

WI-OF  
Δ  
COR.  
1/2:  
W 67/  
2003

# 150 Years of Inmate Work Programs



## Corrections



Then...

...and Now



Special Report  
2003



**State of Wisconsin  
Department of Corrections  
Bureau of Correctional Enterprises**

---

Dear Reader:

December 31, 2002 marked the completion of 150 years of inmate work activities in Wisconsin prisons. The first inmate work program was established with the opening of the first Wisconsin prison at Waupun in 1852. That work program involved the construction of the permanent prison. With this milestone it is important to give special recognition to the thousands of dedicated men and women who imparted work and job skills to hundreds of thousands of offenders over those 150 years. A special recognition must also be given to those offenders that accepted the training and became productive citizens of Wisconsin after release from prison.

This publication is one method the Bureau will be utilizing during this year to recognize these achievements. This publication traces the history of this endeavor in an effort to better inform the general public and to honor the many dedicated staff who lived this history.

As I have been investing significant time over the past two years to present our story to dozens of government and community organizations involving over 1,000 individuals, I have been struck by the lack of information people have on our programs. More significant, however, has been the universal support by these individuals once they were informed about our programs. Because of that overwhelming positive feedback it is important that everyone in the Bureau take every opportunity to tell our story. Hopefully this publication can assist in that effort.

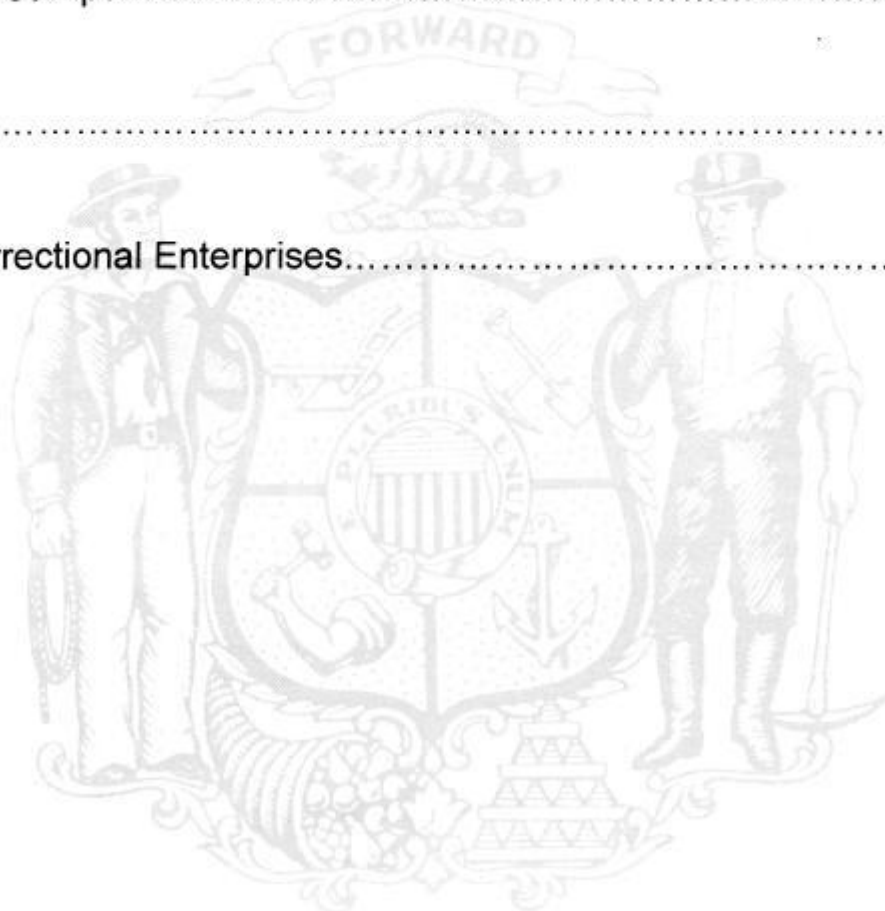
Sincerely,

Steve Kronzer, Director  
Bureau of Correctional Enterprises

# Table of Contents

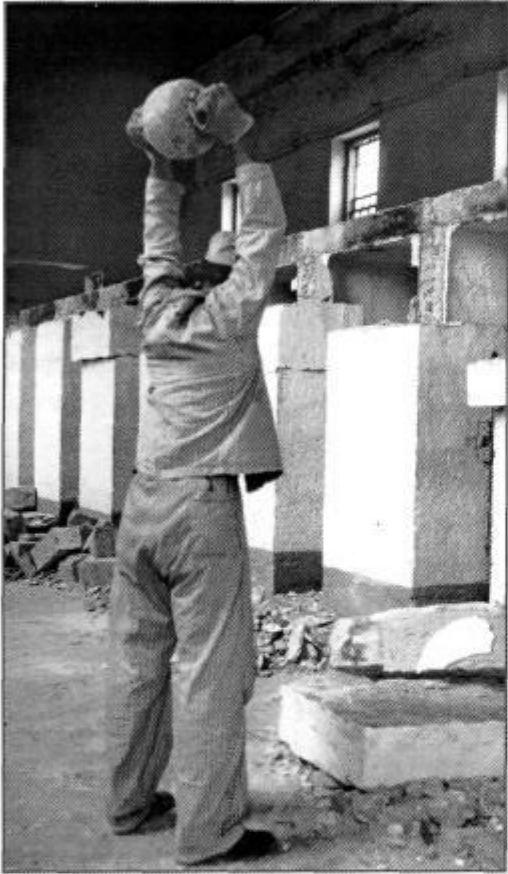
WI-OF  
A  
COR.  
1/21  
W 67/  
2003

|                                                     |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|
| History of Inmate Work in Prison.....               | 2     |
| Wisconsin State Prison.....                         | 3-6   |
| Wisconsin State Reformatory.....                    | 7-9   |
| Wisconsin Home for Women.....                       | 10-11 |
| Prison Farms.....                                   | 12-14 |
| Prison Conservation and<br>Reforestation Camps..... | 15    |
| Modern Era.....                                     | 15-16 |
| Bureau of Correctional Enterprises.....             | 17    |



## History of Inmate Work in Prison

The concept of prison dates back to the fifth century BC. Although most often used as a holding place until the prescribed punishment could be carried out, there is evidence that in ancient Greece at the time of Socrates, prisons were used as punishment. In fact, Socrates chose death as punishment for his "crimes" rather than imprisonment.



