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Imprisoning Chicago: Incarceration, The Chicago City Council, Prisoners, and Reform, 1832-1915

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

IMPRISONING CHICAGO:
INCARCERATION, THE CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL, PRISONERS,
AND REFORM, 1832-1915

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HISTORY

BY

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INTRODUCTION

INCARCERATION AND CHICAGO

Eliza Thompson spent a great deal of time in the Chicago Bridewell during the 1850s. Within six months of the Bridewell's opening in December 1851, Thompson had already served three terms there.¹ Thompson found herself confined in the Bridewell on charges of drunkenness, prostitution, and vagrancy for sentences up to two and a half months at a time. Shortly after release, sometimes after two or three days of freedom, she reentered the institution for another term. By August 1856, Thompson had entered the Bridewell at least eleven more times, confined within the walls of the Bridewell more than most of her fellow detainees.² Indeed, Thompson spent more time inside than outside the facility. She experienced first-hand the realities of confinement in an institution dictated by city leaders' desire for non-professional administration and low-cost detention of criminals. Thompson embodied the fluid and dynamic population, often idle while detained, incarcerated in the Bridewell.

Inmates like Thompson convinced city council members to address the shortcomings of the Bridewell by opening the House of Correction (HOC) in 1871. The HOC retained some of the same characteristics as the Bridewell, political influence in the

¹ Report of Committee on Police on the Bridewell Keeper's Bill, 1852/53 0236 A 05/10, Chicago City Council Proceeding Files, Cook County, Illinois Regional Archives Depository System, Northeastern Illinois University. (Hereafter City Files), The first numbers relate to the fiscal year the document was filed, the second number is the document number filed, and finally, the date the document was filed.

² Bridewell Keeper's Reports from May 1852 to August 1856.

positions of Superintendent and Board of Inspectors and the constant overcrowded conditions, but in many ways it was different. The HOC was designed to more completely segregate inmates from the urban landscape, was administered primarily by professionals with previous penal experience, and imposed a structured daily routine for those within its walls. City leaders devoted considerable time and attention to the physical construction and social design of the HOC in an attempt to create a self-sufficient institution that better met the needs of the city. The HOC more completely separated inmates, initially based on sex with later attention to age as well. In contrast to the informal and unstructured Bridewell, prisoners in the HOC found life inside dictated by formal routine, discipline, and work. The city council's administration of the Bridewell and HOC signified city leaders' shift from the detention of criminals as an annoyance which required little attention and minimal expense to a problem which demanded a long-term, permanent solution in a more professional and modern, prison-like facility during the nineteenth century.

The HOC signified another transformation in Chicago justice. During the operation of the Bridewell, prisoners and their families exerted power and petitioned the City Council for their release. Administrators of the HOC intended to replace "arbitrary" releases with more "professional" administration, removing much of the potential political influence in its creation and administration. Securing a pardon from the HOC was still possible, but all petitions had to be endorsed by the superintendent or city physician. Aldermen still played a part by presenting an individual case to the mayor, but prisoners were only released upon investigation by HOC officials into their

circumstances. By the end of the nineteenth century, city incarceration was more rigidly defined, coercively structured, and reflected a desire to fully contain offenders both physically and philosophically.

Chicago underwent unprecedented change from its early beginnings as a frontier town until its emergence as an industrial and transportation center of America by the end of the nineteenth century. During this same period, residents of Chicago also experienced an increased fight against crime and vice. City leaders attempted to contain criminals in more adequate and “modern” facilities which would “correct” inmates and instill habits of industry. In doing so, they built multiple facilities to house the growing number of misdemeanants found within the city limits. The city’s primary detention buildings underwent significant change from 1832 to 1915. City leaders originally erected temporary holding facilities to house minor offenders. As local officials constructed and administered the Bridewell, and later the HOC, they increasingly placed emphasis on containment, labor, and discipline. In doing so, carceral facilities demonstrated the rising power of the penal administrators and the decreasing power of its inmates and city leaders in their administration.

Historians have examined prisons and the prison system in the United States.³

Early works stressed the enlightened and reformatory aims of the prisons, often

³ Early works on the penitentiary include: Orlando F. Lewis, *The Development of American Prisons and Prison Customs, 1776-1845, With Special Reference to Early Institutions in the State of New York*, with a new introduction by Donald H. Goff (Montclair, New Jersey: P. Smith, 1967); Frederick Howard Wines, *Punishment and Reformation: An Historical Sketch of the Use of the Penitentiary System* (New York: T.Y. Crowell, 1895); Blake McKelvey, *American Prisons: A Study in American Social History Prior to 1915* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936). Examples include: David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971); Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*

neglecting the reality of conditions inside the structures. Revisionist historiography has largely regarded the prison as a form of social control. More recently, Michael Meranze documents the shift from public punishment to the rise of the penitentiary in *Laboratories of Virtue* and connects it to the rise of liberalism in the western world, specifically in Philadelphia. He contends that imprisonment represented a different way of treating the body of the convicted, through discipline.⁴

Historians interested in Western and other penal systems have emphasized the relationship between the evolution of modern society and the state's role in that development through the rise of modern prison systems. Extensive research on penitentiaries has emphasized penal systems, convict labor, and prison reform. The seminal studies by David J. Rothman, Michael Ignatieff, and Michel Foucault argue that the Jacksonian-era asylum, England's Pentonville prison, and the penitentiary emerged as responses to a decline of earlier community controls over crime and poverty and the rise of new philosophies of punishment which shifted from a focus on the body to one that sought improvement of the inmate's mind.⁵ Penitentiaries served as a measure of social control. Rothman especially argues that during the Jacksonian era, the public "located

(New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

⁴ Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 15.

⁵ Revisionist studies include: Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*; Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*; and Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*. Briefly, Rothman interprets the rise of the asylum in the Jacksonian era as a response to the decline of earlier community controls over crime and poverty. The penitentiary would correct the problem of crime. Ignatieff's examination of England's Pentonville prison in 1842 demonstrates the emergence of the modern prison as a response to new philosophies of punishment which shifted from the body to improve inmates' minds. Foucault also documents the shift from public punishment of the criminal's body for crimes against the sovereign to the hidden sources of control behind prison walls.

both the origins of crime and delinquency within the society,” and crime was a societal problem of disorder that the penitentiary would correct. Ignatieff describes industrialists’ use of penitentiaries in England in their attempts to maintain order. Foucault argues that a new conception of the role of penitentiaries emerged around the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Reform and the power of constant surveillance replaced the power of physical restraint. No longer was the body the focus of the penal institutions, rather, the soul was to be punished.⁶ Foucault philosophized about this shift from the body to the soul. All three historians concentrate primarily on reformers’ ideals of punishment, ignoring the empirical social and physical realities of discipline in the prison system.

Convict labor historiography has also focused on the larger prisons and carceral facilities. Both Glen Gildemeister and Matthew Mancini reason that few protested the treatment of convict labor for humanitarian reasons; rather protests occurred because of the threat that prison labor posed to the working class.⁷ Recently, historians have explored the roles of punishment and convict labor. No longer merely viewed as a means of social control, discipline is now increasingly interpreted as more of a negotiation among those involved. As Joy Damousi contends, disorderly behavior by female inmates

⁶ Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 78, 205, 247, 277, 295; Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain*; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 7-8.

⁷ Glen A. Gildemeister, “Prison Labor and Convict Competition With Free Workers in Industrializing America, 1840-1890” (Ph.D. diss., Northern Illinois University, 1977), 128; Matthew J. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 230-231. While Gildemeister mentioned, “Although convicts did not view labor as a privilege, it was preferable to staring at the stark, dirty stone walls of a cell all day,” he did not explore the perceptions of punishments for either the guards or prisoners. He simply stated that prisoners participated in convict labor because it was better than staying in their cells. Gildemeister, 118.

in Australia challenged authorities who attempted to control their actions. Prisoner resistance allowed women to shape their environment, even if temporarily.⁸ More recently, scholars have focused on the inmates to understand how they attempted to alleviate conditions inside through bribery, mutilation, and other means to slow down production in prison industries.⁹ In addition, historians increasingly view studies into punishment and convict labor as a window into American culture. Michael Meranze argues that changes in penal institutions can be connected with American liberalism and the middle-class ideology of creating an ordered citizenry. Alex Lichtenstein contends that coerced convict labor made modernization of the South possible.¹⁰ Both Meranze and Rebecca M. McLennan extend their studies beyond the physical edifice of the prison to its influence on American society. Specifically, McLennan's study of New York's state prisons argues that the struggle over punishment and convict labor shaped penal institutions and the American social order.¹¹

Prisons were primarily male institutions; imprisonment of women in state institutions was the exception, not the rule. Most notably, works by Estelle Freedman,

⁸ Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 84.

⁹ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), chapters 4 and 12.

¹⁰ Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Alex Lichtenstein, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South* (London: Verso, 1996); David M. Oshinsky, *"Worse Than Slavery": Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

¹¹ Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760 - 1835* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Rebecca M. McLennan, *Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Nicole Hahn Rafter, and L. Mara Dodge consider how women's experiences in prison were different from their male counterparts.¹² Female-only reformatories emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. Relying on female staffs and domestic training of the prisoners, reformers hoped to redeem "fallen women."¹³ Females held in the Illinois penitentiaries from 1835 to 1896, for example, were housed within the confines of the prison, increasingly segregated from the male inmates. In 1896, a separate cell house was constructed to detain women, still under the control of the male warden. The separate State Reformatory for Women at Dwight finally opened in 1930.¹⁴

A few historians have analyzed the local jail and its place in the criminal justice system.¹⁵ Sean McConville argues that in the United States, despite attempts to promote a humane method of containment of prisoners, jails in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries suffered from "overcrowding, underfunding, and brutality."¹⁶ In "America's

¹² Estelle Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons, and Social Control* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985); L. Mara Dodge, *"Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind": A Study of Women, Crimes, and Prisons, 1835-2000* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2006).

¹³ Rafter, *Partial Justice*, 49.

¹⁴ Dodge, *"Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind,"* 6. Accommodations were made at Alton and Joliet, but such segregated cells were abandoned at Joliet shortly after construction. As the numbers of females detained were so small, they were housed in the administrative offices until the opening of the separate cell house in 1896. Dodge, 83, 7.

¹⁵ Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993). For local criminal justice systems, see Allen Steinberg, *The Transformation of Criminal Justice: Philadelphia, 1800-1880* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1989); Michael Hindus, *Crime, Justice, and Authority in Massachusetts and South Carolina, 1767-1878* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1980).

¹⁶ Sean McConville, "Local Justice: The Jail," in Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, eds., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 288.

Greatest Criminal Barracks,” Timothy Gilfoyle explores New York City’s Halls of Justice, and finds that penal ideologies did not determine inmate life in “the Tombs.” Rather, “informal procedures and personal relationships between law enforcement authorities and inmates” dictated how accused offenders were treated.¹⁷ Similarly, Edgardo Rotman points out that prisons and their administration were dictated by city, county, or state budgets, and those who ran the institutions.¹⁸ Close examination of Chicago’s carceral facilities demonstrates that city leaders administered the Bridewell with a focus on treating prisoners as humanely as possible. Such aims were ultimately limited by city council members’ primary objective to create low-cost detention facilities to house minor offenders. Philosophies of reformation, punishment, or rehabilitation were secondary, couched in terms to further emphasize the priority of keeping costs to a minimum.¹⁹

The emergence of a city facility to detain criminals reflected similar trends in eastern America. During the 1820s and 1830s, reformers in New York and Pennsylvania created new institutions, penitentiaries, to hold state criminals for sentences longer than a

¹⁷ Timothy J. Gilfoyle, “‘America’s Greatest Criminal Barracks’: The Tombs and the Experience of Criminal Justice in New York City, 1838-1897,” *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 5 (July 2003): 545. Gilfoyle also examines other carceral institutions more fully in Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket’s Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006).

¹⁸ Edgardo Rotman, “The Failure of Reform: United States, 1865-1965,” in Morris and Rothman, eds., *Oxford History of the Prison*, 152-156.

¹⁹ The use of labor within prisons has been examined more fully than in city institutions. Glen A. Gildemeister, *Prison Labor and Convict Competition With Free Workers in Industrializing America, 1840-1890* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 128; Matthew J. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 230-231; Rebecca McLennan, *Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

year. Reformers hoped to design structures which would separate criminals from outside influences. Incarceration would prevent inmates from succumbing to outside influence and allow for their rehabilitation as productive members of society. Emphasis on order, discipline, and labor would teach prisoners habits of industry, and ultimately, reform them of criminal habits upon re-entry into the populace.²⁰ City leaders only incorporated these ideals more fully with the planning and creation of the HOC.

Examination of the Chicago structures complicates understandings of carceral facilities in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. Four types of detention institutions existed in the period: state prisons, jails, juvenile reformatories, and workhouses. Administrators of each type of facility adhered to different philosophical principles, depending on those detained inside. Prisons were large facilities designed to hold those convicted of felonies for sentences longer than a year. As such, inmates were theoretically detained long enough to be reformed so they would not engage in future criminal activity upon release. Prisons were funded primarily by the state; money generated from contracting out inmate labor helped defray expenses. Wardens and administrators sought to maintain order with labor, discipline, and inmates' reflections on the errors of their behavior. Generally, they were large buildings located outside of urban

²⁰ Two systems of prison philosophy and structure emerged during this period: Auburn and Pennsylvania. Under the Pennsylvania system, inmates would be segregated during their entire sentence. They would work, sleep, eat and remain in their cells, with no contact with any other inmate. The Auburn system also stressed the lack of communication with fellow detainees, but they would not be physically separated during their entire term. Rather, Auburn inmates would sleep alone in their cells, but would work during the day with other prisoners in workshops. Silence was to be maintained in order to prevent the spread of corruption from criminal to criminal. Most state penitentiaries in the United States followed the Auburn system; the Pennsylvania system was largely abandoned throughout the nation. However, the philosophies still remained influential into the twentieth century. Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 82-83.

areas which held large populations inside. Inmates had little contact with those outside the prison walls.

Local jails may seem to occupy a secondary, less important, role in the prison system as they were physically small in comparison to larger state penitentiaries. Certainly, studying these local lockups allows historians to gain a fuller understanding of the prison system as a whole. However, they are also important. Smaller, local structures, such as jails or lock ups, held a diverse group of individuals including those who were arrested, awaiting trial, and serving sentences for misdemeanors (less than a year). Local facilities had a dynamic population of prisoners who stayed for periods of months, weeks, days, or even hours. Although local facilities housed fewer inmates at a time, most of those incarcerated found themselves in smaller carceral structures, rather than state prisons where most inmates remained for years at a time.

City or county institutions also differed from state prisons in another key aspect. They were often locally administered and funded, meaning life inside depended on a variety of factors. Often, positions were filled by political appointees, based on an individual's connection to the party in power at the time. As a result, superintendents or jail officials may not have been well versed in penal philosophy or practices. Officials focused on detaining inmates rather than reforming them. Additionally, since not all those held within were convicted of a crime or offense, their ability to punish or contract labor were often negligible or significantly reduced. The Cook County Jail, along with the police lockups, served this function in Chicago. As a result, the jail and lock-up populations were the most fluid of the Chicago detention institutions. Finally, lockups

housed inmates within the city limits, allowing for more contact with outsiders, even during detainment.

Separate facilities for juveniles emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, seeking to prevent young offenders from becoming adult criminals. Initially, many of these reformatories were locally funded, but by the turn of the century, many states constructed and administered them. In early Chicago, juvenile offenders were often held with adults in lockups, the jail, and the city prison. This only changed during the Progressive Era as city leaders built the separate John Worthy School at the House of Correction, where young males served longer sentences and theoretically learned a trade during their confinement. Upon release, some experienced interference from local authorities who kept many in their care long after the end of their official detainment.

Workhouses, also known as houses of correction, were intermediate facilities between prisons and jails which shared aspects of both structurally and administratively. On one hand, they were often local institutions administered by city or county governments. Administrative appointments were often politically motivated with little regard to previous penal experience. Similarly, buildings and services for inmates were funded by city budgets, dependent on revenues and popular will. However, because they did not hold those awaiting trial, meaning that all held inside had been convicted or fined for their offense, they were more like prisons in structure, labor requirements, and discipline.

The Bridewell and the Chicago House of Correction were hybrid institutions: both were city prisons with characteristics of state prisons and local jails. The HOC

additionally incorporated aspects of all four types of facilities while in operation.

Designed as a workhouse which incorporated labor into routine, inmates were more fully segregated from the city, as with a prison. Almost all inmates were misdemeanants serving sentences under a year, resulting in a dynamic population. And, from 1892 to 1914, the John Worthy School administered male juveniles detained at the HOC.

Examination of Chicago carceral institutions highlights the inherent tensions in detention in city prisons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Bridewell and the House of Correction were not as physically separated from the urban environment as larger, state prisons. Both were located within the city environs in order to be near police stations, police justices, and courts. The state prisons, first at Stateville, and later Joliet, were located outside of the city limits and environs, making contact with outsiders difficult. By contrast, inmates at the Bridewell often enjoyed frequent contact with outsiders during detainment. However, construction of the House of Correction signified an increasing attention to segregation of the facility. Through construction of walls surrounding the grounds, prisoners found themselves physically removed from Chicago, even as the city grew up around the site. Prisoners at the House of Correction frequently escaped from the institution, but nevertheless found themselves physically separated from outsiders, making it more like a prison than its predecessor.

The evolution of changes within the Bridewell and House of Correction complicates prison historiography. Imprisonment emerged as the dominant mode of punishment, rather than earlier public forms, by the 1820s and 1830s. States, especially in

the North, constructed prisons through the 1840s.²¹ The various forms of isolation associated with the Auburn and Pennsylvania systems relaxed over the nineteenth century, often replaced by overcrowded cells or programs intended to rehabilitate and rid criminals of their wayward habits. Reformers' attempts to remedy overcrowding and brutality within the prisons were limited; inmates experienced frequent punishment, filth, and inadequate facilities. Progressives hoped to "cure" the illness of crime and developed classification systems, medical language to diagnose criminal tendencies, specialists such as psychiatrists to ensure that inmates were treated as "patients," and indeterminate sentences to allow time for diagnosis and treatment. Such programs had limited success, often because of the high prisoner to specialist ratio. They did ensure that classification became a more central feature of prison life.²²

Women comprised a larger percentage of the population at the Bridewell and House of Correction, in contrast. Females accounted for only a fraction of the prisoners at both Alton and Joliet. Even at the end of the nineteenth century, approximately twenty of the few hundred women convicted of felonies in Illinois ended up in the penitentiary.²³ Unlike their state counterparts, aldermen and superintendents had to accommodate a large female population detained in Chicago. Only with increased commitments of women to the city's House of Shelter and Domestic Courts, did the female population at the House of Correction decline at the turn of the twentieth century. The experience of women held

²¹ David J. Rothman, "Perfecting the Prison: United States, 1789-1865," in Morris and Rothman, eds., *Oxford History of the Prison*, 106.

²² Rotman, "Failure of Reform," 151, 157-158, 159-160.

²³ Ibid., 64.

at the Bridewell and House of Correction was more representative of female detention than their counterparts at the state facilities.

More critically, officials at the Bridewell and the House of Correction never completely duplicated conditions inside a prison. Superintendents at the House of Correction advocated for longer sentences, but such aspirations proved unsuccessful. Instead, the city prisons housed a population much more transient than that of the state prisons. Like the Cook County Jail, most inmates at the city facility were confined for weeks or days at a time. A rare few served terms longer than a month. Unlike the jail, none were innocent; all were convicted before arrival. The House of Correction, unlike state prisons, processed large numbers of detainees. There were only 236 prisoners in the House of Correction on December 31, 1871, but the institution processed 1,955 people from its opening in August until the end of the year.²⁴ This number drastically increased over time; from 1872 to 1900, 215,556 inmates were received at the House of Correction. On average, the House of Correction processed approximately 7,400 inmates per year.²⁵ State prisons or penitentiaries never processed such a fluid population.

Chicago councilmen originally planned and constructed the Bridewell to be an inexpensive workhouse for city ordinance violators and misdemeanants. The Bridewell emerged as a more long-term solution to the detention of criminals. Economics, rather than a humanitarian impulse, dictated the goals and structure of the institution. Inmates

²⁴ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and Reports of the Superintendent and City Physician to the Board* (Chicago: M. H. Kendig, Printer, 1893), 13.

²⁵ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and Reports of the Superintendent, City Physician and House Physician* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co, Printers, 1901), 19.

within worked to defray expenses of running the facility while learning habits of industry, ideally balancing economic and reformatory goals. City leaders' inability to reform prisoners and continually employ them resulted in sustained criticism of the structure. At the Bridewell, prisoners and their families often secured their release through petitions to the Chicago City Council. Critics argued that prisoners faced overcrowding, boredom, and poor food quality, despite the money expended to supply and administer the facility.

Prisoners, their families, and the public often influenced changes and policies at the Bridewell. Keepers at the Bridewell had no previous experience with detainment of inmates, but many of the superintendents from 1871 to 1915 did. Even if a superintendent had no prior experience, he claimed "expertise" shortly after appointment. Each shaped the House of Correction in an effort to mold it into their understanding of a city jail. Most emphasized order, discipline, and labor to control the population contained inside. Inmates at the House of Correction experienced an institution that increasingly resembled a modern prison rather than a nineteenth-century jail. City leaders attempted to construct a self-sufficient workhouse which would also alleviate concerns of overcrowding and housing an idle population with the construction of the House of Correction, its replacement.

The Bridewell's replacement by the House of Correction signified a shift from the temporary, low-cost detention of minor offenders to a more modern and professional structure designed to compel order and discipline. Ideally, guards and officers at the House of Correction adhered to a code of conduct, order was maintained through labor

and humane discipline, and the facility was financially self-sufficient. Revenue generated from prisoner labor offset operating expenses, meaning that the House of Correction was not to be a burden to the city. From 1871 to 1915, city leaders constructed new departments at the House of Correction to also better accommodate the younger and female inmates through the John Worthy School and Women's Departments, respectively. Both were designed to address specific problems of housing female and youth populations. However, once these departments were eliminated or reworked, public attention on the House of Correction waned. Once women and young offenders were physically removed from the main facility, citizens turned their attention to other problems in Chicago. The House of Correction housed a population that became increasingly older, male, and black, especially after 1915. As a result, public and political power to alleviate conditions faced by this population evaporated.

Reality differed from this expectation. City leaders and administrators at the two institutions faced a number of problems during the nineteenth century. Neither the Bridewell nor the House of Correction became self-sufficient because officials encountered problems in contracting out the inmate population. Few companies wanted to use HOC prisoner labor, essential to maintain order and economic self-sufficiency, because prisoners did not stay long enough to master a skill. As a result, officials pursued unskilled labor opportunities, but these attempts were increasingly limited by protests from labor unions and workers.

Changes and releases from the House of Correction became more difficult to secure, especially after the turn of the twentieth century. Inmates inside realized that the

shift to a more professional institution resulted in their decreased ability to gain an early release. Families still appealed to local aldermen to gain a release, but such appeals had to be endorsed by the superintendent or city physician. The mayor had the final power to pardon. Similarly, although the House of Correction, like its predecessor, was plagued by overcrowded conditions and escalating costs, the council only slowly responded. Changes in the city's administration of the city prison meant that inmates and reformers had less input in shaping the House of Correction than in the Bridewell.

Both the Bridewell and House of Correction detained the young, the old, hardened criminals, women, and men, but only at the House of Correction, were these populations increasingly segregated, resulting in an experience inside that was dramatically dependent based on factors of age and sex. Such division reflected a "progressive" recognition that the various populations housed at the House of Correction should be handled differently. Reformers and administrators argued that, for example, young boys incarcerated for the first time should not be subject to the same conditions as older, repeat offenders. Such "progressive" concerns dominated national debates around the turn-of-the-century.

Michael Willrich has examined how these concerns resulted in the first municipal court system in the United States, located in Chicago. The creation of the Court of Domestic Relations, the Morals Court, the Boys' Court, and the Psychopathic Laboratory signified the socialization of the law at the beginning of the twentieth century. Judges and court officials could evaluate the domestic circumstances of individuals brought in front of the courts. Willrich contends that through these procedures, the law became more

“liberating and repressive” for those who encountered it.²⁶ However, young male inmates experienced differences in detention and officials’ attempts to extend the reach of the House of Correction more fully into their lives after incarceration even before the Juvenile Court was created in 1899.²⁷

The Bridewell and the Chicago House of Correction were unique institutions which illuminate the development of nineteenth-century city incarceration from a fluid and informal process to more of a rigid and formal status. Physically and philosophically, city structures, and the inmates detained inside, shifted from being part of the city to one separate of Chicago and its residents. The Chicago City Council Proceeding Files, rarely used by historians, provide a rare glimpse into city leaders’ administration of the carceral facilities.²⁸ Economic concerns, rather than humanitarian impulse, emerged as paramount to the city council in constructing and administering both the Bridewell and the House of Correction. Additionally, the House of Correction grew with Chicago, becoming one of the largest institutions of its kind in the nation. The facility is important nationally also due to the renown in the emerging field of penal philosophy that some of the superintendents at the House of Correction achieved. Both Charles E. Felton and John L.

²⁷ Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 120, 125, 79.

²⁸ Examination of the City council Proceeding Files, virtually ignored by historians, provides a glimpse into the multiple goals and complications of local incarceration during the nineteenth century. One reason for historians’ failure to use the Proceeding Files is that they were believed to have been destroyed during the Great Fire of 1871 see Robin Einhorn, *Property Rules: Political Economy in Chicago, 1833-1872* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Einhorn uses the files to examine pre-Fire politics in Chicago. Her examination of the Bridewell through the files is limited to its economic contribution through convict labor, a small part of her focus.

Whitman served as leaders and participants in the yearly meetings of the National Prison Association, presenting papers to their colleagues on a variety of topics.²⁹

The city's administration of the two institutions reflected a few of the changes in penal philosophies over the nineteenth century. City leaders sought the professionalization of officials, a reliance on labor for discipline, and the eventual rise of Progressives who wanted to treat inmates, especially the women and the young, more individually. However, the two institutions also included some particular influences of Chicago, especially the selection of superintendents which still generally relied upon political connections and the Great Fire which prevented the city from spending on additions to the overcrowded HOC for fifteen years. Ultimately, studying the city's administration of the Bridewell and House of Correction demonstrates the segregation of inmates physically and literally from the public. Justice, previously negotiated by inmates and their families, became more formalized and extensive with the professionalization of local carceral facilities.

Eliza Thompson's many months confined in the two-story wooden Bridewell typified incarceration in the 1850s. She, like most of her fellow prisoners, male and female, was most likely idle during her many terms. The Bridewell was managed by non-experts overseen by the city council. A keeper's primary duties were to ensure that inmates, Thompson included, served their sentences fully and to operate the Bridewell as cheaply as possible. Fifty years later, John Brennan's detention within the HOC was dramatically different.

²⁹ Felton was the first superintendent at the HOC from 1871 to 1890; Whitman served from 1907 to 1917.

Former Chicago alderman John Brennan found himself in the HOC in 1904.

Brennan, by virtue of his political position, was an atypical prisoner, but his experience, like those of others at the HOC, differed greatly from that of Eliza Thompson. Brennan wore a uniform, worked for ten hours a day in the on-site broom factory, and was supervised by professional administrators and guards.³⁰ The informality of detention in the Bridewell was replaced by a routine which emphasized work and discipline. The population at the HOC, still very fluid, was demographically more male and older than that of the Bridewell. From Thompson to Brennan, imprisonment in Chicago's carceral facilities transformed from a negotiated process to one that was more rigidly imposed by professional administrators.

From 1832 to 1915, city leaders oversaw administration of the city's Bridewell and House of Correction. Expenditures related to the police and detention of criminals reflected an increasing emphasis on detention and crime by city leaders, reliant on professional management. Debates over the purpose of city incarceration reflected similar national deliberations concerning the reformation of criminals, preventing crime, and punishment. Mayors, the city council, police justices, Bridewell keepers and House of Correction superintendents exerted considerable influence in the criminal justice system in the nineteenth century. City violators and misdemeanants attempted to negotiate this oversight as much as possible.

³⁰ "Bridewell Toil Tires Aldermen," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 January 1904, p. 3, final edition.

CHAPTER ONE

“ENTIRELY INADEQUATE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE CITY”:

EARLY INCARCERATION IN CHICAGO, 1832-1871

On August 2, 1864, the *Chicago Tribune* printed a scathing review of the Bridewell, Chicago’s city prison.

The present building, located on the corner of Polk and Wells streets, was first used for Bridewell purposes about fourteen years ago [...] It was constructed of wood, and is by this time thoroughly rotten, scarcely a sound plank being left in the structure. The authorities use every effort to keep it clean by whitewashing, the lime being sometimes a quarter of an inch thick from repeated layers, when it is peeled off, and the process of thickening repeated. But whitewashing does not make new wood, it only covers up the evil. In the innumerable chinks of those decayed timbers, rats, lice and bugs find resting or hiding places, from which it is impossible to dislodge them, and whence they sally out in countless swarms on the inmates.¹

Intended as an improvement of the first city lockups, the Bridewell, opened December 15, 1851, soon attracted criticism as an outdated structure that no longer met the needs of the city. Furthermore, critics argued that the facility did not provide improved moral and physical treatment of prisoners housed inside. Examination of early carceral institutions in Chicago and the Bridewell demonstrates the contestation between city officials who wanted to provide an inexpensive solution to crime in the growing city and those who sought the reformation of prisoners. Economics dictated the physical structure and administration of the building. However, the city council had to address

¹ “The City Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 August 1864, 4, final edition.

concerns brought by the public, penal reformers, and public depictions of prisoners' actions. Ultimately, the administration of the Bridewell reflected the inability of city officials to meet the twin goals of creating a low-cost detention facility which also reformed inmates confined within its walls.

The Chicago city council faced a few unique challenges in governing the city, and by extension, housing its criminal population. Most notably, Chicago's population dramatically expanded during the middle of the nineteenth century. Chicago's population grew from 4,470 inhabitants in 1840 to 29,963 ten years later; by 1860, the city had 109,260 inhabitants. The city more than doubled during the 1860s, and by 1870, 298,977 resided in Chicago. The population continued to increase dramatically as the city passed the one million resident mark by 1890 and doubled to two million twenty years later.² Much of this increase was due to immigration, especially from Ireland and Germany. In 1870, the Irish-born population accounted for approximately 40,000 of the city's inhabitants.³ Germans comprised the largest immigrant group in the city with approximately thirty percent of the population from 1860 to 1900.⁴

Reacting to the perceived threats presented by the large immigrant population, Chicago's mayors and aldermen directed a portion of their attention to alleviating related crimes, especially regarding alcohol during this same period. Mayor Levi Boone sought

² "Chicago Growth 1850-1990: Maps by Dennis McClendon," UIC, <http://tigger.uic.edu/depts/ahaa/imagebase/chimaps/mcclendon.html> (accessed August 21, 2012).

³ Lawrence J. McCaffrey, "The Irish-American Dimension" in Lawrence J. McCaffrey, ed. *The Irish in Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 7.

⁴ Hartmut Keil, "Chicago's German Working Class in 1900" in Hartmut Keil and John B. Jentz, eds., *German Workers in Industrial Chicago, 1850-1910: A Comparative Perspective* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1983), 20.

to increase the price of liquor licenses in 1855, inciting the German Lager Beer Riot on April 21. Two years later, his successor, John Wentworth, focused his efforts on the underground economy including gambling and brothels.⁵ Although sources are limited as to their success, charges of drunkenness, vagrancy, and disorderly conduct accounted for the majority of inmates' sentences at the Bridewell. In September of 1853, seventy-four of eighty sentences were for drunkenness and disorderly conduct.⁶

The increased attention to enforcement of city ordinances necessitated expanded carceral facilities in the city. City officials initially used the county jail, along with city watch houses and lock ups, to temporarily detain individuals arrested and convicted of violating city ordinances. Members of the Chicago city council recognized the limitations of such facilities and opened the Bridewell in 1851 to confine inmates for longer periods of time. Economics, rather than a clearly defined penal philosophy of reformation, determined the council's construction and administration of the Bridewell. City council members hoped the Bridewell would remain a low-cost detention facility, but expenses quickly escalated. City leaders increasingly faced the challenges of housing and reforming a greater number of prisoners, and the pressures of cutting expenses during difficult times. City council members created the Bridewell as a carceral structure for convicted misdemeanants, but economic and humanitarian concerns for inmates resulted in its failure as a permanent solution to the city's crime problem.

⁵ Richard C. Lindberg, *To Serve and Collect: Chicago Politics and Police Corruption From the Lager Beer Riot to the Summerdale Scandal* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 6-11.

⁶ City Files: 1853/54 1043 A 10/10.

City and county leaders initially used a limited number of institutions to house persons awaiting trial and those convicted of misdemeanor crimes in the first days of settlement. Only with the construction of the Bridewell did city leaders begin to distinguish a “jail” from a “bridewell” or a “house of correction.” Chicago’s first carceral structure was a small log cabin built and administered by county officials in 1832. The building detained both misdemeanants and those awaiting trial.⁷ As such, it housed both guilty and not yet convicted individuals, like other jails around the country. Little care was taken to separate inmates within the walls of the building.

City leaders were slow to recognize and respond to the need for separate facilities for the accused and the convicted. Chicago’s city charter adopted in 1837 contained a provision for the city council to construct and administer a bridewell or house of correction. Such an institution would confine individuals who violated city ordinances or misdemeanants only. Those awaiting trial were to be held at the Cook County Jail or police lockups. The charter provided that the city council was responsible for feeding, maintaining, and employing inmates at the city institution.⁸ The city council did not implement this law until the opening of the Bridewell fifteen years later.

Early ordinances and laws in the city of Chicago reflected its status as a small frontier village. The first detention centers were small, temporary facilities, similar to those in colonial America. Punishment of crime in pre-revolutionary America was accomplished through public shaming or the expulsion of outsiders. As villages were

⁷ Max Stern, “The House of Correction: A History and Examination of Recent Statistics Regarding Persons Committed to It” (M.A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1932), 3.

⁸ Ibid., 4.

small, community members self-policed and were wary of strangers. Most crimes committed were punished through fines, whipping, or the stocks. But in the early nineteenth century, Americans increasingly emphasized detainment as punishment. Penitentiaries emerged in New York and Pennsylvania to address the new challenges presented from crime and increasing social disorder.⁹

Watchmen or constables in Chicago who arrested violators of ordinances took them to a justice of the peace for sentencing. If an arrest occurred overnight, the watchman detained the arrested individual in the watch house until the judge could be contacted the next morning.¹⁰ The construction of watch houses was sporadic and inexpensive. Often, the city council received requests for watch houses from citizens. Aldermen then approved of the construction, if deemed necessary. City council members then accepted bids for construction of the structures, and selected the cheapest one meeting specifications previously published.¹¹ The appointment of watchmen and constables also reflected the informal procedures of early law enforcement in the burgeoning village.

The first public law enforcers were nonprofessionals, selected for their standing in the community, not for previous experience. City officials relied upon watchmen and constables to maintain order in the frontier town. Men interested in patrolling as a member of the watch petitioned the city council for the post. In 1843, Horace Scott

⁹ David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), Chapters 2 and 4.

¹⁰ City Files: 1845/45 A 2832 12/05.

¹¹ City Files: 1845/45 2549 A 04/30.

submitted his petition as watchman along with the signatures of thirty neighbors who supported his request.¹² City council members added more night watchmen when they considered them as critical. Much like the procedures for establishing watch houses, the process remained informal in early Chicago.

But informality did not mean that the post was without rules. The earliest city watchmen were required to follow a code of conduct. Ordinances highlighted appropriate behavior while on duty. Watchmen could lose their position if they were found not on duty at night, if they did not report for duty at specified times, if they were intoxicated while on patrol, or for other misconduct.¹³ Hugh Henry was discharged after the city council investigated reports of his drinking while on patrol.¹⁴ Councilman Levi Boone recommended the removal of Anthony Tierney as police constable in December 1846. Boone forwarded a petition to the council in which a complainant reported his experience in the watch house. The petitioner stated that although it was a cold night, Tierney made no accommodation made for his comfort, either in the form of a fire or blankets. The council concurred with Boone's proposal and removed Tierney.¹⁵

Additional ordinances further attempted to consolidate the various officials of the law. The council passed an ordinance in 1851 delineating the duties of the mayor and aldermen, along with the city marshal, police justices, watchmen and police constables, known collectively as the police. The mayor was responsible for overseeing the police

¹² City Files: 1843/43 1804 A 11/20.

¹³ City Files: 1845/45 2733 A 08/29.

¹⁴ City Files: 1844/44 2154 A 08/08.

¹⁵ City Files: 1846/46 3534 A 12/18.

while the aldermen were to cooperate with the mayor, ensuring peace in the city. The marshal, as chief, managed the day-to-day administration of the police under his supervision. A watchman could be appointed, but was required to take an oath, be a citizen of the United States, and a “qualified voter.” Individuals who prevented a police man from discharging his duties, did not assist the police when asked, or helped another in custody escape were subject to fines varying from one hundred to five hundred dollars.¹⁶

Aldermen further formalized the various officials by establishing the Police Department on April 30, 1855. According to William Church, Chair of the Committee on Police, organization of the police was critical because “there is perhaps no branch of a city government upon which so much depends for the well being and comfort of the population.” Church, and his fellow councilmen, took the language and many of the ideas from the 1851 ordinance in the 1855 action. The Marshal was the Acting Chief of Police, with Lieutenants, Sergeants, Police Constables, and Policemen under his command. The city mayor, at the time Levi Boone, was officially made head of the Police. Church stipulated that the ordinance allowed for a force of forty, but he proposed a total force of eighty men; the resolution passed.¹⁷

¹⁶ City Files: 1851/52 0463 A 05/17.

¹⁷ City Files: 1855/56 0293 A 04/30. David Johnson examines the emergence of police departments in three antebellum cities, including Chicago. He finds that local circumstances shaped the formation of police, but that all had similar organizations. Most notably, he argues that detective forces emerged from earlier constabularies to address crime and vice. David R. Johnson, *Policing the Urban Underworld: The Impact of Crime on the Development of the American Police, 1800-1887* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

Early confinement in Chicago also alluded to the less formal, public nature of criminal justice in the antebellum city. Confinement in early Chicago was but one course of action available for punishment. Individuals convicted of petty crime were also subject to public punishment in the streets. Inmates committed to the county jail were sentenced to perform work to benefit the city. For example, Thomas Madigan worked fifteen and a half days during June and July 1851 for the city's southern district street commissioners. During the two months, twenty-five different men worked the equivalent of 109.25 days of labor; five of those worked multiple times for a total of forty hours.¹⁸ Early violators of city ordinances found themselves detained in small carceral buildings or laboring in view of the public. Many years passed before county and city officials implemented more permanent structures, professional administrators, and cohesive philosophies regarding detention and punishment in the growing city.

Jails and small, locally-administered detention facilities differed from penitentiaries. Penitentiaries had a clear philosophical basis: to separate criminals from society during their term. Inmates in prison would theoretically learn habits of industry and return to society reformed of their criminal ways. Jails, by contrast, lacked a cohesive philosophical foundation of reformation. More accurately, they were an outgrowth of centuries of British law and systems of justice. Jails were primarily designed to simply detain and hold individuals either awaiting trial or already sentenced to serve sentences of less than a year for misdemeanor crimes. Misdemeanants were often detained for periods

¹⁸ City Files: 1851/52 0845 A 08/15.

of months, weeks, or only days at a time. Despite such limitations, some cities incorporated a labor component in their jails for misdemeanants.¹⁹

The theoretical foundation of bridewells and houses of correction initially differed from jails. Jails held those awaiting trial, debtors, and those convicted of crime. Houses of correction initially could be filled by the poor or orphans.²⁰ The first, Bridewell, was established in London in 1556.²¹ Bridewell, and other institutions by the same name, was supposed to detain and punish members of the lower social orders. In particular, those individuals found guilty of minor crimes or violations related to their economic status including: unlicensed begging, vagrancy, and disorderly behavior. While within the bridewells, inmates would theoretically be subject to punishment and continued employment.²² Workhouses, such as houses of correction, by contrast, were designed to deter the working poor from voluntary unemployment, but gradually transformed into an asylum for “the elderly and sick.” Jails and houses of correction (and their antecedents, bridewells) slowly merged in England from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries,

¹⁹ Sean McConville, “The Victorian Prison, England, 1865-1965,” in Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, eds., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 119.

²⁰ Those sent to houses of correction were not initially guilty of any particular crime, differentiating them from the bridewell. Sean McConville, “Local Justice: The Jail,” in Morris and Rothman, eds., *Oxford History of the Prison*, 282.

²¹ Sean McConville, “The Victorian Prison, England,” in Morris and Rothman, eds., *Oxford History of the Prison*, 119.

²² Joanne Innes, “Prisons for the Poor: English Bridewells, 1555-1800,” in Francis Snyder and Douglas Hay, eds., *Labour, Law, and Crime: An Historical Perspective* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987), 42.

philosophically and physically. Legally, legislation made this consolidation formal in 1865.²³

Chicago city leaders drew upon the theoretical understanding of the bridewell for their new institution. City officials finally decided to implement the authority granted to them by the 1837 city charter. The city institution would meet two goals: relieve overcrowding at the county jail and employ those detained inside. The proposed bridewell could detain some held at the Cook County Jail, which was growing increasingly overcrowded. The jail housed those found guilty of violating a city ordinance, those awaiting trial, and those convicted of misdemeanors. In addition, inmates were idle since no provision existed for work or prison labor. Aldermen recognized their ability to create a bridewell that could detain and employ minor offenders, ideally at little expense to the city.²⁴ The Bridewell would not specifically detain the poor or orphans, unless found guilty of violating a city ordinance. Bridewell inmates would theoretically work during their confinement to defray costs of the structure. Aldermen and leaders only emphasized the monetary benefits of inmate labor; reform through labor was of little concern at the Bridewell.

Before the new structure could be built, the city needed to acquire a plot of land for the new building. On August 28, 1850, the city council passed an order to appoint a committee of three to “ascertain and report [...] the best location for a Bridewell or work

²³ McConville, “Local Justice,” 282, 283.

²⁴ City Files: 1850/50 6381 A 08/28.

house.”²⁵ Several months later, on March 19, 1851, Benjamin Wilder proposed the sale of two different lots to the city for the future bridewell, one on Clark Street and the other on State Street. The latter was eight hundred feet by five hundred feet deep and eight hundred seventy five dollars. The Clark Street lot was priced at sixteen hundred dollars. Half of the price would be paid in two years, the rest over five years.²⁶ A week later, the city council’s Committee on Wharves and Public Grounds recommended the council purchase the State Street lot, and the council concurred. Although either lot was “desirable,” the State Street lot was the “cheapest.”²⁷ To further lower the cost of the land purchase, the council elected to divide the lot, only purchasing half of the original proposed lot after George Springer offered to purchase the other half.²⁸

By December 1, 1851 the Bridewell was completed, but not ready for occupancy - the council had to appoint a supervisor or “Keeper.”²⁹ Two days later, David Walsh took the oath as Keeper of the City Bridewell.³⁰ According to the 1860 census, Walsh’s salary as keeper was not his only income. Listed as a “merchant,” Walsh had \$10,000 in real estate property. Ten years later, he reported \$25,000 in real estate property and \$4,000 in

²⁵ The language is of interest. City leaders often used the terms “bridewell,” “house of correction,” and “workhouse” interchangeably, denoting their early understandings of the terms. All were detention facilities which emphasized work. The legal definition of who could be sent to the various facilities was not as clearly demarcated by Chicago leaders. City Files: 1850/50 6381 A 08/28.

²⁶ Only the State Street lot had the dimensions listed in the records. Wilder’s offer of the Clark Street lot was less specific, simply stating the amount and interest terms of the purchase. City Files, 1851/52: 316 A 05/19; City Files: 1851/52 317 A 05/19.

²⁷ City Files: 1851/52 318 A 03/26.

²⁸ City Files: 1851/52 319 A 03/31; 1851/52 320 A 03/31.

²⁹ City Files: 1851/52 1246 A 12/01.

³⁰ City Files: 1851/52 1257 A 12/03.

personal property with his occupation as a “bank clerk.”³¹ Walsh, unlike many later superintendents of the House of Correction, was not a professional prison administrator.

The Committee on Police proposed, and the council agreed, to set Walsh’s salary at two hundred dollars annually. Aldermen also allotted six cents a meal for each prisoner held in the Bridewell. To ensure that the city was charged correctly, as keeper, Walsh was required to keep a record of prisoners of the Bridewell when he submitted bills to the council.³² Theoretically, Walsh spent the allotment of money on food for the inmates. He then submitted the ledgers to the council for reimbursement of the food expense. The following April, the council increased the meal allotment to seven cents per meal per prisoner and allotted Walsh twenty-five dollars a year for water and gas for the jail.³³ In addition to this increase, the council added an assistant keeper to the jail staff, E. L. Thrall.³⁴

Walsh’s appointment as keeper reflected the political nature of the post. He had no previous experience with law enforcement or criminal detention. His primary qualification as administrator of the facility originated from his political affiliation as a

³¹ Ibid; Ancestry.com, *1860 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2004. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls (accessed 04/29/2008); Ancestry.com. *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2003. Original data: 1870 (accessed 04/29/2008).

³² City Files: 1851/52 1257 A 12/03.

³³ City Files: 1852/53 191 A 04/26. The food allotment system would later become criticized as an area of potential loss to the city and changed with the construction of the House of Correction.

³⁴ City Files: 1852/53 163 A 04/19.

Democrat.³⁵ Walsh was succeeded as keeper by William Justice, a Republican appointed by Mayor John Wentworth in 1857.³⁶ None of the six men who served as keeper had previous experience related to crime, but were connected to either the Republican or Democratic Party. The keepers of the Bridewell assumed their positions based upon political connection rather than any professional experience with law enforcement.

The city council, along with the mayor, oversaw the institution, which was administered on a day-to-day basis by the keeper. The keeper had custody of all inmates and was to keep order at the Bridewell.³⁷ To ensure that prisoners were fairly punished, Walsh and his successors kept inmates until they served their sentences or were released by the city council or mayor.³⁸ All keepers were required to report monthly to the council fines collected from prisoners, along with prisoners' names, dates of sentences, and offenses for which convicted.³⁹ The ledgers also ensured that the city council allotted enough money to cover the food expenses of the facility.⁴⁰ City council members

³⁵ Throughout his career, Walsh served as a member of the Democratic Party and was involved in a number of political activities. After his service as keeper, he was later elected Alderman to the city council. "Obituary 1," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 June 1899, p. 2, final edition.

³⁶ Justice was the first Republican keeper of the Bridewell appointed by the first Republican mayor of the city. "New Appointments," *Chicago Tribune*, 18 March 1857, p. 1, final edition.

³⁷ City Files: 1853/54 145 A 04/04.

³⁸ Walsh continued to work within the city's criminal justice system after his tenure as keeper. In 1879, aldermen confirmed his appointment as the police justice of the west district of the city. City Files: 1879/1879 146 A 05/12.

³⁹ Inmates were fined by police justices. Those who could not pay their fines "worked" them off while detained. City Files: 1853/54 145 A 04/04.

⁴⁰ City Files: 1853/54 145 A 04/04.

stipulated that keepers were to be overseen by the Mayor and the council. To ensure compliance, the Mayor and the Committee on Police could inspect the building monthly.⁴¹

The city council also spelled out rules for detainees. Inmates, who could be committed by the mayor or any city court or police justice, were to obey the keeper. Prisoners could “not molest or hinder him [the keeper] in the discharge of his duty [...or...] attempt to escape or assist others to escape.” The ordinance did not stipulate specifically how a keeper was to maintain order in the Bridewell, but only stated that he could “enforce rigidly such rules.”⁴² The city regulation further allowed the keeper to bring offenders to the mayor or magistrate to be fined for such behavior.

