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Centralization to Consolidation: Some Historical Antecedents of Unified Correctional Systems

N. E. Schafer

Summary

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Centralization to Consolidation:
Some Historical Antecedents of Unified Correctional Systems

by

N.E. Schafer

Justice Center
University of Alaska Anchorage

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Abstract

Autonomous prisons in the nineteenth century were often inefficient and highly political. Many state legislatures and governors attempted to move toward centralized control of their state facilities. In the 1930s the Federal Bureau of Prisons was seen by the Wickersham Commission as a model for institutional centralization. While consolidation of all correctional services was recommended by the National Advisory Commission in 1973; today only a few states have fully unified adult correctional systems. Each is described.

Centralization to Consolidation:
Some Historical Antecedents of Unified Correctional Systems

In 1973 the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommended reorganization of all state corrections systems through consolidation of all facilities, programs and field services, both adult and juvenile, under a single state-level agency. The consolidation of adult and juvenile correctional services seems to have been rejected; indeed, more states today have separate adult and juvenile administrations than in 1973 when the Commission reported that 23 states administered the two separately (p. 560). Separation appears to be based on philosophical grounds since the goals of adult and juvenile corrections are as different as the separate procedures for processing adults and juveniles into their correctional systems.

The rationale for unifying all correctional services for adults into a single state agency continues to be valid. Arguments include: accountability, increased efficiency, cost control, consistency through uniform standards and goals, uniform personnel policies, improved recordkeeping, elimination of duplicative services, standard qualifications for employee categories, establishment of career ladders, improved communications between institutional and field services, and removal of political influence.

Unification involves the creation of a single state agency which would assume operation of local institutions (both pre-trial and misdemeanant facilities), operate state felony institutions, and administer probation and parole field services as well as special community-based programs (EM, boot camps, halfway houses, community service, day treatment units, etc.).

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the historical antecedents of consolidation and to discuss those aspects of history which appear most instructive to consolidation efforts in contemporary American corrections.

Lessons from the Nineteenth Century

As the colonies became states and new territories became states, each saw the need for a prison. Few states needed more than one in the early part of the century, and none had any other correctional services. (Parole and probation were decades in the future.) The single state prison was the whole of corrections for the state. In some states the prison warden, appointed directly by the governor, was in full charge; but a more common practice involved the appointment of a board to oversee operations and even appoint the warden and other prison officers.

As is the case today, an important goal of these boards was consistency, but it was *philosophical* consistency. Through much of the first half of the 19th century the merits of the Auburn and Pennsylvania systems were debated and states chose one model or the other. A primary responsibility of citizen boards was to oversee prison operations to make certain that the regimen was consistent with the silent system (in the case of Auburn) or isolation (in the case of Pennsylvania). The Board of Inspectors of the Auburn prison was so concerned with enforcement of the rule of silence in prison workshops and dining areas that, according to Lewis (1922), they "held that inferior officers should be invested with the power to punish because '[t]he danger of abuse . . . is an evil much less than the relaxation of discipline produced by want of authority.'" However, Lewis went on to note that the board begged to be excused from one of their statutory obligations—to be present at floggings—because it caused them "painful feelings" (p. 93).

The duties of the boards differed from state to state in the early part of the century. In his appendix to his 1832 report to the Home Secretary in London, Crawford made note of how each American prison he visited was governed. The variations are described in Table 1.

Crawford (1832) found that western states and territories were most likely to adopt the Auburn system because it provided for making a profit from the labor of convicts. Crawford was critical of states where the profit motive was the primary focus of prison management because in these states he found no attention paid to the moral reformation of the prisoners. A proponent of the Pennsylvania system, Crawford focused on the Inspector's role in mitigating the potential tyranny of unsupervised wardens who might sacrifice prisoners' health and reformation in favor of profits. He noted that in two states the prison was primarily a manufacturing concern, and in one he found that the keeper had paid the state to obtain his position as manager of the convicts' labor and that he had the "uncontrolled management of them" (p. 132). The convicts were employed outside the prison under the control of private individuals where it was profitable to the keeper. No attention was paid to reformation. It should be noted that hard labor was listed as a punishment in state penal codes.

By mid-century, the goal of the prison in most states was to become at least self-supporting if not to make a profit (either for the state or for the warden). The philosophical basis of neither the Auburn nor the Pennsylvania systems mattered when profits were possible. Only in a few states, most noticeably New York, did the rule of silence at work continue to be important, and only in Pennsylvania was the idea of total segregation still espoused. Crowding made segregation impossible, and turning convicts over to private contractors made the rule of silence somewhat moot.