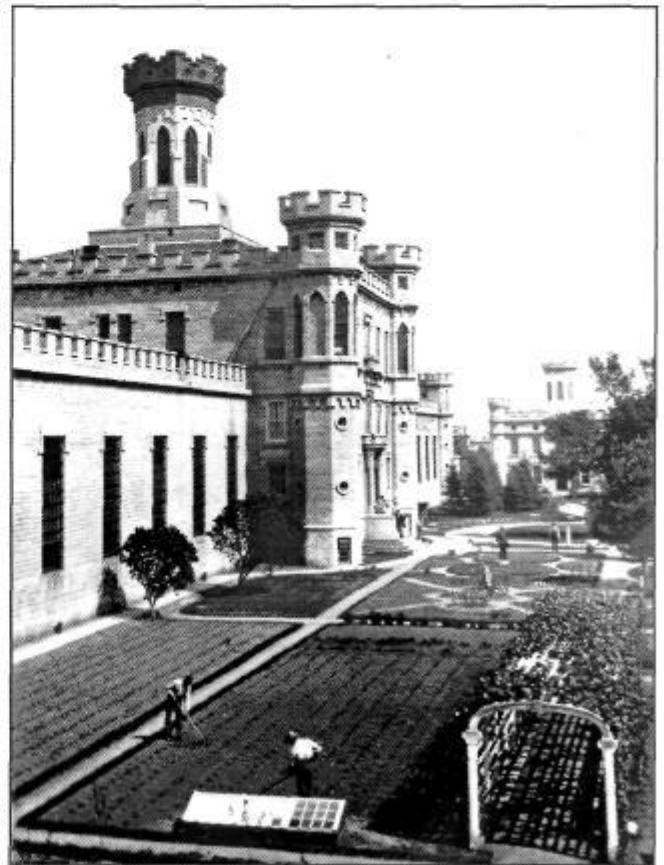
Demolition of Waupun cell hall  
(1930s)

The concept of work as part of punishment or as a part of incarceration goes back to ancient Egypt and the Pharaohs. The Hebrew slave Joseph performed forced labor in a granary according to the Book of Genesis. Over the years, labor as part of punishment took various forms including using prisoners in galleys of ships during the centuries before and after the birth of Christ, rasping (grinding) and cloth work in the 16th century workhouses in Germany, and individual occupational pursuits in the 18th century debtors prisons in England.

When prisons were established in America for purposes of punishment, there were two theories of prison operation, the Pennsylvania model championed by the Quakers and the New York (Auburn) model. The Pennsylvania model emphasized solitary confinement, work in cells, discipline and repentance. The New York or Auburn model allowed for congregated meals and work and more interaction with staff.

Although volumes were written defending each of the models the real differences in the models were more architectural rather than programatic. While the Auburn model allowed congregation, it strictly enforced silence. Both models viewed inmate work as an important component of the program.

In the end most states, including Wisconsin, adopted the Auburn model. That decision was based not on the merits of the programs but on economics. It cost more to operate under the Pennsylvania model. Additionally, there was some evidence that the onset of mental illness was more prevalent among inmates in the Pennsylvania model.



Gardens at Waupun  
(1920s)

## Wisconsin State Prison

In 1848 Wisconsin became a state. In 1851 the Legislature appointed a three-person commission to pick a site for a prison. Waupun was selected due to its proximity to transportation and availability of building materials. A contract was issued to construct a temporary wooden building. In 1852 Henry Brown was elected the first Commissioner or Warden of the prison. In 1852 the first inmates were received at the prison. By the end of the year the prison held 27 inmates (25 men and 2 women).

The arrival of the first inmates in 1852 also marked the start of the first work program for inmates. That work program involved the construction of the permanent prison beginning with the south cell hall. The permanent prison was to be constructed of stone, and inmates were used in the quarrying and cutting of stone. In the written history of Waupun this effort was described, "To accomplish the building of the permanent prison citizen stonecutters were employed to instruct the convicts, one instructor being employed to every four convicts" (emphasis added). The use of the words "instruct" and "instructor" is significant in that from the first work project in the history of Wisconsin's prisons until today, there has been a strong emphasis on providing inmates with work skills.

The use of inmates in construction of state buildings has been a significant part of inmate work programs for many years, particularly in the first 100 years of Wisconsin's history. Inmates from Waupun were used to construct:

- The Wisconsin State Reformatory near Green Bay.
- The Hospital for the Criminally Insane (Central State Hospital now Dodge Correctional Institution) in Waupun.
- The Industrial Home for Women in Taycheedah.
- The Southern Wisconsin Home for the Feeble-Minded (Southern Center for the Developmentally Disabled) at Union Grove.
- Parts of the Industrial School for Girls in Milwaukee.
- The Women's Prison at Taycheedah.
- Many of the existing and former camps including McNaughton Lake, Gordon, Union Grove, Fox Lake Bunkhouse and the old Waupun Bunkhouse.



Men marching to work in Waupun.  
(1920s)

In the 1960s and 1970s inmates from Waupun were involved in few construction projects. In the early 1980s the most significant use of inmate labor in construction was a demolition project at Waupun which involved demolishing the old cannery building, a building inmates constructed many decades earlier.

In the early days of prisons in the United States it was common for inmates to work for private business in nearby communities, sometimes called the "rent an inmate program". This was also true in Wisconsin. In 1855 inmate labor was used in a local tin shop and shoe shop. The contract with these two establishments however only lasted until 1856. In 1859 inmates began constructing workshops within the prison. In 1862 two workshops opened, a cabinet shop and a shoe shop. Products made could be used internally or sold in the open market. In 1863 profits from the cabinet shop were \$1,850 and \$548 from the shoe shop.