The Bridewell was not intended to be an expensive or large structure. The two-story wooden building contained eighty-five cells.⁴³ Each cell was nine feet by five feet and designed to hold one inmate.⁴⁴ Throughout 1855, the Bridewell housed 966 men and 196 women, a total of 1,162 inmates. On average, it contained forty-five prisoners per day, but on October 3, it held seventy-eight men and women.⁴⁵ As early as June 1855, David Walsh reported that the Bridewell could not comfortably accommodate all detainees. The committee concurred by noting that after examining the facility, they

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ “The City Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 February 1857, 1, final edition.

⁴⁴ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1858, 1, final edition; “The City Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 February 1857, 1, final edition.

⁴⁵ “Bridewell Keeper’s Report for 1855,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 February 1856, 3, final edition.

found it “entirely inadequate to the demands of the city.”⁴⁶ They proposed an addition to the Bridewell to house female inmates. Not only would women be separated from male prisoners, but the building would help alleviate overcrowding.⁴⁷ The council was forced to take action in 1858.

The Bridewell was overcrowded by the end of January 1858 holding one hundred and twenty-four prisoners (100 men and 24 women).⁴⁸ Six months later, two hundred thirty-two prisoners (182 men and 50 women) celebrated the Fourth of July inside the facility, more than double the number of cells.⁴⁹ Consequently, each cell housed two inmates and the rest slept in the halls of the building.⁵⁰ Although numbers fluctuated, the facility almost always held more prisoners than originally intended. Overcrowding and a slow response to attacks of the Bridewell signified city leaders’ reluctance to spend public money on costly additions.

Aldermen used city resources to inexpensively provide a temporary solution to overcrowded conditions. Previously used by Engine Company X, a wooden structure was moved onto the Bridewell site on July 12, 1858. The building provided “temporary relief” by housing female inmates, whose wards were occupied by the male inmates.⁵¹

⁴⁶ City Files: 1855/56 646 A 06/11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 January 1858, 1, final edition.

⁴⁹ “The Fourth in Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 July 1858, 1, final edition.

⁵⁰ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1858, 1, final edition.

⁵¹ “An Improvement,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 July 1858, 1, final edition.

The “temporary” structure was used for at least eight years.⁵² The city council investigated the ability of the jail to house the city’s criminals later that year. Council members resolved that the “present accommodations are entirely too small.”⁵³ Although the city council was unable to build an addition, the council authorized a whitewashing of the Bridewell to clean the building.⁵⁴

The city council resorted to drastic measures in attempting to alleviate the overcrowded conditions. On June 4, 1860, Mayor John Wentworth wrote to the aldermen about the number of prisoners detained in the facility. Arguing that many of those held were not residents of Chicago who “would not again trouble us” upon release, Wentworth contended that they should be either sent home or to the county poorhouse. Since many were paupers, Wentworth argued that they could find “good, healthy work” at the farm of the poorhouse. However, if they were simply released from the Bridewell, they “would soon become intoxicated and the courts would be called upon to return them.” Wentworth further pointed out that releasing a large number of prisoners would “save the city unnecessary expense and promote the welfare of an unfortunate class of our citizens, without endangering society.”⁵⁵

Wentworth hoped to meet a few goals with the action: to relieve the overcrowded conditions, to lower the city’s expense of housing prisoners, and assist the prisoners in the process. The Cook County poorhouse was located outside Chicago city limits, in the

⁵² “The City Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 October 1866, 3, final edition.

⁵³ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 December 1858, 1, final edition.

⁵⁴ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1860, 1, final edition.

⁵⁵ City Files: 1860/61 0060 A 06/04.

present-day Jefferson Park neighborhood. County leaders built the poorhouse on the site in 1849. Poorhouse residents worked at the farm and raised much of the food used to operate the facility. In 1874, approximately 700 men, women, and children lived on the premises. County supervisors also oversaw the addition of an asylum to house the blind, deaf, and those deemed to have physical or mental limitations.⁵⁶ Wentworth's proposal provided a low-cost solution for the city to avoid an expensive addition to the Bridewell, but ensured that release to the county poorhouse meant inmates would continue to learn habits of industry by working at the poor farm. Certainly economics factored into his administration of the Bridewell, but by couching the argument in more humanitarian terms, he hoped to persuade the alderman to approve the order for release.

Aldermen of the council approved Wentworth's plan for release that day. The council released sixty male inmates, most found guilty of drunkenness, from the Bridewell. After the expulsion, the Bridewell housed fifteen men and fifteen women, well below capacity. The *Chicago Tribune* questioned the action, despite being a Republican paper. The editor scathingly asserted that "Instead of taking drunken men to the Bridewell hereafter, the police are to go armed with blankets, to comfortably cover up and tuck away the stray inebriates to sleep off their dr[i]nks."⁵⁷

Seven months later, the population was forty, still under the capacity of the structure.⁵⁸ The number slowly increased; by June 1861 ninety-three prisoners were

⁵⁶ "County Charities: Visit to the Insane Asylum and Poorhouse," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 January 1874, 5, final edition.

⁵⁷ "An Ignominious Expulsion – Turned Out of Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 June 1860, 1, final edition.

inside (47 men and 46 women).⁵⁹ Economics continued to factor into these releases.

Discharging such large numbers of inmates meant that the Bridewell would no longer be overcrowded, and by extension, no longer needing a costly addition or construction.

Additionally, the city would also spend considerably less feeding and processing those detained inside. Large-scale expunges of inmates provided a temporary, low-cost solution to overcrowding at the Bridewell. Wentworth's actions solved the immediate problem of overcrowding without further financial burden to the city. Indeed, his actions saved the city money by lowering the number detained at the Bridewell. Wentworth, and other city leaders, hesitated spending money to construct additions to a structure already under criticism by the public.

Sustained critiques of the Bridewell began in May 1858, only six years after opening. The jail was not just severely overcrowded, but was generally described as an unhealthy place for those confined inside. The wooden building was rotting and portrayed as a fire risk to those confined inside by 1864. Many prisoners arrived sick or became ill shortly after imprisonment.⁶⁰ The Bridewell was not unique in such criticisms; reformers found conditions in many American jails or prisons were equally troubling.

Enoch C. Wines and Theodore W. Dwight of the New York Prison Association toured the nation's penal institutions in 1865 in an effort to analyze the state of the nation's reformatories. As part of their tour, they surveyed Chicago-area institutions

⁵⁸ "The City," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 January 1861, 1, final edition.

⁵⁹ "The City Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 June 1861, 4, final edition.

⁶⁰ "The City Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 August 1864, 4, final edition.

including the Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet, the Cook County Jail, and the Bridewell. They found the Bridewell to be “the worst prison of its class.” Physically, each cell was so small that a prisoner could “stretch forth his hand and touch the walls all around [while] seated on the bed [with] his knees touch[ing] the opposite wall.”⁶¹

Wines and Dwight found that the facility was not just overcrowded, but filthy and structurally unsound. In many cells, two men were crammed together. A lack of bedding contributed to the cramped conditions. Not all cells contained bedding, meaning that some were overcrowded, while others remained empty. Many had straw for one cot, but it was often dirty. Wines and Dwight stated that bed linens were dirty because “the supply of bedding was insufficient, so that he [the keeper] could not possibly change it.” They also described privies as filthy and that prisoners used a single trough for washing “without soap.” Grime permeated even the physical structure which was “wood, old, rotten and rickety, affording nests for innumerable vermin.”⁶²

Critics generally focused their attacks on a single issue encompassing an economic and reformatory issue: the Bridewell failed to employ all of its prisoners. As part of the reformatory ideal, prisons were expected to keep inmates laboring. Ideally, prisoners were to be taught discipline to prepare them for life after imprisonment.⁶³ Although the men were “set to stone-breaking and wood-sawing” for the public schools, these kinds of labor were insufficient to employ all inmates. Female inmates had “nothing

⁶¹ E.C. Wines and Theodore W. Dwight, *Report on the Prisons and Reformatories of the United States and Canada, Made to the Legislature of New York, January, 1867* (Albany: Van Benthuyssen and Sons’ Steam Printing House, 1867), 344-345.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 86.

to do, except some little domestic labor.”⁶⁴ They took turns washing laundry, cooking the meals, cleaning, or “making and mending the very scanty supplies of bedding and clothing.” City leaders and critics argued that the Bridewell should be more self-sufficient. Receipts for contracting out labor could “be a source of profit” for the city.⁶⁵

Employment of Bridewell inmates constituted considerable attention by the city council. City leaders hoped that contract labor would relieve some of the financial burden of running the facility. Officials wanted to enter into contracts with private citizens or companies to lease out prisoner labor for a set period of time. The companies paid for the inmates’ labor and such receipts helped offset costs of the Bridewell for the city. Under the penitentiary ideal, such work was part of the routine and order, resulting in a prisoners’ reformation of criminal habits upon release. Councilmen did not have such a theoretical basis for contract labor; economics were of primary concern.

City leaders emphasized the possible economic relief afforded by contract labor to the city coffers, and only referred to the possible reformation of detainees as an added benefit. As early as January 1854, the Committee on Police recommended the city council try to employ convicts detained there. He forwarded a petition by E. Granger to construct a foundry with woodworking and blacksmithing shops on the Bridewell grounds. He hoped to arrange with the council an agreement to contract for prisoner labor. The council did not act on the petition.⁶⁶ Keeper David Walsh even appealed to the

⁶⁴ “Death and Inquest,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 November 1863, 4, final edition.

⁶⁵ “Our City Prisons,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 August 1865, 4, final edition.

⁶⁶ City Files: 1853/54 1452 A 01/30.

council to advertise for the lease of land on the Bridewell site and the services of inmates. Walsh hoped that such an arrangement would make the institution more self-sufficient. The Committee on Police supported the proposal and the council adopted the measure.⁶⁷ Their attempts to contract out inmate labor to private companies or individuals proved unsuccessful.⁶⁸ Although labor was not contracted out, the city did employ some inmates for local improvements.

Some prisoners did work at the Bridewell, those employed broke (macadamized) stone used for various projects for the city, most often to improve roads around the growing city.⁶⁹ Additionally, members of the council noted that employing inmates would “pay the whole cost of expense now incurred by the city Bridewell.”⁷⁰ Walsh also noted that stone breaking was a suitable use of inmate labor as because it required little skill.⁷¹ Reformation of male Bridewell inmates was much less critical than the financial advantages of such arrangements.

Aldermen continually faced the reality that the Bridewell proved to be a financial burden on the city. In 1857, the City Comptroller presented his estimate budget for the fiscal year. Of the \$788,000 estimate, the police department consumed approximately

⁶⁷ City Files: 1855/56 0213 A 04/16.

⁶⁸ The proceeding files contain no responses to the advertisements or contracts regarding prisoner labor.

⁶⁹ City Files: 1855/56 1956 A 02/02.

⁷⁰ City Files: 1855/56 2023 A 02/14.

⁷¹ Ibid.

\$102,000 of that, nearly 13 percent.⁷² If the following years' numbers are a comparison, the Bridewell comprised about ten percent of the police budget. In 1858, expenses for the police, including the facility, were \$139,333; \$13,433 was for the Bridewell.⁷³ Taken together, structure accounted for about two percent of the city's expenditures, more than double what the city was paying for interest on its debt, approximately \$6,000. However, this was about half of the expense required for the fire department.⁷⁴

Most jails in the nineteenth century inherited their administrative structure from England, namely the fee system. Neither jails nor their employees were paid out of public money initially. Rather, sheriffs, keepers, and others often earned most, if not all, of their income by collecting fees from prisoners. Under the fee system, they charged inmates for such things as services, food, separate cells, and other privileges.⁷⁵ American institutions frequently borrowed this framework in order to keep operating costs as low as possible for city and county budgets. For example, keepers at the Tombs, located in New York City, similarly collected fees from affluent detainees.⁷⁶ The city council, perhaps in response to the potential abuses afforded by such a system, did not stipulate that officials could similarly receive fees from prisoners. The documentary evidence for the fee system

⁷² "Common Council Proceedings," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 April 1857, 1, final edition.

⁷³ "Examine the Figures," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1858, 1, final edition.

⁷⁴ "Common Council Proceedings," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 April 1857, 1, final edition.

⁷⁵ McConville, "Local Justice," 269.

⁷⁶ Keepers, lawyers, and guards could sell access to visitors, better food, and relaxed security. Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "'America's Greatest Criminal Barracks': The Tombs and the Experience of Criminal Justice in New York City, 1838-1897," *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 5 (July 2003): 532-533.

within the Bridewell is elusive and helps account for the city's financial outlay to operate the Bridewell.⁷⁷

Table 1. Bridewell and Police Expenses

Year	Total City Expenses	Bridewell Expenses	% of Total for Bridewell	Police Expenses	% of Total for Police
2/18/1845 to 2/16/1846	27,191.48	181.23*	0.7%	859.13*	3.2%
2/20/1847 to 2/25/1848	33,650.84	n/a	n/a	770.00#	2.3%
1857 Comptroller (est.)	788,000.00	n/a	n/a	102,000.00	12.9%
1858	787,664.70	13,433	1.7%	139,333.00	17.7%
1860 Comptroller (est.)	507,683.84	7,862	1.5%	54,154.00	10.7%
1862 Comptroller (est.)	408,030.88	9,000.00	2.2%	60,000.00	14.7%

* denotes amount for city watch/watch house expenses

(est) = estimate by Comptroller for appropriation
Numbers taken from the City Files.

The information for city expenses in the era of the Bridewell is limited, but still valuable. The portion spent on hiring watchmen, supplying the watch houses, and expended on early police comprised less than five percent of the city's budget in the 1840s. Maintenance of the Bridewell also equaled approximately two percent of the city's expenses in 1858, 1860, and 1862. Confining minor offenders remained a small

⁷⁷ Despite the lack of evidence in regards to a fee system, critics complained of the potential for corruption through the money used to feed prisoners, as explained later in chapter 3. The Tombs, opened in 1838, was far larger with 173 cells (143 for males and thirty for females). See Gilfoyle, "America's Greatest Criminal Barracks," p. 547, footnote 5.

portion of Chicago's budget. Costs for operating the Bridewell demonstrate the prioritization of the city's expenses.

The Chicago city council spent a similar percentage of money on incarceration as other American cities. In Philadelphia, the Finance Committee appropriated \$70,871 for the operation of the Philadelphia County Prison in 1855. The entire city budget totaled over \$3.7 million; the prison accounted for less than two percent of the city budget. In comparison, the police department comprised \$506,640, close to fourteen percent of the city's expenses.⁷⁸ The 1866 budget for New York City appropriated \$1,002,189.08 to the police and the Department of Public Charities and Correction, equaling nearly eleven percent of the city's \$9.3 million total amount.⁷⁹ Certainly Chicago was much smaller than New York City and Philadelphia during this period, but the proportional costs for police and detention are comparable.⁸⁰

City leaders may not have expended significant funds to detention of misdemeanants, but did spend a lot to potentially detect and prevent crimes. Shortly after

⁷⁸ Committee on Finance, "Statement of the Committee on Finance, Showing the Expenses of the Various Municipal Corporations," (Philadelphia: J. H. Jones and Co., 1855), 5.

⁷⁹ The majority of this total (\$967,889.08) was appropriated for the Department of Public Charities and Correction. The amount budgeted for the Board of Metropolitan Police (\$34,300) was set aside for improvements on station houses and a telegraph. "Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections: Abstract of Fifth Annual Report for the Year," *New York Times*, 22 April, 1865, p. 2, final edition.

⁸⁰ The Bridewell was a much smaller institution than the Philadelphia County Prison and the workhouse at Blackwell's Island (N.Y.C.) Ascertaining the number of guards within the structure is difficult. However, as of 1864, there were at least three assistant keepers and the keeper, Ira Colman. City Files: 1864/65 0383 A 12/12. Based on the 1862 budget for the Bridewell, this is most likely correct. Based on the 1862 rate to feed inmates (five cents per meal – raised to six cents in 1863) and estimating that 100 prisoners were within the facility daily (on average based on the June 1861 numbers), this would amount to \$5,475 for the year, leaving \$2,625 for supplies and salaries. City Files: 1862/63 0273 A 03/23. If the number of inmates estimated covered supplies (a more minimal expense), this would mean an average salary of approximately \$55 per month for the four employees, a reasonable amount based on the documentation that the assistant keepers asked for (and received) a raise to \$65 per month in 1864. City Files: 1864/65 0383 A 12/12.

creating the new police department, expenditures quickly increased. From 1857 to 1862, police costs totaled more than ten percent of the Chicago budget each year, despite efforts to trim costs. Rising police and Bridewell expenses amounted to a new emphasis, and a greater portion of the city's costs spent, on crime from 1857 to 1862.

The city council continually expended money to feed inmates at the Bridewell, but did little to address concerns of the structural and unhealthy conditions inside. Humanitarian concerns for prisoners constituted many criticisms of the Bridewell's administration. As the *Chicago Tribune* opined,

The Bridewell prisoners, if entitled to none of the luxuries of life during their terms of imprisonment have a right to demand that their prison shall be a clean and a healthy one. Hard labor, stone walls, coarse clothing, a scanty bed and the plainest food, accompanied with clean and well ventilated cells and general neatness outside and inside the prison, would be regarded as luxuries by the unfortunates who fill the Chicago Bridewell.⁸¹

According to *Tribune* editors, although the prisoners served punishments for crime, they still deserved a modicum of treatment in the city jail. The editorial stipulated that while prisoners should not be "spoiled," they should be treated as human beings, entitled to basic care. In addition to pointing out the conditions faced by the prisoners, the editors also called for better inmate medical care. The *Tribune* called for reform: "As a matter of humanity and for the credit to the city, the present buildings should be removed, the yard filled to the grade and new buildings immediately constructed."⁸² Thirteen years passed before the call was fully answered.

⁸¹ "The Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May, 1858, 1, final edition.

⁸² Ibid.

Criticisms increased over time, but not everyone agreed to replace the facility.

The Bridewell was investigated by grand juries to ensure the facility remained orderly and clean. Reports from investigations in 1856 and 1861 highlighted positive responses to conditions inside. The 1861 report concluded that the Bridewell was “in good order, sufficiently warm, neatly kept, and in as comfortable condition for the inmates as the building it capable of.”⁸³ That fall, the Grand Jury again visited the Bridewell and found it in acceptable condition, despite the numerous reports to the contrary.⁸⁴

The building of a chapel for the Bridewell illustrated the city council’s attempts to reform the prisoners at least expense to the city of Chicago. On February 22, 1858, the city council authorized William Justice and others to build a chapel for the Bridewell “for the purpose of the moral and religious instruction and improvement of the prisoners.” The chapel was to be built only if “it shall in no case be or become a charge or expense to the city.”⁸⁵ The chapel opened a few months later, built by Chicago residents.⁸⁶ Bridewell inmates attended both religious services and holiday festivities held in the new structure.⁸⁷ Reformation of prisoners proved again secondary to the potential costs of religious instruction.

⁸³ “The City,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 February 1861, 4, final edition.

⁸⁴ “Recorder’s Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 15 October 1861, 4, final edition.

⁸⁵ City Files: 1857/58 1338 A 02/22.

⁸⁶ “Chapel for the Inmates of the Bridewell,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 March 1858, 1, final edition.

⁸⁷ “The Fourth in Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 July 1858, 1, final edition; “Our Bridewell: Visit by the Grand Jury of the Recorder’s Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 December 1866, 1, final edition.

Many who previously reported positively on the Bridewell joined others in criticizing the institution by the end of 1862. Grand Juries once stated that conditions inside the structure were good, but in December, they instead complained of “abuses of power by some one – the keeper, or the city through its authorities.” More importantly, “prisoners, particularly the females, are insufficiently clothed, many with nothing to cover their nakedness but a cotton prison dress.”⁸⁸

Mayor Francis Sherman also joined with the Grand Jury to point out problems within the structure. He went further to persuade the city council to provide a permanent solution: a new facility. Not only was the Bridewell not a “House of Correction,” it also failed to provide work for many of the male inmates inside. According to Sherman, female inmates were “left entirely unoccupied.” He echoed earlier economic arguments regarding the benefits of work. Employment of inmates, both male and female, would defray some of the costs of administering the facility. Labor would also help instill habits of industry to prisoners during their detainment.⁸⁹

The shift in language reflects a new understanding of the city’s administration of the detention facility. When originally specified in the 1837 city charter, the council could “erect and establish a bridewell, or house of correction [...to confine...] all rogues, vagabonds, stragglers, idle or disorderly persons” sentenced within the city.⁹⁰ The philosophical basis for labor within the structure as a house of correction (to house the

⁸⁸ “Recorder’s Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 December 1862, 4, final edition.

⁸⁹ City Files: 1862/63 256 A 12/15.

⁹⁰ Chicago. “Act of Incorporation for the City of Chicago, 1837,” (Chicago: Office of the *Democrat*, 1837), 9

poor or those unable to support themselves and their participation in compulsory labor) or bridewell (as a workhouse for minor criminals) did not appear. By 1862, criticisms of the Bridewell allude to city leaders' interpretations of the structure as in reality one of detention only, more like a jail. As with the Cook County Jail, many contended that inmates remained idle and unproductive. Sherman's understanding of a house of correction, in contrast, emphasized the role of labor in a detention facility. Work was integral to the theoretical foundations of English bridewells, but remained elusive in the reality of administration in early Chicago.

Sherman also pointed out the primary economic ramification for under-employment of inmates: the Bridewell was too expensive for the city to maintain. He proposed that if the city moved and properly managed a new carceral institution, it could be self-sufficient, or could even provide much-needed revenue for the city. Only after writing that the Bridewell was "located on one of the most valuable wharfing lots" of the city, did Sherman mention other shortcomings of the facility. He pointed out that the wood buildings were designed to be temporary, the facility was not large enough to meet the needs of the city, and that "there [was] little prospect for a decrease in the number under the present system." With these considerations in mind, he recommended the Finance Committee find a more suitable location for a new facility.⁹¹

Finally, in July of 1865, after the Civil War ended, the common council voted to create a committee of five aldermen to purchase one hundred acres for a new city jail. Although most committee reported to the city council, this committee had the power to

⁹¹ City Files: 1862/63 256 A 12/15.

act without presenting their findings or recommendations to the full council.⁹² A year later, a number of aldermen toured a number of potential sites for the new building after already purchasing a site.⁹³ The common council finally passed an ordinance to immediately erect a new Bridewell in September 1868 on a new parcel of land. The site, called the “Bridewell tract” was situated on the West Branch of the South Branch of the Chicago River, approximately a half mile outside the western city limits.⁹⁴

While the city council attempted to build a new jail, the old Bridewell continued to hold too many inmates. In June of 1867, two hundred fifteen inmates were incarcerated inside.⁹⁵ Once again, the city approved a mass release of some of the prisoners. That month, seventy inmates who had not served out their terms were released. Most were first time offenders or convicted on minor offenses.⁹⁶

The Chicago city council attempted to administer the Bridewell as a low-cost improvement over earlier city lock ups. Mayors and aldermen constantly attempted to keep expenses of detaining city ordinance violators low. City officials hoped the Bridewell could employ inmates to help relieve the financial expense of detainment, but were unable to meet this goal. Their inability to provide work for inmates meant that the city had to sustain the facility. City leaders refused to construct costly additions to the structure, which was overcrowded within a few years of its opening. Changes and

⁹² “The New Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 15 July 1865, 1, final edition.

⁹³ “Site of the New Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 1866, 4, final edition.

⁹⁴ “The New Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 September, 1868, 4, final edition.

⁹⁵ “The City Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 June 1867, 4, final edition.

⁹⁶ “The Bridewell ‘Running Over,’” 17 June 1867, 4 final edition.

reforms made to the Bridewell were inexpensive, in an effort to keep expenses in check.

The Bridewell embodied changes in local carceral philosophies in Chicago. Specifically, the structure was comparatively larger than earlier city lock ups, which held few inmates at a time. The Bridewell was designed to accommodate eighty-five prisoners. Chicago officials recognized that as the city expanded, they needed to accommodate a larger detained population than in earlier years. Additionally, inmates began to serve most of their time within the structure. Earlier public punishments were replaced by physical separation from the city itself. Such segregation, however, was never complete.

City council members also ushered in new changes to administration of detention facilities by stipulating rules for the keeper and council to follow running the Bridewell. Keepers were not yet required to be professional administrators of the facility, but they were overseen by the council. Keepers were to perform their duties to the satisfaction of aldermen. However, political affiliations, not previous experience, were crucial qualifiers for the keepers. As the political makeup of city hall changed, often a new keeper was appointed. The political realities of the post meant that a keeper's ability to hold the position depended more on his stature within local politics, rather than his ability to run the Bridewell effectively.

Incarceration at the Bridewell remained similar to earlier lock ups with a relative lack of oversight, but does provide a transition to the more professional and modern administration of its successor, the Chicago House of Correction. Keepers managed the

day-to-day operations at the Bridewell. Aldermen and mayors remained updated on the expenses and conditions within the Bridewell, reflecting the emphasis on commitment to oversight by city leaders. They reviewed monthly reports and commented on the operation of the Bridewell. All additions or administrative changes had to be approved by city officials, requiring at least some familiarity with the institution and its administration. Granting petitions written by prisoners and their families provided further insight and control over the Bridewell.

CHAPTER TWO

“FOR GODS SAKE GRANT THE PRAYER”:

PRISONERS, PETITIONS, AND JUSTICE IN ANTEBELLUM CHICAGO

Peter Owens wrote the mayor and the Chicago city council in January 1857 in hopes that his wife, Mary, would be discharged from the Bridewell where she was held for drunkenness:

The undersigned Pet[itione]r respectfully states to your hon[ora]ble body, that his wife is presently confined in the workhouse on a charge of Drunkenness that he has an child about fifteen months who it appears cannot live without her mother: That his present circumstances forces him to acknowledge that he cannot pay the fine \$10 for which she went to the workhouse, and pray that your hon. Body will restore her to the child, and by so doing it will enable him the sooner to provide for the wants of his family and it will be kindly remembered.

signed Peter Owens¹

The city council reviewed and granted Mary's release that day, seemingly moved by the petition. Owens submitted another petition for his wife's liberation from the institution less than two months later on March 23. Mary was imprisoned again for drunkenness; this time her young daughter accompanied her. Using language similar to his earlier petition, Owens again pleaded that he could not pay the fine, but hoped the

¹ City Files: 1856/57 1640 A 01/26. In the interest of preserving the prisoners' and their families' voices I have refrained from making numerous grammatical or spelling corrections. In addition to retaining the prisoners' words and language, this will also ensure that the reader is focused on the prisoners and not their "errors of language." I have edited the language only when the words are not fully spelled out. Most petitions (ninety-seven) were written to secure an inmate's release from the Bridewell; the first thirteen sought release from the county jail.

council would release her, allowing him to “provid[e] for his family.” Owens wrote that if she were freed, “it will be gratefully remembered.”²

Owens’s plea was rejected. In his Report of Committee, the Chairman of Police, Hiram Joy explained that Owens only “appeal[s] to the sympathies of the Council. As every inmate of the Bridwell can do this [...] granting [a] request of this kind would be an invitation to all the inmates of the Bridwell to make the[m],” he recommended the petition be rejected.³ Councilmen concurred. One is left to speculate if Mary’s failure to avoid arrest for drunkenness also factored into the decision, or if the lack of separation between her and their young daughter negated his family’s need for their mother at home.

Owens’s petition for his wife’s release from the Bridewell reflects a number of aspects of incarceration in early Chicago. The Bridewell and earlier city lock ups were generally smaller, informal, and less-ordered institutions. Petitions for release from the Bridewell help provide a glimpse into the operation of criminal justice in early Chicago, somewhat elusive to historians. A few highlight the early difficulties faced by policemen during arrest. As David Johnson contends in *Policing the Urban Underworld*, early police work was dangerous for a single patrolman “on the beat.” He most likely was alone, vulnerable to injury if a crowd gathered to prevent an arrest.⁴ Cornelius Crowley, for example, was arrested for breach of the peace and assisting Michael Finnigan from escaping custody of the watch. In his petition, Crowley explained that a crowd gathered

² City Files: 1857/58 171 A 04/13.

³ Ibid.

⁴ David R. Johnson, *Policing the Urban Underworld: The Impact of Crime on the Development of the American Police, 1800-1887* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979), 135.

when Finnigan escaped. Crowley stated that he was there, but did not help Finnigan because he was a “peaceable, quiet citizen.”⁵ Whether or not he helped, Crowley’s statement alludes to the attention garnered by a patrolman during the execution of his duties.

An arrested individual was taken to a police justice or held at a watch house (if arrested at night or when the police justice courts were not in session). He or she would soon encounter the realities of justice in antebellum Chicago. Michael Willrich describes this informal system in his *City of Courts*. Willrich primarily focuses on the creation and administration of the Chicago Municipal Court, but highlights some of the key aspects of the early “justice shops.”⁶ Magistrates handled the majority of cases within the city, often with little legal training. Shops and rented spaces often accommodated the “hallowed halls of justice.” Justices often worked other jobs, fitting their growing case loads into a few hours per day.⁷

Many of Willrich’s sources for the early system are from Progressive critiques of the police court, but are supported by petitions asking for release from the Bridewell. Petitioners often only focused on the circumstances that the prisoners or their families experienced as a result of imprisonment. However, Augustus Fuller’s appeal to the city council provides some insight into the police justice system. On May 20, 1856 Fuller, a resident of St. Louis, was brought before the magistrate. Fuller, a deaf mute, could not

⁵ City Files: 1845/45 2750 A 09/19.

⁶ Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

⁷ Ibid, Chapter 1.

hear critical information, such as the charges against him, but does provide the attitude and process he encountered that day.⁸

Fuller's statement attests to the limited nature of early justice. Fuller wrote that a man, perhaps the watchman who arrested him, "came forward and made some statement, but he was not sworn." After Fuller took out a pencil and attempted to communicate with the justice, "the magistrate stopped me." Fuller wrote that he was unable to communicate anything to the magistrate, who simply "hurried me off to this place [Bridewell]." Fuller intones that a justice attempting to process as many cases as possible had little concern for asking the arrested individual for his or her input. Rather, the "hearing" was simply a formality with no opportunities for an individual to respond or address charges brought against him or her. Fuller next presented his understanding of proceedings, arguing that he simply "wished to know the charge against me, to have the witness testify upon oath, and to have a chance to make a defense, all of which was [...] denied me." His encounter in front of the magistrate did not meet his expectations of "justice."⁹

Fuller stated that only when he arrived at the Bridewell did he learn that he had been fined twenty-five dollars, equating to a fifty-day sentence.¹⁰ Individuals who could not pay his or her fine "worked" off the costs at the Bridewell at the rate of fifty cents per day.¹¹ Once the court costs were added, he was sentenced to a term of fifty-three days.

⁸ City Files: 1856/57 0538 A 06/09.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Such a sentence was long by Bridewell standards. Even most inmates at the House of Correction, fifteen years later, served an average term of less than a month.¹² Longer sentences were reserved most often for frequent detainees at the Bridewell, such as Eliza Thompson. Fuller, as a visitor to Chicago, would not have had such notoriety with the police justices.¹³ According to the Bridewell ledger, he was committed for vagrancy and served twenty-one days of the sentence before release.¹⁴

Fuller wrote his letter on June 8, nearly three weeks after arriving at the Bridewell. Fuller related that he suffered from epileptic seizures. During his confinement, he suffered two seizures while detained. Fuller had no memory of the arrest itself. He simply stated that the night of the arrest he had felt the warning symptoms of a seizure coming. He did not remember anything afterward until he gained consciousness in the watch house, where he was held before appearing in front of the magistrate the next morning.¹⁵

Fuller further expressed his frustrations at the magistrate and watchman, stating that

there are men [...] having full possession of all their faculties, who not only get drunk, but rave, and fight, and tear round like wild beasts – come here [the Bridewell] with battered and bloody faces, hatless and shoeless – the majority of

¹¹ *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago, and the Reports of the Superintendent and Physician to the Board of Inspectors* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1874), 3.

¹² *Annual Reports*, 1872-1921.

¹³ City Files: 1856/57 0538 A 06/09.

¹⁴ City Files: 1856/57 0824 A 08/14.

¹⁵ City Files: 1856/57 0538 A 06/09.

whose fines average from 2 to 5 dollars, while a deaf and dumb man, picked up in a fit in the street, and doubtless misunderstood and misrepresented by some wiseacre of a watchman, is fined \$25.¹⁶

The petition, with its well-written and articulated ideas of legal proceedings, along with his references to the lower-class status of many of his fellow detainees, highlights his likely middle-class status. He posits himself as a hard-working, sober, and restrained man wronged by the policeman and the sentencing magistrate.

Fuller charged that justice in early Chicago was hurried, busied, and cursory. His “trial” perhaps took a few moments. After hearing a short statement from a witness, Fuller could not respond to the (unknown to him) charges. Instead, he complained that the justice was less concerned about trying to discern the “facts” of the crime than with simply rushing along the proceeding. Certainly Fuller was not a typical inmate of the Bridewell, but his ability to relate and question his experience with early Chicago justice provides a critical insight into the experience most likely similar to that of many of his counterparts in the facility.

Two other petitions highlight another aspect of justice in early Chicago: the power of the citizen. Michael McNamara’s petition for the release of his wife Mary and Mary Burke’s letter concerning her husband Samuel alluded to the nature of securing warrants in the late 1850s. McNamara related that on the night of June 25, 1856, he was away from home. That night, John Quinn entered his house by opening a window and “offered great indignities to my wife.” After the incident, Mary secured a warrant from Police Justice John King against Quinn for assault with intent to commit rape. Two days later,

¹⁶ Ibid.

Quinn secured a warrant from Police Justice T. G. Prendergast. Later that evening, Mary was arrested and brought before Prendergast and sentenced to a sixty-day term in the Bridewell. McNamara argued that Quinn took action against his wife to avoid his own prosecution.¹⁷

Whether Quinn and Prendergast were really guilty of a “conspiracy” in this instance is not known, but McNamara may have had cause to make such a claim against Prendergast. Less than a year later, Prendergast and others were indicted by the Recorder’s Court for conspiracy to extort money from the keepers and inmates of brothels. Prendergast, who had only served as a police justice from May 1856 to March 1857, was found guilty by the jury in the case.¹⁸ Whether Prendergast committed any wrongdoing in this instance, the actions of the Burkes and Quinn demonstrate the ability to somewhat easily secure warrants for arrest (legally or illegally) by residents with access to the police justices of the city.¹⁹

Similarly, Mary Burke stated that when her husband attempted to collect late rent from a female tenant, a McSloy, the renter refused to pay. Burke stipulated that her husband then proceeded to remove their furniture from the renter’s room, but McSloy “offered to most violent opposition and he was thereupon compelled to use force to obtain the possession of his own property.” Shortly thereafter, Samuel Burke was arrested after McSloy complained. The justice then quickly fined Samuel with little inquiry into

¹⁷ City Files: 1856/57 0704 A 07/21.

¹⁸ “The Conspiracy Case!” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 June 1857, p. 1, final edition.

¹⁹ “The Conspiracy Case,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 May 1857, p. 1, final edition.

the circumstances. Mary's request, which included the signatures of eight men, was granted a week later.²⁰ Though this evidence is limited, it does allude to the role of the public in justice in early Chicago. Arrests and imprisonment at the city Bridewell could be secured upon requests to the city magistrates.

The petitions of Fuller, McNamara, and Burke reveal the democratic nature of antebellum justice. Certainly caution should be applied in using these limited sources as characteristic of early Chicago, but they do support other historians' findings. Allen Steinberg's analysis of criminal justice in Philadelphia contends that working and middle-class people had considerable power through private prosecutions in using the justice system before the rise of the public prosecutor. With the development of the public prosecutor, the democratic nature of early justice was replaced by the state-administered system.²¹ Residents in early Chicago had similar access to police justices. As a result, they used that influence to secure arrests and actions against those they felt wronged them.

Within the Confines of the Bridewell

Confinements to the Bridewell comprised a small portion of those arrested in the city of Chicago. From June 1855 to January 1856, policemen arrested 3,716 people, most (2,389) for drunken and disorderly conduct. Police justices discharged 512 cases, but the rest were fined. Of those fined, 113 were unable to pay their fine, and were sent to the

²⁰ City Files: 1856/57 1582 A 01/05. Neither McSloy's first name nor the justice's names were given in the petition. The emphasis is original to Mary Burke's petition.

²¹ Allen Steinberg, *The Transformation of Criminal Justice: Philadelphia, 1800-1880* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 223.

Bridewell.²² Similarly, a year later, 1,971 individuals were arrested for drunken and disorderly conduct of 5,008 arrested; police justices sent 321 to the Bridewell.²³

Those detained within the Bridewell encountered first-hand a number of realities of nineteenth-century incarceration. Public awareness of deaths and escapes raised concerns for inmates confined there. Inmates' families and friends petitioned the city council to secure their release. Negative attention meant that prisoners retained community ties during confinement, but administrators often countered accusations against the Bridewell by directing the blame to the prisoners themselves. Interactions of prisoners within and their families, aldermen, and others outside the wooden walls of the structure meant that the Bridewell was more permeable than its replacement, the House of Correction.

Unhealthy conditions contributed to deaths inside the Bridewell. From March 1852 to December 1856, at least five inmates died during confinement.²⁴ Deaths generated the greatest public criticism. Indeed, mortality demonstrated failures of the institution. Some inmate deaths which received public attention were blamed on disease, but many more were attributed to alcohol consumption, or "delirium tremens." Timothy Madden, for example, died in the Bridewell on January 21, 1858. His death from

²² These figures are taken from the first report of the Captain of Police. City Files: 1855/56 1874 A 01/14.

²³ City Files: 1856/57 1710 A 02/02.

²⁴ For this fifty-seven-month range, the records are legible and complete for thirty-two of the months. The number of deaths could be (and probably are) higher as this leaves approximately forty percent of the Bridewell ledgers not considered in these numbers. As tallied, the death rate was one per 660 prisoners. Taken from City Files. In comparison, twenty-five prisoners at Philadelphia County Prison died in 1853 out of 11,905 committed. Inspectors, *The Seventh Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Philadelphia County Prison* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, Printers, 1854), 9, 25.

“delirium tremens” received a grand jury investigation, publicized in the *Chicago Tribune*. Madden, allegedly suffering from tremens when sentenced to the Bridewell, was confined to a straight [sic] jacket, and “lashed to his bed with ropes to prevent him from injuring himself.”²⁵ Despite the fact that his body was covered in bruises received during arrest, physicians testified that they were insufficient to have caused his death. The grand jury concluded that alcohol was the primary contributing cause of death; his rough treatment during and after arrest was merely a secondary cause. They, however, advised that the policeman who arrested him, Edward Burns, be discharged. Additionally, they argued “that the dictates of wisdom and humanity forbid that a person suffering under the delirium tremens should be committed to the City Bridewell, or should be there kept confined, and that is high time that [...the city...] should make provision for the humane care and skillful treatment of this class of cases within its walls.”²⁶

Certainly the announcement of prisoners’ deaths served to bring more negative attention to the Bridewell. However, officials rejected this bad publicity. Instead, by stipulating that many prisoners died from the delirium tremens, they attempted to deflect the blame to the inmates. Gerhard Paoli, the City Physician, clearly addressed this issue in the *Chicago Medical Journal*. He stated that he treated 160 cases of delirium tremens in the Bridewell in 1857. Paoli contended that because “many [...prisoners...] come from the most filthy and unhealthy places in the city [...and...] have all for many days and

²⁵ “A Death in the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 January 1858, 1, final edition.

²⁶ Ibid.

weeks been constantly drinking alcohol,” they arrived already “poisoned.”²⁷ He argued that because of these circumstances, the eight deaths at the Bridewell in 1857 should have been higher.²⁸ Although the deaths were attributed to the poor food and unhealthy conditions inside the facility, Paoli hoped to deflect some of the negative attention back to the prisoners themselves.

Deaths at the Bridewell were not the only incidents that received public attention. Escapes and suicides also provided negative publicity for administrators. While these breakouts were not as numerous as those of the Cook County Jail, they nevertheless pointed out the flaws of the prison. Ten prisoners escaped in thirty-two months from 1852 to 1856; approximately one every three months.²⁹ John May and James Enos ran away from the Bridewell on April 9, 1857. Along with an announcement of their flight, the *Chicago Tribune* opined that the “present Bridewell building is a miserable wooden concern totally unfit for a prison, and the only wonder is that so few escapes from it occur.”³⁰ A few inmates ran away more than once. Richard Smith broke out from the Bridewell, but was captured in St. Louis and returned. In November 1857, he escaped again.³¹ Alfred Allen injured himself during his escape and was taken into custody

²⁷ Gerhard Paoli, “Ipecacuanha in Delirium Tremens,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 December 1858, 2, final edition.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Again, from March 1852 to December 1856, the records are incomplete. The number of escapes could be (and probably are) higher as this leaves approximately forty percent of the Bridewell ledgers not considered in these numbers. As tallied, the escape rate was one per 330 prisoners. Taken from City Files. In comparison, one prisoner escaped from the Philadelphia County Prison in 1853 out of 11,905 committed. *Seventh Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Philadelphia County Prison*, 9, 25.

³⁰ “Escaped From Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 April 1867, 1, final edition.

shortly afterward.³² A few weeks later, a hundred-dollar reward was offered for his capture.³³

Breakouts were often possible because of the lack of security in the facility. “Con” Brown, Hugh Crosby, and William Kelly worked together and escaped in May of 1864. Crosby and Kelly were appointed as gate keepers of the Bridewell. One night while the keeper stepped out, the two released Brown, unshackled him, and the three slipped out and locked the gates behind them.³⁴ The men were captured the next day in Lemont.³⁵ A month later, Brown again escaped, but this time he eluded the authorities.³⁶

Some inmates attempted to flee while outside the Bridewell itself. “Wash” Hume slipped away after giving testimony at the Police Court.³⁷ John Evans tried to run away when moved to the West Market Station. Breaking free from the officer who accompanied him, Evans jumped over the rail of the Polk Street Bridge, broke through the ice on the Chicago River, and kept himself under water. Officers foiled his plans for freedom when they dragged him out of the river and took him back to the Bridewell.³⁸ Female inmates escaped as well. An account of Ellen Cook’s escape in the *Tribune*,

³¹ “Escaped From the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 November 1857, 1, final edition.

³² “Fast and Loose,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 August 1858, 1, final edition.

³³ “\$100 Reward,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 September 1858, 1, final edition.

³⁴ “Escaped,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 1864, 4, final edition.

³⁵ “Found,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 May 1864, 4, final edition.

³⁶ “Escaped,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 August 1864, 4, final edition.

³⁷ “Clearance,” *Chicago Tribune*, 24 September 1858, 1, final edition.

³⁸ “Attempted Suicide,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 February 1862, 4, final edition.

stated that she was sent “to wash a floor in North Market Hall” and ran away.

However, she “could not restrain her love for whiskey,” was captured by the police, and returned to the jail.³⁹

Suicides proved more difficult for administrators to counter, although depictions of the suicides provided an opportunity for officials to respond, most often by highlighting their detained status in the announcements. Louisa Scott unsuccessfully attempted to kill herself by “biting open a vein in her arm.”⁴⁰ Shortly afterward, she escaped the Bridewell, but was recaptured. In 1856, Terrance Brady, who was placed in the “cold cell” the previous night, hanged himself and was found dead the following morning.⁴¹ Five years later, Godfrey Bordeaux committed suicide in the jail by hanging himself. He was later discovered dead by the keeper.⁴² Nine days into his twenty-nine day sentence, August Kalkbrenner strangled himself and was found the next day by the keeper.⁴³ Pointing out the prisoners’ punishments and misconduct during imprisonment helped to alleviate more negative publicity brought onto the institution through suicides.

Prisoners did not only have to deal with cramped conditions and questionable food quality, but also punishment inside the institution. An ordinance in 1853 stipulated that Bridewell keepers “may adopt rules of discipline” and “enforce rigidly such rules.”⁴⁴

³⁹ “A Bridewell Bird Escaped and Retaken,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 1860, 1, final edition.

⁴⁰ “Attempted Suicide,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 April 1860, 1, final edition.

⁴¹ “Suicide in the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 August 1856, 3, final edition.

⁴² “End of a Mis-Spent Life,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 May 1861, 1, final edition.

⁴³ “Death and Inquest,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 November 1863, 4, final edition.

However, the means of punishment within the Bridewell are difficult to ascertain.

Prisoners of the Bridewell could be chained and shackled, although it is not clear whether these instruments were used to punish or detain, or even how often they were used.

Officially, the only mention appears in 1847 when Mayor James Curtiss approved a bill for “two sets of shackle chains and ball.”⁴⁵ They were available for the guards to use.

The “cold cell” was a punishment that was more frequently mentioned, though rarely described in detail. Sources as to the specific “cold cell” within the Bridewell are limited, but a contemporary example should illustrate a similar cell and its use. The Milwaukee House of Correction implemented solitary confinement and the “dark cell” for prisoners who misbehaved. Both rooms used for solitary confinement and the dark cell were similar; in each, the prisoner was confined alone in a cell. However, a dark cell was a form of isolation in a room approximately five feet by five feet, which was kept dark from the lack of light allowed through the door and walls. Two completely empty stone rooms served as the dark cells. Under the rules of that institution, a prisoner could remain in the dark cell for any period of time up to twenty days. Ideally, the troublemaker was released when he promised “to conform to the rules and behave.” He could communicate his promise of conformance to the rules to the guard who brought his food to him in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. In addition to being confined in the dark cell, a prisoner’s penalty included receiving a piece of bread and a cup of water at those three times of the day.⁴⁶ Whether the “cold cell” equated more to the dark cell or

⁴⁴ City Files: 1853/54 145 A 04/04.

⁴⁵ City Files: 1847/47 3978 A 08/02.

one for simple solitary confinement, but the physical detention, alone, in a small area meant the prisoners were further cut off while inside. The “cold cell” provided at least one means of punishment available for the keeper and his guards.

In addition to the physical limitations of the institution, prisoners also had to contend with poor food quality. In a letter to the *Chicago Tribune*’s editor, “Veritas” described the food as “of a character that would create a mutiny in the stomach of the most contemptible canine in the city.”⁴⁷ He declared that meat was nearly rotten and vegetables inedible.⁴⁸ Because the keeper was paid per meal served to the prisoners housed inside, he often used this for another source of income. He took the money, purchased sub-standard food, and kept the difference for himself. Although it is not clear that this was in fact done, allegations were made to this effect. In April 1866, the *Tribune* pointed out that a new facility should implement a new means to provide meals as the keeper’s “chief income” was derived from the meal allowance. Instead of giving the keeper a fixed amount for meals, the paper intoned that the city should simply pay for the meals directly.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ The description of the Milwaukee House of Correction solitary and dark cells are from an investigation of the facility in 1879, examined in Susan Fry, “‘In This Den of Iniquity’: Prisons and the Degradation of Prisoner Masculinity in the Nineteenth Century.” (Master’s thesis, Northern Illinois University, 2006). Testimony of Henry Hase, Superintendent of Milwaukee House of Correction, “Milwaukee Investigation,” Wisconsin State Historical Society, 30 October 1879, Box 1, Volume 1, 26, 31-32. Testimony of Michael Alft, Deputy Sheriff at Milwaukee House of Correction, “Milwaukee Investigation,” 30 October 1879, Box 1, Volume 1, 73-77.

⁴⁷ “Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 August 1864, 4, final edition.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “City Hall and Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 April, 1866, 4, final edition.

