THE EARLY DAYS OF THE
PHILADELPHIA HOUSE OF REFUGE

BY NEGLEY K. TEETERS*

THE decade of 1820 seems to have been the earliest period in which the reformers of the country were actively concerned over the plight of delinquent and vagrant children. Various phases of child care were well underway before this period, especially those dealing with orphans and paupers, but concern for delinquents and problem children in general had to mature gradually.

The movement began in New York City and in Philadelphia at approximately the same time. The man who apparently stimulated the citizens of New York to action was the prominent Quaker pedagogue, John Griscom (1774-1852). In 1818 Griscom made a tour of European children's schools and was impressed by the fine work they were doing for abandoned and "depraved" children. His description of these schools may be found in his *Memoirs*. The year previously he had been moved "by the condition of the poor and criminal classes in the city and invited several of his friends into his parlor up on Williams Street to consider some practical measures for the cure of pauperism and the elimination of crime."

The result of this meeting was the founding of the New York "Society for the Prevention of Pauperism." Four years later, after Griscom had completed his European tour, the organization changed its name to the "Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents." It is quite possible that this was the first time that children who had broken the law were referred to as "juvenile delinquents." Through the efforts of Griscom and his fellow

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philanthropists, the first House of Refuge for juvenile delinquents was opened in this country in New York City on January 1, 1825. It consisted of a bleak barrack leased from the federal government and stood on the present Madison Square which, at the time, "was well uptown and away from business and city confusion."

There was a curious mixture of puritanical zeal and progressive education in the philosophy of the first institutions for delinquent children. Griscom and his colleagues were admirers of the noted Swiss educator, Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827), who had established a school for orphans at Neuhoff in 1775. It was in this school that the great philosopher formulated his principles of education which are still recognized in pedagogic circles. Although he and his almost equally distinguished successor, Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg, were not concerned with delinquency, their philosophy of training children made a deep impression, not only on Griscom, but on Bronson Alcott of Concord and Boston, and John M. Keagy of Philadelphia. The first superintendent of the New York House of Refuge, Joseph Curtis, was also a Pestalozzian.

It was written of his short incumbency— he lasted only one year— "He subordinated system to personality as a method of education. . . He aimed to develop the individuality of the child, bring out his powers of self-expression. He believed in the development of character rather than routine." 2

Progressive though Curtis was, he was a stern disciplinarian. At the table, the children had to "be silent, holding up a hand if they wanted water, a thumb for vinegar, three fingers for bread, and one finger for salt." 3 The chief complaint lodged against Curtis by the management was that he permitted the children to escape. However, his defense was that no one could run an educational institution like a factory or a prison. His successor, N. C. Hart, was an educator as well as an organizer and administrator. He is remembered for his efficient management of this first House of Refuge where he remained for a number of years.

Up to this time wayward children, runaway apprentices, and homeless waifs had been sent to jails or almshouses, where they were obliged to mingle with adults of all degrees of depravity. It was largely because of this condition that the reformers of the

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3 Ibid.
The First Philadelphia House of Refuge.

day had set about to create special institutions for minors. Boston followed the example of New York when it opened its House of Reformation in 1826.

The Philadelphia House of Refuge was opened in 1828. But as early as 1823 there were signs of real alarm concerning the young offenders who had been housed in the two city jails, the one standing at the corner of Sixth and Walnut Streets, known as the Walnut Street Jail, and the Bridewell or Arch Street Prison, which stood on what is now known as Reyburn Plaza across from City Hall. The large number of vagrant children lodged in the county almshouse also disturbed the reformers.

It is quite possible that the Philadelphia reformers had some knowledge of the activities of like-minded people in New York City although the evidence available at this date is somewhat obscured. The issue of the Philadelphia Public Ledger for July 29, 1878, states that as early as 1819 “the venerable James J. Barclay ... frequently visited the prisoners in the old county jail ... and saw the hoary-headed in crime and the wayward youth in his teens, huddled together. He argued that a child, no matter how bad and vicious, could only become more hardened and vicious by daily contact with men ... who had reached the x, y, z of the criminals’ alphabet.”

