

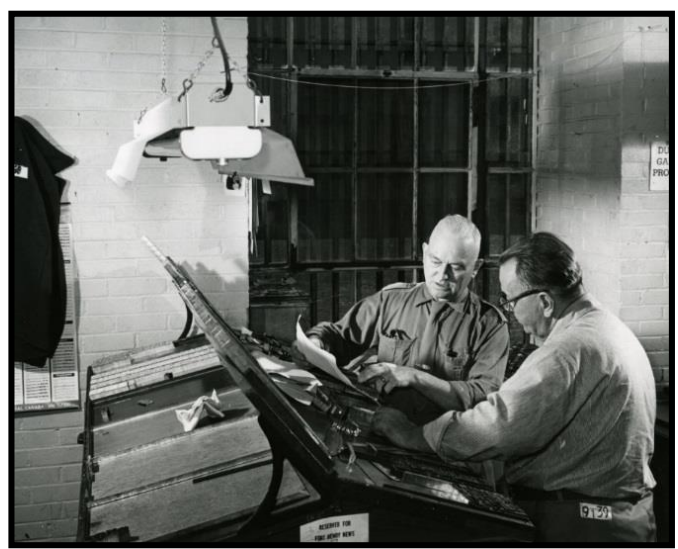
Prison Sentences: Recovering the Voices of Prisoners Through an Exhibit

Kim Bell, W.D. Jordan Rare Books & Special Collections

Introduction

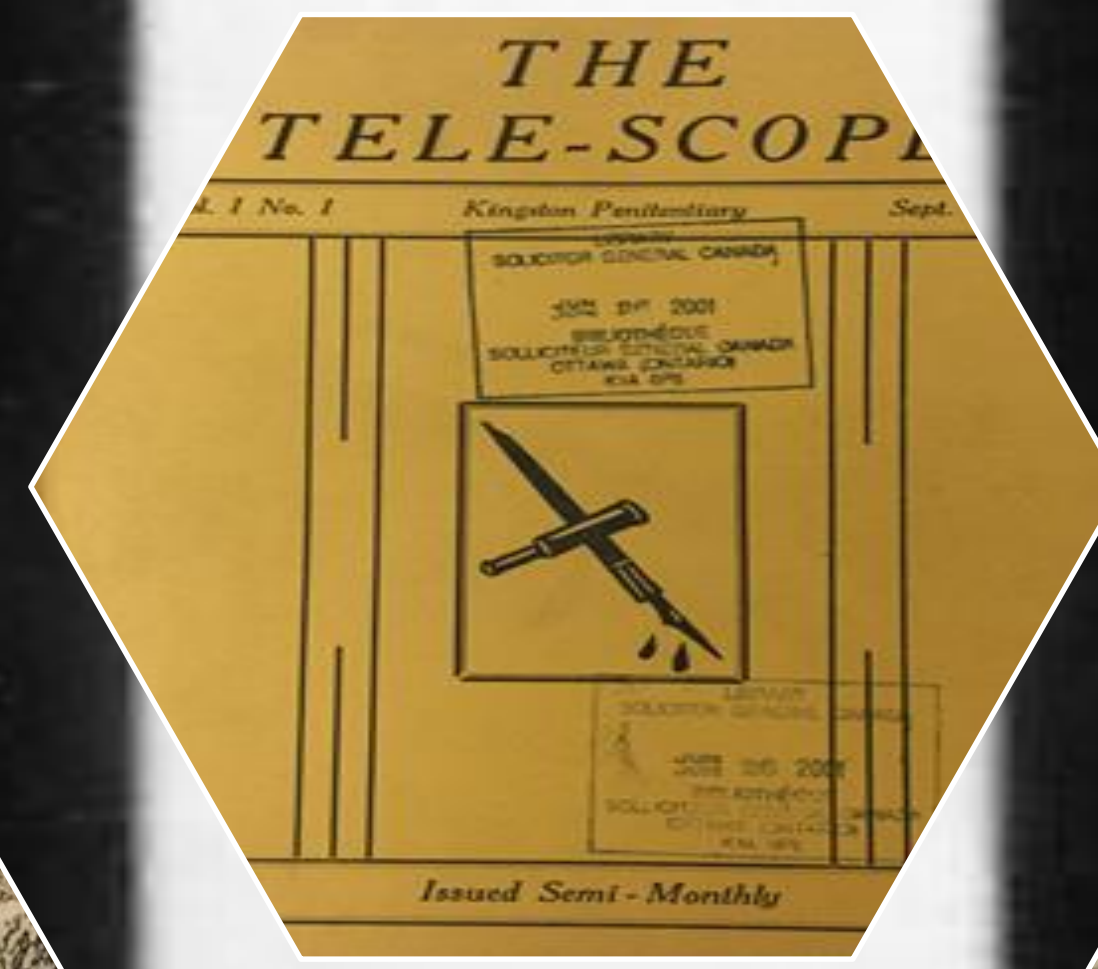
W.D. Jordan library, Queen's University, located in Kingston – Canada's 'carceral archipelago' par excellence – recently acquired and exhibited an important run of Canada's penal press, including the K.P. Telescope, Tightwire from the Prison for Women, and the C.B. Diamond.