Table 1. U.S. Prison Organization and Management in the 1830s

GOVERNING BOARDS

Pennsylvania (Eastern Penitentiary)

Board of Inspectors
Uncompensated
5 "taxable" citizens
Appointed by: Judges of Supreme Court
Duties and powers:
- Select warden, physician, and clerk and fix salaries
- Select person to see to moral/religious instruction (not to be compensated)
- Make rules for governing prison
- Direct purchases of supplies
- Visit twice weekly and speak to each prisoner
- Report annually to legislature

New York (Auburn)

Board of Inspectors
Uncompensated
Appointed by Governor and Council
Duties and powers:
- Appoint agent, keeper, deputy keeper, and all subordinate officers
- Establish regulations for governing prison
- Annual report to the legislature

New York (Sing Sing)

Board of Inspectors
No further information

Massachusetts (Charlestown)

Inspectors
Duties and powers:
- Visit weekly, meet monthly
- See that prison regulations are observed
- Make new rules as necessary

Connecticut (Wethersfield)

Board of Directors
Duties and powers:
- "Personally see to the condition and treatment of prisoners" (p. 70)
- Set all compensation
- Provide advice and consent for warden's appointments of deputy and physician

Maine (Thomaston)

Inspectors
Duties and powers:
- Visit weekly
- Report annually to legislature

Maryland (Baltimore)

12 directors
Compensated
Appointed annually by Governor and Council
Duties and powers:
- Visit one hour per day, meet monthly
- Appoint all officers *except* keeper (who is appointed by Governor and Council)
- Oversee keeper
- Frame all regulations

District of Columbia

3 inspectors
"Chosen annually"
Duties and powers:
- Visit weekly
- See all convicts without warden present

Virginia (Richmond)

5 directors
Compensated
Appointed by Governor
Duties and powers:
- "See the laws of the prison carried into effect" (p. 107)
- Make bylaws
- Audit accounts
- "exercise a control" over superintendent, who is chosen annually by the two Houses of the General Assembly
- Report annually to legislature

OTHER SYSTEMS

New Hampshire

"The Governor in Council is inspector of the prison" (p. 79).

Kentucky (Frankfort)

Keeper appointed by Governor
No moral/religious responsibility
Arrange convict labor
"a manufacturing concern"

Ohio (Columbus)

No inspectors
New prison planned

Indiana (Jeffersonville)

State "farms" convicts to the keepers for a certain sum per year, and he manages labor without control. May lease to individuals "outside."
2 inspectors appointed by legislature required to visit twice yearly (not really involved in governance).

SYSTEM UNDETERMINED

New Jersey (Lamberton)

No information. A new prison is planned.

Vermont (Windsor)

Superintendent appoints chaplain and all other officers
Legislature fixes and pays salaries

Tennessee (Columbus)

Manufacturing/convict labor

Source of data: *Crawford, W. 1835.* A Report on the Penitentiaries of the United States. *Patterson-Smith reprint series, 1969. Montclair, NJ: Patterson-Smith.*

Some prisons operated profitably. Lewis (1922) wrote that the Ohio prisons led the nation in prison earnings—in 1841 posting a profit of $21,897 (p. 263). And many made enough at convict labor essentially to support the convicts and staff.

During this period, states which built a second prison operated the second in much the same way as the first. Each had its own autonomous board (or warden) reporting directly to the appointing

authority. Thus, there were not only different patterns of prison management among the states, but also different patterns within a single state.

Though shelved for the abolitionist movement, a prison reform movement attracted a great deal of attention before the Civil War, and interest was reignited when the war ended. In some ways the prison reform movement came as a reaction to the failure of prisons to tend to reformation as they emphasized profitability. Numerous abuses of prisoners were publicized, with a general theme of the reformers of the period being the removal of politics and graft from the administration of public institutions. Problems were well-publicized and public opinion favored reform.

