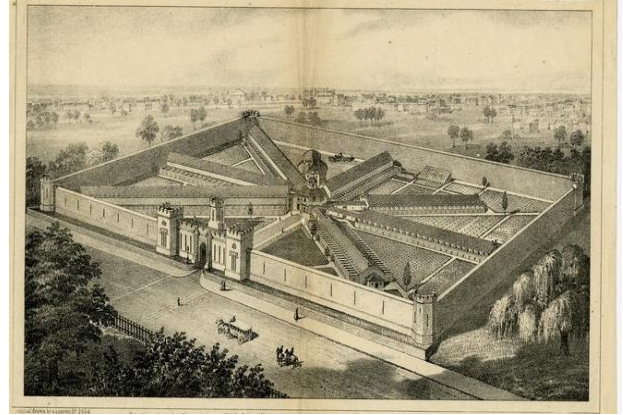


Prison Reform in Philadelphia: Triumph or Tragedy?

In the late 1700s, on the heels of the American Revolution, Philadelphia emerged as a national and international leader in prison reform and the transformation of criminal justice practices. More than any other community in early America, Philadelphia invested heavily in the intellectual and physical reconstruction of penal philosophies, and the region's jails and prisons reflected these evolving principles. Throughout the 1800s, global and local observers looked to Philadelphia—particularly the Pennsylvania system of solitary confinement pioneered at Eastern State Penitentiary—as they created penal practices in their communities. By the late 1900s, however, Philadelphia led the nation not in reform, but in rates of incarceration.



Eastern State Penitentiary

Primary Sources

- ❖ Pennsylvania Prison Society records, 1787-1966 [Collection 1946]
- ❖ Annual Reports of the Inspectors of the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, 1829-1917, 1919, 1927, 1928. Philadelphia, 1831. [Vz.8]
- ❖ Morton, James b. 1792. James Morton Writings. Prisoner at Eastern State. [Am.3181]

Secondary Sources

- ❖ Tyson, J. R. *Essay On the Penal Law of Pennsylvania: Published By Order of the Law Academy of Philadelphia. Philadelphia: Published by the Law Academy, 1827. [Vv* .39]*
- ❖ McElwee, Thomas B. *A Concise History of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania: Together With a Detailed Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee, Appointed By the Legislature, December 6th, 1834, for the Purpose of Examining Into the Economy and Management of That Institution, Embracing the Testimony Taken On That Occasion, and Legislative Proceedings Connected Therewith.* Philadelphia: Neall & Massey, Printers, 1835. [UPA/Ph HV 9475.P4 M3 1835]
- ❖ Vaux, R. (1872). *Brief sketch of the origin and history of the State Penitentiary for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia.* Philadelphia: McLaughlin Bros., Printers. [Rare UPA/Ph HV 9475.P42 S73 1872 Another]

Other Sources of Information:

Eastern State Penitentiary Online Research Library— www.easternstate.org/learn/research-library

The Library Company of Philadelphia – 1314 Locust St., Philadelphia— www.librarycompany.org

The Pennsylvania Prison Society – www.prisonssociety.org