Lessons in Womanhood: Education at the Prison for Women, 1934-1965

By

Katie-Marie McNeill

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Program in Education

in conformity with the degree requirements for the

Degree of Master of Education

Queen’s University

Kingston, Ontario, Canada

August, 2017

Copyright © Katie-Marie McNeill, 2017
Abstract

The Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston, Ontario was the sole federal prison for Canadian women throughout the majority of the twentieth century. As such, studying P4W represents a comprehensive study of Canadian women’s incarceration, which is unique in Canadian prison history in comparison to men’s institutions. This thesis explores the educational history of P4W from 1934-1965 to examine what opportunities were afforded to incarcerated women and to reveal the intentions of the Penitentiary Service in their provision of education.

This thesis argues that education at P4W intended to reform incarcerated women into models of respectable womanhood. This project relies on archival documents from the Correctional Service of Canada fonds at Library and Archives Canada, files from the Public Safety Library Archives, the Isabel J. Macneill fonds from the Nova Scotia Archives, and prisoner press publications. To frame this research, this thesis takes a blended functionalist and narrative approach to legal history to underscore that the development of education in P4W followed the development of education in Ontario, and that narratives are required to appreciate P4W’s gendered educational history. P4W’s education is contextualized by Chapter One, which provides an overview of imprisonment in English Canadian history.

To further deepen analysis, education has been separated and organized into three categories: academic, vocational, and recreational. Chapter Two analyzes academic education and reveals that incarcerated women’s education relied heavily on correspondence courses. This reliance resulted in the neglect of illiterate women’s education until 1949 when the first teacher was hired. Chapter Three analyzes vocational education and presents the narrow options that incarcerated women had for employment. Chapter Four analyzes recreational education which explores what types of activities incarcerated women were allowed to participate in outside of
their daily prison employment. Each of these chapters conclude that incarcerated women in P4W were offered educational programs that reinforced ideas and behaviours associated with respectable womanhood.
Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston for all the work the organization has done, and continues to do, for women in conflict with the law. Ideally, there will be a time when this work is no longer vital, and we will live in a more just and equitable society.

Thank you to my Supervisor, Dr. Ted Christou, who has been a constant source of support. You have been expedient whenever I needed your help and allowed to explore the topic as I saw fit. Thank you for your encouragement and such a positive introduction into academia.

Thank you to my Committee Member, Dr. Jeff Brison, who has been a great collaborator. Thank you for all of your kind words and enthusiastic support. I look forward to working together in the future in the PhD program!

Thank you to all of my friends in the Faculty of Education, especially the Books Last Tuesday Club, for all the kind words of advice, support, and camaraderie.

Thank you to my family for supporting me in anything and everything.

And thank you to Chris for listening to research ideas daily and keeping me grounded throughout this process.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... i  
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... iii  
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... iv  

**Introduction** .............................................................................................................. 1  
Purpose ............................................................................................................................... 2  
Defining Respectable Womanhood .................................................................................. 3  
Defining Curriculum ........................................................................................................ 6  
Source Materials ............................................................................................................. 8  
Historiographical Trends in Penal and Legal History ................................................... 9  
Educational History ......................................................................................................... 24  
Chapter Outlines ........................................................................................................... 29  

**Chapter One:** Origins of Imprisonment in English Canada ..................................... 32  
Nineteenth Century Women’s Criminality ..................................................................... 33  
Upper Canadian Society, 1800-1850 .......................................................................... 36  
County Gaols of Upper Canada .................................................................................. 38  
The Creation of a Modern Penitentiary ......................................................................... 41  
Upper Canada and Ontario, 1850-1900 ..................................................................... 46  
Kingston Penitentiary Administration, 1850-1900 ....................................................... 48  
The Women of Kingston Penitentiary .......................................................................... 49  
The Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women ............................................................... 50  
Leading to War: The Early Twentieth Century in Canada ......................................... 53  
Continuity and Change in Kingston Penitentiary ........................................................ 53  
Postwar Realities ............................................................................................................ 56  
W.F. Nickle’s Investigation into the Female Prison, 1921 ............................................. 57  
The Opening of P4W ...................................................................................................... 59  
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 60  

**Chapter Two:**  
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 62  
The P4W Opens .............................................................................................................. 64  
The Great Depression ..................................................................................................... 69  
Education on the Outside .............................................................................................. 74  
Origins of Educational Reform in P4W ......................................................................... 76  
Increased Attention and Advocacy, 1949-1965 ............................................................ 77  
P4W’s First Educational Staff Member .......................................................................... 80  
Conclusions .................................................................................................................... 92  

**Chapter Three:**  
Introduction .................................................................................................................. 95  
Origins of Vocational Work for Incarcerated People .................................................... 97
P4W 1934-1945: New Location, Same Vocation.................................................................99
The Post-war Decades, 1945-1965.................................................................................106
Dr. Chataway – The First Educational Matron.........................................................108
A New Era in Corrections and Vocational Education: The 1960s...............................113
Conclusions..................................................................................................................118

Chapter Four:
Introduction ......................................................................................................................121
Defining Recreational Education in P4W.................................................................122
Historic Recreational Trends in Canadian Prisons...................................................124
Recreation in P4W’s Early Years, 1934-1949............................................................127
Recreation After E Fry Kingston Involvement, 1949-1965......................................128
Isabel Macneill as Superintendent, 1960-1965......................................................139
Conclusions..................................................................................................................143

Chapter Five:
Conclusion......................................................................................................................145
Future Research............................................................................................................148
Final Thoughts..............................................................................................................151

Bibliography ..................................................................................................................152

Appendices
Appendix A: Educational Officers of P4W.................................................................162
Appendix B: Supervising Officers of P4W.................................................................163
Appendix C: Wardens of Kingston Penitentiary.........................................................164
Appendix D: Leadership in the Penitentiary Service..................................................165
Appendix E: Ministers of Justice of Canada...............................................................166
Introduction

The origins of this thesis stemmed from a discussion with a relative who was employed at a prison for men in Ontario. She stated that she would much rather work at a men’s prison than a women’s prison because incarcerated women were more difficult to work with. Intrigued by this statement, our discussion continued and my interest in gender differences in Canadian prisons ignited. As I completed preliminary research following our initial discussion, the Prison for Women (P4W) located in Kingston, Ontario was a topic I found myself returning to because I could not find answers to satisfy all the questions I had about this institution. Considering that P4W was the only federal prison for women in Canada from 1934-1995 I expected to find an extensive body literature that focused on the institution.\(^1\) It was from this curiosity about P4W that this project took shape.

It was my educational background in both education and history that led me to explore the history of education at the Prison for Women. My curiosity intensified as Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) student at Queen’s University’s Duncan McArthur Hall. I quickly learned that the formidable building directly across the street from the Faculty of Education was the decommissioned P4W. It now appears less intimidating because all but one of the perimeter walls have been demolished and the barbed wire fence that once stood ten feet atop the stone has also been removed.\(^2\) As I engaged with courses about teaching and learning, I wondered what

---


Lessons in Womanhood

educational opportunities were available to women inside P4W, an institution that was only a stone’s throw away from a hub of teacher education and training.³

Purpose

I wanted to study the history of education at the P4W for two key reasons. The first being that I, like many other scholars, volunteers, and members of the public, believe that education can be a transformative experience for individuals, including incarcerated women. I wanted to know what education incarcerated women encountered at P4W and if it was transformational. Beyond this strong personal belief, I wanted to learn about how education in Canadian prisons developed, evolved, and why? I wanted to understand what the federal government believed was possible for incarcerated women to achieve educationally within a correctional context. The purpose of this research is therefore to summarize and describe the educational programs available at the P4W from 1934-1965. This topic addresses large gaps in the Canadian literature related to the history of education and in the history of incarcerated women’s experiences in penal and legal history.⁴

In light of the above, this thesis is guided by the following questions: a) How were educational programs developed and administered at the P4W from 1934-1965? b) How did the curriculum and delivery of these educational programs change in the period 1934-1965? These questions allow for a broad exploration of the education that was available at the P4W. I chose to study this approximately thirty year period from 1934-1965 because it is marked by two

---


substantial events in the history of P4W. In the 1934, P4W was completed and opened and in 1965 the first female Superintendent of the institution resigned amidst departmental disagreement which resulted in a Joint House-Senate Committee inquiry into her resignation.5

This research is important because the history of educational programs provides insight into what the federal government believed incarcerated women needed to learn in order to function as productive members of society. The history of education at P4W shows what the Canadian state thought criminal women lacked in skills and knowledge to function according to social norms. This project will show what the Canadian government believed women’s role to be as the educational opportunities provided by the Penitentiary Service were intended to, ideally, transform criminal women into respectable Canadian women. The idea of a respectable woman was based in white, heteronormative, middle-class definitions of women, which imagined women primarily as wives and mothers. The education at P4W also reveals what federal employees and volunteers from prisoner aid organizations thought of the potential of the women in their care and how to best rehabilitate incarcerated women. Education in P4W offers a window to changing values of Canadians from 1934-1965.

**Defining Respectable Womanhood**

Respectability and womanhood are fluid terms which shift definitions over time and vary on the audience for which each characteristic is performed.6 Despite the elusive nature of

---


6 Judith Butler, “Performativity Acts of Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 520. Butler examines the performativity of gender in this foundational feminist theory article. She argues that gender is a series of repetitive actions performed by an actor (individual) to an audience (larger society) who share a mutual belief about the naturalness of gendered performance. The performance of gender can therefore be challenged by changing the actions of the body, but it takes an awareness that gender is a performance to initiate change. Performance is also temporally located. In this instance that means that a performance of respectable womanhood would appear different in 1890 compared to 1940 although it would share the same meaning.
defining both respectability and womanhood, there are continuous characteristics that persist in the essence of both terms. It is these continuous tropes that define respectable womanhood that I will utilize to analyze the educational programs at the P4W.

Barbara Welter coined the term “true womanhood” in 1966 with her article “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” which examined American Victorian standards of womanly virtue. Welter’s description of womanhood comes from an examination of ladies’ magazines and journals from the period. Welter’s definition of womanhood rests of four pillars: “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.” Welter’s womanhood, although not achievable nor desirable by all Victorian women, was an American Victorian woman’s duty as she was responsible for the home, children, and effectively the future of the nation. In a Canadian context, Adele Perry’s On the Edge of Empire also cast women, specifically white women, as the protectors of nation through their domesticity and child-rearing. The centre of womanhood in both of these nineteenth century discourses is the home.

Into the early twentieth century, more women, including middle-class women, began working outside of the home and respectable womanhood required a new understanding that could incorporate women in the public sphere. Kate Boyer explores how major banks in Montreal helped to redefine respectable womanhood in public spaces as they hired young, single, women as clerks in their offices. Boyer argues that women were still considered respectable outside of the home if they carried themselves with sexual propriety, dressed modestly, were

---

8 Ibid, 152.
9 Ibid, 172.
10 Adele Perry, On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race, and the Making of British Columbia, 1849-1871 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 144-147.
12 Ibid, 262.
polite, and connected to a religious community.\textsuperscript{13} Joan Sangster explored similar expansions in the boundaries of respectability of working women in her study of factory workers in Peterborough, \textit{Earning Respect: The Lives of Working Women in Small-Town Ontario, 1920–1960}. Sangster found that women could earn respectability regardless of their actual class standing if they subscribed to “certain customs, values, and to some extent, represented by material symbols.”\textsuperscript{14} Consistent traits of respectability from the nineteenth century appear in Sangster’s analysis as she found that respectable married women could work, but also had to maintain a clean and orderly home, raise well-mannered children, not appear aggressive or loud, and live a Christian life.\textsuperscript{15} While Sangster notes that each of these markers of respectability had a slightly different definition to each woman, for example the standard of cleanliness that signified a home as orderly, there is clear continuity from the Victorian definition of respectable womanhood.

Respectable womanhood in the period of study from 1934-1965 was also fluid and carried multiple meanings and understandings with it, however, there was consistency from past definitions. Women were expected to adhere to middle-class values that were a by-product of Victorian era ideals. Although the standards were less rigid than in the nineteenth century, women in the early and mid-twentieth century were expected to live a Christian life, which meant that sex outside of marriage was abhorred. Women were allowed to have employment outside of the home, but were still expected to centre themselves domestically, raising polite

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 270. Boyer notes how corporations hired women based on their connections to faith communities. For example, a young woman who came from a respected family and was connected to the largest English Catholic congregation in the city was seen as an ideal candidate.


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 115.
children in a clean home. Paid work represented an addition to the responsibilities of respectable womanhood, not a replacement of domestic duties.

**Defining Curriculum**

Another term that requires further definition in this study is curriculum. To study education, which is a broad subject, parameters must be set and curriculum is a place to set these boundaries. Curriculum is a loaded term that is layered, and is defined by many scholars in many ways. For this study, I conceptualize the different aspects of curriculum through the nested curriculum approach as explained by Theodore Christou in his book *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario’s Public Schools, 1919-1942*. In Christou’s model, curriculum is understood as a series of layers nested in one another that comprise a whole. The first, outer layer of curriculum is rhetoric, which in this specific research includes all the philosophical ideas surrounding the unique context of correctional education. Some of these overarching questions relate to the degree to which education in prison is a privilege or a right and what sort of education is most appropriate for prisoners? This outer layer of curriculum also encompasses mandates, acts, and legislation created to change and direct education in Canadian prisons. The rhetoric of curriculum can be examined through documents like circular memorandums to wardens from the central prison authority. Other useful sources include official reports, investigations, and ruminations of penal authorities amongst themselves in letters of correspondence, employee directives, professional magazines, and personal notes.

---

16 Theodore Christou, *Progressive Education: Revisioning and Reframing Ontario’s Public Schools, 1919-1942*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 45. See also the work of David Tyack for discussions of defining curriculum in an American context.

The second layer of curriculum is situated in the classroom. This layer pertains to how the rhetoric of the first layer is absorbed, transformed, and presented in the classroom by individual teachers.\textsuperscript{18} This layer of curriculum involves the process of individual teachers translating their own educational philosophy, and the philosophy of their institution, into practice. In a correctional education context, the second layer is complicated by the custodial nature of prisons, where teachers were employees of the Penitentiary Service and students were incarcerated women that created a power differential unlike the relationship between a public school teacher and student. The second layer of curriculum in this specific, historical study is comprised of sources such as monthly reports of the Educational Matron, timetables of classes, student progress reports, and planning documents.

The final, inner layer, or core of curriculum, is comprised of what the students actually learn and take away from their educational experiences.\textsuperscript{19} This core of curriculum is the most subjective layer, as it is based on individual student perception, and therefore it is extremely difficult to determine. In a contemporary situation, this inner layer of curriculum could be assessed by a variety of measures of students’ learning, but in a historical context the core of curriculum is much harder to determine. What students learned, in a historical setting, can only be described and assessed through what traces of learning remain. Remnants of learning could include sources such as student diaries or reflections, and could also be examined through oral history practices undertaken with past students. In a prison context, the traces of learning are even less available than in a non-institutional setting. This is because prisoners do not always have the freedom to keep items like diaries, and in some cases, especially earlier in the time

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Theodore Michael Christou, personal communication, June 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2016.
frame of this study, many incarcerated women were illiterate and did not have the ability to record their thoughts and feelings regarding their education. Oral history research, of course, is only an option for assessment of the most recent generations of formerly incarcerated women.

In the context of history of education at the P4W from 1934-1965, which spans several decades and involves hundreds of women, it is far beyond the scope of this Master’s thesis to delve into the student experience layer of curriculum. I will use the first and second layers of curriculum, rhetoric and classroom practice, to explore education at P4W. Whenever available and applicable, I will include the voices of the students, the women incarcerated at P4W, to confirm, disrupt, and complicate the narrative presented by sources created by those in some position of authority. The nested curriculum approach outlined by Christou allows for in-depth analysis of many facets of education at the P4W.

Source Materials

I consulted collections of primary and secondary sources to develop an accurate portrayal of both the rhetoric and teaching that comprised education at P4W. The Correctional Services Canada (CSC) records, RG 73, managed at Library and Archives Canada (LAC) proved to be the largest source for information regarding the rhetoric layer of correctional education. Within the CSC records, there were thousands of pages of primary documents related to the rhetoric of education at P4W. Some of the most important documents for this study included circular memorandums from the central authority of prisons to all wardens, which outlined such specific goals for prison education as literacy rates of prisoners or correspondence course success rates. The Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries were a useful source for contextualizing P4W alongside male prison practices of the same period. The employee publication, Federal Corrections, available through the Public Safety Library Archives, was
another primary source that revealed correctional education rhetoric. Finally, Royal Commission reports, such as the famous the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada, published in 1938, were integral sources for explaining changes, at times radical, to the educational rhetoric of CSC in P4W.

The same collections as LAC and the Public Safety Library Archives informed my interpretation of the second layer of curriculum through documents created by frontline staff. From LAC, insight into classroom practice was best revealed through Matrons’ reports and through correspondence between the Warden of Kingston Penitentiary and various officials from the Office of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries. From the Public Safety Archives, Federal Corrections columns, written by and for an audience of active Penitentiary Service staff, explored best practices from international perspectives, opinion pieces, and success stories with educational programming in Canadian prisons. Finally, the Isabel Janet Macneill fonds from the Nova Scotia Archives in Halifax also proved to be fruitful in understanding classroom practice. Macneill was the Superintendent of P4W from 1960-1965 and her files offered frank commentary on P4W’s educational programs.

**Historiographical Trends in Penal and Legal History**

P4W must be situated within historical context before its educational programs can be analyzed and interpreted. In order to provide this context, this thesis must first be situated within existent scholarship of the sub-field of penal history within the larger Canadian legal historiography. The following historiographical section reviews the origins of legal history in Canada, two major theoretical camps used to analyze sources, methodological trends in the writing of legal history, and trends in selection of subject matter. Within these boundaries, some of the key secondary sources that underpin this thesis are introduced and placed within the
Lessons in Womanhood

aforementioned categories. This section is by no means conclusive of legal and penal history in Canada and focuses on specific selections which best frame the P4W.

Penal and legal history borrow theories and frameworks from other disciplines to analyze and better understand the law of the past and its relevance to current legal issues. In Canada, historians, and other scholars who study the history of prisons and the larger legal systems in which they are situated, follow this trend and borrow from other disciplines, mainly sociology and criminology, to better grasp lessons from legal history. The study of prisons is therefore largely an interdisciplinary project where theories and methods from different disciplines inform each other, expose new interpretations of the past, and offer new suggestions for improvement in the contemporary prison systems.

Despite attention from scholars of various disciplines, penal and legal history are still relatively young as an area of research interest in history.\textsuperscript{20} Legal history was largely unexplored until the mid-1980s when interest among the international community of historians and social scientists grew.\textsuperscript{21} This interest was driven largely by the publication of Michel Foucault’s influential \textit{Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison} in 1975.\textsuperscript{22} In a Canadian context, the creation of the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History in 1979 prompted more study of legal history.\textsuperscript{23} The influential society supports and encourages growth in the field of Canadian history.

\textsuperscript{20} For example, the Canadian Historical Review did not consider legal history a category in its quarterly annotated bibliography until December 2013. In December 2013 legal history was designated a specific category under the heading “Political and Legal History,” and prior this any legal history had been categorized either under “Political History” or “Military History and Foreign Affairs.” Brian Gettler, “Recent Publications Relating to Canada,” \textit{The Canadian Historical Review} 94, no. 4 (2013): 645.


Lessons in Womanhood

legal history by offering both emerging and established scholars funding, publishing opportunities, and archival research supports. Many influential Canadian historians have been supported through the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, and their publications have become foundational readings in the history of law and penal systems.

One of the most notable historians associated with the society is Peter Oliver, who was Editor-in-Chief of the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History from the founding of the society in 1979 until his death in 2006. Under his leadership, the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History published sixty-six books. Oliver’s own work in legal history focuses on Ontario. His book, *Terror to Evil-doers*: *Prisons and Punishment in Nineteenth-Century Ontario*, is a heavily researched tome that relies on primary evidence from case law, local archives, provincial archives, and Library and Archives Canada to construct an image of what crime and punishment resembled and felt like for the inhabitants of early Canada. This book lays a foundation for legal history in Ontario and Oliver provides chapters, which stand individually, on issues ranging from Upper Canada law to the early years of the Kingston Penitentiary to special prisoner populations to reform.

*Terror to Evil-doers* and Oliver’s other work, such as *The Conventional Man* and his contributions to edited volumes of the Osgoode Society, reveal that he is a functionalist when it comes to legal history. In legal history, functionalism ascribes to the belief that law follows society. Oliver illustrates how specific historical actors and events in nineteenth century

---


25 R. Blake Brown, “A Taxonomy of Methodological Approaches in Recent Canadian Legal History,” *Acadiensis* 34, no. 1 (2004): 147. In this article, Brown uses William ‘Terry’ Fisher III’s taxonomy of legal histories. Although Fisher is American, Brown sees his taxonomy as useful and applicable to Canadian legal history because of the similarities the two fields share, and also because American legal historian, J. Willard Hurst was the pioneer of
Ontario influenced changes to criminal law and changes to the types and administration of punishment for transgressors. For example, Oliver did not see the creation of a penitentiary as a mechanism to control the poor as others have argued, but rather that a legal elite of the ruling class, mainly lawyers and judges, wanted to alleviate problems associated with poorly funded, county gaols. Oliver argues that the creation of the penitentiary in the 1830s aligned with popular legal thought from the inherently linked United States and England, and that proponents believed a penitentiary promised a uniform application of the law. Oliver provides an extremely well-researched text that shows the reader what crime and punishment was like in nineteenth century Ontario, although he is generous and forgiving in his interpretation of the thoughts and actions of prison authorities and of the state’s motivation. Oliver’s focus on key figures and the legal elite of early English Canada is reasonable given his intention to illustrate a larger picture of crime and punishment, and because there are more primary sources left behind by the elite in the forms of their diaries, letters, and other personal documents.

Oliver’s approach to penal and legal history involves a process in which he analyzes specific events and then contextualizes these events in larger narratives which describe Ontarian society. He does not categorize or label his analysis under a theoretical framework although his way of presenting historical events in their broader social contexts fits within functionalism.

Contemporary legal history in North America (For more on J. Willard Hurst see Robert. W. Gordon’s 1975 article “J. Willard Hurst and the Common Law Tradition in American Legal Historiography,” in Law and Society Review, volume 10, no. 1, pages 9-55.). The taxonomy outlines 6 methodological approaches to legal history which include: “1) descriptive economic analysis, 2) styles of legal thought, 3) progressive evolutionary functionalism, 4) narrative, 5) dialectical materialism, and 6) intellectual legal history,” (p. 146). Brown elaborates on his thoughts regarding progressive evolutionary functionalism noting that most Canadian authors instead subscribe to functionalism. The key difference between Fisher’s conception of progressive evolutionary functionalism and Brown’s functionalism is that Brown sees the law slowly follow society, therefore not being progressive or ahead of social, cultural, and economic trends.

26 Peter Oliver, Terror to Evil-doers: Prisons and Punishments in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 104.

His unspoken, but apparent, approach to analysis is used by many historians. Historians, as a whole, are notorious for not being explicit about their theoretical and methodological choices in comparison to other disciplines, like education and sociology, who are explicit with their chosen analytical tools. As legal historian Blake Brown suggests, historians do use methodological tools but do so “either by intentionally melding interpretative frameworks or by unintentionally combining them in the process of “doing history.””

Owen Carrigan is another legal historian who subscribes to a more obscured methodological approach, or a “doing history” approach, in his analysis. Carrigan offers a great deal of insight in his book *Crime and Punishment in Canada: A History*, but is not explicit in naming an overarching theory in which his analysis fits. He too, like Oliver, uses a functionalist approach to legal history by exploring changes in law and punishment through social trends and values from the period of New France into the late twentieth century. Carrigan differs from Oliver, however, in the scope of his research. The shallower scope undermines Carrigan’s functionalist approach because he fails to provide detailed, specific examples of actors and events in every region of Canada that influenced legal change while claiming to write a national history.

Both Carrigan and Oliver were established academics working in history with interest in legal and penal history before the publication, and English translation, of Michel Foucault’s hugely influential text *Discipline and Punish*. The publication of *Discipline and Punish* popularized legal and penal history as Foucault used a structuralist approach to study, focusing

---

28 Ibid, 154-155.
29 Brown, “A Taxonomy of Methodological Approaches in Recent Canadian Legal History,” 149.
30 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, front matter.
on underlying structures of power in prison systems. Foucault established theoretical frameworks
with which to name, define, and interpret these structures. While some scholars who were
established prior to *Discipline and Punish* occasionally use Foucauldian ideas, there is a clear
difference between the works of penal and legal historians who completed their doctoral research
and obtained professorial positions before *Discipline and Punish* and those who did so
afterwards. Those who graduated and taught beforehand, tend to analyze prison systems using
undefined, typically functionalist, frameworks, whereas those who matured afterwards tend to at
least borrow ideas from Foucault, or use his ideas exclusively for analysis.

Ted McCoy and Kelly Hannah-Moffat, a historian and sociologist respectively, who
joined academe after 1975, have both used a Foucauldian framework to understand massive and
minute details of experiences in Canadian prisons that show how deeply power is manifested in
prison life. Both scholars are from a generation after that of Carrigan and Oliver, having matured
academically well after the work of Foucault found widespread readership and interest in
international academic communities. McCoy analyzes power dynamics through reform efforts in
Kingston Penitentiary from its opening until the end of the nineteenth century in his first
monograph, *Hard Time: Reforming the Penitentiary in Nineteenth-Century Canada*, and
Hannah-Moffat examines the history of power relations inside P4W in her first monograph

McCoy studies many of the same events and individuals that Oliver studied in *Terror to
Evil-doers* in relation to the opening and early life of the Kingston Penitentiary, but McCoy

---

arrives at very different interpretations than Oliver due to his Foucauldian analysis. McCoy differs from Oliver in his argument that there were racial associations with criminality. McCoy argues that having non-white heritage was a large component of criminality, as race was yet another way that authorities could categorize and separate individuals within the prison system. McCoy states that “among penitentiary administrators and officials, there was a consensus that blacks exhibited more criminality than whites.”

To support this argument, McCoy quotes a Chaplain at Kingston Penitentiary who believes that Black men were more susceptible to crime, but not to any fault of their own, simply because of the terrible conditions that slavery imposed on Black men and women. In 1841, Protestant Chaplain, R.V. Rogers believed that “the previous education of slaves should be considered,” and wondered if “living as they do on the majority of plantation, in a state of the grossest ignorance and vice, can it be wondered at that some once reaching this land of liberty should commit crimes which render punishment necessary?”

In contrast, Oliver does not believe that race played a substantial role in criminality because his functionalist perspective has his research focus on records of imprisonment and numbers of incarcerated individuals (some of which did include notes about race and national origin), instead of popular perceptions about criminality.

Foucault’s framework involves analyzing the use of language and how it impacts beliefs, and McCoy explores what criminality meant in Canada through language used in newspapers to

---

32 McCoy, *Hard Time*, 121; Donald Fyson and François Fenchel, “Prison Registers, Their Possibilities and Their Pitfalls: The Case of Local Prisons in Nineteenth-Century Quebec,” *The History of the Family* 20, no. 2 (2015): 163. Prison registers at prisons and gaols across Upper and Lower Canada at this time collected immense amounts of personal information about prisoners including name, age, race, national origin, height, complexion, marital status, education level, literacy, occupation, religion, and drinking habits.

33 McCoy, *Hard Time*, 121.

34 McCoy, *Hard Time*, 121.

35 Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 417. Oliver disregards other historians’ assertions that the Irish were overrepresented in 19th century prisons as he examines records of imprisonment from which he concludes rates of incarceration of Irish are slightly higher than that of Canadian born, but less than half of the rate of incarceration for Americans.
describe sentenced criminals and how these construction of criminality shifted over time. McCoy shows through newspaper reports from 1835, that characteristics attributed to criminals included poor familiar relationships, lacking formal education, unstable employment, and having personal problems with alcohol and anger management. He shows that although the language used to describe criminals changed slightly in nineteenth century Canada, the underlying assumptions about criminality remained largely the same. Many of the components that composed criminality in nineteenth century Upper Canada are still relevant in constructions of contemporary criminality. The aforementioned characteristics, whether applicable to individual offenders or not, still resonate and are often used in popular media analyses of offenders’ actions.

In *Punishment in Disguise: Penal Governance and Federal Imprisonment of Women in Canada*, Kelly Hannah-Moffat deploys a Foucauldian framework that forefronts the legal and lived trajectory of female offenders in Canada in an analysis of philosophic and practical changes of CSC. Hannah-Moffat’s combines her background as a sociologist, her personal activism, and historical research to create an integral resource for studying the incarceration of Canadian women in the twentieth century. Hannah-Moffat’s work differs from other penal histories as she spends a great deal of time analyzing the role of volunteer organizations as prominent actors

---

37 Susan Clairmont, “The Two – Very Different – Sides of Mark Smich,” *The Hamilton Spectator* — www.thespec.com, May 17, 2016, http://www.thespec.com/news-story/6557553-clairmont-the-two-very-different-sides-of-mark-smich/ For example, media coverage of the Tim Bosma murder trial portrayed one of the men found guilty of his murder, Mark Smich, as having the aforementioned characteristics. Smich was portrayed as an unwitting side-kick, who has been described as not very intelligent with a criminal past of using and selling narcotics, drinking, abusing his romantic partner, and having intermittent employment.
38 CSC is the modern Canadian penal authority. CSC came into being in 1979 after the merger of the Penitentiary Service and the National Parole Board.
in prisons whereas other historians focus their analysis on legislators and lawyers. She shows how the involvement of women volunteers created new policy in the prison, provided personal support, educational programs, entertainment, employment opportunities, and aftercare for women post-release. Her sociological history is thus underscored by her Foucauldian analysis that reveals how these actions were driven by pastoral power and the knowledge of incarcerated women that volunteers held.

Hannah-Moffat adopts Foucauldian understandings of power relations within prisons to interpret and analyze the experiences of women incarcerated at P4W. She explains that starting in the 1970s, shifts towards a feminist and women-centred approach to penality created many of the same circumstances for women that had been previously driven by maternalism. Her sharp Foucauldian critique of the CSC is clearest in her analysis on the 1990 Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women and the Creating Choices report. She shows how the CSC adopted and subsequently adapted the language of feminist and Indigenous activist groups to fit the philosophic needs of P4W and other female institutions. Her strongest example of this is the CSC’s use of ‘empowerment’, as it differs greatly from the definition given by other groups.\textsuperscript{40} Hannah-Moffat explains that CSC used empowerment to mean women were responsible for their choices in a neo-liberal fashion without analyzing pre-existing power structures that placed them in those situations. This differed fundamentally from feminist and Indigenous groups’ definitions of empowerment that sought to help women find their voices while understanding their position within existing power-structures.