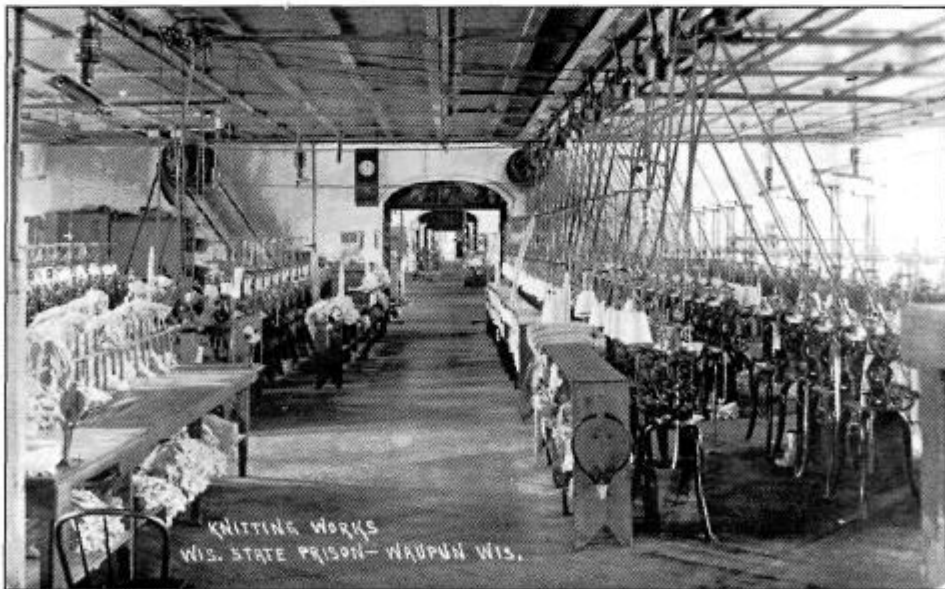
From 1865 through 1870 four more shops were opened. They were:

- Blacksmith shop
- Chair and furniture factory
- Tailor shop
- Wagon factory

By 1878 revenues and reserves from these shops plus revenues from inmate contract labor in a local boot factory were sufficient to pay the entire costs of operating the prison. For the next 40 years Wisconsin State Prison was a profitable operation for the State of Wisconsin.

In the late 1800s and the first half of the 1900s industry-type shops were established, including:

- Knitting industry
- Twine plant
- Canning
- License plate factory
- Print shop
- Laundry



Knitting plant at Waupun.  
(1940's)

In 1942 Warden Lee reported that all able-bodied inmates were employed, including:

- 275 working in the Knitting factory.
- 80 in the Twine plant.
- 30 in the Shoe shop.
- 20 in the License Plate factory.
- 25-50 in the Kitchen.
- 10-15 in the Laundry.
- 20-30 in the Tailor shop.
- 6-10 in the Print shop.
- 50-70 on the Farm.

The focus of inmate work programs changed at Waupun from the early 1900s to the 1940s. Reactions to concerns of unfair competition, abuse of inmate labor, scandals involving "kick-backs" to prison officials from private companies contracting for labor, union opposition and most importantly the Great Depression led to legislation at the federal level restricting sale of inmate made goods in the open market.

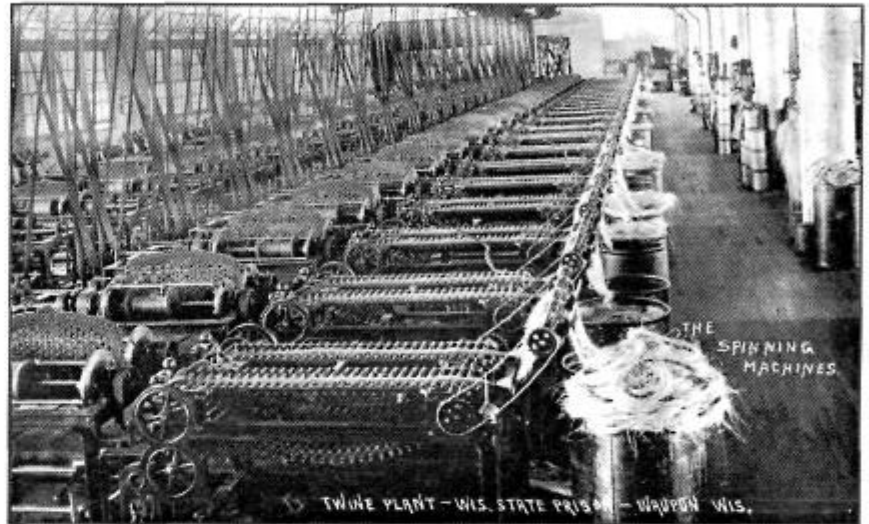
The 1929 Hawes-Cooper Act, the 1935 Sumners-Anhurst Act, the 1936 Walsh-Healy Act and the 1940 Sumners-Anhurst Act put significant restrictions on the sale of inmate made products. Although Wisconsin did not suffer the same scandals that occurred in other states, pressure was exerted to limit sale of prison made products. In the 1930s prison industries were created as a statutory entity with a market limited to sales to state agencies and its political subdivisions, other states and their subdivisions and the U.S. Government. The only products that could be sold in the open market were farm machinery, farm implements and tools, cordage rope and ply goods.

This development had two major impacts on the work programs. It established or retained operations that served government agencies (known as State Use Industries) and resulted in the creation in 1926 of minimum security prison conservation and reforestation camps. By 1931, there were 11 camps outside the prison walls.

From the mid 1950s to the mid 1970s Waupun was basically a working prison with the following industries:

- Metal (including signs, furniture and license plates)
- Laundry
- Printing
- Paint Manufacturing
- Shoe Shop
- Canning
- Clothing
- Binder Twine

In addition, hundreds of inmates worked in the kitchen, on maintenance and in various offices.



Twine plant at Waupun  
(1940s)

But in the late 1960s and early 1970s the winds of change were occurring. Declining prison populations, expansion of educational and vocational training programs, negative images of industries creating "slave labor," loss of markets for products and destruction of facilities resulted in a significant decline in industry programs at Waupun. The following industries were shut down at Waupun between 1959 and 1977:

- Binder Twine
- Shoe Shop
- Canning Factory
- Laundry
- Printing (moved to Kettle Moraine)
- Paint Shop
- Clothing

This left Waupun with only three industries, all in metals (furniture, signs and license plates).