The mismanagement of the Southern Prison in Jeffersonville, Indiana serves as an example of a public scandal of the period. Indiana was not noted for progressive attitudes toward the convicted. Children as young as twelve were housed in the state prison until 1867; to achieve its primary objective of economic self-sufficiency, the prison leased the prison to the highest bidder until 1857, when the contract system was instituted; and it housed female prisoners under all-male supervision for nearly twenty years before appointing the first matron in 1859 (Thornborough, 1965). The prison was described by a late nineteenth century historian as "about the worst managed and conducted prison on the continent, a disgrace to the state and an outrage on humanity" (Smith, 1897: 634). In 1868, after receiving a letter from the prison's board requesting it, the governor of Indiana appointed a Quaker couple, Charles and Rhoda Coffin, to investigate conditions in the prison.

A legislative hearing followed their confidential report to the governor, with and the newspapers making the most of the scandal. The testimony of the warden, one Colonel Merriweather, was printed in full in the *[Indianapolis] Daily Sentinel* with such subheads as: "Cruelty to Prisoners;" "Debauchery of Female Convicts;" and "Why the Prisons are Not Self-Sustaining" (*[Indianapolis] Daily Sentinel*, 1869: 2). Included among the charges were: a flogging so severe it caused the death of the prisoner; prostitution of women prisoners who were required to service both the staff and their friends; embezzlement of funds; and unsanitary and crowded conditions.

Even before the public testimony was made available, the *Daily Sentinel* had reported under the headline "Prison Investigation—Stealing Somewhere" that the contracted labor of convicts brought in a large amount of revenue, yet the prisons continued to need state money for operations. "This robbery . . . has been going on many years," the reporter wrote. "A corrupt system administered by corrupt men, has produced its legitimate result" (*[Indianapolis] Daily Sentinel*, 1869: 2).

In point of fact, though Merriweather and the directors (whom he later sued for taking money from him as a condition of his employment) probably were guilty of embezzlement and certainly were guilty of lax financial practices, the failure of the "Old Jeff" to be self-supporting wasn't really their fault. The area around Jeffersonville was not suited to contracts and it was difficult to find satisfactory private lessees. Several small prison contractors went bankrupt and defaulted on their obligations to the state (Thornborough, 1965: 588).

Bribery, corruption, and abuse in many states gave impetus to the reform movement and the need to centralize authority and remove prisons from the political arena. This movement involved not only institutions for criminals, but also facilities for the insane and those which addressed the problems of poverty. In several states Boards of Charity were organized to oversee all such institutions. By the early 1880s, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Rhode Island, Michigan, and North Carolina had established boards empowered to inspect and recommend changes for facilities such as almshouses, prisons, houses of refuge, and insane asylums. The boards exercised varying degrees of control, but their goals were consistency and efficiency and, through staggered terms, removal of political influence and patronage jobs. Some had inspection authority over county jails and prisons, but not over the state prison. Nevertheless, the importance of removing state prisons from political domination gradually took hold (McKelvey, 1977).

The creation of such boards did not always eliminate political interference; indeed, in some cases political maneuvering increased. McKelvey (1977) reported the situation in Ohio "where the penitentiary suffered probably more than any other institution from repeated pillaging." One Ohio law of 1874, which provided for five directors with alternating terms, was expected to decrease political maneuvering. To circumvent it, "[t]he Democrats who won in 1884 passed the same law a second time with slight changes, thus creating the occasion to appoint an entirely new board. This procedure was repeated four times within the next twelve years" (p. 174).

New Developments in Corrections 1870-1930

The reformatory movement, beginning in 1870, changed the focus of the purpose of imprisonment from hard labor (and profits) to the moral reformation of the prisoner. The concurrent rise of the labor movement had some impact, since both labor and business were interested in removing the competitive edge some products had over others because of the use of cheap prison labor. Restrictions had been placed on prison production in many states by 1900. As these went

into effect, the financial opportunities for prison wardens decreased and the positions became less desirable as political rewards.

The indeterminate sentence and conditional release (parole) were first advocated nationally at the initial meeting of the National Prison Association in 1870 and first put into practice at the Elmira Reformatory. Prisoners on early release from Elmira were, in theory, supervised by the prison for six additional months (Barnes & Teeters, 1943). Volunteer (unpaid) citizens were recruited to do the actual supervision of the released prisoners.

As the reformatory philosophy spread and states added both new facilities and parole eligibility to sentencing structures, the need to centralize authority increased. The Boards of Charity with their powers of inspection seemed no longer adequate. Apparently Illinois was one of the earliest states to organize corrections in a way we would recognize today. In 1917 the state created a Department of Public Welfare as part of the governor's cabinet. The director of this department was appointed by the governor and politically responsible to him. He had direct authority over the superintendents of both penal and charitable institutions and over parole and welfare (McKelvey, 1936: 278). Several states imitated this organizational pattern, and New York and Massachusetts gave authority over departments of correction to commissioners.