Securing Release from the Bridewell

A prisoner who found him or herself within the Bridewell was not on his or her own. An inmate could rely on family, friends, and neighbors to try to secure release. Petitions were a way for some prisoners to escape the conditions and imprisonment at the Bridewell. Many prisoners and their families attempted to secure their release by petitioning the mayor and city council. These petitions, along with Bridewell ledgers, shed light on the demographics of prisoners held in the Bridewell and the operation of criminal justice in early Chicago.

One hundred ten petitions were submitted to the Chicago Mayor and the Chicago City Council from 1845 to 1860. The vast majority of the petitions, eighty-two percent (90), regarded male prisoners. Most petitions, sixty-six percent (73), were granted; one petition was withdrawn. Of those thirty-seven rejected, only sixteen percent (6) were for women. Of the eight-four percent (31) petitions regarding male prisoners that were rejected, nine percent (3) had already paid their fine or served the term by the time the petitions were considered. Nineteen percent (6) of male petitions were not granted because the city council deemed it had no power to release the prisoner. Only one petition, granted by the Common Council, was overruled by the mayor.

Table 2. Bridewell Petitions (Sept. 1845-June 1860)

	Petitions	Granted	% Granted	Not Granted	% Not Granted
Men	90	59	65.60%	31	34.40%
Women	20	14	70.00%	6	30.00%
Totals	110	73	66.4%	37	33.60%

The exact processing of the petitions is difficult to ascertain, but the sources support the following sequence of events. Once the council received a petition, it was sent to the Committee on Police to “investigate.” The investigation was often informal. Sometimes the prisoner was “questioned” at the Bridewell to determine the accuracy of the information within the petition itself. Other reports of the Committee on Police allude to the input from the keeper or physician in regards to an inmate’s health. The chairmen of the Committees on Police must have had a working relationship with the keepers (and guards) at the Bridewell, although such connections remain elusive. Based on the “findings” of the “investigation,” the chairmen of the Committee on Police reported a recommendation on whether to release or not release the inmate. Most often, the larger council, and mayor, concurred with his recommendation. Only rarely did the council overrule the Committee on Police, depending on the findings from the investigation into the prisoner’s background and individual circumstances.⁵⁰

Three characteristics contributed to the granting or rejecting of petitions by aldermen: promise to reform and adhere to the letter of the law in the future, the offense for which the prisoner was committed, and the timing of the petition. Successful petitions often emphasized that a prisoner or petitioner would ensure that a released individual would not violate any other city ordinances. He or she promised to obey city laws.

⁵⁰ The Committee on Police and the larger council would also have confirmed the keeper once appointed by the mayor, further connecting him with aldermen. The relationship between the police justices and aldermen is less clear. As with the keeper, they also depended on the council for confirmation and did (rarely) request the release of an inmate. However, aldermen most likely knew (if not personally) the police justices based on their standing within the (small) community in early Chicago, accounts in the newspapers of legal proceedings, and reputation. Chicago. “Act of Incorporation for the City of Chicago, 1837,” (Chicago: Office of the *Democrat*, 1837), 19-21.

Councilmen also considered the offense for which an inmate was committed and when the petition was received. In general, individuals detained for minor offenses, such as drunkenness, vagrancy, or disorderly conduct, were more likely to be liberated. Criminals guilty of a more serious, or physical violations, were not released as often. Inmates serving terms for assault (especially against the police) or abuse were least likely to gain freedom. Finally, timing was also critical. Petitions received before April 1857 were more successful than those sent later. Requests received after April 1857 were only successful thirty-three percent of the time (six of the eighteen were granted), a far lower percentage than for the period from 1845 to April 1857.

A change in administrations resulted in the lower success rate of later petitions. Republican John Wentworth won the mayoral election in March 1857, largely because Dyer's Democratic administration had come under attack as especially corrupt.⁵¹ Wentworth targeted the police department as part of his attempt to address crime in the city. Despite his raids on gambling houses and brothels and his appointment of more patrolmen, residents endured a wave of property crimes in early 1857, allowing John C. Haines, another Republican to win the office.⁵² Wentworth and Haines both focused on crime during their administrations. They not only expanded the police department, but they (and their respective city council members) hesitated to release inmates from the Bridewell. Rejecting petitions of inmates and their families allowed the mayors to further

⁵¹ Both mayors enjoyed a majority of Republican aldermen as well. "Municipal Election – Necessity of Reform," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 February 1857, p. 1, final edition; "The Charter Election," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 March 1858, p. 1, final edition.

⁵² Johnson *Policing the Urban Underworld*, 62, 64.

claim their commitment to prevent crime (in addition to other actions such as expanding the police department) and detain criminals to lessen crime across the city.

The sex of the inmate was a negligible factor in the council's decision.⁵³ For petitions regarding women, seventy percent (14 of the 20) were granted. Petitions written on behalf of male inmates were somewhat less successful with sixty-six percent granted (59 out of 90). However, these figures can be adjusted to consider instances in which prisoners already served their sentences or paid their fines by the time the request was considered. Such circumstances meant that the Council's granting of a pardon was irrelevant; the inmate was already released. The inability of the council to act on some petitions also can be factored into the success rate of requests. The council could only release inmates sentenced by the Police Justices. Adjustments for the Council's inability to grant petitions or an inmate's previous release reduced the total petitions to ninety-six instances in which the Council could act (77 for male and 19 for female inmates.) Of these, seventy-seven percent (59) of petitions regarding males were granted; seventy-four percent (14) of petitions concerning females were granted. Approximately seventy-six percent of all petitions were granted – an even higher percentage than without such adjustments.⁵⁴ Essentially, in circumstances in which the Council could pardon, they were highly likely to do so.

⁵³ Most petitions do not include a report detailing the reasons why the petitions were granted by the Council. Of those that include such a report, many only state whether or not the petition was granted. A small portion of them specify why they were granted or rejected. These findings are only cursory and begin to suggest the reasons for granting beyond those spelled out by the Council. As far as timing, between April 1857 and November 1859, only two petitions of fourteen submitted were granted. For this period, John Wentworth and John Charles Haines served as mayors.

⁵⁴ City Council Files, 1833-1871.

Table 3. Bridewell Petitions after Adjustments

	Petitions	Granted	% Granted	Not Granted	% Not Granted
Men	77	59	76.60%	18	23.40%
Women	19	14	73.70%	5	26.30%
Totals	96	73	76%	23	24.00%

Some themes and characteristics emerge from these petitions. First, they often follow a standard form. The petitioner addressed the “honorable” mayor or “honorable body” of the city council and begged for them to consider the release of “their friend or family member’s name.” He or she continued by documenting his or her relationship to the prisoner and his or her dependence on the prisoner. After recognizing the greater power of the city council in comparison to themselves, petitioners often cited loss of household labor or financial support in their requests for release of prisoners from their sentences in the House of Correction. Petition request reflected understandings of gender roles in mid-nineteenth-century Chicago. Wives often invoked their reliance on a husband to provide for their families; husbands stressed their wives’ roles as mothers.

William Henry, a father of three children, stressed they were “suffering from the absence of their mother [...who was...] of the most vital importance to them.” He further stressed that since his wife was in the Bridewell, he was “prevented from following his usual occupation of earning a livelihood for his family.”⁵⁵ Henry’s request was granted. Seven men signed a petition requesting the release of Ann Healey from the Bridewell.

⁵⁵ City Files: 1852/53 0228 A 05/10.

Healey's status as a mother was referred to by the petitioners, but also by Alderman Church. Healey had four children at home, but another confined in the Bridewell with her. Whether the councilmen wanted to spare Healey or her child further confinement, the request was quickly granted.⁵⁶

Margaret Gavagan's petition was succinct. She simply stated, "Gentlemen of council my children and myself is in want of my husbands help and I hope you will be so kind as to extricate him as it was only a little to much drink was the cause of it."⁵⁷ Gavagan simply phrased her family's reliance on her husband and alluded to her husband's intoxication as minimal. Implicitly, she argued that her family's need of her husband outweighed any punishment necessary for drunkenness. The aldermen granted her request.

Twelve of the city's eighteen aldermen granted the petition of Bridget Kelley and her children to release her husband Patrick. Serving a sentence for intoxication, Patrick Kelley left his "large family of weak helpless children" without the "hard earned bread of a husband." Perhaps they were convinced with her promise that "he shall never be found guilty of breaking any of the rules belonging to the city ordinance of Chicago." Perhaps they were swayed by the appeal to the better natures when she stated her hopes "that your store of liberality is not yet exhausted."⁵⁸ Whether the aldermen were swayed by the facts of the case or the appeal to their mercy is unclear, but the desired result was achieved.

⁵⁶ City Files: 1855/56 1228 A 10/4.

⁵⁷ City Files: 1852/53 0596 A 08/16.

⁵⁸ City Files: 1854/55 083 A 05/08.

The sex of a prisoner may have factored little into the success of a petition, but gendered language permeated most of the requests. Husbands often wrote petitions on behalf of their wives, stating their need for wives to take care of children. In almost all petitions that addressed a woman's role in the home, the city council released the woman from the Bridewell. Like Owens, most husbands who petitioned for their wives' release argued they needed their wives to take care of their families. William Henry, writing on behalf of his wife, argued that because she was in the city jail, his "three young children [were] suffering from the absence of their mother." Because of her incarceration, he was "left in the sole charge of [...] children [and was] prevented from following his usual occupation of earning a livelihood for his family." Not only did Henry insist that he needed his wife at home to take care of their children, but added that his inability to work prevented him from caring for the children. He was unable to fill his role as a family provider to his family because his wife was could not fulfill her role as a caregiver.⁵⁹

Husbands were not the only ones invoking female prisoners' roles as mothers in petitions for their release. The two female inmates who wrote petitions to the city council also used their maternity in trying to persuade the city council to release them. Louisa Scott mentioned that she was a mother.⁶⁰ However, Margaret Reilly expounded more fully on her role, arguing that she was "a Poor destitute widow" who was "very ill during" her imprisonment, but she also addressed her role as a mother "of two female children." Coupled with her incarceration, "the anxiety of mind for the fate of these little

⁵⁹ City Files: 1852/53 0228 A 05/10.

⁶⁰ City Files: 1860/61 044 A 05/05.

children add[ed] to her misery and increasing her disease.” Both women’s petitions were granted.⁶¹

In other instances, petitioners invoked the idea that female prisoners could and would be reformed if released. William Henry argued that his wife “made strong, and as your petitioner verily believes, sincere promises of reformation.” Using more extensive language, two male petitioners offered to reform women incarcerated in the Bridewell.⁶² Francis T. Seely stated if the Council granted his petition for Ann Riley’s release, he would “remove her to his home” because he was “desirous of reforming” her. Inherent in his petition, Seely wanted to remove Riley from the temptations in the city of Chicago to Bristol, located in Kendall County. By doing so, he could reform her of “her vicious habit” - drinking. Riley served twenty-seven days of her sixty-seven-day sentence for drunkenness.⁶³ Seely wrote that if she were released, “she will leave the county immediately” under his care. Swayed by the petition, the Council granted the petition to release Riley.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Riley returned to the Bridewell within a few days of her release.⁶⁵

Similarly, James Brintnal argued that he would attempt to reform his sister-in-law Ann if she were released from the Bridewell, where she was serving a term for living in a house of prostitution. Brintnal wrote that sixteen-year-old Ann had come to Chicago, but

⁶¹ City Files: 1848/48 4609 A 05/26.

⁶² City Files: 1852/53 0228 A 05/10.

⁶³ City Files: 1855/56 1809 A 01/10.

⁶⁴ City Files, 1855/56: 1681 A 12/17.

⁶⁵ City Files: 1855/56 1809 A 01/10.

that he did not know where she was until he found out she was at the Bridewell. Soon after, his wife visited her while detained and Ann “tole my wife that if she had a home to go to that she would reform from the life that she had ben a living for the last four month[s.]” After relating this, Brintnal stated that he was “willing to take hier home to my house and try to reforme heir if [the Council] will pardon heir.” Because “this young girl is a sister to my wife,” he wanted to help her “from living a life of ill faim and try to reforme heir.”⁶⁶

Petitions written to the City Council were often sent to the Committee on Police. Members of the committee could investigate the circumstances of the prisoner, his or her home life, or simply provide a recommendation regarding release. Reporting on Brintnal’s petition, the Committee on Police stated that because “the petitioner is desirous of taking the girl [Ann] into his own family thinking that he may be enabled to reforme her,” this was “her first offense,” and “she is very young,” the committee decided to grant the petition.⁶⁷ Although petitions did not always state why a woman was in jail, they were granted if they pointed out the woman’s prescribed role in the home, often as a wife or mother. Additionally, female prisoners had to be imprisoned for a “minor” or first offense. Not all women met these requirements.

Ellen Teahan, whose husband petitioned for her release, was seemingly unable to meet the Council’s requirement for appropriate behavior. Her husband Patrick wrote the Council that he was “a most unfortunate man having three children, all young the oldest

⁶⁶ City Files, 1855/56: 1565 A 11/17.

⁶⁷ City Files: 1855/56 1565 A 11/17.

not being yet three years. My wife has been sent to prison nine days ago for some frivolous charge.” Because she was incarcerated, Patrick was unable to look for work. He begged the Council to “let my wife home to her Children.” If they did, he would “ever offer my thanks to God.” At the end of the petition, he further pleaded, “For Gods sake grant the prayer.” Unfortunately, the Committee on the Bridewell “made inquiry at the Bridewell” and “had [a] conversation with her without her knowing who we were or the object of our inquiry.” They found that although Patrick argued that he had three children, Ellen said that she had “but one child, and that the charge and offense for which she was committed was fighting in the streets.” Although she stated that the other woman “struck her first,” the Committee did “not regard this case as one calling for the exercise of the pardoning power.” Finally, the Committee found that the “Petitioner has himself quite recently been in the Bridewell.”⁶⁸ Although Patrick drew upon Ellen’s role as a mother, her arrest for fighting contributed to the Council’s decision to keep her in the jail.

While petitions for women’s releases from the Bridewell depended upon their roles as mothers, petitioners often argued that the loss of a husband’s or father’s wages left the family very poor or destitute. Margaret Gavaghan simply stated that “my children and myself is in want of my husbands help.” As he had only had a “little to much drink,” she hoped that the Council would release him from the Bridewell. Her hope was fulfilled with her husband’s release.⁶⁹ William Roark’s petition was granted after he asked the

⁶⁸ City Files: 1857/58 1311 A 02/05. Emphasis was that of the Committee.

⁶⁹ City Files: 1852/53 596 A 08/16.

Council to release him because he had “a family of four children to support.”⁷⁰ John Roark was released as the Committee was “satisfied that he has no means of paying his fine” and he was “a poor man with a large family dependant upon him for their daily bread and that it is unusual for him to get intoxicated.”⁷¹

Isabella Thompson’s petition for her husband’s release was granted. She explained that although her husband had served sixty days of his sentence, forty days were left for him to serve out. “In the meantime your Petitioner, with two children, is an Inmate of the County Poor House.” Thompson further stated that she and her family were “a burden on the County since his incarceration.” She finished her plea arguing that her husband was “a good tradesman” who was “able to support his family and [he] has pledged himself to remain in future a steady and sober citizen.”⁷² Although no report was filed, the city council most likely granted her petition based upon her argument that her husband was able to support her and her children, meaning that they would not have to remain at the County Poor House. In addition, her petition was interesting because it was written by someone at the Poor House (although it does not say who) and her signature at the bottom differed from that of the petition. As in the case of the women, petitioners needed to demonstrate a family’s dependence on the men’s roles at home.

⁷⁰ City Files: 1855/56 498 A 05/28.

⁷¹ City Files: 1855/56 566 A 06/07.

⁷² City Files: 1856/57 390 A 05/12.

Although generally successful, not all appeals to a male inmate's family support were granted. Patrick Redmond, the "only son of a widow"⁷³ was not released despite his mother being "wholely dependant for the furnishing of her with the necessaries of life." After an initial petition was filed by a number of men, Julia Redmond, his mother, petitioned the Council a week later. Julia stated that Patrick's fines, amounting to \$22.75, were paid and Patrick was "fully aware of having grossly violated the law on the occasion of his arrest, and pledges himself never to commit the like again." To further support her petition, she included a brief statement and the signatures of fourteen men. The signers attested to knowing Patrick as a "man of good character" who was "led to the commission of the crime [...] by the advise of some ill disposed person." Such statements certainly hoped to secure Patrick's release. Julia and her fellow petitioners attempted to emphasize Patrick's character, his perhaps momentary lapse in judgment, and reinforce that he would not commit such actions again. Redmond's petition was unique as he had several signatures on his petition. Three individuals signed both the first and second pleas, demonstrating his connections to the community. However, the attempts to secure Redmond's release were not enough to sway the Council. As before, aldermen refused to release Patrick.⁷⁴

Catharine McGuire's petition for her husband's release was not granted even though "she and her family consisting of two little children are suffering for food and fire in consequence of his imprisonment." The Committee of Police reported "the fact that he

⁷³ City Files: 1854/55 282 A 05/08.

⁷⁴ City Files: 1854/55 0321 A 05/15.

has a wife and two children dependent on him for support, is not a sufficient reason why Michael McGuire should be liberated.” The city council concurred.⁷⁵ Similarly, the petition for James Galvin’s release was denied as “a wife and four children who need his assistance” was “not sufficient reason why the prisoner should be liberated.”⁷⁶

In a couple of instances, the Committee on Police reported why men were not released. Although petitions on behalf of Patrick Sweeney and William Heffron were submitted, they were rejected. Sweeney’s petition, and its rejection, highlights the nature of police work in early Chicago. Councilmen rejected Sweeney’s argument that confinement presented a “danger to his health.” Alderman William Church, a member of the Committee on Police, harshly responded to Sweeney’s petition in August 1854. Church argued that his case was “one of the almost daily occurrences” when a police officer was “attempting to make an arrest [that] some Bully will interfere.” The officer will be “assaulted and beaten,” and if possible, “will arrest him.” Church contended that Sweeney’s appeal did not produce any mitigating circumstances or justification for his actions, but simply referred his health. Alluding to the danger of early police beats, Church intones that such encounters occurred “almost daily.” He, and the Committee on Police, fully intended to “protect their officers in the discharge of their duty.” Church recommended petitioners who failed to present new evidence or mitigating circumstances for the incidences “may as well save their paper and ink.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵ City Files: 1858/59 57 A 03/29.

⁷⁶ City Files: 1858/59 58 A 03/29.

⁷⁷ City Files: 1854/55 713 A 08/14.

The memory of Sweeney's petition was most likely still fresh in Church's mind when he received William Heffron's request less than a month later. According to Church, Heffron was simply "another of the cases of an assault upon a Policeman while in the discharge of his duty." Despite Heffron's statement that he was drunk at the time, his promise to avoid alcohol in the future, and his acceptance of guilt, Church and the other aldermen refused to release Heffron early.⁷⁸ In conjunction with being able to demonstrate a family's dependence on the male inmate, male inmates needed to be imprisoned for minor offenses in order for the Council to be lenient. More serious offenses, especially fighting or assaulting police officers, contributed to the Council's rejection of these petitions.

A few prisoners secured their release despite having committed more serious offenses. The husbands of Margaret Cushing and Mrs. Murphy both were confined for domestic violence. Both women appealed to aldermen to release their husbands. Cushing reported that her husband abused her while drunk, but according to Alderman Church's report, "thinks he is sufficiently punished, and if released he will in future conduct himself as a good citizen and kind husband."⁷⁹ Murphy similarly represented to Church that she was "in distress and requires the assistance of her husband." She, along with the court, requested his discharge.⁸⁰ Perhaps Church and the other councilmen presumed that the threat to the public safety was lessened in instances of domestic abuse than in cases of

⁷⁸ City Files: 1854/55 865 A 09/11.

⁷⁹ Names for the petitioner or prisoner are not always given. In these two instances, Murphy's name is not given (either his or his wife's). Margaret Cushing's husband is likewise unnamed in the petition and the Report of the Committee on Police. City Files 1855/56 0971 A 08/20.

⁸⁰ City Files: 1855/56 0973 A 08/20.

attacks on policemen. At least five other requests for release of domestic violence were also granted. Patrick Hanley was released for assault against a neighbor, who signed the petition for his release. Two other petitioners submitted separate appeals to the council and stated their knowledge of Hanley. One petition included a short statement by Police Justice Isaac Milliken, endorsing the request.⁸¹ These petitions allude to aldermen's willingness to tolerate some violent actions.

Inmates and their families were not the only ones who petitioned for prisoners' release. The Grand Jury of the Recorder's Court also succeeded in gaining the release of a couple of inmates in the Bridewell. In his report, Henry Fuller, the foreman, stated that in June 1856, two prisoners were mutes. Because the two men were sent for vagrancy, served most of their terms, and there were no other charges against them, Fuller recommended they be discharged. The Committee on Police agreed, stating that a "release from further imprisonment would better serve the ends of Justice than to detain them the full time of their commitment." After consideration, the city council concurred with Fuller and the Committee on Police; inmates Merrieth and Mahoney were released.⁸²

Similarly, William Justice, the Bridewell Keeper, petitioned for the release of John Scott on May 23, 1860. He wrote that Scott, who was serving a term for vagrancy, was "sick and a much more fit subject for the Poor House than for the Bridewell." Iver

⁸¹ City Files: 1855/56 1901 A 01/21.

⁸² City Files: 1856/57 536 A 06/09.

Lawson, the City Marshall, also recommended that Scott be transferred to the Poor House because Scott was “an old man and incapable of being of any use to the City.”⁸³

Of course, not all petitions to the council were granted. The Committee on Police stated that the city council had no power to release a prisoner in six instances. Some prisoners were sentenced to the Bridewell by the Recorder’s Court and those petitions were not granted. The first petition not granted because of “no power to grant” was Eliza Quinn’s petition to release her husband, written in March of 1856. Although she wrote that “herself and children are in a very helpless and destitute condition and suffering a great deal of misery and want having no means of support whatever,” S. Sexton wrote that the committee members were “of the opinion that the Common Council has no jurisdiction in the case.”⁸⁴ That same day, Bridget White’s petition for her husband’s release was also denied for a similar lack of power on the Council’s part.⁸⁵

Most petitioners secured the release of their friend, family member, or worker from the Bridewell. Sometimes, simply mentioning that the inmate was needed at home as a care giver or laborer was enough. Petitions frequently alluded to promises of a prisoner’s reformation in hopes of obtaining the city council’s pardon. However, prisoners also needed to have been convicted of minor crimes to be released. Those convicted of previous crimes, even if drunkenness, remained in the Bridewell. More major offenses - fighting or assaulting an officer - were rejected. Although the city

⁸³ City Files: 1860/61 45 A 05/05. Lawson is probably referring to Scott’s inability to labor for the city as a prisoner of the Bridewell.

⁸⁴ City Files: 1856/57 205 A 03/31.

⁸⁵ City Files: 1856/57 206 A 03/31.

council confirmed nineteenth-century domesticity and gender roles such as motherhood and a man's ability to provide for his family, their endorsement ultimately depended on the petitioners' pronouncement of these gender ideals and the prisoners' actions during arrest, which could not challenge them. A woman, who was to be a mother and care for her family, could not be arrested for fighting and be pardoned.

Justice in early Chicago remained contested, informal, and hurried. Once arrested, an individual was brought before a police justice or magistrate to face minor charges or violation of city ordinances. A few minutes later, the justice discharged or fined the accused. Individuals who could not pay the fine found themselves at the Bridewell. Detention did not mean that the imprisoned lost his or her ties to those outside the structure. Public attention brought by deaths and escapes kept the structure and its inhabitants in residents' minds.

Prisoners at the Bridewell accounted for a small portion of those arrested by Chicago policemen. Many cases were discharged by magistrates; most offenders paid their fines and costs rather than face a term in the structure. Petitions illuminate the contested nature of early justice. Even after imprisonment, prisoners and their families wielded power to decrease time served by inmates, but such power had limits. Generally, those not committed for their first offense or for more violent offenses could not gain their freedom.

As a result of the physical structure of the workhouse and the city council's administration of it (as compared to the Bridewell's replacement, the Chicago House of Correction), inmates and their families wielded considerable influence in securing the

release of prisoners inside through such actions as petitions for release and private actions while detained at the Bridewell. Their success speaks to the fluidity of prisoners' status as community members and inmates during their incarceration. Prisoners' families could directly appeal to the city council to secure release of an inmate. Successful petitions often relied on middle-class understandings of gender roles; men were needed to provide for the family and women were needed to raise children. Appeals for release were possible precisely because the Bridewell retained many characteristics of earlier forms of carceral facilities. Later petitioners appealed to their local alderman, but were only released from the House of Correction, the Bridewell's successor, upon recommendation of the Superintendent or City Physician.

CHAPTER THREE

“TO MANAGE THE DEPARTMENT LARGELY IN HIS OWN WAY”:

THE EARLY HOUSE OF CORRECTION AND CHARLES FELTON (1871-1890)

The 1880 Federal Census included a special addendum, a *Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes*, compiled by Frederick Howard Wines (1838-1912).

Wines, a Presbyterian minister, devoted his life to studying crime, poverty, and philanthropy, writing and speaking prolifically on the subjects. He also served as the Secretary of the Illinois State Board of Charities from 1869 to 1892, during which time he presented numerous papers at the annual congresses of the National Prison Association.¹ Wines is best remembered for his book *Punishment and Reformation: A Study of the Penitentiary System*, an early history and analysis of the penitentiary and crime in the United States. Wines, like his father Enoch, emerged as an expert seeking improvement to the nation’s carceral facilities in an effort to reduce crime.

Wines’s census report was one of the earliest national examinations of the populations of asylums, penitentiaries, juvenile reformatories, and local carceral institutions. Wines reported that of the 50,155,783 residents of the United States in 1880,

¹ “Frederick Howard Wines,” Springfield-Greene County Library District, <http://thelibrary.org/blogs/article.cfm?aid=971>, accessed May 25, 2012; Illinois Board of State Commissioners of Public Charities, *Biennial Report of the Board of State Commissioners of Public Charities of the State of Illinois* (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Journal Printing Office, 1871), 3; “To Cure the Insane: Scientific Methods Employed at Kankakee Hospital,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 1 April 1894, final edition, p. 33.

58,609 were adult prisoners.² An additional 11,468 juveniles were detained in reformatories, bringing the total number to 70,077.³ Most (30,659) were detained in state penitentiaries.⁴ State penitentiaries held a larger portion of the prison population at any given time, but because smaller facilities processed more inmates on a yearly basis, imprisonment in local carceral structures was more representative of the experience behind bars.

By 1880, the Chicago House of Correction (HOC) was the third largest workhouse in the nation. Only Philadelphia and New York City had larger structures. Sixty-one workhouses or houses of correction across the nation contained 7,865 of the inmates counted.⁵ Incarceration in city facilities depended on a variety of factors: the size of the institution, the role of work and discipline within, and the length of incarceration. Prisoners at the Chicago House of Correction under its first superintendent, Charles Felton, experienced a transition in the city's administration of carceral facilities. The HOC evolved into a more segregated and structured facility under Felton's management.

The House of Correction opened August 10, 1871 when 130 prisoners were transferred from the Bridewell.⁶ The new structure was portrayed as a testament to

² Frederick Howard Wines, *Report on the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes of the Population of the United States as Returned at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), VII-VIII. Many of the detained adults, 5,657, were held awaiting trial, or 9.7 percent. The most common charges were crimes against property, which comprised 59 percent of charges. Most prisoners were male 48,845 compared to 4,324 females (8.1 percent.) Ibid., XLVI, XLVII.

³ Ibid., XI.

⁴ Ibid., XXIV.

⁵ Chicago detained 680, compared to Philadelphia (817) and New York City (800). Ibid.

progress, even officially abandoning the name “Bridewell.” In an effort to address the criticisms levied against its predecessor, the city council instituted a number of changes designed to transform the new detention center into a more humane and equitable facility. Officials wanted to remove potential opportunities for personal gain by the keeper and eliminate the numerous early releases of inmates. To do so, officials modeled the HOC after Detroit’s House of Correction in both structure and administration. Felton, a professional, oversaw the HOC which incorporated a number of elements which resulted in an ordered, structure where work was the central defining feature.

Jails had a long history in England, dating back to the Saxon invasion. Early on, jails detained individuals awaiting trial. Guilty defendants were punished publicly or fined – incarceration was not initially intended as punishment. Bridewells and houses of correction, by contrast, differed philosophically from jails. The London Bridewell opened in 1556 to house vagrants and other minor criminals. The moniker “house of correction” sometimes replaced bridewells after 1609.⁷ Whether referred to by their earlier or later names, both institutions were meant to reform and punish. Inmates worked during confinement, gaining industrial habits. Ideally, terms would dissuade individuals from future confinements.⁸

⁶ John E. Wagner, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago*. (Chicago: The House of Correction, 1933), 4.

⁷ Jails and houses of correction were combined in 1865, creating local prisons which detained and punished. Sean McConville, “The Victorian Prison: England, 1865-1965,” in Norval Morris and David J. Rothman, eds., *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 118-119.

⁸ Randall McGowen, “The Well-Ordered Prison, England, 1780-1865,” in Morris and Rothman, eds., *Oxford History of the Prison*, 74.

The Chicago House of Correction better incorporated the philosophical ideal of work in English institutions than its predecessor, the Bridewell. Inmates often remained idle within the earlier facility, as did prisoners held at the Cook County Jail. Charles Felton, the first superintendent, argued that labor could meet the two disparate goals of city officials: to minimize cost and allow for the reformation of individuals confined within. Achieving these goals continually plagued his and future administrations. However, such problems were largely ignored by the public. Felton's annual reports consistently offered reforms to address the needs of the growing inmate population, but public criticisms only escalated after his retirement in 1890.

The lack of public concern regarding the plight of inmates can be attributed to two key factors: public attention to more pressing issues and the professionalization Felton embodied. Two months after the HOC opened, fire decimated Chicago. The fire devastated a considerable portion of the city, including the recently-abandoned Bridewell. City leaders and citizens wrestled with the destruction brought by the conflagration. The needs of the newly-built HOC simply did not demand the attention of the council and public. The other factor, Felton's expertise as a penal administrator, accounts for another component of city leaders' lack of action. Initially, aldermen and mayors were heavily involved with the planning, constructing, and early administration of the HOC. However, after the fire, the council's involvement diminished and the facility was largely left to Felton and the Board of Inspectors to administer. Under their management, the HOC began its transformation from a low-cost, nineteenth-century detention facility to a more modern and "professional" institution.

The Chicago House of Correction was unlike many jails of the nineteenth century.⁹ All who passed through its doors were sentenced, most by city courts. Other inmates arrived from Cook County or the state of Illinois. Until the creation of the Municipal Court in 1905, prisoners were most often fined by the city police justices. Those who could not afford to pay the fine, “worked” it off at the rate of fifty cents a day at the HOC.¹⁰ Those awaiting trial were held at the city police stations if arrested for violation of a city ordinance. More serious offenders waited trial at the Cook County Jail. This meant that all at the HOC were guilty of violating a city ordinance or a more serious crime. As the years progressed, a larger number of inmates were committed from the Criminal and U.S. Courts to serve terms under a year.

The Chicago City Council moved slowly to build and construct the HOC. The process officially began December 15, 1862 when Mayor Francis Sherman proposed the Finance Committee be charged with finding a new site to build a new self-sufficient structure. The communication to the City Council was only filed at that time.¹¹ Sherman, the City Comptroller S.S. Hayes, and the Council’s Finance Committee reported that three blocks (encompassing thirty acres) could be purchased for a new structure the following spring. The site was the cheapest, but the purchase was tabled; aldermen

⁹ Most jails of the nineteenth century held both those awaiting trial and those who had been sentenced. For example, the nation’s largest jail, “The Tombs,” contained courts, holding cells for the accused, and cells for the sentenced for a majority of its existence. Gilfoyle, ““America’s Greatest Criminal Barracks”: The Tombs and the Experience of Criminal Justice in New York City, 1838-1897,” *Journal of Urban History* 29, no. 5 (July 2003): 525-526.

¹⁰ Board of Inspectors. *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago, and the Reports of the Superintendent and Physician to the Board of Inspectors* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1874), 3.

¹¹ “Meeting of the Common Council,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 December 1862, p. 4, final edition.

presumed that property values might fall, meaning cheaper property might be purchased at a later time.¹² Aldermen considered seven sites proposed for sale to the council in December 1863.¹³ A special committee divided their opinions on which site to purchase the following March. Once again, no decision was made, but the reports were simply laid over.¹⁴

New city leaders emerged after the 1865 election and with the end of the Civil War, they began to focus their attention locally, and finally acted to build the new detention facility. On July 13, 1865 a committee of seven was appointed to oversee purchasing a suitable lot of land for the future building. Two members included Mayor John B. Rice and City Comptroller Walter Kimball. Eight months later, the city purchased a ten-acre plot of land on the southwest side of the city near the Illinois and Michigan Canal for \$12,250.¹⁵ Despite being accessible by road and water, critics worried that the land lacked adequate drainage, since the site was a few feet lower than the canal itself.¹⁶

Once the property for the HOC was secured, Rice appointed a different committee to oversee design and construction.¹⁷ The committee reported that the purchased lot was

¹² "Meeting of the Common Council," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 May 1863, p. 4, final edition.

¹³ "The Common Council," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 December 1863, p. 4, final edition.

¹⁴ "Common Council," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 March 1864, p. 4, final edition. The majority of members recommended the purchase of the lot recommended by N.P. Iglehart; the others recommended the D.C. Skelly site.

¹⁵ City Files: 1865/66 974 A 03/12. The lot was located at the corner of Ridgely Place and Long John St.

¹⁶ "Site of the New Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 1866, 4, final edition.

inadequate because it lacked water frontage, necessary for easy transportation of goods to and from the workhouse. Instead, they urged the council to purchase a different site along the Chicago River.¹⁸ The council acted on the committee's recommendation and visited four sites on July 19, 1866, including the one previously purchased. One lot, offered by S. J. Walker, was a forty-acre site for \$20,000 (or \$500 per acre). Located one-quarter mile west of the city limits, the land was situated on the south branch of the Chicago River.¹⁹ The council purchased the Walker site a year later. Cost dictated the new purchase as the resolution for the purchase included the stipulation that Walker take the previously purchased lot in exchange for \$10,000 toward the purchase of the new one. The rest of the amount owed would be paid to him through city bonds.²⁰ The matter was not fully settled until April 23, 1868 when the council purchased an additional seven and half acres from Walker at the earlier rate after a survey of the site was completed.²¹

The Committee on the Bridewell not only participated in the purchase of the site of the new structure, but also toured a number of cities in order to better design the facility. Aldermen David Gage and Mancell Talcott highlighted their findings from the Philadelphia County Prison, Blackwell's Island (New York City) and Boston. They

¹⁷ City Files: 1865/66 1000 A 03/19.

¹⁸ City Files: 1866/67 0202 A 07/23.

¹⁹ "Site of the New Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 1866, 4, final edition.

²⁰ City Files: 1867/68 0102 A 06/17

²¹ City Files: 1867/68 1402 A 04/23. The survey revealed the land was fifty-seven and a half acres, not fifty as previously believed. The critical seven and a half acres had the water frontage that the council members considered necessary for the proposed structure.

hoped that by visiting these institutions, they could implement positive aspects of each facility's administration, as well as improve upon areas which were troubling to them.²²

The committee toured Blackwell's Island in New York City after visiting the Philadelphia County Prison.²³ Blackwell's Island housed a number of buildings including a penitentiary, charity hospital, insane asylum, and workhouse.²⁴ The men focused their attention to the workhouse because they envisioned a structure in which inmates would work during their confinement. They found the Workhouse at Blackwell's Island to be well managed.²⁵ Housing 1,233 prisoners at the end of 1864, the facility was far larger than the Chicago Bridewell.²⁶ Each cell was also larger, fifteen by ten by eleven feet and designed to hold four people.²⁷

The New York City Workhouse detained minor offenders, often those deemed vagrants, drunks, or disorderly. Those imprisoned for disorderly conduct served terms from one to six months. Inmates worked during their sentences at a variety of jobs including breaking stone, building, and gardening.²⁸ Gage and Talcott did point out that

²² City Files: 1865/66 0443 A 10/05.

²³ For the manuscript, I will fill in the comparisons more fully with the Philadelphia County Prison information, much of which is in Philadelphia.

²⁴ "New York City," *New York Times*, 20 December 1852, 1, final edition.

²⁵ City Files: 1865/66 0443 A 10/05.

²⁶ Blackwell's Island was also larger than the Boston House of Correction which held 700 in 1855 while having a capacity of 450. "Institutions for Juvenile Criminals," *Prisoner's Friend: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Criminal Reform, Philosophy, Science, Literature*. 1 March 1855 p. 227; "Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections: Abstract of Fifth Annual Report for the Year," *New York Times*, 22 April, 1865, p. 2, final edition.

²⁷ "Our Charities: The Institutions on Blackwell's Island," *New York Times*, 13 November 1872, 2, final edition.

most of the female prisoners at Blackwell were generally idle, a perceived negative aspect of the jail. The men reported that because the sentences of the women were so uncertain, contractors were hesitant to hire them. Here, Gage and Talcott pointed out their belief in constant employment as in “the best interest of inmates.”²⁹

Aldermen Gage and Talcott continued their report with recommendations for the new city workhouse. The men emphasized that administrators in Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia considered land at a premium for future buildings. In addition to providing enough space for physical structures, Gage and Talcott reported that inmates benefitted from performing outdoor labor, which required even more land. The report recommended the council purchase 100 acres of land for the new HOC within five or six miles of the court house. They argued that such a large site could employ inmates and ensure enough room for future expansion.³⁰

The two men were not the only ones who traveled east. John M. Van Osdel, the eventual architect of the HOC, accompanied the men. He also reported on his findings from the trip, detailing a general plan for the new edifice. Osdel’s design placed the keeper’s quarters in the middle of the structure, which also contained the laundry, bakery, hospital, chapel, and kitchen. Two wings of cells, four stories high, were located on either side of the main building; one for housing the female inmates and the other for males. He

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ City Files: 1865/66 0443 A 10/05.

³⁰ Ibid.

designed each wing with 180 cells, four feet by eight feet in size. He estimated the new facility would cost \$131,500 to build.³¹

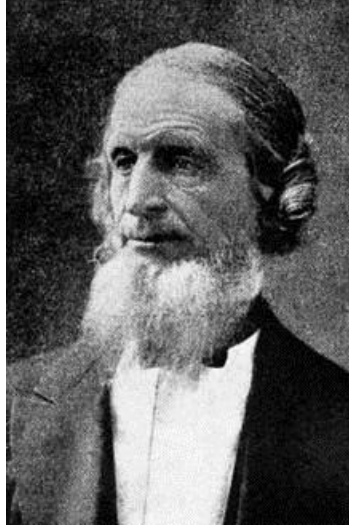


Figure 1. John M. Van Osdel. Image from Chicago Tribute Foundation, <http://www.chicagotribute.org/Markers/Osdel.htm> (accessed August 14, 2012).

Gage and Talcott strongly urged the council to adopt their costly recommendations. They cautioned the council to not simply dismiss their report. The rapid increase of crime in general and prostitution in particular, they argued, demanded that a sizeable amount of land was necessary for the new workhouse. Reporting that a significant number of women were recently arrested for prostitution, they declared a large facility was required to protect Chicago from simply arresting and fining such women, as had been done in this case. In addition to seeking a huge site, they also recommended that

³¹ Ibid. The estimate Van Osdel provided did not include the boiler or other machinery required to heat the structure.

the institution be called a “House of Correction” instead of a “Bridewell” to further demonstrate the new facility’s function.³²

The difference in language was critical. Previously, city officials primarily used “bridewell” to refer to the city’s first carceral institution. This varied from wider usages of the terms “workhouse,” “poorhouse,” and “bridewell,” which were used interchangeably and for similar institutions for centuries. In early modern England and colonial America, such named institutions confined those deemed unable to take care of themselves, such as the sick, elderly, and vagrants. They attempted to provide work, education, and religious instruction to those inside. In the late seventeenth century, “workhouses,” or “houses of correction,” employed those held for crimes such as debt and vagrancy. In theory, the City Council wanted the new structure to be a “house of correction” which would reform short-term convicts, many guilty of simple misdemeanors, through work rather than simply serving as a detention facility like the Bridewell. Yet, the name still persisted. Contemporaries often referred to the HOC as the “Bridewell,” even retaining a City Council committee “The Committee on the Bridewell” well into the twentieth century.³³ Despite this nomenclature, city council members clearly envisioned a different institution, not just in physical structure, but in administration as well.

Despite the findings from the eastern tour, the council did not incorporate one of the key specifications for the new physical structure. The city council did not act upon

³² Ibid.

³³ J. M. Moynahan and Earle K. Stewart, *American Jail: Its Development and Growth* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1980), chapter 4.

Gage and Talcott's recommendation for more land. Instead, plans proceeded using the smaller plot of land already acquired by the city, the Walker lot. Such inaction was most likely due to the increased costs of purchasing another (larger) tract of land. Emphasis on space, a critical component for Gage and Talcott, was not a primary concern to aldermen.

Plans and construction proceeded slowly. No official plans were submitted to the council until September 1868.³⁴ Upon receiving the initial plans from Van Osdel, the Board of Public Works presented an ordinance for the council to approve issuing additional bonds to cover the estimated cost of \$219,000. The ordinance also allowed the Board of Public Works to advertise for bids for construction.³⁵ The city council approved a motion to construct the HOC on September 25, 1868.³⁶

³⁴ City Files: 1868/69 0656 A 08/31.

³⁵ The estimate included the heating system for the HOC, but did not include the cost of workshops. The September 22, 1868 ordinance authorized \$150,000 in thirty-year bonds (\$1,000 each) to supplement a previous issuance of \$69,000 worth of bonds. City Files: 1868/69 0794 A 09/21.

³⁶ "Site of the New Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 July 1866, 4, final edition.

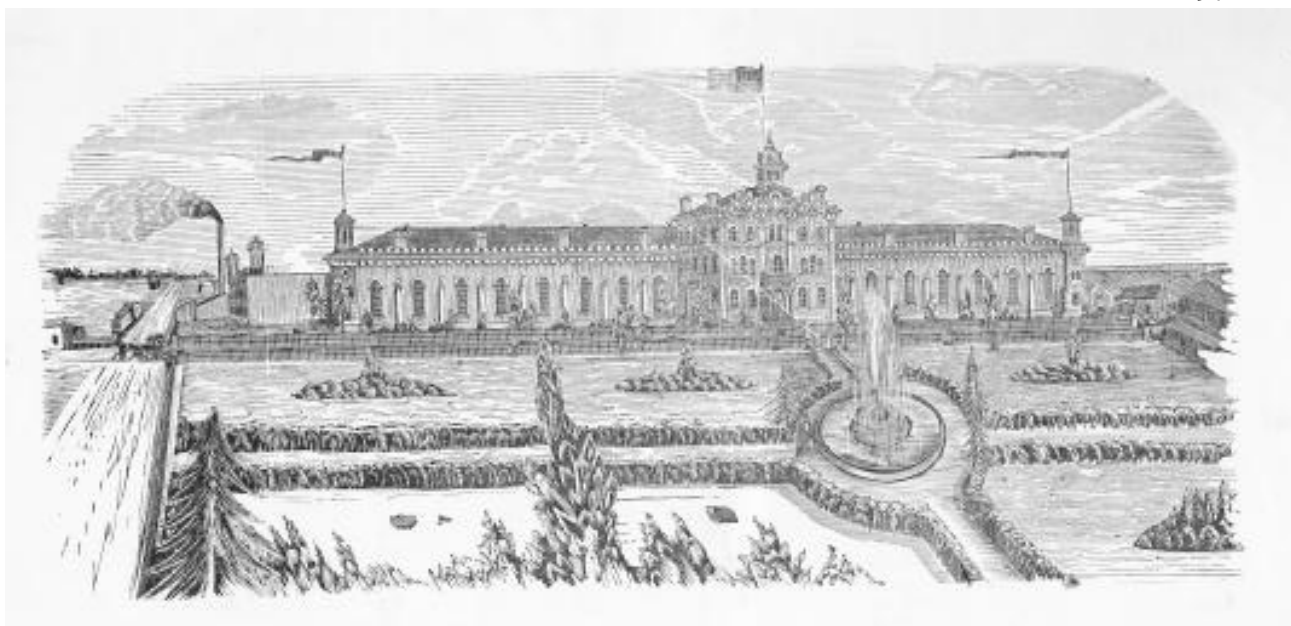


Figure 2. Detroit House of Correction. Image from *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Detroit House of Correction* (Detroit: Advertiser and Tribune Printing House, 1863), 1.

The ordinance dictated that the HOC would be designed by J.M. Van Osdel and modeled on the Detroit House of Correction.³⁷ The Detroit institution was roughly structured in a cross shape. Males occupied the two hundred cells on the left arm of the cross; women were detained in eighty cells on the right side. Each cell was seven feet long and four feet wide. Prisoners labored in large workshops separated from the cell houses.³⁸ The Chicago structure incorporated the larger elements of this design

³⁷ City Files: 1866/67 234 A 07/23. For the manuscript, I will visit archives in order to find a floorplan to more fully compare how the HOC plans differed from that of Detroit. Van Osdel was prevalent in the design and construction of many early Chicago buildings. Van Osdel was involved with construction of grain elevators, the Tremont House, the Cook County Courthouse, and the homes of several city leaders, including first mayor William B. Ogden. Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 37.

including: segregation of the sexes, the placing of one inmate per cell, and the prominence of labor within the institution.

City council members also used Detroit a model for the Chicago institution for potential economic and reformatory advantages over the Bridewell. City officials wanted to make the new structure self-sufficient in order to reduce the cost to the city. Ideally, prisoners would be kept at work and the facility would be self-supporting, and if possible, a profitable one. The Detroit House of Correction appeared exemplary in this requirement. Unlike Blackwell's Island, the Philadelphia County Prison, and the Boston workhouse, Detroit best met the aldermen's goals for the new facility. The Detroit institution appeared to successfully employ all inmates and taught them to be productive citizens upon release. Most critically, councilmen praised Detroit administrators for ensuring that expenses remained less than revenue earned from prisoner labor.

Opened in 1861, the Detroit House of Correction used monies received from prisoner labor to meet the costs of running the facility.³⁹ Inmates at Detroit labored in the on-site chair factory. Receipts from the factory nearly equaled the expenses of the facility. Zebulon R. Brockway, the warden at the Detroit House of Correction, and other Detroit city leaders publicized their success when possible. As historian Paul Keve notes, ledgers detailing the financial condition of the Detroit House of Correction are problematic as accounting procedures for penal institutions were not uniform in the nineteenth century. Expenses related to operation of facilities could be charged to other

³⁸ Inspectors of the Detroit House of Correction, *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the Detroit House of Correction* (Detroit: Advertiser and Tribune Printing House, 1863), 4-5.

³⁹ "Mr. Brockway and the Chicago Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 October 1871, 2, final edition.

accounts, affecting their perceived profitability. Chicago city leaders focused on the promise of self-sufficiency and paid less attention to the accounting practices which made it possible.⁴⁰

Brockway administered the Detroit House of Correction as an “expert.” He emphasized this in his autobiography *Fifty Years of Prison Service*.⁴¹ Detroit, despite being a small facility, immediately saw profitability from hiring out prisoner labor. In 1864, averaging 142 inmates, the facility’s income exceeded expenses. Detroit continued to earn money at the institution; in ten years, the total profit equaled \$103,004.50, a considerable sum. Aldermen, in contrast, only saw rising expenses associated with the operation of the Bridewell. They perhaps did not recognize part of Brockway’s financial success also related to the longer terms of detention. Inmates at Detroit remained confined for approximately three months; terms in Chicago’s Bridewell (and even the later HOC) averaged less than a month.⁴²

Brockway publicized more than just his financial successes at Detroit. Several of his programs there earned him attention and acclaim. He established a number of programs, including an evening school, to help reform those detained. Brockway contended that progress of students in the evening school was comparatively quicker than

⁴⁰ Keve, 8.