Industry operations not only declined at Waupun but at other prisons, and the entire program was in decline. Financial losses were suffered in the 1970s and through most of the 1980s. At one point in the late 1980s prison industries carried a debt exceeding \$6.5 million. The Department of Health and Social Services in its 1981-83 biennial budget request proposed closing all industries. Fortunately the Governor did not accept that proposal.

With the decline in industry jobs, Waupun had to replace those assignments with other inmate activities. Educational programs were increased, institution work activities grew, including community service projects, and inmates were used in construction and demolition projects. Despite the institution's best efforts many inmates were idle and that problem remains to this date.

As industries have made a comeback in recent years, the number of inmates working in industry shops has increased. Metal furniture, file assembly, signage and license plates are the current operations. In June, 1996 Waupun became the first prison in Wisconsin to establish a private sector venture, authorized by the Legislature in 1995, when products began to be manufactured for the Jorgensen Conveyor Company. Ironically, a program begun at Waupun in 1855 in which inmates made products for private companies returned 141 years later.

Current plans would move the sign operation to the new prison in Stanley and to use the space freed up and possibly additional space, for an expanded furniture operation.



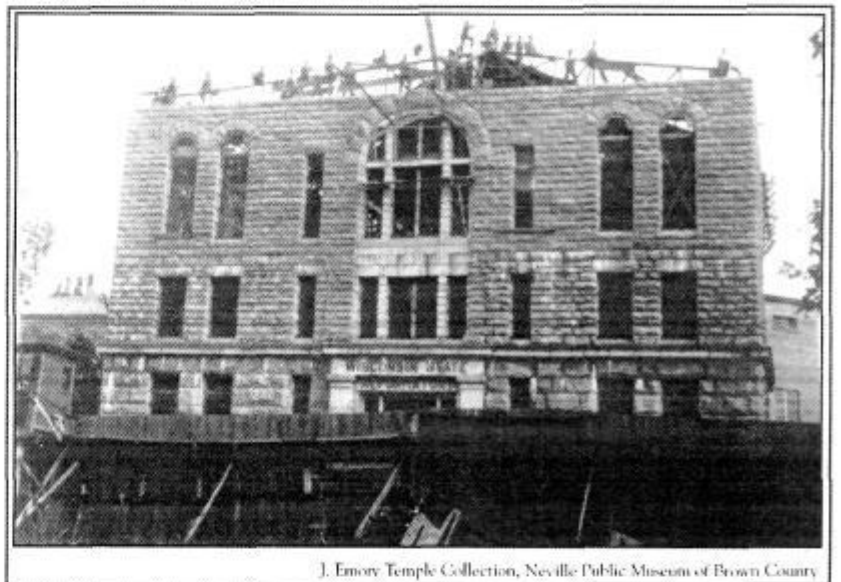
Inmates assembling systems panel at Waupun  
(2000)

## Wisconsin State Reformatory

In 1885 Charles Lulling and H.H. Giles, Chairs of the State Boards of Supervision and Charities and Reform, respectively, visited a new type of penal institution located in Elmira, New York known as a reformatory. The reformatory was designed for young first time offenders "who have never learned any useful industry or regular habits of labor. They need reform and to reform criminals, one of the essential things is to give them a good trade," Lulling wrote. Convinced of the need for such a facility in Wisconsin, Lulling and Giles attempted to convince Governor Jeremiah Rusk to support establishing a reformatory. Although supportive of the concept, Governor Rusk refused to move forward with legislation because of a poor state economy and because he felt that the concept was not sufficiently developed. It was not until 1897 that the Legislature approved legislation authorizing the establishment of a reformatory. Assemblyman Thomas McGrath of Green Bay acted as the chief sponsor of the legislation. Governor Edward Scofield (who served ten months in a confederate prison camp) signed the legislation and the long fight was over. The Wisconsin State Reformatory became a reality.

In July, 1897 the Wisconsin Treasury made available \$75,000 to implement the reformatory bill. At the recommendation of Assemblyman McGrath, a site was selected in a wooded area along the Fox River between Green Bay and DePere. A temporary prison was built from the foundation of a former bicycle factory. On August 31, 1898 Superintendent James E. Heg accepted the first eight inmates on transfer from Waupun.

Superintendent Heg's plan for the inmates as written was "to require five hours of some productive work for the state, three hours of technical training in some industry whereby a trade may be acquired, one hour of military drill and "setting up" exercises and one and one-half hours of school, wherein at least the rudiments of education may be obtained."



Inmates building Green Bay prison  
(Early 1900)

The harsh Green Bay winters precluded outside work in the first years of existence. To meet this problem the Board of Control ordered in 1900 that the Tailor industry at Waupun be moved to Green Bay to provide year-round labor. When weather permitted, inmates also worked clearing land and digging foundations for the permanent buildings. Others cultivated fields and planted crops. Later in 1901, inmates also assisted in the construction of the new buildings.

A "school of letters" was established in 1902 and the American School of Correspondence offered instruction in mechanical drawing and electricity. Much of the original construction of the institution was completed by 1920. As an adjunct to the work program, the state purchased 306 acres of farm land 16 miles from the Reformatory. In 1921 Camp Oneida was established at this location. By 1924 the second cell block was completed, as was the concrete wall encircling the back end of the institution.

The passage of state and federal legislation limiting the sale of inmate made products in the open market had a significant impact on the Tailor industry at Green Bay since most of the products produced in this operation were for outside companies. In response, reforestation and conservation camps were established, construction projects were initiated using inmate labor, a laundry operation was established, state use products were introduced in the Tailor Shop and a 40 acre granite quarry at Amberg was leased in 1925.

The Camp Amberg Quarry was mined by Green Bay inmates. Cut granite from this operation was used to build the Wilson Street State Office Building in Madison, a new bunkhouse at Oneida and additional buildings at the Reformatory.

Additional work camps operated by Green Bay were Camp Douglas in Brown County and Fish Creek Camp in Door County. In August of 1926 an auto school was established including an auto body shop.