The administration of parole continued to be something of a problem. Parole decision-making varied considerably from state to state. At the Elmira Reformatory parole decision-making rested with the prison board, a pattern which emerged elsewhere as states enacted indeterminate sentencing laws and provided for parole. Enabling legislation was slow to come in many states, but by 1930 all but two states (Virginia and Mississippi) had made statutory provisions for the conditional release of prisoners (Table 2). Several states still left the institution in which the prisoner was held or the Board of Managers of that institution as the final paroling authority.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons, established in 1930, took a leadership role in the centralization of parole decision-making. Rather than having institutional boards with different standards determining when prisoners should be paroled, the Bureau established a paid board of parole which applied uniform standards throughout the federal system. Several states followed suit.

However, parole field services continued to be less than satisfactory, with no uniform standards of supervision in many states. The Advisory Committee of the Wickersham Commission (1931) noted that "most of the deficiencies of the parole system as practiced have to do with the

Table 2. Granting Parole in 1930

Governor	Board of Pardon	Boards with other powers (State Board of Charities, Board of Welfare, etc.)		Board of Parole
Colorado	Arizona	Arkansas	Maine	Delaware
Oklahoma	Florida	California	Missouri	Iowa
Vermont	Idaho	Connecticut	Montana	Louisiana
West Virginia	Nebraska	Georgia	New Mexico	Massachusetts
	Nevada	Illinois	Tennessee	Minnesota
	North Dakota	Kansas	Texas	New York
	Utah	Kentucky	Wisconsin	Ohio
	South Carolina			Rhode Island

Source: *National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (Wickersham Commission). 1931.* No. 9 Report on Penal Institutions, Probation and Parole. *Reprinted 1968. Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith.*

quality of supervising given to persons while on parole" (p. 304). Included in their listing of the "defects in the machinery and nature of supervision" were:

- no supervision at all except a requirement for mailed communication
- incompetent and untrained parole officers (including police officers or volunteers)
- large caseloads
- automatic release from parole after a specified period (usually one year)
- failure to follow up on violations
- inadequate administrative and financial support (p. 305)

Some states developed creative ways of insuring compliance with parole conditions. Indiana required the parolee's employer to withhold a portion of his salary, which was sent to the prison for safekeeping until the parole period was satisfactorily completed (McKelvey, 1936: 246).

The supervision of parolees was, in some states, placed under the newly formed state Parole Board. In others it was the responsibility of a separate division of the same state agency which administered the institutions; in yet others it was the responsibility of the Department (or Division) of Corrections.

Although the history of probation spanned approximately the same time period as that of parole (the first official probation officer was appointed in Boston in 1878), it was never as closely tied to correctional institutions as was conditional release. Because placement on probation depended on the judge to suspend imposition or execution of sentence, in many states probation field services were placed under the judicial rather than the executive branch of state government, and in some at the level of the local judiciary rather than at a state level.

Probation seemed to gain acceptance more readily than early release from prison or parole. The Massachusetts experiment with this new idea was much admired and emulated, and by 1910 nearly all northern states had adopted probation laws; by 1915 almost every western state had.

This was an area where the federal system was not in a leadership position. When federal judges attempted to use this alternative to incarceration, the Supreme Court decided, in the 1916 Killitts case, that federal judges did not have the authority to suspend sentences and would not

unless Congress authorized them to do so. Although probation was considered by Congress several times, the National Probation Act did not go into effect until 1925. Field services were administered by the administrative office of the courts. When the U.S. Parole Commission was organized and parole became a standard part of federal sentences, parolees were supervised by federal probation officers.

In no state have the courts had control over both probation and parole field services. But the tendency to place probation supervision under judicial administration presented a new centralization problem.

In 1931 the Wickersham Commission expressed strong support for expansion of the use of probation, but argued that local (judicial) control of policies, personnel, and methods of supervision was "one of the main causes of the ineffective and uneven development of probation in the United States" (p. 200). They strongly urged state-level administration and advocated that supervision should be the responsibility of the state executive branch of government.

The Commission argued that probation was another way of handling convicted offenders and, since judges do not control the conditions of incarceration, they ought not control the conditions of probation. In addition, "[The judge] would not think of issuing orders to, or appointing, or fixing the salary of the warden of the institution; why should he possess authority in respect to these same matters over the probation officer?" (1931: 204).

