

Iowa became a territory, and seven years before it became a state. The ISP was patterned after the Auburn, New York, penitentiary: a prison within a prison, a cell for each convict.

Investigation reveals some interesting facts about the origin of the Ft. Madison penitentiary. Says one historian, "Before the cell blocks were ready, the prisoners were housed in a walled-in cellar dungeon beneath the oak hallway of the warden's home. Each night, with ball and chain dangling from their legs, they were descended into the cellar through a trapdoor in the middle of the hallway. In spite of precautions, seven of the first twelve prisoners escaped before the cells were ready."

Today the ISP is the state's only maximum-security institution, housing repeat and violent male offenders. The penitentiary complex includes ISP itself, with a design capacity of 550; the John Bennett Correctional Center, a medium-security 100-bed dormitory adjacent to the penitentiary; and two minimum-security farms located within a few miles of Ft. Madison, with a total of 130 beds.

ISP underwent extensive renovation of its cellhouses before "unitization" was introduced in 1982. Unitization divided large cellhouses into smaller, self-contained living units, which are more easily managed. In 1984, a new visitors' center and infirmary were dedicated at the penitentiary.

Medium Security Unit

Dave Scurr, superintendent; Mt. Pleasant Treatment Center, Mt. Pleasant 52641; 319-385-9511

The Medium Security Unit (MSU) opened in 1977 on the grounds of the Mt. Pleasant Mental Health Institution, in a 144-bed building formerly occupied by mental health patients. The main wing of the Mental Health Institution was converted to correctional use in 1984, bringing the MSU design capacity to 528.

MSU provides a medium-security setting for men with treatable character disorders and substance abuse and sexual abuse problems. The inmates tend to be younger offenders most often convicted of crimes against property.

North Central Correctional Facility

John Ault, superintendent; Rockwell City 50579; 712-297-7521

The North Central Correctional Facility (NCCF) was opened in 1982 at the site of the former Women's Reformatory near Rockwell City. Constructed in 1918, the distinctive stucco-walled, tile-roofed buildings now provide a medium-security dormitory-style setting for 100 misdemeanor and low-risk male offenders who are within one year of discharge.

Riverview Release Center

John Mathes, superintendent; Newton 50208; 515-792-7552

Riverview Release Center was founded south of Newton in 1964 as a prison honor farm. In 1971 it was designated as a minimum-security release center, with the responsibility for preparing inmates of Iowa correctional institutions for parole or discharge. The center's dormitory has a design capacity for 96 men.

Riverview strives to provide inmates with programs that include practical experiences in the community, in preparation for their release. Community visit furloughs are non-supervised, but closely-monitored, productive, overnight outings for selected inmates. To qualify, an inmate must complete the orientation program and furlough classes, receive classification approval, and be screened by the counseling staff. While on furlough, inmates are required to make periodic checks with local law enforcement agencies and be available for phone checks by Riverview staff.

Parole, Board of

Richard E. George, executive secretary; Barbara J. Freeman, operations manager; Capitol Annex, Des Moines 50319; 515-281-4818

BARBARA BINNIE, Des Moines; full-time, term expires 1992

WANDA E. EVERAGE, Ankeny; part-time, term expires 1992

ROBERT A. JACKSON, SR., Des Moines; full-time, term expires 1993

JOANNE C. LORENCE, Atlantic, term expires 1993

WALTER L. SAUR, Oelwein; full-time, term expires 1990

The Board of Parole was established in 1907 by the 37th General Assembly. The

Board of Parole consists of five members, three who serve full-time and two who serve part-time. The board is responsible directly to the governor and is attached to the Department of Corrections for the purpose of receiving routine administrative and support services. Board members are appointed by the governor for staggered four-year terms from July 1st of the year of appointment, except appointees to fill vacancies who shall serve for the balance of the unexpired term, and are subject to confirmation by the Senate. The chairperson of the board shall be elected by the members of the board to a term of one year, and may serve more than one term. A majority of the members of the board shall constitute a quorum to transact business.

The board is charged with the duty of investigating and studying the cases of prisoners confined in the penitentiary and the men's and women's reformatories and is authorized to release on parole any prisoner, except those serving life terms, after serving the portion of the maximum term it deems proper. The board may revoke and remand to prison any person it has released on parole for any reason it deems proper. It also retains the power to grant a final discharge to any parolee under the supervision of the eight judicial districts in Iowa, usually on the recommendation of the supervising officer. The board is also charged with the responsibility of approving and revoking work release; making recommendations to the governor concerning executive clemency; and conducting research and surveys relating to the effectiveness of the corrections system.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF

William H. Jackson, director; 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines 50319; 515-281-7471

Cultural Affairs Advisory Council

JULIANNE E. ANDERSON, chair, Cedar Rapids; term expires 1990

LARRY L. BRANDSTETTER, Red Oak; Arts Council chair

ELAINE G. ESTES, Des Moines; term expires 1990

B.J. FURGERSON, Waterloo; president, Iowa Public Broadcasting Board

TED HEALEY, Cedar Rapids; Library Commission chair

WALTER W. PYPER, Council Bluffs; term expires 1992

JAN SHOTWELL, Des Moines; term expires 1992

JOSEPH W. WALT, Ph.D., Indianola; State Historical Society Board of Trustees chair

JAMES W. WHITAKER, Ph.D., Ames; term expires 1990

The Department of Cultural Affairs was created by the 71st General Assembly in 1986 as part of the comprehensive, statewide reorganization plan. The department combines the State Historical Society, State Library of Iowa, Iowa Arts Council, Terrace Hill Commission, and Iowa Public Television into a single agency, with Iowa Public Television retaining a degree of autonomy. (See Iowa Public Television.)

The Cultural Affairs Advisory Council's mission is to advise the director of the Department of Cultural Affairs how best to increase the incorporation of cultural activities as valued and integral components of everyday living in Iowa. The council also recommends strategies which promote an awareness and participation in cultural events and activities, informational services, and life-long learning in Iowa. When these important elements in Iowa's quality of life are realized, Iowa will have a stronger economy, increased tourism, greater employment opportunities, and more leisure-time activities.

The Department of Cultural Affairs is charged with developing the state's interest in the areas of the arts, history, libraries, and other cultural matters for Iowans and visitors. It administers the Iowa Community Cultural Grant Program (ICCG), which provides funds to cities and community groups for the development of a city's historical, ethnic, and cultural heritages. The department provides for the improvement of library services for all Iowans, and promotes cooperation among the state's many libraries. It also stimulates and encourages the study and presentation of the performing and visual arts and public interest and participation in them, and implements tourism-related arts and history projects that promote an awareness and understanding of local, state, and regional history. Additionally, the department meets the informational needs of the three branches of government, and develops and promotes educational radio and television services to aid in accomplishing the educational objectives of the state.