Occasionally, inmates and guards from Green Bay were moved to other parts of the state to assist in constructing local, community projects. Janesville, Wisconsin built a root cellar with Green Bay inmate help in 1927. This marked the beginning of an organized community service program, which continues today. The moveable construction crews continued to function until the late 1960s.

With the onset of the Great Depression, the U.S. Congress established the Work Program Administration (WPA) program in the 1930s to deal with the massive unemployment rate. WPA workers entered the Reformatory to work hand-in-hand with the inmates to remodel and rejuvenate the institution. This effort not only provided work for unemployed workers but it also provided meaningful work for inmates.



THE GRANITE CUTTING SHOP— WISCONSIN STATE REFORMATORY— GREEN BAY.

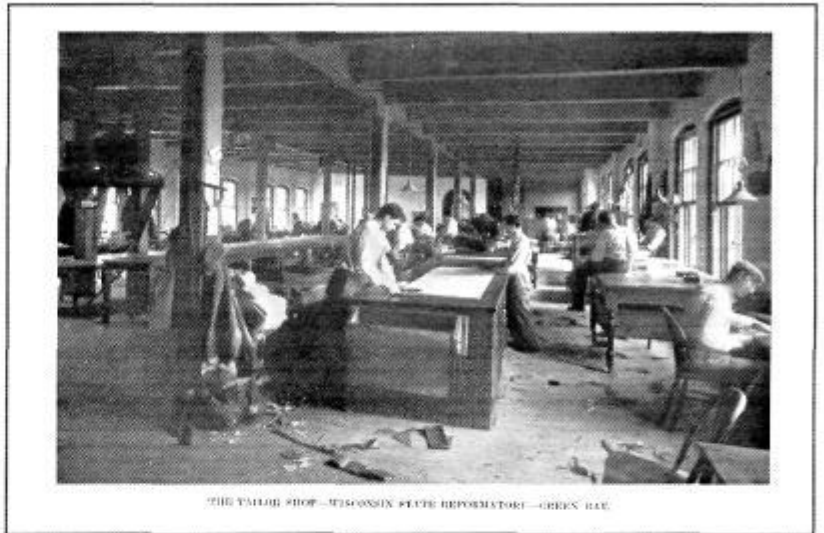
The granite cutting shop, Green Bay (1914)

During World War II the population at Green Bay was reduced by half. Inmates were used to farm land owned by private citizens who were called away to war. Inmates were also used for minor building projects and renovation of existing facilities in the Reformatory.

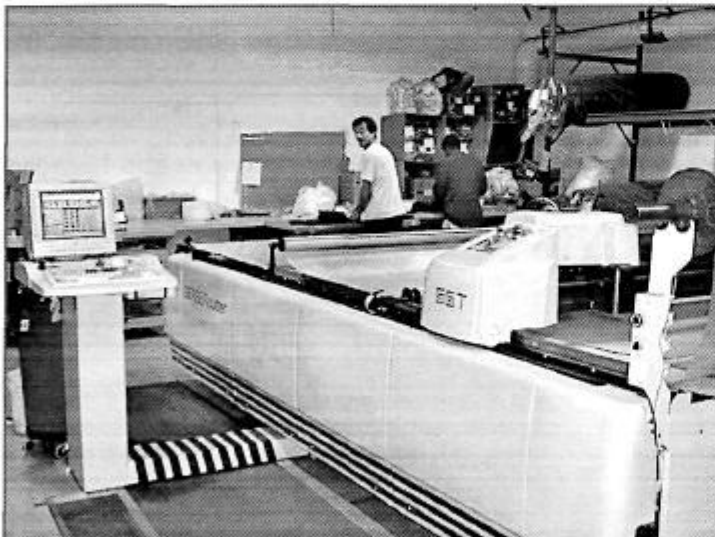
During his first month as Superintendent of the Green Bay Reformatory (August, 1951), Sanger B. Powers began paying inmates who worked. The pay was ten cents a day and marked the first time inmates were paid at that institution. He also ended the silent system, which prohibited inmates from talking at meals and at work.

In 1953 a new auto school was built which included an Auto Body Industry. Under special legislative authority vehicles could be repaired for licensed auto body dealers. In November, 1954, Camp McNaughton, a reforestry camp, was brought under the direct control of the Reformatory. In 1955 inmates began repairing toys for needy children.

In 1965 Green Bay initiated a new work program called work release. The Huber Law authority, which permitted individuals serving jail sentences to work outside the confines of the jail, was applied to the Reformatory. A crew of men were released under this law to pick apples in Door County. The work release program was greatly expanded in the late 1960s.



The Tailor Shop - Green Bay prison (1914)



Gerber Machine (2000)

As prison work programs declined at Waupun in the 1960s and 70s, so too did they decline at Green Bay. The following changes occurred at Green Bay:

- The Camp Amberg Quarry closed and the granite operation ceased.
- The Tailor shop was damaged in an inmate disturbance and remained closed for many years.
- The Auto Body industry was converted to a vocational training program.

These changes left Green Bay with the laundry as its only industry. At about the same time, the Green Bay Dairy farm was closed and the land sold.

Green Bay has experienced the benefits of a resurgence in industries. The Tailor shop was reopened in the 1980s as a repair

shop and eventually grew to a Textile factory producing mattresses (both foam and innerspring) and inmate clothes. In June, 1996 it took on a private sector venture in a joint partnership with the Fabry Glove and Mitten Company of Green Bay. Often politically controversial, it did provide jobs for 100s of inmates who paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes, child support and maintenance. In 2002 the company had to succumb to the pressures of low cost imported products and the Company's and Green Bay's production ceased. Today the Textile shop is expanding its production of clothing items including jail clothing. The Laundry continues to service mainly correctional institutions.

## Wisconsin Home for Women

The first woman received in the state prison system was admitted in 1852 to the Wisconsin State Prison in Waupun. She was the 24th inmate received at Waupun.