Despite the theoretical differences between functionalist and structuralist Foucauldian analysis, there are other trends in penal and legal history that appear regardless of theoretical

\textsuperscript{40} Hannah-Moffat, \textit{Punishment in Disguise}, 175.
choices. The first trend worth noting is methodological in which narrative is used to create an emphatic understanding of the law.41 The majority of contemporary scholars employ narrative in their approach to legal topics to bridge the distance between the law and the social context in which the law was situated by presenting the reactions of individuals involved in different levels of the law. This is an effective methodological tool to engage an audience whether an author employs a functionalist or structuralist analysis.

Acclaimed legal historian Constance Backhouse uses narrative in all her work to show how individuals, including defendants, judges, lawyers, or the accused, reacted to legal decisions and interpretations of the law. In her first monograph, *Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth-Century Canada* Backhouse explores how law was applied to, and by women in early Canadian history through a series of case studies filled with narrative accounts. Backhouse offers the most in-depth analysis of women and crime in nineteenth century Canada in *Petticoats and Prejudice*. Backhouse’s academic background comes from law, with an L.L.M from Harvard and teaching career in Law, but her interests lie in feminist legal history. Backhouse divides her focus into four sections that deal with marriage and sexuality, fertility, the family, and finally women’s work.42 In each of her chapters, Backhouse analyzes one type of crime or litigation action and provides detailed narrative examples of a few women who experienced the law under this circumstance. Some of the crimes and litigations Backhouse examines include cases of seduction, rape, divorce, and infanticide.

Backhouse explains that she does not believe it is fair to simply dismiss racist, sexist, or anti-Semitic behaviours because they were common of the time, which differs from a

---

41 Brown, “A Taxonomy of Methodological Approaches in Recent Canadian Legal History,” 151.
Lessons in Womanhood 19

functionalist approach, as she asserts that these behaviours had very real effects on those groups of people targeted.43 She uses narrative to support this assertion, showing the difficulties encountered by marginalized groups of Canadians under the law. In each of Backhouse’s case studies in Petticoats and Prejudice, she combines narrative and expert analysis to present the prejudice women faced in male-dominated courts. For example, Backhouse clearly illustrates how class and respectability played the most important role in whether the law ruled in favour of a woman. In the following passage Backhouse describes the Crown attorney’s strategy of prosecuting four men for the gang rape of two women who worked as prostitutes:

Cameron’s [Crown attorney] strategy for the prosecution would be to emphasize the “disreputable” backgrounds of the two women himself, hoping to blunt the edge of the defence. He would concede that “the evidence of an abandoned female would be generally received with considerable suspicion.” He would then attempt to use this to his advantage, arguing that it provided a practical safeguard against prostitutes complaining except in the very worst situations. “The very fact of the female having been of loose character would, in itself, afford some sort of guarantee that she would not make such a charge without sufficient grounds.”44

As Backhouse clearly shows, a woman’s sexual history, perceived or real, weighed heavily in the courts. Her sexual choices, along with her habits as a mother and wife were scrutinized, embellished, or fabricated by the opposing legal team, and became the focal point of the case. A woman’s credibility, based on how closely she subscribed to a monogamous, Christian marriage and expected wifely duties including caring for children, cooking, being faithful and modest, largely affected the outcome of her case, whether she was the defendant or appellant.45 Needless to say, given the gendered nature of social and professional power at the

43 Backhouse, Petticoats and Prejudice, 3-4.
44 Ibid, 94. In this case, Mary Hunt and Ellen Rogers lived together in a house that had been used as a brothel. A group of men forcibly entered their home and began to sexually assault both women. A male neighbour tried to intervene but was stopped by the attackers. The women contacted police in the streets immediately following the attack as the intruders were still leaving the home with money and other stolen goods.
45 Welter, “The Cult of Womanhood,” 152. These characteristics are congruent with Welter’s pillars of nineteenth century American womanhood: piety, purity, submissiveness to men, and domesticity.
time, cases were argued by two male lawyers, ruled on by all-male juries, and sentences delivered by male judges. While Backhouse does not explore incarceration of women in this text, *Petticoats and Prejudice* is essential for understanding constructions of female criminality in nineteenth century Canada and demonstrates masterful use of narrative to write legal history.

Joan Sangster, another distinguished historian, has also explored legal history and female criminality using narrative to create emphatic understanding in her research on young women and girls in conflict with the law. Her book, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*, looks closely at the Ontario Training School for Girls (OTSG), which was later renamed the Grandview Training School for Girls. Sangster traces the policing of girls from the Juvenile Delinquency Act (JDA) of 1908 into the 1960s using a feminist framework supported by girls’ experiences. Sangster begins her historical work with definitions of delinquency over time, and asserts that when studying women and girls in the law that the victim/offender dichotomy must be avoided because most cases are far more complex.

Through narrative, Sangster shows how expanding social services from 1908 into the 1960s shifted away from individual charity and towards regulation and surveillance in the way that charities, such as the Children’s Aid Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the YWCA, worked with police and juvenile courts to create a network to survey and regulate behaviour of working-class girls. For example, Sangster writes,

In an amusing confession, some of the affluent Big Sister volunteers told how they went slumming one night to secretly investigate these questionable teenage hangouts [downtown Hamilton, Ontario] to witness the very birthplace of delinquency. They

46 Joan Sangster is the current president of the Canadian Historical Association and has had a long and successful career in Canadian history. Her newest publication, *Through Feminist Eyes*, is a retrospective collection in which she re-examines her past articles and discusses changing themes in women’s history and Canadian history.

47 Joan Sangster, *Girl Trouble: Female Delinquency in English Canada*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 5.
confessed that they found only snuggling teens, kissing and sipping soft drinks, hardly a vision of crime and sin.  

Her use of narrative creates an emotional response to the surveillance of teenage girls by volunteers of a pseudo-legal organization, and the playfulness of the language she uses shows how melodramatic the responses of organizations were to the actions of working-class, teenage girls. Despite this incidence of surveillance seeming innocuous, Sangster explains that organizations like Big Sisters reported to police things that Little Sisters revealed to their Big Sister in confidence. Sangster argues that historians must question whether organization outreach to police offered any real alternative or benefit to girls, such as access to social services, beyond reinforced and increased surveillance despite the intentions of the organization.

Sangster’s focus is on girls in this monograph, but her analysis of female criminality and her use of the narrative style is useful to this project because it shows how inseparable women’s respectability and crime are in the Canadian justice system. Girls were sentenced to serve time at Grandview, as it was colloquially known, for non-criminal actions such as hanging around with boys, which were directly related to their sexuality as young women. Girls could be institutionalized for behaviours that threatened middle-class ideas of respectable sex, which was proselytized to only occur in heterosexual marriages. Some girls were even subjected to medical exams where their hymens were inspected to determine if they were immoral or sexually active, and therefore delinquent, girls. The trend of regulating women’s sexuality is one that continued from the nineteenth century, as seen in the cases presented by Backhouse, and is an attitude that

49 Ibid, 8.
50 Sangster, *Girl Trouble*, 83.
plagued many of the Grandview Girls later into their lives, some of whom would return to custody in their adult lives, sentenced to P4W.\footnote{Sangster asserts that many girls became hardened from girlhood incarceration which resulted in their later incarceration at P4W as adults. Isabel Macneill, P4W’s Superintendent from 1960-1965, was also the Superintendent of OTSG from 1948-54 and she noted that she encountered 36 former OTSG girls at P4W of the 1200+ girls she supervised in the 1950s. However, Macneill’s anecdotal evidence does not consider former OTSG inmates who were incarcerated provincially. Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG 1 vol. 3649, file 3, “Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, 1966” Some comments on my conflict with the Penitentiary Service, 1, 1966.}

Although the last two texts discussed explore women and girls and the law, legal history tends to focus on male offenders as the main subjects of study, which has led to men being considered the default or normative prisoners in Canadian prisons. There is a prevalence of women-centred texts in this discussion thus far, but this is due to the fact that this thesis focuses on women at the P4W. Women are mentioned, in varying degrees, in historical studies of prisons, but unless they are the title subject, women receive substantially less attention from authors. It has been argued that the tendency to ignore women offenders in Canada is due to their historic, and contemporary, smaller prison population in comparison to the male prison population, but this idea has been contested by feminist scholars who instead believe that women have purposefully ignored as they are not seen as a normative prisoner.\footnote{Sheelagh Cooper, “The Evolution of Federal Women’s Prison,” in In Conflict with the Law: Women and the Canadian Justice System eds. Ellen Adelberg & Claudia Currie (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1993): 33; Hannah-Moffat, Punishment in Disguise, 72. Cooper believes that incarcerated women are neglected because of insignificant size, whereas Hannah-Moffat believes that incarcerated women are ignored because prison administrators do not understand how to govern the non-normative prisoner.}

The idea that men are viewed as the default prisoner and subject of study in prison and legal history is exemplified by the naming of texts. Texts that focus on men’s experiences in prisons do not state in their titles that men will be studied in a prison context, and this is because authors assume that their readership will understand that their text is about the “normal”, default prisoner – a man. In contrast, any text that analyzes women’s experiences in prisons always
includes some marker of gender in their title. No matter which gender is the primary focus, scholars who write about the history of prisons reference the experience of the other gender, to varying degrees, for context. Not one entry from the bibliography uses the word boy, man, men, or masculine, and yet all of the texts make reference to men’s treatment or experience in prisons or the legal system. In comparison, every bibliographic entry that focuses on women’s treatment or experience in prisons or the legal system uses of the following words: girls, woman, or women. Authors writing women’s history feel as though they have to distinguish their work from the normative, male prisoner and therefore include gendered language in their titles, yet all texts in the bibliography that deal with prisons and the law make reference to the experience of both genders. This difference in title shows how men are the default image of prisoner in Canadian penal history, and also shows how important it is to be critical of assumptions made in past scholarship when studying the experiences of women in prisons.

In light of the aforementioned patterns and trends of legal and penal history, I will use an intentional blending of narrative and functionalism to analyze and interpret the educational programs at the P4W. To reiterate, the narrative approach, as used by Backhouse, Sangster, and Oliver, allows for an empathetic understanding of the law and of the impact it had on individual lives, and a functionalist perspective assumes that the law moves with society, both of which are pertinent to studying education at P4W. The educational programs were the main outlet for expression and individualism of incarcerated women in the prison and should not be understood without some personalization and empathy. I could simply list the titles of courses offered in P4W over time, but without narrative and the inclusion of individual stories relating to those

53 For example, Carrigan’s *Crime and Punishment in Canada* posits itself as an overview of crime in Canada from the 18th to 21st century yet includes two chapters on female offenders out of the total 10 chapters. The first chapter on women looks at trends in women’s crimes and the second chapter analyzes the treatment of female offenders through sentencing and public perceptions of women offenders.
courses, the history that would emerge would be flat, lifeless, and would be more or less a database of course offerings. Functionalism allows the educational programs to be placed in relation to other educational trends and societal beliefs of the time. This is also essential to understanding women’s education in a prison setting because, as will be shown in later chapters, ideas surrounding what necessitates a quality education for women depends entirely on a society or community’s beliefs about womanhood and respectable forms of employment for women.

**Educational History**

This thesis, despite its interdisciplinarity, uses the history of education as a focal point. That is why it important to also understand the educational philosophies that surrounded P4W. The education at P4W must be considered and analyzed in variety of contexts. Firstly, P4W is located in the province of Ontario whose Department of Education underwent a series of reforms in the period of study, 1934-1965, which influenced the education available to incarcerated women. Secondly, the prison is a part of larger, federal penal system with its own educational philosophies, aims, and policies. Finally, the broad definitions of prison education necessitate categorization and definition of types of education in P4W to ensure a thorough investigation.

To further contextualize the education incarcerated women received I rely on the works of educational historians to explore the public education system of Ontario. I use the provincial context of Ontario public education to frame education in the federally operated P4W because Penitentiary Service regulations dictated that the location of a prison determined the education an institution was required to deliver. Penitentiary Service regulations stated that incarcerated people had to reach a level of education which was “the standard of education of the average public school pupil at the maximum age of compulsory school attendance for the Province in
which the Penitentiary [was] situated.”

Therefore, Ontario’s public education system provided the standard that P4W was supposed to use for their educational practices.

I rely on three foundational texts for philosophical, political, and economic historical contexts of Ontario’s education system. The first text, Theodore Christou’s *Progressive Education*, provides detailed insight into what and how educationists in Ontario were philosophizing in the early period of P4W’s existence. He argues that progressive education was widely defined as having three characteristics: active learning, education that related to contemporary society, and that individual, student centred learning was essential. He also argues, however, that these three components were interpreted very differently by three leading camps of educationists. The three competing, but overlapping, camps were the child developmentalists, the social efficiency proponents, and the social justice proponents. His work is integral to understanding prevailing educational thought in P4W’s early years as *Progressive Education* spans the period 1919-1942.

Robert D Gidney’s book *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario’s Schools* focuses on Ontarian educational history in the post-Second World War period and continues the narrative where Christou concluded. Gidney examines Ontario education from the Hope Commission of 1950 to the slash-and-burn changes of the Harris government in 1997-1998. He analyzes education through a combination of three lenses – the responsibility of educational governance shared between the provincial and local governments, the role of finance (or lack

---

55 Ibid. However, there was some discrepancy between policy and practice.
thereof) in educational change, and the role of curriculum. Gidney’s work scrutinizes the mechanisms, governance and finance, that support the overall provincial educational system. While Christou’s work investigates curriculum in the classroom, Gidney’s work stays at the first layer of curriculum, examining rhetoric and avoiding actual classrooms, which would cloud his arguments on the overarching structures of the public school system.

Finally, Robert Stamp’s *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* is the third foundational Ontario history of education text that I rely on to contextualize P4W’s education system. *The Schools of Ontario* details the creation of Ontario’s public school system to the present (when the book was first published). Stamp’s influential work has been routinely cited since its publication in the early 1980s and remains a staple for educational historians. Stamp’s work was expanded upon by Christou and Gidney, and together these three texts provide an overview of the administrative and philosophic histories of Ontario’s public school system from 1934-1965.

Stamp nuances the idea that the Ontario school system was a unified, central authority by providing examples of local resistance to change. His exploration of the dissent against the amalgamation of boards reveal how integral local schools were to rural localities as a hub for community. He also explores the conflicts amongst religious and language groups, specifically the struggles of Franco-Ontarians and Catholics, for representation in the public education system. Stamp does this all while providing a rich political history of the provincial government and the ministers who managed the coveted, yet demanding, education portfolio.

---


58 Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 26. This begins a discussion of separate Catholic schools, but there is continued exploration of the subject throughout the text.
The public school system of Ontario provides some context for incarcerated women’s education, but a more expansive definition of education beyond the public school classroom is necessary to capture the educational experiences of P4W. In the words of George C. Koz, the Penitentiary Services’ Assistant Director of Inmate Training in 1962, prison education was not limited to formal school: it is all-inclusive, it is comprehensive, it is inspiring in its meaning. It embraces a wide range of teaching and training: for physical and mental health, for mental development, for socio-economic understanding, for appreciation of cultural life and moral values, for the build-up of character, for citizenship -- all phases of it forming the steps which are necessary for the reformation of an individual.\(^59\)

As this statement suggests, education in prison was all encompassing, and therefore the educational activities of the P4W necessitate organization into manageable sub-categories. The three sub-categories of education that this thesis utilizes are academic, vocational, and recreational education. These three categories organize education at P4W and allow for deeper investigation of each type of education. The designation of academic, vocational, and recreational education were chosen because these were categories used by the administration and frontline staff of the institution to refer to specific activities of incarcerated women.

Academic education, or formal education as it was also referred to by the Penitentiary Service, was managed by the Educational Officer or Educational Matron who was effectively a teacher. I define academic education as activities that explicitly teach specific academic skills and concepts that are later assessed and evaluated by an official of the prison. An example of this type of education in P4W was weekly classes or individualized tutoring for illiterate women. Academic education in the prison is also exemplified by correspondence courses.

---

\(^59\) RG 73, 1-17-20 part 1, “Adult Education of Inmates Generally,” Memorandum Re: Designation “Adult Education” to Department of Inmate Training from George C. Koz, July 10, 1962.
Vocational education, at times called technical education by the Penitentiary Service and in educational history literature, embodies learning and experiences that taught incarcerated women employable skills. Although vocational education and technical training were used interchangeably by the federal government, the main difference between the two terms lies in the scope of learning.\textsuperscript{60} Technical training was more theoretical and emphasized learning about a trade or profession whereas vocational education was practice based and employed more of an apprentice approach to teaching.\textsuperscript{61} For this reason, I have chosen to use the term vocational education when referring to the learning of employable skills in P4W. Incarcerated women learned vocational skills through experience at P4W.

Finally, recreational education has the broadest definition of the three categories of education. Recreation education is defined as the learning of skills related to activities that are outside of one’s employment or work.\textsuperscript{62} This definition is debated by scholars of recreation who add nuance and create new definitions for specific circumstances. Prison recreation varies from other types of recreation and therefore requires a more specified definition. A salient definition for recreation in prisons is the understanding that “for most individuals, it is the quality of the experience that is important, rather than the venue or the activity, and the chance it affords for a ‘break’, a ‘change’ or ‘time to be yourself.’”\textsuperscript{63} It is necessary to distinguish prison recreation as an experience that allows an individual a break instead of simply a non-work activity because the distinction between work and life is diminished in a prison setting where all activities take place

\textsuperscript{60} The federal government titled legislation for training using both ‘technical’ and ‘vocational’ interchangeably and, at times, simultaneously.
\textsuperscript{61} Darius Young, \textit{An Historical Survey of Vocational Education in Canada} (Toronto: Captus Press, 1992), 6.
in the same setting, with the same individuals, all while being monitored. This definition of recreation includes physical education, holiday celebrations, hobbycrafts, performances, lectures, and other activities.

**Chapter Outlines**

I have organized my thesis into five chapters that will depict and assess the development of education in the P4W. My thesis argues that education in P4W was extremely gendered, based on ideas of what a middle-class, respectable woman should be, and that education was a way to shape and reform incarcerated women into this narrow definition of womanhood. In each chapter I make arguments regarding a specific aspect of education at P4W that stand alone, but that also support my larger thesis statement. Chapter One focuses on situating P4W in historical context. This chapter traces the evolution of imprisonment in Canada from county gaols in nineteenth century Upper Canada to major prison reforms of the early and mid-twentieth century. I also examine how nineteenth century women’s criminality was constructed and how this influenced the types of institutions women were incarcerated within. Looking at the historical development of penal institutions in Canada provides context for where, how, and why P4W was constructed.

Chapter Two analyzes academic education in P4W. This chapter reveals the changes between academic education offered in 1934 and academic education offered by the end of 1965. As previously stated, I define academic education as activities that explicitly teach specific academic skills and concepts that are later assessed and evaluated by an official of the prison. Academic education is analyzed first because it fits the most traditional definition of education and because it reveals the academic abilities and interests of incarcerated women at P4W. Academic education programs also had a variety of formal record keeping practices associated
with it and therefore has primary sources needed to interpret the rhetoric and classroom layers of curriculum.

Following the thesis structure outlined previously, vocational education is analyzed in Chapter Three. This chapter looks at programs and courses that were intended to teach women specific skills for the workplace upon release. Vocational education offers insight into what professions were deemed acceptable for women throughout the P4W time frame of 1934-1965. The variety of job training expanded as the roles of women in the Canadian workforce expanded, although P4W’s vocational education remained thoroughly feminine. The types of job training offered to women shows what the Penitentiary Service and immediate prison authorities thought of women’s potential post-release.

As much as academic and vocational education were proselytized by reformers as essential to rehabilitation, it was often recreational education that garnered the most participation and interest from incarcerated women. Recreational education is more loosely defined as activities that occupied incarcerated women’s time outside of work that offered the women a break from prison life. Chapter Four focuses on recreational education and analyzes perceptions of what recreational programs were deemed acceptable for women and what programs were offered to women. As early recreational education programs were largely run by volunteers, this chapter emphasizes the work of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston (EFry Kingston) in P4W.

P4W from 1934-1965 offers a unique and important case study into penal history in Canada as it was the sole federal women’s prison until 1995.64 Education at P4W is an avenue

---

64 The other women’s correctional institutions that opened in 1995 were the Edmonton Institute for Women, the Nova Institution for Women, and the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Aboriginal Women, which are located in Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan respectively. Government of Canada, *Correctional Service Canada, Women’s Facilities*, http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/women/002002-0002-eng.shtml.
into the daily routines of women, of both incarcerated women and staff, as well as an avenue into exploring larger trends in education for women and how women were viewed in Canadian society. The history of education of prisons is a phenomenon that deserves more academic attention because of its ability to determine values of the penal system and the larger Canadian state.
Chapter One: Origins of Imprisonment in English Canada

This chapter will provide historical context that places P4W and criminalized women in Canadian penal history. It will provide insight into larger social history trends that influenced public and popular attitudes towards women and prisoners. I will focus on prisons and incarceration in Ontario throughout the nineteenth century and early twentieth century as the province established the first modern penitentiary in pre-Confederation Canada. To begin, I argue that women’s criminality in Canada has consistent patterns by showing the trends of women’s criminality present in nineteenth century Canada and tracing their appearances in penal history. This is followed by a brief overview of important social, political, and economic events in Upper Canada from 1800-1850. To establish an idea of what conditions of incarceration were like in general, and more specifically for women prior to P4W, I will use case studies of three types institutions, each slightly different in their physical construction and in philosophic foundations.

This chapter will provide an overview of county gaols in Upper Canada, the Kingston Penitentiary, and the Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women because their histories provide valuable context for the opening of the P4W in 1934. Each of these institutions contribute to understanding the history of incarcerating women in Canada for the following reasons: gaols were the first penal institutions in Upper Canada, the Kingston Penitentiary was the first modern penitentiary, and the Mercer Reformatory was the first women’s-only institution in the province. These institutions show the progression of early Canadian penal policy from local initiatives to a large social net encompassing all three levels of government, reaching and regulating most of society. Finally, this chapter will delve into the social history of Canada in the early twentieth
century looking at political, social, and penal conditions along with the immediate factors leading to the opening of the P4W.

**Nineteenth Century Women’s Criminality**

Throughout the nineteenth century Canadian women had little agency within the law. In the eyes of the law, women were first considered the property of their fathers and after marriage, women were considered a legal extension of their husband as marriage joined them into one, male, person in the eyes of the law.¹ This lack of agency and inability to be active in law however, did not stop women from committing crimes and being incarcerated. Over the century, women’s crimes had incredible consistency, with the majority of women being convicted for crimes of petty theft, alcohol related crimes, prostitution, or a combination of all three crimes.² Criminal women were seen as physically harmless, with the exception of their ability to spread venereal disease, but were still seen as troubling as they disrupted conventional gender roles of the century and social order.³ Women were arrested for offences that offended middle-class respectability whereas men were typically arrested for offences against property and person, or as Peter Oliver summarises “men in need stole while women sold their bodies.”⁴

Another trend that persisted throughout the nineteenth century was the idea that if a woman engaged in crime, or if she was suspected of criminal behaviours, the woman was discounted as of being a true victim of crime. Any transgressions against a woman who was perceived to be criminal were deemed to be deserved and a result of her character. When women

---

¹ Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice*, 177. A married couple legally became one person and from that point onwards, the wife could not collect rent from properties she owned previously, sue, or own personal property. Everything she had before marriage became the property of her husband.

² Carrigan, *Crime and Punishment in Canada*, 289. Carrigan also notes how remarkable the consistency is in female crime in spite of major changes in Canadian settlement size, nation of origin of immigrants, and overall population.


⁴ Oliver, ‘Terror to Evil-doers’; 436.
entered the courts, whether as plaintiffs or defendants, the outcome of their case depended heavily on their personal character, and not necessarily evidence of the crime. If a woman fit within the constructions of respectable womanhood, meaning she was either married or a single virgin, and embodied passive femininity, she would have much better chances of a favourable outcome. If a woman was bold, loud, drank, was from a working-class background, or had sex outside of wedlock, the odds of a favourable ruling, whatever the nature of the evidence, were severely diminished. It has even been argued that “the single most important factor in determining the outcome of a sexual assault trial was character.”

The propensity for women’s sexuality to determine her treatment in court went beyond the level of commonly held beliefs and was actually entrenched in some laws. In seduction law, a woman’s father could take a man to court for engaging in a pre-marital relationship with his daughter in which it was reasonably expected to lead to marriage. The courts considered the woman’s sexual history and her chastity as integral evidence to the case.

A poignant example of how sexual reputation and character influenced legal outcomes in the nineteenth century was the case of Mary Hunt and Ellen Rogers. Hunt and Rogers were victims of a violent gang rape and robbery when fifteen young men entered Rogers’ home in 1858. A neighbour, John McCallum, heard their cries for help and tried to intervene, but was stopped by the mob of men. As the attackers were leaving the house, the women ran into the

---


6 Dubinsky, *Improper Advances*, 77. Seduction charges would be successful if a woman could prove that she reasonably believed that she would marry the man seducing her. Usually after pregnancy or a reneged marriage promise, her family would take the former lover to court in hopes of securing a marriage or receiving financial compensation. If it could be proven that the woman had previous relationships of any kind with other men, her case was dismissed. This was common practice across North America and continued into the 20th century. See Brian Donovan’s article “Gender Inequality and Criminal Seduction: Prosecuting Sexual Coercion in the Early-20th Century.”

7 Backhouse, *Petticoats and Prejudice*, 84.
street and alerted nearby policemen. The police told the women to obtain warrants the next morning at the police station and sent the attackers home. The case went to the courts, and despite the corroborating testimony of Hunt, Rogers, and McCallum, combined with the state of disrepair Rogers’ home was found in, and the fact that police saw the accused men leaving Rogers’ residence all four men charged were found not guilty. In the trial it was revealed that Hunt had previously been arrested for prostitution and Rogers admitted that she also engaged in prostitution. From then onwards, the women were berated by the defence counsel, judge, and rowdy courtroom spectators who jeered and shouted malicious insults. It did not matter that the crime of rape had taken place because Mary Hunt and Ellen Rogers fit the characteristics of female criminals. They were not respectable women, and therefore, the judge and jury found that they were not worthy victims. Sadly, the case of Mary Hunt and Ellen Rogers was not the only example where women were denied justice because the public decided they fit the construction of female criminals, who were therefore undeserving of justice.

Annie was another woman who was sexually assaulted and then suffered insulting because of her personal sexual history. Annie lived in Elgin County and in 1894 she brought charges of rape against her neighbour who had repeatedly harassed and bothered her. She was a newlywed mother, but her son was a child born out of wedlock from a previous relationship. Once the courts discovered that Annie had an illegitimate child her case was dismissed. This incident shows yet again the importance of character and sexual history in determining a woman’s value as a victim in nineteenth century Canadian courts. This rape took place some three decades after the case of Hunt and Rogers, but it too resulted in no conviction. Having an

---

8 Ibid, 82.
9 Ibid, 99.
illegitimate child was not illegal, and rape was a crime, yet the moral offence of having sex outside of marriage was enough to discredit and discount Annie as a victim of crime.

The characteristics surrounding the construction of a female criminal in the nineteenth century included being working-class, sexually active, loud and boisterous, drunk, and unfeminine lingered well into the twentieth century. Women who had some, or all, of these characteristics were not viewed as women who could be victims of crime because their personality, actions, or simply their existence pre-determined for authorities and the public that they were deserving of any treatment received, whether the treatment was criminal or not. Perceptions of criminal women, the crimes actually committed by women, and the inability of criminalized women to be regarded as victims remained relatively static throughout the entirety of the century. One thing that did change however, was the increased ability of penal and legal systems to regulate and criminalize women and girls.

**Upper Canadian Society 1800-1850**

With the Constitutional Act of 1791, Upper Canada became an official colony of the British Empire, however, the loose collection of settlements were far from being British. Individual communities were comprised of loyalists from the United States and of settlers of German, Dutch, Scottish, Irish, American, and French descent.\(^{11}\) The first decade of the colony, average communities and families were self-contained, and focused on ensuring their daily survival. The Lieutenant Governor, John Graves Simcoe, arrived from England in 1792 and sought to bring Britain to the New World through Upper Canada. While there were small merchants and skilled labourers in urban centres, including Kingston, London, and Niagara, most

new settlers were farmers or were reliant on resource extraction, mainly lumber, for their livelihoods.\textsuperscript{12}

It was not until the first crisis faced by the colony that a sense of unity and distinct identity began to form. In the years leading up to the War of 1812, the political leaders of Upper Canada, both colonial British administrators and domestically elected representatives, worked to convince Upper Canadians that Upper Canada was worth fighting for because it was unique and distinct, in the event of war between Great Britain and the United States of America.\textsuperscript{13} The political elite rallied Upper Canadians around the notion that the colony could be both British, with a constitutional monarchy adapted to the realities of the New World, and could still be an ally of the American federalists, with whom Upper Canadians had personal and economic relationships. When the war became a reality and ended two years later, Upper Canada was left with a more defined colonial identity that marked them as British subjects in North America.\textsuperscript{14}

Post-war Upper Canada continued to grow rapidly with waves of immigration from the British Empire and Europe. From the end of the war to 1828 the population doubled, which led to increasing urbanization, better communication amongst scattered communities, and improved physical access amongst regions due to new roads and steamboats along lakes and rivers.\textsuperscript{15} Along with increased population, communication, and transportation in the 1820s came social institutions and services including libraries, schools, more newspapers, theatre productions, banks, police forces, and professional and benevolent societies.\textsuperscript{16} As life became easier and

\textsuperscript{13} Errington, \textit{The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada}, 66.
\textsuperscript{14} Errington, \textit{The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada}, 189.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 90.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
survival was less of a daily struggle, citizens became more political aware and active. This posed challenges for the old, conservative political elite, known as the Family Compact, who now had to contend with serious opposition from other locally elected officials, known as reformers.