It is quite possible that the first recorded instance of action may be found in the minutes of the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons of which James J. Barclay, men-

tioned above, was an influential member (and president from 1849-
1885, having joined the Society in 1820), dated October 3, 1823.
It was resolved at this meeting that a committee be appointed “to
confer with the guardians of the poor on the best means of putting
a stop to commitments of young children as vagrants, and be taken
away by the guardians.”

The committee brought in its report on March 17, 1824. This
report included the following significant recommendations:

That a suitable place be provided by the Guardians
of the Poor for the reception of all minors who are taken
up by the watchmen and others, strolling the streets, and
some without a home, and now committed to the common
prison amongst the untried prisoners, who are charged
with murder, grand larceny, and all other crimes, thereby
inuring them to vice in its most formidable shape, and
which in many instances proved a school for the comple-
tion of the most adept characters of villainy; which place
is provided to be made sufficiently strong for their safe
keeping, until suitable places can be obtained for binding
them out apprentices, at such a distance from the city as
will, in all probability, break off all connections with their
former associates.⁵

Nothing came of this proposal, but in 1826 the Society was ap-
proached by the Society of Women Friends, which had been visit-
ing female prisoners in the Arch Street Prison for some time.⁶
This organization offered its services in assisting in the creation
of a “House of Refuge for Juvenile Offenders should such an
establishment be formed under its auspices.”⁷ The Prison Society
in its deliberations realized the magnitude of the task confronting
it, and decided to enlist the thought and cooperation of the entire
community in the undertaking. Subsequently a public meeting was

⁵ From the Minutes of the Acting Committee of the Pennsylvania Prison
Society, March 17, 1824.
⁶ This prison, a Bridewell for vagrants and short-term offenders, had been
opened in 1817.
⁷ Minutes of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, January 9, 1826. This So-
ciety is the oldest prison reform society in the world. It has, from its in-
ception, been directly or indirectly responsible for practically every cor-
rectional reform in the Commonwealth. For over a hundred years it defended
the old system of “separate” or “solitary” confinement of prisoners. Today
it is a professional case-work agency.
called for consideration of the project. This meeting was held on
February 7, 1826, and was reported as follows in the February 9
issue of Poulson's *American Daily Advertiser*:

At a very numerous and respectable meeting of the
citizens of Philadelphia . . . held at the County Court
House . . . Chief Justice Tilghman was called to the chair
and Robert Patterson was appointed secretary. On motion
of John Sergeant, Esq., the following resolutions were
read and unanimously adopted:

This meeting, being duly impressed with the im-
portance of the employment of means not only for
the prevention of vice, but for rescuing those espe-
cially in their tender years, who have, through the
influence of various temptations, committed offenses,
whereby they have become objects of legal correction
by confinement in prisons, where association with
accomplished and hardened offenders too often con-
irms their depraved dispositions and enlarges their
knowledge of crime; and, whereas, experience has
shown that much benefit has resulted to individuals
and to society from establishments devoted to the safe
keeping and moral improvement of the juvenile of-
fenders.

Therefore, resolved: That it is expedient and
necessary to organize in or near the city of Phila-
delphia, an institution to be called "The House of
Refuge for Juvenile Offenders."

A committee of eleven was appointed to prepare articles of
association to be submitted to the citizens of the city and to peti-
tion the legislature for legal status of the group. From another
source we learn that the "Board of Managers" of the proposed
institution had petitioned the legislature (in 1826) to turn over
the Prune Street debtors' apartment (adjacent to the Walnut
Street Jail) for its use. John Goodwin and Levi Garrett, repre-
senting the new Board, met with the jail inspectors and all agreed
that this move would not be feasible. The inspectors, however,
volunteered to assist the managers in urging the legislature to

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8 This committee was composed of the Rt. Rev. William White, Robert
Wharton, Joseph Watson, John Sergeant, J. R. Ingersoll, J. C. Biddle,
Roberts Vaux, Samuel R. Wood, James J. Barclay, Thomas Bradford, Jun.,
George M. Dallas, with William Tilghman, chairman, and Robert Patter-
son, secretary.
appropriate funds for a separate institution for delinquent children.9