Contemporary Efforts to Consolidate

Thirty-five years later the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967) was still noting the variations among jurisdictions regarding administrative responsibility for probation and presenting some of the arguments for and against judicial authority.

At the time the Commission's Task Force Report on Corrections was published there was considerable variation among the states in models of central authority. Heyns (1967) described a wide variety of organizational schemes among the fifty states. He found many administering their systems through boards, some of these solely in charge of adult institutions, some with control of institutions in addition to the prison (those for the mentally ill or the retarded). In Idaho he found a full-time three-member Board of Correction. Each member of the board had a specific function: the chairman was warden of the state prison, the vice-chairman was director of rehabilitation, and

Table 3. Organization of Corrections, 1967

BOARDS OR COMMISSIONS	LARGER STATE DEPARTMENTS	INDEPENDENT DEPARTMENT
Board for individual institution Arizona Arkansas Connecticut Mississippi New Hampshire New Mexico	**Department of Welfare** Alaska Hawaii Rhode Island Virginia Wisconsin	Alabama California Delaware—*policymaking, but not administrative head* Georgia Indiana Kansas Kentucky Maryland Massachusetts Michigan Minnesota Missouri New York North Carolina South Carolina Tennessee
Board concerned with more than one area of correction Idaho Oklahoma Texas Utah	**Department of Institutions** Colorado Louisiana Montana Nebraska Vermont Washington West Virginia	
Ex officio board Florida—*governor, secretary of state, attorney general, state treasurer, commission of agriculture, superintendent of public instruction* Nevada—*governor, secretary of state, state treasurer* Oregon—*governor, secretary of state, state treasurer* Wyoming—*governor, secretary of state, state treasurer, state auditor, superintendent of public instruction*	**Department of Public Safety** Illinois **Department of Justice** Pennsylvania **Department of Mental Health and Correction** Maine Ohio	
Board with functions in addition to corrections Idaho New Jersey North Dakota South Dakota		

Source: *Heyns, G. 1967. "Patterns of Correction."* Crime and Delinquency *133): 421-431.*

the secretary was director of parole and probation—a form of centralization with no specific head and with clear division of responsibilities (p. 423).

Heyns noted that some degree of coordination and integration was evident in nearly all states. He noted three major models: "1) those that use boards or commissions to manage correctional programs; 2) those that have placed correction in some larger, existing department; and 3) those that administer correction in an independent department" (1967: 422)

Because the first two models contain considerable variation, he subdivided these. Each state was placed under one of these headings (Table 3). In most states parole field services were closely tied to institutions (either within the same larger department, as a division of the independent department, etc.). From Heyn's description of each state's organization it appears that probation field services were operated in conjunction with parole field services in 29 states.

Using information in the 1992-1994 *Probation and Parole Directory* (American Correctional Association, 1992), I have constructed a list which compares current location of probation in the executive and judicial branches by state (Table 4).

Table 4. Organization of Adult Probation

Executive		Judiciary
Alabama	New Mexico	Arizona
Alaska	New York	Arkansas
Delaware	North Carolina	California
Florida	North Dakota	Colorado
Georgia	Ohio*	Connecticut
Idaho	Oklahoma	Hawaii
Iowa	Oregon	Illinois
Kentucky	Pennsylvania*	Indiana
Louisiana	Rhode Island	Kansas
Maine	South Carolina	Massachusetts
Maryland	Tennessee	Nebraska
Michigan	Utah	New Jersey
Minnesota*	Vermont	Ohio*
Mississippi	Virginia	South Dakota
Missouri	Washington	Texas
Montana	Wisconsin	West Virginia
Nevada	Wyoming	
New Hampshire		

* Varies by county.

Source of data: *American Correctional Association. 1992.* Probation and Parole Directory 1992–1994. *Laurel, MD: American Correctional Association.*

Full Consolidation

Clearly several states have consolidated adult corrections within single departments or divisions administering prisons and probation and parole services (as well as such special programs as work release, community service, etc.). There is, however, one adult corrections area where very few states have achieved centralized control—only six states operate jails: Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Even during the nineteenth century there was concern that jails should be included in efforts to centralize authority over correctional institutions. In some states those early Boards of Charity did have inspection powers over the county jails, but no state attempted to assume their operation. In some states special state farms or prisons were established for serving misdemeanant sentences, but in most misdemeanants served their time in county-operated jails or prisons.