⁴¹ Zebulon R. Brockway, *Fifty Years of Prison Service: An Autobiography* (Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1969 reprint), first published 1912. The autobiography needs to be read with care. Despite his self-promotion, his account can be illustrative in demonstrating the emergence of a “professional” class of prison officials, individuals who spent the majority of their careers as guards, wardens, and officers of detention facilities.

⁴² Ibid, 80. Superintendents later argued that the short terms severely limited their opportunities to hire out labor. Short sentences required work needing little to no training to perform. In contrast, Brockway received (a small) population of long-term federal prisoners, further enabling him to hire out for longer-term contracts, resulting in a higher income for the city as compared to Chicago.

those in the public schools.⁴³ Lectures included a variety of topics, including “The Labor Question,” “The Nobility of Work,” and “Courage,” to name a few.⁴⁴ Moral lessons and the benefits of work comprised a significant portion of time in classes.

The Chicago City Council was certainly interested in making the HOC a low-cost, if not self-sufficient, penal facility. But they also sought to create a structure which would more humanely hold and administer to its prisoners than its predecessor. Brockway fulfilled these two requirements. As warden at the Detroit House of Correction, he implemented a number of “progressive” programs for inmates. Like many other local detention facilities, Detroit received both males and females. In 1868, Brockway developed the House of Shelter to serve as a halfway house for young women discharged from Detroit. Later criticized by twentieth-century historians as paternalistic, the House of Shelter exemplified to nineteenth-century contemporaries that Brockway was innovative in his attempts to reform “fallen women.”⁴⁵ Chicago city leaders hoped that a similar administrator could provide such reformatory promise to the Chicago House of Correction.

Chicago’s HOC administrative structure was modeled on Detroit’s. Detroit was governed by a five-member board which consisted of the city’s current mayor and the current chairman of the Michigan State Prison at Jackson. The remaining three members were appointed by the Detroit Common Council. Not only did this panel seek to create a

⁴³ Ibid. As those even detained for a year only spent 210 hours in the classroom, he promoted the accomplishments of pupils being more than two times greater than that achieved in Detroit schools.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁵ Paul W. Keve, “Building a Better Prison: The First Three Decades of the Detroit House of Correction.” *Michigan Historical Review* 25: 2 (Fall 1999): 18-19.

relationship between the city and the state prison, but also the city's executive and legislative leaders. Under the Board, the Detroit Superintendent administered it on a day-to-day basis.⁴⁶ Chicago officials created the HOC to reflect many key aspects of the Detroit facility: design, philosophies, and administration.

Van Osdel's final design of the Chicago HOC borrowed from and expanded upon the Detroit model. The main structure consisted of two wings: one to house 280 male inmates, one per cell, and the other to house 200 female inmates, also one per cell. Cells were four feet by seven feet, the same size as those at the Detroit House of Correction. A tower at the front of the facility contained offices for the Superintendent, rooms for their families, and rooms for the deputies and chaplain. In addition to the main building housing inmates, another two-story building on the site included a kitchen, dining room, hospital for the male inmates, two laundries, and officers' quarters. A hospital for female inmates and the matrons' rooms were located on the second floor of the female wing of the main building. Other structures included a watch tower, stables, and workshops.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁷ City Files, 1866/67: 234 .

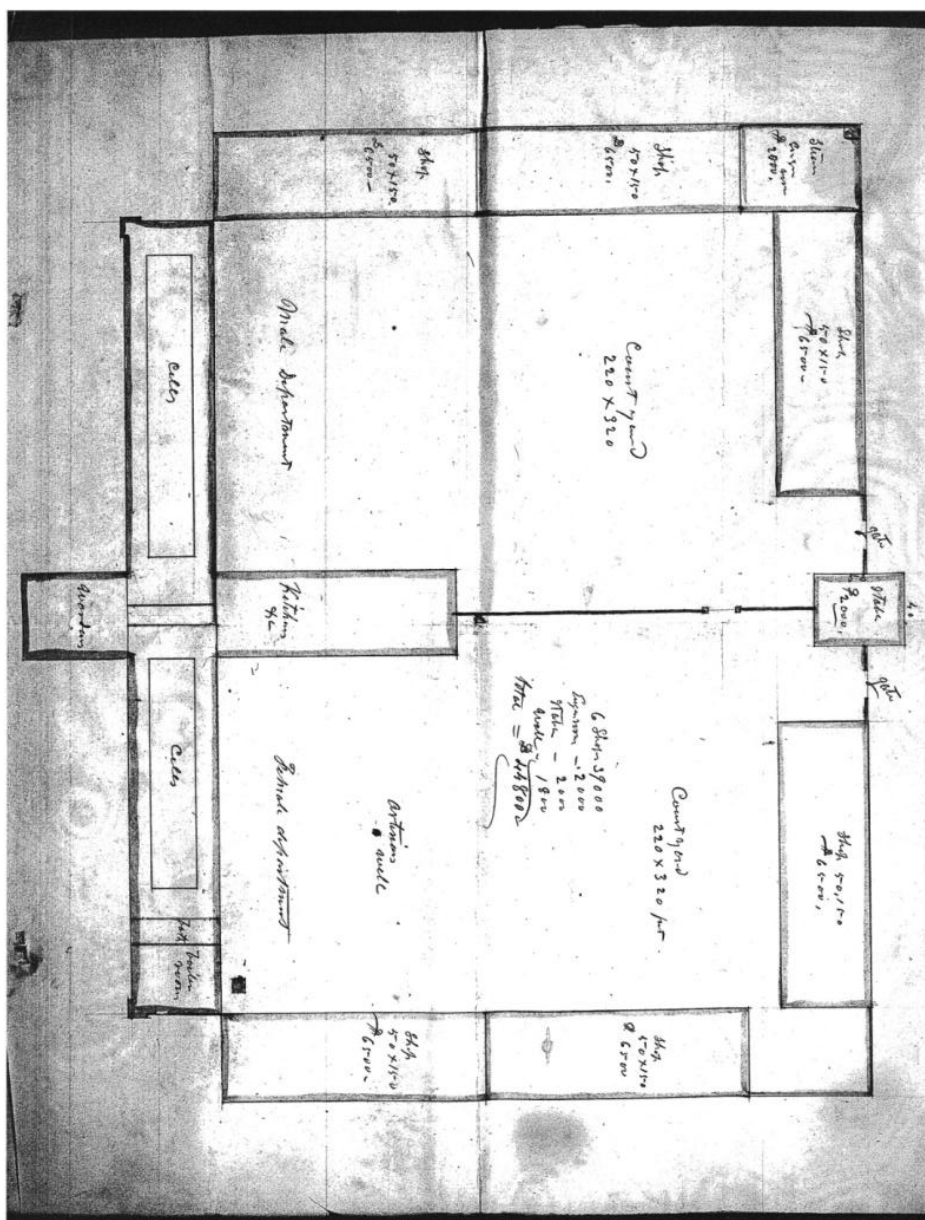


Figure 3. Original HOC Floorplan. The floorplan for the original portion of the House of Correction was built in 1871. The floorplan shows the segregation of the male and female populations, along with the workshops, kitchen, and other rooms. The rooms, starting from the upper left and going clockwise, are labeled as follows: steam engine, shop, stable, shop, shop, shop, boiler room, bath, cells (female), kitchen (above), warden (below), cells (male), shop, shop. Image from City Files, 1869/70 2028 A 10/17.

Aldermen devoted considerable attention to the HOC. Construction continued slowly, but by February 1870, the new edifice was largely completed at a cost of \$134,000, but not yet furnished or occupied.⁴⁸ Council members secured more money to finish the structure and next focused on how the facility would be governed.⁴⁹ Previously, the Bridewell was overseen by the City Council, which appointed the keeper. Critics argued that as long as the keeper's political friends were in the majority his job was safe whether or not he was effective.⁵⁰ They pointed out that corrupt administrators could profit from the position. The keeper earned a yearly salary and received an allowance for meals, which in 1871 was approximately \$32,000.⁵¹ Potentially, the keeper could take the money for food, provide less expensive meals, and keep the profits for himself. Under the new system, expenses were to be paid from money received from prison labor, the city, and fines.⁵²

⁴⁸ "The New Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 April 1870, 2, final edition.

⁴⁹ The council approved additional appropriations of \$2,500 and issued more bonds totaling \$135,000 to complete the project. City Files: 1869/70 0732 A 06/06; City Files: 1870/71 0457 A 05/23; City Files: 1870/71 0491 A 06/05.

⁵⁰ Max Stern, "Treatment of Petty Offenders in Chicago," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* (1931-1951) 24, no. 5 (January/February 1934): 935.

⁵¹ "The Common Council and the Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 July 1871, 2, final edition.

⁵² *First Annual Report*, 10-11.



Figure 4. Carceral Facilities in Chicago. The locations of the Bridewell (1), Cook County Courthouse (2), and the House of Correction (3) are marked on the map above. When constructed, the HOC was located away from much of the built-up city, further demonstrating the physical segregation of the HOC and its inmates. Map from Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 101.

Once constructed, the transfer of prisoners to the new building was fairly quick, but creating a new administration took several months. State law allowed municipalities to establish houses of correction “for the confinement and punishment of criminals” in violation of state or local laws. A board of inspectors would consist of four individuals: the current mayor and three appointed members nominated by the mayor and approved by the council.⁵³ Appointees often served multiple times, even though the position came with no monetary compensation. Inspectors adopted rules, nominated the superintendent, and met each quarter to examine the institution to ensure the proper management of the facility. Records of receipts and expenditures, the number of prisoners received and discharged, and how inmates were employed were compiled and presented in quarterly and annual reports to the city council for their review.⁵⁴ Despite such regulation, in reality, the reports were simply filed with little or no comment by the council members.

The Board of Inspectors oversaw the superintendent and ensured that he followed the rules adopted by the Board. The duties of day-to-day management of the HOC fell to the superintendents. They were personally responsible for maintaining order and cleanliness of the institution and held accountable for the overall condition of the facilities. As such, they resided on the premises and removed troublesome officers. They

⁵³ City Files: 1870/71 0560 A 06/22.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

were nominated by the city mayor and approved by the Board of Inspectors for a four-year term which could be renewable.⁵⁵

Setting up the new administrative structure for the HOC proved to be a political and ethnic power struggle. During the summer of 1871, Mayor Roswell Mason nominated board members who needed City Council approval. Mason but did not have the backing of the council. The mayor first proposed Charles Hammond, R.P. Derrickson, and William Bross, three native-born Americans.⁵⁶ However, the council rejected their nominations on July 22. Councilmen couched their rejection of the nominees in ethnic terms, arguing that since most of the inmates at the Bridewell (and potentially at the HOC) would be immigrants, at least one member of the Board should also be an immigrant.⁵⁷

After four more proposed boards were rejected by aldermen, Mason attempted to placate the council by nominating an additional Democrat and first- or second-generation immigrants.⁵⁸ On August 5, the Mayor proposed a list of thirty names and requested that the council choose three acceptable names from the list, implying that he would nominate those individuals.⁵⁹ The Council chose S.S. Hayes, a Democrat, John Herting, a

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "Common Council," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 July 1871, 4, final edition.

⁵⁷ The HOC did not receive prisoners until Bridewell inmates were transferred there on August 10; the Bridewell remained in operation until the transfer. Wagner, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 4. "The Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 July 1871, 2, final edition.

⁵⁸ City Files: 0715 A 07/24; City Files: 0735 A 07/27; City Files: 0762 A 08/03; City Files 0763 A 07/31.

⁵⁹ Charles Hammond and Louis Wahl, eventual members of the Board of Inspectors were included in this list.

Catholic, and J.B. Sherman, but the Mayor did not nominate them.⁶⁰ After putting forward more names, Mason seemingly resorted to interchanging four previously submitted names (Hammond, Derrickson, Hoyne, and Wahl) to create three-member board proposals. The ploy worked. Finally, on August 14, four days after the HOC opened, the council confirmed Charles Hammond and Louis Wahl.⁶¹ A week later, the council finally accepted ex-Mayor John C. Haines, a Democrat, as the third member.⁶² Appointing inspectors proved a month-long battle between Mason and aldermen, but the most important position remained vacant: superintendent.

The HOC under Charles Felton

Finding a superintendent for the HOC also proved to be a challenging task for city officials. In keeping with their desire to model the HOC after Detroit, the Board of Inspectors nominated Zebulon R. Brockway, the Warden of the Detroit House of Correction.⁶³ On March 6, 1871, the Council passed a resolution advising the Mayor to communicate with Brockway to potentially become the HOC's first Superintendent. Stipulating that in order for the new institution to be financially self-sufficient while providing for "the moral and intellectual improvement of the unfortunate inmates," the

⁶⁰ "The Bridewell Imbroglio," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 August 1871, 3, final edition.

⁶¹ "The Bridewell Commissioners," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 August 1871, 2, final edition.

⁶² City Files: 0913 A 08/17; City Files: 0955 A 08/21; and City Files: 0956 A 08/21. The members of the original committee served multiple terms: Haines for seven years, Hammond and Wahl until their deaths in 1884 and 1892, respectively. G. A. Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago: A Retrospect Covering a Half Century of Endeavor From the Founding of the Institution to the Present Time, 1871-1921* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 1921), 2.

⁶³ "Mr. Brockway and the City Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 October 1871, 2, final edition.

new Superintendent needed to have previous experience. The council wanted Mason to investigate what terms would be required for Brockway to come to Chicago.⁶⁴

Brockway had served as a penal administrator for the majority of his adult life, starting at the age of twenty-one at the Albany penitentiary in New York.⁶⁵ He was the first superintendent of Monroe County Penitentiary, in Rochester, New York, the first superintendent of the Detroit House of Correction, and finished his career as warden of Elmira Reformatory in New York. Historian Paul Keve argues that Brockway was popular during the nineteenth century because early in his career he offered new philosophies in regards to prisoners and wrote and spoke on the issue frequently and eloquently. Brockway came under criticism later in his career as well as from academics in the late twentieth century. Criticisms of Brockway primarily focused on his harsh disciplinary practices towards inmates, mainly while he was warden at Elmira. Keve contends that such perhaps Brockway also engaged in brutal tactics in his earlier administration at Detroit.⁶⁶

Brockway served in a variety of positions in detention facilities. He started at the Albany County Penitentiary as a deputy in 1851. Albany housed approximately 600 prisoners, mostly misdemeanants. Brockway reflected that inmates at the Albany penitentiary, unlike other state facilities, were not as stringently confined. Three years later, he began his tenure at Monroe County Penitentiary. While there, he received word

⁶⁴ City Files 1870/71 0219 A 03/06.

⁶⁵ Brockway, *Fifty Years of Prison Service*, 61.

⁶⁶ Keve, "Building a Better Prison," 5, 25.

of his new appointment at the Detroit House of Correction. Brockway credited his ability to administer Albany as a low-cost institution for the appointment.⁶⁷ Detroit city leaders, like their counterparts in Chicago, sought to detain minor offenders with as little public expense as possible.

Although charges of brutality and inhumane corporal punishment tainted his later career, Brockway emerged as a model administrator at Detroit and in his early years at Elmira. E.C. Wines and Theodore Dwight included an analysis of the Detroit House of Correction and Brockway in their *Report on the Prisons and Reformatories of the United States* (1867), declaring the facility was a “noble institution, worthy in many respects to be regarded as a ‘model prison.’”⁶⁸ Brockway was equally well-regarded.

Brockway served as superintendent at Detroit from 1861 to 1872. As a life-long correctional officer, Brockway wrote and spoke prolifically on penal ideologies and administration. Brockway argued that inmates, even in local institutions, should be incarcerated for longer sentences. These longer terms would better allow for their reformation. As an added bonus, contracts for their labor to make such institutions self-sufficient could be more easily obtained.⁶⁹

Brockway portrayed himself as an expert in administering a low-cost, and sometimes profitable, facility. He also publicized his successes at the Detroit House of

⁶⁷ Brockway, *Fifty Years of Prison Service*, 43, 46, 57, 61.

⁶⁸ The two men did not visit the actual facility, but largely based their analysis on correspondence from Brockway. E. C. Wines and Theodore W. Dwight, *Report on the Prisons and Reformatories of the United States and Canada, Made to the Legislature of New York, January, 1867* (Albany: Van Benthuyssen and Sons’ Steam Printing House, 1867), 344.

⁶⁹ Keve, “Building a Better Prison,” 10.

Correction. The jail remained generally profitable for the remainder of Brockway's tenure. A number of factors contributed to the financial success of the institution: longer sentences for inmates (including misdemeanants), continued contracts and sales for prison-made products, and accounting practices which allowed for some expenses of the institution to be debited from other city accounts.⁷⁰

Brockway left the Detroit House of Correction, and corrections, temporarily in 1872. After a few years as vice-president of the Michigan Car Company, he served as the superintendent at Elmira Reformatory from 1876 to 1900.⁷¹ While at Elmira, Brockway served in a variety of positions in the National Prison Association, gaining national prominence as an expert in penal philosophy and administration. Brockway drew upon his public status as a penal expert, writing and speaking prolifically.

Alderman hoped that Brockway would bring his expertise to the HOC. However, Brockway declined the offer of the Board, but recommended Charles E. Felton for the position. The two men must have had some professional relationship, although documentation remains elusive. They may have encountered each other late during Brockway's time in New York, but perhaps later as Felton did not become warden at Erie until 1862. It is unclear if they personally knew each other, although Brockway's recommendation for Felton as a "successful manager" implied a relationship beyond one

⁷⁰ Ibid., 8.

⁷¹ Brockway, *Fifty Years of Prison Service*, 151, 161.



Figure 5. Zebulon R. Brockway. Image from California State University – San Bernardino, Center for the Study of Correctional Education, <http://coe.csusb.edu/programs/correctionalEd/images.htm> (accessed August 14, 2012).



C. E. FELTON.

Figure 6. Charles E. Felton. Image from “Will C. E. Felton be Removed?” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 19 February 1890.

of name recognition.⁷² Certainly they interacted often later in their careers at the annual congresses of the National Prison Association as both were prominent within the organization.

Recently-elected mayor Joseph Medill heeded the suggestion and nominated Felton.⁷³ Born in Massachusetts in 1831, Felton had served as an alderman in Buffalo, New York early in his career. He was selected, in part, for his previous experience as warden of the Erie County Penitentiary. According to Felton, the two institutions received mostly misdemeanants.⁷⁴

The Board of Inspectors accepted Felton's nomination and he assumed the superintendency of the HOC on January 15, 1872.⁷⁵ City officials did not achieve their goal of employing Brockway, but they hired an individual with previous penal experience. Felton's assumption of the duties of superintendent demonstrated a clear break from earlier administrations of the Bridewell. Professional administrative experience, not just political affiliation, was a key factor in future appointments of superintendent. With the beginning of Felton's tenure, which lasted until 1890, the

⁷² City Files: 1872 143 01/23. Report of the Committee on Bridewell on Communication from His Honor the Mayor in relation to the appointment of C. E. Felton.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ "Col. Felton Has Resigned," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 April 1890, p. 3, final edition; G. A. Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 10-11; "Will C. E. Felton be Removed?" *Chicago Tribune* 19 February 1890, 3, final edition. Although both institutions detained predominately minor offenders, the two facilities differed greatly in size. According to Felton, he received 17,653 inmates during his tenure from 1863 to 1871. From 1872 to 1887, 121,658 prisoners entered the HOC. *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard Co., 1888), 31.

⁷⁵ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 10-11.

critical members of the administration were put into place. Felton and the newly-appointed Board of Inspectors proceeded to take control of the institution.

Felton's appointment signified two critical aspects in the city council's relationship to Chicago carceral institutions: the role of politics in appointments and council members' role as administrators. First, previous keepers of the Bridewell depended upon political affiliations for appointments and re-election. By contrast, Felton's primary qualification as superintendent resulted from his previous carceral experience, not his political connections. Party politics continued to factor into appointments of superintendents and board of inspector members, but was no longer the primary influence. A few inspectors, and later superintendents, discovered this reality, especially after Felton's tenure.

Second, the councilmen were considerably involved in the planning and construction of the HOC. However, upon the appointment of Felton and the Board of Inspectors, they took a less critical role in overseeing the facility; that was the purpose of the Board of Inspectors. Professionals, rather than politicians, were to manage the HOC. Felton and inspectors simply prepared their quarterly and annual reports to the City Council. Although the council continued to oversee the HOC, such oversight was minimal. Shortly after the HOC opened, rebuilding the city after the Great Fire consumed a considerable portion of aldermen's attention. Professional administrators, such as Felton, were free to operate the HOC on a day-to-day basis and received little input from city leaders.

Felton and the Board of Inspectors proposed several improvements to transform the new House of Correction into a reformatory. First, Felton argued for a fully segregated building for the male and female inmates. He and the Board pointed out the lack of segregation still present in the new structure. Felton also protested against boys between the ages of seven and fifteen serving time with older male prisoners in his first report. Members of the Board concurred with Felton that a completely separate building for females and another for younger offenders was needed. However, as all noted, such improvements were impossible due to the 1871 fire. The men urged completion of a women's cell house, noting that the male population alone would test the limits of the HOC's accommodations within a few years.⁷⁶ These proposed reforms, however, were never addressed until the completion of the John Worthy School for boys and the Women's Department, opened in 1896 and 1906, respectively.

Separation of the sexes was a key component of the design of the HOC. Along with the physical manifestation of gender, administration of the HOC made it a more critical component as the facility underwent changes over the next forty years. During Felton's tenure, differences in treatment emerged with the creation of a new group of jail officers to administer and discipline the prisoners based on sex. By 1885, the HOC had a superintendent, prison keeper, guards, industrial keepers, and a night watchman to oversee the male prisoners of the jail. A house matron, prison matron, kitchen matron,

⁷⁶ *First Annual Report*, 5-7, 18.

laundry matron, and night matrons were charged with managing the female department including the cells and workshops.⁷⁷



Figure 7. “Police Matron (left) searching a female prisoner (right),” *Chicago Daily News*, ca. 1904. DN-0001599, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago Historical Society.

Confinement within the HOC was one aspect in which gender affected female and male prisoners’ experiences. Reformers sought female staff to detain women held at the HOC and to process them during arrest. After 1882, female reformers pushed for matrons to be placed at the largest city police stations. Mayor Carter Harrison stated that he had no authority to do so. After deliberation, members of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) asked if they could place a matron at the Harrison Street Station if they paid her salary. Harrison agreed, and with his consent, the male and female experience

⁷⁷ *House of Correction, Chicago, Rules Adopted Dec. 2, 1885* (Chicago, Knight and Leonard, 1885), 5-8.

began to differ. One year later, thirty-two women served as matrons; they were paid out of the city's yearly appropriation.⁷⁸

Unlike police officers, the matrons were to exert a protecting, reforming influence on females in their custody. At the stations, matrons were to “mother” their charges by giving them a pillow at night, a cup of coffee in the morning, and soothe them in order to ascertain why they were in the police station cell. The matrons were to help the women and girls who found themselves on the wrong side of the law. Once the woman was sentenced, the matron would accompany her to the HOC or County Jail.⁷⁹ Police officers had no such duties towards arrested males.

Felton also insisted upon more facilities in the HOC to help reform and treat inmates. He called for a better hospital facility to care for those inmates who arrived at the center with alcohol-related “tremens.” Without such a building, inmates were simply “treated” by being locked in their cells. More critically, in order to fully reform prisoners, Felton requested two more additions. He urged that the city build a chapel on the HOC site for Sunday services along with a school. Felton argued that education would help in “converting [prisoners] into moral and God-fearing citizens.”⁸⁰ He further noted that such expansions would be costly even with the use of prison labor. Felton intoned that because of the “embarrassed [sic] condition of the finances of the city” caused by the Great Fire

⁷⁸ “Police Matrons: Their Power of Good,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 June 1895, p. 42, final edition.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ *First Annual Report*, 18-19.

of 1871, he did not expect monies for the expansions in the immediate future, even if greatly needed.⁸¹

Felton's vision of the HOC as a more prison-like facility became more pronounced in his annual reports to the city council and activities with the National Board of Charities and Corrections. Early on, Felton focused on the separation of older criminals from younger offenders, but later in his career he praised isolation in detention. By 1877, he noted that none of the inmates had been previously held at Eastern Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. He attributed this not to the realities of geography, but to the segregation realized with the "Pennsylvania system" which theoretically isolated each prisoner for the duration of his imprisonment. Inmates would be confined to their cells where they would eat, work, sleep, and reflect on their crimes without consorting with others. Felton stressed that such a system prevented prisoners from creating criminal contacts while held, making it ideal for the Chicago House of Correction.⁸² Ideally, the solitary system, combined with longer terms would result in a fewer commitments.

Like Zebulon Brockway, Felton argued that sentences to the HOC needed to be longer, especially for repeat offenders. Short sentences failed to reform most prisoners.⁸³ Felton argued that many prisoners who served short sentences merely returned to the facility shortly after release, meaning that their frequent arrests, trials, and confinements

⁸¹ Ibid., 10.

⁸² *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1877), 12; David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 82.

⁸³ Ibid., 13.

cost taxpayers more money over time.⁸⁴ Felton stressed that statutes should allow justices to impose sentences of thirty days to six months. Payment of a fine, if levied, could end a sentence, but needed to include costs of arrest, imprisonment, and care of the inmate.⁸⁵ And in order to ensure that prisoners were not released early, he stressed that pardons by governors or mayors should be limited. This would also ensure a lengthier stay during which the prisoner could better be reformed.⁸⁶ He further stated that although indeterminate sentences might seem harsh, the “detering influence would be extraordinarily efficient.”⁸⁷

Felton, Brockway, and other penal administrators advocated the use of longer sentences in both state and local institutions, even for misdemeanors. They argued that inmates could only reform their criminal ways with long-term sentences. Administrators of carceral institutions also stressed the benefits of longer sentences. Securing contracts for possible inmate labor could be easier. Longer terms meant that inmates could be taught a skill, making it easier to secure their employment with private companies. More consistent employment of inmates would mean increased receipts for the facility, and by extension, the city. Penal officials also argued that such labor also helped to prevent offenders from being recommitted. Inmates who learned a profitable skill, might have better employment prospects upon release, and therefore, were less vulnerable to

⁸⁴ *Third Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J. S. Thompson and Co, 1875), 21.

⁸⁵ *Fifth Annual Report*, 15.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁸⁷ *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Company, 1879), 18.

engaging in future criminal activity, leading to future detainment. Despite his pleas, length of detention remained short within the HOC.

Although the average sentence was less than a month, aspects of confinement at the HOC were similar to life within a state prison, which often emphasized routine, order, and discipline. Routine dictated life inside the HOC. Waking at 5:30 a.m., prisoners dressed in their uniforms and cleaned their cells. Most inmates donned garb of blue-gray; those who had good conduct dressed in brown.⁸⁸ The cell doors opened once the inmates were dressed and they marched to the kitchen single-file to receive breakfast at 7 a.m., which was eaten back in the cell.⁸⁹ Breakfast consisted of coffee and a bread-like biscuit, known as a “duffer.” Thomas recalled that inmates who worked in the kitchens reported the coffee as a combination of beans, peas, oats, coffee beans, and molasses (to provide color.)⁹⁰

At 8:00, inmates marched in lock-step to the workshops in groups of thirty to forty.⁹¹ At noon, inmates again lined up to receive their rations which would be eaten in their cells.⁹² Prisoner B. F. Thomas described the noon meal as another loaf of the duffer and a pan of soup.⁹³ At 1:00 p.m., the cell doors opened and inmates marched back to the

⁸⁸ “Home for Tramps,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1893, p. 25, final edition.

⁸⁹ “Bridewell Toil Tires Alderman,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1904, p. 3, final edition.

⁹⁰ “Sent to the Bridewell: B.F. Thomas’ Story of His Arrest by Chicago Police,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1890, 26, final edition.

⁹¹ “Home for Tramps,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1893, p. 25, final edition.

⁹² “Bridewell Toil Tires Alderman,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1904, p. 3, final edition.

⁹³ “Sent to the Bridewell: B.F. Thomas’ Story of His Arrest by Chicago Police,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1890, 26, final edition.

workhouses to work until 5:00.⁹⁴ After work, prisoners again lined up to receive their supper and march back to their cells.⁹⁵ The supper meal duplicated that of breakfast: coffee and a duffer.⁹⁶

Felton, much like Brockway, signified the emergence of professional administrators during the nineteenth century. Both men spent time overseeing multiple institutions during their career. Just as Brockway instilled similar rules and administration the Detroit House of Correction and the reformatory at Elmira, Felton similarly administered the HOC.⁹⁷ Brockway and Felton also participated in prison conferences, presenting their philosophies on crime, reformation of criminals, and penal philosophies. Their public acts as experts and wardens further blurred the previously clearer divisions between the types of carceral facilities in the nineteenth century. Felton's arguments regarding indeterminate sentences and solitary confinement reflect his desire to implement such prison-like policies at the HOC.

Philosophically, Felton continued to insist that the HOC differed from other local detention institutions, namely its predecessor and the Cook County Jail. Felton's perspective on the HOC's role in the penal system was clarified during his tenure. The HOC was not a jail. He differentiated "jails" and "houses of correction" in his 1884 report. According to Felton, a jail primarily held individuals awaiting trial. Houses of

⁹⁴ "Bridewell Toil Tires Alderman," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 January 1904, p. 3, final edition.

⁹⁵ "Home for Tramps," *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1893, p. 25, final edition.

⁹⁶ "Sent to the Bridewell: B.F. Thomas' Story of His Arrest by Chicago Police," *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1890, 26, final edition.

⁹⁷ Brockway, *Fifty Years of Prison Service*, 58, 60, 174.

correction, by contrast held persons primarily convicted of violating municipal laws along with some misdemeanants.⁹⁸ More critically, he saw the HOC as a house of correction beyond just the name. Whereas the Bridewell simply housed idle inmates, the HOC had a clearer goal: to use labor in order to train and reform prisoners.

The HOC could potentially reform inmates, but Felton saw beyond the HOC's walls and envisioned additional ways to lessen crime in Chicago. He urged the city council to ensure that the police department of the city better eradicate the source of the city's criminal population: better police surveillance of brothels and "places of doubtfully moral character." Felton argued that merely arresting the women at a brothel did little. Instead, laws needed to focus on punishing owners. Simply arresting and releasing prostitutes had little effect. Additionally, he also proposed that the HOC be sent some inmates from the state prison at Joliet. Felton argued that such an arrangement would have two key benefits: the state could house prisoners more cheaply than at the penitentiary and the long-term inmate population could make the HOC more appealing to contractors seeking a labor source.⁹⁹ As historian Paul Keve argues, part of the success of the Detroit House of Correction in meeting expenses depended on the availability of long-term prisoners at the facility. Although numbers were initially small, it housed federal and state felons. With the longer sentences of these inmates, Brockway and others could attract contractors seeking a more permanent workforce for labor. Long-term

⁹⁸ *Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1884), 15.

⁹⁹ *Fifth Annual Report*, 13, 18.

prisoners resulted in more profitable labor contracts.¹⁰⁰ Felton sought to institute such reforms in Chicago.

Felton increasingly insinuated that the management of the HOC largely fell to him, with only minimal input from the Board of Inspectors. Although legally he was in charge of the institution's daily business, he did not acknowledge this directly in early reports. However, by 1880, he noted that he "manage[d] the department largely in his own way."¹⁰¹ His annual reports also shifted from merely stating facts concerning prisoner totals and employment to expositions on his penal philosophies.

Demonstrating their faith in Felton, the Board also increasingly endorsed Felton's vision in their annual reports to the council. By 1882, they also urged the City Council to appropriate funds for separate quarters for each inmate. To bolster their claim that a single individual in each cell was best, the Board referred to the murder of William J. Clark. On July 25, Clark was killed by his cellmate. Imprisoned upon complaint of his wife, Clark was confined with a "demented" man.¹⁰² The aggressor, John Prindell, was previously housed with other inmates without incident.¹⁰³ However, he murdered Clark with a "single blow, with the wooden leg of the victim."¹⁰⁴ Prindell killed Clark in the night, but prisoners in the adjoining cells claimed to hear nothing. Once he murdered

¹⁰⁰ Keve, "Building a Better Prison," 10.

¹⁰¹ *Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1880), 13.

¹⁰² *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1883), 7-8.

¹⁰³ Charles Felton, "House of Correction," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 July 1882, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Eleventh Annual Report*, 8, 45.

Clark, Prindell covered his body with a quilt, hiding it from the view of the night guard.¹⁰⁵ Clark was found the next morning when a fellow prisoner was sweeping the cells and noticed Prindell's bloody hands.¹⁰⁶

The Clark case further highlighted another deficiency of the system of confinement to the HOC. County institutions were to handle vagrants, the insane, and sick. However, when these individuals arrived before the police justices of the city of Chicago, they did not have jurisdiction to confine those individuals to the county facilities. Having no recourse, they sent these persons to the House of Correction, further contributing to overcrowding and testing the capacity of its hospital. Often times, these individuals served time because they were unable to pay their fine and were released only if the Superintendent recommended their release to the Mayor, who had the authority to do so.¹⁰⁷ Not only could county institutions better administer to the sick, elderly, or mentally challenged, but the Board argued, perhaps William Clark would not have died.

Felton addressed the homicide and circumstances surrounding Clark's death. He explained that upon arrival at the jail, anyone thought to be insane was examined by city physician, French Moore. Moore examined Prindell on June 17 and found him "demented, but saw no evidence of vicious inclinations." Moore did not send Prindell to the County Hospital as he feared he would be released, as previously happened. Since Moore did not see Prindell as a threat, he recommended he stay at the HOC. Prindell and

¹⁰⁵ Charles Felton, "House of Correction," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1882, p. 8

¹⁰⁶ "Ghastly Murder," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 July 1882, 7, final edition.

¹⁰⁷ *Eleventh Annual Report*, p. 9.

Clark ended up in the same cell when Clark arrived on July 25 because both were deemed unfit for labor. Felton explained that the first floor of the HOC was reserved for juveniles on one side and the infirm on the other. Finally, in order to deflect blame for the overcrowded conditions, Felton used the event to point out his numerous requests for additional cells at the HOC.¹⁰⁸

The capacity of the HOC was tested early. Like many nineteenth-century jails, including the Bridewell, the HOC frequently suffered from overcrowding. In his first annual report, Felton alerted the Council that the facility held more male inmates than originally designed, specifically 280 male and 200 female inmates, each in separate cells. By December 1872, 385 men and 126 women were confined in the institution. Felton's proposal for separate facilities for the female inmates would more completely segregate the sexes and free up space that could be used for the male prisoners.¹⁰⁹ Often, the female wing contained empty cells. These empty cells could not be used by male inmates while females were in the jail. In order to create more room and more completely segregate female inmates, the Board of Inspectors proposed a solution. As early as 1874, Felton reported that male prisoners were doubled up in cells in order to accommodate the inmate population.¹¹⁰ Felton and the members of the Board of Inspectors continually called for an addition to relieve the problem.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Felton, "House of Correction," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1882, p. 8

¹⁰⁹ *First Annual Report*, 13, 18.

¹¹⁰ Board of Inspectors, *Second Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and the Reports of the Superintendent and Physician to the Board of Inspectors* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1874), 40.

Felton explained in his second annual report that the HOC received a number of prisoners who should have been sent to other facilities, including the insane and poor. He advocated for the appointment of physicians at the police stations who could prevent such commitments. Doctors could examine those arrested and evaluate their physical and mental condition to ascertain if a sentence to the HOC would be appropriate. Felton also called for police justices of the city to be send many of the poor arrested to county hospitals or almshouses if needed.¹¹¹ The City Physician seconded Felton's pleas and urged that the board make arrangements for many to be sent to the poor house, hospital, or insane asylum.¹¹²

The Board of Inspectors frequently echoed the same sentiments. In 1879, inspectors stated that although the Washingtonian Home was created to treat and hold persons with "delirium tremens," no HOC prisoners were sent there. Of the many individuals convicted of alcohol-related charges, police justices only directly sent eleven people confined at police stations to the private facility. Justices sent most alcohol-related misdemeanants to the HOC.¹¹³ Established in 1863, the facility was partially funded by fines and licenses fees collected.¹¹⁴ Most money to operate the private institution came

¹¹¹ Ibid., 38.

¹¹² Ibid., 44.

¹¹³ Washingtonian Home received ten percent of money received for liquor licenses. *Seventh Annual Report*, 8-10.

¹¹⁴ "Alcoholics Home is 100 Years Old; Sister Hospital Plans Expansion," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 November 1963, N3, final edition; "The Washingtonian Home," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 March 1867, 2, final edition.

from donations and boarding fees collected from inmates.¹¹⁵ Such fees most likely would not be collected from those sentenced by the police justices, most who ended up in the HOC “worked” off their fines due to the city. Administrators of the Washingtonian Home did not want to provide their services to those who could not pay.

Felton gave readers a glimpse into the cells in his later reports to urge the council to act. He alerted the Board of Inspectors specifically, but aldermen more generally, that the air quality of the jail was poor. He explained that the cells only had a door opening and a small ventilating flue that allowed for air exchange. He wrote that although outlets reached to the roof, no system of forced ventilation was put into place, meaning that air was not quickly replaced in the building. When opened, windows at the front of the blocks alleviated the situation in warmer months. However, during colder seasons, the ventilation was often blocked to cut down on heating expenses of the HOC. This resulted in air that he described as “absolutely foul and poisonous.”¹¹⁶ He elaborated further by pointing out that all of the male cells contained two prisoners at some point during the year; over half of cells continuously held two.¹¹⁷

By 1881, some cells held as many as three prisoners simultaneously. One day 742 males were confined in 288 cells at the HOC.¹¹⁸ For the first time, Felton urged for not only an addition for female inmates, but also a structure to accommodate 500 additional

¹¹⁵ *Seventh Annual Report*, 8-10.

¹¹⁶ *Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1881), 27-28.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹¹⁸ The exact date was not given in Felton’s report. *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1882), 26.

males.¹¹⁹ The City Physician and Board of Inspectors echoed Felton's call in their reports. Dr. French Moore stated that cells held two, and often three, with increasing frequency. This "evil" was "conducive to a very bad sanitary condition."¹²⁰

However, despite the overcrowding, the city never appropriated funds until 1886. While the House of Correction was unharmed during the Chicago fire, many other public buildings were and city funds went to those needs first. Finally, on March 3, 1886, the City Council appropriated \$100,000 for additional construction to the institution.¹²¹ The council used the money to add two buildings, which contained 300 more cells along with administrative offices. In order to save on costs, city officials used prisoner labor to build the addition.¹²²

The first building was two stories high, with an octagon rotunda in the rear. The three-story structure was 75 feet by 75 feet. In addition to the rotunda, the first addition had a western wing for a kitchen and other facilities. The second building was joined to the original HOC by the first (now the central) structure. In addition, it had three wings, one attached to the rotunda, and the other two connected to the initial edifice. The wing which linked to the rotunda contained a kitchen, storerooms, chapel, and a school room. The other two annexes that connected to the main building held cells. Both structures

¹¹⁹ *Tenth Annual Report*, p. 27.

¹²⁰ *Eleventh Annual Report*, 43.

¹²¹ "The City Budget," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 March 1886, 12, final edition.

¹²² Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 12.

were to follow the original design of the HOC in order to blend in. They were constructed of brick with rock trim.¹²³

The multiple additions of cell houses were only part of the structural changes to the HOC site. Another notable change included the physical separation of the HOC from the surrounding area and city environs. As early as 1874, members of the Board endorsed Felton's request for a wall to surround the facility. Felton proposed the wall in order to limit prisoner escapes and that it be built from brick manufactured on site. The use of prisoners' labor also appealed to the council which could not expend money on non-essential construction. The wall was completed by 1875.¹²⁴ As the city grew up around the building, administrators enclosed the site, making it more prison-like than ever before.

Economics in the Early HOC

Costs continually plagued the HOC. The institution never fully achieved the self-sufficiency that administrators and city officials desired. Originally, the HOC was to utilize prisoner labor in order to meet expenses. However, outside contracts for work proved inconsistent. Sensitive to the costs to the city for the maintenance of the institution, annual reports by the inspectors and superintendents specified how the HOC was still an improvement over its predecessor. In January 1876, inspectors detailed that although \$52,292.28 had been expended on rations since the HOC's opening, under the

¹²³ Ibid., 12-13.

¹²⁴ *Second Annual Report*, 25, 40; *Third Annual Report*, 5.

previous system, the amount would have equaled \$139,116.42.¹²⁵ Four years later, the savings was listed at \$180,455.88.¹²⁶ Savings amounted to a staggering \$324,773.35 as of January 1884. In addition to costing the city less money for provisioning inmates than under the Bridewell system, the HOC provided “hard labor, good diet, humane discipline, and kind treatment.” More critically for the Board, the HOC required prisoners to “earn the cost of their care,” or at least a portion of it.¹²⁷

Constant employment of those detained in the HOC presented numerous problems to Felton and the Boards of Inspectors. Unlike state prisons, inmates at the HOC often served short sentences, making it difficult to contract for their labor. Felton and inspectors frequently stated that prisoners did not stay long enough within the HOC to learn how to perform the work, preventing them from contracting skilled jobs to the prisoners. Instead, they had to contract for unskilled, easier labor that prisoners could learn quickly. Contractors often hesitated to sign agreements with the HOC because they wanted a group of more permanent workers, not possible in an institution where most served terms of under a month.

Administrators attempted to hire out inmate labor at the House of Correction for both for private and public use. Private companies paid the HOC to lease workers under the contract labor and piece-price systems. Under the contract system, officials at the HOC agreed to let a private company lease inmates to work for a set daily rate. The HOC

¹²⁵ *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J. S. Thompson and Co., 1875), 5-6.

¹²⁶ *Eighth Annual Report*, 5.

¹²⁷ *Twelfth Annual Report*, 9, 11, 12.

provided guards for the prisoners, buildings and workshops where the work was done, along with power and light. In return, the company provided the required machines, materials, and supervisors to ensure the quality of workmanship.¹²⁸ Similarly, companies contracted with the HOC under the piece-price system. However, contractors provided only raw materials for production, and purchased back the finished products at a set rate.¹²⁹

City officials also tried to use the potential labor source at the HOC for public use under the public account and the city-use systems. The public account system financed the production of goods sold on the open market. Profits were credited to the city. Similarly, the city benefited under the city-use system whereby products made at the HOC were sold to various city agencies for potentially less than they could be purchased from private companies. Unlike the public account system, the goods created under the city-use system did not directly compete with free labor.¹³⁰

31. ¹²⁸ The contract labor system was used from 1871 to 1914. Stern, "Chicago House of Correction,"

¹²⁹ The piece work system existed from 1880 to 1914. Ibid., p. 32.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 32-33.



Figure 8. “Men Pushing Wheelbarrows in the Bridewell Prison Stone Quarries,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1907. DN-0004990, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

City and penal officials faced additional problems in keeping HOC inmates continually employed. Board members often commented on the inmate population as “incompetent” or unable to do physical labor. To reconcile these difficulties, the first Board of Inspectors selected brick making as the industry of the early HOC.¹³¹ However, they struggled to obtain and maintain outside contracts for the brick. In its 1873 report, the Board urged the city to use brick manufactured at the HOC for municipal projects.¹³² Some brick would also be used to “improve” the HOC facilities, meaning that the city only purchased materials for the improvements. Labor included changes to the grounds and buildings, raising food for the institution, manufacturing clothes and shoes for the

¹³¹ *First Annual Report*, 4.

¹³² *Second Annual Report*, 25.

prisoners.¹³³ By the end of 1873, a workshop and barn were added along with 2,000 feet of a fence around the brickyard and garden. Stairways added at end of block of cells, seats in chapel, among other small improvements completed work for the year.¹³⁴ Not only did prisoners build on the HOC grounds, they also broke stone for streets, most notably California Avenue and Twenty-Sixth Street, making the HOC more accessible.¹³⁵

Many prisoners who did not work on projects at the HOC or stone-breaking made stockings, horsenets, or yarn, for which the HOC was paid by various contractors including A.C. Terry and George W. Powell and Co. However, trouble emerged between the HOC and the companies when the original contracts expired. Contractors preferred a stable inmate force while the HOC administrators wanted higher advances for labor promised.¹³⁶

In 1885, Amazon Hosiery Company contracted with the HOC to employ a large number of male inmates, but the business affiliation only lasted a few months. Board members argued that hosiery production did not compete with the trade unions, but resolutions passed by the council made it difficult for contractors like Amazon, or others, to use prisoner labor. Namely, on July 28, 1884, aldermen passed a resolution which prevented labor contracts at the HOC from being renewed with private companies. The resolution passed because the contract labor system was “detrimental to the best interests” of Chicago to have HOC inmates compete with “deserving poor” for work. As

¹³³ *First Annual Report*, 12-13.

¹³⁴ *Second Annual Report*, 24.

¹³⁵ *Third Annual Report*, 5; *Tenth Annual Report*, 28.

¹³⁶ *Eleventh Annual Report*, 11.

a result, prisoners within the HOC could not manufacture anything which directly competed against labor in the city.¹³⁷

Since some companies' contracts either expired or were revoked, at the time of the report, the board wrote that no male prisoners were engaged in productive labor.¹³⁸ Considering the lack of productive labor at the facility, inspectors speculated that the HOC would require additional funding for the coming year. Again, they reiterated the difficulties in obtaining any labor contracts, especially with the new city council resolutions. They then called upon the city council to direct them as to appropriate labor for those confined inside.¹³⁹ In doing so, they highlighted their inability to comply with aldermen's wishes while ensuring the self-sufficiency of the HOC.

Administrators of the House of Correction hoped to employ all prisoners. However, unlike the Illinois State Penitentiary or other state prisons, they had a special challenge: to find suitable work for its male and female inmates who only served sentences less than a year. In other words, they needed to find work that could be done with less training and had to find work for both its men and women.¹⁴⁰ Of course, the work had to be designed in such a way that inmates could not escape (either on campus or with guard supervision).

¹³⁷ City Files: 1884 536 A 07/28.

¹³⁸ *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1886), 8-9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁴⁰ "Editorial," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 28 August 1870, p. 2.

Despite such troubles, board members emphasized their success in achieving self-sufficiency during the 1880s. For the years 1880 to 1885, reports showed income exceeded expenses. Part of this was attributed to accounting practices which applied to the general expenses of the HOC and often ignored the cost of improvements or construction to the facility.¹⁴¹ When taken into account, costly additions reveal that the HOC was not self-sufficient.

The facility's cost represented a small portion of the recorded city's budget even though the HOC was not self-sufficient. Accounting practices of the nineteenth century mask the actual expenses of the HOC, but an examination of the expenses at the HOC compared to the expenditures for the city reveals that the HOC comprised a small percentage of the total. These figures were incomplete because they often did not include the construction and additions made to the HOC. Even though the detention of misdemeanants and city violators comprised a minimal component of the budget, overall law enforcement expenses constituted one of the largest expenditures by the city.¹⁴²

Costs of operating the HOC increased dramatically at the end of the nineteenth century. In order to get a better idea of the relative costs of the HOC, Table 4 shows the recorded "expenses" of the HOC as recorded each year by the city treasurer (and the percentage of the city's total.) Table 5 highlights the total money required to operate the HOC, including the amount brought in from prisoner labor and fines (not included in the city's accounting of HOC revenue). This total is then compared to the amounts expended,

¹⁴¹ *Ninth Annual Report, Tenth Annual Report, Eleventh Annual Report, Twelfth Annual Report, Fourteenth Annual Report.*

¹⁴² City Files: 1898/1898 3322 03/14.

including salaries and provisions, revealing the amount expended each year for the HOC. Usually this number totaled more than the amount annually appropriated to the institutions. The use of prisoner labor helped offset many of the costs of operating the HOC, but most years the HOC failed to generate enough revenue to cover operating expenses. Expenditures were particularly high during years in which additions were constructed. Costs steadily rose in the 1870s and 1880s under Felton's administration, indicative of future trends.