On April 27, 1827, a tract of land containing five acres, fifteen
perches was purchased for $5,000 and on June 27 the cornerstone
was laid for the new establishment. The distinguished John Ser-
geant, president of the Board of Managers, delivered an appropriate
address at the ceremony.10 The building stood at the corner of
Francis Lane (later known as Coates Street and today as Fair-
mount Avenue) and Fifteenth Street (its eastern boundary), facing on the Ridge Road (now Ridge Avenue). The plot of ground of 400 by 231 feet was enclosed by a stone wall two feet thick and twenty feet high. The only adequate description of the building may be found in a book dealing with the penitentiaries of the United States, written by the English Prison Commissioner, William Crawford, who visited this country in 1833, who wrote:

The main building is ninety-two feet in length and thirty feet in depth. The building contains the keeper’s and matron’s residences, rooms for the use of the managers, and infirmaries. The wings on each side of the main building extend the whole length of the front. They contain three ranges or stories of cells, each seven by four feet. These cells are well lighted and ventilated. In the centre of the ground is a detached building, containing the chapel, under which is the boys’ dining-room; adjoining is the kitchen, with the girls’ dining-room. There are separate school rooms for each sex. The workshops are ranged along the boundary wall in the rear. . . . The building was at first calculated to contain 172 children in separate dormitories, but the accommodation having been enlarged, 279 inmates can now be lodged, educated, and employed; viz., 196 boys and 83 girls.\textsuperscript{11}

Thus far no satisfactory picture of this first House of Refuge has been brought to light. The accompanying etching shows nothing more than a bleak front façade with a wall running down one side which resembles a prison more than a school for children of “tender years.”\textsuperscript{12}

Apparently the originators of this ambitious project had some difficulty in raising funds. But with $10,000 from the state legislature and $5,000 annually for five years from the Philadelphia County Commissioners, a sum adequate to purchase a site and construct modest buildings was realized. Private citizens, making contributions, were given memberships in the corporation and because of this provision the institution was self-governing. It and its successors, the Glen Mills Schools and Sleighton Farms for Girls, both in Delaware County, are still regarded as private in-

\textsuperscript{11} William Crawford, \textit{The Penitentiaries of the United States} (London, 1834), 47.

\textsuperscript{12} The cut on p. 167 is from \textit{Picture of Philadelphia} by James Mease, continued by Thomas Porter, and published by R. Desilver (Philadelphia, 1831), II, 40.
Children were to be committed to the House from the various counties through the courts upon complaints of their parents, or by being apprehended on the streets by regularly constituted authorities, such as the night-watch, predecessors of the police. Some inmates were also transferred to the House from almshouses by magistrates or by the Overseers of the Poor.

The first superintendent, or steward, as he was originally called, was a Capt. Jared Bunce who assumed his duties on November 17, 1828. Who he was or why he left, so soon after his appointment, on December 25 is not known. Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman was appointed matron and her daughter, Sally Ann, was made assistant matron. The Board did not replace Capt. Bunce for some time. Edwin Young served as steward until April 1, 1829, when Dr. John Keagy (1792-1837) became superintendent. Keagy was both a physician and an educator. While he espoused the Pestalozzi school of educational philosophy, he found it easy to concur with the Board in advocating the use of the "cat" as a disciplinary persuader. Keagy, whose brief biography may be found in the Dictionary of American Biography, was of Swiss extraction. He was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and was trained in medicine as well as in education. He had taught at Asbury College, Baltimore, and later at the Classical Academy of Harrisburg before assuming his duties at the House of Refuge. Later he taught at Penn Charter School in Philadelphia. The biographical sketch fails to mention his year at the Philadelphia House of Refuge. Keagy and Bronson Alcott of Boston and Concord, Massachusetts, were friends and carried on a correspondence concerning Pestalozzian methods. The Rev. Louis Dwight, secretary of the Boston Prison Discipline Society, in his fourth annual report described the new superintendent as a "physician, a skilled teacher, a disciplinarian and a pious man." Keagy was selected for the post from a number of candidates.