Into the 1830s there was continued political conflict which culminated in the 1837 Rebellions. The series of armed rebellions across the colony sought to lessen British control and to force the government to listen to the people in a manner similar to American republicanism. The rebellion was quickly quelled by British troops stationed in the colony and the perpetrators were arrested, tried, and sentenced. A total of 93 men were shipped to Van Diemen’s Land, the penal colony, for their actions in the Rebellions of 1837 and 1838.\(^\text{17}\) The Act of Union of 1840 passed and amalgamated Upper and Lower Canada into the Province of Canada to reorganize the government and to ameliorate concerns that the government had too much power.\(^\text{18}\) This reorganization did not resolve political strife in the colony, but instead created different tensions regarding the equally weighted elected representation of the minority English population and majority French population in the House of Assembly. French and English tensions remained a constant in Canadian politics into the 1850s.\(^\text{19}\) Throughout 1800-1850, Upper Canada experienced population growth, political strife, and the process of creating a colonial identity which is reflected in the shift from isolated local gaols to the creation of a modern penitentiary system detailed in the following section.

\(^{17}\) John C. Carter, “One-Way Ticket to a Penal Colony: North American Prisoners in Van Diemen’s Land,” \textit{Ontario History} \textit{C1}, no. 2 (2009): 189. Van Diemen’s Land was a British penal colony located in modern Tasmania. If the men were executed, the colonists would have been incensed and if the rebellious men remained in the colonies they would have been able to continue to voice their discontent. Sending prisoners to exile was a convenient solution. After 1841, only military prisoners were transported from British North American territory to Van Diemen’s Land and Australia as punishment.


\(^{19}\) Errington, \textit{The Lion, The Eagle, and Upper Canada}, 187.
County Gaols of Upper Canada

Offenders in Upper Canada in the nineteenth century were held in gaols.\textsuperscript{20} Local gaols were the responsibility of each region in Upper Canada following the opening of the Upper Canada legislature which adopted the same criminal laws as those of England, with the exception of English poor laws due to the small government and tax funds with which to administer.\textsuperscript{21} The gaols were often constructed of wood, and in wealthier regions, some gaols were built of stone. The buildings typically had a few large cells on the second floor that held debtors, the insane, and the impoverished with more cells on ground level for holding accused or sentenced criminals.\textsuperscript{22} Men, women, and occasionally children were held in the common cells and were left unsupervised for long periods of time while the gaoler completed daily tasks, as many communities could only afford to hire one or two gaolers who could not supervise all prisoners at all times.

Gaols were intended to hold the accused before their trial and to hold criminals for short sentences, usually ranging between a few days to a few months. Gaols also held debtors until their owed sums were repaid, which was intended to be a short period, but could take months or years. Gaols were central to communities in Upper Canada. Each gaol was run by the local gaoler, who would often live in a portion of the gaol with his family. The gaoler ensured the custody, safety, and health of those imprisoned reaching out to the local doctor when necessary.\textsuperscript{23} The friends and family of the imprisoned could visit, and debtors especially relied

\textsuperscript{20} Gaol is pronounced jail.
\textsuperscript{22} Oliver, ‘\textit{Terror to Evil-doers}’, 56.
\textsuperscript{23} Oliver, ‘\textit{Terror to Evil-doers}’, 62. Criminals were seen as more desperate and therefore less threatening to social order than debtors who had failed to properly participate in the new and growing capitalist economy of Upper Canada.
on frequent personal visits as the gaol did not pay for their meals or other needs. Because imprisonment in county gaols was such a community affair, the experience in local gaols could range immensely from hospitable to terribly foul depending on the wealth of the surrounding area.

Up to the 1820s, gaols were also a place of refuge for the most destitute including the sick, old, and homeless due to the lack of social institutions and services. Despite acting as community hubs for justice and poor relief, most gaols were old, crumbling and full of problems such as horrible smells due to insufficient plumbing, poor ventilation, no yard access, no classification of prisoners, no access to chaplaincy, and insecurity due to small staffs. With the frequent redrawing and shifting of county boundaries in early nineteenth century Upper Canada, many counties were hesitant to spend more money on county services, including gaols, which could be rendered irrelevant in a merger with another county.

In the 1830s there were efforts to reform gaols to ensure standardized and uniform quality of care for prisoners. In 1838 the “Act to regulate the future erection of gaols” was enacted and was intended to standardize gaols. While these policies were well-intentioned and quite progressive in comparison to gaol conditions, the policies were not realistic for many counties and the province had little authority to force counties to change. To expect these counties to implement all of the new regulations and not supply them with any additional funds to do so,

---

25 Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 80 and 338. Oliver describes the conditions of gaols in the earlier portion of his book and later on he discusses the severe understaffing of county gaols. For example, Oliver found that 6 counties’ gaols had only one employee, the Head Gaoler, and that 21 counties had two employees, the Head Gaoler and an additional keeper or turnkey; Ranasinghe, “Vagrancy as a Penal Problem: The Logistics of Administering Punishment in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada,” 542. The lack of classification between the indignant and criminals in gaols was also complicated by the common practice of
26 Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 81.
27 Wetherell, “To Discipline and Train: Adult Rehabilitation Programmes in Ontario Prisons, 1874-1900,” 147.
appeared to ensure that the regulations would not be implemented. Counties tried to meet the standards dictated by legislation, but financial realities, limited them to fully and efficiently implement new policy. The provinces could try to force counties to implement gaol policy, but unless the Legislature was willing to take a county to court, not much could be done beyond applying diplomatic pressure.\(^{28}\)

Upper Canadian legal elite, which consisted of judges, lawyers, and politicians, under the leadership of the influential Judge John Beverly Robinson, lobbied to create a penitentiary to remedy the poor material situation of gaols and the uneven application of justice.\(^{29}\) (Often these elite men held all three of the positions of judge, lawyer, and politician in their lifetime, and typically occupied two of the three positions simultaneously.) The decision seemed a natural one, considering the prevalence of modern penitentiaries spreading throughout Europe and the successes of penitentiaries in the United States and in England. The Upper Canadian penitentiary plan was modelled after the Auburn system in New York State. The foundation of the Auburn philosophy was strict discipline, repentant silence, and work.\(^{30}\) Upon visiting Auburn, Upper Canadian officials were assured that the prison would pay for itself quickly through profits of inmate labour. The Auburn system appeared to be the clear solution to the problems of underfunded and localized gaols.

**The Creation of a Modern Penitentiary**

Kingston was selected as the site of the penitentiary because of its access to limestone quarries, shipping routes, and relative size and status in pre-confederation Canada. Kingston was

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

\(^{29}\) Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 104.

the first capital of Canada and was full of prominent politicians who saw the penitentiary as an important institution. The surrounding waterways, which explains the early settlement of Kingston, also appealed to penitentiary advocates. Sentenced men could be transported by ship in and out of the prison’s port without fanfare. Construction began and the first 55 inmates christened the unfinished prison in 1835 with only the South wing of the building completed.\(^{31}\) It was expected that inmate labour would build the other three wings of the plans, which would include a hospital, chapel, women’s prison, dining hall, school, and staff quarters in the form of a cross to encourage pious living.

The expense and duration of construction was much greater than anticipated largely due to the fact that most prisoners were unskilled labourers without experience in the construction of a massive, stone building. The original budget estimate for the Provincial Penitentiary, later renamed, and hereafter referred to as, the Kingston Penitentiary, was £56,850, compared to the £69,999 budget estimate for Fort Henry in the same year.\(^{32}\) Fort Henry was seen as a necessary quasi-national defence and the comparable budget of Kingston Penitentiary solidifies its importance as a quasi-national, state-building institution. Prison construction would utilize most of the overall budget for the next two decades and Kingston Penitentiary would be under constant construction to accommodate a growing prison population until the early twentieth century.

The establishment of Kingston Penitentiary was supposed to eliminate the disorderliness of local gaols, establish a prisoner classification system and eliminate mixing of sexes, yet there was no women’s prison, so men and women continued to mix although less freely than in gaols.

---


\(^{32}\) Patterson, “Surviving For 130 Years in a Male Dominated Prison,” 91.
After 1835, women and men sentenced for serious or repeated crimes were sent to the new penal institution, which would become the largest federal prison post-confederation with the passing of the Penitentiary Act in 1868.\textsuperscript{33} Women were shuffled around from the South wing in 1835, to the North wing in 1839, to the East wing in 1843 (due to an infestation of bugs in the pine cells in the basement of the North wing) as construction continued.\textsuperscript{34} In 1850 the female population settled into the newly completed North wing above ground with four dark cells in the basement used for punishment.\textsuperscript{35}

In the early period of the penitentiary from 1835-1847, the infamous Warden Henry Smith ran the Kingston Penitentiary under a regime that focused on punishment. Warden Smith followed the Auburn system and the instructions prison inspectors who expected rigid adherence to the policies set by the Upper Canadian legislature. He was known to use ample corporal punishment to correct prisoners. For example, it was revealed that Smith ordered the flogging of women and of children as young as eight years old.\textsuperscript{36} Punishment records along with testimony from incarcerated men, the prison surgeon, and staff attest to Warden Smith’s heavy hand and that cat o’nine tails and rawhide punishments occurred almost daily for offences ranging from “laughing and talking,” insolence, fighting, and to possessing “song-books, novels, [or]
tobacco”.\textsuperscript{37} Corporal punishment was a central tenant of the Auburn system and records show that Smith followed the philosophy.

The Brown Commission of 1848 made public the frequent use of corporal punishment under the leadership of Warden Smith at the Kingston Penitentiary along with eleven other charges that accused him of complete mismanagement of the institution.\textsuperscript{38} Beyond the institutional violence used as punishment and deterrence, prisoners were also subjected to supererogatory violence at the whims of staff members. Smith’s son, Frank Smith, was hired by his father as the kitchen manager. The commission accused Frank Smith of many cruel and violent acts. Frank Smith’s notorious acts included: shooting arrows at men while they were in the yard (hitting one man in the eye and blinding him), throwing stones at men, ordering them to open their mouths to search for tobacco and spitting into their mouths, sticking pins and other sharp objects into men, covering the air holes of the box (a dreaded punishment where a convict was locked into a coffin-like box, forced to stand for hours), and ordering other convicts to violently dunk other convicts into wash basins.\textsuperscript{39} He was also charged with “behaving incredulously towards the females,” – a charge supported by the testimony of five witnesses. \textsuperscript{40} 

The testimony of other penitentiary staff and prisoners revealed that Frank Smith visited the convict women’s apartments several times while “pretty tipsy,” and told Mrs. Julia Cox, an

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid, 182.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, i-iv. The eleven charges against Brown, which were comprised of one hundred and twenty-one sub-charges, included financial mismanagement, purchasing of poor quality foods, and using penitentiary supplies to feed personal livestock among other things.
\textsuperscript{39} Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conduct, Discipline, and Management of the Provincial Penitentiary, \textit{Reports of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conduct, Discipline, and Management of the Provincial Penitentiary}, 83, 85, 87, 89.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 94.
assistant Matron, that “he had been down there regulating the women,” which other staff members believed to be immoral and unacceptable.

The Brown Commission was unrelenting in its criticism and would not let Smith defend himself or his actions. The commission ignored the fact that Smith was interested in the ideas of Alexander Maconochie, the British reformer who created a reward system for good behaviour in Australian penal colonies, and the ideas of Walter Crofton, the Irish reformer who created a graduated prison reward system that ended with parole. Smith had tried to change the management of Kingston Penitentiary, but was told to follow the letter of the law and the strict prison rules of the prison by his superiors, the prison inspectors, when he appealed to regulate corporal punishment. Whether Smith was a cruel man bent on punishing prisoners or a man who struggled within an underfunded, fledgling penitentiary system appears to be a matter of opinion and methodology, but his legacy will forever be remembered through the Brown Commission and the violent treatment of prisoners that occurred under his leadership.

Public outrage following the Brown Commission led to the dismissal of Warden Smith. The Penitentiary Act of 1851 reaffirmed the Auburn system as the penitentiary’s philosophy, which effectively blamed the failures of the prison on Warden Smith’s mismanagement instead.

---

41 Ibid.
42 Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 172.
43 McCoy, *Hard Time*, 47-50; Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, Chapter 4: “The Reformation of Convicts is Unknown”: The Penitentiary under Henry Smith, 1834-1948,” 139-193. The main difference in opinion of Warden Smith is due to methodological differences between the work of McCoy and Oliver. For example, McCoy describes Warden Smith as a power hungry leader who wished to have complete control over Kingston Penitentiary without interference from the prison inspectors and regulatory boards. Although McCoy concedes that Smith’s son, Frank Smith, was responsible for much of the chaos in Kingston Penitentiary he does not believe that the elder Smith was persecuted too harshly by the Brown Commission. This is due to his use of a Foucauldian framework in which Warden Smith is the central authority of the prison who uses knowledge of prisoners’ past transgressions, carefully recorded in punishment log books, as a way to further assert control over their lives in the prison. McCoy also uses the Brown Commission as his main source when condemning Warden Smith’s actions. Oliver uses a functionalist perspective to analyze the actions of Warden Smith and he consulted other sources, such as letters of correspondence between Smith and others, that show how isolated he was as the only warden in Canada and how he wanted to change the Kingston Penitentiary but felt trapped by prison inspectors and legislation.
of Auburn’s philosophy of rigid discipline. Smith was replaced by Donald Aenas Macdonell. Warden Macdonell reduced the overall number of corporal punishments, but he did not change much else in the overall organizational structure and philosophy of Kingston Penitentiary. He continued to rely heavily on punishments instead using solitary confinement and dark cells.\textsuperscript{44} The main challenge of Warden Macdonell’s career was overcrowding of the prison, and he publicly requested more funds to expand the budget to finish construction.\textsuperscript{45} Macdonell had witnessed Smith’s demise, and he refused to be blamed for problems resulting from underfunding so he reached out publicly early in his career to pressure the government to better fund Kingston Penitentiary.

**Upper Canada and Ontario 1850-1900**

As Upper Canada moved past the scandal of the Brown Commission and into the second half of the nineteenth century, the state encountered similar problems that it had in the first half of the century. The colony experienced consistent immigration although the immigrant base shifted from mainly British and Western European immigrants to include people from Russia, Italy, Ukraine, as well as Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.\textsuperscript{46} These newcomers entered the colony at a rapid pace which resulted in increasing urbanization, the creation of new rural communities, and continued expansion of social services and institutions to serve the burgeoning population.\textsuperscript{47} With the influx of people came a larger and diversified economy which was still based in land

\textsuperscript{44} Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, 226.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid, 214.
\textsuperscript{47} Oliver, *Terror to Evil-doers*, xxiv.
resources, including farming and logging, but increasingly included commercial trade and general stores that sold everything from glassware to footwear to cheese.⁴⁸

Although communication and transportation networks within the colony improved and also allowed for easier communication with other British colonies, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, many of the same political tensions remained in the colony.⁴⁹ Tensions continued between French and English Canadians over the division of the House of Assembly created by the Act of Union in 1840, but these long-standing disagreements were considered secondary to the chaos and uncertainty emanating from the United States in the 1860s. During the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861-1865, colonists feared invasion and annexation of territories by Americans as hostilities between Britain and America heightened once again.⁵⁰ Despite concerns over language, religion, education, and political representation among other things, British North Americans agreed to Confederation in 1867 and the Dominion of Canada was created.

From Confederation onwards, there was a concerted effort to populate, claim, and join western frontier settlements to Canada to strengthen the new Dominion. Subsequent settlement occurred at an accelerated pace, displacing and destroying the lives of Indigenous communities through starvation and disease.⁵¹ State building pushed forward with planning and surveying of the Canadian Pacific Railway to British Colombia in 1872, followed by the completion of the

⁵⁰ Ibid, 9.
⁵¹ James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 100. The thesis of Daschuk’s book revolves around “the material conditions, the result of long-term economic and environmental forces that ultimately led to such divergent histories of population health in western Canada” (p.x), but this citation specifically deals with mass deaths of Indigenous people on the Western plains of Canada in the 1870s.
coast-to-coast railway in 1885.\textsuperscript{52} These massive modernization efforts, accompanied with a constant influx of immigration, changed Canada from a rural country, with only 14\% of the population living in cities in 1851, to a more urbanized nation with 40.3\% of Canadians living in larger settlements and cities by 1901.\textsuperscript{53} This urbanization and population growth accentuated fears of crime throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

\textbf{Kingston Penitentiary Administration, 1850-1900}

In this state building period, Macdonell worked as warden from 1850 until his retirement in 1869.\textsuperscript{54} Macdonell’s successor, John Creighton, a former mayor of Kingston, warden from 1871-1885 made vast improvements to the conditions at Kingston Penitentiary.\textsuperscript{55} Creighton improved the physical facilities of the prison and changed the manner in which prisoners were treated. He introduced gas lighting to the cells, which allowed prisoners to read at night, and introduced night school classes along with holiday entertainment.\textsuperscript{56} Warden Creighton was known to eat his meals in the dining hall with prisoners and his respect of prisoners ushered a new era of more humane care for incarcerated people. After Creighton’s death in 1885, Dr. Michael Lavell accepted the position of warden for until May of 1896. Politician James Metcalfe was the subsequent warden, and stayed in the position until 1899.\textsuperscript{57} As Canada transformed into a twentieth century dominion around Wardens Lavell and Metcalfe, the Kingston Penitentiary remained a remnant of the early nineteenth century.

\textbf{The Women of Kingston Penitentiary}

\textsuperscript{52} Daschuk, \textit{Clearing the Plains}, 128.
\textsuperscript{53} Oliver, \textit{‘Terror to Evil-doers’}, xxiv.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid, 213.
\textsuperscript{55} Patterson, “Surviving For 130 Years in a Male Dominated Prison,” 96.
\textsuperscript{56} Canada’s Penitentiary Museum, \textit{Cedarhedge}, http://www.penitentiarymuseum.ca/default/index.cfm/history/cedarhedge1/
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
Women were present at Kingston Penitentiary from its opening in September of 1835, although they were an afterthought to prison officials. The three women who first arrived were not expected, and were incarcerated on the third floor of the South wing while male prisoners were housed on the first floor. A part-time matron was hired in October of 1835 to manage the women and set them to work mending clothing and bedding for the guards and male prisoners. Over the next decade, the women of Kingston Penitentiary continued to work in domestic trades, laundering and fixing garments for men in the prison. There were consistently small numbers of women in the prison, ranging from 8 to 14 from 1838-1845, so Warden Smith did not pay the women much attention.

In the 1850s, a former assistant Matron, Mrs. Julia Cox, was hired as Head Matron to maintain the women of Kingston Penitentiary. There was much disagreement between Cox and her assistant Matrons which led to her eventual leaving of the institution in 1856. She was replaced by Martha Walker who worked exceptionally well in the prison, gaining the admiration of Warden Macdonell. Though she worked diligently to provide the best care for those in her custody, Matron Walker did not have the same resources as the male administrators at the Kingston Penitentiary and was not able to offer regular education classes. James Gardiner, the long-time teacher of Kingston Penitentiary, was not able to teach women because his time was consumed with running programs for the male inmates, Matron Walker did what she could teaching those who wished to learn. The circumstances of women did not change much during the last few decades of the nineteenth century as women continued to labour in the domestic

---

58 Patterson, “Surviving For 130 Years in a Male Dominated Prison,” 91.
59 Carrigan, Crime and Punishment in Canada, 450.
60 Ibid.
61 Oliver, ‘Terror to Evil-doers’, 239.
field, laundering and sewing, with the monotony of their days supplemented by the work of matrons who provided what education and entertainment they could in addition to their regular duties.

After the women’s constant shuffling throughout various wings of the prison, they finally settled into a separate building on prison grounds by 1913. The new, separate building fulfilled two needs of the prison; it allowed men to move into the North wing to alleviate overcrowding, and it gave the women more privacy and separation from the men and guards. The self-contained building held the Head Matron’s quarters on the second floor and the inmates’ quarters on the first floor. It offered women their own yard for exercise in which they later raised chickens on and planted gardens to supplement their inadequate prison diets. The efforts of the women and the matrons to creatively supplement their diets and educational programs resulted from genuine concern for the well-being of incarcerated women, and supplemented the small budgets that did not include funding for fresh foods and education for women.

The Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women

While many women served sentenced in the Kingston Penitentiary throughout the nineteenth century, it is important to recognize that after 1880, there was an alternative to Kingston Penitentiary for sentenced women. The Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women, known as the Mercer Reformatory or the Mercer, was the first women’s only penal institution in Ontario. The institution was located in Toronto and opened in 1880 modelled after women’s reformatory institutions in the United States. The reformatory was managed by Matron Mrs. J.

---

63 Patterson, “Surviving For 130 Years in a Male Dominated Prison,” 98.
O’Reilly, a widow from Kinston, from 1880 until her retirement in 1901. Her work was supported tirelessly by Prison Inspector J. W Langmuir, who was the most influential proponent of a separate correctional institution for women, having seen the conditions in which women were incarcerated at Kingston Penitentiary and in county goals.

Langmuir persuaded the government of Ontario to open the Mercer Reformatory for Women as a more benevolent and cost effective way to imprison women when the province was bequeathed with the estate of Andrew Mercer. Langmuir had visited several reform institutions for women in the United States and read reports praising the successes of women’s only institutions in saving women. In reports dating as far back as 1868, Langmuir noted increasing numbers of women in gaols, and was alarmed by the 140 girls under the age of sixteen imprisoned for prostitution. The Mercer Reformatory, Langmuir argued, would provide a means to save these young women from their questionable moral choices and from the dangers associated with urban vices. A women’s only institution was projected to cost less to operate than a men’s prison because it would require less custodial staff for non-violent women offenders and it was projected that profits from the labour of incarcerated women’s work, primarily as seamstresses, would offset operational costs.

The Mercer functioned as a de facto prison despite its title of reformatory. There was constant supervision of women and the possibility of confinement to dark cells as punishment, and women were sentenced to stay there by the courts. As a reformatory, the Mercer was supposed to offer “an ordinary, well-conducted household,” atmosphere that was guided by an all-female staff who were to assume the “roles of loving but demanding mothers,” to reform

---

65 Ibid, 92.
criminal women. The Mercer was seen by most women as an attractive alternative to serving time at the Kingston Penitentiary for it ensured release into Toronto, was a women’s only institution, and had a staff that ruled with a philosophy of reform not punishment. The overall quality of life at the Mercer was preferable to Kingston Penitentiary, and for some destitute women it was better than their quality of life on the outside. O’Reilly, her matron staff, and the prison doctor, Dr. John King, worked diligently to ensure the physical health of those in their care. Dr. King kept detailed logs of his appointments with women and even made celebratory notes of success when women gained weight.

At the Mercer, women were taught to sew, clean their cells, launder, and other skills deemed essential for women to lead a proper life. Mrs. O’Reilly noted in her reports to Langmuir that most of the women’s offences were related to drinking either as the direct cause, for example a charge of public intoxication, or as an indirect cause of crime such as assaulting another person while drunk. O’Reilly therefore encouraged sobriety and temperance upon release, in alignment with the middle-class values of the era reflected in the campaigns of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which formed its Canadian chapter in 1874. O’Reilly actively encouraged sobriety through an early probation program of her own volition. Keeping with her maternal image, O’Reilly kept up written correspondence with released women wishing them well and encouraging continuing sobriety, personal strength, and religious

67 Strange, “‘The Criminal the Fallen of their Sex’,” 86.
68 Typically there was an increase in petty crime as the seasons changed from fall to winter. Homeless women preferred incarceration to homelessness in winter.
69 Oliver, ‘Terror to Evil-doers’, 458.
70 Strange, “‘The Criminal the Fallen of their Sex’,” 88.
devotion. She also aided women post-release by finding employment for some, usually as domestic help for families in Toronto.

**Leading to War: The Early Twentieth Century in Canada**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Canada followed much of the same trajectory of the nineteenth century, which meant it continued to experience immigration, modernization, and migration from rural to urban areas, although at an increased pace in the progressive era. The state building project of Canada continued with the addition of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. The population reached over 7 million in 1911 and Canadians found employment in factories, in professional careers, on farms, and enjoyed a booming economy due to global high prices in wheat and increased newspaper printing that both fueled an emerging pulp and paper industry and allowed Canada to continue to export lumber. The economy slumped slightly in 1913, but improved dramatically with the start of WWI the following year.

As a British colony, Canada entered the war immediately and began to enlist men and prepare for war, simultaneously shrinking the labour force and increasing demand for labour.

**Continuity and Change in Kingston Penitentiary**

Canadian penal practice continued into the early twentieth century as it had in the nineteenth century with the Kingston Penitentiary acting as the only federal prison and the notorious “big house”. The Royal Commission on Penitentiaries of 1914, known as the MacDonnell Commission, examined the policies and practices of Kingston Penitentiary as well as the conduct of prison administration. The MacDonnell Report found that despite changes in policies, such as the decline of using corporal punishment in sentencing, and despite changes in

---

72 Stacey, *Canada and the Age of Conflict*, 4.
73 Ibid, 123.
75 Ibid.
Lessons in Womanhood

infrastructure, such as increasing individual cell size, many of the problems of the past century plagued Kingston Penitentiary.76

Corporal punishment was still used on prisoners although flogging with a cat o’nine tails had been replaced largely with flogging from a leather strap alongside newly developed techniques. There was “tubbing,” which was a preferred method of punishment for insane and defective inmates, where incarcerated men were forcibly held in a tub of ice water for an indeterminate amount of time. Another new corporal punishment technique was hosing, which the MacDonnell Commission compared to the rack and the thumbscrew, where an industrial water hose was affixed to a man’s cell door and he was blasted with water defenselessly from close range until he collapsed or begged for mercy.77

Other similarities to nineteenth century prisons included the state of complete silence that prisoners were supposed to maintain. Incarcerated men in the early twentieth century still served their sentences forbidden to speak to one another because silent repentance was a cornerstone in the Auburn prison philosophy adopted by the Kingston Penitentiary. Physical labour, another cornerstone of Auburn, persisted as the focal point of daily life even after prison contracts with private companies were discontinued due to complaints of unfair competition from civilian tradesmen.78 This meant that when there was no maintenance or construction needed on prison infrastructure that prisoners often had to break rocks – which was demoralizing, pointless, and physically gruelling labour that did not provide any tangible skills.79

76 George Milnes MacDonnell, Frederick Etherington, and Joseph Patrick, Report of the Royal Commission on Penitentiaries (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1914), 40-42. The recommendations of the MacDonnell Commission mirror many of the recommendations made by the Brown Commission related to reduce the use of corporal punishments.
78 Ibid, 32.
Yet another trend that persisted into the early twentieth century was the ignorance surrounding the women prisoners of Kingston Penitentiary. The MacDonnell Commission includes only four sentences regarding women in its forty-four page report. The main topic of discussion is the completion of a new separate building for women within prison grounds. Women’s days consisted of cooking, sewing, and laundering. The women did the personal of laundry of officers, keepers, and guards in addition to institutional laundry. It can be inferred that the women’s treatment was less violent than that of the male prisoners from the omission of any incidences requiring investigation. It can also be inferred that the women were not a point of concern for the commissioners as women are not mentioned in any of the recommendations put forth by the commission.

The recommendations made by the MacDonnell Commission included greater access to education, permitting weekly newspapers into circulation (with the condition that stories related to crime be censored), small tobacco allowances, improved staffing and facilities for the insane, modernized hospital equipment, meaningful labour, contract work for the state (i.e. producing military uniforms and supplies), and the reinstatement of warden’s authority to hire and dismiss staff. The commissioners went to great length in their report to justify and rationalize each of their recommendations. They explained that there needed to be some system of reward for good behaviour to encourage men to find pride in their character and habits as a way to reform themselves. While these recommendations could have provided relief to some of the most

---

80 MacDonnell, *Report of the Royal Commission on Penitentiaries*, 40-42. At this time, local politicians and Members of Parliament would recommend men to be hired at the prison. The warden could technically dismiss an appointee at the end of a trial period, but the blowback from politicians prevented the warden from doing so in most cases. This led to a system of “political jealousies and religious animosities prevail,” between Catholic and Protestant staff members “to such an extent that they have seriously affected the welfare of the inmates,” (p.41).
pressing problems, the MacDonnell Commission report was cast aside for the imminent concerns of the First World War.

**Postwar Realities**

The First World War is considered a defining moment for Canada as a nation, and in the period immediately following the war, more state-building parameters were set. The lives of women at home were dramatically affected by the war, as women had gained federal franchise between 1917 and 1918, however with the notable exclusions of Asian and Aboriginal women.\(^8\)

With increasing autonomy and wartime need, many women began to work for wages outside of the home and they continued to do so after the war. The influx of soldiers returning home saturated the workforce and there were calls that women should leave the workforce to open employment to veterans. There was increasing unemployment and labour unrest as the economic situation did not improve, culminating in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.\(^2\)

Canada’s economy recovered slowly during the immediate postwar period and into the mid-1920s eventually regaining some sense of prewar normalcy and stability.\(^3\) However, this did not stop Canadian women from continuing to seek and hold waged employment outside the home as they had during the war. As consumerism became a part of twentieth century reality due to increasingly mechanized and standard production of goods, women found steady employment as sales clerks in urban centres. The average sales clerk was a young, unmarried woman who was under the age of thirty.\(^4\) These sales clerks often lived in rented rooms, which offered the

---


\(^3\) Goutor, *Guarding the Gates*, 18.

potential to have male visitors while unsupervised by family members, triggered new fears about urban life from middle-class Canadians. Fears of urban vice, namely sex outside of marriage, idleness, and drinking was perceived to create a surge of unwanted pregnancies, divorce, and juvenile delinquency that undermined the nation’s moral fabric, upon which many middle-class Canadians prided themselves.\(^{85}\) These perceived moral dangers created a ripe environment for an inquiry into the treatment of incarcerated women. These women represented the outcome of a life of vice and were seen as “fallen women” who had lost their moral compass. W. F Nickle, a commissioner of the Committee to Advise Upon the Revision of the Penitentiary Regulations and the Amendment of the Penitentiary Act, conducted his own investigation of the women incarcerated at Kingston Penitentiary in 1921.