The Legislature in 1913 authorized the establishment and construction of the Wisconsin Industrial Home for Women. Previously, women convicted of crimes were sent to private institutions, placed on probation, or sent to the Wisconsin State Prison. The newly authorized facility was for women between the ages of 18 and 30. In many ways this institution was to serve the same type of offender that the State Reformatory did except for females.

In 1914 inmates from Waupun began construction of the facility at a site near the village of Taycheedah in Fond du Lac County. Because of lack of funds the institution was not completed and opened until 1921.

The initial program for the women consisted of laundry, kitchen, sewing and farm work. The institution farmed about 100 acres. Inmates from Waupun helped with the field work, but the women maintained a large truck garden, milked cows, made butter and did canning. They also cared for chickens, hogs and ducks. In their sewing they made inmate clothes, baby clothes, drapes and linens.

In July, 1933 the Wisconsin Prison for Women was established with the construction of Addams Hall at Taycheedah. All the women who had been housed at Waupun were transferred to this facility. Although the women from the two institutions were kept separate, all the facilities were available to both populations.



Women gardening at Waupun  
(Early 1900)



Women at Taycheedah computer recycling shop (2000)

In 1943 the women made children's dresses for the Russian War Relief. Eighty acres were added to the farm. The raising of pheasants was added to the farm operation. In 1945, the two institutions were combined into one, named the Wisconsin Home for Women.

In 1952 the farm operation was discontinued as a program for the women. Male inmates from the Waupun Farm farmed the land for several years thereafter.

In recent history, a prison industry involving screenprinting and signage was opened in 1986. Also, women began working with maintenance staff and work release was heavily used.

In the late 1980s women began to take calls for the Department of Transportation and the Lottery Board, but this project was moved to Ellsworth Correctional Center in the early 1990s.

In 1997 a Computer Recycling program began which involved the rebuilding or demanufacturing of donated computers. Rebuilt computers were sold for a nominal amount or donated to schools, the disabled and the elderly. The Computer Recycling Programs grew so large that it has been expanded and is currently operational at six different sites and employs over 100 inmates. The Screenprint shop has added a major embroidery operation.

## Prison Farms

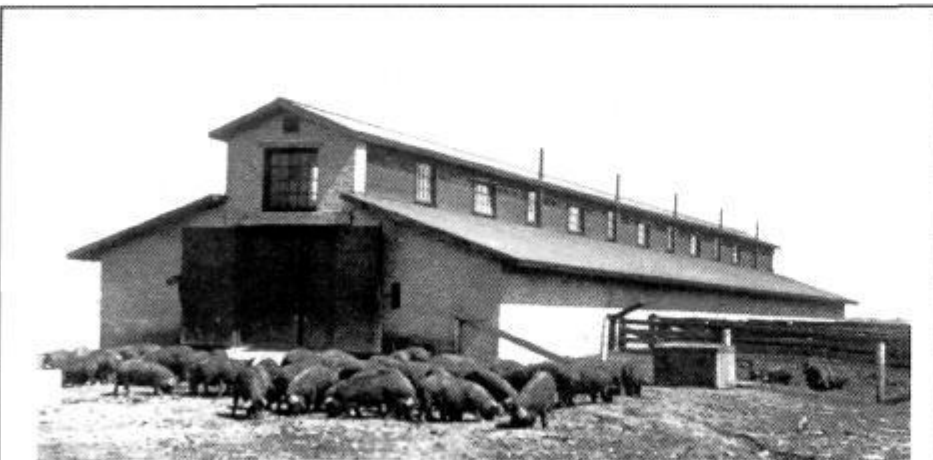
In 1885 the State of Wisconsin purchased 112 acres of land one mile east of the Wisconsin State Prison in Waupun for \$4,500. With that, the first prison farm began operation. In the next 40 years 340 acres were added to the Waupun farm. During its history the Waupun Farm raised dairy cows, beef, hogs, chickens and ducks. In 1957 a slaughterhouse (Abattoir) was built for processing meat from various farms and for providing halves and quarters of beef and pork to various institutions. It was closed in 1979 as institutions went to purchasing portion cut meat directly from vendors.

In 1930 an inmate bunkhouse was built to house inmates working on the Waupun Farm. Prior to that time inmates came from within the prison. This bunkhouse was abandoned and eventually removed. Inmates working on the farm were then housed in a converted warehouse building adjacent to the Waupun Central Warehouse. In 1990 the John Burke Correctional Center was opened and farm inmates were moved to that facility. John Burke was converted to a female facility in the early 2000s. Currently, female inmates are used to operate the dairy and the third milking shift.

In 1918 the State purchased 400 acres of farmland in the Town of Trenton seven miles west of Waupun which became known as Fox Lake Farm. A dairy farm was built on that site. A bunkhouse was built in 1920 but was closed in the 1950s and removed in the mid-1990s. An additional 80 acres were added to the Fox Lake Farm in the 1950s known as the "Lost 80". In 1920 a separate farm in the Town of Fox Lake was purchased. Part of the property was later used to build the Fox Lake Correctional Institution.

In 1911 inmates from Waupun began building the Hospital for the Criminally Insane in Waupun. Later called Central State Hospital, the facility operated a farm adjacent to the facility. In 1977 the Waupun Farm took over operation of the Central State Farm known as the Allen Farm. The John Burke Center and the expanded Dodge Correctional Institution (old Central State Hospital) were built on part of this property.

In 1983 the Fox Lake Farms and Waupun Farms were combined under one administration. Land was added to this operation in 1990 (Farm 4 near Waupun), 1994 (Popp Farm near Fox Lake) and 2002 (New Farm near Fox Lake).



Prisoners tended a farming operation on the bank of the Fox River where they grew food for themselves. They also sold food to other state institutions and the surrounding community. The operation later grew in the 1920s to include more than three hundred acres near Oneida in Outagamie County.

**Green Bay hog farm  
(1940's)**



Green Bay Creamery (1948)

With the establishment of the Green Bay Reformatory an adjacent farm was opened in 1900. Dairy, beef, hogs, poultry, feed crops and garden were part of the operation over the years. The farm was closed and the land sold in 1973.