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13 Scribner's (1946), X, 266-267. The sketch is signed by Tyrrell Williams.
The Board of Managers devoted several weeks to the development of administrative policies. First they set down the "means by which they proposed to Effect the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents." This was to be achieved by: "First, the security of their persons; second, inspection; third, classification; fourth, constant employment; fifth, education combined with moral and religious training; sixth, coarse but suitable food and clothing; seventh, space for exercise conducive to health; eighth, separation of the sexes; ninth, accommodation for and attendance on the sick."17

The Board had little to guide them in the development of a philosophy of dealing with wayward youth. A discipline that employed the generous use of the "cat" is difficult to reconcile with a philosophy of education purportedly based on the work of the great Pestalozzi. Both the Houses of Refuge of Boston and New York were headed by progressive educators, but at least the New York establishment flourished under a strict regime. The Boston institution was reputed to have been somewhat milder in its approach to education.18

Classification and discipline of the inmates were an integral part of the system of all three Houses of Refuge. The management of the Philadelphia school may have derived some knowledge of the systems of the other cities although we do not know this to be true. The system of classification at Philadelphia was as follows:

Class I Shall consist of the best behaved and most orderly boys and girls; those who do not swear, lie, or use profane, obscene or indecent language or conversation, who attend to their work and studies, are not quarrelsome and have not attempted to escape.

Class II To include those who are next best but who are not quite free from all the above mentioned vices and practices.

Class III Those who are less moral in conduct than those in Class II.

Class IV Those who are very vicious and disobedient.

17 William Crawford, *op. cit.*, 152.
18 For details concerning these schools, see Teeters and John O. Reinemann, *The Challenge of Delinquency* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), Chapter XI.
The daily routine, as prescribed by the Board, was arduous and long. The children arose at seven o'clock during the winter months and at five o'clock during the summer. There was a smattering of schooling prior to breakfast, in some months a half hour while in others an hour. Work hours ranged from eight o'clock until noon and from one o'clock until four. School followed supper until bedtime which was at eight o'clock during the entire year. Thus the work hours ranged from six and a half hours to eight and a half per day, and schooling ranged from three and a half to four and a half. The diet was none too ample for growing boys. For breakfast, rye coffee with milk sweetened with molasses was provided. Meat, mostly mutton, and vegetables were served for noon dinner. Supper consisted mainly of mush and molasses. A commentator, writing in 1893, had this to report about the first Refuge and its inmates:

Some of us remember the House of Refuge that stood at the corner of Ridge Road and what was then called Coates Street. The enclosure was open [this is hard to imagine when looking at the only available print we have of the structure] so that the little prisoners could thrust their hands through, for they had flowers to sell that had been grown on their premises, and the great throng of passers-by would stop and watch these little ones, and sometimes give a few cents for the flowers. It was a sad sight—free children on the one side and the imprisoned ones, of the same age, in their coarse clothing, on the other. And yet here was a growth from the old times of dungeons and underground cells, of cruelty and inhumanity.\(^\text{10}\)

The children committed to the House were, by law, under the supervision of the Board until they reached their majority. This type of commitment, followed in the other Houses of Refuge in New York and Boston, was the first experiment with the indeterminate sentence and may be found today in all reform schools for juveniles and in the country's reformatories for older youth.

The children were assigned work and schooling and when, in the judgment of the Board they were prepared for release, they were apprenticed out to persons who would accept responsibility

\(^{10}\) From the *Journal of Prison Discipline & Philanthropy*, official publication of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, 1893, 10.
for their further development. The Board elected an Apprenticing Committee consisting of five members whose duty was to decide upon the fitness of those who wished to apprentice the children. Rules covering indenture were:

The inmates shall be bound to persons of good moral character, who . . . will feel a deep interest in the reformation of the children placed under their care.