The Wickersham Commission (1931), the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice (1967), and the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals (1973) all recommended that state agencies should assume responsibility for jail operations citing inadequate funding, unsafe and unsanitary facilities, and inappropriate and poorly-trained staff at county levels.

The Report of the Advisory Committee of the Wickersham Commission recommended that "several local jails could be thrown together into a district jail. . . . Existing buildings, or jails of the better sort, could be used, the State making the selections" (1931: 276).

The National Advisory Commission (1973) recommended that state governments build and operate regional facilities to serve several counties in their states, and a trend toward regional jails

in several states might be viewed as a step toward consolidation. Where regionalization has occurred, state government has played a central role in encouraging regional cooperation, financing construction, and establishing guidelines for operation.

In Virginia, for example, enabling legislation permits any combination of city or county governments to establish a regional jail. If three or more governmental units participate, the state will fund up to 50 percent of construction costs. Virginia has 12 regional jails serving 35 counties. The extent to which regional jails must comply with state policies and procedures varies from state to state and may depend on the degree to which states contribute resources toward the construction and operation of the regional jail.

True consolidation of adult corrections would include all correctional institutions—pre-trial, misdemeanant, and felony facilities—as well as all field services—both probation and parole. At present only four states have fully unified systems: Alaska, Delaware, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The State of Alaska has centralized nearly all governmental services at the state level, particularly criminal justice services; prosecuting attorneys and public defenders, for example, are state employees. Law enforcement is still carried out at the local level and many small police agencies maintain lockups or jails. There is a limit to the amount of time persons can be held in these facilities (3 to 30 days). If they are to be detained beyond these limits they are transferred to regional facilities operated by the state.

The Alaska Department of Corrections contains a Division of Institutions and a Division of Probation. The Division of Institutions includes both pre-trial facilities and long-term institutions. In some communities the institution is multi-purpose, serving as the pre-trial facility for the surrounding community, and holding both sentenced misdemeanants and sentenced felons.

The Division of Probation completes pre-sentence investigations for the court system and supervises both probationers and parolees. Probation officers are also assigned to the institutions to work with prisoners.

A third division lets contracts for community residential centers and for delivery of rehabilitative services to the institutions.

Rhode Island has the oldest unified corrections system in the country. It has had state responsibility for the Providence County Jail for a century, but there were other jails under local control. The Unification Act of 1956 resulted in the closing of three jails and the creation of an entity known as the Adult Correctional Institutions, within the Department of Social Welfare, and

in 1972 adult corrections was removed from its parent department and reorganized as the Rhode Island Department of Corrections.

The department is fully unified, operating pre-trial detention facilities and prisons, probation and parole field services. Even court lockups are one of the department's responsibilities. The Intake Services Facility, opened in 1982, was intended to hold all male pre-trial detainees as well as performing for the courts and the department many of the functions of what are known as reception and diagnostic centers (RDCs) in other states.

In Vermont, state-level administration of adult correctional services has had a long history, but unification of these services has been gradual. Probation was a state-level executive branch function from the beginning, but it was administered by the State Board of Charities and Probation. This board had no relation to any of the state correctional institutions. The state had always assumed some fiscal responsibility for jail operations even though jails had been managed by county sheriffs. In 1968, the legislature authorized the state to take over four county jails to be reorganized as regional correctional centers and transferred funds for prisoner care from the sheriffs to the Department of Correction.

The department had itself been created in 1966 with a clear legislative directive to develop community-based corrections. The four regional correctional centers not only were to perform traditional jail functions (pre-trial detention and misdemeanant sentences), but also to serve as release centers and as centers for probation and parole counseling and treatment. Their locations enable these centers to provide erring area residents access to a variety of services necessary to a continuum of treatment (medical, dental, mental health), as well as education and employment opportunities for pre-release prisoners.

Vermont's is a totally unified system organized with a clear statement of purpose: "the disciplined preparation of violators for their responsible roles in the open community" (Morrissey, 1980: 8). One of the legislators involved in its origins noted that Vermont was the first state to establish a program around which institutions could be built rather than building prisons and then trying to figure out programs (Morrissey, 1980: 9).

Until 1955, the State of Delaware was unique among the forty-eight states in that it had no state-operated correctional institutions. In effect, Delaware's three counties each had its own independently-operated-and-maintained penal facility (jail and prison combined).