**W.F. Nickle’s Investigation into the Female Prison, 1921**

The Nickle Report of 1921 was the catalyst for finally opening a separate federal women’s prison in Canada. William Folger Nickle led an investigation of the Kingston Penitentiary to learn more about accusations of misconduct by male staff towards incarcerated women. It was alleged that Deputy Warden Robert Corby flirted with inmates and that Guard John Givens watched women in their cells in various stages of undress.\(^{86}\) The Matron, Ms. McMahon, was aware of Corby and Givens’ actions as the women in her care told her of the

---


\(^{86}\) LAC, Correctional Service of Canada fonds, RG 73, C-1 4-1-14, volume 105, file “Investigation by W. F. Nickle Re: Female Prison, Kingston, 1921,” page 19. This report is an unpublished report that was sent to the Minister of Justice, the Right Honourable C.J Doherty, as a component of the investigation of another, larger committee advising on amendments to the Penitentiary Act and the policies of prisons (see Biggar, O. M., W. F. Nickle, and P. M. Draper. *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Right Honourable C.J. Doherty, Minister of Justice, to Advise Upon the Revision of the Penitentiary Regulations and the Amendment of the Penitentiary Act*. Ottawa: Printer to the King, 1921.). Nickle is much more informal, compassionate, and specific in recommendations to improve the women’s prison in this unpublished report in comparison to the recommendations made for in the aforementioned official commission report. This offers valuable insight into one commissioner’s thoughts regarding the treatment of incarcerated women. It reveals how Nickle had to revise and abate his recommendations to incorporate substantially less improvements in Kingston Penitentiary’s women division in the final official report.
misconduct. She advised the women to close the blinds in response to Givens’ peeping, although most women did not have blinds or curtains in their cells. McMahon did not inform Warden John Charles Ponsford, who was the top authority of the women’s prison, of Corby’s unwanted interactions with the women. The inmates felt unprotected due to her inaction and many complained to Nickle about McMahon’s lack of leadership and ability to do her job.\(^{87}\)

While the misconduct of male employees was the main focus of the investigation, Nickle observed daily life in the women’s quarters. As a result of his observations he made thirty-five recommendations to improve the overall conditions in the prison in addition to his findings that related to disciplining Corby and Givens’ misconduct. Nickle’s suggestions ranged from organizational improvements, such as having an autonomous Matron, to physical facility upgrades, such as mosquito netting for cell windows and mats for the cold cell floors.\(^{88}\) His recommendations took into account and tried to address the to the monotony of prisoners’ daily lives and Nickle revealed that he believed loss of freedom was punishment in itself and that loss of creature comforts, within reason of 1920 Canadian standards, should not add to a prisoner’s punishment.

Nickle also noted the lack of educational and vocational opportunities available to the women, especially the lack of French language services for the small population of Francophone women. None of the prison staff, male or female, were bilingual and Nickle believed the next Matron hired should be bilingual.\(^{89}\) He recommended that women have access to academic instruction as a part of their regular workdays. Quite radically, Nickle advocated for paid work

---

\(^{87}\) LAC, Correctional Service Canada fonds, RG 73, C-1 4-1-14, volume 105, file “The Nickle Report,” page 19.  
\(^{88}\) LAC Correctional Service of Canada fonds, RG 73, C-1 4-1-14, volume 105, file “Investigation by W. F. Nickle Re: Female Prison, Kingston, 1921,” page 23 of report and page 1 of index of recommendations.  
\(^{89}\) LAC, Correctional Service of Canada fonds, RG 73, C-1 4-1-14, volume 105, file “Investigation by W. F. Nickle Re: Female Prison, Kingston, 1921,” page 23 of report and page 1 of index of recommendations.
(at this time, work by prisoners in Kingston Penitentiary was unpaid), and that in the evenings skills such as “dressmaking, nursing, cooking, etc.,” be taught as both recreational activities to cure the boredom of prison and to help with the women’s eventual reintegration into society upon release.

Nickle proposed that the problems he found within Kingston Penitentiary’s women’s division could be partially remedied with his recommendations, but to fully address the problems opening a separate women’s only institution was required. Other individuals, too, had suggested this separate institution solution, but for various reasons, mainly financial concerns and lack of public interest in female offenders’ generally non-violent crimes, the initiative never gained the political support necessary for creation. Nickle’s report came at the right time and the creation of a separate women’s prison was supported by the Liberal government under William Lyon Mackenzie King. The building of the new women’s prison commenced in 1925, but faced construction delays due to slow process of removing rock to prepare the site, which at places was several feet deep.\textsuperscript{90}

The Opening of P4W

P4W was operational in the year 1932, but was not completed and inhabited by incarcerated women until 1934.\textsuperscript{91} From 1932-1934, men were incarcerated at P4W to relieve the overcrowding of the Kingston Penitentiary following a riot.\textsuperscript{92} This is symbolic of the experience of female offenders in Canada as women were housed elsewhere to accommodate male


\textsuperscript{91} Dominion of Canada, \textit{Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1934} (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 1934): 11. Incarcerated men were moved out of P4W in December of 1933 and incarcerated women moved in January 24, 1934.

\textsuperscript{92} Dominion of Canada, \textit{Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1933} (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 1933): 12. One hundred men were moved into a cell block following a riot at Kingston Penitentiary in mid-October, 1932. The riot was largely due to overcrowded conditions. Incarcerated men had been sleeping in shop space and corridors.
offenders. Women offenders were seen as a nuisance by prison administration, provincial governments, and the federal government due to their small population with unique needs compared to the substantially larger and generally more dangerous male offender population.

P4W was based on maximum security prisons designs, despite the Minister of Justice believing that minimum and medium provincial jails could manage federally sentenced women. The building was surrounded by a towering, twenty-six foot wall, which was made of sixteen feet of limestone topped with ten feet of barbed wire. For this one hundred cell facility, the fence cost approximately 23% of the total budget for the project.93 No expense was spared on the security of the prison which would hold women charged with mainly non-violent charges. In 1936, for example, 72% of women’s charges in P4W were Class 4 offences, meaning they were offences against public order, and of those Class 4 offences 60% were related to alcohol consumption and vagrancy.94 The women incarcerated in the newly completed P4W were not a threat to public safety and did not require the superfluous fence. As Backhouse, Sangster, and other scholars have noted, there was fear of women offenders, not because they were dangerous, but because the women’s actions seriously disrupted ideas of respectable womanhood.

Conclusion

In the century leading up to the opening of the P4W, Canada experienced a great deal of change. The country began as a series of settlements that became British colonies and continually amalgamated with other territories until Confederation and the creation of the Dominion of Canada in 1867. This national expansion was made possible through consistent immigration and settlement by settlers from Great Britain, the United States of America, and the

---

nations of Europe. Throughout this period of great change, the penal system experienced an overhaul as well, shifting from a system based on local incarceration in county gaols to the establishment of modern penitentiaries, starting first with the Kingston Penitentiary. As the population grew, so did the need to open gender specific penal institutions that resulted in the Andrew Mercer Reformatory for Women. The Mercer offered more comfortable incarceration than county gaols or Kingston Penitentiary, but it was a prison nonetheless that focused on molding women to fit the character traits associated with respectable, middle-class womanhood.

Despite all this change in penal institutions and nation building, women’s criminality and characteristics associated with criminal women remained static. Women who were working-class, sexually active, intemperate, loud and boisterous, or unfeminine were considered suspicious in the eyes of the law. Women were seen as moral offenders whose actions could corrupt Canadian society, with its roots in conservative, British ideals, because women were supposed to be mothers to the nation, raising the next generation of god-fearing, hard-working, Canadians. The continuity of perceptions of criminal women in Canada is integral to understanding the philosophical underpinnings of P4W. The enduring nature of these tropes allows for a better understanding of policy and practice working with incarcerated women at P4W. As I argue in the following chapters, the Canadian public’s perceptions about criminal women had great influence on the educational programs available to incarcerated women.
Chapter Two: Academic Education

Introduction

Teachers in the Penitentiary Service recognized that though officially their classrooms for incarcerated people were “the schools of second chance,” in reality they were “schools of last chance.”¹ Prison schools were seen as one of the last hopes that an incarcerated person had at gaining literacy and numeracy in a substantial and meaningful way that would allow them to succeed in life after release.² The Penitentiary Service overall did not appreciate the importance of formal education programs in their institutions in both policy and practice until the 1960s. Before this era, formal academic education had been deemed important by some upper administration but in practice, at the prison level, this idea had not been realized. For the P4W, the disjunction between the supposed value of education and the practice of education was noticeable especially during the period from 1934-1949 when formal academic educational opportunities were sporadic. Incarcerated men in this period also had limited educational opportunities although this improved greatly in the 1947 with the appointment of R.B. Gibson as the Superintendent of Penitentiaries, the new top authority of the Penitentiary Service.

Starting in 1938, incoming incarcerated people had substantive demographic data recorded due to a shared effort between Statistics Canada and the Penitentiary Service. There was, however, a stark discrepancy between the type and amount of data collected on men and women.³ While incarcerated men were categorized and analyzed with over sixty-five data points

---

² Ibid.
³ The male prison population was approximately 85 times greater than the female prison population and Penal Service officials felt that no viable statistical data could come from such a small population. For example, in 1942 there were 37 federally incarcerated women compared to 3232 federally incarcerated men. It would have been simple to collect data on federally incarcerated women, who were centralized in P4W, in comparison to the collection and aggregation process of demographic information on men prisons across the country.
including their level of education and employment before incarceration, women had ten points of data collected which included their age, racial origin, religious affiliation, marital status, mental condition, offence, use of alcohol and drugs, duration of sentence, and prior offences. From this data we can learn that fifteen percent of the male prison population was illiterate or semi-illiterate and that the average education achieved was a grade six level with fifty-four percent of the prison school population requiring instruction in elementary level courses. It is impracticable to generalize these statistics to incarcerated women of the same time, but it can be surmised from these statistics that women’s prison education was not given as much concern or consideration as men’s education.

I argue that formal academic programs in the P4W focused on women achieving functional literacy because any education beyond this was viewed as superfluous for criminalized women. Incarcerated women were thought to benefit from basic education, but did not need to learn beyond that as it would be unnecessary in their roles as wives, mothers, or domestic labourers. I will first explain the bureaucratic blunders and temporal context that prevented a substantive formal educational program from solidifying at P4W after which I will detail and analyze the original academic program. I will follow the story of P4W’s formal education program chronologically which will allow for other pertinent information, such as trends in Ontario public school education, to be interwoven and will allow for the stories of

---

Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1942 (Ottawa: Printer to the King, 1942), 32.

Between the years 1938-1960 these statistics were available in their entirety in the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries. Afterwards, this statistical data was still used internally and weekly reports were given to the Commissioner on incoming prisoners, but the public reporting of the raw data ceased. References to the data are made throughout subsequent annual reports with summaries of data (ex. In the 1960-61 report “93.7% were born in Canada, 6.2% born outside Canada…” and typically a chart of total incoming prisoners, those released (and how they were released i.e. expiration of sentence, death, parole, etc.), and escaped inmates was still included in the annual report.

Lessons in Womanhood

incarcerated women to be heard in appropriate moments as per the style of a functionalist narrative approach in socio-legal history writing.

The P4W Opens

As previously mentioned, P4W admitted women after almost a decade of delayed construction, bureaucratic infighting within the Penitentiary Service, and efforts to relieve overcrowding and subsequent rioting at Kingston Penitentiary. The institution was built using prisoner labour and broke ground in the summer of 1925, yet women did not occupy the prison until January 24, 1934. In the midst of construction, the leadership of the Penitentiary Service changed, which also contributed to delays. The change replaced Superintendent W. S Hughes, who had served in the role since 1919, with General D. M. Ormond who was appointed Superintendent of Penitentiaries in April of 1932. Ormond’s authoritarian leadership style, a corollary of his previous career in the military, ushered in waves of riots and smaller disturbances due to unstudied decisions that negatively impacted the conditions of daily prison life. For example, he authorized the use of wooden partitions to spilt cells in Kingston Penitentiary for double residency of cells. This meant that each incarcerated man had a cell that was approximately two and a half feet wide and seven feet long; this offered just enough space to

---


7 Archambault, *Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada*, 43. Ormond was previously employed as a District Officer of Military District 13, a supervisor of an RCMP division, and a veteran who served overseas in the Great War. Before his military career, Ormond was called to the Manitoba Bar in 1909. While he had a legal background, he had never worked within prisons and had not worked as a lawyer for almost thirty years when he assumed the position of Superintendent.
lie down.\textsuperscript{8} The decision resulted in rioting and a subsequent decision to temporarily incarcerate men in P4W from 1932-1934 until enough men could be transferred to other federal prisons.

Ormond had no prior knowledge of Canada’s Penitentiary Service before his appointment, and according to the Commissioners of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penitentiary System, known as the Archambault Commission, he made no concerted effort to learn. Ormond's “arrogant manner,” was well known to those who reported to him and he was known for displaying “an irritating manner of exercising authority”.\textsuperscript{9} The Commissioners claimed that Ormond’s command style contributed to “the sixteen riots or disturbances that have taken place since he began.”\textsuperscript{10} Ormond’s lack of concern for understanding the conditions of male prisons, the majority of his responsibilities, meant that P4W was extremely low on his priority list as P4W was technically a subsidiary of Kingston Penitentiary until 1962.

The Superintendent micro-managed every aspect of prison life, despite his lack of experience and his unwillingness to visit prisons. Ormond did not allow a single rule change or a single penny spent without his explicit authorization in writing. Therefore, the pace of change and managerial decisions were dependent on the speed of the post and a prison’s proximity to Ottawa where Ormond’s office was situated. Ormond’s tight control meant that he had to approve spending on storm window hinges, which cost sixteen cents apiece, before they could be purchased, and then he demanded another formal approval process before hinges could be installed.\textsuperscript{11} No materials could be used for their intended purpose until Ormond approved their

\textsuperscript{8} McCoy, Hard Time, 142. This was the original cell size of Kingston Penitentiary. This size was deemed cruel and, in one of the many modernization efforts of the prison, the cells were doubled in size by removing centre walls between two cells. Ormond’s order effectively returned the cells to their late 19th century size.

\textsuperscript{9} Archambault, Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada, 26 and 51.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 51.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 30. Ormond was so controlling that he demanded to approve individual prisoner’s medical purchases. If a prison doctor prescribed crutches or orthopedic shoes for a man, Ormond had to know about it and approve the purchase before the man received his medical device.
use – even though he approved the goods’ purchase. Wardens had little authority over the prisons they were tasked with managing. In addition to the approval process, approximately fifty percent of a warden’s time was spent answering Ormond’s hundreds of circular letters instead of supervising the prison.\textsuperscript{12} Ormond reminded anyone who offered suggestions, or if they dared, criticisms, that they could resign if they did not like how he managed prisons.\textsuperscript{13} This overbearing and centralized control impeded the development of substantial academic, vocational, and recreational programs, among other reforms, in all prisons for the duration of Ormond’s tenure from 1932 to 1938.\textsuperscript{14}

Ormond’s “dictatorial methods,” of leadership complicated life at P4W even more so than in the male institutions under his jurisdiction. P4W was run by a staff of matrons, led by a head matron, but ultimately was under the authority and accounting of the warden of Kinston Penitentiary.\textsuperscript{15} This meant that if a head matron wanted to make a purchase, for example of books to create a library, she had to first submit her request to the warden of Kingston Penitentiary for approval, who then submitted a request on her behalf to the Superintendent who would then approve or deny the spending request. If approved, the head matron could make her purchase but would have to engage in the same process to get approval to use the purchased

\textsuperscript{12} Archambault, \textit{Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada}, 29. The Archambault Commissioners estimate that 50\% of wardens time was spent replying to memos was determined by interviews with wardens across Canada. While the amount of labour spent on letter writing might seem outlandish, I can attest to the enormous volume of circular letters in the Library and Archives Canada collection from the Ormond era. Previous and subsequent Superintendents of Penitentiaries had substantially less circular letters and memos collected in the archives.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 34. This led to high turnover rates of staff at all levels of prisons. From 1932-1935, 224 penal staff were fired, dismissed, or resigned (of a total 767 staff), and a further 79 left the service both voluntarily and involuntarily from 1935-1936. See Appendix A for more information regarding the leadership of the Penitentiary Service throughout the period discussed in this thesis.

\textsuperscript{14} Dominion of Canada, \textit{Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1938} (Ottawa: Printer to the King’s Most Excellent Majesty, 1938), 27. The Archambault Report was published on April 4, 1938 and Ormond was the subject of intense criticism. Ormond was replaced by Acting Superintendent G. L. Sauvant who worked in this role until 1942.

The Archambault Commission heavily criticized the management of prisons under Superintendent Ormond, and recommended a litany of changes including improving the quality and accessibility of education. They also stated: “the principles of classification, training, and education for men prisoners recommended in other chapters should be applied as far as possible to women.” More specifically, the Commission recommended that employees in the Penitentiary Service be reminded of Regulation 81 and 86 of the Penitentiary Act. Regulation 81 mandated that all illiterate prisoners and those who had not reached the minimum provincial level of education received regular, daily instruction. Regulation 86 encouraged independent study time in cells with support for the teacher and/or librarian. The Archambault Report used educational programs in British prisons as examples of the societal benefits that came from offering education to incarcerated people. From their study of British prisons, the Commissioners encouraged Canadian prison administrators to use volunteers to support additional programs, such as recreational programs, and stressed that these educational programs were not luxuries but a way to “counteract ‘prison psychosis’” caused by boredom. However, just like the work of the previous Royal Commission, the MacDonnell Commission of 1914, the report came to the

---

16 Ibid, 315.
17 Ibid, 145.
18 Ibid, 118.
attention of the federal government at the beginning of war. Discussions surrounding prison reform were replaced by discussions on how to reconfigure prison labour and production to support the war effort.

The galvanizing effects of the war on Canadian society were paralleled in Canadian prisons. Officers took leave to enlist, there were efforts to recruit for military service young men on their first conviction who were soon to be released, and all production efforts focused on wartime goods. P4W contributed a great deal to the war effort considering the small size of their workforce. Throughout the war years 1939-1945 there was a range of 34-52 women incarcerated, and of this there was a prisoner workforce ranging from 28-48. In 1942 the warden of Kingston Penitentiary, R.M. Allen, reported that the women produced over 20,000 pillow slips for the Naval Service to date and managed a chicken farm that produced a surplus of eggs, which were given to the local training facilities.

Given the authoritative bureaucracy that impeded reform from 1934-1938 and the Second World War that focused the nation’s efforts, civilian and prisoners alike, on production of wartime goods, academic programs at P4W were virtually non-existent from 1934-1945. There was no teacher or librarian employed during this time and the library consisted of approximately 100 donated books on a single bookshelf. The transfer from Kingston Penitentiary into the new

---

19 Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1942*, 33. A total of 44 Officers had already enlisted, and the Penitentiary Service predicted approximately another 200 of 800 of their staff were eligible and willing to enlist in the future.

20 Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1938-1944*. Some of the women incarcerated at P4W were deemed unfit for working, which included women considered enemy aliens and Doukhobor women who were known by prison staff for their collective reputation of being difficult, arsonists, and generally uncooperative.


institution had improved the physical facilities for women, but the move also resulted in a
downgrade to the academic program. While incarcerated in Kingston Penitentiary, women
prisoners received noon-hour lessons which were provided daily by a matron who was “a
qualified school-teacher.”23 There is no evidence to suggest that these lessons continued after the
transition to the new facility. The Archambault Commissioners concluded that the state of prison
education in Canada, including at P4W, was abysmal.

The Great Depression

The historical economic context of the opening of P4W and the Archambault Report
cannot be ignored for the immense role it had in stalling reforms. The Great Depression hit the
Canadian economy hard comparatively to the United States and to other western, industrialized
nations which resulted in 20% of Canadians being dependent on government aid throughout the
1930s.24 Canada had a largely unskilled labour market that was dominated by seasonal resource
extraction.25 The stock market crash of 1929 was immediately apparent in the Canadian
workforce with increasing unemployment, but the worst was yet to come. When global markets
falter and the price of raw goods dropped, including economy staples such as wheat, the
Canadian market could not cope.

In 1930 Richard Bedford Bennett won the federal election with the Conservative party on
a campaign of ending unemployment, which he believed was the result of a temporary economic
downturn.26 In 1930 and 1931 Bennett’s government made relief payments to provincial

25 James Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own: Unemployment and the Canadian Welfare State, 1914-1941* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 4-5. In the 1930s 40% of the workforce was comprised of unskilled labourers and between 1911-1941, 35.2-44.5% of all Canadian jobs were seasonal.
26 Struthers, *No Fault of Their Own*, 70.
governments who then redistributed funds to municipalities for local relief through the Unemployment Relief Act. Relief at the local level resulted in discriminatory funding based on religious and political affiliations as well as whether an individual or family qualified as a member of the deserving poor. Despite Bennett’s campaign against unemployment, he did not believe that the federal government should interfere with direct work relief projects as that amount of governmental interference bordered on socialism. The federal government spent millions of dollars annually to end unemployment and offer economic relief, but had no oversight on how monies were spent and had no control over how provincial and municipal relief programs were organized.

An example of the disorganization of the response to the Depression were the haphazard and unregulated relief systems of the City of Toronto, the largest municipality of Canada. There was no municipal aid organization and aid was doled out through private charity that catered to individuals based on their race, religion, or professional association. There were separate charitable organizations for Protestants, Catholics, Blacks, Jews, and veterans among other organizations in the city that only served distinct communities. This meant that local politics, disagreements with local community leaders, or perceived adherence to a charitable organization’s beliefs affected the amount and frequency of relief that a family or individuals received.

28 There was no official definition for whether someone was deserving or undeserving poor. These labels were based on middle class morality and, much like women’s criminality, were determined by how much a person was perceived to live a wholesome life. A family who did not save enough income from summer employment, a woman who had a child out of wedlock, or a family where the parents drank alcohol in pubs or taverns frequently would be considered members of the undeserving poor whereas a woman with children widowed by the First World War or a large, temperate, family whose children worked would be considered members of the deserving poor.
29 Struthers, No Fault of Their Own, 105.
From 1930-1931, Toronto, like other municipalities, offered work relief through public works projects such as road building and chopping wood with funding from the Unemployment Relief Acts.\(^{31}\) However, the federal government changed relief funding schemes annually and were inconsistent in funding amounts because Bennett, and other members of his cabinet, believed that the economic hardship was temporary. This meant that provincial, and therefore municipal, work relief projects were unpredictable and unsustainable.\(^{32}\) Programs of direct relief, meaning cash payments to individuals and families, became the norm and the federal government looked to combat continually rising levels of unemployment.\(^{33}\)

Unemployment levels peaked in early 1933 with thirty percent of the country unemployed.\(^{34}\) This prompted fears of socialism and communism as young, single men gathered listlessly in cities searching for employment and commiserating. The federal government decided in the summer of 1933 that a return to working the land through work relief camps would alleviate the congregation of young men in cities and would provide a work opportunity that would not compete with private business.\(^{35}\) This idea was similar to American President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, but the American version of work camps were far more successful. The US camps were aimed directly at young men aged 18-25 and focused on forest conservation and public works projects. These camps of young men were respected by society for their work building roads, dams, parks, and other smaller local projects.\(^{36}\) In Canada, men were paid pithy amounts for make-work projects such as ditch digging in isolated, Northern, parts of the country.

\(^{32}\) Ibid, 42; Struthers, No Fault of Their Own, 59. Canada’s credit rating dropped and the federal government tried desperately to balance their budget and restore the nation’s credit rating. This was in part due to Britain’s decision to stop using the gold standard which caused American based loans to grow larger.
\(^{33}\) Struthers, No Fault of Their Own, 52.
\(^{34}\) Ibid, 55.
\(^{35}\) Ibid, 8 and 135.
\(^{36}\) Ibid, 98.
The men in Canadian camps were treated in an undignified manner and became the site of strike movements as discontent with the federal government’s inaction towards the Depression grew.\textsuperscript{37}

An April 1935 strike starting in British Columbian work camps culminated into the On-to-Ottawa protest caravan as men from other camps across western provinces joined the original group of strikers. The federal government intervened in the mass protest in Regina which resulted in the Regina riot.\textsuperscript{38} Bennett finally conceded in 1935 that a nationally directed plan was needed to combat the Depression which had been ongoing for five years.\textsuperscript{39} He proposed his own New Deal style plan over a series of radio broadcasts which promised a national unemployment insurance and old-age pension plan, progressive tax reform, maximum hours for work weeks, and a national minimum wage.\textsuperscript{40} The Canadian public, especially the unemployed, received this as too little too late and were not satisfied by the plan which did not include provisions for public work relief programs and housing security – two of the public’s largest concerns.

Bennett’s five years as Prime Minister failed to alleviate the suffering of the Great Depression as he had promised in his election, and as a result, he suffered the most decisive loss in the federal election of 1935 to Mackenzie King’s Liberals.\textsuperscript{41} As the official opposition, the Liberals had not offered suggestions to improve relief efforts and the party now had to set policy to alleviate Canadian’s economic hardship. King, like Bennett, also did not want to encourage state interference, and as a result, King’s policy ideas centred on free trade with the United

\textsuperscript{37} Struthers, \textit{No Fault of Their Own}, 100.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid, 131. For more on the On-to-Ottawa trek and Regina riot Ronald Liversedge’s book \textit{Recollections of the On to Ottawa Trek} (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1973) which includes a historical discussion of the event followed by a collection of reprinted primary documents related to the trek.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid, 126.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid, 127.
States. In the fall of 1935, King signed a deal with President Roosevelt that stipulated no third party country could have lower duties on trade goods than the duties between Canada and the United States. Specific goods, such as wood pulp, were given free trade status, but King conceded to American interests on the trade of potatoes and cod.

On the domestic front, King’s plans for relief included a seventy-five percent increase in relief payments to provinces until the end of the fiscal year of 1936. This was in exchange for provincial agreement with the National Employment Commission, which would exert control over how funding was spent. He also announced the closure of work camps in 1936. This decision was met with apprehension from provinces who feared a return of single, unemployed men to cities. To assuage apprehension, the federal government funded work relief projects building sections of the Trans-Canada and provincial highways as well as work on railways. Despite King’s dislike of federal involvement in relief, his government continued to finance provincial and municipal relief and create work projects, like Bennett’s government. Drought ruined the harvest of 1937, and unemployment levels increased, but Canada was becoming distracted by tension and aggression in Europe. King’s relief plans remained consistent until the onset of the Second World War which launched the Canadian economy into mass production.

___

45 Strikwerda, The Wages of Relief, 205.
46 Ibid, 207.
47 Ibid.
49 Ibid, 268.
Education on the Outside

All of the penny pinching and indecision surrounding the federal government’s budgets of the 1930s affected every aspect of provincial governments, including departments of education. The lack of academic programs for incarcerated adult women from 1934-1949 is unsurprising given the social and economic context of this time period. Economic hardship was felt by all Canadians and the Penitentiary Service did not attempt to increase their spending on prison education whatsoever, as incarcerated people received daily rations and shelter, which was more than some civilians.\textsuperscript{50} All public services at the municipal, provincial, and federal level, including public schools and prisons, were trying to save, scrimp, and cut their budgets wherever possible. Ontario, where P4W was located, was no exception.\textsuperscript{51}

By the fiscal year end of 1934, Ontario slashed its budget for public schools by one third.\textsuperscript{52} However, lack of funds did not stop innovation in Ontario education. Education was increasingly seen as a way to create ideal Canadian citizens by instilling the right values in children. In an effort to reach as many children as possible, Ontario began correspondence courses and railcar schools to engage remote communities with.\textsuperscript{53} Change and innovation extended beyond the medium of lesson delivery and forayed into deeper questions about the

\textsuperscript{50} Struthers, \textit{No Fault of Their Own}, 106. Single, unemployed women were particularly destitute and without political clout. Many young women found their relief funds could only afford meals for three days a week and had to supplement their diets from inconsistent sources such as soup kitchens or churches.

\textsuperscript{51} To reiterate, Ontario is used comparatively to P4W because penitentiary regulations stipulated that incarcerated people had to be educated to the minimum level a child in the province would achieve before reaching the drop-out age. This meant when as Ontario changed the mandatory attendance age of students it affected P4W.

\textsuperscript{52} Stamp, \textit{Schools of Ontario}, 143-145. The belief that education could fix or ameliorate social problems was growing in public discourse and this belief would be used to bolster the rehabilitation model of prisons in the post-war period.

\textsuperscript{53} Christou, \textit{Progressive Education}, 16.
purpose of education, the values education should teach, and what a revised curriculum should resemble to answer these questions.

As the economy began to recover, so did the educational budgets of Ontario’s public schools and by 1938 funding reached its pre-Depression levels.\textsuperscript{54} The quick recovery of the public school budget can be attributed to the provincial Liberal government, led by Premier Mitchell Hepburn, who believed in the power and possibility that education offered Ontarians. Ontario underwent massive curriculum change in 1937 with Duncan MacArthur as the Minister of Education.\textsuperscript{55} These changes promoted a more progressive public school that emphasized personal choice, learning with relevance to the real world, and active, engaged learning in schools.\textsuperscript{56} Sweeping curriculum reforms and renewed enthusiasm and optimism for the transformational social power of education took hold in Ontario’s public education system, yet these changes were aimed at children. It is important to contextualize the academic education at P4W within both public and adult education trends because the women were adult learners, but many required academic instruction and support to complete their public school equivalencies. A large portion of women in P4W were adult learners engaging with public school curriculum.

There had been notable adult education initiatives in Canada since the late nineteenth century. Most of these initiatives were aimed at engaging rural and remote workers who could not access urban educational resources. Organizations such as Frontier College and local branches of Women’s Institutes offered correspondence courses to promote literacy and public

\textsuperscript{54} Stamp, \textit{Schools of Ontario}, 156.
\textsuperscript{55} Christou, \textit{Progressive Education}, 110.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, 117, 120, and 127. As Christou argues, these changes were met with resistance from different stakeholders, including some teachers, who felt as though their foundation of curriculum, the ‘little grey book’, had been taken away without proper consideration. Others welcomed the progressive changes, but found that it did not meet all of the needs of their brand of progressivism as the government chose to use a broad definition of progressive education to satisfy as many camps as possible.
lectures for remote miners and farming women respectively.\textsuperscript{57} By the mid-1930s, other educational organizations formed with the goal of engaging more adults, both new immigrants and Canadian born citizens. The Canadian Association for Adult Education formed in 1936 alongside other organizations and movements such as the Workingmen’s Educational Association, the St. Francis Xavier University-based Antigonish Movement, and programs offered by the Y.M.C.A and Y.W.C.A to create opportunities for learning for both urban and rural Canadians.\textsuperscript{58} The early years at P4W overlapped with the creation of many recognizable public organizations that offered educational opportunities, such as the Canadian Broadcast Company (CBC), yet the small number of federally incarcerated women were not the target audience of these adult education groups and did not enjoy the increasing popularity of public adult education campaigns.\textsuperscript{59}

**Origins of Educational Reform in P4W**

Despite all of the educational reform in Ontario’s public schools and larger adult education initiatives from 1934-1949, little reform happened in prison education. Repeated calls to educate incarcerated people came from federal government investigations, from criminologists, from educators, and from religious leaders, yet it was the efforts of volunteers that transformed the calls for action into practice at P4W. One of these volunteers was Kathleen Healey, known as Kaye, who first visited P4W in 1945 and was appalled by the lack of educational materials available to the women. Healey began visiting the P4W after a friend, Dr.