No inmate shall be apprenticed to a tavern-keeper or distiller of spiritous liquors; and girls shall not be apprenticed to unmarried men, or placed in boarding-houses, or in public academies.

A Bible and printed paper of advice and instruction, relative to his or her future conduct, shall be given to each inmate when apprenticed; a printed letter shall also be given with the indenture to those under whose control the children are placed, recommending them particularly to their parental care and affection.

No child shall be apprenticed until he or she has resided at least one year in the House, given satisfactory evidence of reformation, and has learned to read and write, except in special cases, and then only with the consent of the Executive Committee.²⁰

The first boy received at the House was William Coombs, aged 13 years, 7 months. He arrived at the institution on December 8, 1828, having been committed by the Mayor of Philadelphia. His offense was larceny. The records show that he was “washed thoroughly and clothed in a new suit.”²¹ The records further state that “we were under the necessity of confining him in the hall of the dormitories, the south gate not being fastened or the necessary fastenings not having been attached.” A further notation states “the character given him is very bad.” This prognosis was borne out by the record of this young ragamuffin during the ensuing days and weeks, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>Seems contented and evinces a more than readiness to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>William made his escape about 12 o'clock from the hall through the privy but was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²⁰ Crawford, op. cit., 153.
²¹ From the Journal of the House of Refuge, dated December 8, 1828; these journals and other records may be found at the Glen Mills Schools, Glen Mills, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.
stopped at the gate. Now confined in his cell.

December 16: Confined to his cell for impertinence in talking to the daughter of the matron. Liberated in the afternoon upon a promise of good conduct in future.

December 17: Sentenced William last evening to confinement until after breakfast for breach of duty in school hours and being disorderly and noisy in his cell; not released 'till afternoon.

January 10: [1829] Confined from 9 A.M. 'till 1 P.M. for improper conversation and quarreling with G. Dereckson [another inmate] in the work shop; William being very noisy in his room was punished with a rattan upon the hand.

January 12: Reduced from Class I to Class II.

February 4: It was thought advisable to give William a few cuts with the cat this morning.

February 5: Thought necessary to use cat again for talking and quarreling in the shop.

February 9: Sentenced to continue his work during the dinner hour and about 3 o'clock was confined to his cell.

February 10: Liberated from his cell at half past 8 A.M.22

William stayed at the House for about two years and was finally bound out.

The second boy received was older, about 18 years of age. He was Frederick Marsh, committed from the Arch Street Prison by Alderman F. Wolbert on December 15. Marsh's record reads: "Charged with stealing a piece of Ravensduck valued at $2.50. Says he has not been fairly dealt with, that he learned the trade of a Saddler, in part from his father; can make collars for Horses and do something at Harness Making. Says he did want to go to sea but at present does not desire to. Says a black man first led him into mischief but he is not now in the city; that the bad boys he had some acquaintance with were taken and are in prison; he promises good behavior." This did not materialize, as Marsh had the "cat" applied to him on numerous occasions.

The youngest boy sent to the Refuge during the first year was

22 Ibid.
George Peiffer "a child of seven . . . who was committed this day June 29, 1829, on the charge of disorderly conduct, pilfering, etc."
The record shows that "his mother is a widow, her employment is nursing, washing, whitewashing, etc., and that George is the youngest of six children." There were other young children sent to the institution in later years. For instance on January 9, 1831, Mary Carter, aged 7 was committed on the charge of "wandering about the streets at midnight in a destitute and forlorn condition."
On March 6, 1830, "Rebecca Smith, aged 9 and her brother, Henry aged 5 and upwards were committed for vagrancy."

There is nothing in the records indicating that Negro children were not to be accepted at the Refuge. However, during the early years there were few of this race admitted. In 1850 the Board established a segregated building for Negro children at the new site, 22nd and Parrish Streets. A Negro boy, Jason Moore, was admitted on December 16, 1828, sent from the almshouse. But on December 19 he was returned. The following year, 1829, on November 10, Eli Hitchens, colored, aged 13 "was this day committed by the Court of Quarter Sessions of Chester County on the charge of larceny. He is a colored boy and the first [sic] inmate of that kind in the House."