In 1921 the State purchased 306 acres of land, 16 miles west of the Reformatory. Camp Oneida opened as a farming operation raising beef, hogs and poultry. Feed crops were grown. In 1934 a 60 bed bunkhouse was built which eventually closed in 1982, when the Sanger Powers Correctional Center was opened. By 1942 total acreage of the Farm was 500 acres. In 1952 the 982 acre Vickery Farm was purchased and added to the Oneida operation. In 1991 the Oneida Farm was closed due to financial and staffing reasons. It was reopened in 1999 as a beef feeder operation.

In 1928 the Oregon Farm was established. Dairy, beef, hogs and poultry were raised. In the 1950s the Suhr Farm was added. In 1978 the Fox Farm was also added. In 1986 the dairy processing plant was closed and all dairy processing was centralized at Winnebago. On June 17, 1992, a tornado did major damage to the Oregon Farm. Fortunately, there was no loss of human life. Over the next several years the damaged structures were repaired or replaced. Currently, the hog operation is being phased out and replaced by a beef feeding operation.

Winnebago State Hospital operated a farm adjacent to its facilities. It was a dairy operation and included a milk processing plant, which was built in 1939. Correctional inmates took over the operation of the farm in the 1950s. In 1959 Corrections took over the creamery operation. The Winnebago farm was closed in 1992 with the expansion of the Oshkosh Correctional Institution. The herd and some facilities were moved to the Waupun farm at that time. The Creamery continued to operate on the grounds of Winnebago Mental Health Institute until 1996 when the newly constructed Waupun dairy was opened.

The Thompson Farm near Cambridge was established in 1942 when Corrections leased 1,500 acres from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Beef and crops were the main products. Corrections purchased the property in the 1950's. It closed as a farming operation in 1973 and all but 22 acres were sold. The site now operates as a correctional center.

The Southern Wisconsin Home for the Feeble Minded at Union Grove (Southern Center for the Developmentally Disabled) operated a farm with its patients. In the 1950s Corrections took over the farm operation but it was closed in 1975. Union Grove was mainly a beef operation.

Over the years farms were also operated using inmate labor at the Wisconsin Home for Women at Taycheedah and the McNaughton Camp.

During the long history of prison farms two major events occurred which have had a long lasting impact on farms. The first was the Governor's proposal in the 1971-73 budget to close all prison farms, to sell all the land and to use the funds to establish new treatment programs. Although not totally successful, the Governor was able to close the Reformatory Farm, the Thompson Farm and the Union Grove Farm. All three were financially strong operations.

The second major event was the poor management and neglect suffered by the farms in the 1960s and 1970s. The Farms ended FY78 with a cash deficit. This downward trend actually began in 1967. The trend continued downward except for a brief interruption in FY's 76 and 77 when the Farm Manager sold off a large portion of the herds to realize an infusion of cash at the end of the fiscal year.

During the 1960s and much of the 1970s building and machinery replacements and repairs were deferred. Because the herd was declining in size and the best animals sold off, the quality and quantity of the products declined. Institutions at the time began purchasing meat and vegetables from private sources. Cash losses continued until FY92 when the Farms began their comeback. However, Farms had accumulated cash losses in excess of \$5.5 million by FY92. The debt has been reduced to \$4.5 million in FY03. The new dairy at Waupun with its capacity to produce 1/2-pint milk containers and ice cream has had a positive impact on finances of the Farms. Improved herd management at both Waupun and Oregon has significantly increased milk production permitting the Dairy to keep up with the demand for dairy products within the State's correctional facilities.



Women at Waupun dairy (2000)

## Prison Conservation and Reforestation Camps

With the advent of federal and state restrictions on sale of inmate made products and the decline of prison industries, the Prison and Reformatory began establishing conservation and reforestation camps. The first camps were established in 1926 as summer labor camps at Camp Douglas in Brown County and Fish Creek Camp in Door County. Inmates in these camps performed conservation projects and reforestation projects. By 1931 there were 11 camps used by the Wisconsin State Prison and Wisconsin State Reformatory.

Shortly after that, permanent year-round conservation facilities were opened. The McNaughton Adult Correctional Camp on McNaughton Lake was opened. In 1937 the Gordon Camp was opened. These camps were located in or adjacent to state parks and forests. Inmates spent most of their days working in the park doing conservation and reforestation projects for the Department of Conservation (now Department of Natural Resources). The McNaughton facility was moved to its current location (a former TB Sanatorium) in 1956.

In 1953 construction of the Flambeau Camp began. The work for inmates was similar to that of the other camps. In 1959 Flambeau became a juvenile camp with work and school as its program. In 1982 it again became an adult camp.

The Black River Camp outside of Black River Falls was founded in 1961 as a juvenile camp with in-house school and reforestation work as its program. Over the years the jurisdiction of the camp went from juveniles, to adults, to youthful offenders back to adults. In reality the offenders remained basically the same and the program remained the same.

## Modern Era

The period of 1960 to the present saw a number of new prisons open, including the following:

- Wisconsin Correctional Institution - Fox Lake
- Kettle Moraine Correctional Institution - Plymouth
- Oakhill Correctional Institution - Oregon
- Dodge Correctional Institution - Waupun
- Columbia Correctional Institution - Portage
- Oshkosh Correctional Institution - Oshkosh
- Wisconsin Resource Center - Oshkosh
- Racine Correctional Institution - Sturtevant
- Jackson Correctional Institution - Black River Falls
- Racine Youthful Offender Correctional Facility - Racine
- Redgranite Correctional Institution - Redgranite
- Wisconsin Secure Program Facility - Boscobel
- Prairie du Chien Correctional Facility - Prairie du Chien
- Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility - Milwaukee
- Stanley Correctional Institution - Stanley

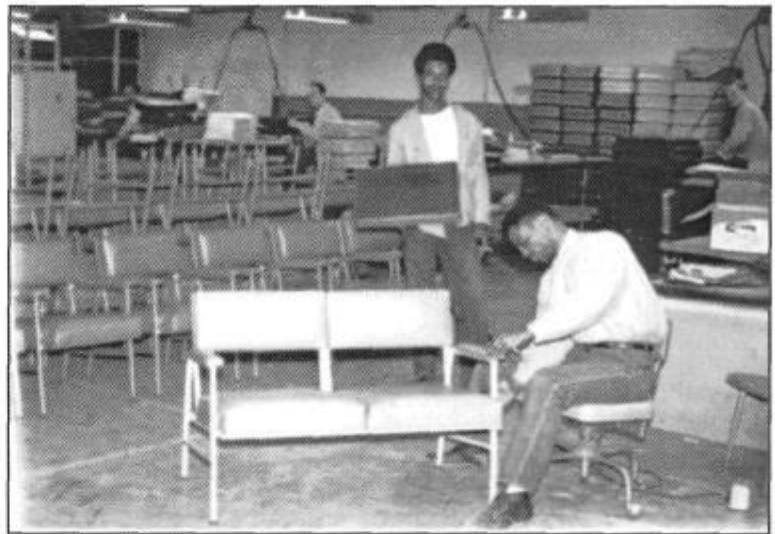
At many of these institutions a major work program/industry was established.