\textsuperscript{59} Sandwell, “‘Read, Listen, Discuss, Act’,” 171.
Clarence Crawford, a psychiatric consultant for Kingston prisons, mentioned that he wanted to bring educational resources to the women.\textsuperscript{60}

Healey worked in the Department of Extension at Queen’s University and was able to access university resources from the University’s library. After her initial visits, Healey brought educational films from Queen’s library to the prison in 1946 much to the delight of the incarcerated women and matron staff. She wanted to further improve the conditions at P4W and connected with seven other concerned civilian women about the state of the prison. In 1949 this group formed the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston (EFry Kingston). The founders included: Dorothy Bartlett who was a physical education teacher, Vera Cartwright who was a lawyer, Elizabeth Harrison who was an artist and art instructor at Queen’s, Jeanne Hughes, Eileen Lord, Blossom MacDougall, and Harriet Selby who was a social worker.\textsuperscript{61} The volunteers of EFry Kingston had varied personal and professional backgrounds, but they all believed in improving the rehabilitation of incarcerated women, educating the public through advocacy and outreach, and liaising between prison officials and other layers of government to achieve the aforementioned goals.

**Increased Attention and Advocacy, 1949-1965**

EFry Kingston began lobbying the Penitentiary Service for better educational services as one of their first priorities. This aligned well with the priorities of the new leader of the Penitentiary Service, R. B. Gibson, who was the first Commissioner of Penitentiaries, which was a new position that replaced the previous position of Superintendent. Gibson was hired in 1947 and began his role by conducting a review of all prisons and of the neglected recommendations

\textsuperscript{60} Avis, *Women in Cages*, 57.

of the 1938 Archambault Report. The Archambault Report heavily criticized most aspects of the penitentiary system and provided an eighty-eight point recommendation list for improving Canada’s prisons. General recommendations included a reorganization of administration, regulation of prison employment, a probation system, expansion of parole, and further classification of prisoners.

Gibson endorsed the majority of the Archambault Commission recommendations, including the two specific recommendations related to education and women prisoners. The recommendation on education called for “a complete reorganization of the educational system,” while the recommendation for incarcerated women suggested that women be incarcerated in provincial jails instead of federal prisons. Commissioner Gibson wrote to each provincial Attorney General in 1947 hoping to establish a partnership between federal and provincial correctional systems to relocate incarcerated women to jails in their home provinces, but he was met with a resounding no from all nine provinces. Gibson had more success reorganizing and expanding the educational system of prisons, which he saw as a priority for improving the overall state of Canada’s prisons.

Instead of creating something completely new, Gibson partnered the Penitentiary Service with the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (D.V.A) which already had a roster of correspondence courses. By the spring of 1947, D.V.A correspondence courses were available for incarcerated women.

———

62 See Appendix D on page 165 for a list of the leadership of the Penitentiary Service.
65 Ibid.
veterans and by January of 1948 the courses were also available to non-veterans in prison. The Penitentiary Service paid the D.V.A for the course books needed for each non-veteran to enrol and the D.V.A covered the costs of any veterans in courses. The teacher of each prison circulated lists of course offerings and then collected the necessary information of those interested to enrol them into the courses of their choice. Partnerships were also developed with provincial departments of education, including the Ontario Department of Education (O.D.E), to offer elementary and high school courses to interested prisoners with the costs of booklets covered by provincial governments. These correspondence courses were completed primarily through independent study in cells after the working day was over. Those enrolled could get assistance on their work from the teacher or chaplain in the evening, but the amount and degree of assistance depended entirely on the culture of the specific prison and the relationship between staff and prisoners.

Although the P4W did not have their own teacher, Mr. H. B. Patterson who was the farming instructor at Kingston Penitentiary, helped interested women enrol in correspondence courses. Until the summer of 1949, Mr. Patterson sent the required documents to the D.V.A and the O.D.E depending on the choices of women prisoners. Women took D.V.A. courses in bookkeeping, introductory math and French, and shorthand and from the O.D.E. course offerings, women took elementary course equivalencies for grades six, seven, eight, and nine. When the new position of Educational Matron was created in the summer of 1949, the P4W’s

---


69 Although it appears that Mr. Patterson did this begrudgingly. According to interviews with his son, Bill, for the oral history project “In Our Own Words: The Links Between Kingston's Heritage and its Penitentiaries,” Mr. Patterson did not enjoy administrative or teaching responsibilities that were outside of agriculture.

70 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School Report from Dr. H. Chataway, October 17, 1949. Courses from the O.D.E. included public school and high school academic courses whereas the D.V.A course offerings were more vocational based including broad subjects such as business, engineering, and agriculture.
Lessons in Womanhood

course offerings expanded beyond correspondence courses to include in-class courses. Paterson continued to play a role in the education available at P4W by allowing women to borrow books from Kingston Penitentiary’s library and personally walking the books over a few times a week at the request of the new Educational Matron, Dr. Helen Chataway (PhD in Chemistry).  

P4W’s First Educational Staff Member

Chataway began at P4W as the first Educational Matron on August 15, 1949. Chataway was a well-educated and accomplished woman before her leadership position at P4W. She studied her B.A and M.Sc. at the University of Manitoba before completing her Ph.D in chemistry at McGill in 1926. Upon graduation, Chataway worked as a researcher for the federal government and for private companies such as the Hudson Bay Company. She also developed an interested in economics which led to the publication of her monograph, *Economics and Life*, in 1948. Chataway’s strong academic background and previous careers made her an extremely qualified candidate for the Educational Matron position which led commentators to congratulate “the inmates… on having as wise a person as Dr. Chataway with them.”

Dr. Chataway was not discouraged by the lack of educational programs when she first arrived and instead saw it was an opportunity to develop a completely new system in the prison.

---

72 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School Report from Dr. H. Chataway, October 17, 1949. See Appendix A on page 162 for a list of Educational Matrons/Officers of P4W.
74 Helen Drinkwater Chataway, *Economics and Life*, (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1948): 209-212. Chataway believed that the best way forward for economic reform was for government intervention in the form of injecting spending into the economy when necessary. Chataway believed that governments should inject their spending through the expansion of social and other services.
as evidenced by her reports to the warden of Kingston Penitentiary and Deputy Commissioner.\(^\text{76}\)

Within a month, Chataway had established eight day-time courses including written and oral English skills for French and English language speakers, an elementary English reading course, and an elementary arithmetic course for French and English women. With the help of the EFry Kingston volunteers, Chataway also oversaw an art course and an introductory French course for English speakers.\(^\text{77}\)

Chataway was able to provide more individualized support during in-class courses and for illiterate women for whom the prison system was the only form of academic education available to them. The popular correspondence courses required at least some literacy to complete even the elementary levels of public schools and Chataway would assist women enrolled even though her main focus was illiterate women. In her reports, Chataway notes that she periodically communicated with women to assess their progress in a course, answer any questions, and suggest future courses if women were engaged in the material.

Women who were literate received the majority of their academic instruction through correspondence courses. Literate women continued to take correspondence courses after the arrival of Dr. Chataway and in significant numbers. In October of 1949 a total of 23 women were enrolled in courses from the O.D.E. and D.V.A.\(^\text{78}\)

At this time, the total population of P4W was eighty-five, meaning that twenty-seven percent of women were participating in correspondence courses, and these participation levels did not account for in-class course attendance which

\(^{76}\) Commissioner Gibson reorganized the Penitentiary Service as part of his early reforms following the Archambault recommendations. This included the creation of two Deputy Commissioner positions, three Assistant Commissioners, and a host of other management positions working out of the Penitentiary Service’s headquarters in Ottawa. Gibson, “The Penitentiaries Move Forward.”

\(^{77}\) LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School Report from Dr. H. Chataway, October 17, 1949.

fluctuated.\textsuperscript{79} This level of participation remained relatively stable, with a slight increase to twenty-seven women enrolled by February 1950.\textsuperscript{80} Correspondence courses were successful because they were completed during a woman’s recreational time independently and were therefore easier to arrange than in-class courses which had to accommodate women’s prison employment.

Scheduling of classes was one of the largest obstacles that Dr. Chataway encountered. The working schedules of incarcerated women varied greatly depending on their position. For example, those who were employed in the laundry worked the first half of the week while those who pressed and ironed clothing worked the latter half of the week, and women who worked in the kitchen did so sporadically throughout each day to prepare meals and clean afterwards. Chataway proposed that classes could be held in the evening to fit any woman’s schedule, but her superiors believed that the women would then see education as taking their recreational time, despite the common practice that correspondence courses were completed during women’s own time, and the proposal did not move forward.\textsuperscript{81} Chataway continued offering day classes, but had inconsistent attendance and participation.

Outside of the classroom, Chataway’s role included responsibility for establishing a functioning library. The remnant library collection was seldom used as the incarcerated women explained “that all the books are old and have already been read.”\textsuperscript{82} She was informed that she

\textsuperscript{79} Dominion of Canada, \textit{Annual Report of the Commissioner of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1949} (Ottawa: Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1949), 51.

\textsuperscript{80} LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School Report from Dr. H. Chataway, March 4, 1950.

\textsuperscript{81} LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Correspondence from Deputy Commissioner J. McCulley to Warden Allen, November 4, 1949. McCulley also worried that night classes would interfere with fledgling recreational programs offered by EFry Kingston.

\textsuperscript{82} LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Monthly Report by Dr. H. Chataway, November 8, 1949.
could use any leftover money from the 1949 budget to purchase more books and magazines at her discretion, but that major purchases would have to be accounted for in the upcoming budget. Chataway was aware of the Penitentiary Service’s desire to gradually “build up a permanent library for the Prison for Women,” and accordingly spent time reorganizing, cleaning, and cataloguing what books had amassed over the fifteen years P4W had been in operation in preparation for purchasing new books.83 Most of the books had come from private donation and were dated in comparison to the tastes of the women who preferred contemporary magazines to keep in touch with the civilian world. In addition to a demoded book and magazine collection, Chataway encountered the same scheduling conflicts as she did with the class schedule when trying to devise a library schedule, and was lenient when items were returned late.

As shown by her library efforts, Chataway’s role as Educational Matron extended beyond classroom hours. Chataway worked a minimum forty-eight hour, six day work week and found that “the nature of penitentiary work,” and the demanding work week did not leave “enough time for renewing of faith in the ultimate verities.”84 Chataway did not remain as Educational Matron for a long period of time as she left her position at the beginning of 1951 after approximately two and a half years. In January of 1951, Mrs. Vera Hudson replaced Dr. Chataway as the Educational Matron of P4W.85 Hudson encountered the same problems as Chataway had finding that classes were irregular and the library use, and its hours of operation, were lacklustre and infrequent. Hudson spent her first month in the prison “becoming acquainted with the girls,” and

83 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Correspondence from Deputy Commissioner McCulley to Warden Allen, December 16, 1949.
spent a “good portion of time devoted to Library work,” which resulted in having space open thrice weekly for half hour blocks of time.  

Hudson’s devoted library time resulted in a catalogue of the full inventory of all text and technical books and magazine titles held in the library. Hudson’s inventory noted that there were 819 unique titles, with some titles such as the bible, *A New Algebra for Highschools* (six copies), *Shorter Poems* by William Cowper (six copies), *Let’s Consider Jobs – Household Science* (eight copies) and *Highroads* spelling books (twenty-two copies) among others having multiple copies available. The titles were grouped into the following categories: hobbies and crafts, careers, health, sports, religion, geography, science, shorthand, bookkeeping and accounting, history, mathematics, languages, English literature, English composition, French, and spelling. The process of taking inventory and organizing the library took approximately four years to complete. This was because library work was done primarily in the summers when classroom participation and course work interest was low, and because extenuating circumstances caused delays.

One such instance of delay were the fires at Kingston Penitentiary during 1955 in which “long awaited,” book shelves from the woodshop and books that had been sent for repair to the print shop were lost. Events like this were far outside of Hudson’s control as an Educational Officer, but they nonetheless hampered her ability to provide formal educational programs which were supported by relevant resources to women.

---

86 Ibid.
87 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School Report from Mrs. Vera Hudson, August 13, 1955, Appendix A.
88 Ibid.
Despite outside interventions, Hudson kept busy in the classroom teaching with a focus on basic and intermediate literacy and numeracy for French and English women. The partnership between the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston and P4W staff continued to grow, and volunteers supplemented Hudson’s course offerings with art classes. Hudson’s formal education program was largely an extension of Chataway’s original plan, but offered more selection. She taught regular Latin, French, English, and math at introductory and intermediate levels as well as bookkeeping and shorthand. Similar also to Chataway, Hudson too struggled with creating an effective school schedule. She found that most women preferred and excelled with individual instruction, despite upper administration of the Penitentiary Service wanting a uniform classroom with traditional teacher-as-lecturer instruction. Deputy Commissioner R. E March found that Hudson’s approach was more tutoring than teaching. He found it wasteful and unorganized, believing that the prison classroom should resemble a common public school classroom with a teacher lecturing at the front. The Penitentiary Service’s emphasis on having a traditional classroom in prison reflected contemporary educational trends across Ontario public schools.

The range of abilities and interests of her pupils resulted in Hudson teaching small groups, pairs, but mostly individual women brief lessons, explaining their work, and then rotating around the classroom space. The individualized attention that Hudson provided women allowed for her students to learn without fear of judgment or embarrassment. Hudson wrote in

---

94 Ibid.
one of her reports that “This woman remarked to me that she had always felt an embarrassment when her own children had asked for assistance with their homework,” and she, being illiterate, could not help. This woman made “rapid progress,” with Hudson’s individualized attention in her reading and writing abilities. Hudson’s professional decision as an educator to ignore instructions from Ottawa to teach formal education in a traditional way benefitted her students. Hudson found that as a group of learners no “more than two [were] at the same stage,” and that the traditional classroom model, which was designed for same age peer children who had similar educational experiences, would not work in P4W.

Hudson’s educational work with incarcerated women gained more recognition and support due to another federally commissioned report into the state of the justice system of Canada. In 1956, the Report of a Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Principles and Procedures Followed in the Remission Service of the Department of Justice of Canada, known as the Fauteux Report, reiterated the importance of education in prisons and echoed many of the same recommendations of the Archambault Report. The Fauteux Report praised the efforts of Commissioner Gibson for increasing the amount of teachers and instructors employed and called for further expansion of educational programs. Overall the Fauteux Report recommended that a philosophy shift towards rehabilitation, improved public education about corrections, increased and varied institutions for different types of offenders, and an overhaul of existing legislation to

---

96 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School report from Vera Hudson, October 22, 1951.
98 The national prison population was increasing consistently leading up to the Fauteux Report, but it was the reorganization of the penal system from 1947 onwards that prompted an inquiry into the Remission Service. The Fauteux Report was commissioned to ensure that the Remission Service remained relevant, efficient, and congruent with the changes to other aspects of the criminal justice system. Gerald Fauteux, et al., Report of a Committee Appointed to Inquire Into the Principles and Procedures Followed in the Remission of Service of the Department of Justice of Canada, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1956, 1-2.
create a more uniform penal system should be adopted. The Report’s forty-four specific recommendations emphasized the need for prisons to re-educate and rehabilitate incarcerated people and emphasized that to do otherwise risked creating more habitual, dangerous, and bitter recidivists. The report explained that “the importance of basic education should … be a matter of primary concern.” As for P4W specifically, the Fauteux Report recommended that “a more intensified system of varied forms of treatment should be instituted.”

The authors of the report urged the Penitentiary Service to enact these reforms as soon as possible because “the public opinion [had] never been more understanding than it is at the present.” The understanding public came from a post-war Canada where there was a desire to return to normalcy after years of war. Support for reforms that were intended to guide incarcerated people towards lifestyles that fit within an established white, middle-class, heteronormative, Christian norm was easy to find. The rise of the expert and their advice, particularly the advice of psychologists, shaped public discourse on what constituted normal behaviour. Incarcerated people, especially women, were seen as deviating from normal behaviours stemming from personality deficiencies that interfered with their ability to accept the circumstances of their lives. Incarcerated people committed the most abnormal and socially unacceptable behaviour in Canadian society, and for that they were punished through the most formal and severe measure of incarceration. Definitions of normalcy, and advice on how to

---

100 Fauteux, et al., Report of a Committee Appointed to Inquire Into the Principles and Procedures Followed in the Remission of Service of the Department of Justice of Canada, 90.
101 Ibid, 46.
102 Ibid, 88.
103 Ibid, 78.
104 Mona Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Post-War Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999): 4. Gleason argues that the norm “entrenched and reproduced the dominance of Anglo-Celtic (as opposed to ‘ethnic’) middle class, heterosexual, and patriarchal values.”
achieve the norm if one found themselves outside the standard, began with child development stages and benchmarks and extended to reach Canadians at all points in their lives.105

This ideal student-citizen was to be developed through a return to more conservative teaching practice. There was a rejection of the progressivism of the 1930s and early 1940s that was seen as eroding parents and adults natural authority over children and disliked for appearing to promote American values over British ones.106 The traditional classroom was supported by some teachers, who felt comfortable teaching a more standardized curriculum, and by members of the public such as vocal opponent of progressive education and influential historian, Hilda Neatby.107 However, the most memorable change of the 1950s was not in philosophy, but the proliferation of new schools and spaces for learning in preparation for the incoming baby boom generation.108

The growth of schools and of school aged children to fill schools, resulted in the teaching profession becoming a high demand career. Teachers were in short supply and higher salaries attracted growing numbers of individuals and kept working in the public school system. The baby boom presented a serious problem for the Penitentiary Service in the hiring of teachers. Finding prison teachers was already difficult due to the stigma still attached to prisons and

105 Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 84. See Gleason’s discussions about popular stages of development from Piaget, Blatz, Freud, and Laycock throughout chapters 2 and 4.
106 Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, 176. The most influential progressive thinkers, notably John Dewey, were Americans who were trained and taught in American universities and schools. Also see literature on Anglo-conformity including Jatinder Mann’s article “Anglo-Conformity”: Assimilation Policy in Canada, 1890s-1950s,” *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, 50 (2014): 254-257, where he discusses traditions of Britishness in schools as a component of larger assimilationist policies.
107 Gidney, *From Hope to Harris*, 36. Neatby wrote her scathing critique of Canadian progressive education, *So Little for the Mind: An Indictment of Canadian Education*, in 1953 claiming that progressive education was anti-intellectual and created a dependence on experts’ advice.
108 Ibid.
working with incarcerated people, and the salary increases of public school teachers made teaching in prisons even less appealing.109

The P4W did not encounter a shortage in teaching staff as Mrs. Vera Hudson remained the Educational Officer and her formal educational work remained stable. In January of 1958, she reported that thirty-three women were currently enrolled in D.V.A correspondence courses, with Introductory English as the most popular course; there were five women enrolled in university extension courses including Politics and Spanish; one woman was taking a grade 10 arts course from the British Colombia Department of Education, and fifteen women regularly attended classes in the P4W school.110 The isolation of the prison meant that Hudson’s educational programs were insulated from the philosophical debates about education in Ontario and elsewhere. Throughout her career, Hudson practiced an individualized approach to teaching in her classroom from 1951 resignation in the fall of 1960.111 Mrs. E. D. Diaper filled her position as teacher soon after in November of 1960 who began during a time of upheaval and reform in prison education and in the prison system overall.112

109 Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1965 (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 1965), 8. This was also true of hiring vocational and trades teachers.
110 LAC, RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108,” Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” School report from Vera Hudson, February 18, 1958.
111 Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1960 (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 1960), 72. The Supervising Matron, Mrs. Burke, was still managing P4W in March of 1960 before Macneill’s hiring in December of that year. Burke wrote that “With the resignation of our Schoolteacher, Mrs. V. Hudson, we will be starting off our revised school program with a complete new staff,” and that she was looking “forward with high hopes for an all over stepped-up program in the coming year.” Burke did not like Hudson personally as she found her “flighty,” and was annoyed when Hudson was made a permanent staff member by the Kingston Penitentiary warden soon after being hired in 1951 without Burke’s consultation. It appears that Burke’s dislike for Hudson endured until her resignation almost a decade later.
112 “Staffing Changes,” Federal Corrections 1, no. 1 (1961): 10. While teachers remained a stable position P4W did however, encounter huge matron turnover rates. In the Penitentiary Service staff quarterly magazine, Federal Corrections, staffing changes are noted in the back pages and many new matrons’ appointments are noted, which are often followed by their resignation a few months later.
The Penitentiary Service finally saw a merger of the discourse about the importance of education and the creation of positions, budgetary lines, and support for enacting educational programs with the appointment of the new Commissioner of Penitentiaries, Allen J. MacLeod in the fall of 1960. Commissioner Gibson retired and his efforts to hire more teachers in the immediate post-war period was lauded, but Commissioner MacLeod set out to reorganize and reimagine prison education. With the 1960s came immense change in all aspects of the Penitentiary Service. As a functionalist perspective suggests, the Penitentiary Service followed Canadian society in changes of attitude and practice.

Commissioner MacLeod created a Director of Training position in the headquarters of the Penitentiary Service in Ottawa to oversee the training and development of vocational programs for inmates. At the P4W, Commissioner MacLeod made substantial change by creating the position of Superintendent. This position restructured the relationship between Kingston Penitentiary and P4W slightly as the new position now assumed control over the training and discipline of inmates and staff while KP’s warden retained control over the finances of the institution as well as the ability to hire new staff, the maintenance of the building, and was responsible for delivering food rations as ordered by the new Superintendent. Macleod had a candidate in mind for this new position. He reached out to Isabel J. Macneill who had a career in corrections, as the former Superintendent of the Ontario Training School for Girls (OTSG), and a

---

113 “Staffing Changes,” Federal Corrections 1, no. 1 (1961): 6. MacLeod had a law background, graduating from Dalhousie University Law School in 1942, after which he served overseas. He then was called to bar after the war in 1945 and began working in Department of Justice in 1950 in various roles before his appointment to Commissioner.

114 Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649, file 2, “Prison for Women correspondence and miscellaneous administrative material, 1961-1966,” Prison for Women – Superintendent - Terms of Reference from Commissioner of Penitentiaries, circa 1960. In the past, the P4W was managed by a Head Matron, but the final authority over all matters rested with the Warden of Kingston Penitentiary.
career in the navy, as the Commander in the Royal Canadian Women’s Naval Service, before officially joining the Penitentiary Service in December of 1960.\textsuperscript{115}

Macneill’s correctional background and past leadership made her an ideal candidate to become the first Superintendent at P4W. Commissioner MacLeod and Superintendent Macneill shared a vision of reform for P4W that was keeping with the recommendations of the Fauteux Report. As per the recommendation that P4W develop a “more intensified system of varied forms of treatment,” Macneill supported existing programs and emphasized that treatment would only be effective if incarcerated women were invested and interested in change. Women had to develop skills while incarcerated, but the types of skills to be developed, whether they were vocational, educational, interpersonal, intrapersonal, or a combination of the like, were self-directed. Macneill made women choose as much of their treatment plan as possible, beginning with their prison employment.

\textsuperscript{115} Macneill completed her B.A and teaching certification as a young woman before travelling abroad to work as a stage director and teacher. She returned to her hometown of Halifax during the Second World War and enlisted in the Royal Canadian Women’s Naval Service, (R.C.W.N.S) known as WRENS. By the end of the war, she was promoted to the rank of Commander of the H.M.C.S Conestoga and as the first woman in the British Commonwealth to reach this rank, Macneill was awarded an Order of Empire for her service.

In 1948, Macneill took the position of Superintendent at the Ontario Training School for Girls (OTSG) which was a reformatory for delinquent girls. OTSG was located in Galt, Ontario where the fresh air and pastoral countryside was supposed to contribute to the rehabilitation of girls who were believed to have fallen to the evil vices of the city. This was where Macneill began to develop her philosophies on incarceration and institutionalized care. Macneill found the task of disciplining and incarcerating girls while also providing a rehabilitative environment to be an impossible paradox, especially given the low staff to child ratios. She simultaneously joined the newly established Board of Directors of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto which, like the Kingston branch, worked with women and girls in conflict with the law and provided assistance through activities and advocacy. Macneill cited a difference in correctional philosophy as the reason for her resignation from OTSG in 1954.

Macneill moved to Ottawa to rejoin the WRENS to advise on hiring policies for women with criminal records, and although she moved, Macneill kept up her involvement with the Elizabeth Fry Society by joining the Ottawa branch. She left the WRENS in 1957 and until 1960, Macneill travelled to Europe to research prisons and chaired a Nova Scotia committee on juvenile delinquency. The committee’s proposal, which emphasized preventative action and avoided detention, was rejected for being “too revolutionary,” which was indicative of Macneill’s evolving philosophy on correctional institutions. Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649, file 4, “Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training,” Appendix B - resume in letter to Dr. Barbara Kay re: Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training, July 11, 1966
Macneill wanted women to value education as much as any other form of prison employment so she made full-time schooling, in any level that a woman was qualified, a paid option comparable with all of the other employment opportunities in the prison.116 Some incarcerated women pursued this option, and in 1963 there were seventeen women, representative of sixteen percent of the total population - that chose full-time schooling as their prison employment.117 During this time, Mrs. E. Diaper taught as in the classroom full-time for roughly two years from the fall of 1960 until the fall of 1962. Mrs. H. J Heidecker was hired immediately following Diaper’s resignation and continued teaching women individually in the classroom full-time.118 In addition to classroom studies, sixty percent of incarcerated women were enrolled in correspondence courses, which was an increase compared to participation in correspondence courses from the previous decade. Increased correspondence course enrollment continued throughout Macneill’s tenure as Superintendent until her resignation at the end of the 1965 fiscal year.119

Conclusions

Formal academic education at P4W throughout the first three decades of operation evolved slowly, but developed into a robust program that offered women opportunities to take courses that ranged from Ontario public school primary grades levels to university level courses offered by nearby Queen’s University via correspondence. The first Educational Matron of P4W,

Dr. Helen Chataway, created a series of introductory courses with a focus on basic literacy and numeracy courses that established the standard for formal education in the prison classroom. Her successor, Mrs. Vera Hudson, continued to offer individually focused introductory courses for women with low literacy skills and offered support to women working independently on correspondence courses. These two educators were isolated in the very specific context of the only federal women’s prison classroom and were therefore able to be selective and critical of teaching rhetoric and policy changes in the realm of public education from the Ontario Department of Education. The prison teachers who followed after Chataway and Hudson offered the same formal education program to incarcerated women. The focus of the prison educator, at times called the Educational Matron, Educational Officer, or simply Teacher, was to help illiterate and semi-illiterate women gain functional literacy skills and to monitor the progress of women enrolled in correspondence courses.

Beyond these conclusions, it is difficult to ascertain a complete picture of formal educational programs in the P4W from 1934-1965. The Annual Reports of the Penitentiary Service do not comment on the women’s prison at length, with typically less than a paragraph written about the entirety of P4W’s year throughout the 1930s and into the late 1940s. The Annual Reports produced by Commissioner Gibson from 1947-1960 include a Supervising Matron’s report, which offers more insight into the programs, particularly when paired with the school reports from Chataway and Hudson. The Annual Reports produced by Commissioner MacLeod from 1960 onwards offered more detail on P4W as an institution financially, but did not include references to women’s education in the report’s general education sections nor did it include individual reports from wardens and superintendents. Formal educational programs and the classes held in P4W deserve more attention, especially in regards to how incarcerated
women, the Educational Officers, and any support staff experienced these classrooms. This type of information could be accessed through memoirs, diaries, or drafts of monthly school reports which have yet to be discovered.

Education of incarcerated women as defined by Macneill, and other administrators in P4W and the Penitentiary Service, was believed to be a broad endeavour that went beyond the formal classroom. Administrators wanted incarcerated people to learn skills and traits that would make them successful workers and citizens upon release. For women, this meant mastering domestic skills and learning the skills of professions deemed appropriate for women. In the following chapter I will explore vocational educational programs in P4W.
Chapter Three: Vocational Education

Introduction

Vocational education was the oldest and most enduring form of education in the P4W from 1934-1965.\(^1\) This was because vocational education, or vocational training as it was called by the Penitentiary Service before 1961, was linked to labour and production. Prison labour in Canada was foundational to the establishment of Kingston Penitentiary. The Auburn prison system was chosen primarily because it promised to be self-sufficient as a result of the sale of prisoner labour and because work prevented idleness, which was then believed to be a leading cause of crime.\(^2\) Into the twentieth century, prison labour’s definition changed, but it continued to play a dually functioning role in prisons as a way to offset operational costs and as a way to reform prisoners. During the First and Second World Wars, prison labour became a project wherein incarcerated Canadians could contribute to the war effort and thus express their patriotism.\(^3\) The language surrounding prison labour post-Second World War framed it as a productive, perhaps even altruistic, way for inmates to serve their sentences, earn a pay cheque, and to improve their sense of self-worth and self-esteem.\(^4\) The original, early nineteenth century

---

\(^1\) Vocational education is archived in the Correctional Service of Canada’s fonds from 1924 until 1959 in twenty-two boxed under the title “Educational Facilities in Penitentiaries”. After 1959, a new filing system acknowledged differences between academic and vocational education and led to the creation of a series of files titled “Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Inmates Generally”. As evidenced by the volume of documents, which span over four decades and equal the volume of academic educational documents, vocational education was an integral component of prison education in Canada.

\(^2\) The idea that labour in prisons was equally for moral production as well as material production was established in Michel Foucault’s seminal text *Discipline and Punish.* For a Canadian perspective see Ted McCoy’s article “The Unproductive Prisoner: Labour and Medicine in Canadian Prisons, 1867-1900,” or his “Labour” chapter, pages 19-60, in *Hard Time* which both discuss the connection between prisoner labour and rehabilitation/reformation.

\(^3\) See pages 68 and 105 for more information on the war effort contributions of P4W.

connections between prison labour and reformation remained engrained well into the twentieth century.

Vocational training has been ubiquitous in Canadian prisons since their inception, requiring that all incarcerated people do work in some capacity.\(^5\) For incarcerated women, this labour was extremely gendered and fell within commonly accepted ideas of women’s work.\(^6\) Vocational education was another way that education was used in P4W to rehabilitate and reform incarcerated women into models of respectable womanhood. Respectable womanhood limited women’s employment opportunities to the domestic sphere as a wife and mother, extensions of domesticity (such as taking in washing from wealthier homes, acting as a housekeeper or nanny), or professions that emphasized caring and support such as teaching, nursing, and secretarial/clerical work. Even as Canadian women made small expansions in their access to a broader range of careers, especially during the Second World War as a result of the demand for labour it created, P4W’s vocational education stagnated in traditionally feminine roles from 1934-1965.