The case of Eli Hitchens is well worth recording as he gave the management considerable trouble. In the records we find the following:

November 20: Eli Hitchens was found absent from school time in the evening. After considerable search he was found in the superintendent's cellar. He was severely chastised for his misconduct. A scaffold pole and a small ladder were found placed against the eastern wall where it joins the girls' fence. Eli was strongly suspected of having done this but stoutly denied it.

November 21: A trunk was broken open in the House and Eli Hitchens being suspected of the act was examined by the visiting committee the result of which can be seen from the Minutes. In addition to the examination of Friday evening last he confesses that he had made the arrangements on the eastern wall to get out that night.
September 26: Eli Hitchens this evening confessed to
Mr. Young and myself that he had set the
House on fire and that John Davis was
his adviser. The confession was first made
to Mr. Young and without any improper
means being used to extort it.

November 11: Some wish had been expressed to find
employment for Eli Hitchens. As we are
about whitewashing our Hall and dor-
mitories and he is an excellent hand at
it, might he not be permitted to work at
it under constant supervision of some sub
officer and when not at work immediately
returned to his room?

December 16: Eli Hitchens has been for a few days past
employed in the oil room which is kept
locked during the morning cleaning and
scouring lamps, etc. The remaining part
of the day he has been kept in his dor-
mitory. Mr. Wolf, the foreman of the
book-bindery is willing to give him em-
ployment in folding and will himself give
him the necessary instruction. The only
difficulty seems to be to find where he
can work and at the same time be kept
sufficiently warm. Perhaps one of the
dormitories nearest to one of the stoves
or to where a pipe enters the flue will
be sufficiently warm—if so, he can be set
to work immediately.

January 10: The propriety of permitting Eli Hitchens
attend chapel services on Sundays and
the morning and evening religious serv-
ces suggested to the committee.

March 25: Eli Hitchens has been confined for six
months. The following queries present
themselves with considerable force. Will
longer confinement to his room be pro-
ductive of any benefit to himself? Will it
probably have a salutary influence upon
others? or will a mitigation of his con-
finement be attended with any danger
with regard to the safety of the buildings?
His service would be of some value if
confined only to the Hall but the danger
of his escaping should not be lost sight
of.
April 14: Eli Hitchens was indentured to John Hooper of Berlin, Worcester County, Maryland.\textsuperscript{23}

By the end of the first year statistics from the record show that 117 boys and girls were at the Refuge, although several had already been bound out. Of the above number “41 had lost their fathers, 19 their mothers and 27 were orphans. This leaves only 30 whose parents are both living many of whom are worse than none, being intemperate and careless.”

The educational and work programs of the Refuge began as soon as the House opened in December, 1828. A teacher was employed and, one by one, foremen for the work shops were employed. The shoemaker arrived on January 5, 1829, and book-binding and willow-working began the following day. Tailoring and carpentering were soon added for the boys who showed such aptitudes. Each week the supervisors of the shops enumerated the amount of work accomplished. On numerous occasions boys and girls were reported for idleness or apathy at their work and were, of course, punished. On a few occasions boys were punished for hiding their tools. From time to time additional types of work were added to the school’s industries. The manufacture of brass-headed nails, glass watch crystals and buttons was introduced before the first year expired. Dr. James Mease, noted Philadelphia writer, called and asked for the labor of some of the idle children “to pick tow off several thousands of silk cocoons.”