The 1980s and 1990s also saw many positive changes in the prison industries program. Despite continued opposition from labor and small business, prison industries were able to expand its sales from \$5.6 million a year to over \$23 million in FY03. Inmate employment increased from 350 to over 800. By June 30, 1998 prison industries had paid back the \$6.5 million of accumulated cash deficit owed the State of Wisconsin and had a positive cash balance of over \$5 million on June 30, 2003.

Legislation during this period was sometimes restrictive and sometimes expansive. In 1989 legislation was approved restricting sale of laundry services and furniture for offices. In 1995, however, legislation was approved permitting three private sector companies to purchase inmate made products or provided services. This number was expanded to six in 1997, but reduced to two in 2001.

Other legislation was approved which assisted prison industries to become profitable. Special accounting, purchasing and personnel provisions were established in 1983, as well as the State Use Law was strengthened. The cash profit reversion provision was repealed in 1983. The goals of industries were clarified and a Prison Industry Board was created.

Other legislation passed in 1989 was less helpful in advancing the program and significantly increased legislative involvement of the details of operating the program. It also required preparation of numerous reports and complicated processes for securing approval for new operations



Fox Lake Chair Assembly Shop  
(1960)



Columbia Correctional Print Shop.  
(2003)

## Bureau of Correctional Enterprises

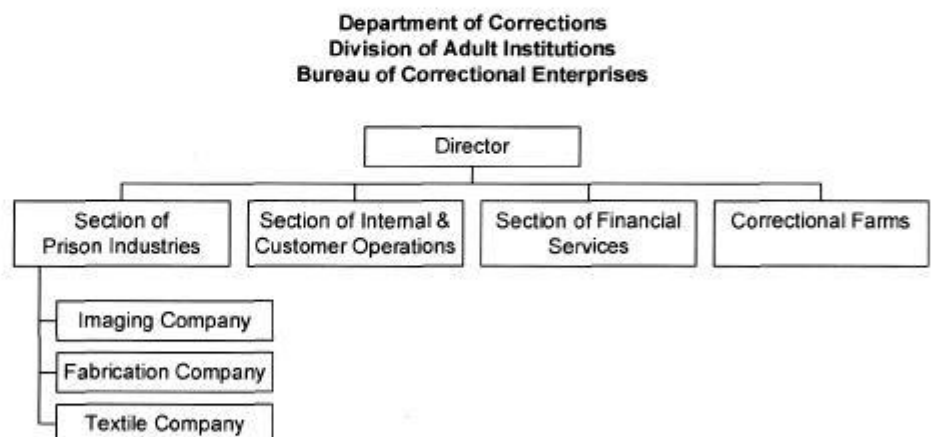
In 1992 the Bureau of Correctional Enterprises (BCE) was created to consolidate the major DOC enterprises into one organizational unit creating efficiencies, allowing the sharing of resources between programs and creating the framework for expansion. The enterprises incorporated included Prison Industries, Correctional Farms and Community Service Projects. It is more than mere coincidence that the period since the creation of the Bureau has resulted in the greatest growth in these programs in their history in terms of number of operations, revenues and inmates employed. The Bureau currently operates industry units at 14 distinct sites, community service units in 6 areas and farms at 4 locations for a total of 24 operations. In addition administrative offices, including accounting, sales, marketing, purchasing, furniture design, installation and general management and support services are operated out of Madison along with a warehouse. In FY93 total revenues from all funding sources for the Bureau were approximately \$15 million. In FY03 revenues from all sources were \$29 million. The number of inmates employed in FY93 was about 500. By FY03 that number has grown to over 900.

In addition to directing the growth in the enterprises, the Bureau also successfully implemented a continuum of programming for inmates. Most significant of these efforts was the creation of the Transition Program, which assists inmates who work in any Bureau program to become prepared for release from the institution in order to secure and retain employment. The services provided by the Transition Program include providing the means to document job skills learned while incarcerated, as well as educational achievements; providing assistance in obtaining needed documents such as social security cards; assistance in developing job seeking skills; directing inmates to community resources; doing job referrals; funding emergency support needs; and following up on success of the inmates to remain crime free and obtain employment. The results of these efforts have been documented and are impressive. Less than 20% of inmates have returned to prison and almost 70% of those participants who are out, are employed. As the Transition Program evolves the goal is to reduce the return rate even more and to increase the rate of offenders employed.

Additionally, the Bureau has implemented an Inmate Trainee Program, which requires shops to hire trainees at the rate of 10% of its normal work force. This program has the benefits of adding about 100 more inmate jobs and provides the shops a trained workforce, reducing the negative impact of worker turnover.

Currently, the Bureau is implementing a basic Computer Training Program, which will be made available to all inmates interested in securing these skills. Also, discussions are underway with several institutions on implementing two five hour shifts, four days a week. This change would double the number of inmates employed and could result in greater productivity.

The Bureau will continue to advance the goals of the inmate work programs first established 150 years ago. Those goals include reducing the costs of the prison system by becoming more self-supporting and providing the opportunity for inmates to develop work habits, attitudes and skills to lower the likelihood that they will violate the law again



# Department of Corrections

## Bureau of Correctional Enterprises

■ Industries ■ Farm Operations ■ Recycling Projects