\(^5\) One notable exception to prison labour was the refusal of the Doukhobor prisoners. The Doukhobor prisoners, as they were referred to by Penitentiary Service officials, called themselves the Sons of Freedom, which was a sub-sect of religious minority group the Doukhobors, who emigrated from Russia to Canada at the beginning of the twentieth century. They were pacifists and were arrested in large numbers throughout the 1940s and 1950s for public disturbances, spurred by nude protests, and refusing to send their children to school. When incarcerated, they collectively refused work and were feared arsonists who had a reputation of starting fires whenever and wherever they could. The Doukhobours were so difficult to manage within a regular prison population that a separate, fire-proofed prison, the Stony Mountain Camp, was opened in a remote area of mainland B.C. Men and women were incarcerated here in separate, adjacent camps and were given the absolute bare minimum food, uniforms, visiting privileges, and recreational opportunities as punishment for their refusal to work.

Origins of Vocational Work for Incarcerated People

The original plan for prison labour, as informed by the Auburn prison system, foresaw the Kingston Penitentiary entering into contracts with private industry to supply a captive and stable work force. Immediately local workers and guilds were incensed by the unfair advantage that a prison work force had over free workers because of their immurement. Local workers also expressed outrage because Kingston Penitentiary had the ability to undercut local producers’ costs by reducing or eliminating wages from contacts because at this time incarcerated men and women were not paid any wage for their prison labour.\(^7\) Tradesmen were insulted that prisoners would create and sell similar products and tradesmen felt as though sharing a professional title with convicted criminals diminished the reputation and legitimacy of their crafts.\(^8\) Private contracts nonetheless were signed by prison administration, such as a shoemaking contract signed in 1849 with an American businessman from New York, E.P. Ross, which employed fifty men daily for approximately thirty cents.\(^9\) Prison administration were pressured to generate as large a profit from prisoner labour as possible to supplement Kingston Penitentiary’s operational budget, to ideally, become a self-sustaining institution.

Continuous petitioning from local workers pressured the federal government to rethink its contract approach to prison labour, but the operational costs of prisons were too great to convince both Liberal and Conservative governments to end contract labour for incarcerated

---

\(^7\) W. A Calder, “The Federal Penitentiary System in Canada, 1867-1899: A Social and Institutional History,” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1979), 297-8. For example, contracts per diem for prisoners ranged from $0.20-0.50 whereas a carpenter would make $1.50/day in nearby Toronto.


\(^9\) Oliver, *Terror to Evil-Doers*, 244. Ross was involved in the majority of Kingston Penitentiary contracts throughout the mid-nineteenth century. See Calder “The Federal Penitentiary System in Canada,” page 298 for a figure detailing Ross’ involvement in various contracts.
people decisively for approximately four decades.\textsuperscript{10} In 1870, the Directors of Penitentiaries pledged to stop private prison labour contracts, but continued to do so in practice, even as there were unsuccessful interventions in 1873 and 1883 by the federal government to end contract labour in Kingston Penitentiary.\textsuperscript{11} Finally, the federal government passed legislation in 1887 that ended all contracts thereby taking prison labour out of competition with free labour because of local labour concerns and because of an inability to negotiate profitable, private contracts.\textsuperscript{12} This resulted in a limitation of vocational training and employment opportunities in prisons to the maintenance and operations of prisons and, in smaller quantities, creating goods to be sold to different departments in government.\textsuperscript{13}

For the smaller population of incarcerated women, this meant that vocational positions in prison entailed cooking, cleaning, laundering, and sewing work, which was not unlike the employment available to their free counterparts.\textsuperscript{14} For example, while women were still incarcerated within a separate unit on Kingston Penitentiary grounds, the women did industrial laundry for the entire institution. The industrial laundry work was considered women’s work even though it required great strength and endurance to work in the steamy laundry room.

\textsuperscript{10} Early prison labour contracts at Kingston Penitentiary began in the late 1840s and the federal government passed legislation to stop prison labour contracts in the late 1880s.


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 303.

\textsuperscript{13} CorCan, the division of the Correctional Service of Canada responsible for prison labour, still creates goods for government needs. A Kingston example of this work arrangement is the production and repairs of mail bags for Canada Post that was completed in Kingston Penitentiary until it closed in 2013.

\textsuperscript{14} At this time, late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} century Canada, women worked primarily in the home, but scholars such as Peter Baskerville and Melanie Buddle have explored women’s work outside of the home, noting regional trends with Western Canadian women being more apt to take on additional labour. Baskerville and Buddle state that this regional difference is because women living in British Colombia had spouses employed in resource extraction industries that often took men away from home for prolonged periods. Frontier women supplemented their incomes by taking in washing, sewing, and dressmaking, while some women ran boarding houses, inns, and taverns. For more discussion on women’s entrepreneurial work in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early the 20\textsuperscript{th} century see Peter Baskerville’s A Silent Revolution? Gender and Wealth in English-Speaking Urban Canada, 1860-1930 (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2008) and Melanie Buddle’s The Business of Women: Marriage, Family, and Entrepreneurship in British Colombia 1901-1951 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).
heaving bundles of wet clothes from station to station. Laundry and washing was a disputed issue in Kingston Penitentiary. Officers brought their personal soiled laundry from home to the prison for washing and the incarcerated women who washed it were very unhappy about the extra work and felt that it fell far outside the scope of their prison employment and punishment. Nickle, an official investigating the state of Kingston Penitentiary on behalf of the federal government, stated “the women bitterly resent the indignity and consider themselves degraded by what they are compelled to do,” when washing personal, soiled garments by hand. It was such a point of contention that the Nickle Report, the previously mentioned catalyst for constructing a separate women’s prison, noted how disgusting and undignified the investigators thought it was to have women washing unfamiliar men’s dirty laundry, even if they were officers.

**P4W 1934-1945: New Location, Same Vocation**

The creation of a separate women’s prison, spurred by the Nickle Report, changed the physical conditions of imprisonment, but not the long-standing traditions that guided women’s incarceration in Canada including those that emphasized the importance of women’s vocational training in rehabilitation. The architectural plans for P4W confirm the importance of vocational training, particularly laundry, in transforming women from criminal to law-abiding, respectable women. The laundry room was planned to be state of the art in 1927 with a large, 39.4-by-42 foot, ventilated space in the basement. Laundry had a prominent role in P4W. The facility,

---

15 LAC, Correctional Service of Canada fonds, RG 73, C-1 4-1-14, volume 105, file “Investigation by W. F. Nickle Re: Female Prison, Kingston, 1921,” 7.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid. Nickle stated this about officer’s personal laundry: “I am convinced, and it cannot be truthfully denied, that at times these washings are very foul, and it is surprising that self-respecting people would send such soiled clothes to a public place to be cleaned, more particularly when it is known that women do the washing by hand.”
18 W. Lawson, Chief Engineer, “Cell Block, Basement Plan,” January 1927, Blueprint 193KC1630 from Physical Plant Services, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada.
when combined with the adjacent laundry storage room, was the area with the greatest square footage of a shared area in the prison when it opened in 1934.\textsuperscript{19} The Penitentiary Service acknowledged laundry as a key component of women’s incarceration because it provided easy employment and because of the need for clean bedding and uniforms.

In the mid-1930s, coinciding with P4W’s opening, the Penitentiary Service learned that laundry could be reframed as a vocational educational program when administration researched penal practice in New York State.\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Development of Curricula for Correctional Institutions}, written by Walter W. Wallack who was the Director of Education for New York State Corrections, was published by the American Prison Association (APA) as a guide for establishing an educational program in prisons.\textsuperscript{21} It provided both theoretical and practical musings on how and why it was important to establish a variety of educational program in prisons and included a specific women’s course on laundry that taught both vocational and social skills. The Penitentiary Service used the guide as an example of what could be developed in a Canadian context. Wallack introduced the text by explaining his personal theories on prison education as Director of Education this belief that prison curricula included “all the experiences and materials which are utilized in the learning process, the organization of these materials, and

\textsuperscript{19} The calculation of the prominence of the laundry space is based on a comparison of other single purpose, shared rooms. As a collective, the cells comprise the largest area of the prison, but I consider cells as individual spaces in this assessment because incarcerated women would have only had access to their own cell. The laundry, as a shared space where all women had access to, is the largest space in P4W.

\textsuperscript{20} LAC RG 73 1-17-2 vol. 1 “Educational Facilities in Penitentiaries, 1924-1938,” report by Walter W. Wallack titled \textit{The Development of Curricula for Correctional Institutions}, between July 1935 and December 1937. Just as Upper Canadian officials had looked to American models to select an original prison system, the Penitentiary Service looked to the APA to develop their educational programs.

\textsuperscript{21} Walter M. Wallack earned a doctoral degree in Education from Colombia University in 1938. Wallack worked as the first Director of Education for the New York Department of Correction from 1932 until 1940 when he became the Warden of Wallkill State Prison, which was seen as progressive prison, as it did not have any walls surrounding the building designed to look like a college. Wallack developed and initiated an expanse of training and education programs for both incarcerated men and correctional officers while he was Warden at Wallkill until his retirement in 1966. He was an international consultant and advised other governments on educational prison reform. \textit{New York Times}, “Dr. Walter M. Wallack is Dead; Penologist and Author Was 76,” (New York, NY) August 18, 1973.
the methods by which learning is guided.” Wallack then provided practitioner examples of exemplary course design and practice which included the model laundry curriculum for incarcerated women.

The course Wallack included was that of Miss Bernice Byfield, who developed the laundry course while in teacher’s college for students incarcerated in a southern New York state reformatory and industrial farm for women and girls. The outline, printed in full in *The Development of Curricula for Correctional Institutions*, was heavily racialized and designed for “ten negro girls with a mental age around ten years.” Miss Byfield, believed that many of her students/custodial charges would be from the Southern United States originally and that they would “not have the moral standards of the North and [would] be a rather happy-go-lucky group.” Byfield’s biased description of her students is important to understanding the rest of the course as it is used to preface her learning objectives, which she divides into two categories with eight social objectives and five vocational objectives. Byfield then gives examples about how to assess her objectives. If a woman improved throughout a laundry course it could be “shown by a. less frequent attacks of moodiness [and] b. less temper tantrums.” Byfield elaborated that incarcerated women could be evaluated by assessing whether they had “shown improvement in personal appearance as shown by: a. more attractively arranged hair b. care of

---

22 LAC RG 73 1-17-2 vol. 1 “Educational Facilities in Penitentiaries, 1924-1938,” report by Walter W. Wallack titled *The Development of Curricula for Correctional Institutions*, between July 1935 and December 1937, 2. This course is one of the few references that pertain to incarcerated women throughout the period 1924-1959 as most documents related to women were stored and archived in separate, P4W only files.

23 Bernice Byfield was the Director of Education at the Westfield Reformatory Farm for Women and Girls in the 1930s, which was established at the turn of the twentieth century and was one of the first separate institutions for women in New York state.


25 Ibid.

dress [and] c. making of collars, etc. for dress.”

Byfield’s assessment criteria support the idea that a women’s temperament and physical appearance were reliable and important markers of success in a laundry course.

The most important lessons to be learned from Byfield’s laundry course, which was regarded as a standard for women’s vocational education in prison, were being pleasant, agreeable, and physically attractive. An incarcerated woman’s actual vocational training achievement (such as improved laundering skills or speed) or employability upon release were secondary to embodying respectable womanhood in prisons. Laundry, which had always been considered women’s work, was reimagined as another educational avenue to teach women proper feminine behaviours and social norms. Laundry and the other vocations in P4W, such as cooking and cleaning, all reinforced traditional gender roles, but this reinforcement of gendered employment was not limited to incarcerated women in the 1930s.

Although the Penitentiary Service believed that incarcerated women working in the laundry could be envisioned as vocational education, the commissioners of the 1938 Archambault Report were not so easily convinced. Upon inspecting P4W and other Canadian prisons they reported that “there [was] no vocational education worthy of name.” They found that women worked solely in maintaining the prison and that education and leisure opportunities were sorely lacking. The Archambault Report called for working and educational opportunities to be expanded in all prisons to ensure that incarcerated women had more employable skills upon

---

release than they had prior to incarceration.\textsuperscript{29} The industrial laundry work that women completed daily did not translate well to employment after incarceration.

Free women also learned of the limited employment opportunities available following domestic education training in the 1930s. As a part of federal relief efforts during the Great Depression, under the Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act of 1937 funded vocational training programs for young adults, but required provinces to match federal spending which resulted in underuse of the program.\textsuperscript{30} Only 1700 women participated across all provinces, and received funding for vocational training. The women were taught skills in a course called home-service training.\textsuperscript{31} Men were eligible to learn mining and forestry skills that were directly employable after completion of their training whereas women could only learn domestic skills which were readily accessible without formal training. There was no direct path to employment following the completion of women’s vocational training assisted by this federal program which resembled the training that incarcerated women received at P4W during the same period.\textsuperscript{32} Women’s vocational education was intended to keep women working in the home and in the domestic sphere regardless of the dire economic situation or personal circumstances that necessitated a women earning income to support herself, and any potential children, without a male partner.

\textsuperscript{29} Archambault, \textit{Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada}, 129. The expansion of educational and vocational training in prisons also applied to incarcerated men. \\
\textsuperscript{30} Darius R. Young, \textit{An Historical Survey of Vocational Education in Canada} (Toronto: Captus Press, 1992), 23. \\
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, 24. \\
\textsuperscript{32} Veronica Strong-Boag, \textit{The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919–1939} (Markham: Penguin Books, 1988), 51. Strong-Boag found that over 70% of working women in 1921, 1931, and 1941 worked in only 6 of the 25 total categories of employment collected by the census. These 6 fields were “textiles and clothing, retail and wholesale trade, education, health and welfare services, food and lodging, and personal and recreational services.” Of these categories of women’s work in Canada, it should be noted that women comprised over 50% of the total workforce in textiles and clothing, education, health and welfare services, and in personal and recreational services although few, if any, women worked in management positions in any of their respective fields.
The onset of the Second World War rapidly changed the vocational opportunities of both incarcerated and free women in Canada. The War Emergency Training program of 1940 was the first federal response to providing vocational training for the war effort. The training program was available to any person aged sixteen years or older who wished to learn skills for either industries that supported the war, or for skills needed to eventually enlist as an active member of the armed forces. Subsequent legislation, the Vocational Training Coordination Act of 1942, consolidated the efforts of the 1940 act and set up provincial-federal agreements to share costs in training. The high demand for skilled workers resulted in select technical secondary schools operating on a twenty-four hour schedule in urban centres with men, women, and students training in three shifts although women were not permitted to take overnight classes. Secondary students would take their regular technical and vocational courses throughout the day and adults would take their places in classrooms in the evenings and overnight. Once secondary students reached enlistment age, many joined the military in the fields which they had studied at secondary school and some continued to study more specific vocational skills before enlisting. Some young women were recruited for specific positions directly out of secondary school, but overall after 1942 with men continuing to enlist into military service, women were recruited to fill a wider variety of positions.

33 Young, *An Historical Survey of Vocational Education in Canada*, 27.
35 John Allison, “Technical School in Toronto: Growing Up in the Trades During the Second World War,” *Historical Studies in Education* 28, no. 1 (2016): 64. Women were restricted to evening classes. Daytime classes would interfere with childcare responsibilities and overnight classes were perceived as inappropriate for women who would have to travel to and from the facility alone at night. Incarcerated men also worked into the night as wartime production ramped up in 1942 and their willingness to do so was “commendable,” according to the acting Superintendent of Penitentiaries W.S Lawson. Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1942*, 15.
As men enlisted in greater numbers, women replaced their labour in factories, service industries, in the home as the head of household, and across the Penitentiary Service. In P4W labour efforts were reorganized to support the war. Incarcerated women continued with their regular routines of washing laundry, cooking meals, and cleaning as these were essential for daily operations of the prison, but they also undertook new wartime projects. These new projects included an industrial sewing campaign in which 20,000 pillow cases for the Navy were produced and an agricultural project development with the help of Mr. Patterson, the farm instructor of Kingston Penitentiary. P4W established and maintained a brood of egg-laying hens and a vegetable garden within prison grounds. Any extra eggs, fresh produce, and canned goods, which were canned at Kingston Penitentiary, were given to the local Navy training facility. Sewing and gardening were clear examples of feminized work in P4W. Although raising hens was considered an agricultural pursuit, incarcerated women’s innate caring nature was thought to guarantee success in the endeavour. Regardless of the gendered nature of P4W’s assistance, supporting the war effort did expand P4W’s vocational training repertoire to include industrial sewing and small-scale agriculture, both of which continued after the war and offered women varied vocational opportunity.

The Post-war Decades, 1945-1965

“Technical School in Toronto: Growing Up in the Trades During the Second World War,” 65. Allison’s article also mentions how women were recruited for oddly specific jobs including meter assembly which required weaving coloured wires as men were found to generally be too colour-blind to effectively wire meters, see page 65 for his discussion.

38 Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1940*, 36. One of the largest labour reorganization tasks of the Penitentiary Service was retaining and keeping male staff, particularly guards, as they enlisted into military service.


40 Ibid.

41 Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1943*, 16. The agricultural operations had been so successful that P4W ordered an additional 500 chicks to increase their brood.
Post-Second World War Canada saw the return of thousands of soldiers looking for working and the begrudging resignation of many women to allow for veterans to find employment and for a return to the male as breadwinner family composition. Canadian women had always worked outside of their homes or brought additional work into their homes for extra income, but the Second World War allowed women en masse to experience the freedom that accompanied a full-time, paid position. Understandably, many women did not want to leave their wartime employment, but most relented. Although the increased presence of women working for pay normalized to some extent in the post-war era, the climate of workplaces were slow to improve and reminded working women that a job was yet another “arena in which courtship, and thus eventually marriage, women’s ultimate vocation, might be pursued.” Nonetheless women continued to work in traditional jobs such as teaching, nursing, social work, textile and garment making, sales, and clerical work.

Despite the return of men to industrial, manufacturing, farming and other traditionally male domains and women working in their respective domains, Canada’s rapidly growing economy required more skilled workers and vocational education remained a pressing concern. At the end of the war in 1945, the provinces and federal government extended the agreement of the 1942 Vocational Training Coordination Act for an additional twelve years.

---


43 Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 45. Strong-Boag found that women were a growing part of the general workforce from 1921 as 15.45% of the total to 19.85% of the total by 1941. She however notes that these numbers are underestimations as they are based on census data which did not account for part-time work, paid women’s work in the home (i.e. taking in lodgers), or women’s work in family businesses. Census data obviously also does not account for illicit work of prostitution, owning brothels, or any other illegal activity like bootlegging which certainly provided some women, and their families, a source of income.

44 Ibid, 62.


Vocational education in Canada had long been viewed as “preparation for second-class citizenship,” because it offered blue collar employment, but the high demand for skilled labour meant that this perception had to be spun positively instead assuring Canadians that vocational education was a guarantee for stable, well-paid employment. An advisory council was formed in 1942 and was later renamed Vocational Training Advisory Committee (VTAC) in 1953 to create strategies to attract students to vocational education, to advise on the development of vocational training programs, and to anticipate future needs of the changing economy. The VTAC was comprised of unpaid members from private industry and the public service. There were representatives from industries including construction, social work, agriculture, and engineering and public representatives from the D.V.A., various provincial Ministries and Departments of Education, Statistics Canada, the Department of Justice, and the Penitentiary Service. The extended agreement and VATC resulted in discussion and attention on vocational training across sectors of Canadian industry although it would take until the 1960 Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act to see a prioritization of these plans by the federal government as evidenced by their commitment to spending and funding the majority of vocational costs in schools.

Dr. Chataway – The First Educational Matron

---

49 LAC RG 73 1-21-16 vol. 76 part 12, “Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Inmates Generally” Minutes of the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the Vocational Training Advisory Council, February 13-14, 1958. The wide group of representatives was intended to foster discussion on training across employment fields and to create strategies to develop vocational training for all types of professions.
50 Gidney, Hope to Harris, 44-45. The federal government assumed up to 75% of schooling costs for students enrolled in provincial secondary schools that devoted at least half their time to trades. This financial incentive saw the rapid adoption of more vocational programs in public schools.
Similarly in the Penitentiary Service during the immediate post-Second World War period, reform of vocational education, among a series of reforms, began. The appointment of Ralph B. Gibson as Superintendent of Penitentiaries in 1947 revitalized the Penitentiary Service and Gibson focused on education as a key component of rehabilitation for incarcerated people. For P4W, this meant that incarcerated women would finally have an Educational Matron, which was the equivalent of a teacher, conducting formal lessons in the prison. The vocational education that the first Educational Matron, and her successors, offered remained fixed in ideas of what constituted acceptable women’s work in Canada.

Dr. Helen Chataway began in 1949 and created an educational program that included vocational components. Academic education was Chataway’s primary focus, particularly helping illiterate women learn to read and write, but she did start vocational education programs. The first vocational training program that Chataway organized was a St. John’s Ambulance home nursing course taught by local instructors by the end of 1949. For eight weeks, incarcerated women who enrolled in the course attended two-hour classes twice a week and received certification in home nursing if they successfully completed their exams. Women who proved particularly apt with these skills were allowed to work in P4W’s hospital as nursing aides. As this was the first official vocational training course in P4W, it revealed that the Penitentiary

---

51 R. B. Gibson, “The Penitentiaries Move Forward,” (An address given to the Canadian Penal Congress, Kingston, Ontario, June 21, 1949). Gibson pledged to make all of the reforms noted in the 1938 Archambault Commission which had been neglected during the Second World War. The reforms included better access to education, emphasis on rehabilitation, and moving away from a punishment centred prison model.

52 Throughout the majority of the Second World War, the Commissioner of Penitentiary position had been filled by acting Commissioners. Gibson’ appointment as permanent Commissioner signalled a recommitment to the penal system from the Department of Justice.


54 LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W, School Report from Dr. Helen D. Chataway, December 9, 1949; LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W, School Report from Dr. Helen D. Chataway, April 4, 1950, page 2. Eleven women took the course to completion from the end of December until mid-March and all eleven passed the course.
Service was changing its views that incarcerated women could learn skills beyond manual labour, as had been the case with laundry education, but that women’s vocational learning remained solidly in the feminine sphere.

There were also regular typing classes that accompanied the regular academic instruction and occasional nursing course. When Chataway began in August, she ordered a typewriter immediately and one arrived by November 1949.55 In her reports, Chataway praised the diligent practice of the incarcerated women stating “the students taking typing, however, are persevering commendably, so much so, that with an ever lengthening waiting list, logic suggests that a second typewriter should be purchased.”56 Additional typewriters were purchased in the following months and typing practice was a constant activity in the P4W. Women could enrol for a one-hour typing practice block throughout each day and Chataway read and corrected their typing sheets. Typing offered incarcerated women necessary skills for clerical or secretarial work which was a common form of employment for women.57 Typing, like nursing, was part of a set of vocational skills that would lead incarcerated women along the path to a respectable profession upon release.

In addition to providing vocational training, Chataway counselled women privately about their future career choices. She connected incarcerated women with EFry Kingston volunteers and community members who matched women with mentors, services, or training after their

56 LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W, School Report from Dr. Helen D. Chataway, March 4, 1950.
57 Joan Sangster, “Invoking Experience as Evidence,” Canadian Historical Review 92, no. 1 (2011): 144. In this article, Sangster reflects on the letters from working women to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1968-69. Sangster notes that she read all of the letters and found that the majority came from white and pink collar workers, who were comprised of secretarial and clerical workers.
release based on their career aspirations.\textsuperscript{58} One such woman that Chataway advised was a young woman named Anne in the spring of 1950.

Anne arrived, and wanted advice as to the possibility of her getting work (after her discharge) in a school in a far northern area (a suggestion that had been made to her by Mrs. Lord). Discovered the girl is “High Anglican”. Outlined to her life in one of the Church of England, Indian and Eskimo Residential Schools. In canvassing possibilities, frankly ruled out that of her being able to supervise girls at work, say, in the Laundry (her own character is not dependable enough); but pointed out there was work to be in mothering youngsters just arrived, helping to scrubbing their faces and dry their tears. (It may be that this takes character too, nevertheless her reply was enlightening.) “Now that, that appeals to me, the younger the better. I wish I had about 10 of my own.” No, she had never had a chance to do work of that type. Always it had been factory work or waitress work, “and I don’t like either.”\textsuperscript{59}

Anne had already experienced the women’s world of work as a waitress and factory worker, which she disliked, but she was thrilled with the idea of working with infants and toddlers.

There was no consensus among Canadian women, free or incarcerated, if women should remain working within professions that were already open to women or whether women should try to expand their employment options. Some women, such as Anne, were happy to work in childcare while others desperately wanted alternative career options in fields such as scientific research.\textsuperscript{60} The vocational options presented in P4W through counselling and training opportunities directed women towards traditional, respectable, professions for women.\textsuperscript{61} P4W dissuaded women who were interested in untraditional work by not providing any vocational opportunities outside of women’s work and by repeating suggestions of specific careers.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} Lloydlangston, “Applying to Be ‘Industrial Soldiers’: The Letters of Young Women Wanting to Train as Chemistry Laboratory Technicians, 1942–1944,” 40-42.
\textsuperscript{61} LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W, Special Report of the Work of One Day, March 28, 1950
There were also plans for vocational training for incarcerated women that were initiated outside of the immediate P4W staff by the upper administration of the Penitentiary Service. These vocational education opportunities too were located within traditional sphere of women’s work. P4W was constructed with a salon area in the basement near the laundry room and in 1951 Penitentiary Service administration decided to use the salon as a learning space. Penitentiary Service officials shopped around Kingston for second-hand wash basins, dryers, chairs, and other hairdressing equipment to set up small beauty salon. The search proved fruitless at first as Elliot’s Hairdressing Parlour’s advertised goods were overpriced, broken, and of “poorest quality.” The Penitentiary Service representative, G.N. Whaley wrote that he would follow other leads for used equipment for sale. Whaley then demystified the daunting process of a “permanent” or perm, to justify why he would need a larger budget to purchase a second wash basin. Unbeknownst to upper administration (but likely known to their wives), a perm was a highly time sensitive operation. A salon required at least two wash basins because the solution used to perm hair could cause chemical burns to the scalp or damage a client’s hair permanently if not washed out in a timely fashion. This letter reveals Penitentiary Service’s lack of knowledge in traditionally feminine fields needed to initiate vocational programs for women.

---

62 W. Lawson, Chief Engineer, “Cell Block, Basement Plan,” January 1927, Blueprint 193KC1630 from Physical Plant Services, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. The blueprints do not designate whether the original purpose of the salon was for women to groom themselves during their sentences or whether it was intended to become a learning space for hairdressing and aesthetician skills.


65 Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 51. Strong-Boag argues while men and women were counted in the census as two parts of the overall Canadian workforce that in reality, the opportunities for employment, the wages, and upward mobility for men and women were so vastly different that it created two separate worlds of work. The idea that women and men worked in two separate worlds becomes evident when Penitentiary Service officials tried to establish a salon at P4W.
Despite the learning curve for the Penitentiary Service’s upper administration in regards to salon management, a beauty salon opened in January 1952. The vocational training course was offered on a trial basis to six women who were nearing their release dates. The women applied for enrolment to the Warden of Kingston Penitentiary who chose students primarily on their release dates. Although it was referred to as a beauty parlour course, the students focused on hairdressing. The six incarcerated women were instructed by Mrs. I. Fuller, aided by the Educational Officer, Mrs. Vera Hudson, over a six month period in the evenings after their work day. The course culminated with an exam, which all women passed, and hairstyle makeovers to display their new skills. The women were awarded certificates, corsages, and new nylon donated by the other incarcerated women at a surprise graduation ceremony in week following the course. The certificate recognized the women’s work in the course and represented approximately fifteen percent completion of the required hours for a hairdressing license in Ontario, which P4W staff hoped would lead these women to a career in a salon post-release.

A New Era in Corrections and Vocational Education: The 1960s

The 1956 Fauteux Report praised the efforts of the current Commissioner of Penitentiaries, which was R.B. Gibson, for increasing the amount of academic teachers and vocational instructors employed across the service, but it also called for further expansion of

---

67 Ibid. The warden chose women who would have enough time to finish the course, but who would be released soon afterwards in hopes that the training would translate to employment.
68 Ibid, 27. Mrs. Vera Hudson became the Educational Officer in 1951 after Dr. Chataway’s resignation. The title of the position was also changed from Educational Matron to Officer to reflect similar titles in men’s prisons.
69 Ibid.
Lessons in Womanhood

The Report’s forty-four recommendations emphasized the need for prisons to re-educate and rehabilitate incarcerated people and that to do otherwise risked creating more habitual, dangerous, and bitter recidivists. Overall the Report recommended that a philosophy shift towards rehabilitation, improved public education about corrections, increased and varied institutions for different types of offenders, and an overhaul of existing legislation to create a more uniform penal system should be adopted. The Report explained that “education in the merely narrow or formal sense [was] not enough,” and that prison education needed to be more holistic. These educational recommendations coincided with the federal government’s growing support for vocational education.

The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act of 1960 extended the federal government’s commitments to provincial governments regarding vocational training made throughout the previous two decades. Vocational education had been associated with second-class citizenship as Canada relied on skilled immigrants to fill any gaps in the workforce, but it became apparent that this strategy could no longer satisfy the needs of the economy. The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act shared costs, including the training of teachers and administrators, in an equal split between the federal and provincial governments, if provinces could prove they could match funding upfront. This act resulted in construction of some new secondary schools, although most schools opted to add vocational facility additions to

---

71 Ibid, 47 and 87-90. Following the Second World War there was a constant increase in the men’s prison population in Canada and there was concern that prisons were not preventing further crime.
their existing building, to increase the vocational training opportunities for students.73 This federally led initiative led to increased attention to vocational education for other groups besides youth, including unemployed adults, war veterans, persons with disabilities, and incarcerated people.74

Commissioner Gibson retired in 1960 and his position was filled by Allen J. MacLeod who supported the changes recommended in the Fauteux Report, including those that called for increased vocational educational opportunities. Commissioner MacLeod hired Isabel Macneill, as mentioned in preceding chapter, to lead reform in P4W in the newly created position of Superintendent of P4W. Macneill herself had worked in the respectable field of teaching before joining the women’s branch of the Navy in the Second World War. Afterwards Macneill was involved with the Ontario justice system as the Superintendent of the Ontario Training School for Girls (OTSG) and later worked in Nova Scotia advising a committee on the province’s youth justice system.75

While Macneill’s own career choices were less conventional, she advocated for incarcerated women at P4W to have more vocational educational options within the confines of respectable, women’s employment. Macneill stated that “employment is essential for rehabilitation, whether in a job, or as a wife and mother,” which shows Macneill’s belief that incarcerated women’s rehabilitation hinged on finding her proper role.76 Macneill herself was single and childless, but as an educated woman from the upper-middle class, it was not as

75 See pages 90 and 91 for a more detailed description of Macneill and her previous careers. Pay particular attention to the footnotes.
important for her to also subscribe to traditional roles for acceptance in Canadian society. The incarcerated women that Macneill supervised generally were not middle-class and therefore could not afford to have flexibility in their adherence to societal norms as they were already considered outside social standards due to their criminality.

