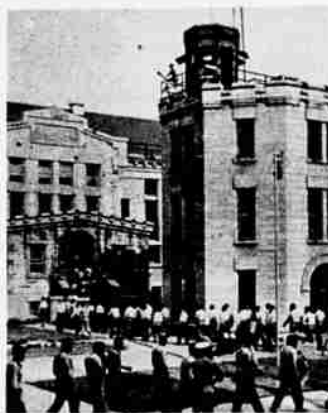


Criminals Can Be Rehabilitated



Is this prison a place to punish, or should it try to help men find a place in society? Many believe hope and not despair is its goal.

rehabilitation is reaching many people—and turning them into supporters of progressive penology.

Primarily, they are trying to prove that when a criminal is rehabilitated, the threat he posed to society—both physical and financial—is removed. When a prisoner travels the long road to rehabilitation he benefits himself and society. He takes up a normal, happy life; and society is richer by one tax-paying citizen in place of a cumbersome burden.

THE IOWA Penitentiary, the oldest one west of the Mississippi, maintains its own power plant, supplies its own water, and is generally a self-supporting institution. There are four cell houses with a capacity of 1,116 men. The rest of the 1,300 inmates work outside the walls on trusty units and honor farms.

Each cell accommodates one man and is furnished with a bed, table, stool, toilet, wash basin, and a radio earphone which is centrally controlled.

The 30-foot-high walls surrounding the penitentiary are manned by armed guards



The Iowa State Penitentiary is proving that with vocational training and public understanding, convicts can become useful, law-abiding citizens.

by Dutch Vanderneese

This article was written from firsthand experience by two inmates of the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison. Dutch Vanderneese is a pseudonym used by them.

THE EVER-RISING crime rate has finally shocked the American people into investigating the problem. For the past hundred years, while all other phases of life have moved steadily forward, treatment for criminals has been at a standstill. Most of our prisons are ancient and heavily overpopulated. This is one big reason for the alarming repeater rate (more than 50 percent) in our penal institutions.

In times past, prisoners were locked in cells on their arrival, there to languish, unoccupied by anything constructive, until their release. Then, around 1850, convicts were put to work in makeshift prison shops, but the work for the most part was unnecessary and pure physical drudgery.

Today, thanks to increased public interest and enlightenment, prisons are equipped with facilities to teach inmates useful trades. The emphasis now is on turning better men out of prison, instead of merely confining them and releasing them unchanged.

Only a few men can be called habitual

criminals, and the public is becoming aware of this fact. Most prison inmates are "one shotters" or men who have simply not been able to adjust to the fast pace of modern society. In many cases, the lack of a trade has sent a man to prison.

A good example of steps being taken to turn former criminals into contributing citizens may be found in the rehabilitation program of the Iowa State Penitentiary at Fort Madison. Under the direction of Percy A. Lainson, president of the Warden's Association of America, the prison has moved far ahead in the struggle to return better men to society.

What Warden Lainson and his staff need most to accelerate their program are public interest and support. Their biggest problem is convincing people that prisoners can be rehabilitated. Slowly but surely, Iowa's prison is accomplishing this important public-relations job. Through a prison publication, "The Presidio," and a weekly radio program, "Prison on the Hill," the story of



Two prison editors prepare copy for a magazine at Iowa