Table 4. Early HOC and Police Expenses as Percentage of City Finances

Year	Total City Expenses	HOC Expenses	Percent of Total for HOC	Police Expenses	Percent of Total for Police
1873 to 1874	10,896,879.78	14,148.42	0.13%	779,082.24	7.15%
1874 to 1875	17,911,135.58	6,393.53	0.04%	1,239,228.55	6.92%
1875	13,859,201.14	2726.86	0.02%	1,322,349.42	9.54%
1878	5,967,295.83	6,977.95	0.12%	615,177.49	10.31%
1879	6,225,758.44	18.29	<.01%	1,173,931.48	18.86%
1881	8,906,352.40	n/a	n/a	580,182.72	6.51%
1882	8,450,099.55	68,842.54	0.81%	755,479.26	8.94%
1883	9,683,465.26	66,559.69	0.69%	708,136.80	7.31%
1884	13,307,370.85	61,785.76	0.46%	776,576.97	5.84%
1885	13,141,556.21	60,879.75	0.46%	1,080,146.19	8.22%
1887	16,023,160.76	111,554.27	0.70%	1,304,545.55	8.14%
1890	22,713,429.46	97,887.32	0.43%	2,193,879.15	9.66%

Note: Expenses as recorded by the city treasurer for years available. For years 1873-1874 and 1874-1875, the fiscal year was dated April 1 to March 31; for 1875, April 1 to December 31. For the remaining years, the fiscal year was from January 1 to December 31.

City expenses escalated during Felton's tenure at the HOC. Many of the expenses can be attributed to the devastation of the 1871 fire. For most years, schools and appropriations for the Board of Public Works constituted the largest expenditures for the city. Outlays to the HOC were often small, less than one percent of the city's budget. Until 1881, the city spent more on the public library than on the HOC; this changed after 1881, but the two expenses were comparable. In contrast, amounts expended for the police department constituted a much larger portion of expenses.

Table 5. Comparative City Expenses.

Year	Total City Expenses	HOC Expenses	Police Expenses	School Expenses	Public Works	Public Library
1873 to 1874	10,896,879.78	14,148.42	779,082.24	472,830.85	1,502,447.70	19,091.49
1874 to 1875	17,911,135.58	6,393.53	1,239,228.55	483,412.25	2,807,733.49	64,953.10
1875	13,859,201.14	2726.86	1,322,349.42	457,235.37	2,154,028.36	28,476.75
1878	5,967,295.83	6,977.95	615,177.49	451,627.93	46,370.83	28,991.23
1879	6,225,758.44	18.29	1,173,931.48	223,226.86	10,273.75	27,533.24
1881	8,906,352.40	n/a	580,182.72	667,867.47	849,544.03	50,092.64
1882	8,450,099.55	68,842.54	755,479.26	725,025.51	880,076.39	44,719.25
1883	9,683,465.26	66,559.69	708,136.80	807,583.82	821,058.50	53,049.01
1884	13,307,370.85	61,785.76	776,576.97	879,416.24	1,384,793.33	55,037.26
1885	13,141,556.21	60,879.75	1,080,146.19	764,056.66	72,978,953.00	57,724.63
1887	16,023,160.76	111,554.27	1,304,545.55	1,193,645.53	1,302,789.38	70,012.42
1890	22,713,429.46	97,887.32	2,193,879.15	1,784,506.18	1,795,759.53	92,548.43

Note: Taken from Treasurers' Reports for years available. School and Public works comprised the largest expenditures for the city. As a reference, the library was often a more minor expense.

However, such numbers need to be regarded with care. Again, nineteenth-century accounting practices in regards to expenditures are somewhat misleading (for all departments). Despite seemingly negligible amounts for the HOC, more money was required to operate the facility, as shown below. If the annual reports with their financial statistics are examined more closely, the issue becomes more complicated. Certainly, money “earned” by inmates helped defray some expenses. However, once the fines collected at the HOC are taken out (they were not actually credited to the HOC), along with the city’s annual appropriation for the institution, the true expense to the city can be more fully ascertained. Doing so reveals that the HOC often required considerable financial outlay for operating expenses. Except for 1881, administrators of the HOC depended on financial assistance from the city to ensure continued operation. Additions to the HOC required even more money to operate the structure.

Felton and members of the board of inspectors continually urged for the use of prisoner labor. Receipts from prisoner labor defrayed some of the expenses of managing the HOC, but also offered administrators another tool of discipline within the facility. Without work, inspectors argued that inmates would enjoy their time at the institution. Order provided by work prevented them from being too comfortable as a result of “discipline being lax, food being good, warm rooms, and clean beds” provided for them.¹⁴³ Work served as another form of control to be utilized at the jail. According to

¹⁴³ *Fourteenth Annual Report*, p. 12.

the Felton and the inspectors, “nothing is as deterrent to an offender as severity of discipline and hard labor.”¹⁴⁴

Table 6. Early HOC receipts and Expenditures

Year	Money Received				Expenses			Net Difference
	Labor	Chicago City Fines*	Total (w/o Approp.)	Total (w/o Approp. or Fines)	Provisions	Salaries	Total	
1872	12,194.57	6,522.00	29,098.53	22,576.53	12,608.15	12,003.57	56,561.80	(33,985.27)
1873	5,067.05	9,076.00	44,310.57	35,234.57	14,135.76	13,339.18	94,710.34	(59,475.77)
1874	2,444.50	3,466.00	26,484.10	23,018.10	13,509.56	14,821.47	60,830.48	(37,812.38)
1875	2,822.56	2,169.00	38,438.83	35,819.83	11,575.73	17,547.66	55,913.24	(20,093.41)
1876	2,831.07	1,025.00	46,183.65	46,158.65	11,262.87	17,432.41	51,471.37	(5,312.72)
1877	13,223.59	710.50	20,647.07	19,936.57	13,538.23	16,799.14	53,042.44	(33,105.87)
1878	20,532.90	513.50	32,473.90	31,960.40	10,290.51	14,617.82	44,286.98	(12,326.58)
1879	15,790.59	1,356.70	32,251.29	30,790.59	8,751.47	14,699.99	32,695.92	(1,905.33)
1880	40,701.23	3,064.95	45,890.98	42,683.03	14,049.44	16,338.05	56,380.28	(13,697.25)
1881	39,479.60	3,824.50	105,846.14	101,840.94	16,571.81	17,160.21	72,800.01	29,040.93
1882	56,338.87	4,999.65	72,008.89	64,786.74	16,319.03	18,187.06	72,673.70	(7,886.96)
1883	46,393.00	6,486.00	66,108.84	59,397.84	16,640.03	19,281.73	64,507.08	(5,109.24)
1884	42,964.08	7,548.40	60,792.06	53,243.66	15,132.72	19,587.78	60,684.78	(7,441.12)
1885	55,007.40	5,458.85	63,753.31	58,294.46	15,959.44	16,875.29	61,854.20	(3,559.74)
1886	46,067.34	7,564.45	62,938.49	40,192.29	17,737.10	17,664.67	102,235.87	(62,043.58)
1887	51,430.38	10,663.10	66,473.95	55,810.85	19,966.83	21,796.13	127,096.75	(71,285.90)
1888	35,597.44	12,264.50	58,461.14	46,196.64	22,001.34	24,195.78	137,820.99	(91,624.35)
1889	38,589.76	11,209.00	70,353.89	59,144.89	19,098.70	25,505.22	124,875.51	(65,730.62)
1890	38,362.47	13,784.13	60,477.33	46,693.20	24,496.99	20,477.46	99,531.25	(52,838.05)

Source: Annual Reports, 1872-1890

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Felton's tenure at the HOC ended when he retired in 1890.¹⁴⁵ His superintendency marked a transition in the city's administration of carceral facilities. Members of the board of inspectors were nominated because of their political or ethnic background, but Felton was appointed to the position of superintendent based on his previous experience at the Erie County Penitentiary. Felton was the day-to-day manager of the HOC, overseen by the Board of Inspectors. He exercised power in administering the HOC that none of his successors experienced. Felton also placed a new emphasis on the role of labor and order. Work served a dual purpose: to employ and reform inmates. Felton created the HOC as a detention facility to adhere to his penal philosophies as much as possible. His efforts were limited by city finances and procedural elements of the city courts. Despite these limitations, Felton's tenure ensured that the HOC began to transition to a more permanent and professional detention facility. The transformation into a more prison-like facility continued with Felton's successors.

Felton's tenure signified a change from the council's administration of the Bridewell. Aldermen oversaw construction and implementation of new governance at the HOC, but relinquished much of this interference upon the start of Felton's tenure. Felton, a penal professional, largely administered the facility as he wanted. Members of the Board of Inspectors frequently endorsed his administration in quarterly and annual reports. The City Council, greatly involved in the planning of the facility, only learned of his administration in these reports, often filed in the proceeding files with little comment from the Committee on the Bridewell.

¹⁴⁵ *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M.B. McAbee, Printer, 1891), 3.

In many ways, Felton administered the HOC as the facility it was designed to be: a workhouse for minor offenders. From 1871 to 1890, he managed the HOC as the aldermen originally intended. Most critically, inmates (both male and female) at the early HOC were more fully employed than at any other time. Criticisms of the HOC appeared, but did not largely affect his operation of the facility.¹⁴⁶ Unlike the Bridewell and the later HOC, Felton truly administered the facility “in his own way.” His tenure was the longest of all HOC superintendents, and in some ways, highlighted the stability he brought to the position. The successors of Felton did not have as much control over the administration of the HOC as he did. In contrast, the twenty-five years following Felton’s term were characterized by considerable changes, often brought by reformers, mayors, and public outcry over treatment of inmates detained within.

¹⁴⁶ Critiques of the facility during Felton’s tenure will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRIME DOES NOT PAY:

THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION AFTER FELTON (1890-1915)



Figure 9. "Exterior View of Bridewell Prison," *Chicago Daily News*, 1903. DN-0000314, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Charles Felton's tenure at the HOC ended with accusations of political wrangling and mismanagement at the HOC. The Board of Inspectors consisted of Democratic Mayor DeWitt Clinton Cregier, original inspector Louis Wahl, Walter Newberry, and W. H. Ford in February 1890. Members of the board met to discuss allegations that Felton neglected his duties as superintendent to pursue personal business opportunities with the

Western Arms and Cartridge Company. Wahl and Newberry acknowledged discussing the situation, but did not ask for, or demand, Felton's immediate dismissal.¹

Cregier finally requested Felton's resignation on April 28, 1890 and Felton quickly complied. The transfer of power occurred the next day when Felton and Mark Crawford attended a meeting with the Board of Inspectors at the Mayor's office. There, Cregier appointed two new men as officers at the HOC: Crawford as the new superintendent and F.H. Jones as the new assistant superintendent. Crawford was not appointed for previous experience in law enforcement or detention facilities. Born in 1850, Crawford arrived in Chicago in 1878 and initially worked as a printer, and later as the editor of *Switchmen's Journal*. He was a printer by trade and president of the Trade and Labor Assembly of Chicago. Although he had not held a political office prior to his appointment, he was the Democratic candidate for Cook County recorder in 1889.² Cregier's appointment of Crawford was politically motivated, signaling a new era of administration at the HOC.

Felton ran the HOC as an "expert" who emphasized the centrality of inmate labor within the facility. Work served as a disciplinary measure, a way to structure the daily routine, and a vehicle to defray expenses. Once appointed, he ran the facility with little input from the Board of Inspectors and city leaders; his tenure was stable and power unquestioned. After 1890, politics again entered the debates about administration of the city's detention center. After Felton's resignation, most superintendents served for a few

¹ "Will C.E. Felton be Removed?" *Chicago Tribune*, 19 February 1890, 3, final edition.

² "Col. Felton has Resigned," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 April 1890, p. 3, final edition.

years. Only one took the post with any previous experience with carceral facilities; their appointments often depended on their political affiliation and that of the mayor and inspectors. City reformers had not focused much attention on Felton's HOC, but after his resignation, administration of the HOC attracted more criticism because of the contracting of prisoner labor, the political nature of superintendent appointments, and the arguably high recommitment rate of inmates. For many, the city's management of the HOC simply did not work. Progressives targeted the city's criminal justice system, including the HOC, in an attempt to better meet the needs of the individuals detained within. However, the effectiveness of reforms were limited by the lack of expertise of administrators, the political nature of the post, and managers' inability to lower expenses through inmate labor.

Crawford immediately addressed the most pressing problems at the HOC, despite the questionable circumstances surrounding his appointment. First, he needed to replace a number of officers who left upon Felton's resignation. Crawford appointed a new chief clerk, assistant clerk, overseer, night watchman, three guards, and three matrons.³ Next, he focused on the overcrowded conditions. Crawford proposed retrofitting HOC buildings to relieve the overcrowded conditions inexpensively, arguing that the smallpox hospital on site could be used for female prisoners since they rarely filled the cells designed for them. He next argued that the newly-freed cells could be used to separate first and young offenders from the older, more criminal male population.⁴ A few months

³ "Changes at the Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 May 1890, p. 3, final edition.

⁴ "Visited the Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 July 1891, p. 8, final edition.

later, the Inspectors implemented a similar plan. They renovated the original administrative building into a dormitory for female inmates, freeing the original 200 cells for females to house male prisoners, bringing the total available cells for male inmates to 800.⁵

Proposals for alleviating overcrowding at the jail also came from political leaders of the city. In his 1891 address, Mayor Cregier called for the use of other institutions to house prisoners in some instances. He argued that ten of the eighteen deaths at the HOC the year before occurred within ten days of commitment. Cregier urged the City Council to consider allowing some inmates to be admitted to the hospital or the Washingtonian Home, designed to treat alcoholism.⁶ As Felton argued years earlier, the institution was partially funded by the city through fines collected.⁷ Police justices could not legally directly commit offenders to the Washingtonian Home without the consent of officers at the institution.⁸ Cregier argued that as the city partially funded the facility, it should have the right to detain those arrested for drunkenness there as well.⁹ Justices simply did not have the legal authority to sentence city violators to other facilities such as the

⁵ “Changes at the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 24 September 1891, p. 8, final edition; *Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M. H. Kendig, 1892), 30.

⁶ City Files: 1890/91 6932 4/27.

⁷ “The Washingtonian Home – An Appeal to the Public,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 October 1864, 4, final edition.

⁸ “The Washingtonian Home,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 March 1867, 2, final edition.; “Money Received From the City,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 29 December 1891, p. 2, final edition.

⁹ City Files: 1890/91 6932 4/27.

Washingtonian Home or the county poorhouse. As a result, the HOC continued to receive more commitments than it was designed to hold.

The inability to commit individuals to the HOC did not mean that city officials were powerless to the concerns of overcrowding. Cregier used his office to pardon individuals to help relieve the overcrowded conditions. As previous mayors had during the operation of the Bridewell, Cregier released some inmates in 1892 as a way to free up desperately needed space within.¹⁰ Despite such actions, the HOC continued to detain a larger population than its capacity, forcing the completion of the planned north cell house addition. Crawford oversaw the opening of the north cell house in 1892, along with the wall to enclose it. The wall, as with many earlier “improvements” to the site, was completed with inmate labor.¹¹

Mayor Hempstead Washburne also urged the council to remedy the conditions at the HOC in his 1892 annual message. He endorsed Crawford’s management and commended his efforts to educate the young confined inside. However, Washburne categorically lamented the overcrowded quarters at the jail. Reminding the council that numerous annual reports pressed for additions to the facility, he declared that it was “little better than the famous Black Hole of Calcutta.”¹² One year later, he again appealed to the council to appropriate funds in order to enlarge the facility.¹³

¹⁰ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and Reports of the Superintendent and City Physician to the Board* (Chicago: M. H. Kendig, Printer, 1893), 33.

¹¹ Ibid., 34.

¹² City Files: 1892/93 0003 4/18.

Dr. James Todd similarly proposed other alternatives to help alleviate deaths at the HOC in his 1894 report. Todd stated that forty prisoners who were sent to the HOC Detention Hospital ended up being transferred to various asylums. Seven others were sent to the County Infirmary during the year.¹⁴ Some of those transferred were infected with smallpox during their detainment. Exposure to the disease resulted from the location of the city's smallpox hospital within the HOC grounds which the city opened in 1874.¹⁵ Todd contended that the proximity to the HOC inmates meant that HOC funds had to be expended in order to treat the twenty inmates infected with the disease that year. He argued that most, fifteen of the individuals, were infected during their confinement at the HOC. Todd argued that HOC resources could be saved by simply admitting sick inmates to other institutions initially and by moving the smallpox hospital away from the HOC.¹⁶

Mayors, superintendents, city physicians, and inspectors continually complained about the ordinances by which individuals were sentenced to the HOC. Superintendent Mark Crawford urged the Mayor and Justices of Chicago to handle some of the "Breach of the Peace" cases by treating them for alcoholism, rather than simply sending them to the HOC. He argued that habitual drunkenness needed to be handled as a disease.¹⁷ Crawford further pointed out, as Dr. Todd had, that many inmates who should have been

¹³ City Files: 1893/94 0097 4/17.

¹⁴ Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: William C. Hollister and Brother, 1895), 45.

¹⁵ City Files: 1874 0643 A 03/26. "Report of the Committee on Bridewell of the Common Council on Resolution Concerning Removal of Smallpox Hospital."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁷ *Twentieth Annual Report*, 30.

sent to county institutions, because of various physical or mental ailments, cost the city taxpayers money. Not only did the HOC provide medical care for them, but they could not be employed in the numerous industries of the jail.¹⁸

Crawford, as his predecessor before, also continually complained against sending those sentenced to fines of ten dollars or less to the facility. He argued that such fines were often given to two types of people: first offenders or “rounders,” individuals who had served multiple sentences at the institution. Crawford opined that first offenders should rather be held overnight at the police station or subject to “a lecture by a police magistrate,” instead of the HOC. According to him, imprisonment at the HOC resulted in contact with other prisoners, making them “of the same thought and feeling as those that come often.” Prisoners frequently detained were beyond hope as they returned multiple times to the site. Crawford reported that over half (fifty-one percent) had been in prison before. He commented that such statistics did “not speak eloquently of the efficacy of our whole prison system.”¹⁹

Crawford further argued that imprisonment for small fines resulted in a large financial burden to the city. Most inmates (sixty-five percent) received from the police magistrates assessed a fine of ten dollars or less. Detention per prisoner cost thirty-five cents a day, but short-term inmates did not provide much labor to the city. Rather, because many were sick upon commitment, they required medicine or other medical

¹⁸ Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: William C. Hollister and Brother, 1897), 29.

¹⁹ *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: William C. Hollister and Brother, 1896), 25, 26.

attention. Inspectors also advocated against the imprisonment for non-payment of fines in 1896, emphasizing the expense of detaining such inmates at the facility.²⁰

Reports by the Board of Inspectors reinforced many of these complaints as well. Inspectors pressed the City Council to reform the fine system. Claiming that small fines equaled short sentences, the 1902 Board suggested two primary reforms. First, they reasoned that the physical condition of many offenders should permit them to be sent to the hospital. Second, they implored magistrates to consider previous commitments when imposing a sentence. Many individuals served multiple terms at the HOC. Such recommitments could be reduced by imposing longer terms during which the individual could be “reformed” at the institution.²¹

First superintendent Felton had contended that the fine system resulted in problems as well. According to his analysis, if an offender was arrested without much publicity, he or his friends could request a lesser charge, resulting in a smaller fine. If such an arrangement was not agreed to, then the justice could either “discharge the offender or send him the grand jury.” He claimed that if a police justice were to be “strict,” then he would gain notoriety as “hard,” ensuring that chronic offenders would request a change in venue to avoid punishment in that justice’s court. Such a venue change would also result in lighter sentences (and lesser fines) by more lenient magistrates. This was unlikely to occur as some justices earned their salary based on the

²⁰ Ibid.,5.

²¹ Board of Inspectors, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1903), 10.

amount of fines imposed, meaning that if he imposed higher fines, he would decide fewer cases, resulting in fewer fees, ultimately reducing his own income.²²

Critics argued that some individuals could have avoided the HOC but for the failure of the city justice system. Carrie Howard was released by Judge James Goggin on December 14, 1892 when she related her experience. After being fined, she was taken directly to the HOC and never given a chance to pay her fine. She appealed for release, granted by Goggin. When issuing the writ for her release, Goggin stated that such practices were common.²³

Others complained that the police magistrates simply hurried proceedings and hearings. Some contended that they engaged in private work after hearing city cases. Instead, detractors proposed that magistrates should hold two sessions of court per day and spend the time more carefully considering the circumstances of the individuals in front of them. Critics argued that justices failed to differentiate between first and previous offenders.²⁴

Members of the Anti-Crime Committee faulted both the police courts and the HOC in their 1904 report. They stated in particular that the Harrison Street Police Court was too busy. The two magistrates, John E. Caverly and J.K. Prindiville, often handled sixty to one hundred cases in a morning session. As a result of the quick nature of cases, the committee lamented inconsistent sentencing between trivial and major violations.

²² *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1883), 17.

²³ "Gains Her Freedom," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 December 1892, p. 16, final edition.

²⁴ "Justice Courts Roundly Scored," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 April 1904, p. 3, final edition.

They claimed that a young man who was arrested at a lunch counter for the first time was fined \$100, but a woman frequently arrested had been charged with robbery and disorderly conduct only received a ten-dollar fine. Both were sent to the HOC, despite the young man's previously "clean" record. Perhaps this was due to the quickness of "trials" at the Clark Street Station.²⁵

The committee placed blame for the overcrowded condition of the HOC on the police courts which hurried through cases. In order to ensure that magistrates more thoroughly assessed the cases before them, the committee recommended they be required to give up their private practices. Once they fully devoted their days to handling cases, they would have more time to determine the particular sentence needed for an individual case. The committee did not stop with reforms for the court system. They also proposed that guards and employees of the HOC should meet a higher standard than required by the Civil Service Commission.²⁶

Historian Michael Willrich has examined the development of the Municipal Court system, arguing that the creation of the Municipal Court transformed the city court system into one that extended beyond the court. Through the Morals Court, Boys Court, and the Court of Domestic Relations, judicial officers entered into citizens' lives to determine the larger causes and effects of the cases brought before judges. From 1871 to 1915, most inmates at the HOC were sent by the police justices. Changes at the HOC and

²⁵ Members of the committee included Dr. R.A. White, Howard Gross, Dr. C.E. Bentley, John F. Holland, and Albert N. Eastman. "Find Justice a Joke," *Chicago Tribune*, 19 April 1904, p. 1, final edition.

²⁶ "Justice Courts Roundly Score," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 April 1904, p. 3, final edition.

the Municipal Court reflect growing concerns over crime and the city's increased role in administering justice based increasingly on social and economic factors.²⁷

City leaders also attempted to reform many detained within the HOC, especially juvenile males. Treatment of male juveniles in the court system and the HOC troubled many reformers, culminating in the John Worthy School (JWS). In February 1892, Helen L. Wood spoke at a meeting of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). She deplored the manner in which young offenders were handled at the HOC:

One boy I remember was arrested for some petty theft and placed in a cell with an old man. When he got out we hunted him up. He told us with a swagger that he had learned a good deal while in jail – a good deal more, he said, than he ought to know. We took charge of him and helped him what we could and he is doing well now outside of Chicago. The whole practice should be stopped short.²⁸

Often, juvenile offenders were placed in the same cells as older, hardened criminals. Housing young, impressionable offenders with hardened criminals meant that the boys potentially emerged from the HOC with knowledge to commit more serious offenses than those for which they were committed. To prevent such instruction from occurring, she urged city, or state, officials to address the problem by separating younger inmates from older ones in the jail.

City police justices could only send younger offenders to the HOC. Such limitations meant that young offenders often received different treatment by the police justices themselves. Often, the arrested boys were brought before a justice without a parent or guardian. At this point, criminal charges were changed to city violations, such

²⁷ Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Preface.

²⁸ "Is a Veritable School of Crime," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 February 1892, p. 2, final edition.

as “disorderly,” after which a guilty plea was entered. Once a fine was imposed, the violator was confined to the HOC to work off the fine at fifty cents per day. According to J. F. Geeting at a meeting of the Social Science Club, magistrates used city ordinances to confine young offenders who otherwise would not be held accountable for the crime originally committed.²⁹

Some justices found ways to punish juveniles without sending them to a reformatory or the later JWS. Justice James Dooley, for example, threatened violence and used confinement to discipline juveniles brought before him. In one instance he made three boys under twelve years old stand in front of him and hold their hands above their heads until they begged to be relieved. Dooley often threatened young violators of city ordinances with indefinite confinement in a dark cell in the basement. He left them there for a period of time until they would cry for release. In another case, he threatened three young Polish boys with hanging for their crimes. Using a police interpreter, he announced to them and their mothers that they would hang the next day. After sending them away, he had a policeman “release” them instead of taking them to their punishment. The *Tribune* published his actions in an article which highlighted the “advantages” of such tactics. The author intoned that such methods instilled enough fear to prevent future violations and avoided confinement (and corruption by others) at the HOC.³⁰

²⁹ Since offenders between the ages of seven and fourteen could only be found guilty if it was proven that the individual understood the nature of that crime, finding them guilty of violating a city ordinance eliminated that requirement. As such he argued such confinements were inherently illegal. “Juvenile ‘Criminals,’” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 1892, p. 4, final edition.

³⁰ “Reform by Fear,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 October 1898, p. 46, final edition.

Some reformers and political leaders proposed a number of plans to reform young offenders through public and private facilities. Rural Glen Farm, located near Glenwood, was one such institution. Efforts for the farm's creation were led by Oscar Dudley, a member of the Illinois Humane Society. In 1885, he advocated for a law passed by the Illinois state legislature. The law allowed private training schools to be created where any vagrant, delinquent, or neglected boy could be sent. Two years later, eight city leaders applied for a charter school to establish an industrial training school for boys. When it opened, early inmates to the institution found themselves in rented rooms of the Norwood Park hotel.³¹

Milton George offered a 300-acre farm to the group if they could raise the needed funds for buildings and shops. The *Tribune* joined the reformers and used the newspaper as a forum to highlight the inadequate city and county institutions many juveniles found themselves in. Prompted by the news stories, the Women's Club of Chicago helped to raise the necessary funds. Rural Glen Farm included cottages for the inmates, workshops and a schoolhouse, along with animals, pastures, and fields. The farm accommodated 250 boys. Supporters argued that the farm was an efficient, low-cost facility. Boys worked to provide enough food for them. In addition to working and learning farm skills, the boys also gained from the environment of the farm itself. The fresh air, trees, and fields worked with the matron to help cleanse them physically. Unlike the HOC, the young men were only there temporarily, until proper homes were provided for them, away from the corruption of their old neighborhoods and associates. They stayed long enough to gain

³¹ Nora Marks, "To be Sent to Grass." *Chicago Tribune*, 2 March 1890, 25, final edition.

“manners and morals,” but not long enough “to become institutionalized.”³² Most males under the age of twenty-one continued to be sent to the HOC.

Crawford proposed a number of ways to relieve overcrowding, while also attempting to make the HOC less harsh for the imprisoned. For example, on Christmas Day 1890, he allowed inmates out of their cells to mingle freely while enjoying a holiday program. The musical recital accompanied a holiday dinner of chicken and plum pudding. Gifts to the inmates were provided by a group of Evanston women. The young male inmates were given candies, fruits, and nuts; females received handkerchiefs.³³ Crawford also worked to create a library at the HOC. After six months, he had collected 1,300 books for the inmates of the institution.³⁴

Crawford also instituted religious services on Sundays. Reaching out to local Protestant and Catholic leaders, he urged them to give sermons for HOC inmates. According to Reverend William B. Leach prisoners were “attentive audiences. He also credited services, his included, in being “instrumental in leading many of the bridewell prisoners to better lives.”³⁵ Attendance of services was voluntary, but prisoners were expected to be quiet and respectful. Perhaps Leach correctly attributed the content of his sermons for commanding the attention of prisoners, but the threat of punishment most likely was the reason.

³² Nora Marks, “To Be Sent to Grass,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 March 1890, p. 25, final edition.

³³ “Other Observances of the Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 December 1890, p. 2, final edition. Led by “Mrs. Lake of Evanston.”

³⁴ “Condition of the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 May 1891, p. 3, final edition.

³⁵ “For the Manual Training School,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 March 1892, p. 5, final edition.

Crawford did discipline inmates at the HOC as well. Though rarely mentioned, he stated that sixteen “solitary or punishment cells” were added in 1894. He remarked that cells, along with a greenhouse, were built by prisoners. Doing so, he reassured aldermen that no unnecessary funds were expended during construction.³⁶ Through his proposals to alleviate overcrowding and improve conditions inside, he emphasized his attempts to lower costs.

Crawford’s early reports were often positive, but included recommendations for improvement of the facility. Crawford’s first report was particularly appreciative of the mayor and board of inspectors who hired him “without [his] having had any previous experience in prison work.”³⁷ He continually requested more cells to alleviate overcrowding, a school for the younger male inmates, and other sundry items for a more effective jail. However, by his seventh report to the council, Crawford wrote with increasing frustration that annual reports were only a “clerical duty required of the management by law, only to be cast in the waste basket.”³⁸ Crawford wrote in a desperate tone, stating that idleness at the HOC was bad for inmates physically and mentally. He argued that “[i]t would be more humane to behead those that become the wards of the state than to make mental and physical wrecks and industrial dwarfs out of them by

³⁶ *Twenty-Third Annual Report*, 34.

³⁷ *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M.B. McAbee, Printer, 1891), 32.

³⁸ *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report*, 24. The report was published in 1897. Crawford was replaced July 1, 1897 by Adolph Sturm.

forcing them into idleness.”³⁹ Crawford’s frustration also emerged in his attack at the rules governing the institution. He urged the City Council to “[t]ell prison managers what *may* be done in prisons and not constantly declare what *shall not*.” He continued by declaring that “[t]here cannot be successful management of a prison without the moral support, at least, of the people.”⁴⁰

Crawford soon faced the reality of his appointment. Despite his attempts to separate juveniles from older offenders and alleviate overcrowded conditions, he needed to appease the Board of Inspectors and mayor to retain his post. Politics factored into the later administration of the HOC, despite earlier attempts to eliminate political influence. Theoretically, the Board of Inspectors served the interests of the public as they did not receive compensation for their appointments. However, Superintendent Crawford faced calls for his replacement early on. In 1891, two Republicans and two Democrats composed the Board of Inspectors. Democrats Louis Wahl and W.H. Ford stated that he should remain in place, but Republican Mayor Washburn Hempstead argued otherwise.⁴¹ Hempstead, who succeeded Democrat DeWitt Creiger, wanted to appoint Miles Kehoe in place of Crawford, but lacked a majority of the inspectors, who were divided on party lines.⁴² Crawford avoided the 1891 call for his replacement, but was not immune. After Democrat Carter Harrison, Jr. was inaugurated as mayor in 1897, he replaced Crawford

³⁹ Ibid., 30.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The other Republican inspector, John Worthy remained neutral in his opinion of Crawford at this time. “Thinks it a Necessity,” *Chicago Tribune*, 12 June 1891, p. 8, final edition.

⁴² “Visited the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 July 1891, p. 8, final edition.

with Adolph Sturm.⁴³ According to the *Tribune*, Sturm was a free silver Democrat whose appointment was backed by “the liquor selling interests of the city.”⁴⁴

Similarly, Inspectors also faced political struggles with Harrison, Jr., even fellow Democrats. The post did not include a salary, but wrangling was still present. On October 25, 1901, Harrison demanded Adams A. Goodrich’s resignation. Goodrich, a Democrat, had attended a Tilden Democracy meeting the night before which attacked political patronage and Harrison’s administration. In a letter responding to the request for his resignation, Goodrich argued that he was appointed and reappointed by mayors of both political parties, including Harrison. He further stated that he would resign since “it is necessary for me to surrender my independence of thought and action, and to consult you, as Mayor, as to what political meetings I may or may not attend.” Harrison accepted the resignation by retorting, “I appreciate manifestation of independence, duty, and self-respect, but I do not approve of allowing or compelling men to associate with those whom they condemn.”⁴⁵

Adolph Sturm focused his efforts on lowering the expenses of running the HOC. He implemented a policy of bidding out for supplies in order to decrease expenditures.⁴⁶ To demonstrate his success, his first annual report broke down expenses for the year divided between Crawford’s tenure (from January 1 to June 30) and his tenure (July 1 to

⁴³ “Mr. Crawford to be Retired,” *Chicago Tribune*, 24 June 1897, p. 12, final edition.

⁴⁴ “Adolf Sturm Succeeds Crawford,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 June 1897, p. 12, final edition.

⁴⁵ “Mayor’s Ax for Tilden Head,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 October 1901, p. 2, final edition.

⁴⁶ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1898), 5.

December 31). Despite having received 399 more prisoners in his six-month term for the year, his expenses were \$7,760.80 lower than Crawford's. Sturm's most significant cost reductions were for meat for inmates and supplies for the Engineer's Department. Most departments had lower expenses for the second half of the year, except for groceries and vegetables for the inmates, which were higher.⁴⁷

Sturm emphasized programs designed to save the HOC, and by extension, the city money. He proposed the construction of a wall around the farm on the HOC property in 1899. Sturm argued that such a barrier would allow for committed boys to be trained to farm while at the institution. He pointed to the struggles of the industrial labor force as evidence that farm experience would be better than industrialized work for boys who would be released into the workforce. Furthermore, products grown at the site could be sold, recovering the expense of building the structure.⁴⁸

Like Felton had, Sturm envisioned his role as the Superintendent of the HOC as one that extended beyond the walls of the institution. Despite no previous penal experience, he theorized and proposed ideas with broader applications to prevent crime and related environmental and social effects. His suggestions involved increased local regulation and intervention. For example, in 1899, he proposed the licensing and oversight of prostitution. License fees could be used to pay for medical services for sick

⁴⁷ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁸ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1899), 31.

prostitutes, who were otherwise sent to the HOC at greater public expense, taxing the HOC's medical facilities.⁴⁹

Sturm also advocated censorship of crime literature and newspapers. Both mediums, he argued, sensationalized law-breaking and influenced younger offenders, in particular. Details of gruesome crimes, and even hangings of criminals, were a “pernicious influence on the criminal and ignorant classes.” Sturm also wanted less attention to be paid to the lives of the wealthy because he saw such reports as particularly detrimental to young females. They might want to have fine goods and engage in criminal activities in order to gain them.⁵⁰

Most significantly, Sturm proposed a radical program to help alleviate recommitments to the HOC. In a meeting with Mayor Harrison, Sturm suggested that upon release, inmates would receive cash. Recognizing that many newly-released prisoners often had difficulty securing work, Sturm argued the money would “start many of them on the road to reform.” Harrison, despite appointing him, refused to endorse Sturm's plan, contending that such support might start a cycle during which individuals would use the money to drink. The result would be another term in the HOC, at the end of which he would receive more funds to drink again, and so forth.⁵¹

State legislators and Chicagoans passed the Civil Service Act in 1895.⁵² Responding to accusations of political influence in city government, leaders implemented

⁴⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 32-33.

⁵¹ “Favors a \$10 Gift,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 December 1897, p. 10.

a system to ensure that individuals were qualified for the positions they held. Only those with the skills could hold many positions within city government.⁵³ Sloan expressed trepidation at the city's Civil Service system in 1899. While he generally approved of the testing because it "resulted in the securing of a better class of employes [sic]," he had his reservations.⁵⁴ He argued that no test could ascertain the character of a potential guard. Since the job required "a person of tact, good disposition, kindness and firmness; with ability to judge impartially; industrious, truthful and sober," he doubted that any examination could ensure such qualities. Rather, he thought that guards needed to exude these qualities in order to reform inmates by example of their good behavior. He alluded to tensions between the newer hires and himself by implying that they understood that if they passed the examination and were hired, they could only be fired upon a flagrant abuse of the rules. However, such tensions were alleviated when the Civil Service Commission allowed the Board of Inspectors to act as arbitrators in cases of employee suspensions or removal by Sloan. Sloan additionally thanked the Board for approving of his removal of officers during the year.⁵⁵

⁵² "The Triumph of Civil Service Reform," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 3 April 1895, 6, final edition.

⁵³ Debate about whether the superintendent of the HOC should be held to the Civil Service Act abounded as it was a supervisory position. Guards were held to the civil service requirements, but superintendents were not. *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and Reports of the Superintendent, City Physician and House Physician* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co, Printers, 1901), 13-14.

⁵⁴ *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 13.

⁵⁵ I have not found earlier use of uniforms within the HOC. However, policemen had uniforms before this period, making them identifiable from the common citizenry. *Ibid.*, 3, 14.

After two years, Sturm resigned as superintendent because Mayor Harrison appointed him Deputy Commissioner of Public Works.⁵⁶ Harrison quickly appointed John J. Sloan as his successor.⁵⁷ Sloan, as Crawford and Sturm before him, was a city Democrat.⁵⁸ However, Sloan's appointment may have been an effort by Harrison to better unite city Democrats under his leadership, as Sloan was often listed as a member of the "anti-Harrison" faction in city politics. Harrison did not support nationally-known William Jennings Bryan, but Sloan and others within Chicago did, very publicly.⁵⁹ At the time of the appointment, Sloan had no previous experience with carceral facilities and was also relatively young: thirty-one years old.⁶⁰

Sloan oversaw the construction of several major additions to the HOC site. These changes complemented internal reforms in order to maintain separation, order, and discipline at the jail. Sloan required guards to secure uniforms shortly after taking office and as a result, he wrote in his first annual report that they "present[ed] a neater and more of a military appearance."⁶¹ Reliance on a uniform served as a way to visually convey the professional status of the guards under his supervision. Sloan also changed prisoner garb

⁵⁶ "To Lay Tracks July 21," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1899, p. 12.

⁵⁷ "Mayor's Slate is Made," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 July 1899, p. 1, final edition.

⁵⁸ "Contest is Won by Sloan," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 July 1898, p. 12, final edition.

⁵⁹ "Rival Escorts Made Up," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 April 1899, p. 7, final edition.

⁶⁰ "John J. Sloan, Civic Builder, Dies," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 January 1927, p. 1, final edition.

⁶¹ Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1901), 7.

from brown to blue. He reported that the dark blue clothes looked better and also lowered the clothing expense of the jail.⁶²

Sloan implemented a number of changes designed to improve the facility's appearance and operation. Many of these aesthetic reforms included making the jail grounds appear neater and more park-like. In 1902, he added a number of trees, flowers, bushes and walkways on the site.⁶³ Some prisoners could march along the walkways on Sunday afternoons for outdoor exercise. "The good order and discipline maintained as they march six feet apart around this square shows their appreciation and they are careful to observe the regulations," Sloan wrote.⁶⁴ He also oversaw the completion of a whitewashing project begun the previous year. Sloan reported that as all walls had been whitewashed, some visitors referred to the HOC as the "White City," invoking the name from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair exhibit.⁶⁵ The term is instructive as the "White City" covered a fabricated vision of Chicago and the modern city. Similarly, the appearance of the HOC's white walls presented a gleaming façade, hiding the internal problems within the facility from public view.

The most prevalent problem within the HOC remained overcrowded conditions. Sloan oversaw a number of attempts to alleviate overcrowding. Some space opened up for male offenders with changes or additions made to accommodations for females or juveniles. In 1902, cells originally constructed for the John Worthy School were moved

⁶² *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 12.

⁶³ *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 16.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

and added on to the North Cell House. The addition meant that, at least temporarily, each male inmate had his own cell.⁶⁶ However, by July 1904, the HOC broke a record for the number of prisoners contained inside. That month, 1,924 men, women, and children were housed in a space designed for 1,550 people. Six hundred men were doubled up in cells. Not only was cell space at a premium, but beds were hard to come by as well. Twenty-seven women slept on the floor and an additional twenty-nine boys were without cots. According to Sloan, “We must have an extension of facilities [...] It is impossible to go on this way.”⁶⁷

More space was created with the opening of the Women’s Department in 1906. Nevertheless, this again failed to meet the needs of the inmate populations as men were still doubled up in the jail. In 1908, the Board appropriated \$40,000 for an additional cell house, completed two years later. The West Cell House, fifty feet by 250 feet long, contained 334 cells, each of which was seven feet by nine feet. Every cell had a window, water closet, and lavatory, unlike the original cells of the (now) South Cell House. As a more modern counter to the rest of the facility, officials boasted that the West Cell House was “well lighted and ventilated.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ With the addition of the JWS cells, the North Cell House contained 434 cells at this point. Ibid., 9.

⁶⁷ “Sleep on Floor in Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1904, 12, final edition.

⁶⁸ G. A. Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago: A Retrospect Covering a Half Century of Endeavor From the Founding of the Institution to the Present Time, 1871-1921* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 1921), 12, 22-23. With construction of the West Cell House, the capacity of the HOC in 1921 was: North, 434; South (original structure), 640; West, 334 and Women’s, 198 for a total of 1606 cells, each to hold one inmate. Claussenius, 27.

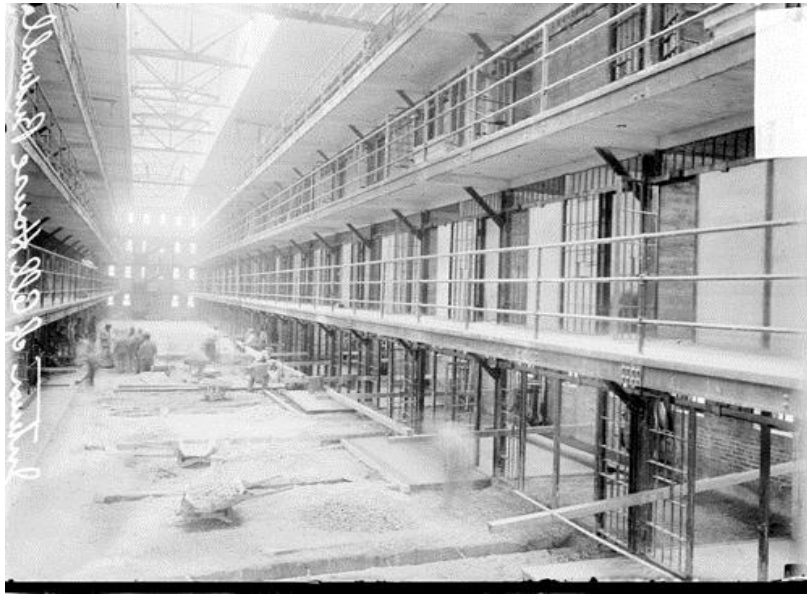


Figure 10. “Bridewell Prison, New Cellhouse under Construction, Laborers Working on the Interior,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1910. DN-0055674, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.



Figure 11. “Two Cells in the New Cell House, Chicago House of Correction,” *Chicago Daily News*, Jan. 30, 1911. DN-0056533, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Other structural changes meant a gradual physical separation of the institution from the city around it. Physically, the expansion of the city during the 1880s and 1890s meant that the HOC became surrounded by the urban landscape. However, administrators of the institution sought to more completely segregate the facility from the city itself. In 1903 and 1904, a brick wall was constructed to enclose the western part of the facility, bordered by present-day Sacramento Avenue. The new wall continued the original wall built in 1871 which enclosed the eastern portion of the facility, bordered by present-day California Avenue. The wall surrounded the quarry, and brick machine building and other buildings outside of the original enclosure. The final portion of the wall, constructed in 1907, bordered the Chicago River (on the south side) and completely isolated the House of Correction from the neighborhood. All of the walls featured guard towers in order to better supervise inmates working outside of the cell houses.⁶⁹ Now, outsiders only saw the large wall of the institution, anchored by watchtowers at each corner.⁷⁰ The buildings, and the inmates they confined, were physically removed from view.

⁶⁹ G.A. Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago: A Retrospect Covering a Half Century of Endeavor From the Founding of the Institution to the Present Time, 1871-1921* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 1921), 20-21.

⁷⁰ "Home for Tramps." *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1893, 25, final edition.



Figure 12. “Bridewell Prison, North Wall and Gate,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1910. DN-0055778, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Sloan pushed for indeterminate sentences for juveniles and adults. He argued that the only way to prevent future incarceration was to ensure that a sentence was long enough to reform the individual. Sloan contended that short sentences to serve out a fine did not result in such reformation. Additionally, he reported that such short terms meant that some did not work during their confinement, and so served as a burden to the city, and by extension, the taxpayers.⁷¹

Sloan’s arguments regarding short terms harkened back to ideas promoted by Felton and others. However, in his 1905 annual report, Sloan directly addressed his philosophy on discipline within the HOC. He alerted the City Council to difficulties in maintaining order in the HOC. Sloan noted that individuals committed to the jail should be treated with “consideration, so long as they obey the rules.” Sloan stated that many

⁷¹ *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 10.

inmates during the year showed “a disposition to evade every rule.” He blamed “well-meaning people” who called for changes to the HOC, but were not as well-versed in penal philosophies as himself.⁷² Indeed, Sloan continued to be associated with the HOC as a member of the Board of Inspectors after his tenure as superintendent.⁷³

Sloan left his position as superintendent and shortly after entered the private sector.⁷⁴ Perhaps drawing on his experience operating the stone-crushing plant at the HOC, he took a position with the Wisconsin Granite Company. Despite the administrative change, his successor, Andrew Lynch, also emphasized discipline. Lynch was a local businessman who served on the Board of Local Improvements for two years.⁷⁵ Despite a lack of previous experience, the Board of Inspectors endorsed his appointment in September 1905, drawing on *their* “expertise” in penal administration. They noted that they “aimed to maintain strict discipline” despite protests by “people who are not grounded in the facts respecting inmates of penal institutions.” Inspectors argued that public protests often “encourage[d] them [prisoners] in the belief that they are so-called victims of society.” Members of the board contended that inmates were given

⁷² *Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1905), 18.

⁷³ Sloan continued to serve the city for many years afterward. He was the head of the local improvements board from 1923 to 1927 and oversaw the building of Wacker Drive. *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, p. 1; “John J. Sloan, Civic Builder, Dies,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 January 1927.

⁷⁴ “John J. Sloan, Civic Builder, Dies,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 January 1927.

⁷⁵ “Andrew Lynch Funeral Rites at 10 Today,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 January 1934, p. 20.

“proper consideration” if they obeyed the rules, but emphasized that in order to protect the citizens of Chicago, they did not bend to “the wishes of inmates.”⁷⁶

Inspectors reinforced their arguments in the following report, stating that “non-observance of discipline [...] is a standing invitation to others to disregard these rules.” Members of the board contended that “discipline, in our opinion, can never be maintained without punishment.” Urging the City Council to endorse their philosophies on punishment, the members wrote, “prison authorities ought to be upheld in maintaining a strict, firm discipline against those who will not respect either the laws or authority.” They stressed that the nature of the prison should be to protect society, rather than be a “place of refuge.”⁷⁷ Discipline, as never before, was a central element of the HOC annual report. Maintaining order competed with work and raising revenue for prominence within the HOC.