Macneill began in 1960, working with P4W’s team of staff to expand upon previous successful educational, behavioural, and emotional programs aimed at rehabilitation. The P4W staff included Vera Hudson the Educational Officer, Marion Bastone a social worker, and Margaret Benson a psychologist. One of the most important aspects common across all these programs was the emphasis on incarcerated women’s personal choice. All programs, besides employment, were optional and a woman could “opt for the shirt factory, kitchen, laundry or maintenance work… or business course at any level for which she qualifie[d], institutional sewing, or a full-time home economics course in a cottage on the grounds,” when she first arrived at the prison. Some women opted to work cooking, cleaning, or laundering in their prison employment and some women, such as the seventeen women enrolled in full-time academic pursuits in 1963, chose to take courses. The business course was an improvement from the hour-long, self-directed typing study that women had prior to Macneill’s hiring. The course was conducted in the classroom with other women working on their studies and offered learning and practice in a group setting with an instructor.

---

77 Dr. Chataway resigned in 1951.
Another new addition to vocational options was the Housekeeping Cottage, a small model home on prison grounds that opened in 1962. A six week vocational training course on home economics began after a suitable instructor was hired. Mrs. Betty Hof, a restaurant manager with a university education in home economics, was hired as the instructor. Hof offered a comprehensive course on household management including budgeting, cooking, etiquette, and how to clean every imaginable item and surface in a home. The incarcerated women enrolled in the course cooked meals together based on new recipes and techniques from Mrs. Hof and then ate the meals together at their properly dressed table. The house was equipped with appliances and furniture as a typical family home would be with a refrigerator, stove, washing machine, and dryer. The course was popular, especially with young women, and there was a waiting list for enrollment.

In addition to the new types of vocational education offered in the prison, a work release program was established with the support of EFry Kingston which allowed women to practice their skills in a community setting. P4W was the one of the first prisons in Canada to implement such a program. Interested women approaching their release dates were given job placements in the Kingston community that typically lasted between four and six weeks. Superintendent Macneill, P4W staff, and EFry volunteers wanted to find job placements in fields that were readily accessible to women, that were available in any location, and that would not be hampered by the stigma of hiring women with a criminal record. The jobs that women were

---

81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Avis, Women in Cages, 68-72.
84 Fauteux, et al., Report of a Committee Appointed to Inquire Into the Principles and Procedures Followed in the Remission of Service of the Department of Justice of Canada, 89. A pre-release program was a specific recommendation made by the Report.
placed in were traditionally female roles, such as secretarial or clerical positions, waitresses, or aesthetician work in salons. Work release offered incarcerated women professional experience and time to readjust to the outside world that, depending on the length of their sentence, could have differed greatly from the start of their incarceration.

Before women began working, they would often be released on day parole with an EFry volunteer to reacclimatize to Kingston and the civilian world. Initially volunteers would take incarcerated women out on day parole to visit her friends and family if in the local area, eat at restaurants, shop for groceries, and to engage in other normal civilian activities that were absent in a prison setting. One EFry Kingston volunteer remembered the first time she took a woman to grocery store to shop.\textsuperscript{85} As the volunteer walked towards the store entrance, she realized the woman was still sitting patiently in the passenger seat. The volunteer walked back, opened the door, and then realized that her companion had not opened a door for herself or exited a place without explicit permission for the last few years of her life at P4W.\textsuperscript{86} It was habits and behaviours such as this that incarcerated women learned for survival in a prison setting that they had to forget to readjust successfully to life after release. And with day parole and work release programs to utilize new vocational skills, there was hope that incarcerated women would find steady and self-supporting employment after release.

**Conclusions**

The vocational education opportunities for incarcerated women at P4W following its opening in 1934 until the Second World War were extremely limited. Laundry work remained

\textsuperscript{85} Avis, *Women in Cages*, 70.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
the primary vocational learning opportunity for incarcerated women in this period. Laundry work was a mainstay of nineteenth century women’s incarceration in Canada and it continued into the twentieth century, although with some rebranding. The Penitentiary Service looked to American penal practice in New York State for new ideas on correctional education and found Walter Wallack’s *The Development of Curricula for Correctional Institutions* with a syllabus for a women’s laundry course. The laundry course curriculum affirmed the Penitentiary Service’s adherence to the idea that criminalized women needed to be taught how to be respectable women during their incarceration. The assessment components of the course evaluated incarcerated women’s success based on their improved agreeableness and physical appearance, which were not signifiers of laundry skill, but of womanhood.

The Second World War brought change to all of Canadian industry because of an increase in demand for labour and a diminishing male workforce from enlistment. This resulted in women filling positions previously not open to women. Vocational changes simultaneously took place in the P4W. Incarcerated women’s vocational educational opportunities grew to include small scale farming and industrial sewing as the prison built gardens, a henhouse, and sewed thousands of items for the Navy. Following the war, these changes in vocation remained and incarcerated women expanded their vocational options.

From 1945-1960 incarcerated women experienced increasing learning opportunities, although the opportunities were rooted in traditionally feminine professions. The Educational

---

88 Ibid, 39.
89 Allison, “Technical School in Toronto: Growing Up in the Trades During the Second World War,” 64.
Matron and volunteers from EFry Kingston organized home nursing courses and supported individual women with career counselling. Penitentiary Service administration supported the opening of a beauty salon and an accompanying hairdressing course for a few incarcerated women nearing their release dates. The majority of incarcerated women, however, remained employed in their daily positions as laundresses, cooks, and cleaners maintaining the institution.

The most growth in vocational educational opportunity came with Superintendent Isabel Macneill from 1960-1965. Macneill emphasized incarcerated women’s choices as a key to success in vocational and educational programming. She offered two new full-time courses within the first two years of her tenure. A business course trained incarcerated women to be typists and balance books to support a future career as a secretary or clerk and a home economics course supported the idea that incarcerated women were in need to retraining in womanhood to succeed after release. The partnership with EFry Kingston strengthened under Macneill’s leadership and allowed incarcerated women to participate in work-release programs designed to test their new vocational skills and help them readjust to life outside of P4W.

While incarcerated women at P4W experienced an expansion in the variety of vocational education from 1934-1965, all of the vocational programs offered were clear examples of respectable professions for women. The vocational training programs in nursing, gardening, typing, secretarial skills, hairdressing, domestic skills, and prison employment in positions that

---

95 Avis, Women in Cages, 68-72.
consisted of cooking, cleaning, or laundering presented incarcerated women with a limited scope of career options after release. Vocational education that focused on domesticity and caring professions was one component of the overall educational program at P4W that pressured women to subscribe to middle-class values. This gendered vocational education program intended to re-educate and re-train incarcerated women from criminalized women to respectable women.
Chapter Four: Recreational Education

Introduction

In prison, boredom is a common problem that recreational education programs can help alleviate. At the same time, prison officials see it as a way to help incarcerated people make productive use of their time. At P4W, there were many recreational activities, the highlight, however, was the annual Christmas concert. Former EFry Kingston President Faith Avis remembered the spectacle of the nativity scene fondly:

A magnificent, huge gold-foil paper star hung suspended from the roof at the east end of the dining room cum auditorium. And, of course, there were angels. They floated about in flowing white robes and wire-frame wings, the image slightly flawed by the odd glimpse of sneakers or loafers. Upon sight of the angels, the recently appointed new Superintendent of P4W, Isabel Macneill, muttered to me, “Now I know what became of those sheets that disappeared from the laundry.”

Avis noted that the 1960 performance was one of the best in recent memory, but the same praise was offered for the concert no less than four times in five years which was a testament to the importance placed on it by incarcerated women and P4W staff. Recreational pursuits played a special role in education at P4W as these activities did not require assessment and evaluation like formal academic education or vocational training and offered a chance for fun and play. Recreational education was an avenue for incarcerated women to learn without judgement.

---

1 Avis, Women in Cages, 44.
2 LAC RG 73, 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W”. Compliments that mention the Christmas concert was the ‘best’ in recent years occur in 1955, 1956, 1957, and 1960 from various Penitentiary Service staff and EFry Kingston volunteers. Even if the concert did top itself each year in the quality of entertainment, I think the dedication and practice incarcerated women put into preparing for the concert ensured that their efforts were met with praise from officials regardless of the true quality of performance.
Defining Recreational Education in P4W

Recreation education, a term often used interchangeably with leisure education, simply refers to the learning of skills related to activities that are outside of one’s employment or work.³ Scholars of recreational education debate and contest its definition constantly, but a salient definition when studying recreation in prisons requires understanding that “for most individuals, it is the quality of the experience that is important, rather than the venue or the activity, and the chance it affords for a ‘break’, a ‘change’ or ‘time to be yourself.’”⁴ In prison, which is a total institution, the boundaries between work and free time blur because all activities take place in the same setting, with the same people, and are monitored.⁵ The difference between defining recreation in a prison as a quality of experience instead of as a temporal space (i.e. not working time) reveals what incarcerated women did for recreational enjoyment versus what they did to fill their time. This definition incorporates physical education related activities, which traditionally defined recreation, as well as a wide variety of other activities that incarcerated women enjoyed.

Activities that have been historically considered recreational in prisons include: outdoor recreation, athletics, health and physical education, community education, drama and cultural programming, crafts, hobbies, entertainment, special events, movement and self-expression, musical performance, music appreciation, film, outdoor art, drawing, painting, and photography. All of these are examples of recreational activities that can be conducted in a prison setting.⁶ The

---


⁵ Erving Goffman, Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (London: Aldine Transaction, 2009), xxi. The classic text was first published in 1961 and still serves as an important piece of sociological literature in understanding institutions although it has been criticized and re-examined by scholars since its original publication.

amount of time for recreation varied greatly prison to prison, but at P4W, incarcerated women had at least three hours an evening the 1950s and four to five hours on weeknights between dinner time and bed/lock-up time in the 1960s.7

A commonly held belief was that without structured recreational education in prisons, incarcerated women would “sit endlessly playing cards…or just vegetating.”8 Unproductive recreational time was viewed as problematic because it was not contributing to the rehabilitation of the individual.9 As was the case with both academic and vocational education in P4W, the rehabilitative properties of recreational education were gendered, as the goal of rehabilitation for an incarcerated women revolved around becoming a law-abiding, respectable woman defined by standards of middle-class respectability. The recreational activities women could partake in at P4W from 1934-1965 were intended to teach women recreational and leisure skills that were closely associated with middle-class respectability. These activities included non-contact sports, skills for mothering and nurturing, sewing, knitting, crocheting, and other hobbycraft skills that had origins in the domestic sphere.10

---

7 LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Letter from R. E. March Deputy Commissioner to Commissioner R.B Gibson, May 25, 1953. The earliest activities for incarcerated women started at 4:45pm and there were regularly schedule activities until 8:00pm on weeknights. Special events such as dances, bingos, or concerts could carry on until 11:00pm on Friday or Saturday nights, which is the latest time I have found for any event; Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649, File 2, “Prison for Women correspondence and miscellaneous administrative material, 1961-1966,” Star Weekly Magazine “Insides Canada’s Prison for Women” by Peter Sypnowich, August 10, 1963, 3.
10 Shirley Tillotson, The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Post-War Ontario (Toronto: University of Tonto Press, 2000), 159. Tillotson notes in middle-class, public life that “the activities most frequently attended by adult women – arts, crafts, and folk dancing – were often less endowed with facilities and funding,” which mirrors the activities available in P4W. This is juxtaposed to recreation in men’s prisons. Although recreation differed greatly from prison to prison, Wayne Carlson, a formerly incarcerated man, recounts organized inmate boxing as a popular past-time in the Saskatchewan Prince Albert Prison in the early 1960s. Incarcerated men bet on the outcome of the fight. Wayne Carlson, Breakfast With the Devil, Insomniac Press: Toronto, 2001. Another example of the juxtaposition of masculine prison recreation were the activities of incarcerated men in Kingston Penitentiary, who played baseball, lifted weights, carved wood, and made leather goods.
Historic Recreational Trends in Canadian Prisons

When recreation first emerged as a concept in Canada, it was a way to display wealth and status. The upper classes spent their recreational time productively by becoming more cultured reading, appreciating and learning to play music, appreciating art, and forming voluntary associations. In contrast, the recreation and leisure enjoyed by those considered the lower classes, namely drinking, gambling, playing games, dancing, and having sex, were seen as a menace to social order by the upper class and were therefore not considered true recreational activities. It is unsurprising therefore that recreation in Canadian prisons as an idea did not gain a foothold until the inter-war period as incarcerated men were considered of the lowest social standing, and that it was not until post-WWII that recreational activities became proactively incorporated into prison life.

When recreational activities were slowly incorporated into Canadian prisons, they were used as an administrative strategy to mitigate violence and alleviate tensions that arise among incarcerated men and between men and guards. Sports, outdoor recreation, and other activities offered incarcerated men the opportunity to expend energy, gain the mental and emotional

---

12 David A. Sutherland, “Voluntary Societies and the Process of Middle-class Formation in Early-Victorian Halifax, Nova Scotia,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 5, no. 1 (1994): 241. Sutherland argues that voluntary associations were not accessible to unskilled labourers, servants, or journeymen because they could not afford leisure time. The bulk of their time was spent working while leisure was reserved for the upper classes.
14 MacDonnell, Etherington, and Patrick, *Report of the Royal Commission on Penitentiaries*, 8. The MacDonnell report of 1914 discovered that the rule of silence was still rigidly enforced and incarcerated men were not allowed to even gaze at each other or guards; they were to look only at the ground. There was no recreation in the penal system of Canada until the inter-war period, and the recreation that became available was sparse and varied across men’s prisons.
benefits of exercise, and offered an outlet for negative emotions. Recreation was such an important aspect of prison management that when the Superintendent of Penitentiaries D.M. Ormond revoked softball privileges in the mid-1930s, incarcerated men at Kingston Penitentiary reached a near riot. Men’s prison recreation was defined through physical activities and usually competitive sports. The physicality of men’s recreation in prison mirrored trends in the public school curriculum of Ontario and other provinces.

Recreation in public schools manifested itself as physical education. Recreation and physical education were gender specific and required separate instruction for girls and boys from the subject’s inception in Canadian public schools in the late nineteenth century. Into the twentieth century, physical education and recreation in Ontario public schools remained divided by gender. Boys were seen as requiring more supervision for their aggressive, manly style of play which involved competitive sports and girls, who were perceived as having “innate passivity,” were in less need of supervision for their play which involved games. The physical education curriculum for boys was based in military drill exercises. Boys drilled and were

\[16\text{ In men’s prisons, recreation historically has been understood in physical education terms until the mid-1970s when recreational professionals and scholars in the United States urged prison officials to expand their definitions of recreation to include other activities such as crafts, theatre, and the arts. Carroll A. Hormachea argues that recreation has to incorporate activities beyond physical education because of the need to promote strong mental health in prisons in her article “Recreation Programming for Local Jails,” in the summer 1981 Journal of Physical Education and Recreation.}

\[17\text{ Dominion of Canada, Annual Report of the Superintendent of Penitentiaries for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1935 (Ottawa: Printer to the King, 1935), 17. In this incident, incarcerated men barricaded themselves in a shop taking the instructor and guards on duty hostage. Damages totalling $3484.33 were a result of small fires and the smashing of equipment from this near riot. The reinstatement of softball was the main request of the incarcerated men.}


\[19\text{ Ibid, 207.}

\[20\text{ Lenskyj, “Training for “True Womanhood”: Physical Education for Girls in Ontario Schools, 1890-1920,” 212. Lenskyj suggests that adults’ division of children’s play created and perpetuated gendered stereotypes. She explains “the commonly held notions of innate aggression in males and innate passivity in females shaped educators’ expectations, as well as having the effect of self-fulfilling prophecy on issues of girls’ physical activity. Without practice, girls performed less successfully and experienced more fatigue than boys, a situation which was entrenched by the restrictions placed on their play, and one which in turn entrenched the existing female fragility myth.”}
supposed to learn discipline, gain physical strength and endurance, and be prepared for military service in adulthood. Exercises for girls were more callisthenic based and focused on improving posture, graceful movement, and bodily awareness. The gender separation was in part due to social attitudes about appropriate activities for girls and in part to lingering remnants of nineteenth century medical science which “warned of the harm that strenuous physical activity could do to a woman’s reproductive system and general health.” This gender-divided and military inspired physical education curriculum lasted in Ontario schools, and in the majority of Canadian public schools in other provinces, well into the 1940s. The military influence on school recreation was in part due to the global climate created by the First and Second World Wars and also due to funding from the Strathcona Fund which funded military training initiatives in public schools through cooperation with provincial Departments of Education.

Recreation and physical education for adults became areas of interest for the federal Canadian government nearing the end of the Second World War. Canada trailed behind the similar physical recreation and health campaigns of national governments including the United Kingdom and New Zealand which had passed legislation for national plans which included radio broadcasts of exercise drills in 1937. In these national campaigns, recreational activities were promoted to citizenry as productive and patriotic because staying fit ensured a citizen could

---

23 Francis and Lathrop, “‘Children who drill, seldom are ill.’ Drill, Movement and Sport: The Rise and Fall of a ‘Female Tradition’ in Ontario Elementary Physical Education – 1850s to 2000,” 66-67. The Strathcona Fund began in 1909 with a $500,000 donation from Lord Strathcona to establish and keep strong ties between schools and the military, ensuring a next generation of Canadians ready for national defense service.
contribute to national defence, should the need arise. Recreational activities that kept populations fit was a way for governments to ensure enough people were able for armed duty if the need arose. In 1943 the federal government passed the National Fitness Act which promoted fitness to youth and provided funding to train teachers in physical education and recreation. The act provided $250,000 of matched funding to each province and, after the war, many universities accessed the funding to establish sports programs.

**Recreation in P4W’s Early Years, 1934-1949**

Despite the growing enthusiasm for recreation for adults and children alike, P4W did not institute formal recreational programs until 1949. The lack of recreation can be explained by a few factors. First of all, the prison did not have a teacher hired to direct activities of any kind until 1949. Secondly, P4W was a very low priority in the Penitentiary Service because its small population was not seen as dangerous. The Archambault Commission, which published its report in 1938, called for the closure of the newly opened P4W because of the immense cost to transport convicted women across the country to Kingston, Ontario and because of the nature of their crimes most women in the prison system did not pose threats to society at large. Finally,

---

26 Francis and Lathrop, “‘Children who drill, seldom are ill.’ Drill, Movement and Sport: The Rise and Fall of a ‘Female Tradition’ in Ontario Elementary Physical Education – 1850s to 2000,” 67; MacDonald, *Strong, Beautiful, and Modern*, 127.
27 Lamb Drover, “ParticiPATION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory,” 280.
28 Even women who were convicted of violent crime such as murder, were largely thought to be one-time offenders who killed abusive partners after snapping from years of abuse. Women who committed this type of violent crime were not believed to be violent towards others and unlikely to reoffend. The commissioners of the Archambault report found that women who committed murder or attempted murder were “not a crime problem but are the occasional or accidental offender class, who have been carried away by the overmastering impulse of the moment, often the outbreak of long pent up emotion.” Archambault, *Report of the Royal Commission to Investigate the Penal System of Canada*, 147. While the Archambault report’s assessment may at first appear to rely on assumptions that women cannot control their emotions, it does describe the modern defence of battered women syndrome, which is now understood as a sub-type of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
29 Ibid.
the onset of the Second World War derailed any plans for penal reform as Canadian prisons shifted their daily operations to support the war effort with manufactured goods and food production.\(^{30}\)

**Recreation After EFry Kingston Involvement 1949-1965**

It was not until volunteers began visiting P4W in the period immediately following the Second World War that incarcerated women had access to recreational activities. Kay Healey, one of the founding members of EFry Kingston, visited P4W in 1946 and was appalled by the lack of resources and activities available to women. Healey worked in the Department of Extension at Queen’s University and was able to borrow resources from the university library to bring to the prison. She borrowed films and began showing what were described as educational films, in P4W on a regular basis. She organized with other local Kingston women and formed the Kingston Elizabeth Fry Society (EFry Kingston) in 1949.\(^{31}\)

The bulk of recreational programming at P4W was facilitated by EFry Kingston. After the formation of the society, volunteers began visiting the prison on a regular basis. Initially, EFry Kingston volunteers visited P4W every Thursday evening for conversation, legal advice, and activities. The recreational activities that EFry Kingston offered were based in ideas of what middle-class, respectable women could do for leisure and fun. The volunteers of EFry Kingston themselves were white, middle-class, mostly married and enjoyed the activities they facilitated with incarcerated women. Oftentimes, EFry Kingston volunteers would share their personal

\(^{30}\) See pages 68 and 105 for further discussion of P4W’s role in the war effort.

\(^{31}\) See pages 76 and 77 for a more detailed description of the formation of EFry Kingston. This description details the founders of the society and their professions.
hobbies in P4W as they had the knowledge, supplies, and equipment necessary to teach women how to do new hobbycrafts.

EFry Kingston members volunteered in P4W and lobbied the Commissioner of Penitentiaries for reform in recreational pursuits among other concerns. One of EFry Kingston’s continual concerns was additional funding to pay their Rehabilitation Officer, Miss Rowan Patterson, an honorarium based salary. Rowan Patterson was a British woman who was an expert and avid gardener. She worked at P4W on a full-time basis and acted as a liaison for incarcerated women with other services and recreational activities.

Patterson’s main recreational education project was managing the prison gardens. The garden plots leftover from the increased wartime planting were parcelled out to interested women. Patterson organized the sign-up for plots and obtained vegetable seeds from Kingston Penitentiary and flower seeds from EFry Kingston for the over fifty women who requested vegetable plots annually. Incarcerated women anxiously tended to their gardens, especially first-time gardeners, as another incarcerated woman quipped “the way she watches over them you’d think she expects to see them actually sprout up beneath her gaze!” Gardening was both feminine and productive so it was regarded as an excellent recreational choice for incarcerated

33 Avis, Women in Cages, 64-65.
women. It was also one of the few recreational activities that was popular with older women. Gardening was also associated with rehabilitation.  

EFry Kingston brought a variety of activities to incarcerated women designed to alleviate boredom, to connect with the local community, and to develop useful skills for life after release in a non-committal and relaxed setting. These optional activities were recreational, women could enjoy them at their leisure or ignore them completely if that better suited their interests. Unlike other activities in P4W, such as employment or educational classes, incarcerated women were under no obligation to continue participating and faced no repercussions for stopping their involvement with EFry Kingston. The flexibility afforded by the Thursday evening recreational activities was enjoyed by incarcerated women who had fluctuating participation on a weekly basis.  

Beyond practical women’s skills to learn during recreational periods, EFry Kingston also taught the women in P4W moral lessons through recreation. These lessons were sometimes explicit, as in the mothercraft session where EFry Kingston volunteers offered advice on how to be better mothers from their middle-class worldviews, but sometimes moral lessons were more

---

37 Gardening as therapy has a long history. Asylums and other institutional settings in the U.K and U.S used gardening as a form of therapy for their patients in the late nineteenth century. See the first section of Horticulture as Therapy: Principles and Practice, edited by Sharon Simson and Martha Straus, for an history of using gardening as therapy. Today gardening is still considered therapeutic, but it is now called Horticultural Therapy (HT). HT is still used in prisons in North America and the United Kingdom. For more information on contemporary HT in prisons see Jay Stone Rice and Linda L. Remy’s work such as “Impact of Horticultural Therapy on Psychosocial Functioning Among Urban Jail Inmates,” in the Journal of Offender Rehabilitation (26 no. 3-4 (1998): 169-191) or their work with Lisa Ann Whittlesey in Horticulture as Therapy: Principles and Practice titled “Substance Abuse, Offender Rehabilitation and Horticultural Therapy Practice.” In a Kingston context, there is a coalition of local proponents for HT to be reinstated at Joyceville and Collin’s Bay prisons. Local farmers and proponents want to see the historic prison farms reopened. For more on Kingston’s prison farms see Jessica Reeve’s 2013 Master’s research paper “Hard Times for Prison Farms: The Political Ecology of Prison Farms in Canada and the United States.”  
The benefits of charity and thrift were implicitly advertised throughout EFry Kingston’s activities. Lessons regarding thrift were conveyed to incarcerated women in the way they were expected to be fastidious with materials used for hobbies. Lessons regarding charity were taught for example, when a group of women who donated their time repairing and painting toys for the Kingston Welfare Council were enthusiastically praised for their volunteer work. Charity was also taught through institutional policy. Women who sold their hobbycrafts were required to donate ten percent of their earnings to the communal prison Welfare Fund, which paid for shared items such as radios and televisions. The rest of the profits from craft sales were deposited into individual woman’s Trust Funds which they could use to buy things from the Eaton catalogue, the canteen, or from downtown Kingston stores that took orders from the prison. Incarcerated women sold their goods through the Kingston Penitentiary Hobbycraft Officer alongside the goods created by men or through EFry Kingston volunteers who displayed P4W goods at local expos, bazaars, and craft sales.

The most popular activities were hobbycrafts such as knitting, crocheting, sewing, and jewelry making. Many incarcerated women had knitting or sewing skills before incarceration,
but honed those skills through their prison jobs in the industrial sewing room or from learning from each other or the volunteers from EFry Kingston. The popularity of hobbycraft increased when women were able to sell their goods for profit, although many women had made goods as gifts for family members long before sales began. Knitting and sewing were so popular in 1952 that Hudson requested an additional sewing machine strictly for recreational use to be kept in the classroom. Incarcerated women often borrowed sewing machines from their workspace, but when work orders were full there was no opportunity to borrow machines.\textsuperscript{45} To appease the nimble-handed knitters, Vera Hudson (the Educational Officer of P4W) negotiated an industrial purchase rate of wool from Patons & Baldwins which cost incarcerated women thirty-five cents a ball instead of the commercial price of fifty-five cents a ball.\textsuperscript{46} The voracity of the knitters led to a wool invoice of $1436.99 from the beginning of the agreement in February 1952 to mid-August, or the purchase of approximately 4105 balls of wool in six months.\textsuperscript{47}

In addition to regular activities facilitated by EFry Kingston, the Educational Officer supported recreation events, the most popular being holiday celebrations. Halloween garnered excitement and preparation in P4W. Dr. Helen Chataway, who was responsible for P4W’s education from 1949-1951, reported that the first event of its kind in 1949 was “a very successful Hallowe’en Party.”\textsuperscript{48} Thirty-three costumed women attended with others participating as spectators, and the party included a costume competition, parade, amateur hour, and a dance. The party started with mingling and guessing the true identities of costumed guests, followed by a

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School Report, August 14, 1952.
costume parade and voting on best costumes. There were three award categories for costumes. In the “Ladies Costume” category first prize was awarded to a “Gypsy” and second prize was a tie between a witch and black cat. In the Male Impersonation category a pirate won first prize and a French Legionnaire won second prize. In the final category, “Couple or Group Costume” a few women dressed as “St. John’s Ambulance” won first prize, whether this costume was an actual ambulance or members of the medical profession is unclear, and two women dressed as a “Coloured Couple from Harlem” won second. Finally, a special prize was awarded to woman dressed as a “Tramp” was won the “Longest Unrecognized prize” for being unidentifiable for the longest period of time. After the costume awards, incarcerated women performed in an amateur hour with two singers winning prizes for their “cowboy songs,” and continued to dance into the evening until lock-up.

The annual Christmas concert was the largest event of the year and women supported the concert in a variety of ways. Dr. Helen Chataway, noted in her school reports as early as the first week of November that preparations for the concert were underway. Costumes were designed and sewn, props were built, and actresses and singers rehearsed their lines. The performance took place in late December in the auditorium for the entire population of women, guards and staff from P4W and Kingston Penitentiary, guests, and volunteers from EFry Kingston. This tradition

---

49 LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Dr. Helen Chataway Special Report on Halloween Party October 31, 1949, November 8, 1949. During this era, there were clearly different attitudes towards race relations as the “Coloured Couple from Harlem,” costume in a federal institution did not raise any issues. The treatment of race as a costume and how it supports continued inequality and white supremacy is discussed in many texts; one text that is accessible to a wide audience is Chelsea Vowel’s Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Issues in Canada (Highwater Press: Winnipeg, 2016). The St. John’s Ambulance costume is also intriguing. Was this costume a team of women dressed as paramedics? Or were they dressed as an actual ambulance? There were no descriptions of the costumes, but one can imagine the creativity of incarcerated women using limited materials to create their costumes.


continued with the next Educational Officer, Vera Hudson, who experienced similar dedication to the Christmas concert.\textsuperscript{52}

The physical recreation schedule was also affected by the seasons just as the holiday events were. As was the case in men’s prisons, physical recreation was popular in P4W, but the sports and activities in P4W were what were considered more “ladylike” sports.\textsuperscript{53} In the summer months, softball was by far the most popular recreational pastime. In the summer season of 1949, games were played as frequently as weather would allow. There were 14 games between August 26\textsuperscript{th} and September 30\textsuperscript{th} of 1949.\textsuperscript{54} The teams were self-organized and ranged between two and four full teams of incarcerated women depending on the night. The coaches, umpires, and scorekeepers were all incarcerated women who volunteered their expertise as past softball players.