Authored and edited exclusively by inmates, these highly produced publications were intended for, and won significant circulation among the outside population.



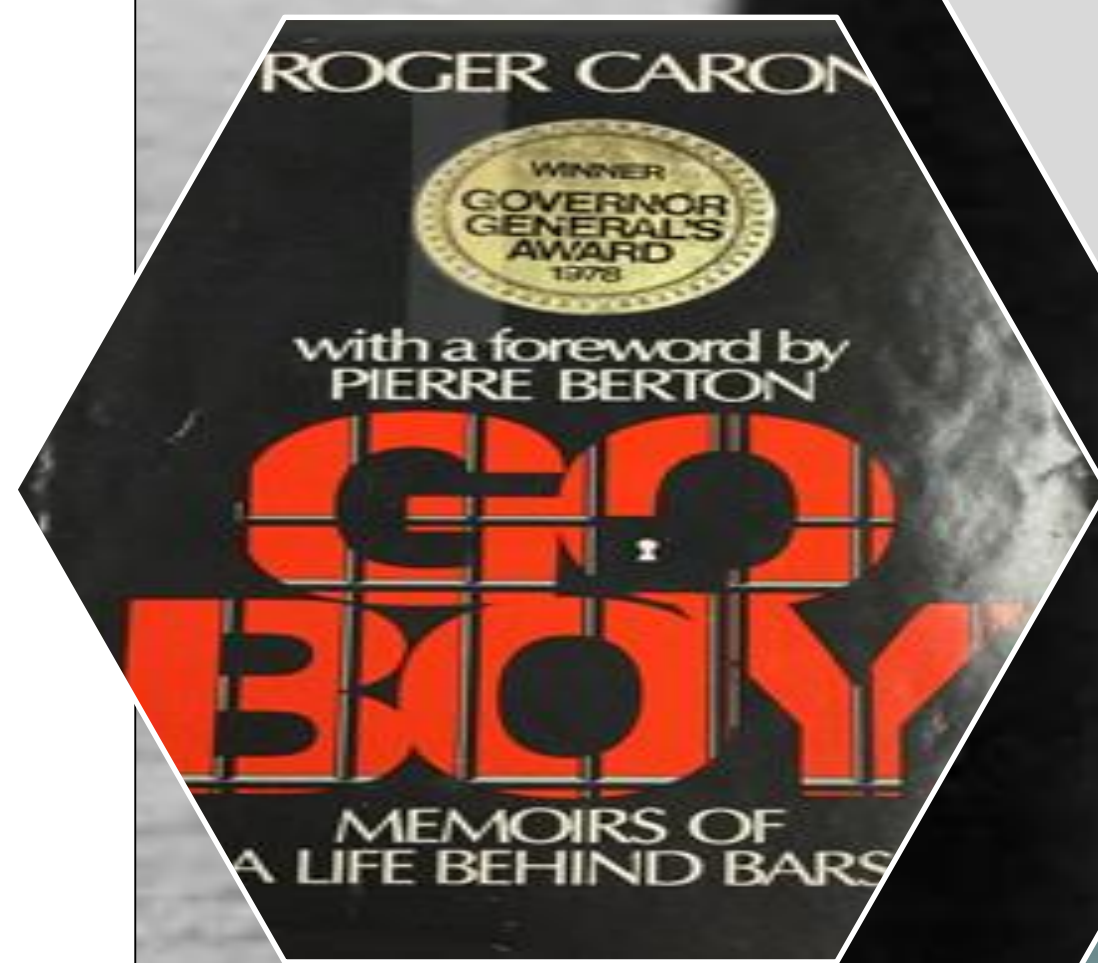
Goals

- To examine the content and historical significance of these works.
- To draw attention to the quality of these publications, especially in the 1950's and 60's.
- To establish the context and tension in which these newsletters were produced.



Exhibit

- Penal press history
- Social issues
- Tightwire
- Printing
- Personal narratives
- Political prisoners



Questions

- How best to recoup the voices of this marginalized group, while being mindful of the victims' voice?
- So many themes—how to choose?
- How to do the 'big edit' for the exhibit?

Outcomes

- Received local newspaper coverage and interest.
- National coverage: CBC radio interview.
- Digitized missing issues for penalpress.com
- Received a donation of books by prison author who had seen the exhibit.
- Audio tour of the exhibit.
- ENGL 866: Incarceration of Indigenous Peoples—class used the newsletters this year.
- HIST 400: Canadian social history:
 - The students had to assess the value of the newsletters as sources for writing a Foucauldian-inspired history of the prison.