The HOC, like a prison, should be an institution in which strict discipline and order were maintained. Inspectors endorsed superintendents’ emphasis on punishment to ensure control. Rather than an institution for reformation, the inspectors stressed control at the facility. Again, they chastised those individuals who did not agree with their understanding of the role of the HOC as “misdirected.” They finished their report on a more conciliatory note stating that they intended to make the jail “the best institution of its kind, and what it ought to be in effect, as well as in name, a ‘House of Correction.’”⁷⁸

⁷⁶ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, and of the Superintendent and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1907), 20.

⁷⁷ *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, and of the Superintendent and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1908), 9.

However, they made it clear that discipline would be crucial to the “correction” of inmates.

Andrew Lynch and John Sloan emphasized restraint with the city carceral institution, but their successor, did not agree with their goals. Superintendents after Felton rarely managed the facility for more than a few years; their influence on the HOC lasted only as long as their superintendency. Andrew Lynch resigned on June 1, 1907 and John L. Whitman assumed the post of Superintendent.⁷⁹ After newly-elected Mayor Fred Busse told reporters that he “would be glad” to appoint Whitman as head of the HOC, Lynch quickly drafted his resignation.⁸⁰

Whitman, unlike most of his predecessors, had previous experience as a guard and warden. At the age of eighteen, he started as a guard at the Cook County Jail. During his time there, he served as assistant clerk, chief clerk, and finally appointed warden in 1895.⁸¹ Whitman had overseen the Cook County Jail for more than a decade before arriving at the HOC. With his appointment, Whitman brought his reformatory focus to the HOC. At the Cook County Jail, he focused on reformation and treatment of criminals. Whitman argued that crime was “a disease” which needed to be treated. He viewed the

⁷⁸ *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report*, 10, 12.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁰ “New Mayor Goes to Springfield,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 April 1907, p. 5; “War Declared on Smoke,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 May 1907, p. 7, final edition.

⁸¹ “J.L. Whitman, Former Warden, Taken by Death,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 December 1926, 3, final edition.

Cook County Jail more as a hospital to treat crime than a prison.⁸² Whitman emphasized reforming, not just punishing prisoners.

Early on, Whitman enjoyed the endorsement of Mayor Fred Busse. Even before Lynch resigned (or consulted Whitman), Busse publicly stated he would be “glad” to have Whitman oversee the jail.⁸³ Busse endorsed Whitman’s administration of the HOC in his 1911 annual message. He highlighted a few changes that Whitman implemented at the HOC. Whitman gave each inmate the opportunity to have a weekly private meeting. In his message, Busse implied a dramatic shift had occurred with Whitman’s tenure. The mayor noted that “the old plan of exterminating the self respect of a man who was sent to the bridewell has been abandoned.” Whitman went “beyond the legal duties of his office and taken up the benefit of the inmates who desire to reform.”⁸⁴ Whitman reversed the emphasis on discipline of his immediate successors, especially Lynch and Sloan.

Despite such earlier endorsement of discipline, the members of the Board also praised John Whitman’s tenure in their 1910 report. Referring to his “progressive manner [...] to further the interests of those committed to his care,” they applauded his “practical, philanthropic work that aims at elevating as well as correcting.”⁸⁵ They credited the “discipline and gentlemanly conduct” of the guards and officers of the jail in helping with

⁸² “Treat Crime as a Disease,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 July 1901, p. 5.

⁸³ “New Mayor Goes to Springfield,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 April 1907, p. 5.

⁸⁴ Mayor’s Message. City Files: 1910/11 4766 A 04/17.

⁸⁵ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1909), 13.

the reformation of those committed. In their 1911 report, they noted that “punishment is seldom called for.”⁸⁶

Economics in the Later HOC

Work continued to comprise a critical component of inmate life at the HOC. Since all those confined were sentenced, officials required them to work, unlike other institutions where individuals were awaiting sentencing, like the Cook County Jail. Superintendents and inspectors struggled to find work that needed little training for the inmates, employed all prisoners, and did not compete with union labor. Officials tried a variety of industries at the HOC to accommodate these demands. In 1892, they began making brooms, eventually only to be made or sold to the city in 1914 with the end to prison labor contracts with outside businesses.⁸⁷ Inmates produced goods such as socks and ice. Ice production added in 1899 when a one and a half-acre pond was constructed on the premises. During the first winter, 1,800 tons of ice were cut. Most of the ice was used at the HOC, but some was sold.⁸⁸

Union leaders urged Inspectors to produce goods that did not compete with their labor. To address these concerns, officials added scrub brush production at the HOC in 1900. Additionally, this also meant that short-term prisoners could be taught to do the work, thereby increasing money brought to the institution through goods. Production of street brooms sold to the city also sought to provide income without competing with free

⁸⁶ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, Superintendent, and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1911), 5.

⁸⁷ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 39.

⁸⁸ *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report*, 4; *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 8.

labor. Superintendent Sloan also increased the production capacity of the knitting and cane departments. In addition to the ability of the institution to receive more money, work provided another facet to the discipline of the jail.⁸⁹

Sloan reinforced the idea that work served the disciplinary and reformatory goals of the HOC and oversaw implementation of a variety of new modes of work. According to Sloan, an inmate could learn a productive skill that he could apply once released.⁹⁰ Such aims were unrealistic as the industries at the HOC were designed to be quickly taught and executed; few prisoners gained skills applicable outside the walls of the facility. Ultimately, officials sought to lower costs of the institution, not to provide practical work-training for those held inside.

City leaders also tried to employ inmates to help lower city expenses. An incinerator for the city's waste was established in 1900 on the HOC site. Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr. stated that the plant provided a great municipal service. In addition, he stated in his 1901 annual message that he knew "of no better place in which to establish a garbage crematory [...than...] within the grounds of the House of Correction." Not only was the HOC somewhat separated from the city itself, but the inmate population meant that the city would have "an ample number of laborers to perform the menial work about the plant."⁹¹ Originally the crematory was built to dispose of the HOC's waste. Because

⁸⁹ *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 8-9.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹¹ City Files: 1902 0014 A 04/08.

the capacity of the incinerator was greater than the HOC's needs, garbage from surrounding wards was sent to the HOC as well.⁹²

Superintendent Sloan expressed his support for the incinerator. He agreed that the HOC was an ideal location for a city incinerator for multiple reasons: it could help provide employment for inmates building and working in it while also ridding the city of refuse. But added, "Why not stamp it out effectually by removing the cause and let those who violate society's laws take care of society's refuse?"⁹³

Low employment of inmates nevertheless plagued HOC administrators. In 1901, the Board of Inspectors ordered the boring of holes at the site where clay was made into brick. After reaching limestone at a depth of thirty-three feet (eight feet below the previous depth), prisoners were employed in the quarrying of the stone. To ensure the productivity of inmates, the City Council appropriated money to purchase a stone crusher.⁹⁴ The City Council used funds in 1904 for a stone crushing plant.⁹⁵ Aldermen resolved that the city construct the plant in order to employ prisoners in work that did not directly compete with free labor. The plant under a roof would mean inmates could labor all year long. The stone would be largely by the city.⁹⁶ The quarry supplied stone to the

⁹² *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report*, 16.

⁹³ Board of Inspectors, *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1904), 18.

⁹⁴ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 18.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁹⁶ City Files: 1904 2782 12/19.

city as well as for improvements on the HOC site, including a retaining wall, new cell house, and warehouse in 1908.⁹⁷

Despite their attempts to create a self-sufficient facility, the expenses of the HOC continually rose. To meet these costs, officials often asked the City Council for additional appropriations. For example, in 1902, Superintendent Sloan and the Inspectors requested additional funds of \$18,000. They stated the money was needed because of an increased prisoner population, improvements to the John Worthy School (JWS), and the opening of an on-site hospital.⁹⁸ They also argued that the extra money was needed because the Inspectors ended the system of contract labor at the HOC. Instead, inmates were to be employed making goods for the city.⁹⁹ In an effort to address organized labor's demands, Inspectors reduced the ability of the HOC to sell goods to the private sector at a higher price than under the city-use system

A year later, the inspectors lamented the success of the city-use labor system. They faced a harsh reality: city departments did not use enough goods to fully employ the inmates of the jail. Since labor unions protested against the contracting of prison labor to private employers, a decreasing number of inmates worked during their confinement. Additionally, the amount of money brought in under the city-use system was less than under the contract-labor system.

⁹⁷ *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, Superintendent and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1908), 38.

⁹⁸ City Files: 1903 2627 A 11/10.

⁹⁹ *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 9.

Despite such problems, some officials continued to praise efforts to employ inmates at the HOC. In his 1904 address, Mayor Harrison reported a number of improvements including the use of prisoners to begin quarrying stone on site. They continued to produce brick and crush stone as well. Harrison reported that most inmates worked during their confinement, but because of the outcry against the use of their labor, their services would only be applied to the city in the future.¹⁰⁰

Not all goods produced at the HOC were for sale, even to the city. In an effort to reduce costs and increase self-sufficiency, prisoners grew many of the vegetables they consumed. Superintendent Lynch reported that he employed older inmates on the fifteen-acre farm located on the HOC grounds. He also alluded to inmate resistance to work at the jail by commenting, “It is surprising what interest these men taken in the vegetable garden and in caring for the lawns and flowers. In most every other department a prisoner will occasionally want a change in employment and will flunk and refuse to work but the garden men never.”¹⁰¹

The City Council continued to receive and respond to numerous complaints concerning the use of inmate labor at the HOC. In 1906, a larger printing room was constructed on site in order to meet the city’s needs, including printing for the Municipal Courts.¹⁰² However, printers argued that the small plant soon ballooned into a large-scale printer that unfairly competed with their labor. In 1909, the council received a petition

¹⁰⁰ City Files: 1904/05 0041 A 4/11.

¹⁰¹ *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, And of the Superintendent and House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1906), 17.

¹⁰² *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 9.

from many printers in the city. The petition referred to the printing facility at the HOC as “an evil which is threatening the business interests of the printing industry.” City printers protested the growth of the printing plant at the jail. Initially, some juveniles at the John Worthy School (JWS) worked in the small printing plant, in hopes that they would be employed after their release. The Illinois State Federation of Labor joined the printers’ efforts and also appealed to the council to end printing at the jail. The council took action on May 13, 1912 and passed a resolution ending the industry.¹⁰³

Additionally in 1912, Committee on Schools, Police, Fire, and Civil Service reported that the contract labor system which resulted in chair manufacturing was unprintable for the city. Contractors paid twenty-five cents per prisoner per day and provided the machinery. The HOC furnished the prisoners, shop, heat, and light. As feeding inmates cost thirty-three cents per day, the city lost at least eight cents per day.¹⁰⁴ In July, the Board of Public Works contracted with the HOC to provide it with 625,000 sewer bricks.¹⁰⁵

Seeking an end to contract labor, the Federation of Labor also met with Mayor Harrison in early 1914. Harrison wrote Superintendent Whitman after this meeting and appealed to him to end all current contracts for labor. Instead, he proposed that all labor at the prison should benefit the institution itself. After an investigation into the city’s finances, almost all contracts at the HOC were terminated on May 1, 1914. Harrison

¹⁰³ City Files: 1912 196305 05/13.

¹⁰⁴ City Files: 1912 196307 A 05/13.

¹⁰⁵ City Files: 1912 197918 07/15.

suggested in his annual address that the shops previously used to make goods for sale be utilized for producing goods for the facility.¹⁰⁶

Aldermen and superintendents had long advocated the benefits of compelling inmates to work. However, the reliance on contract labor to help meet the expenses of the facility was no longer possible after 1914. The city used the city-use labor system exclusively from 1914 to 1920.¹⁰⁷

Additionally, work would also help inmates learn a skill, instill habits of industry, and prevent future recommitments. However, this goal was also elusive. Superintendent Whitman highlighted the high number of repeat offenders sent to the HOC, especially women. Whitman tabulated that twenty-six men had served twenty-five or more sentences, nine served fifty or more, and three who had been committed more than 100 times. In contrast, seventy-eight women had entered the HOC twenty-five or more times, forty-four women served more than 50 terms, and twelve over 100 sentences.¹⁰⁸

Expenses at the HOC escalated under Whitman's tenure, especially after the end of the contract labor system. In many ways, the end of Whitman's term signaled another transformation for the administration of the HOC: a return to discipline and order. Many changes Whitman implemented were reversed upon his replacement by Joseph Siman. Namely, all employees at the HOC were again required to wear uniforms.

¹⁰⁶ City Files: 1914 211537 05/18.

¹⁰⁷ Max Stern, "The Chicago House of Correction: A History and Examination of Recent Statistics Regarding Persons Committed to It" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1932), 34.

¹⁰⁸ "Prison No Terror to Crime Women," *Chicago Tribune*, 25 November 1910, p. 11.

Despite the end of his tenure at the HOC, Whitman remained well regarded as a jailer. He resigned as superintendent upon appointment as Superintendent of Illinois prisons. He attempted to institute similar changes in the state penal system.¹⁰⁹ A few years later, he still retained his position as Superintendent of state penal institutions. At the time, the Cook County Jail experienced a brutal escape and Whitman was offered his former position at the Cook County Jail in 1921.¹¹⁰ By 1926, he had been named as warden of the Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet.¹¹¹ He faced charges while at Joliet regarding how petitions were handled. The scandal proved a stain on his otherwise clean record as an administrator.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Whitman Plans to Make Prisons Cure Criminals," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 June 1917, p. 16.

¹¹⁰ "Slain Man Found in Creek Seen as O'Connor Victim," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 December 1921, p. 17.

¹¹¹ "Whitman to go Before Grand Jurors Today," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 May 1926, p. 1.

¹¹² "J. L. Whitman, Former Warden, Taken By Death," *Chicago Tribune*, 14 December 1926, p. 3.

Table 7. Later HOC Receipts and Expenditures

Year	Money Received				Expenses				Net Difference
	Labor	Chicago City Fines*	Total (w/o Approp.)	Total (w/o Approp. or Fines)	Provisions	Salaries	HOS	Total	
1891	46,231.96	9,001.10	63,738.87	52,878.17	30,231.91	18,121.27		99,992.90	(47,114.73)
1892	60,765.85	1,350.35	82,080.57	80,730.25	34,610.11	21,306.21		121,614.96	(40,884.71)
1893	42,286.29	14,312.30	68,460.74	50,548.44	35,919.88	24,356.17		133,417.04	(82,868.60)
1894	35,146.55	9,999.00	58,172.21	48,173.21	33,344.05	24,257.39		113,828.87	(65,655.66)
1895	32,021.90	10,323.25	61,621.23	51,297.98	30,504.21	24,845.90		110,711.19	(59,413.21)
1896	29,481.74	10,209.35	57,719.93	47,510.58	34,862.20	27,418.32		118,088.53	(70,577.95)
1897	19,645.15	5,822.40	44,639.41	38,817.01	32,136.99	27,041.71		102,264.00	(63,446.99)
1898	23,496.33	6,688.41	48,528.98	41,840.57	38,698.16	28,534.74		112,300.68	(70,460.11)
1899	22,810.66	8,858.83	47,188.41	38,329.58	40,566.18	33,324.55		127,119.35	(88,789.77)
1900	30,845.12	10,268.40	58,150.78	47,882.38	52,268.40	43,846.85		166,640.80	(118,758.42)
1901	54,902.39	12,040.50	88,303.93	76,263.43	43,109.98	62,261.93		168,353.18	(92,089.75)
1902	57,556.88	12,918.00	111,289.28	98,371.28	44,597.01	62,317.45		188,619.30	(90,248.02)
1903	48,782.71	19,234.90	95,987.11	76,753.11	51,773.38	64,264.44		187,999.81	(111,246.70)
1904	29,376.28	25,264.45	101,655.16	79,390.71	57,243.00	70,699.34	25,952.40	236,669.74	(157,279.03)
1905	61,205.41	27,684.65	129,581.79	101,897.14	70,242.36	72,481.35	21,130.80	285,169.07	(183,271.93)
1906	58,401.18	30,673.55	130,629.02	99,955.47	60,524.62	77,166.42	37,099.20	303,947.10	(203,991.63)
1907	77,124.03	34,323.75	193,906.54	159,582.79	56,027.89	85,739.62	29,740.50	273,527.66	(113,944.87)
1908	75,894.16	32,181.00	183,993.06	151,812.06	77,318.89	93,651.22	31,264.20	302,923.98	(151,111.92)
1909	89,052.28	38,287.00	210,591.48	172,304.48	154,227.93	99,037.78	29,952.90	329,005.93	(156,701.45)
1910	93,393.58	41,798.75	201,911.33	160,112.58	151,382.66	94,675.91	29,031.90	328,283.34	(168,170.76)
1911	86,463.43	45,201.75	198,223.52	153,021.77	69,867.77	100,454.55	26,493.30	298,108.27	(145,086.50)
1912	78,188.83	47,933.25	200,938.69	153,005.44	76,609.94	107,487.39		316,061.01	(163,055.57)
1913	82,589.09	58,187.75	220,084.31	161,896.56	81,172.40	107,632.03		308,780.32	(146,883.76)
1914	79,480.92	51,887.00	283,854.87	231,967.87	96,513.75	120,458.56	29,402.18	381,350.36	(149,382.49)
1915	68,733.08	41,269.25	297,461.10	256,191.85	108,012.08	126,979.11	24,519.61	426,963.15	(170,771.30)

Table 8. Comparative City Expenses

Year	Total City Expenses	HOC Expenses	Police Expenses	School Expenses	Public Works	Public Library
1891	30,118,115.61	99,034.48	2,623,693.47	2,399,220.14	2,728,675.00	108,999.82
1892	31,799,755.69	125,895.84	3,005,454.68	2,650,167.29	2,424,973.53	181,253.87
1893	34,334,968.50	124,509.87	3,567,864.30	2,890,851.57	3,155,303.15	429,777.24
1894	34,207,047.79	105,344.68	3,386,299.11	3,233,972.81	2,701,323.08	498,969.63
1895	30,179,560.82	113,510.90	3,707,463.50	3,651,483.63	2,683,161.35	475,131.59
1896	33,680,046.80	102,672.73	3,230,592.25	3,934,407.91	1,391,694.69	572,248.79
1897	32,404,865.88	107,464.33	3,438,228.74	4,177,712.51	1,502,555.82	707,902.48
1898	35,753,423.71	139,251.77	3,385,875.69	4,703,016.27	1,542,487.35	320,144.58
1899	51,407,804.80	65,078.36	3,442,639.75	4,773,334.32	1,416,155.65	245,463.66
1900	30,141,134.71	151,381.22	3,532,537.80	4,337,343.64	1,432,667.07	217,142.09

Note: Figures from years available from Treasurers' Reports. Expenses of the HOC began to be smaller than other areas of public spending in Chicago, including the library.

Table 9. Later HOC and Police Expenses as Percentage of City Finances

Year	Total City Expenses	HOC Expenses	Percent of Total for HOC	Police Expenses	Percent of Total for Police
1891	30,118,115.61	99,034.48	0.33%	2,623,693.47	8.71%
1892	31,799,755.69	125,895.84	0.40%	3,005,454.68	9.45%
1893	34,334,968.50	124,509.87	0.36%	3,567,864.30	10.39%
1894	34,207,047.79	105,344.68	0.31%	3,386,299.11	9.90%
1895	30,179,560.82	113,510.90	0.38%	3,707,463.50	12.28%
1896	33,680,046.80	102,672.73	0.30%	3,230,592.25	9.59%
1897	32,404,865.88	107,464.33	0.33%	3,438,228.74	10.61%
1898	35,753,423.71	139,251.77	0.39%	3,385,875.69	9.47%
1899	51,407,804.80	65,078.36	0.13%	3,442,639.75	6.70%
1900	30,141,134.71	151,381.22	0.50%	3,532,537.80	11.72%

Note: Figures from years available from Treasurers' Reports.

Charles Felton's tenure shaped the first twenty years of the Chicago House of Correction. The next twenty-five years were influenced by the five different superintendents of the institution. Their efforts to reform the facility as they desired were more limited by the Board of Inspectors, the City Council, and Chicago mayors. Politics factored into the administration of the facility in a number of ways, despite attempts of officials to emphasize the "expertise" of penal administrators. Except for John Whitman, superintendents owed their appointment more to their political connections than previous carceral experience.

Crawford, Sturm, Sloan, Lynch, and Whitman managed the HOC from 1890 to 1915. Each superintendent attempted to mold the philosophy of the facility into their vision of how the institution should operate and fit into the city landscape during their tenure. In general, most Superintendents sought to separate the facility physically from the urban environment. Construction projects ensured that the edifice was enclosed and segregated from the outside, and outside influences. Many superintendents envisioned that HOC as more of an "urban prison" instead of simply a workhouse. Andrew Lynch and John Sloan especially emphasized discipline and order in their philosophies governing the institution. However, their respective emphases on reform, discipline, or work were only temporary, however, lasting only as long as each of their terms.

Aldermen, mayors, and inspectors continued to emphasize the role of work within the structure. However, concerns from labor leaders and reformers about the competition from inmate work contributed to the elimination of contracting out prisoner labor. Administrators could only compel enough work out of inmates to serve the needs of the

city – not enough to employ all inmates. Balancing public concerns and city council ordinances requiring the production of goods which did not compete with free labor, meant that work was no longer the central focus within the facility. Superintendents had to administer the institution, keep those who appointed them happy, and try to keep expenses as low as possible – a difficult task.

Superintendents after Felton encountered the limitations presented by political affiliations, resulting in greater turnover. Despite the lack of any individual superintendent's lasting influence, the physical form of the HOC's prison-like structure was permanent. Successors, for example Whitman, could relax discipline within the facility and try to develop personal relationships with inmates to emphasize reformation. However, walls constructed remained permanent fixtures which remained. Inmates detained within the HOC from 1871 to 1915 encountered the ramifications of detention in the city facility.

CHAPTER FIVE

“MOST OF THEM HAVE HARD FACES”:
INMATES AT THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION

B. F. Thomas found himself in the House of Correction (HOC) in February 1890. He was arrested and sent to the police court accused of running an intelligence office without a license. Thomas was next taken to the police justice and within two hours of arrest, found himself riding in the “Black Maria” to the HOC. Upon arrival, he was stripped, bathed, and given a prison uniform.¹ Dr. James Todd, the HOC physician, reported that upon arrival prisoners also received haircuts and vaccinations before entering the cell houses.² Next, a guard asked if Thomas, or any of the others with him, wanted to send a letter to friends or family. Thomas recalled that he requested a letter sent to his lawyer. After asking for the information, the guard addressed the envelope and had him sign his name, but did not allow him to write a note. Instead, the “letter” consisted of a printed form with Thomas’ signature which stated that he was at the institution and could be released upon payment of his fine. Thomas was committed on

¹ “Sent to the Bridewell: B.F. Thomas’ Story of His Arrest by Chicago Police,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1890, 26, final edition.

² Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: William C. Hollister and Brother, 1895), 42.

December 31, 1889, but as of February 2, the letter had not arrived. Such letters often remained unsent.³

Thomas described the overcrowded and filthy conditions at the HOC. He explained that four men were often confined in a cell designed to hold one person. Three would squeeze together and sleep on the floor, while the fourth would spend the night sitting on the wood bucket. Despite the constant scrubbing of the floors and the relatively clean appearance presented to visitors, Thomas explained otherwise within the cells. Mattresses, blankets, and cell walls were constantly dirty and covered with dirt. Guards constantly reminded inmates to keep clean, but as another prisoner explained the impossibility of cleanliness, “Here I am locked in this filthy dungeon four weeks today and wearing the same dirty shirt that I put on when I entered. I cannot get a clean one; I am not allowed a bath. Four weeks without a bath or clean shirt. How am I to keep clean?”⁴

Inmates within the HOC encountered some of the same problems as Bridewell prisoners years earlier. The most common issue was the overcrowded conditions within the male cells. However, inmates within the later facility experienced an imposed daily routine, centered on work. Idleness was the exception, not the rule, within the structure. This was not the only difference within the facility. From 1872 to 1915, the demographics within the edifice changed considerably. City leaders attempted to address the needs of inmates more individually, especially in regards to sex and age. Creating the

³ “Sent to the Bridewell: B.F. Thomas’ Story of His Arrest by Chicago Police,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 February 1890, 26, final edition.

⁴ Ibid.

Women's Department and the John Worthy School for youthful offenders meant that the demographics in the HOC changed considerably. The population detained within became more divergent from the city itself. Inmates were more likely to be older and male than ever before. As a result, their ability to retain strong connections to the city outside was more difficult than during the city's administration of the Bridewell. Accounts of discipline within and pardons for release kept inmates within the public view, temporarily.

As with the earlier Bridewell, inmates within the early HOC comprised a diverse group. Most white inmates (over sixty percent) were immigrants in 1872 (the first year of data available), many of them were Irish. The Irish accounted for the largest immigrant group within the HOC during Felton's tenure. First- and second-generation Irish frequently found themselves within the structure. But from 1872 to 1889, the percentage of native-born inmates steadily increased to nearly sixty percent by the end of Felton's tenure, reflecting demographic changes within Chicago as well.

Most inmates, over ninety percent, within the early HOC were white. Few African Americans were incarcerated in the facility early on. African Americans comprised a small portion of the population within the HOC. Generally, they constituted approximately five percent of inmates detained. The low number of African Americans at the HOC was largely due to their small numbers within the city itself. The number of African American inmates increased slowly during Felton's tenure, reaching eight percent of the population by 1889. Only later, with the Great Migration, did the black population within Chicago increase dramatically, and the within the HOC by extension.

Ethnicity only accounted for part of the demographic diversity. Both men and women found themselves at “Felton’s Hotel.” In the first twenty years of opening, women consistently comprised twenty percent of the detained population. Keepers at the Bridewell also detained a significant portion of women. From March 1852 to December 1856, females accounted for twenty percent of the population. Fluctuations during the four year period occurred, but the numbers were fairly constant from 1852 to 1890.⁵

More critically, the data from 1872 to 1890 highlights the growth in the detention of minor offenders by the city. The city experienced incredible growth in the later nineteenth century. In 1870, 298,977 residents called Chicago home; 503,185 lived there by 1880. By 1890, the number doubled to over one million.⁶ Despite the city’s growth, the HOC’s population did not increase at the same rate. At the early HOC, the greatest number of inmates committed in a year (9,928) was fifty percent higher than that during its first year of operation (6,636), far lower than the nearly quadrupled population of Chicago. Such slow growth was probably reflective of police justices’ hesitancy to send more inmates to the (already) overcrowded structure.

⁵ Unfortunately, such comparisons for ethnic composition within the Bridewell are difficult to ascertain. In total, 670 women were detained out of a total population of 3,317 for the thirty-two months for which the records are clear. City Files.

⁶ “Chicago Growth 1850-1990: Maps by Dennis McClendon,” UIC, <http://tiger.uic.edu/depts/ahaa/imagebase/chimaps/mcclendon.html> (accessed August 21, 2012).

Table 10. Ethnicity and Race in Early HOC

Ethnicity/Race of Inmates						Prisoners' Nativity			Parents' Nativity		
Year	Total	% White	% African Am.	# Native Am.	# Asian	% US	% Irish	% Polish	% US	% Irish	% Polish
1872	6636	97%	3%	0	0	39.4%	35.10%	0.20%	16.0%	57%	0%
1873	5934	95%	5%	0	0	44.3%	34.00%	0.30%	18.3%	54%	0%
1874	5471	95%	5%	0	0	49.8%	27.10%	0.20%	19.9%	54%	0%
1875	4603	95%	5%	0	0	49.2%	28.20%	0.20%	18.6%	55%	0%
1876	5611	94%	6%	0	0	51.2%	25.80%	0.10%	21.0%	52%	0%
1877	6130	94%	6%	0	0	54.4%	23.30%	0.10%	22.7%	49%	0%
1878	5810	94%	4%	0	0	55.7%	24.20%	0.20%	22.8%	50%	0%
1879	5201	96%	4%	0	0	55.2%	25.10%	0.10%	22.8%	53%	0%
1880	6755	97%	3%	0	0	50.7%	24.40%	0.30%	20.4%	51%	0%
1881	6836	96%	4%	0	0	51.6%	23.30%	0.50%	19.8%	50%	1%
1882	7566	95%	5%	0	0	50.2%	21.80%	0.40%	19.9%	48%	1%
1883	7058	95%	5%	0	0	49.9%	22.90%	0.50%	23.2%	48%	1%
1884	6999	93%	7%	0	0	61.2%	17.90%	0.60%	24.3%	46%	1%
1885	7108	92%	8%	0	0	55.6%	17.80%	0.70%	22.7%	46%	1%
1886	7524	94%	6%	0	0	56.9%	18.10%	0.50%	21.2%	47%	1%
1887	8763	94%	6%	0	0	55.0%	16.60%	0.90%	34.2%	28%	1%
1888	9928	94%	6%	0	0	56.9%	17.10%	1.00%	22.8%	44%	2%
1889	8393	93%	7%	0	0	58.8%	16.60%	1.00%	26.8%	41%	2%
1890	8457	92%	8%	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1872-1921).

Table 11. Male and Female Inmates Received at the Early HOC

Year	Total	Men	Women	% Women
1872	6636	5086	1550	23.4%
1873	5934	4536	1398	23.6%
1874	5471	4033	1438	26.3%
1875	4603	3211	1392	30.2%
1876	5611	3883	1728	30.8%
1877	6130	4414	1716	28.0%
1878	5810	4035	1775	30.6%
1879	5201	3906	1295	24.9%
1880	6755	5314	1441	21.3%
1881	6836	5279	1557	22.8%
1882	7566	5757	1809	23.9%
1883	7058	5346	1712	24.3%
1884	6999	5530	1469	21.0%
1885	7108	5524	1584	22.3%
1886	7524	5956	1568	20.8%
1887	8763	7170	1593	18.2%
1888	9928			
1889	8393	7026	1367	16.3%
1890	8457	7253	1204	16.6%

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports.

Age provided another element of diversity within the facility. Inmates under the age of twenty-one frequently constituted twenty percent of the population. Children as young as seven could be detained at the HOC. Certainly children under the age of ten comprised a tiny percentage of prisoners, but one to two percent of inmates were under the age of thirteen. During Charles Felton's tenure (1872-1890), the city had few institutions designed for the young. As a result, many misdemeanants or violators of city ordinances under the age of twenty-one ended up in the HOC.

The diverse population proved difficult for administrators. Juvenile offenders presented numerous challenges to city courts, the HOC, and reformers during the nineteenth century. Many young boys and girls found themselves in the Bridewell and the HOC. When the HOC opened in 1871, female inmates were separated from males in the new building. However, no such division based upon age existed. Officials argued that provisions needed to be made for children at the facility. In his 1873 report, Superintendent Charles E. Felton pointed out that a large number of boys between seven and fifteen were committed to the jail. He argued that juvenile delinquents should not be housed in the same prison as older men or hardened criminals. In addition, he contended that boys should not be locked in cells as older inmates. Felton stressed that young offenders at the HOC needed to be separated from the hardened older criminals and needed “disciplinary treatment.” He stated that they were not fit for a reform school because of their offenses which included drunkenness, vagrancy, and breach of the peace.⁷

Felton again pointed out the problem of young offenders being confined in the HOC two years later. He reasoned that because most of the offenders under twenty-one had foreign-born parents, they did not receive “proper rearing and moral education.” He took a hard stance against reform schools to remedy such failings, however. Felton urged the City Council to consider that many of those sent to reform schools emerge not “reformed,” but as hardened criminals. He instead advocated the use of preventive

⁷ Board of Inspectors. *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago, and the Reports of the Superintendent and Physician to the Board of Inspectors* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1874), 18.

agencies for the younger, as well as the older population. In addition to prevention, he again urged that prisoners be isolated from others as much as possible. The more inmates were separated from each other, Felton argued, the less possibility for their corruption.⁸

Table 12. Ages of Inmates at Early HOC

Year	Total	<10	<13	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Total <21	Percent < 21
1872	6636	15	82	44	73	82	141	205	214	188	170	180	1199	18.1%
1873	5934	6	99	71	100	113	173	198	234	236	178	211	1402	23.6%
1874	5471	6	67	74	77	125	199	276	314	292	204	185	1628	29.8%
1875	4603	2	47	49	77	92	144	252	244	255	175	172	1335	29.0%
1876	5611	8	82	82	94	120	183	216	291	249	212	209	1529	27.3%
1877	6130	12	131	89	129	124	205	280	278	296	250	246	1782	29.1%
1878	5810	6	80	54	107	97	168	237	291	277	260	246	1571	27.0%
1879	5201	3	71	44	81	96	137	166	223	228	201	213	1247	24.0%
1880	6755	11	96	69	72	68	114	168	212	242	183	230	1224	18.1%
1881	6836	8	70	72	79	109	124	157	228	248	224	307	1311	19.2%
1882	7566	5	91	68	103	95	120	185	255	231	234	310	1382	18.3%
1883	7058	5	61	57	97	120	160	177	216	229	222	238	1339	19.0%
1884	6999	5	74	65	117	107	177	229	314	280	259	328	1622	23.2%
1885	7108	10*	91	70	75	95	160	215	287	253	218	n/a	1464	20.6%
1886	7524	9	126	81	119	112	158	214	276	235	214	253	1535	20.4%
1887	8763	16	130	80	112	149	231	291	326	334	304	289	1957	22.3%
1888	9928	4	105	74	151	157	226	306	367	373	302	376	1694	17.1%
1889	8393	4	64	62	103	146	235	252	374	368	318	369	1922	22.9%
1890	8457	1	53	45	86	122	234	277	266	324	325	366	1732	20.5%

* ten-year-olds included for 1885.

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1872-1890).

⁸ *Third Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J. S. Thompson and Co, 1875), 22, 23.

According to the 1885 rules, all prisoners, regardless of age or sex, had “duties” while confined at the HOC. They needed to maintain the cleanliness of their bodies and cells. And, in keeping with its role as a workhouse, inmates were to work. Prisoners were to remain silent at all times, except to communicate with officers in relation with illness or grievance.⁹ In his twelfth annual report, Felton explained that although inmates worked side-by-side in the HOC’s workshops and filled its cells by twos and threes, “conversation while at labor is prohibited, walking and talking in the halls is not permitted.” Indeed, “non-intercourse is the rule of the prison.”¹⁰

Adherence to the rules had its perks. Prisoners who maintained a clean record could write to “such person as it may be proper to correspond with once in each month [...] with the consent of the Superintendent.” Letters sent and received could be inspected for illicit content. Especially well-behaved inmates were allowed a visit by a relative or “other persons of good character” once a month, but such interactions would be in the presence of an officer of the institution.¹¹

Inmates who did not conform to the rules faced punishment. Discipline and prisoners’ resistance at the HOC was rarely noted in official reports, but can be ascertained. City Physician John Guerin noted in 1873 that “strict discipline is exercised

⁹ *House of Correction, Chicago, Rules Adopted Dec. 2, 1885* (Chicago, Knight and Leonard, 1885), 9.

¹⁰ *Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1880), 10.

¹¹ *House of Correction, Chicago, Rules Adopted Dec. 2, 1885* (Chicago, Knight and Leonard, 1885), 10.

by all the officers; yet I have noticed that all prisoners are treated kindly.”¹² At least in regards to discipline, officials did not emphasize the frequency of punishment.

Seven years later, the Inspectors briefly noted that “discipline of the prisoners has been maintained, without that severity of treatment which often seems required in other like institutions.” Felton himself briefly alludes to punishment one of his reports by stating, “Prisoners are under the restraints of a discipline which secures good results, moral, I think, as well as financial.”¹³ He later hinted at the use of punishment in order to quell “several revolts among prisoners,” but assured inspectors and aldermen that they were “suppressed without the infliction of harsh punishments.”¹⁴ Despite such official downplay of punishment, force was present within the HOC.

The rules adopted in 1885 stipulated the duties of each position at the HOC including the superintendent, his various officers, matrons, clerk, and contractors. Specifically, the superintendent was charged with “enforce[ing] good order and discipline among all prisoners and officers.”¹⁵ Breaking a rule could cost a prisoner financially and physically. Although those who were committed on non-payment of fines were credited fifty cents per day served, an infraction would negate credit for a day. Additionally, he or she “may also be reprimanded, deprived of privileges, rations, or bedding, or be locked in

¹² *First Annual Report*, 22.

¹³ *Eighth Annual Report*, 10, 17.

¹⁴ *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard Co., 1888), 46.

¹⁵ Rules were certainly formally adopted before 1885 at the HOC, but the first rules included in the annual reports and Proceeding Files are those from 1885. As such, it is difficult to ascertain how the rules differed from earlier versions, and the meanings of these changes. *House of Correction, Chicago, Rules Adopted Dec. 2, 1885* (Chicago, Knight and Leonard, 1885), 4.

the dark cell, and placed upon bread and water.”¹⁶ In general, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents only could punish. Guards were only to use force in instances of escape.¹⁷

Troublesome inmates faced punishment at the hands of the Superintendent.¹⁸ Inmates were frequently cuffed to the cell door if they broke rules within the HOC. Once searched for needles or other implements, he (or she) was taken to the cell. There, the inmate would stand at the door and place his or her hands through the bars and handcuffed.¹⁹ Continued rule-breaking, or a failure to meet work quotas, resulted in being handcuffed to the wall of the dark cell, up to twenty-four hours at a time. More serious offenses, such as attempted escape, violent behavior, or threats could immediately result in handcuffs.

Another common punishment included isolation in the dark cell. Prisoners could also be isolated within the dark cell (with or without cuffing) for infractions. According to the official rules, punishment would end once a prisoner promised adherence to the rules, but he or she could not be cuffed for longer than twenty-four hours for “any one offense.” The rules did allow “sufficient force” to obtain instant obedience. Specifically, whipping, bucking, and showering were prohibited from use, although “sufficient force

¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷ Ibid., 4-7.

¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁹ “The Bridewell: Visit to Chicago’s Penal Colony,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1885, 9, final edition.

may at all times be used to secure instantaneous compliance.”²⁰ Both cuffing and the dark cell were applied to male and female inmates.²¹

Reliance on punishment within the HOC to maintain order was in keeping with practice within larger, state-run penitentiaries. Within Sing Sing Prison in New York, punishment, indeed torture, was commonly experienced by prisoners. In the 1870s, officially (and unofficially) sanctioned punishments were used frequently by guards. These included the dark cell, shower bath, and the paddle.²² As in larger penitentiaries, Felton viewed the maintaining of order as absolutely critical. Punishments would help to ensure inmates cooperated and remained obedient.

As with punishment, treatment initially differed little between male and female offenders in the early HOC. This reality was reminiscent of the Bridewell’s administration. Critics had frequently complained that the Bridewell administrators failed to treat (and fully segregate) detained women. Additionally, some lamented that women (and men) did not have enough work to keep them occupied within the Bridewell. Unlike earlier Bridewell keepers, superintendents at the HOC, starting with Felton, began to treat male and females differently.

²⁰ *House of Correction, Chicago, Rules Adopted Dec. 2, 1885*, 11. The annual reports and other official documentation do not allude to either the frequency of punishment within the HOC or resistance to the rules.

²¹ “The Bridewell: Visit to Chicago’s Penal Colony,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1885, 9, final edition.

²² Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket’s Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 53-56.

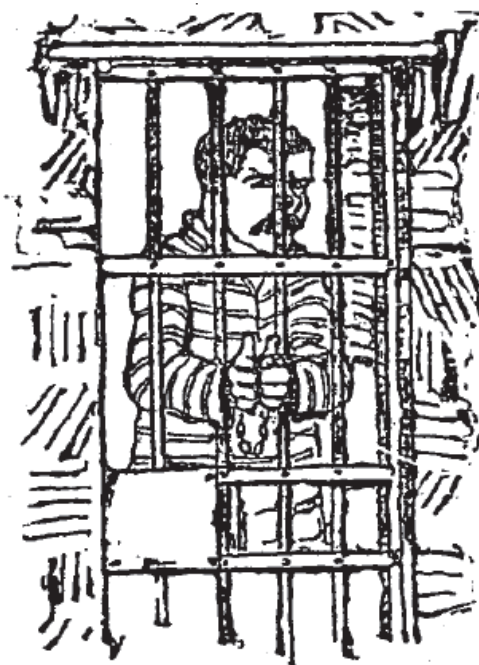


Figure 13. Cuffing at the House of Correction. Image from “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1885.

The female and male experiences began to greatly differ at the HOC after opening. Structurally, architect John Van Osdel designed the building to segregate men and women. Because men accounted for most of the inmates within, the female cell wing often contained empty cells. At least two, sometimes more, men crowded into cells designed for one, but the female wing was rarely overcrowded. Perhaps as a consequence, the female wing was often described as “much cleaner and neater” than that of the male wing.²³

²³ Van Osdel had used over forty percent of the original cells to housing women, who accounted for twenty percent of the inmates. “The Bridewell: Visit to Chicago’s Penal Colony,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 January 1885, 9.

In addition to segregating the male and female inmates in separate wings, officers administered to the prisoners based upon sex. Prisoners were to be reformed: men were to become productive citizens and women were to be educated in domestic duties. Economics no longer comprised the primary factor in the city council's building and administration of the facility; gender was also a critical component. As a result of these changes, along with outside influences, gender mattered more in the experience of an HOC inmate than a Bridewell prisoner.

Women's experience during arrest and upon confinement at the HOC differed from that of male inmates. Police matrons continued to exert their influence on women who found themselves on the wrong side of the law. Female police matrons argued that they could best relate to arrested women. Chief Matron, Mrs. L. L. Waller, explained in 1895 that by gaining a young girl's or woman's confidence through motherly care, she could exert influence and determine the particular circumstances by which she ended up in the police station. Waller attested she helped one girl who ran away from home and came to Chicago return home. Rather than insisting that the girl simply write her mother for money to return to North Carolina, she used her "expertise" as a motherly matron. She insisted the girl write her mother as to where she was and earn the money for her return home. Otherwise, if she simply wrote for her mother to pay her way home, she would have "a fairy story" about her adventure in the big city. The *Tribune* reported that the girl earned her money (honestly) and returned home to become "a good girl."²⁴

²⁴ "Police Matrons: Their Power for Good," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 June 1895, p. 42, final edition.

Labor within the HOC constituted a key difference between the male and female experience. First, women were more often employed than their male counterparts. Felton noted that most women did washing for the police department or made items such as horse nets and scrims.²⁵ In 1874, women could also be employed at cane-seating of chairs.²⁶ By 1880, women worked in a variety of capacities including: making stockings, doing laundry for the HOC and police, working in the sewing room, kitchen, bakery, dining room, and as nurses.²⁷ Another difference related to the nature of the work. Males labored both inside and outside the building, but women only worked inside the building itself. Domestic employment of females at the HOC was similar to work done by women at other nineteenth-century institutions. In contrast, men detained at the HOC made chair seats and backs in the male workshops.²⁸ Outside, they broke (macadamized) stone, a job that prisoners had performed previously at the Bridewell. These early trends became more pronounced in the years after Felton's tenure.

Administration of the early HOC did not completely break with trends of the past. One feature remained constant: pardons were granted by city leadership. The process was slightly different from that of the Bridewell. Releases were granted by the mayor, usually after a prisoner's friends, family, or employer requested one. Upon receiving such an application, the mayor sent an inquiry to the HOC to ascertain the prisoner's crime and circumstances of arrest, sentence, behavior in jail, time served, and age. Felton and the

²⁵ *First Annual Report*, 10

²⁶ *Third Annual Report*, 6.

²⁷ *Eighth Annual Report*, 25.

²⁸ "The Bridewell," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1885, 9, final edition.

City Physician needed to endorse releases for their consideration by the mayor, signifying an increased reliance on their “expertise.”²⁹ The mayor only released those prisoners that Felton recommended. Inmates at the Bridewell did not need the approval of a keeper to secure liberation; prisoners in the early HOC did.

Pardons from the HOC were overwhelmingly granted by city mayors, reflecting the nature of justice in early Chicago. Police justices committed most of those detained at the early HOC (See Table 13). From 1872 to 1889, 122,326 prisoners were sent to the institution. Of those, less than two percent (2,262) were committed by U.S. or criminal courts.³⁰ This reality of jurisdiction meant that the mayor, as the executive of the city, retained pardoning power for most inmates at the HOC. The President and Illinois governors simply could not pardon those sentenced by the city courts, but only those convicted by the criminal (in the case of the governor) or federal courts (in the case of the president).

Pardons consistently comprised a significant portion of releases from the institution, especially due to changes of administration and overcrowded conditions. Approximately five to eight percent of inmates received pardons from 1871 to 1890, with a few periods of higher release rates. During most of Felton’s tenure, the political affiliation of mayors was not a significant contributing factor as both Republicans and Democrats pardoned offenders during this period. Only the two men serving as mayor

²⁹ *Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1883), 27.

³⁰ The number does not include 1888, for which the number of U.S./Criminal Court number is not available. Even so, the percentage is still only 1.8%. After 1879, the city made arrangements to detain those committed by neighboring cities as well. Even still, most inmates were still committed by Chicago police justices.

from 1873 to 1876 issued more pardons than their fellow executives. Mayor Harvey Colvin (1873-1876) and his successor, Thomas Hoyne (May 18-June 4, 1876) oversaw more early releases (except during periods of overcrowding) than their counterparts.

Table 13. Commitments at Early HOC

Year	Total # of Inmates Committed	Courts received from			Percent from City
		City	US/Crim	Other Cities	
1872	6636	6521	115	0	98.3%
1873	5934	5794	140	0	97.6%
1874	5471	5326	145	0	97.3%
1875	4603	4341	139	0	94.3%
1876	5611	4868	162	0	86.8%
1877	6130	4796	143	0	78.2%
1878	5810	5552	98	0	95.6%
1879	5201	4989	108	91	95.9%
1880	6755	6267	138	347	92.8%
1881	6836	6396	180	256	93.6%
1882	7566	7019	186	354	92.8%
1883	7058	6690	119	248	94.8%
1884	6999	6523	116	345	93.2%
1885	7108	6589	121	386	92.7%
1886	7524	6254	94	430	83.1%
1887	8763	6615	133	607	75.5%
1888	9928	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1889	8393	7091	125	400	84.5%

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1872-1921).

Table 14. Releases from Early HOC

Year	Pardon Mayor	Pardon Gov.	Pardon Pres.	Total Pardons Granted	Percent of Releases by Pardons	Total Released
1872	455	9	0	464	8%	6125
1873	522	16	0	538	8.3%	6445
1874	732	11	0	743	12.4%	5980
1875	576	26	0	602	12.1%	4992
1876	659	39	0	698	12.6%	5553
1877	280	20	1	301	5.0%	6068
1878	253	3	1	257	4.3%	6022
1879	352	3	0	355	7.1%	5001
1880	638	3	0	641	9.6%	6646
1881	576	2	0	578	8.6%	6686
1882	596	0	0	596	7.7%	7730
1883	604	2	1	607	9.0%	6760
1884	780	1	0	781	10.8%	7220
1885	915	3	0	918	13.0%	7055
1886	847	1	0	848	11.3%	7515
1887	625	6	0	631	7.3%	8679
1888	574	2	1	577	5.8%	9880
1889	589	0	0	589	7.1%	8353
1890	472	0	0	472	5.6%	8501

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1872-1921).

Hoyne justified his use of the pardoning power by referring to changes in the city charter. Hoyne, released a number of inmates under a new section of the charter which limited imprisonment for non-payment of fines. Hoyne acted as mayor from April to June 6, 1876 when the Circuit Court rendered a decision that he had not legally been elected in the election to fill a vacancy in the office. Nevertheless, Hoyne issued 133 releases from

May 18 to June 4, 1876.³¹ According to the laws incorporating the House of Correction, prisoners worked out their fines at the rate of two dollars per day, but many were only working off their fines at fifty cents per day. Hoyne released those who would have earned their release at the two-dollar rate.³² His actions contributed to a significant rise in the number of pardons for 1876.