Between 30 and 35 women participated either as players, volunteers, or spectators during the evening games in the prison yard.\textsuperscript{55} Chataway, who supervised the games, found softball to be an excellent use of recreational time as she wrote that the “games are accomplishing all that is so widely claimed for organized sport: They are working off physical energy; building a community spirit; and teaching good sportsmanship. The general effects are very noticeable.”\textsuperscript{56}

Softball’s popularity continued through Mrs. Vera Hudson’s term as Educational Officer and that of the part-time Recreational Officer, Miss M. McCulloch, who was hired in June of

\textsuperscript{52} LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School Report, January 1955.
\textsuperscript{53} For example, in the magazine Telescope, which was printed and published by incarcerated men at Kingston Penitentiary, sports updates from P4W were called “In the Sport-Lite,” because the women’s sports were perceived as less rigorous as the men’s sports. Teddy Nyman, “In the Sport-Lite,” Telescope, September 1952, 24-25.
\textsuperscript{54} LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Dr. Helen Chataway School Report, October 17, 1949.
\textsuperscript{55} LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Dr. Helen Chataway School Report, October 17, 1949.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
1956. The scope of the softball program expanded and the prison team, the Angels, played in the Kingston Softball League, although they always had home field advantage. By the mid-1950s, the Angels played travelling teams on the weekend from Cornwall, Belleville, and Ottawa. In the 1956 season, the Angels had a record of twelve wins, eight losses, and one tie but they were known more for their good manners than their softball prowess. Miss McCulloch proudly remarked that the P4W Angels received compliments as “every team commented on the good sportsmanship of the girls who were in any way connected with the Prison team.”

Although the Angels were well-mannered to visiting teams, the softball aficionados enjoyed using their new knowledge about the sport to bet on major league baseball games. The Dodgers and Yankees were the two favourite teams to watch on television and to listen to on the radio. One woman “ma[de] like a genuine bookie, canvassing all departments and taking all bets,” while the rest of the audience watched games “chewing nails, chain smoking, and saying a prayer.” The merriment of softball and baseball culture permeated P4W beyond recreational pursuits during the major league playoff season with changes to meal time grace to include “Make us truly thankful and may the good Lord bless the Dodgers!” The jovial spirit created by playing softball and partaking in baseball fandom allowed incarcerated women to form new relationships amongst incoming incarcerated women. There was playful banter directed towards

59 Ibid. Miss McCulloch was only hired for the summer recreation season although she made an impression at P4W. The women wrote “our thanks at this time go to Miss Mickey McCullough [sic] for her support of our summer recreation program. Your smiling face will be missed by many, Mickey.” Gail Western and Mugs Harley, “Feminine Features,” Telescope, November 1956, 9.
60 At this time, the Dodgers still played out of New York as the Brooklyn Dodgers, before their relocation to Los Angeles in 1957. The New York City based teams were the geographically closest baseball teams to P4W which made the reception of their game broadcasts easier to tune into.
62 Ibid.
rookie players, as one veteran softball player teased “newcomer to baseball, [name redacted], does not believe in using her hands to catch a ball when her face will serve the purpose.”

The witty recreation banter was also present during the Annual Field Day reports. Recapping the day’s events in a short article for the Kingston Penitentiary magazine, Telescope, one woman reported “all bags entered the next event (one type of which – bags, I mean – was kindly donated by Mr. Patterson),” and to clarify she wrote “should there be any doubt as to the nature of this event – it was the sack race, fellas.” The banter did not stop at the description of the sack races. The author wrote to the incarcerated men of Kingston Penitentiary that “our gals – they now became domesticated. In case you boys have socks to be darned – the winning couples in our thread and needle race were [names redacted].” Incarcerated women were aware that becoming “domesticated” was a component of their rehabilitation while incarcerated and made jokes about their domesticity, or lack thereof. The Field Day also included running races, relays, a softball throw, discus, a piggy-back race, a wheelbarrow race, a three-legged race, and culminated in snacks such as candy and soda on the prison grounds.

When the weather turned colder, P4W recreation moved indoors. The women’s softball season wrapped up by the end of September and women began their indoor volleyball season. The indoor court’s ceilings were lower than an ideal gymnasium space for volleyball, but the women agreed upon modified rules for their games in 1950 under the supervision of Dr. Chataway. The first season of volleyball proved to be less successful because there was a lack

---

65 Ibid. A thread the needle race is a game where teams of two race to thread a needle first. The partners holding the thread line up together and race towards the group of partners holding the needle, with each pair trying to thread the needle as quickly as possible.
66 Ibid, 28.
of interest on the part of the women. Volleyball was coached by Mrs. Bartlett, an EFry volunteer, for over a decade from the winter of 1950 into the 1960s. Mrs. Bartlett came into the prisons on Monday and Thursday evenings to teach proper setting, serving, and volleying techniques as well as to provide encouragement to the teams as they played. Volleyball’s popularity grew as did participation amongst the incarcerated women. In 1951 the frequency of volleyball games increased to three times a week. The teams played some nights without the assistance of Bartlett as the incarcerated women’s confidence with the sport increased.

Despite the increases in winter volleyball games, EFry Kingston volunteers understood that not all incarcerated women were willing or able to participate in higher intensity activities and tried to organize alternative forms of winter recreation. Bartlett also offered folk dancing lessons in P4W during the winter to encourage women who were not interested in volleyball to stay physically active. These lessons were less frequent, occurring once bi-weekly, but were appreciated by Hudson who worried that incarcerated women lacked sufficient exercise and recreation in the winter months. Occasionally, Bartlett organized a square dancing night and received special permission from the Warden of Kingston Penitentiary to allow her husband into P4W to act as the caller. From 1952 onwards, there was also skipping, shuffleboard, ping-pong, and quoits available at incarcerated women’s discretion in the winter.

---

73 LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Dr. Helen Chataway Monthly Report, January 12, 1950. Quoits is a game in which players toss rings towards a board with pegs and score points for landing rings on pegs.
EFry Kingston also spearheaded an ice skating project in 1957. Earlier attempts to get an ice skating program together occurred in 1949 with the support of Dr. Chataway, but the poor weather prevented an ice rink, however in 1957 the weather cooperated. The blacksmiths and cobblers of Kingston Penitentiary sharpened and fixed donated skates and a team of officers and incarcerated men from Kingston Penitentiary flooded a 70 x 150 foot rink in the P4W grounds.\(^7^4\) The skating rink was well-received by the incarcerated women who thought “it’s the most!”\(^7^5\) P4W seldom had outdoor winter recreation, and after a few weeks the skating ceased because of lack of supervision. Hudson explained that “it appear[ed] to be the usual problem existent when any of these programs are undertaken, that the efforts necessitated to institute the program, are immediately dashed by poor co-operation afterwards.”\(^7^6\) While EFry volunteers maintained their weekly evening commitments no staff or other volunteers could be coordinated to supervise weekend skating.

As exemplified by the ice skating project, the recreational opportunities for incarcerated women depended on the efforts of EFry volunteers and the coordination of the Educational Officer (who was also responsible for the formal schooling and vocational training of incarcerated women) and the part-time Recreational Officer. Given the small amount of paid staff dedicated to recreation, it appeared that recreational activities were of secondary concern to the Penitentiary Service. To further this point in the example of Hudson being reassigned to custodial duties in the summer of 1954 because of severe matron shortages. This resulted in no

\(^7^4\) LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School and Library Report, January 31, 1957; LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Dr. Helen Chataway Monthly Report, January 12, 1950. In the winter of 1950, two dozen pairs of skates were donated to P4W from local school Regiopolous College and brought to the prison by EFry Kingston. The skates sat in storage for seven years before the skating rink came to fruition.


formal recreational activities from July 1st to September 1st, better known to the incarcerated women as prime softball season.  

Isabel Macneill as Superintendent 1960-1965

When Isabel Macneill arrived as the Superintendent of P4W in 1960 she had more autonomy over the prison than the Head Matrons who came before her, and Macneill ensured that the Educational and Recreational Officers stayed in their positions and away from custodial duties. Macneill increased the variety of educational programs of all types, including recreational, during her career at P4W because her philosophy of treatment was based on the importance of choice. She believed that “treatment cannot be imposed, the inmate who wants treatment is usually ready to make some effort to change, it must be her choice.” This belief informed P4W internal and informal policies around recreation and incarcerated women’s ability to choose recreation that best suited her interests. The holiday events, softball, volleyball, gardening, and EFry Kingston activities continued and there was the addition of the Great Books Programme and cultural programming for Indigenous incarcerated women, and increased attention and praise for incarcerated women’s Church attendance.

---

79 Halifax Archives, Isabel Janet Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649 file 2, “Prison for Women Correspondence and Miscellaneous Administrative Material, 1961-66.” Narrative Report, Prison for Women April 1964- March 1965. I have not written widely about Church in this research as the archival information related education did not mention the efforts of religious groups. I did not actively pursue files at Library and Archives Canada related to religious activity in P4W, although I suspect files exist. I include church attendance in recreation because church services were voluntary activities that incarcerated women could participate within, and because it offered women a ‘break’ from prison life as per the definition of recreation used. I think a study of religious policies and practices in Canadian prisons would be an intriguing study, but it was beyond the scope of this project on education.
The Great Books Program originated in American universities and by the 1960s had Canadian and European chapters. The Great Books Programme was a book club where chapters of the club would meet to discuss works of Western literary canon. At P4W, the Great Books Program met once a week with a group of eight regular participants. This program was possible due to the close connections between EFry Kingston and Queen’s University. The books discussed were borrowed from Queen’s library and the facilitator of the discussion, an EFry Kingston volunteer Mrs. B. Judge, had training from the university on how to facilitate a seminar style discussion. Discussing key works of literature showed that incarcerated women had intellectual aptitude and that they could adhere to the social codes of the post-secondary education world. Middle-class values exalted education as a key to success and the eight incarcerated women that showed interest in the Great Books Program for their recreational time were praised for such respectable choices. Seminar style discussion of important literature that closely resembled a university class was indicative of the highest aspirations held by EFry Kingston volunteers for incarcerated women upon release.

Another habit that was praised for its respectability was church attendance. Church attendance was a form of recreation for some women as it provided spiritual support, socializing, and a break from prison life. Two chapels, one Protestant and one Catholic, were included in the original plans for P4W and church was an aspect of life at P4W since the opening of the prison. Religious women from Kingston visited on Sundays and host a bible study in the new facility in

---

80 LAC RG 73 1-17-20 part 1 “Adult Education of Inmates Generally,” Memorandum from George C. Koz, the Assistant Director of Inmate Training, to all Wardens and Superintendent of Prison for Women, July 8, 1963.
1934, and were thanked for their continued service by the Warden of Kingston Penitentiary in his annual report. In 1963 an article in *Star Magazine* revealed that approximately half of the incarcerated women attended church. In the 1964-65 report from Superintendent Macneill, it was noted that church attendance was up 100% and that services were followed by a social hour hosted by local volunteers following the service. These two sources suggest that almost the entire population of P4W attended church services by 1965 as approximately half the women attended in 1963 and the attendance doubled the following year. Incarcerated women were not forced to attend services, but were encouraged to attend and build a relationship with their denominational Chaplain. Attending church was viewed positively as another way to reform incarcerated women within middle-class visions.

In the 1960s, the incarceration of Indigenous women at P4W substantiated a sizable portion of the total population. Macneill noted in her final annual report from the 1964-65

---

84 Ibid, 18. The Warden of Kingston Penitentiary reported that “as has been the practice for many years, once a week ladies from the city of Kingston held a Bible instruction period in the Prison for Women.”
87 Chaplains provided counselling and guidance before the professionalization of psychology and psychiatry and subsequent hiring of therapeutic professionals in Canadian prisons. Chaplains also facilitated Alcoholics and later Narcotics Anonymous (AA and NA respectively) meetings in P4W and in other prisons.
88 Joan Sangster, “Criminalizing the Colonized: Ontario Native Women Confront the Criminal Justice System, 1920-1960,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 80, no. 1 (1999): 36. Sangster uses intake statistics from the Mercer Reformatory, because it operated throughout the entire 1920-1960 period, to observe the trend of rapidly increasing incarceration of Indigenous women. Sangster notes that in the 1920s, Indigenous women comprise 2% of the population at the Mercer, 4% in the 1930s, 7% in the 1940s, and over 10% by the 1950s all while Indigenous women comprised 1% of the Canadian population. The majority of these women, between 50-70% depending on the year, were incarcerated for alcohol related offences. She argues that the increase of arrest and sentencing of Indigenous women for moral offences was an extension of the colonial state forcing Indigenous women to subscribe to middle-class ideals after a hundreds of years of colonial trauma. See also Joan Sangster, “Reforming Women’s Reformatories: Elizabeth Fry, Penal Reform, and the State, 1950-1970,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 85, no.2 (2004): 238-252. Sangster’s article discusses early EFry responses to Indigenous women’s incarceration, which largely aligned with the State’s rhetoric. Indigenous women were viewed paternalistically as victims who needed guidance in Canadian society if they left their communities. EFry differed from the State in its stance against idleness and vagrancy laws, which EFry lamented were used disproportionately to incarcerate Indigenous women.
fiscal year that 13% of the incarcerated women at P4W self-identified as Native women. In this year, P4W offered a program for Indigenous women to learn history, culture, and customs of different First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Miss Kivetys, a staff member, volunteered to supervise the group and EFry Kingston and Mrs. Ethel Brant Monture provided materials and support to “carry on traditional crafts.” In one session together, the group made a Cree doll and presented it to Madame Vanier, the Governor General’s wife who advocated for P4W. Macneill included this activity in her report “as training because the women involved have responded by pride in race, than feeling they are second class Canadians.” This group activity was indicative of shifting definitions of womanhood in P4W. From 1934 until 1965 this was the only program that acknowledged women and their cultures beyond a narrow definition of middle-class whiteness.

Conclusions

---

90 Ibid. It appeared to be a survey program, without a focus on a specific nation, language group, or region.
91 Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649 file 2, “Prison for Women Correspondence and Miscellaneous Administrative Material, 1961-66.” Narrative Report, Prison for Women April 1964- March 1965. Miss Kivetys is acknowledged only by her last names in the document and it is unclear if she taught incarcerated Indigenous women or provided support, allowing the women to teach each other. Mrs. Ethel Brant Monture was a well-known and well-respected First Nations’ woman from the First Credit Nation and was the great-great-granddaughter of Joseph Brant. Monture published several titles on Indigenous history in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s and advocated for increased attention to Indigenous history in public school textbooks. Monture kept correspondence with Macneill about incarcerated Indigenous women, but her letters were addressed from Toronto so it is unclear if Monture visited P4W or if she mailed resources to the prison for cultural programming. Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG 1 vol. 3649, file 1, “Prison for Women Correspondence and Miscellaneous Administrative Material, 1961-66.” Letter from Mrs. Ethel Brant Monture to Isabel Macneill, October 1, 1965.
Recreation was the last component of education to gain a foothold in common penal practice in Canada. This was because of an association with recreation as a reward or providing pleasure, which contradicted the philosophy that prisons were a space for punishment. In conclusion, once recreational education began, there was a great deal of continuity in the types of recreational education available to incarcerated women at P4W from 1934-1965. The presence and support of EFry Kingston was integral to the development and facilitation of recreational activities in the prison. EFry Kingston volunteers provided the materials and training for new hobbycrafts and encouraged women to improve their sewing and knitting skills.\footnote{LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School Report, August 14, 1952.} The volunteers displayed incarcerated women’s goods and sold the items on their behalf, which offered an additional source of income for women to supplement their prison employment income.\footnote{LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School Report, November 16, 1951.} EFry Kingston also taught women how to play different sports, dances, and how to stay active indoors.\footnote{LAC RG 73 4-17-7 vol. 108, “Educational and Recreational Reports at the P4W,” Mrs. Vera Hudson, School Report March 13, 1952.}

The schedule of P4W was very seasonal, and the switch from softball to indoor volleyball signalled a return to the winter. Holiday events also signalled time passing in P4W and were consistently a highlight for staff and incarcerated women alike.\footnote{Rose and Teddy, “Feminine Features,” Telescope, January 1953, 10.} Although Isabel Macneill changed many aspects of prison life when she became P4W’s Superintendent in 1960, she kept much of the prison’s recreational life the same, building on institutional practice. She encouraged new programs for advanced academic reading and recorded church attendance, reconfirming the importance of incarcerated women ascribing to middle-class ideals. Macneill made incremental
change at the end of her tenure in the definition of womanhood at P4W from an exclusively white ideal with the acknowledgement of a growing population of incarcerated Indigenous women who required different and culturally relevant recreational activities.\footnote{Halifax Archives, Isabel Macneill fonds, MG1 vol. 3649 file 2, “Prison for Women Correspondence and Miscellaneous Administrative Material, 1961-66.” Narrative Report, Prison for Women April 1964- March 1965.}
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Future Research

This thesis has traced the development of education at the Prison for Women from 1934-1965 and argued that educational programs were designed to reform incarcerated women into models of respectable womanhood. In academic, vocational, and recreational education, incarcerated women were taught the value and importance of domesticity as a marker of success as a wives and mothers. An examination of education at P4W from the 1930s to the 1960s reveals that despite changes in language and slight shifts in the definition of what constitutes a good, moral, woman, the incarceration of Canadian women has been a continuous project of pressuring criminalized women to subscribe to middle-class womanhood.

Incarcerated women were taught these lessons in womanhood by Penitentiary Service employees and by community volunteers, both groups who themselves represented and subscribed to middle-class respectability. Incarcerated women, however, were not passive receptors of this brand of feminine knowledge. They joked amongst themselves and incarcerated men about their progress in achieving domestication and hinted that they were eligible bachelorettes who had experienced the structuration of full domestication. Incarcerated women chose to participate in some educational activities while rejecting others. Their selective participation in educational pursuits attests to the degree of agency and resistance available to women in the face of their gendered, sentenced rehabilitation.

From this research on the history of P4W’s educational programs it is apparent that there were two distinct periods of education in the prison from 1934-1965: from 1934-1949, where incarcerated women did not have access to regular education programs; and from 1949-1965

---

wherein educational opportunities increased in number and variety. The contrast in these two periods can be attributed partially to larger social and economic trends in Canada and partially due to decisions of the Penitentiary Service. In 1934, when P4W opened, Canada was at the height of the Great Depression, which halted any prison reforms including educational reforms. The Archambault Commission was formed to investigate the penal system, and it provided clear recommendations for reform in its 1938 report, but the Second World War broke out shortly after its publication and hindered reform efforts. When the war concluded, the Penitentiary Service returned to regular functioning following a period in which the focus was on wartime production in prison.

The appointment of the new Commissioner of Penitentiaries, Ralph B. Gibson in 1947, signaled change. Educational reform at P4W, however, did not gain momentum until the end of 1949 when the first Educational Matron, Dr. Helen Chataway was hired and P4W’s official education program was instituted. Chataway’s employment also coincided with the establishment of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston, a women’s advocacy organization for women in conflict with the law, who wholeheartedly supported educational efforts at P4W. More changes came with the publication of the Fauteaux Report in 1956 which, like the Archambault Report, investigated Canada’s penal system and criticized the lacklustre education available in prisons. Commissioner Allen J. MacLeod implemented the Fauteaux recommendations following his appointment in 1960 after Gibson’s retirement. MacLeod set a

---

tone of reform in the Penitentiary Service and hired Superintendent Isabel Macneill to reform P4W. It was within this historical context that the thesis set out to answer the two following questions: How were educational programs developed and administered at the P4W from 1934-1965? How did the curriculum and delivery of these educational programs change in the period 1934-1965?

From 1934-1949 academic, vocational, and recreational educational opportunities were scarce. Incarcerated women did not have regular access to academic instruction until 1947 in the form of correspondence courses. In 1948, with assistance from Kingston Penitentiary staff, incarcerated women enrolled in correspondence courses offered by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Ontario Department of Education. These courses provided a self-directed education, but were only accessible to women who were literate. The educational needs of illiterate women were ignored. Vocational education in this period was also limited. Incarcerated women were taught job skills pertinent to the maintenance and operation of the prison. These jobs included cooking, cleaning, and laundering. These traditionally feminine based skills were all that were available to women from 1934-1949 as incarcerated women were perceived as lacking domesticity and in need of re-training in womanly skills. In this time, incarcerated women’s recreation relied on their ingenuity and creativity. There was no sports equipment, operational library access, or supplies for crafts.

The second period of education at P4W, starting in 1949 until 1965, was marked by the development and expansion of educational programs for academic, vocational, and recreational

---

pursuits. In these years, as Commissioners Gibson and MacLeod led reforms in the Penitentiary Service in order to focus on rehabilitation that P4W actively attempted to re-educate incarcerated women into respectable women. Some activities, such as mothercraft classes offered by EFry Kingston, were explicitly designed to train the incarcerated women to be exemplary, middle-class woman while other lessons, such as the ‘ladylike’ sports offered in recreational periods, were less overt but nonetheless aimed at transforming incarcerated women’s habits and behaviours. ⁹ Employability was linked to rehabilitation in penal practices, so P4W offered vocational training lessons in hairdressing, nursing, and home economics, to give incarcerated women opportunity for employment after release, but in undoubtedly feminine professions. ¹⁰ Women in Canada who were sentenced to federal time for breaking the law – an unfeminine and deviant act - were re-educated in lessons in womanhood during their incarceration to restore their proper place in society.

Future Research

While this thesis has answered some questions regarding the education that existed at P4W, it certainly spurs more questions that in turn require further research to answer. One such project is an educational study that continues to trace the history of education at P4W from the 1960s until its decommission in 2000. This type of project would be beneficial to understanding modern educational practice in Canadian women’s prisons. This project could be challenging due to archival access, because more recent P4W records held at LAC are restricted due to privacy concerns. This research, however, would be invaluable to improving current practice.

given that women, especially Indigenous women, are the fastest growing prison population in Canada and they have acute educational needs.\(^\text{11}\) Sixty-six percent of incoming incarcerated women self-reported that they lacked a high school diploma.\(^\text{12}\) This means that two thirds of federally incarcerated women will be required to participate in an Adult Basic Education (ABE) program until they reach a grade twelve equivalency as is the policy for all federally incarcerated people under the authority of CSC.\(^\text{13}\)

From a historical perspective, there are many potential future research projects to explore. The relationship between EFry Kingston volunteers and women in P4W has been examined by sociologist Kelly Hannah-Moffat, but not by historians. Hannah-Moffat’s treatment of the relationship between the two groups is Foucauldian and as a result, focuses solely on overarching power structures at the expense of history on the ground.\(^\text{14}\) A social history of the relationship between these two groups of women could add nuance and disruption to the idea that EFry Kingston operated solely as another node of control in the lives of women in P4W. Joan Sangster has examined the historical relationship between EFry Toronto and policy makers, and the subsequent influence this had over criminalized women.\(^\text{15}\) While there is no doubt that members of EFry Kingston hoped incarcerated women would become law-abiding citizens and embrace middle-class respectability, I believe a micro history of the relationships between individual

\(^{11}\) Howard Sapers, *Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator*, (Ottawa: Printer to the Queen, 2015), 49. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of federally incarcerated women increased fifty percent compared to a ten percent increase of federally incarcerated men in the same period.


\(^{13}\) Ibid, 54-55. CSC policy on education stipulates that individuals must achieve their high school education, or grade twelve equivalency, as a minimum requirement while incarcerated. The level of education required by CSC used to be a grade ten equivalency, but as Ontario and New Brunswick change their mandatory attendance ages to eighteen, or grade twelve completion, CSC followed suit. Although the contemporary educational policy is informed by research on employability after release, it shows that CSC still relies on guidance from provincial departments of education, at least in the spirit of a policy, for setting its educational standards for incarcerated Canadians.

\(^{14}\) Hannah-Moffat, *Punishment in Disguise*.

women of EFry Kingston and P4W would be fascinating and reveal tensions and bonds between middle and working class women, religion or hobby as a bridge across class, and if a gendered culture cut across class.

In a similar vein, Queen’s University and P4W had an ongoing relationship that would constitute a worthy historical study of how the two very different institutions influenced one another. The two institutions interacted in variety of ways. Queen’s University employees were some of the earliest visitors to P4W and shared the university’s resources, such as films and books, with incarcerated women. Queen’s students and faculty visited the prison to lecture, perform in concerts, and to otherwise entertain incarcerated women throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Also from the mid-1950s through the 1960s, Queen’s University lecturers were involved in experiments in psychological and psychiatric treatment of incarcerated women. Finally, incarcerated women enrolled in Queen’s University courses and some formerly incarcerated women became alumnus, effectively creating a human juncture between the two institutions. All of these interactions could be topics of further study.

Finally, there is much work to be done on the history of education in other Canadian prisons. While all federal Canadian prisons besides P4W were male institutions until 1995, much could be gained through comparison to P4W’s educational programs. There is a small body of

---

19 The most controversial incarcerated woman who took courses at Queen’s was undoubtedly Karla Homolka who obtained a Bachelor of Psychology. One outraged student’s reaction to her enrolment is referenced here from the Kingston Whig editorial archives: K. MacDonald, “Homolka Anything but a Golden Gael,” *Kingston Whig – Standard*, August 28, 1995.
literature on men’s prison education, but it is typically not the focal point of penal scholarship.\textsuperscript{20} The history of education men’s prisons could be approached in a variety of ways. From a gendered perspective on masculinity asking, for example, was men’s prison education as deeply rooted in masculinity as P4W’s education was in femininity? The research project could also be approached from a regional perspective, asking such questions as: how did men’s access to education vary across provinces, northern and southern locations, urban and rural locations, among some examples. That is all to say that there should be more research on prison education in Canada.

**Final Thoughts**

Women incarcerated at P4W were ostracized for the stigma they carried as federal inmates. The education offered in the prison attempted to reform and retrain women into respectable women through academic, vocational, and recreational pursuits. Some women embraced these reforms while others rejected them, although compliance with respectable womanhood still did not guarantee acceptance upon release. An incarcerated woman, Mary, explained, “judging from the conversations throughout the building, the majority of inmates seem sincere in saying the do want to become a worthwhile part of society, if only society would accept them on an equal basis.”\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} McCoy, *Hard Time*, 129. McCoy mentions the moral regulation of education in Kingston Penitentiary, but does not detail the educational programs.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Sources

EARLY CANADIANA ONLINE
Reports of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Conduct, Discipline, and Management of the Provincial Penitentiary, With the Documents Transmitted by the Commissioners. Montreal: Rollo Campbell, 1849.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA (OTTAWA, ON)
Correctional Services Canada Fonds RG 73:

Adult Education of Inmates Generally.
Educational Facilities – Penitentiaries, 1924-1959.
Female Convicts, Including Transfers, Generally, 1917-1947.
Female Inmates Including Transfer 1947-64.
Nickle Report, 1921.
Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Inmates, 1958.
Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Inmates Generally.
Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Inmates, Kingston.

Ian Watson Fonds MG 32:
C69 Special Joint Committee on Penitentiaries, 1967-1968.
C69 Special Joint Committee on Penitentiaries, 1951, 1966.

NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES (HALIFAX, N.S)
Isabel Janet Macneill Fonds MG1:

Sub-series 1.1 – Correspondence.
Vol. 3646, file 25. Marg Benson, Social Worker at P4W.
Vol. 3647, file 158. Correspondence from women from Prison for Women and former inmates. 1965-1968.
Sub-series 1.2 – Personal and Biographical.

Sub-series 3 – Ontario Training School for Girls.

Sub-series 4 – Canadian Penitentiary Services. Prison for Women.

PENAL PRESS E-ARCHIVES

PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA E-ARCHIVES

Secondary Sources
Lessons in Womanhood


Lessons in Womanhood


**Government Publications**


**Theses and Dissertations**


**Newspaper Publications**


**Websites**

Canada’s Penitentiary Museum. *Cedarhedge.* http://www.penitentiarymuseum.ca/default/index.cfm/history/cedarhedge1/
### Appendix A – Educational Officers of P4W

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Matron/ Educational Officer/ Teacher</th>
<th>Duration of Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Helen D. Chataway</td>
<td>August 1949 - January 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Vera Hudson</td>
<td>January 1951 – October 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. E.D. Diaper</td>
<td>November 1960 – October 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. H.J. Heidecker</td>
<td>October 1962 - unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B – Supervising Officers of P4W

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervising Officer of P4W</th>
<th>Duration of Tenure</th>
<th>Position Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Edith A. Robinson</td>
<td>1934-1944</td>
<td>Supervising Matron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Amelia May Gibson</td>
<td>1944-1950</td>
<td>Supervising Matron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lorraine L. Burke</td>
<td>1950-1960</td>
<td>Supervising Matron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Isabel J. Macneill</td>
<td>1960-1966</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix C – Wardens of Kingston Penitentiary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warden</th>
<th>Duration of Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Blight Megloughlin</td>
<td>October 1932 – June 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard McKie Allan</td>
<td>June 1934-May 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter F. Johnstone</td>
<td>May 1954- December 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David M. McLean</td>
<td>December 1960 – June 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.S.J. Richmond</td>
<td>June 1962- July 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazen M. Smith</td>
<td>July 1965 – June 1967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix D – Leadership of the Penitentiary Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Penitentiary Service</th>
<th>Duration of Tenure</th>
<th>Position Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W.S. Hughes</td>
<td>1919-1932</td>
<td>Superintendent of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. M. Ormond</td>
<td>1932-1938</td>
<td>Superintendent of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. L. Sauvant</td>
<td>1939-1942</td>
<td>Acting Superintendent of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. S. Lawson</td>
<td>1943-1947</td>
<td>Acting Superintendent of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. B. Gibson</td>
<td>1947-1960</td>
<td>Commissioner of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. J. McLeod</td>
<td>1960-1970</td>
<td>Commissioner of Penitentiaries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix E – Ministers of Justice of Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister of Justice</th>
<th>Term of Office</th>
<th>Duration of Tenure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Guthrie</td>
<td>August 1930 - August 1935</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Reginald Geary</td>
<td>August 1935 – October 1935</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Lapointe</td>
<td>October 1935 – November 1941</td>
<td>6 years 1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joesph-Enoil Michaud (acting)</td>
<td>November 1941 – December 1941</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis St. Laurent</td>
<td>December 1941 – December 1946</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Lorimer Ilsely</td>
<td>December 1946 – June 1948</td>
<td>1 year 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis St. Laurent</td>
<td>July 1948 – November 1948</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuart Garson</td>
<td>November 1948 – June 1957</td>
<td>8 years 8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davie Fulton</td>
<td>June 1957 – August 1962</td>
<td>5 years 2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Fleming</td>
<td>August 1962 – April 1963</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lionel Chevrier</td>
<td>April 1963 – February 1964</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy Favreau</td>
<td>February 1964 – June 1965</td>
<td>1 year 5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George McIlwraith (acting)</td>
<td>June 1965 – July 1965</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucien Cardin</td>
<td>July 1965 – April 1967</td>
<td>1 year 9 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>