The Newcastle County Workhouse, established in 1899, was intended to house prisoners from the entire state in a single institution where prisoners could engage in productive labor. The workhouse was financed in part by fees from the other counties of $1.00 per prisoner per day. But, in 1933, the politically stronger rural southern counties, unhappy with these charges, prevailed upon the legislature to permit them to keep most of their prisoners in their own jails. The resulting legislation provided that "all prisoners convicted in Kent and Sussex Counties and sentenced to ten years or less were to be committed to the jails of those counties." This Act, according to Caldwell, "did more than merely retard, it actually reversed Delaware's penal development" (1942: 29).

The idea that the workhouse ought to be a state institution was raised for more than fifty years. The Prisoners' Aid Committee of Delaware (which became the Prisoners' Aid Society) studied this proposition in the early 1930s. In 1935, a Commission on Prison Industries also examined the penal system, recommending state assumption. After an escape from Newcastle, the Federal Bureau of Prisons was asked to study the workhouse; their report recommended a state-operated prison system (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 1949).

The Commission on Reorganization of State Government requested assistance on corrections reorganization from the Prisoners' Aid Society of Delaware, a civilian organization with a historic interest in corrections. The society developed a plan for a state-operated system in 1950, which was in essence the one ultimately adopted. It called for the state to "acquire, at reasonable compensation, the three institutions now maintained by the counties" (Prisoners' Aid Society of Delaware, 1950) and organize them under a Board of Correction which would establish policy for the operation of the facilities, assure that the policies were carried out, and report annually to the governor. Although the proposed plan appeared before the legislature in 1951, it was not passed until 1955.

The reorganization was directed solely toward institutional corrections; probation continued as a function of the courts and was understaffed, underfunded, and probably underutilized (although data were not routinely compiled). There was only one parole officer for the state. In addition, the assumption of jail operations still left the three former county facilities intact and they still were not suitable for long-term confinement.

The governor, recognizing that corrections was not improving, appointed a Committee for Correctional Programs in 1962. The committee contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency to conduct a thorough study of Delaware corrections. Their report in three volumes, submitted to the governor in December 1962, strongly recommended organization of a state-level

Department of Corrections, headed by a professional in the field of corrections, which would have responsibility for all correctional services—both adult and juvenile—in the state. (Responsibility for juvenile corrections was transferred to a social services agency in 1984.)

Legislation creating this department was passed in 1966. The act not only established the department but also revised sentencing, probation, parole, and pardoning procedures and authorized capital funding for construction of a new adult facility, for remodeling the former Kent and Sussex County jails, and for construction of new juvenile facilities (Cobin, 1967). This legislation marked the true entry of the state into modern state-operated corrections.

Today, the Delaware Department of Corrections exercises authority over the entire spectrum of adult corrections in the state from pre-trial detention through probation and parole field services. Delaware did not meld county jails into an existing state correctional system; in effect, the county jails *were* state corrections. The state assumed fiscal and supervisory control over the only correctional institutions in Delaware. The development into a comprehensive Department of Corrections occurred afterwards.

Conclusion

All four states which have fully unified adult corrections systems have, in many ways, fulfilled the goals of the earliest efforts to centralize authority over penal institutions and agencies.

Philosophical consistency is one of these goals. The state of Vermont has achieved the highest level of philosophical consistency—directing their entire system toward preparation of the prisoner for release and involvement of the local community in these efforts. Both Delaware and Rhode Island operate their adult systems with specific philosophical goals.

Alaska is probably the weakest in this area, and this is probably due to its size. While Rhode Island, Delaware and Vermont are geographically very small states, Alaska is the largest state in the Union. It has the second smallest population and this small population is spread widely across a huge area. It also contains very diverse cultures and lifestyles. As a result, consistency in philosophy and goals may not be possible and may even be undesirable.

Consistency in regard to personnel (recruitment, hiring, training) has been achieved in all the states, and uniform policies and procedures for institutions are in place. Again, Alaska is less consistent in regard to field services than the other states because of the difficulties of supervising people in remote communities.

The extent to which other states will pursue unification is not clear. In some states there seems to be a trend away from consolidation. The Connecticut Department of Corrections, for example, is now primarily concerned with institutions (both prisons and jails). Parole field services have been removed from Department of Corrections jurisdiction and placed under the aegis of the Parole Board.

Is unification still desirable? In many large states it may not be, but in most states unification will increase efficiency and improve personnel standards, and it will enable the state to establish uniform policies and procedures for dealing with offenders.

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