The mayors who served immediately following were not so lenient, until the institution became severely overcrowded. According to Felton, Monroe Heath was not as lenient.³³ Perhaps as a direct result of his predecessors' actions, Heath issued few pardons during his tenure from 1876 to 1879.³⁴ Carter Harrison, Sr. (mayor 1879-1887) initially continued this trend. Even as the jail was overcrowded in 1881, the Board of Inspectors wrote that "none have been discharged for the purpose of making room for new-comers."³⁵ With the increased number of inmates detained, Harrison granted more releases. The highest percentage was conferred immediately before the new addition opened in 1887.

Most inmates served the full term of their sentences, or the number of days required to "work off" their fine. Aside from the examples above, preference was usually given to those who served a large portion of their sentence, were invalids or insane, first

³¹ "The Mayor's Case Decided," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 6 June 1876, 4, final edition.

³² "The City Hall," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 June 1876, p. 8, final edition.

³³ *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1877), 17.

³⁴ *Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Annual Reports*.

³⁵ *Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Knight and Leonard, 1882), 7.

offenders, and the young.³⁶ Requests for release still often came from family members, but rather than the city council considering petitions for release (as with the earlier Bridewell), Felton's approval was required for release. The mayor conferred final approval, but, as in other instances, deferred to Felton's expertise to determine which prisoners most deserved an early release.

Table 15. Yearly Escapes and Deaths in Early HOC

Year	Total Released	Death	Escape	Deaths and Escapes as a Percent of Total
1872	6125	11	11	0.36%
1873	6445	3	6	0.14%
1874	5980	6	9	0.25%
1875	4992	1	2	0.06%
1876	5553	6	6	0.22%
1877	6068	5	1	0.10%
1878	6022	5	4	0.15%
1879	5001	5	7	0.24%
1880	6646	12	1	0.20%
1881	6686	15	3	0.27%
1882	7730	12	4	0.21%
1883	6760	14	5	0.28%
1884	7220	14	7	0.29%
1885	7055	5	7	0.17%
1886	7515	8	6	0.19%
1887	8679	15	9	0.28%
1888	9880	22	10	1.69%
1889	8353	18	10	0.34%
1890	8501	18	7	0.29%

Note: Compiled from Annual Reports (1872-1890).

³⁶ Ibid., 7.

Felton administered the HOC with little interference by aldermen, mayors, or inspectors. HOC inmates encountered the consequences of a few critical differences from life within the Bridewell. He oversaw critical changes which greatly affected the prisoners' experience. Unlike life in the Bridewell, HOC inmates found a daily routine centered on work. Both men and women quickly discovered that rule-breaking met with punishments, similar to life within a larger penitentiary. Labor and punishment went hand-in-hand and defined life within.

The treatment of male and female inmates began to change as structural segregation was accompanied by administrative changes. Incarceration, as well as the arrest experience, differed for men and women. Women were tended by matrons in the police stations, much as patients were treated by physicians. A man was handled exclusively by male cops who did not offer a bed, pillow, or soup if he was ill. Additionally, men were confined within the overcrowded cells, but women were not. Gender more fully shaped a prisoner's experience within the HOC as years passed. After Felton's tenure, life within the later HOC depended on the emphasis a superintendent placed on discipline and their ability to require inmates to work.

Life in the Later HOC

The HOC continued to receive a disparate population in regards to ethnicity, sex and age. However, a greater number of inmates at the later HOC were native-born, white Americans. As years progressed, the percentage increased, reflecting the larger demographics of the city itself. Irish, once a large percentage of the first- and second-generation immigrants within the facility, became a smaller portion of those confined.

Following the greater immigration patterns of both Chicago and nationally, eastern Europeans began to account for more prisoners within the structure. Even so, the numbers remained fairly small until 1915.

Whites continued to consistently account for more than eighty percent of those confined at the facility until World War I. African-Americans comprised approximately five percent of the inmate population until 1890. From 1890 to 1918, their population fluctuated between seven and thirteen percent. Very few Native Americans and Asians were detained at the HOC; only one inmate was listed as Native American from 1872 to 1902. From 1903 to 1918, Asians and Native Americans accounted for more inmates at the HOC, but never reached a combined total of twenty per year, a small fraction of the ten to sixteen thousand received during the period.³⁷

³⁷ *Annual Reports*, 1872 to 1921.

Table 16. Ethnicity and Race in Later HOC

Ethnicity/Race of Inmates						Prisoners' Nativity			Parents' Nativity		
Year	Total	% White	% African Am.	# Native Am.	# Asian	% US	% Irish	% Polish	% US	% Irish	% Polish
1891	8249	93%	7%	0	0	62.2%	13.70%	1.00%	28.8%	39%	2%
1892	9262	91%	9%	0	0	64.9%	13.10%	1.00%	29.8%	39%	2%
1893	10109	90%	10%	0	0	65.2%	11.80%	1.80%	33.2%	36%	2%
1894	9321	86%	14%	0	0	65.3%	9.50%	2.00%	43.3%	22%	3%
1895	8278	89%	11%	1	0	64.1%	10.90%	1.80%	37.3%	27%	2%
1896	9655	89%	11%	1	0	65.8%	10.50%	1.60%	40.8%	24%	2%
1897	7699	90%	10%	0	0	66.1%	9.00%	2.20%	39.8%	23%	3%
1898	6966	90%	10%	0	0	65.3%	9.10%	3.70%	33.3%	27%	6%
1899	6998	89%	11%	0	0	66.9%	9.50%	3.70%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1900	8236	89%	12%	0	0	68.7%	8.30%	3.60%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1901	7813	88%	12%	0	0	69%	8%	3%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1902	7963	89%	11%	0	0	71%	9%	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1903	9174	70%	11%	0	7	70%	7%	30%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1904	10089	88%	12%	1	7	71%	6%	3%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1905	9651	88%	12%	0	2	69%	7%	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1906	9435	86%	11%	2	2	66%	7%	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
1907	11283	89%	11%	1	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1908	12427	89%	11%	7	2	60%	6%	5%	33%	21%	9%
1909	12555	90%	10%	4	2	63%	n/a	n/a	34%	22%	7%
1910	13083	91%	7%	11	6	62%	7%	6%	32%	21%	8%
1911	13195	90%	8%	11	0	63%	n/a	n/a	34%	18%	9%
1912	11457	90%	9%	14	7	63%	n/a	n/a	n/a	19%	8%
1913	15111	91%	8%	13	5	63%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1914	15592	90%	8%	21	1	61%	6%	7%	32%	19%	9%
1915	16427	90%	9%	12	3	61%	6%	7%	33%	19%	12%
1916	12826	90%	10%	0	1	64%	n/a	n/a	37%	19%	7%
1917	15930	88%	12%	15	4	64%	7%	5%	37%	20%	6%
1918	10124	87%	15%	24	32	62%	6%	3%	37%	17%	5%

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1872-1921).

Table 17. Male and Female Inmates Received in Later HOC

Year	Total	Men	Women	% Women
1890	8457	7253	1204	16.6%
1891	8249	7462	787	9.5%
1892	9262	8324	938	10.1%
1893	10109	9200	909	9.0%
1894	9321	8028	1293	13.9%
1895	8278	7221	1057	12.8%
1896	9655	8541	1114	11.5%
1897	7699	6886	813	10.6%
1898	6966	6181	785	11.3%
1899	6998	6214	784	11.2%
1900	8236	7390	846	10.3%
1901	7813	6872	941	12.0%
1902	7963	7080	883	11.1%
1903	9174	8159	1015	11.1%
1904	10089	8803	1286	12.7%
1905	9651	8546	1105	11.4%
1906	9435	8351	1084	11.5%
1907	11283	10129	1154	10.2%
1908	12427	11013	1414	11.4%
1909	12555	11098	1457	11.6%
1910	13083	11700	1383	10.6%
1911	13195	11924	1271	9.6%
1912	11457	10276	1181	10.3%
1913	15111	13543	1568	10.4%
1914	15592	13966	1626	10.4%
1915	16427	14606	1821	11.1%
1916	12827	11207	1620	12.6%
1917	15930	14267	1663	10.4%
1918	10124	8901	1223	12.1%
1919	5733	5209	514	9.0%
1920	4681	4441	240	5.1%

Although the ethnic and racial composition of inmates remained fairly constant from 1872 to 1915, changes became more apparent in regards to sex. After Felton's tenure, women were less likely to be sentenced to the HOC. Although the numbers detained at the facility continued to increase steadily, the portion of women confined began to decline after 1890. Whereas Felton had overseen an inmate population approximately twenty percent female, his successors, beginning with Crawford, had a population of roughly ten percent female. Additionally, men and women began to be more fully segregated within the HOC than ever before.

On October 23, 1891, inspectors proposed that the women would be removed from their wing into a remodeled cell-house created from the original administration building. As a result, the female wing would be used for the male inmates.³⁸ By February 1892, the renovations were complete. Designed to accommodate 100 women, the new building included fifty cells and a dining room for the women.³⁹ However, critics argued that this still did not adequately separate the women from the men as they were still within the same building as the men.

Superintendent John Sloan implemented another change for women. In 1899, he directed that the women's building be further modified to a dormitory system, instead of cells. As he reported, few facilities continued to confine women within cells. Instead, most implemented the dormitory system. At the HOC, one section held fifty beds. Thirty

³⁸ "Decided on the Plans," *Chicago Tribune*, 24 October 1891, p. 7.

³⁹ "Enlarging the Bridewell Capacity," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 February 1892, p. 1.

additional beds were placed in ten rooms, each holding three beds. As a result of the switch to the dormitory system, Sloan reported “better discipline” in 1900.⁴⁰

Other additions to the HOC were designed to appeal to the women. In October 1899, Superintendent Sloan had the male inmates build a 4,000 square-foot greenhouse. Female prisoners tended flowers in the greenhouse. In his first annual report, Sloan wrote that although the greenhouse was so new, he hoped that the flowers would “evinced an interest that may wean them away from former thoughts and actions.”⁴¹

Over the years, the percentage of female inmates at the HOC gradually declined. Before 1891, female comprised almost one-quarter of inmates. After 1891, the percentage hovered near ten percent.⁴² For example, 1,550 of the 6,636 prisoners received at the HOC during 1872 were female (or approximately 23 percent).⁴³ As of 1890, the 1,300 women sent to the HOC comprised 14 percent of the 9,334 total inmates of the facility.⁴⁴ During the 1890s, the female population remained between 10 and 15 percent of the total.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1901), 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴² *Annual Reports*, 1872 to 1921.

⁴³ Board of Inspectors. *First Annual Report of the Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago, and the Reports of the Superintendent and Physician to the Board of Inspectors* (Chicago: J.S. Thompson and Co., 1874), 13.

⁴⁴ *Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M. H. Kendig, 1892), 7.

⁴⁵ 1890s Annual Reports.

The ratio of female inmates within the HOC was partially a result of another change to the criminal justice system. Police justices could send women to other places besides the HOC. The number of women housed at other institutions increased when two institutions were formally designated as Houses of Shelter of the HOC contributing to the decreasing female population within the HOC. In July 1903, the city council designated the Erring Woman's Refuge for Reform (5024 Indiana Avenue), which later became The Chicago Home for Girls, and the House of Good Shepherd, at Hill and Orleans Streets as able to confine female HOC inmates.⁴⁶ Previously, women who became sick at the jail were often sent to the hospital or other home. These facilities were not designed to restrain the women while recovering. The House of Good Shepherd and Erring Woman's Refuge were refitted to meet that need.⁴⁷ The two facilities also confined the younger female inmates of the HOC.⁴⁸ Women had been sent to the House of Good Shepherd and the Erring Women's Refuge from the HOC before the official designation, but were often released because they could not legally detain them. After 1903, such commitments were legal.⁴⁹

Superintendent Andrew Lynch oversaw the complete segregation of women from men. Finally responding to calls for complete separation of prisoners by sex, the city council approved construction on new quarters for females on July 5, 1905. The separate

⁴⁶ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 20.

⁴⁷ "Refuge for Ill in Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1903, p. 12, final edition.

⁴⁸ City Files: 1905 0041 A 4/11.

⁴⁹ Board of Inspectors, *Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1904), 8-9.

building officially opened on October 17, 1906 when the female inmates were transferred into the new quarters. Construction of the new facility did help satisfy the critiques regarding complete segregation of males and females in the jail, but economics still played a role in the execution of the building. The materials for the project were provided by the lowest bidder; the labor was done by male inmates.⁵⁰ Not only did the Women's Building separate the women's quarters from those of the men's, it also included the women's workshops as well (which included the Laundry and Sewing rooms).⁵¹ The building included 198 cells.⁵²

After thirty five years, the House of Correction finally segregated male and female inmates into different buildings. While the Women's Building continued the façade and design of the main prison, a wall separated them from the men. The Women's Department had three parts: a main building flanked by two wings. The two-story east wing (131 feet by forty feet) featured a receiving room, offices, bathrooms, hospital and chapel. The west wing (161 feet by forty feet), also with two floors, housed the Laundry on the first floor and the Dining Room and Sewing room above. Although the Bridewell had been criticized for allowing women to be idle, the "New Women's Building" promised reformation through work that benefited the city. Female inmates cleaned laundry for the police and health departments.⁵³

⁵⁰ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵² With the opening of the new building, women were again placed in cells. City Files: 1907 064 A 04/11.

⁵³ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 19-20.

Like the rest of the Women's Building, the women's cell house was also presented as progressive. As the main structure, the cell house was 203 feet by fifty-one feet with a three-story rotunda in the middle which contained the cells. Each of the 198 cells contained an iron bed, mattress, pillow, sheets, and blankets. In addition, each cell was equipped with running water, a toilet, and a lavatory. According to the city of Chicago, "the entire cell house is kept spotlessly clean." To ensure this cleanliness, five girls labored to clean cells daily and wash the windows weekly. In addition, the women had access to a garden for recreation. Once radio emerged, a radio receiving set was installed in the cell house. Women listened to the radio until nine o'clock, after which it and the lights were turned off.⁵⁴

Superintendents discovered that sometimes they received actually received an additional inmate when taking in a female prisoner: a child. Although not common, babies were sometimes in the early HOC and Women's Department. Rarely mentioned, a few births were described in the City Physicians' early reports. In 1872, the HOC saw the birth of two children at the facility. The first was born prematurely and died, but the second baby lived in the HOC with his mother until he was at least three months old.⁵⁵ Two more male babies were delivered at the HOC in 1874.⁵⁶

Superintendent Mark Crawford detailed his experience with two infants at the HOC in his early tenure. They arrived with their mothers upon sentencing. A fourteen-

⁵⁴ John E. Wagner, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: The House of Correction, 1933), 83.

⁵⁵ *First Annual Report*, 22.

⁵⁶ *Third Annual Report*, 25.

month old went to the HOC before Crawford took office. He asked Mayor Washburne to pardon the mother and she was promptly released. Shortly thereafter, another woman arrived with her baby, a four-month old, to serve her term. Crawford sent a letter to the committing justice that although he received Mary Donahue's commitment paperwork, he did not receive any for the son, Freddy. After a curt exchange, Crawford refused to lock up the son and secured a pardon for his mother. He declared success and stated "Now the Justices understand that I will not receive children, and mothers with infants in their arms are not sent down to me."⁵⁷

Doctors at the HOC also had to perform operations and procedures on female inmates confined there. Although not common, a few of the annual reports refer to abortions and births that occurred at the institution. For example, one abortion was done at the HOC in 1891.⁵⁸ In 1909, Dr. Charles Sceleth reported three abortions and three normal labors during the year.⁵⁹ Sceleth oversaw two births, one pregnancy, one abortion, and one lacerated perineum during labor in 1910.⁶⁰ In 1918, fifteen pregnant women entered the HOC.⁶¹ Despite the number of abortions, births, and babies in the jail, little documentation remains of their presence inside.

⁵⁷ Otto Hoepfner Free, *Chicago Tribune*, 1 March 1892, p. 8, final edition.

⁵⁸ *Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M. H. Kendig, 1892), 36.

⁵⁹ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1909), 63.

⁶⁰ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, Superintendent, and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1911), 54.

⁶¹ *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, Superintendent and the Medical Superintendent* (Chicago: n.p., 1919), 32.

Some reforms affecting women within the HOC were a result of public interest and philanthropy. After visiting the female cells, Nellie Fabyan established a fund to assist “deserving” female inmates at the jail. Fabyan asked Sloan to use the \$100 to loan a few women money to pay their fines. They would then pay the back the loan in weekly installments of one or two dollars once released.⁶² Skeptical, Sloan stressed that the success of the fund depended solely on the inmates keeping their promise to pay back the loans.⁶³ By the end of the month, eleven females had been released through the program, nine repaid their loans in full and the remaining two owed one dollar each. Sloan called the program a success stating, “[t]he promptness with which the money has been returned would delight any business man.”⁶⁴

Few female inmates captured the public attention, but one did. Bridget “Kittie” Adams received a great deal of press upon her release from the HOC. Adams petitioned for a pardon from the jail because she was suffering from consumption. Her petition included confirmation of consumption by HOC physicians, including G.K. Dyer, H.T. Warren, and B.B. Marheinker. She additionally stated that she was being confined for her first offense. Governor John Peter Altgeld ultimately pardoned Adams and she was released August 4, 1894.⁶⁵ Her release created a flurry of press questioning Altgeld’s decision.

⁶² “Plan to Free Girls,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 August 1904, p. 1, final edition.

⁶³ “Pay Fines at \$1 a Week,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 August 1904, p. 12, final edition.

⁶⁴ “Given Liberty By Fund,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 August 1904, p. 3, final edition.

⁶⁵ “Noonan and Kern Recommend It,” *Chicago Tribune*, 7 August 1894, p. 12, final edition.

Describing Adams, the *Tribune* referred to her as “the toughest proposition in the way of a female criminal that the Chicago police ever encountered.”⁶⁶ She, along with a group of other women, executed a particular type of pick pocketing. Adams would approach a man and ask him to buy her a drink in a local saloon. Once the man drank, Adams would then pick his pockets. She frequented a number of saloons and divided up the loot with them. The article detailed the difficulty of imprisoning Adams. Not only did saloonkeepers often secure her release after she was fined, but many of the victimized men refrained from pressing charges against her for fear of publicity.⁶⁷ Superintendent Crawford added to the debate by stating that he had not heard of any such ailments by Adams. An official at the Central Street Police Station theorized that Adams picked her teeth to create the appearance of a bloody mouth. He stated that such tactics were common among criminals to gain sympathy.⁶⁸

Mrs. Caroline Nellis gained public sympathy during her stay at the later HOC. Nellis, 72, had previously suffered a stroke, which left her unable to speak or write.⁶⁹ The wealthy Nellis was found wandering on the streets on May 5 and determined to be “drunk.” Unable to give her name or deny the charges, Nellis was sentenced to the HOC for twenty-three days for failing to pay a ten dollar fine and costs. After a matron realized

⁶⁶ “Kittie is Let Out,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 August 1894, p. 1, final edition.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “Blood from a Tooth,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 August 1894, p. 8, final edition.

⁶⁹ “Homecoming of the Aged Mrs. Nellis,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 1897, p. 3, final edition.

that “Mary Doe” was really Nellis, she sent a letter to her family to alert them to her whereabouts.⁷⁰

A matron at the police station on 35th Street and Halsted later took responsibility for sending Nellis to jail. She testified with the two arresting policemen on May 6th that Nellis was drunk the night before. She assumed that Nellis was homeless, and as a result, argued that the HOC would be an appropriate place for her. Chief Kiple remarked that he “shall see that an affair of this kind will not occur again. In this case I am of the impression that it is a grave error of judgment on the part of the matron.”⁷¹

Most women did not attract public attention during their confinement. Adams and Nellis did attract attention, but for very different reasons. Adams, a repeat offender and professional criminal, was portrayed as a woman who manipulated the system to secure her (early) release. In contrast, Nellis was an infirm (upper-class) woman who simply was at the “wrong place at the wrong time.” As she was incapable of preventing her incarceration, her story served as an example what could happen when the system failed. Adams and Nellis were both exceptional because of the public attention they attracted while within the HOC.

Other changes within the HOC affected men and women differently, especially punishment and order. In 1898, city council and inspectors ordered a change in the use of punishment within the HOC. In response to accusations of guards using the paddle on juveniles, the city council passed a resolution ordering the discontinuance of corporal

⁷⁰ “Prison for a Paralytic,” *Chicago Tribune*, 15 May 1897, p. 1, final edition.

⁷¹ “Matron Brannan Takes the Blame,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 May 1897, p. 7, final edition.

punishment at the HOC. Alderman M.C. Conlon presented the resolution which was passed December 5, 1898. Declaring that children at the HOC suffered “cruel corporal treatment,” the council ordered that the officers and guards “desist from any such thing as the infliction of corporal punishment upon any person or persons confined.” They further ordered that the HOC inspectors insure that the resolution was obeyed.⁷²

Some changes were not visible to outsiders. In July 1901, the Board of Inspectors abolished the lockstep because it was “too harsh a penal character and of degrading and humiliating effect.”⁷³ The lockstep had been in use at least since the 1885 rules were adopted. Prisoners marched in lockstep at any time they were taken out of their cells as illustrated below. In a single-file line, inmates placed their left hand on the shoulder of the man in front of him. As the prisoners passed the guards, they turned their heads slightly toward him so that he can ensure all were accounted for.⁷⁴ After the lockstep was abolished, inmates were required to walk in single-file order, but an “arm’s length apart” from the prisoner in front.⁷⁵

A year later, inspectors abolished the dark cell as a punishment. The cells were still used for solitary confinement, but a window was placed in each. Sloan stressed that they were not used to punish, but rather to segregate the offending inmate and allow for him to “reflect on his misdeeds and determine the wisdom and the practicability of

⁷² City Files: 1898/99 1891 A 12/5.

⁷³ Board of Inspectors, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1903), 21.

⁷⁴ “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1885, p. 9, final edition.

⁷⁵ *Thirty-First Annual Report*, 63.

obeying the rules.”⁷⁶ This language harkened back to the philosophical foundation of the separate Pennsylvania system of isolation.



Figure 14. Lockstep at the HOC. Image from “The Bridewell,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 January 1885.

Although officials slowly segregated the facility from the city around it, the HOC remained within the public eye through news accounts of happenings within its walls. From 1890 to 1915, numerous stories about the institution, its prisoners, and officials captured public attention. Often, these stories centered on violence within the structure. The HOC did fare slightly better in the press than the Cook County Jail, also located in Chicago. In particular, the *Chicago Tribune* praised the HOC for its ability to keep

⁷⁶ Ibid., 21.

inmates at work, unlike the county jail.⁷⁷ However, inmates' attempts to challenge or resist conditions inside dominated these accounts. Many articles relayed stories of escape; the most notorious was that of Eddie McNichols.

"Eddie" McNichols was fined and sentenced multiple times from 1890 to 1901 for a variety of charges ranging from larceny to assault to burglary.⁷⁸ In April 1901, McNichols was serving a sentence at the HOC when he was taken to the Criminal Court building to face charges of jury-bribing. While there, he escaped. A guard, Antonio Denmark, was later indicted of assisting in the escape.⁷⁹ McNichols and Denmark went to Frank's saloon on their way from the HOC to court. There, the two men had drinks and McNichols ran from his captor. Denmark slowly pursued him, allowing McNichols to gain a lead and fired two shots in the air, intending not to harm him. For his actions, Denmark was removed and faced charges of malfeasance in office.⁸⁰ McNichols was later captured in St. Paul, Minnesota, but fought extradition back to Chicago. After the Supreme Court of Minnesota denied his request, McNichols was brought back to Chicago to finish his HOC sentence and face charges in the Criminal Court.⁸¹ On February 14, 1902 he was sentenced to the Illinois State Penitentiary for attempting to bribe a juror.⁸²

⁷⁷ "The Bridewell, not the Jail," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 February 1908, p. 8, final edition.

⁷⁸ "M'Nichols in a Prison Cell," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 February 1902, p. 13, final edition.

⁷⁹ "M'Nichols Free; Eludes Captor," *Chicago Tribune*, 6 April 1901, 3, final edition.

⁸⁰ "M'Nichols is in a Cell," *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1901, 3, final edition.

⁸¹ "Chicago Police Get M'Nichols," *Chicago Tribune*, 30 October 1901, p. 3, final edition. Denmark was ultimately found not guilty. "Former Bridewell Guard Acquitted," *Chicago Tribune*, 10 April 1903, p. 15, final edition.

⁸² "M'Nichols in a Prison Cell," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 February 1902, p. 13, final edition.

Despite official attempts to prevent escapes by constructing a surrounding wall, some inmates nevertheless scaled the wall to secure their freedom, especially in 1912. In April, three men attempted escape. Walter Burke, broke both legs falling from the wall and was captured shortly after, but the other two, Frank McGuire and Carl Bruche, evaded capture.⁸³ A few weeks later, three others climbed over the wall to escape. They were Owen Rogers, Frank McCann, and James Hanrahas.⁸⁴ In June, six more prisoners escaped the jail. As a result, Superintendent Whitman suspended four guards at the end of the month.⁸⁵

Other escapes only received cursory treatment in the newspapers. In general, there were few escapes per year (as shown below.) Some years did see higher rates of escape. Many of the increases corresponded to changes (or possible changes) in administration, particularly 1897, 1905, 1907 and the last years of Whitman's tenure. These years saw the resignations and appointments of new superintendents. Additionally, rumors emerged in 1916 that Whitman would be asked to leave. Again, newspapers stated that Whitman's future at the HOC would end with his impending appointment as Superintendent of Illinois Prisons.⁸⁶ Again, inmates contemplating escapes might have seized the potential opportunity presented by an incoming (or potential incoming) newcomer to the post.

⁸³ "Dizzy Drop at Bridewell; 2 Free; Third Breaks Legs," *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1912, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Escapees also included: Frank Kimball, Michael McCarthy (recaptured), Richard Smith, Maynard Johnson (recaptured), Michael Bloge (recaptured), and Adolph Reiser. "3 Escape From Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1912, p. 1.

⁸⁵ "Ousts 4 Bridewell Guards," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 June 1912, p. 4.

⁸⁶ "Doubt on Yarn Whitman to Go," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 April 1916, p. 15; "Whitman Plans to Make Prisons Cure Criminals," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 June 1917, p. 16.

Other periods of higher rates of escapes frequently occurred during the administration of those superintendents who emphasized discipline within the HOC. Superintendents Sloan and Joseph Siman (Whitman's successor), and to a lesser extent, Lynch, oversaw years of higher than usual escapes. More inmates escaped in 1918 than in any other year. This might have been due to the Siman's reinstitution of discipline, but could have also been due to instability brought shortly after U.S. entrance into World War I. Such a spike in escapes was unusual. Many fewer escaped in 1919, eighteen, which was still high, but much more within keeping of totals from previous years.

Many inmates continued to secure an early release due to pardons. Mayors resorted to releasing inmates by pardon as a way to relieve severely overcrowded conditions. Superintendent Sloan reported in 1903 that Mayor Harrison often pardoned inmates "because we haven't got room," but often such tactics had limited effect. On August 22, Harrison released sixty-eight inmates Sloan recommended, but fifty-two more arrived in their place. Preference was given to those serving their first sentence or convicted of petty crimes.⁸⁷ Even Sloan, who emphasized discipline, faced the reality that the HOC simply could not accommodate all those sentenced to the institution.

The high rate of commitments contributed to the overcrowded conditions. Many prisoners served multiple terms at the jail. Superintendent Whitman tabulated that by 1909, twenty-six men had served twenty-five or more sentences, nine served fifty or more, and three who had been committed more than 100 times. In contrast, seventy-eight

⁸⁷ "Boom Day at Bridewell," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 August 1903, p. 4.

women had entered the HOC twenty-five or more times, forty-four women served more than 50 terms, and twelve over 100 sentences.⁸⁸

Despite such public criticisms of the HOC, Mayor Carter Harrison reappointed Whitman as superintendent. Harrison retained Whitman, stating that the office of superintendent was “not a political position,” even though the administrative and political change brought by Harrison’s election.⁸⁹ However, his perspective regarding the political nature of the board of inspectors was not in keeping with the superintendency. Three new inspectors replaced the board soon after.⁹⁰

The change might have resulted from the previous board’s reluctance to support Whitman’s goal of making the HOC an institution which emphasized reformation rather than punishment. Two years earlier, Mayor Busse stated that he supported Whitman’s policies. However, Whitman could not implement many of his proposals because two members of the earlier board, including former Superintendent John J. Sloan, were against the changes. Sloan, who had reemphasized discipline during his own tenure, opposed turning the bridewell into “a pleasure resort.” He affirmed his position by stating, “We [inspectors] have insisted on methods of strict discipline.”⁹¹

⁸⁸ “Prison No Terror to Crime Women,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 November 1910, p. 11.

⁸⁹ “Whitman Retains Old Post,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 30 June 1911, p. 14, final edition.

⁹⁰ G. A. Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago: A Retrospect* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 1922), 2.

⁹¹ “Busse to Settle Bridewell Fight,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 June 1909, p. 3, final edition.

Table 18. Yearly Escapes and Deaths in Later HOC

Year	Total Released	Death	Escape	Deaths and Escapes as a Percent of Total
1891	8089	13	12	0.31%
1892	9118	12	4	0.18%
1893	10222	9	2	0.11%
1894	9513	9	2	0.12%
1895	8263	8	0	0.10%
1896	9446	16	4	0.21%
1897	7903	7	7	0.18%
1898	7033	9	2	0.16%
1899	6818	14	6	0.30%
1900	7926	16	14	0.38%
1901	7876	19	10	0.37%
1902	7981	41	13	0.68%
1903	8810	38	11	0.56%
1904	10051	31	8	0.39%
1905	9571	18	11	0.30%
1906	9606	32	9	0.43%
1907	10672	46	11	0.53%
1908	12789	34	2	0.28%
1909	12528	43	4	0.38%
1910	13256	50	7	0.43%
1911	12904	48	1	0.38%
1912	11773	51	4	0.47%
1913	14560	46	6	0.36%
1914	15333	35	5	0.26%
1915	17028	28	15	0.26%
1916	12803	45	15	0.47%
1917	15860	62	11	0.46%
1918	10797	39	64	0.95%
1919	6220	44	18	1.00%
1920	4310			n/a
1921	8229	18	13	0.38%

Note: Compiled from Annual Reports (1891-1921).

However, some of his changes were reversed upon his replacement by Joseph Siman. Namely, all employees at the HOC were again required to wear uniforms. The Inspectors, who included previous Superintendent Sloan, noted that a uniform “command[ed] the respect, the attention and the obedience of the inmates.”⁹²

Siman faced a number of challenges in administering the HOC. Inmates, as with the Bridewell, were idle. As the city discontinued the employment of prisoners within the facility, the city’s costs for operating it quickly escalated. A small percentage of the prisoners worked within the HOC, but the workshops were not used.⁹³ Labor, once critical to maintaining order within, was no longer available to superintendents.

Inmates detained within the HOC encountered a number of realities during their confinement. Those who served multiple sentences realized that each superintendent placed a different emphasis on the role of discipline and reformation within the structure. Superintendents Felton, Lynch and Sloan ensured that prisoners conformed to the rules of the facility. Discipline was critical for compliance. Crawford and Whitman hoped to make the HOC an institution which promised rehabilitation for the criminal. Each superintendent (and his respective board of inspectors) envisioned how he could “improve” upon and successfully manage the building. However, each of the men only influenced the administration of the HOC for as long as they served as the superintendent.

⁹² *Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, Superintendent and the Medical Superintendent of the House of Correction* (Chicago: n.p, 1918), 12.

⁹³ Of the 2,037 men and 202 women detained, work existed for about 500. “Prison Loafers Cost Chicago \$325,000 a Year,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 March 1918, p. 8.

Prisoners within the HOC also experienced one critical difference from incarceration at the earlier Bridewell: they were supposed to work. Labor was a central part of prison administration in the late nineteenth century, serving a dual purpose. Work was to defray expenses and also teach inmates a skill during their incarceration. However, this was not the case. Inmates performed unskilled labor. Additionally, administrators had to end contract labor due to calls that it competed unfair with free labor. Routine, a critical component of life within the HOC served as another marker of difference from the Bridewell where idleness was the rule.

The years from 1871 to 1915 also saw other critical changes within the facility. Most notably, experience within depended on the age and sex of the inmate. Women, who had often had a very similar experience as men in the Bridewell, increasingly were treated differently. Gender, originally only designed into the structure of the HOC, was a critical factor into life behind the walls of the HOC. Women were treated during arrest and incarceration by matrons who were to care for and rehabilitate them. Men were not. Part of the difference in treatment by the city also meant that many more women ended up in Houses of Shelter, not within the HOC itself. As a result of the Women's Department and the John Worthy School, the population within the HOC became an older, male population. Although the boys within the HOC received considerable attention, dictating changes to the HOC designed to reform them, the men did not receive such attention. The public concern with life inside the HOC only extended to the juvenile males only, helping to create the John Worthy School. Men detained within continued to

realize that their confinement continued to often consist of routine, discipline, and continued segregation from the city and the public.

CHAPTER SIX

SEPARATING THE MEN FROM THE BOYS:
THE JOHN WORTHY SCHOOL (1892-1915)



Figure 15. “John Worthy Manual Training School,” *Chicago Daily News*, 1908. DN-0006849, Chicago Daily News negatives collection, Chicago History Museum.

Sixteen-year-old Robert Gordon was arrested in September 1906 for the murder of eight-year-old Joseph Reed. According to Gordon, he killed the boy as a result of Reed “holler[ing]” after Gordon attacked him. Gordon hit Reed in the head multiple times and subsequently partially buried Reed’s body in front of Reed’s home. When questioned

about the incident, Gordon reportedly bragged about his use of alcohol, smoking of cigarettes, and previous encounters with law enforcement.¹

Gordon spent time in city institutions designed to reform young, male troublemakers. He initially spent time at the Parental School, sent there by his parents. From the Parental School, he was transferred to the John Worthy School in 1903. Gordon served two terms at the John Worthy School. Gordon was originally detained for five months, and shortly after his release, served a second term for three months. Superintendent Andrew Lynch reported that Gordon “obeyed the rules” during his confinement.²

Gordon epitomized Progressive reformers’ concerns of delinquent juveniles. Gordon, who admitted to causing trouble for his parents and refusing to work, began to smoke and drink at an early age. He was arrested with four other teenagers, who reportedly frequented local saloons.³ Gordon confirmed reformers’ fears when he claimed that during his sentences at the John Worthy School, he learned “viciousness,” culminating in his assault of Reed.⁴

Reformers, penal experts, and political leaders at the turn of the century grappled with the question of how to deal with male juvenile delinquents. State, county, and city leaders proposed a number of ideas to reform young men who ran afoul of the law. Although nearly all agreed that the HOC was no place for young offenders, many years

¹ “Points Path to Murder,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1906, 3, final edition.

² “To Probe Worthy School,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1906, 9, final edition.

³ “Points Path to Murder,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1906, 3, final edition.

⁴ “To Probe Worthy School,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1906, 9, final edition.

passed before they united to create a facility in Chicago just for them: the John Worthy School (JWS). The institution opened in 1896, but boys and men were not housed separately until July 1, 1899, as required under the Juvenile Act of 1899. Juvenile advocates sought the complete segregation of young male offenders from older inmates, hoping to prevent juveniles from falling into a life of crime. Administrators and reformers envisioned the JWS as a hybrid institution: a detention facility which would both punish and educate those held inside. The debates concerning reforming and punishing youth highlight the difficulties reformers faced in preventing future boys from ending up like Robert Gordon.⁵

City, county, and state officials created a number of institutions to help prevent children from falling into a life of crime and dependency. City leaders built and administered a number of facilities, including the Reform School and the Parental School. Each received a different type of juvenile population during its existence. The Reform School operated from 1855 to 1872. Boys aged six to sixteen who were deemed vagrant, truant, incorrigible, or sent by a police magistrate found themselves at the institution until December 1870, when the Illinois Supreme Court ruled only juveniles convicted of a crime through due process could be committed.⁶ The school ceased to operate shortly

⁵ City reformers advocated for the creation of institutions to detain male juvenile offenders, but their actions were more limited for minor female offenders, especially until the creation of the Juvenile Court in 1899. Anne Meis Knupfer has examined the city's efforts to reform female juveniles. To do so, she surveys the Chicago Detention Home, the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, the Chicago Home for Girls, the State Industrial School for Delinquent Girls, and the House of Good Shepherd. As concerns this study, delinquent juvenile females were sent to the House of Good Shepherd and the Erring Women's Refuge for Reform after 1903. Anne Meis Knupfer, *Reform and Resistance: Gender, Delinquency, and America's First Juvenile Court* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

after it was destroyed by the 1871 Fire.⁷ The Parental School was proposed in 1895 to receive truant children or those whose parents could no longer control them. Construction began in 1900, but the school did not open until January 1902.⁸ The Parental School received juveniles sent by the Juvenile Court.⁹

After the Reform School closed, city leaders struggled to create a new institution which would house young offenders. Some were sent to the Illinois State Reform School in Pontiac.¹⁰ The State Reform School, opened in 1871, received boys between nine and eighteen “committed by any court of competent jurisdiction as an offender, a person destitute of proper parental care, or growing up in mendicancy, ignorance, idleness, or vice.”¹¹ Designed to decrease the number of young in the county jails across the state, the reform school received juveniles convicted of felonies.¹² Young misdemeanants sentenced by the police magistrates still found their way into the House of Correction among older inmates.

Constant efforts to improve detainment for younger inmates who violated city ordinances or committed misdemeanors began with Mark Crawford, the second

⁶ Phillip M. Hash, “The Chicago Reform School Band: 1862-1872,” *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 55 no. 3 (Autumn, 2007), 255; “Reform School,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 December 1870, p. 3, final edition.

⁷ Hash, “The Chicago Reform School Band: 1862-1872,” 252.

⁸ “The Parental School Bill,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 March 1895, p. 12, final edition; “Truants Try Old Tricks,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 March 1902, p. 9, final edition.

⁹ “Truants Try Old Tricks,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 March 1902, p. 9, final edition.

¹⁰ “The State Reform School,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 27 March 1875, p. 8, final edition.

¹¹ “The Illinois State Reform School,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 June 1871, p. 3, final edition.

¹² “Reforms Bad Boys,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 April 1894, p. 33, final edition.

superintendent of the HOC. Crawford established an informal school shortly after his appointment. The first class consisted of thirty boys taught by John A. Fitzgerald while a guard watched to ensure order.¹³ Crawford often protested against the imprisonment of young boys at the HOC. He referred to the HOC as “a preparatory school for the penitentiary and the gallows.”¹⁴ Despite such lamentations, he argued that longer sentences would allow for true reformation to occur. In his first annual report, Crawford stated that terms of at least three months would be necessary for such reformation.¹⁵ Attempting to begin reforming younger offenders, Crawford began a program to educate younger offenders at the HOC. In his 1891 message, Mayor DeWitt Clinton Cregier referred to his efforts. He reported that both boys and girls “receive a daily course of instruction from a competent instructor,” making the institution “in deed, as well as in name, a HOUSE OF CORRECTION.”¹⁶

Formal plans to separate offenders based upon considerations of age slowly progressed. Mayor Hempstead Washburne focused on construction of a reformatory shortly after his inauguration in 1891. He quickly appointed John Worthy to succeed Walter Newberry as a member of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction.¹⁷ Worthy previously served the city when he was appointed a Lincoln Park Commissioner

¹³ “Started a School at the Bridewell,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 March 1891, p. 3, final edition.

¹⁴ *Twentieth Annual Report*, p. 33. Crawford’s sentiments echoed many concerns of the Progressive Era. Many reformers worried about the corruption of juveniles, both male and female. The John Worthy School is part of Chicago city leaders to address the problem within the city.

¹⁵ *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: M.B. McAbee Printer, 1891), 31-32.

¹⁶ The emphasis is original in the source. City Files: 1891 6932 05/27.

¹⁷ “Amber Will be City Collector,” *Chicago Tribune*, 1 May 1891, 2, final edition.

in 1888 by Governor Richard J. Oglesby.¹⁸ Worthy likely gained these public positions through his active political life as a Republican of the city's Twenty-Fourth Ward.¹⁹

Worthy, like many inspectors, was a prominent citizen of Chicago. Born in England in 1841, he started by working on his father's farm in Will County after the family immigrated when he was twelve years old. He served in the Civil War as a volunteer and afterward started working in the coal industry; by 1867, he lived in Chicago and worked in a stone quarry. Later, he married and raised two sons with his wife, Martha.²⁰ Worthy was involved with a number of business ventures, including the Commercial Loan and Trust Company and the Metropolitan Elevated Road. He served as a founding member and President of both companies until he died in 1894.²¹ Upon his death, his estate was valued at \$250,000, a considerable sum.²²

Both Mayor Washburne and Worthy spoke out early on their hopes to create a reformatory for minors at the HOC. In June, the two publicly admitted that little might be done as the current city budget made no such appropriations for an addition to the HOC. Despite Worthy's insistence that "Special attention should be given to the boys and girls that are sent to the institution," such provisions were slow to come. Additionally, politics

¹⁸ "New Lincoln Park Commissioner," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 February 1888, 1, final edition.

¹⁹ "Selected Convention Delegates," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 March 1891, 3, final edition.

²⁰ "New Lincoln Park Commissioner," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 February 1888, 1, final edition.

²¹ "John Worthy Dead: Prominent Chicago Financier Dies in New York," *Chicago Tribune*, 13 December 1894, 5, final edition.

²² "Will of John Worthy," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 December 1894, 2, final edition.

again presented the pair with another potential problem: two Democrats (Louis Wahl and W.H. Ford) and two Republicans (Worthy and Washburne) comprised the Board of Inspectors of the HOC. Republicans temporarily gained a majority of the Board when Washburne appointed Ernest Fecker the following year.²³ However, Republicans and Democrats eventually joined the effort to construct an institution exclusively for juvenile males, including the Democratic mayors who followed Washburne.

The *Chicago Tribune* began to follow the Board of Inspectors' plans to build a manual training school for boys in 1892. Juveniles would spend the day separated from the older criminals in the House of Correction. Not only would the new wing segregate young inmates, but boys would also gain "a useful training in some trade before turning them out upon the streets again." The two-story building plans highlighted the two goals of the new structure: education and training. The second floor accommodated these goals with plans for a school room on one side and a woodworking shop on the other.²⁴

In order to assist the youths who were currently confined, Mayor Hempstead Washburne examined a list of the youths in the House to determine if "an injustice [was] being done," upon which point he would "order the immediate discharge of the prisoners." Deputy Superintendent M. C. McDonnell stated "To lock boys up in the same room with old offenders is an offense against humanity. By the nature of things here we are compelled to put them in the same ward with old prisoners."²⁵

²³ "Thinks it a Necessity," *Chicago Tribune*, 12 June 1891, 8, final edition. Louis Wahl's term expired that year; Washburne did not re-appoint him. "Named by the Mayor," *Chicago Tribune*, 21 June 1892, 7, final edition.

²⁴ "To Build for Boys," *Chicago Tribune*, 28 February 1892, 1, final edition.

Continuing its survey of the boys inside, the *Tribune* included sketches to emphasize their young ages. Along with these images, the article continued to depict a day at the House of Correction for a group of boys. They were kept inside for school “without a glimpse of the outside world except what might be gained through the gratings of the cell doors and the heavy bars of the windows across the corridors.” Unlike the present jail, the training school would offer young inmates a chance to spend their time learning a trade rather than having “nothing for [them] to do from dinner time until bed time, except to study over their past misdeeds.”²⁶

Joining the push for reform, Methodist ministers preached to their congregations about the new training school. Drawing on the idea that boys would learn from older criminals, Reverend N. H. Axtell argued “It is by the side of such criminals who are professors in their particular crime that boys are placed. For them it soon becomes a school for crime.” He continued, “Boys who have been sent down for trifling offenses become in a short space of time hardened criminals.” At the end of his sermon, Axtell circulated a petition to the City Council and secured 127 signatures to plead for “an adequate appropriation for the establishment of a reformatory school for boys, in which they may be kept separate from other offenders and receive such manual, mental, and moral training as will save them from a life of crime and fit them for useful and honorable citizenship.”²⁷ Similarly, Reverend William R. Leach declared that boys “confined with hardened criminals, the effect of whose demoralizing influence cannot but

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ “To Rescue the Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 March 1892, p. 5, final edition.

be harmful, and with but little investigation we [church leaders] came to the belief that a boy would better be clubbed to death for his offense than sent to such an institution.”²⁸ Leach had given sermons to inmates at the HOC during Sunday services.²⁹

In 1893, Superintendent Mark Crawford formally proposed a reform institution for juveniles sent to the House of Correction and the City Council authorized the Board of Education to spend \$80,000 to build a manual training school separate from the House of Correction.³⁰ Crawford additionally proposed that sentences at the facility be indeterminate. Instead of serving a definite sentence, a juvenile would be released only when he “showed signs of reforming.” Crawford contended that crime rates would only decline if juvenile delinquents learned trades they could use to earn a livelihood.³¹ The Committee on School Management of the Board of Education voted in favor of the proposed school in January of 1894.³² The building would be located on the HOC site on land set aside in 1893 by the City Council.³³

Architect August Fiedler completed building plans for the facility. The approved plans called for a two-story building 136 feet by 195 feet. (Fig. 1) The first floor contained a coal room, boiler room, engine room, machine and store room, kitchen, and dining room. The second floor housed six school rooms, two offices, a woodworking

²⁸ “For the Manual Training School,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 March 1892, p. 5, final edition.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Trip in Black Maria,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1893, p. 7, final edition.

³¹ “Trades for Bad Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 January 1894, p. 12, final edition.

³² “Trip in Black Maria,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 November 1893, 7, final edition; “Trades for Bad Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 5 January 1894, 12, final edition.

³³ City Files: 1893 9125 3/24.

shop, a paint shop, a machine room, a kitchen, and dining room. Construction began in November 1894 and the building was finished by the following September, although not in use until November 1896. Like the original House of Correction, the John Worthy School was built of brick and trimmed with stone.³⁴

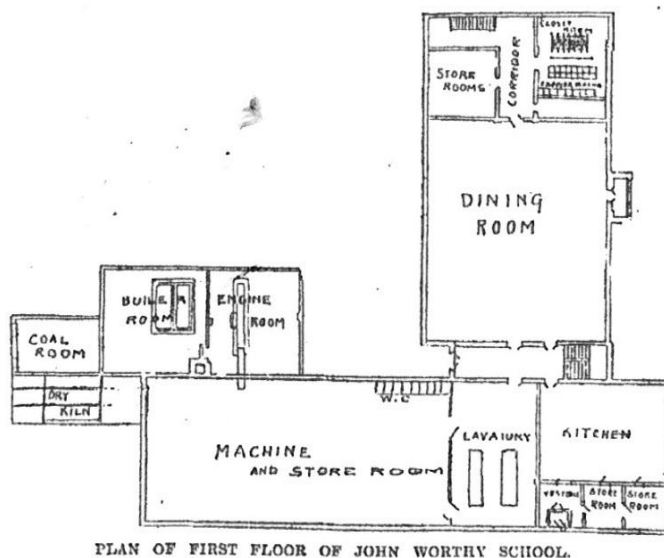


Figure 16. John Worthy School Floorplan. Image from “Needs a Cell House,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 September 1895.

Despite his early endorsement, Crawford emerged as an early critic against using the new building. Crawford argued against using the newly-built JWS until cells were provided for the juveniles. He stressed that although the boys would spend six hours a day in the new school, they still were housed with older inmates and susceptible to

³⁴ G. A. Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago: A Retrospect Covering a Half Century of Endeavor From the Founding of the Institution to the Present Time, 1871-1921* (Chicago: City of Chicago, 1921), 13-14; “Need a Cell-House,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1895, 9, final edition; T. H. MacQueary, “Schools for Dependent, Delinquent, and Truant Children in Illinois,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 9, no. 1 (July 1903): 10-11; “School at House of Correction,” *Chicago Tribune* 1 October 1894, 8, final edition.

corruption. He also disagreed with proposals to use the second floor as dormitories for the inmates. If such a plan was implemented, he argued it the JWS would be “a little bedlam on earth” because the young offenders were “no saints and they love to howl and fight.”³⁵ He contended that the only solution to the problem would be a separate cell house for them. If the city did not want to spend that much money, he proposed a separate wing for the juveniles. Until then, he urged city justices to refrain from sending the young to the HOC to be placed with older inmates.³⁶

C.A. McClaughry, the Deputy Superintendent of the HOC, concurred with Crawford. He reported to the Board of Education that guards could not prevent older criminals from corrupting young offenders in the cells. Although they were separated during the day, at night such corruption could continue as before. He added that with the official opening of the school, police justices were most likely send even more young offenders to the HOC, meaning that the potential for additional corruption would increase.³⁷

HOC officials were not the only proponents of separate housing for juveniles. Lucy Flower, a prominent activist, added her voice to that of Crawford and McClaughry. However, she supported dormitories for the juveniles rather than cells. She reported that “the corruption of the juveniles takes place in the cell-room at night, and until they are taken away from these associations the opening of the school will only aggravate the

³⁵ “Need a Cell House,” *Chicago Tribune*, 2 September 1895, 9, final edition.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “May Be Empty a Year,” *Chicago Tribune*, 14 January 1896, p. 12, final edition.

evil.”³⁸ Police justices concurred with those who proposed separate housing for the young. Until such accommodations were made, they argued that they could only let children brought before them go, or send them to the HOC.³⁹

Mayor John Hopkins joined the debate and wrote to the council in support of an appropriation for separate cells for juvenile boys. He pleaded for such accommodations by comparing the city to parents to the young offenders. “When the city assumes the place of parent or guardian it is bound to surround the boy as far as possible as such influences as will afford an opportunity for the boy to become a good citizen. If the City fails in this it fails to discharge its duty.”⁴⁰ Despite his plea, the letter was merely filed in the councils records; no action was taken at that time. A few months later, Alderman Joseph Haas, a member of the Bridewell Committee, proposed an ordinance for the Finance Committee to appropriate \$60,000 to the JWS for cells. The ordinance was again simply filed.⁴¹

The debate over the partial separation of the young from the older criminals continued for months. Despite the lack of separate housing for the juveniles, some argued that the school should be opened. Cost influenced many of these discussions. The City Council’s Committee on Manual Training inspected the facility in January 1896. The single committee member who attended the meeting determined that although necessary, the absence of a wall and cell house to completely segregate the boys from both the city

³⁸ “Plea for the Waifs,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 February 1896, p. 9, final edition.

³⁹ “Youthful Wrongdoers the Theme,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 February 1896, p. 3, final edition.

⁴⁰ City Files: 1895 6865 3/11.

⁴¹ City Files: 1896 3731 A 10/14.

and the older inmates should not prevent its opening. James P. Mallette determined that the additions were “necessary, but not absolutely necessary for the present.”⁴² Editors of the *Chicago Tribune* entered the debate on February 21, 1896 by essentially arguing that any amount of time spent separate from older offenders in the JWS would be better than no time at all.⁴³

Women of the city pressured city leaders to appropriate needed funds for juvenile offenders. In addition to writing and speaking out for the cell house, members of the Woman’s Club engaged members of the city council to urge them to provide the necessary funds. Prominent women included Lucy Flower, Jane Addams, and others, including HOC Inspector John Worthy’s widow.⁴⁴ After their meeting with Alderman Martin Madden proved unsuccessful, they attended the Finance Committee meeting a few days later. The committee members, including Madden, contended that the city simply did not have the money to appropriate such funds.⁴⁵

The women presented the Finance Committee with a plan for the new cell house. They proposed a compromise between dormitories and individual cells. Well-behaved and younger inmates would be placed in the dormitory, but more troublesome inmates would be placed in individual cells. To support their position, the women showed the Finance Committee correspondence from R.W. McClaughry, Superintendent of the Illinois State Reformatory at Pontiac. McClaughry stated, “I should never allow more

⁴² “Finds it in Fair Trim,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 January 1896, p. 10, final edition.

⁴³ “A Chance for the Philanthropic,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 February 1896, p. 6, final edition.

⁴⁴ “Earnest Plea for Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 February 1896, p. 15, final edition.

⁴⁵ “With Up-To-Date Women,” *Chicago Tribune*, 28 March 1896, p. 6, final edition.

than one boy above that age [12] to occupy a cell. You have no idea how much vice is bred by association, especially at night.”⁴⁶

Recognizing the Finance Committee’s argument that the city did not have the necessary funds, Flower and others secured \$50,000 of private money. They offered to loan the city the money in order to start construction on a cell house.⁴⁷ As a condition to the funds, the women wanted a representative who would supervise the work. However, the Committee on Finance deferred the offer in order to eliminate such oversight.⁴⁸

Administration of the JWS proved to be an arena for debate as well. Crawford sought control of both the juveniles and teachers. He argued that only by doing so could he ensure proper discipline of the pupils. Additionally, he wanted the boys to attend school for ten hours a day, six days a week without a break for summer vacation. However, the Board of Education members rejected his proposal. Balking at his request, Alderman Edward G. Halle suggested that the HOC administer the school as they wished. Crawford relented by stating that the HOC did not have enough funding to pay teachers for the JWS.⁴⁹ Meanwhile, Robert M. Smith of the English High and Manual Training School was recommended as principal of JWS.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ “With Up-To-Date Women,” *Chicago Tribune*, 3 April 1896, p. 3, final edition.

⁴⁷ “Events of a City Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 May 1896, p. 7, final edition.

⁴⁸ “Events of a City Day,” *Chicago Tribune*, 30 May 1896, p. 5, final edition.

⁴⁹ “At Sea as to John Worthy School,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 September 1896, p. 5, final edition.

⁵⁰ “Principal of the John Worthy,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 September 1896, p. 7, final edition.

The JWS officially opened in 1896, but boys continued to be housed with older criminals for the next few years. The lack of separate housing continued to be a source of criticism. Smith added his voice to those who called for separate cells for juveniles at the JWS. He met with leaders to press the state legislature for passage of a bill which later emerged as the Juvenile Act. Smith and others asserted that the Board of Education should manage the JWS. He argued that until boys were committed to the school, and not the HOC, efforts to reform juveniles would be limited. Key elements of the proposed legislation aimed to solve some of the tensions of administration by the Board of Education and HOC as well as the debate between reforming or punishing students. Under the proposal, the JWS would be under the sole control of the Board of Education. Juveniles would be committed for an indefinite sentence (rather than the fine system). Finally, officers would ensure that released boys would be reformed and employed after their release.⁵¹

Finally, the City Council appropriated \$50,000 for a separate cell house. The building was completed by July 1898, but due to a lack of an appropriation for expenses of the cell house, juveniles could not be immediately housed there.⁵² The City Council ordered the Finance Committee to appropriate the necessary funds to complete and furnish the cells.⁵³ The Finance Committee credited the HOC account with \$14,000 to

⁵¹ "Law for John Worthy School," *Chicago Tribune*, 20 November 1898, p. 4, final edition.

⁵² "Delay for Bridewell School," *Chicago Tribune*, 31 July 1898, p. 5, final edition.

⁵³ City Files: 1899 2165 A 1/23.

complete the work.⁵⁴ With the enactment of the Juvenile Act, boys under the age of sixteen were finally transferred from the main facility to the new cell house.⁵⁵

The Juvenile Act of 1899 went into effect July 1st. Many of the recommendations made by HOC officials and city reformers were addressed under the new law. The legislation established the Juvenile Court which handled cases involving boys and girls sixteen years of age and under.⁵⁶ Judges employed a number of new tools to ensure that each case was addressed individually, with consideration to extenuating circumstances of the persons involved. Under the new laws, criminal juvenile offenders were no longer fined, but served indefinite sentences at the John Worthy School or private institutions.⁵⁷ Release no longer depended on days served, but on their progress in studies, behavior, and whether their home environments were beneficial.⁵⁸ More critically, it required housing juveniles of the JWS separately from older offenders of the HOC.⁵⁹

The Cook County Juvenile Court could commit juveniles to the John Worthy School, send them to a private institution, or release them.⁶⁰ Along with the creation of

⁵⁴ City Files: 1899 2154 A 1/23.

⁵⁵ "New Home for the Bridewell Boys," *Chicago Tribune*, 29 November 1896, 5, final edition.

⁵⁶ "Talk of the New Laws," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1899, p. 8, final edition.

⁵⁷ The Chicago Boys' Court was later established in 1914 to hear cases involving males aged seventeen to twenty-one. Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 79-82 and 210.

⁵⁸ *First Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1901), 8.

⁵⁹ "Talk of the New Laws," *Chicago Tribune*, 16 April 1899, p. 8, final edition.

⁶⁰ Michael Willrich, *City of Courts: Socializing Justice in Progressive Era Chicago* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 79-82 and 210.

the Juvenile Court, the JWS signified city leaders' and reformers' early attempts to address juvenile crime within the city of Chicago.

As debates raged about the creation and opening of the JWS, the administration of the HOC underwent change. Mark Crawford was replaced by Adolph Sturm in 1897. Sturm quickly attempted to cut the expenses of the HOC. He argued that until a separate cell house could be provided for the younger male inmates, he could not endorse their commitment to the jail. Sturm stipulated, however, that once separate housing for the boys was provided, they should serve indeterminate sentences to ensure their reformation by the JWS.⁶¹ Further, Sturm argued for a separate juvenile court to hear cases involving young males. Sturm argued that the JWS could only be successful under a new system.⁶²

Sturm oversaw the opening of the cell house at the JWS on June 30, 1899, when the Juvenile Act went into effect. Judge Richard S. Tuthill, juvenile court judge, presided over the ceremony. Attendees included those involved with the changes to the JWS and included: previous HOC superintendents Crawford and Felton, Mrs. John Worthy, Lucy Flower, A.A. Goodrich (inspector), and others. After invoking the examples of Abraham Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin, the 134 boys entered the new sleeping quarters, which consisted of both cells and dormitories. That night, twenty-four juveniles slept in the dormitories; the rest in the cells.⁶³

⁶¹ Board of Inspectors, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1898), 27.

⁶² Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co., 1899), 30.

⁶³ "John Worthy School Opened," *Chicago Tribune*, 1 July 1899, p. 5, final edition.

Once the cells were built, daily enrollment and time in the school increased for the young inmates over time. School attendance in 1897 averaged eighty-three boys per day for an average term of twenty-four days. Two years later, an average of 251 young men occupied the school on a daily basis for a term of seventy-six days.⁶⁴

However, the cells proved short-lived. One month later, dorms were established in the corridors of the cell house and elsewhere. Not only were they seen as too harsh for the younger prisoners, but because of “vicious practices” by some.⁶⁵ Superintendent Strum reported that in hindsight he would have recommended dormitories instead of the cell house because of “the depravity of most of our boy prisoners.” He also argued that dormitories were preferred because they provided “companionship and the sense of shame” which would dissuade some from engaging in illicit activities, alluding to homosexual acts occurring within the cells.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *First Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago*, 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁶ *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report*, 31-32.

Table 19. Average Time of Commitment at the John Worthy School

Year	Average School Attendance	Average Term (days)	Total Held at JWS	Total Received (per yr.)	Previously Committed	Percent Previously Committed
1897	83	24	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1898	106	32	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1899	126	45	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1900	251	76	913	913	103	11.2%
1901	312	164	969	665	155	23.3%
1902	351	174	1008	694	225	32.4%
1903	366	182	1043	731	273	37.3%
1904	380	207	938	590	217	36.8%
1905	379	222	881	552	187	33.9%
1906	379	267	791	405	145	35.8%
1907	236	266	617	393	94	23.9%
1908	266	234	644	391	98	25.1%
1909	163	220	460	272	69	25.4%
1910	141	151	467	355	63	17.7%

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1900-1910).

Sexuality within prisons has been studied since the beginning of the twentieth century. Early sociologists, like contemporary administrators of the HOC and JWS, limit their discussion on sexuality, simply alluding to homosexual relations within carceral institutions. Historians have attempted to understand sexuality and its role in prisons and prison reform. Estelle Freedman argues that accusations of female inmates by male guards at the Indiana State Prison resulted in separate institutions for women. More recently, Timothy Gilfoyle found that homosexual encounters were common on the *Mercury*, a ship used to train boys in nautical skills. He also notes guards' use of rape and

sexual violence to control inmates.⁶⁷ These, and other studies, demonstrate that prisoners resisted both their incarceration and reformers' identification of homosexual relations as perverse or abnormal. By engaging in sexual acts inside and outside the prison, inmates challenged officials' authority as well as the social order.

As in other prisons and detention facilities, administrators alluded to homosexual acts of inmates at the JWS, but did not acknowledge prisoners' understandings of such relationships. John Sloan addressed these issues when he took office July 1, 1899. Similarly alluding to homosexual practices that occurred in the cells, he stated that "boys are not prone to secret crimes unless privacy is assured." To eliminate privacy, he placed beds in public areas, including the chapel and corridors. Doing so, also meant that the younger boys would not be subject to "the terror and despair" of being confined within a cell.⁶⁸ He also recommended that medical lectures as to "the terrible results of youthful indiscretions and crimes against Nature" be held at the JWS.⁶⁹ Such language alluded to homosexual acts which occurred during the night at the JWS. Sloan hoped to eliminate

⁶⁷ Margaret Otis examined interracial female relationships in an unnamed institution in 1913, but saw such interactions as situational. Charles Ford also saw lesbian relationships as situational, resulting from confinement and a lack of male sexual partners. Margaret A. Otis, "A Perversion Not Commonly Noted," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 8 (June-July 1913): 112-114; Charles Ford, "Homosexual Practices of Institutionalized Females," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 23 (January-March 1929): 442-449. Rose Giallombardo argued that women engaged in female homosexual relationships in order to help alleviate the pressures of imprisonment. Rose Giallombardo, *Society of Women: A Study of a Women's Prison* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966); Estelle B. Freedmen, "Their Sisters' Keepers": *Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 38.

⁶⁸ *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 8.

⁶⁹ *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report*, 31.

such practices by using dormitories, where the detainees would have less privacy from the guards, who could watch juveniles more closely than in cells.

A panel of visitors inspected the JWS on January 19, 1900. Including reformers such as Lucy Flower, the committee found that the cells were indeed unused and empty. The group also discovered that no training occurred. At that time, juveniles did not labor at the facility. The committee recommended that some industry be implemented at the HOC to occupy the boys, who remained idle for several hours each day. Despite their recommendation, the committee concluded by writing that even if the addition of work was made they would still “condemn the institution as a place utterly unfit for the reformation of children.”⁷⁰ Contending that the HOC was fundamentally a facility designed to punish, they argued that juveniles could not be reformed at the JWS.⁷¹ The young males should spend time learning a skill at the JWS in order to be reformed while detained. Time should be spent in the classrooms and the workrooms.

The problem of the cells was finally eliminated in 1902 when the cell house was placed in the North Cell House of the HOC.⁷² Once the cells were removed, the building was reconfigured to accommodate a single dormitory containing 400 beds.⁷³ The cell house, no longer used by younger males, was used to expand the capacity to hold older

⁷⁰ “Visitors’ Ban on Schools,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 February 1900, p. 9.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago* 18.

⁷³ Board of Inspectors, *Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1903), 10.

male inmates. Rather than waste the cell house, the city attempted to alleviate overcrowded conditions in the main complex.

Replacing the cells with dormitories did not equate to less structure within the JWS. Beds were carefully arranged into groups of seventeen, which complemented the overall organization of the boys into military-like companies.⁷⁴ Divided into units of seventeen, boys were organized based upon “moral planes.” The daily regimen included military drills which demanded obedience to officials. Each company chose a captain from two candidates selected by the Superintendent.⁷⁵ Captains were elected every thirty days.⁷⁶

Inmates at the JWS experienced a rigid routine, including a five-day school week. Boys woke up at 6:30 a.m. and attended classes from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Four of the six hours were devoted to academic studies; the other two hours focused on manual training. Juveniles were also required to help maintain the facility by cleaning the dining room, kitchen, and dorms.⁷⁷ Toward the end of the day, boys gathered for two hours in the dining room. Activities included singing, oral reading, spelling bees, speaking, and other academic exercises. Their day ended after these group activities.⁷⁸ Boys were under constant surveillance during their stay. A uniform system was adopted

⁷⁴ Board of Inspectors. *Third Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1903), 8.

⁷⁵ Board of Inspectors. *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1904), 16.

⁷⁶ Board of Inspectors. *Fifth Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1905), 13.

⁷⁷ Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 14.

⁷⁸ *First Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago*, 12.

in order to differentiate the boys. Most inmates were clothed in gray uniforms, but “the more viciously-inclined” wore dark brown outfits.⁷⁹

In addition to the military organization, administrators implemented a few other reforms. Sloan created baseball fields on site and boys engaged in outdoor activities. He also gradually increased the number of females who served as matrons while decreasing the number of male guards at the JWS.⁸⁰ The matrons were deemed successful with the first report. Sloan wrote the “improved conduct, general behavior, neatness in appearance, and more carefulness in speech which has cover over our boys since women were placed in charge.”⁸¹ Instead of referring to the “motherly” presence of the women, Sloan attributed their success to the boys’ desire to “win favor” with the matrons through their appearance and good behavior.⁸²

Much like the rest of the HOC, the JWS was physically segregated from the city. Separation came from high walls and barred windows. Although Sloan pointed out the negative connotations of such elements, he argued that they were necessary at the institution. Not only was the JWS located in the city, but numerous boys attempted to escape each month.⁸³ Flight declined in later years, but still presented a problem to officials. For example, seven boys fled the institution in 1905.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁰ *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 8.

⁸¹ *First Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago*, 13.

⁸² *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report*, 8

⁸³ *First Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 13.

Shortly after opening, the JWS suffered from many of the same problems as the HOC. After the first year, average terms served at the JWS increased, creating overcrowding in the facility. The second year, boys stayed for an average of 164 days, compared to seventy-six days the year before. Indeterminate sentences meant that inmates could be retained for longer periods than under earlier terms.⁸⁵ Designed to accommodate 175, in 1903, the average population was 366.⁸⁶ After 1903, the admission of juveniles declined slowly. In 1904, 590 boys were committed to the JWS. Despite the lower number of commitments, the JWS continued to be overcrowded, with 420 boys residing there during the month of July.⁸⁷ Terms continued to lengthen with the average term in 1905 at 222 days; in 1906 it increased to 267 days.⁸⁸ However, the number of commitments gradually decreased. By 1910, only 355 were sent to the JWS and served an average of 151 days.⁸⁹

Labor formed a large component of the routine at the JWS after 1901. In the Manual Training Department, juveniles designed and created items such as brackets and shelves. In 1901, a printing shop was started. Inmates created all stationery for the HOC

⁸⁴ Board of Inspectors, *Sixth Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1906), 10.

⁸⁵ Board of Inspectors, *Second Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1901), 7.

⁸⁶ *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 7.

⁸⁷ *Fifth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 5.

⁸⁸ *Sixth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 5; Board of Inspectors, *Seventh Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1907), 5.

⁸⁹ Board of Inspectors, *Eleventh Annual Report of the John Worthy School of the City of Chicago* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1911), 5.

and printed annual reports of the facility.⁹⁰ The printing shop also furnished services to other city departments.⁹¹ In 1906, Superintendent Sloan praised the success of the shop. He reported that of the 125 boys assigned to printing the previous year, only one boy was recommitted to the JWS. He argued that the print shop taught the boys a trade which provided work after their release.⁹² Other prisoners served in a detail which labored in the dormitories, kitchen, and dining room.⁹³ The second principal of the JWS, S.V. Robbins, expanded the Manual Training Department by adding telegraphing and typewriting. He also added more classes on iron and wire work to the curriculum.⁹⁴

Controversy centered on the use of discipline at the institution. Split management of boys at the JWS meant that housing and discipline were handled by the HOC, while education was overseen by the Board of Education.⁹⁵ Officially, the prospect of release was to instill submission to the guards and instructors of the school. Sloan argued that discipline was not often needed at the JWS because release ultimately depended on good behavior. Particularly troublesome boys would be denied outside recreation or a meal for infractions.⁹⁶

Such positive remarks did not reflect the reality of punishment at the JWS. Guards at that JWS frequently punished boys for rule-breaking during their confinement.

⁹⁰ *Second Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 12-13.

⁹¹ *Third Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 12.

⁹² *Sixth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 9-10.

⁹³ *Second Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 12-13.

⁹⁴ *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 11.

⁹⁵ Claussenius, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 14.

⁹⁶ *Second Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 10.

Reformers and superintendents clashed publically on the issue of punishment.

Reformers challenged the use of punishment, claiming that maltreatment negated the reformatory efforts of the school. Officials contended that discipline was necessary to retain order. Punishment at the school meant that more juveniles experienced brutality at the JWS than in earlier confinements at the HOC. Essentially, the higher commitment rate of youths in the JWS resulted in more boys feeling the paddle, strap, confinement in the dark cell or other means of punishment than ever before.⁹⁷

Early on, refractory boys were placed in the dark cell with only bread and water to eat. However, in 1898 Superintendent Sturm and Principal Smith designed new modes of punishment in response to overhearing punished inmates bragging about their stints to their fellow inmates. Thereafter, confinement in the dark cell was reserved for younger boys who “were afraid of the dark, and for milder infractions of the rules.” Older, more refractory boys were punished physically. Initially, Sturm used a wooden paddle, but after six boys developed welts, the paddle was discarded for a leather strap. The strap elicited “sorrowful howls,” but “left no physical effect.” Deemed a success because boys cried out, but experienced no long-term physical scarring, spankings occurred nearly daily at the JWS. Either Assistant Superintendent Paul Dasso or Chief Deputy E. S. Harvey lined up disobedient juveniles outside the dark cells each morning. After giving their version of events, those found to have violated school rules would be hit with the

⁹⁷ Some judges hesitated to send juveniles to the JWS until the cells were completed in 1899, hoping that they would reform on their own, rather than be exposed to possible corruption presented by older criminals. Upon completion of the cells, more juveniles were sent to the institution as a result of the reformatory promise of the facility.

strap. Younger rule-breakers were placed in the dark cells for a period of one to four days, with only bread and water.⁹⁸

Administrators praised the advantages of the strap. The resident physician stated that strapping was more favorable than the dark cell because of the lack of long-term physical suffering. Assistant Superintendent Dasso used his personal upbringing to endorse his use of the strap declaring, “I was one of ten children myself, and I am none the worse for being whipped occasionally.”⁹⁹ Despite such official proclamations, the city council did not agree. After an investigation, a special committee recommended Dasso’s dismissal; Superintendent Sturm was exonerated.¹⁰⁰ Dasso continued to serve as the Deputy Superintendent until January 1900, when he resigned over accusations of using “profane language” to inmates and subordinates. Rather than submit to a “reprimand,” Dasso resigned.¹⁰¹

Shortly after the new cells opened in 1899, Judge Elbridge Haneey of the Juvenile Court took action against a JWS guard, Redmond Lyons. An inmate of the school, twelve-year old Ray Stewart, claimed that Lyons beat him after he threw a block of wood at another boy. Stewart was sentenced with his brother to serve time at the JWS upon complaint of their parents. Stewart showed the judge scratches and a bruise on his head that Lyons allegedly gave him. In response, Haneey held Lyons on a charge of assault. Superintendent Sloan and Lyons responded that Stewart, who was previously committed,

⁹⁸ “Use Paddle on the Bad Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 December 1898, p. 7, final edition.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ “Favors Discharge of Dasso,” *Chicago Tribune*, 31 March 1899, p. 10, final edition.

¹⁰¹ “Dasso Quits Under Fire,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 31 January 1900, p. 7, final edition..

was “a bad boy.” They argued that Stewart inflicted the wounds on himself in an effort to gain sympathy.¹⁰²

The Board of Inspectors investigated the case.¹⁰³ During the investigation, ten officials at the JWS disputed Stewart’s account of how he received the bruises. Dr. Marhaneke examined the marks on Stewart’s body and stated that he most likely injured himself. Marhaneke also stated that boys often bit their arms or hurt themselves in order to “arouse sympathy.” Robert Smith, the principal of the JWS defended Lyons by asserting that Stewart was “the most incorrigible inmate of the institution.” He further contended that more punishments needed to be implemented at the school. Virgil Dawson, the boy to whom the block was thrown, stated that Stewart wanted to get Lyons “bounced.” Stewart was then serving his fourth term in the HOC. Two previous times he was released with a pardon. He claimed that the incident was not the first time Lyons attacked him. He stated that Lyons “knocked [him] about” the previous winter. Through the investigation, Inspectors heard from multiple boys that Lyons frequently beat or placed them in solitary confinement.¹⁰⁴

Inspectors ultimately determined that Lyons did not assault Stewart. Rather, they found that Stewart inflicted the wounds himself. Overall, the inspectors argued that

¹⁰² “Says Guards are Brutal,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 August 1899, p. 1.

¹⁰³ “Will Act on Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 August 1899, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Stewart previously served terms for disorderly conduct from July 7, 1898 to July 21, 1898 and July 25, 1898 to September 17, 1898. Each time he was released by a pardon. During his third sentence (for breach of peace), he served his full sentence from January 24, 1899 to May 17, 1899. “Sits at the Bridewell,” *Chicago Tribune*, 11 August 1899, p. 5.

juveniles confined at the JWS were treated with “utmost kindness by the guards.”¹⁰⁵

They recommended that the strap be reinstituted as an official punishment. They noted that the only prescribed punishment, solitary confinement, was not effective or humane. Again, inspectors stressed the need for order through punishment as “a mere reprimand or the use of moral suasion is not sufficient to maintain the discipline of the institution.”¹⁰⁶ Punishment conflicted with the reformatory promise of the school, which was increasingly neglected by guards and administrators.

Administrators failed to keep all boys previously held at the JWS from coming back to the JWS or the HOC. However, they often attributed failures of the JWS to the parents or home life of the boy. Sloan wrote that despite a young man’s desire “to do what was right in the future...went back into old habits and ways, due to the environments around their homes.” He also blamed parents for their lack of supervision in regards to the young men. Sloan urged for more intervention outside of the facility through a more thorough investigation of an offender’s home life before his release and continuing supervision afterward. A small amount of blame was placed on the institution itself. In his second annual report, Superintendent Sloan attributed the 155 recommitted prisoners to the relative newness of the institution. However, he argued that because those boys had served short terms, a new sentence at the JWS would serve to prevent such instances.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ “Finds for Guard Lyons.” *Chicago Tribune*, 13 August 1899, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ *Second Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 8, 16, 15.

Despite such predictions, recommitments continued to increase at the JWS, even as the number of first-time commitments declined. By 1909, 5,596 terms had been served by juveniles who passed through the doors of the JWS. However, that number represented 4,038 different individuals who were committed to the facility. Of those, 1,112 entered the facility more than once.¹⁰⁸ Coupled with recommitments, overcrowding limited the ability of superintendents to keep inmates as long as they wanted. In order to make room for new prisoners, some boys were released if their “conduct and progress warrant[ed] at least the belief that they will properly behave.”¹⁰⁹

In an effort to limit recommitments, the JWS extended its reach beyond the physical edifice to remain a part of many boys’ lives after their sentences were served. Since juveniles could only be released if their home environment was deemed “acceptable,” the JWS served as a “halfway house” of sorts for some who served their term. Those boys whose homes were “such that it was unwise to return them there” could stay past their terms at the facility. Some of the boys who remained at the JWS at night usually stayed for two to four months, after which a home was secured for them, often with other relatives or friends.¹¹⁰

Other boys were placed in homes and farms outside of the city. In 1903, fifteen boys were placed with individuals who were “willing to give the boy a home, assist him

¹⁰⁸ *Tenth Annual Report of the John Worthy School* (Chicago: John Worthy Printing School, 1910), 12. Of the 1,112 who served multiple terms, most were committed twice as of December 31, 1909 (789). 230 served three terms, 65 served four terms, 26 served five terms, and 2 were committed six times to the institution.

¹⁰⁹ *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 10.

¹¹⁰ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 14, 15.

to an education, and properly look after his welfare.”¹¹¹ One year later, forty boys were released to local farms. Despite endorsing the success of the rural homes, Sloan admitted that some boys ran away from the farms to return to Chicago.¹¹² In 1907, Albert Detloff worked to secure homes for released boys with farmers outside the city limits. He placed thirty boys with families secured for them.¹¹³ After achieving satisfactory results, Detloff was appointed an honorary parole agent by the Juvenile Court.¹¹⁴

Private citizens also created places which housed released inmates from the JWS. In August 1902, Colonel George Fabyan, a Juvenile Court probation officer, created one such facility, the Junior Business Club. He used two floors of 91 South Clark Street as dorms, a kitchen, dining room, and club room for boys who were released from the JWS, but did not have a home to go to. From August to December, fifty-nine juveniles were paroled into Fabyan’s care. He found work for the boys and provided them with clothes, a temporary home, and supervision to ensure continued good behavior. When they were not working, the boys were supervised and trained in stenography and typing. After a term of at least six months, those who “conducted themselves properly” were discharged with money credited from their earnings.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 18.

¹¹² It is unclear what deemed “satisfactory results.” *Sixth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 10.

¹¹³ *Eighth Annual Report of the John Worthy School* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1908), 8.

¹¹⁴ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 15.

¹¹⁵ *Third Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 16.

Probation allowed court officials access into the homes of juvenile offenders after their sentence at the JWS ended. Superintendent Sloan praised the ability of probation officers to help not just former prisoners, but also their families. He argued that officers could guide families to organizations which provided education, relief, and assistance. Sloan regretted that probation officers could not provide more services because of a lack of public funding, but commended the private sector for the funds for some services.¹¹⁶

Despite the attempts to help released juveniles through the new programs, reformers and critics often attacked the JWS. In particular, they criticized the proximity of juveniles and older offenders and the location of the school within the urban landscape. Despite the time they previously devoted its creation and reformation, private citizens sought to eliminate the JWS. In 1900, the Commercial Club began to raise money to erect a similar facility outside the city limits. A more rural location would mean physical separation from previous ties with fellow delinquents as well as the perceived curative properties of nature itself, including fresh air and sunlight. Reporting on the club's philanthropy, Sloan proposed using the JWS buildings as a new Women's Department, but this did not ultimately occur.¹¹⁷

Judge Richard S. Tuthill frequently criticized the JWS. In April 1901, less than two years after the cell house opened, he asked the state legislature to construct a state

¹¹⁶ *Fourth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 14-15.

¹¹⁷ Board of Inspectors. *Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors of the House of Correction of the City of Chicago and Reports of the Superintendent, City Physician and House Physician* (Chicago: Max Stern and Co, Printers, 1901), 15.

reformatory for delinquent boys. Unless such a facility was built, he argued that the entire juvenile system would fail. He maintained that the Pontiac Reformatory and the JWS were unfit institutions. He proposed that the state build such a facility outside the city of Chicago.¹¹⁸ Tuthill pointed to the number of delinquent boys who reappeared in the juvenile court as evidence of the failings of the JWS to reform those detained inside. One day, eight juveniles previously held at the school reappeared at the court, each facing new charges.¹¹⁹ Tuthill hesitated sending juveniles to the institution “unless it is absolutely necessary.” He continued to push for a home for delinquent boys, instead of the JWS.¹²⁰

Defending the JWS against public protests, the Board of Inspectors emphasized a few key aspects of the institution. In particular, the Inspectors reported that the school received boys that “other institutions cannot accomplish anything with,” including the newer state facility in St. Charles.¹²¹ In December 1904, the state of Illinois opened the State Home and School for Boys in St. Charles to separate young criminals from older offenders.¹²² Members of the Board stressed that most young offenders were “reformed.” They noted that seventy percent of those released did not return to the JWS or other

¹¹⁸ “Must Shelter Bad Boys,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 April 1901, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ “Says Worthy School Fails,” *Chicago Tribune*, 20 April 1901, p. 5.

¹²⁰ “One Day with Judge Tuthill in the Juvenile Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 November 1901, p. 8.

¹²¹ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors, and of the Superintendent and the House Physician of the House of Correction* (Chicago: John Worthy School Print, 1907), 11.

¹²² *Fifth Annual Report of the John Worthy School*, 5.

institutions.¹²³ Inspectors also reported that at the JWS, twenty-four hour supervision meant that many juveniles focused on their studies, rather than engaging in “mischief.” The Board drew on their expertise to again criticize reformers who sought to abolish or change the school. They scolded “self-appointed critics” who wanted to replace the facility, but were “unable to offer practical suggestions for the upbuilding or improvement of the institution.”¹²⁴

Attempting to appease critics, on June 29, 1908, the City Council approved an ordinance which allowed Inspectors of the HOC to construct a building for the juveniles at the JWS. The building would be turned into a gymnasium and training school by the Board of Education. Additionally, Inspectors would set aside six acres on the premises for outside exercise.¹²⁵ A year later, the council asked the Board of directors of Columbian Exposition to appropriate \$44,000 in unspent funds to the JWS. However, the proposed money would go towards the expenses of moving the school outside the city.¹²⁶

Some reformers contended that if the JWS was located outside of Chicago, it could better reform the juveniles confined inside. Progressives continually advocated the use of open spaces and country air as more reformatory than urban landscapes. On November 13, 1908, the Board of Education sent Mayor Fred Busse a letter proposing a solution to the problem of relocating the JWS. Otto Schneider, President, wrote that since

¹²³ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 11. Such statistics are problematic. Certainly some of those who were released simply evaded police and institutions like the JWS.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁵ City Files 1909 1211 A 06/26.

¹²⁶ City Files: 1910 2046 A 10/04.

the city needed to relocate the school, should erect a similar school for females, and a hospital for tuberculosis. He suggested using the property known as “Gage Farm” in Riverside for these institutions. Shortly after Schneider’s letter was forwarded to the council, Busse forwarded a letter from the West Chicago Park Commissioner about the land. Jens Jensen, the General Superintendent, proposed an alternate use for “Gage Farm” as a nursery for the city parks. Busse forwarded both letters to the City Council, who distributed it from the Committee on Schools to the Finance Committee.¹²⁷

In response to a dispute as to the city’s ownership of the land, the Corporation Counsel resolved that the city did in fact own the land. However, since the title was held by the city of Chicago, and not the Board of Education, the JWS could not be moved to the Riverside location. In order for such a move, the title needed to be held by the Board of Education, who would build and administer the new facility.¹²⁸

Slowly, the city took steps to plan and construct a replacement for the JWS. On May 27, 1914, the Board of Education appropriated \$25,000 to erect a school building on the Gage Farm property.¹²⁹ The Park Commissioners granted the Board of Education ninety acres of the farm site for a school.¹³⁰ The school would officially replace the JWS and occupy ninety acres of the site. Six months later, the City Council approved an

¹²⁷ City Files: 1911 0357 A 05/09.

¹²⁸ City Files: 1911 0356 A 05/09.

¹²⁹ City Files: 1914 215477 A 11/30.

¹³⁰ City Files: 1914 212909 A 07/12.

additional \$50,000 appropriation for the erection of a school on the Gage Farm property.¹³¹

Once plans for the new facility for juvenile plans were formulated, some wondered what the JWS would be used for after the boys left. In 1907, members of the Board of Inspectors proposed to the City Council that the JWS should be converted into a City Hospital. Superintendents, Inspectors, and HOC physicians repeatedly called for a city facility to administer to severe cases of alcoholism at the jail.¹³² In proposing this idea, the Inspectors hoped to remedy this need.

Finally, in October 1915, the John Worthy Manual Training School for Boys was closed and the facilities were converted to the House of Correction Hospital. Many reformers felt boys needed to be further physically separated from the older male prisoners to protect them. In addition, they argued that removing boys from the city would also ensure that they would not live a life of crime. Before the John Worthy School was closed, some boys were sent to the boys' reformatory at St. Charles or the newly-constructed Chicago and Cook County School for Boys in Riverside. With the transfer to St. Charles, the building was converted to a cell house for male inmates.¹³³

¹³¹ City Files: 1914 215477 A 11/30.

¹³² *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report*, 11.

¹³³ Claussenius, *House of Correction of the City of Chicago*, 17.

Table 20. Ages of Inmates at Later HOC

Year	Total	<10	<13	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	Total <21	Percent < 21
1902	7963		201	106	179	189	216	374	385	347	285	316	2282	28.70%
1903	9174	7	499	113	169	194	269	414	485	465	333	339	2941	32.10%
1904	10089	9	160	98	148	153	250	441	494	510	413	454	2667	26.40%
1905	9651	9	87	85	104	163	243	339	466	473	365	441	2325	24.10%
1906	9435	5	52	51	88	90	129	262	395	439	482	462	1988	21.10%
1907	11283		42	42	77	101	133	293	463	481	424	575	2056	18.20%
1908	12427	1	32	41	72	109	125	280	522	566	436	547	2183	17.60%
1909	12555		14	23	68	60	94	240	473	469	425	428	1866	14.90%
1910	13083		25	31	73	93	132	223	409	446	380	310	1812	13.90%
1911	13195		16	31	57	115	171	261	493	557	466	558	2167	16.40%
1912	11457		9	5	39	47	91	231	366	413	364	497	1565	13.70%
1913	15111		18	19	85	112	169	239	418	497	529	786	2086	13.80%
1914	15592	1	21	35	67	144	177	192	370	510	665	991	2181	14.00%
1915	16427		6	12	36	55	84	181	296	339	339	529	1348	8.20%
1916	12827					5	9	102	203	261	213	369	793	6.20%
1917	15930					2	18	159	248	287	303	416	1017	6.40%
1918	10124					2	6	172	225	231	229	316	865	8.50%
1919	5733					1	21	169	221	213	165	294	790	13.80%
1920	4681							154	196	215	193	237	758	16.20%
1921	8566						8	196	279	276	248	328	1007	11.80%

Note: Compiled from the Annual Reports (1902-1921).

The percentage of juveniles in the HOC rose slightly with the opening of the John Worthy School. Those numbers dramatically decreased during the last few years of the JWS, its closure, and the creation of the Chicago Boys' Court. The numbers rose again with the end of WWI. However, those under fifteen were no longer confined in the HOC after 1916, when the JWS closed. After 1907, only two under the age of ten were committed to the HOC. As a result, the average age of inmates increased as the twentieth

century progressed. The end of the JWS meant that the remaining population was much older than before. Children could no longer be detained at the HOC. Their confinement to other facilities, as with many female inmates as well, signaled a transformation demographically at the HOC. After 1915, those incarcerated by the city of Chicago formed an older, male population – one that was much less sympathetic to outside observers advocating for reforms.

The short-lived John Worthy School demonstrates the inability of reformers, advocates for juveniles, and administrators to both educate and punish the youths who entered the facility. The closing of the JWS marked the end of the city's administration of an institution meant to specifically hold young men convicted of violating city ordinances separately from older offenders. After the JWS closed, detained young males were held by a state or county institution. Males under the age of twenty-one continued to be held at the HOC after the JWS closed, but in number much smaller than ever before, and none under the age of fifteen.

EPILOGUE:

THE END OF THE HOUSE OF CORRECTION

The JWS closed October 1915, but the HOC endured. Despite the criticisms and attacks of the institution, lessened after the removal of juveniles, courts still sent minor offenders and city violators there. Inmates continued to suffer from overcrowded conditions at the facility. The population of prisoners detained at the HOC became ever-increasingly male, older, and African American, further differentiating it from that of the city itself. Inmates found themselves physically and demographically from Chicago after the turn of the twentieth century. The HOC entered a new period of transformation in the 1920s.

County officials in 1928 began construction on a new Cook County Jail and Criminal Courthouse at the HOC site. The new county jail and court house opened in 1929. The two institutions stood side-by-side for forty years, but were operated separately. The county operated the jail and the city continued to manage the HOC. The two buildings together detained more than 3,200 inmates per day, most likely the largest concentration of prisoners in the United States at that time, and perhaps in the “democratic” nations in the world.¹

Many of the trends emerging in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became more pronounced at the Cook County Jail: more inmates served increasing

¹ “Cook County Jail History,” Cook County Sheriff, http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/doc/doc_history.html (accessed 05/30/2012).

sentences at the jail, administrators at the jail conducted executions at the site, and local carceral facilities were further consolidated. Illinois legislatures created the Cook County Department of Corrections in order to reform the county criminal justice system. In 1969, the Cook County Sheriff's Office took over the administration of the HOC, ending the city's administration of its own carceral institution. The HOC became subsumed under the Cook County Jail.² Today, the Cook County Department of Corrections is one of the, if not the, largest "single-site county pre-detention facilities in the United States," handling roughly 100,000 persons per year, with a daily population of approximately 9,000.³

Local jails continue to detain a large number of people per year, more than the prison population. As in the nineteenth century, most individuals incarcerated are detained within the smaller facilities. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that the number of jail inmates confined at midyear 2011 was 735,601.⁴ Most, eighty-seven percent, held were males. Juveniles accounted for less than one percent of the population. Sixty percent of detainees were awaiting court actions; forty percent were convicted or

² "Cook County Jail History," Cook County Sheriff, http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/doc/doc_history.html (accessed 05/30/2012).

³ "Cook County Department of Corrections," Cook County Sheriff, http://www.cookcountysheriff.org/doc/doc_main.html (accessed 05/30/2012).

⁴ The data is the most recent information available.

sentenced offenders.⁵ From July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011, local jails admitted 11.8 million people.⁶

City leaders, reformers, prisoners, and penal administrators all shaped the characteristics of the early Bridewell, the more “modern” HOC, and eventually its successor, the Cook County Jail, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. All hoped to create their ideal version of a city institution, best able to meet their individual expectations: a low-cost detention facility, a humanitarian reformatory, a place that could be negotiated, and a well-ordered prison. In doing so, they created a hybrid institution: a city prison centered on order and employment. The facility never met the expectations of any group. Despite these limitations, superintendents and inspectors of the HOC attempted to address the needs of the diverse population housed within the walls of the edifice, but in doing so, encountered the difficulties of trying to negotiate tensions between the penal, reformatory, and juvenile ideals. As administrators removed sympathetic populations, especially juveniles, the remaining population found itself further removed from the public eye, and less able to draw upon the public to call for changes or additions to the facility.

Examination of the HOC highlights the ways in which the nineteenth-century city detained many inhabitants. The state, locally administered, incarcerated young, old, males, females, and any number of minor offenders and violators of city ordinances. As the nineteenth century progressed, the city devoted more attention to crime and the

⁵ “Jail Inmates at Midyear 2011 – Statistical Tables,” Todd D. Minton, Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics, <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4235> (accessed 5/30/2012).

⁶ Ibid.

detention of criminals. They gradually divided the HOC into separate sections to better meet the needs of young and female offenders. With the close of the John Worthy School, the city's administration of the HOC began to decline. Within approximately fifty years, Cook County took over incarceration of minor offenders. Chicago no longer administered a large portion of inmates held within the city.

APPENDIX A
LIST OF BRIDEWELL KEEPERS (1851-1871)

Name	Dates Served
David Walsh	December 1, 1851 to March 12, 1857
William Justice	March 12, 1857 to December 17, 1860
Ira Colman	December 17, 1860 to May 10, 1865
George Knerr	May 10, 1865 to May 9, 1867
Charles Tunnicliff	May 9, 1867 to December 1, 1869
George Mansur	December 1, 1869 to August 9, 1871

*Compiled from the City Council Proceeding Files

APPENDIX B

LIST OF HOUSE OF CORRECTION SUPERINTENDENTS (1871-1923)

Name	Dates Served
George Mansur	August 10, 1871 to January 15, 1872
Charles Felton	January 15, 1872 to August 29, 1890
Mark Crawford	August 29, 1890 to June 30, 1897
Adolph Sturm	July 1, 1897 to July 1, 1899
John J. Sloan	July 1, 1899 to September 9, 1905
Andrew M. Lynch	September 26, 1905 to June 1, 1907
John L. Whitman	June 1, 1907 to July 1, 1917
Joseph Siman	July 1, 1917 to May 1, 1923

*Compiled from the City Council Proceeding Files

APPENDIX C
LIST OF CHICAGO MAYORS (1837-1923)

Name	Dates Served	Notes
William B. Ogden	1837-1838	
Buckner Stith Morris	1838-1839	
Benjamin Wright Raymond	1839-1840	
Alexander Loyd	1840-1841	
Francis Cornwall Sherman	1841-1842	
Benjamin Wright Raymond	1842-1843	
Augustus Garrett	1843-1844	
Alson Smith Sherman	1844-1845	
Augustus Garrett	1845-1846	
John P. Chapin	1846-1847	
James Curtiss	1847-1848	
James H. Woodworth	1848-1849	
James Curtiss	1850-1851	
Walter S. Gurnee	1851-1853	
Charles McNeill Gray	1853-1854	
Isaac Lawrence Milliken	1854-1855	
Levi D. Boone	1855-1856	
Thomas Dyer	1856-1857	
John Wentworth	1857-1858	
John C. Haines	1858-1860	
John Wentworth	1860-1861	
Julian S. Rumsey	1861-1862	
Francis Cornwall Sherman	1862-1865	
John B. Rice	1865-1869	
Roswell B. Mason	1869-1871	
Joseph E. Medill	1871-1873	
Lester Ligrant Bond	1873	Acting Mayor after Medill's resignation
Harvey Doolittle Colvin	1873-1876	
Monroe Heath	1876-1879	
Carter Henry Harrison, Sr.	1879-1887	
John A. Roche	1887-1889	
DeWitt Clinton Cregier	1889-1891	
Hempstead Washburne	1891-1893	
Carter Henry Harrison, Sr.	1893	Died in office
George Bell Swift	1893	Mayor Pro Tem until election
John Patrick Hopkins	1893-1897	
Carter Henry Harrison, Jr.	1897-1905	
Edward Fitzsimmons Dunne	1905-1907	
Fred A. Busse	1907-1911	
Carter Henry Harrison, Jr.	1911-1915	
William Hale Thompson	1915-1923	

*Compiled from <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1443.html>

APPENDIX D

LIST OF HOUSE OF CORRECTION INSPECTORS (1871-1924)

Name	Dates Served
John C. Haines	1871-1878
Col. C. G. Hammond	1871-1884
Louis Wahl	1871-1892
Luther Laflin Mills	1878-1884
E. S. Albro	1885-1889
E. W. Blatchford	1885-1889
W. H. Ford	1889-1895
Gen. W. C. Newberry	1889-1890
John Worthy	1891-1894
Ernest Fecker	1892-1896
Judge A. A. Goodrich	1894-1901
William Gardner	1895-1896
Dr. A. Lagorio	1896-1899
Rudolph Seifert	1897-1902
Frank J. Brignadello	1897-1899
Dr. Mathias E. Lorenz	1899-1902
Major George Mason	1901-1910
John Siman	1902
George Duddleston	1902-1904
John J. Boehm	1903-1905
S. Rogers Touhy	1904-1908
John J. Sloan	1906-1910
Chas. A. McCulloch	1908-1910
Matthias Aller	1911-1916
Alois A. Burger	1911-1915
Dr. M. A. Weisskopf	1911-1916
Joseph J. Janda	1915-1917
Ralph Esau	1916-1919
John J. Sloan	1916-1919
George T. Moxley	1917-1924
Frederick E. Erickson	1919-1924
G. W. Halleman, Secretary	1919-1924

*Compiled from Wagner, *The House of Correction of the City of Chicago*

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