The first complaint of free laborers concerning the sale of the children’s work on the open market came on December 2, 1829, as follows: “A committee of the working men paid us a visit today to confer with a committee of the managers on the injurious tendency of the low wages given for work here.” Nothing further is recorded on this matter. Employment of the smaller boys presented a problem as recorded on December 16, 1829, as follows:

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
now have is so full of burrs that they will not pick more than a pound each; of some which is more free of burrs they will perhaps pick 5 or 6 pounds but I do not think they average more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ each. This morning each boy’s task was weighed separately and the highest number picked has been 3 and the average $2\frac{1}{2}$.\textsuperscript{24}

The amount of work accomplished in the Refuge for the first year is recorded:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books bound</td>
<td>84,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books folded</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes made</td>
<td>612 pair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackets</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantalets</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overalls</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baskets, different sizes</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demijohns covered</td>
<td>8,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pint flasks covered</td>
<td>903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check and Tow Aprons for boys and girls</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pocket handkerchiefs hemmed</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frocks made</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caps</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes bound</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats or caps for boys</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheets</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedspreads</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed ticks</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillow ticks</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillow cases</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Night caps</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pockets</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petticoats</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockings marked</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towels</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnets</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackets</td>
<td>45\textsuperscript{26}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was little provision for recreation at the Refuge. After about a year there are notations regarding this in the record. On September 30, 1829, the following appears:

It may be well to suggest the propriety of constructing gymnasium apparatus. The middle section of the yard will afford ample space for arrangements of this kind. . . . There can be no doubt of the utility of exercises such as

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
are usually denominated gymnastics. They bring into strenuous action many important muscles which are not sufficiently exerted in either their labour or customary amusements. And the due strength of these muscles may in many cases save a limb or even life when it is in jeopardy. They will also be better able to sustain any labourious occupation whatever from the general muscular power which is produced by these exercises. The probable cost of the apparatus will be about 20 or 25 dollars.\textsuperscript{26}

It is not known whether the apparatus was purchased. Later (March 1, 1830) it is recorded that “some ropes have been given out for the boys to exercise with which are to be returned and counted every evening.” On occasions small groups of the boys were taken to the Schuylkill River for a swim. When outsiders asked the boys where they were from, they were likely to say “from the Francisville Boys’ Boarding School.”\textsuperscript{27}

Periodically brass badges and honor ribbons, the latter of “white, blue and red” were awarded to the boys who apparently merited them. On the days these were awarded some special food, such as gingerbread or a fourth of a mince pie, was passed around to all the inmates. Christmas Day was a special treat for the inmates although on the first Christmas, with only a few inmates in the House, nothing was recorded. As the record states, “the fare was something more than ordinary; for dinner, good roast beef, etc. and for supper, mince pies.” July 4 was another badge day. The record states: “The children were permitted to spend the whole afternoon in innocent amusements excepting the time in Rewarding them. They were also provided with a good dinner of Beef and Pudding and each indiscriminately presented with a portion of fruit, crackers, etc. as an afternoon collation.” Members of the Visiting Committee usually attended these exercises.

Religion and moral training played a dominant part in the rehabilitative process of the Refuge. There were services in the chapel on Sundays, officiated over by volunteer ministers from the community. Some of the female school teachers from the Refuge taught Sunday School. Testaments and Bibles were donated by the Female Bible Society. The superintendent inaugurated a practice of having private conferences with the boys and reported that

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{27} Journal of Prison Discipline & Philanthropy, January, 1858, 23.
the result was most gratifying. Object lessons were frequent. The record reviews the following item that is of interest in this respect:

January 10, 1831: We heard a few days ago of the death of Major Hassen, one of our former inmates. He was bound out to Thos. May of Nantucket and sailed from that place on a whaling voyage but by some means made his escape from that ship; returned to this city and sailed on the ship Chandler Line for New Orleans where he was taken sick and died. The circumstance was improved in endeavoring to impress upon the minds of the boys the danger of departure from the path of duty. They were reminded that had he continued on his voyage where duty called him he might probably now have been in health whereas the course he took led to the loss of his life.28

Another object lesson resulted when a former inmate of the New York House of Refuge visited the Philadelphia school. He was James McDonald, at the time of his visit, twenty-one years of age. He stated that he had been one of the worst in the school. But he learned tailoring and upon his release applied himself to the trade. He related his experiences to the inmates “in a very feeling manner and closed with a prayer.” The record states, “Here is a living example before them; such an one as all might imitate. The effect seemed to be great.”

There was still another incident where an object lesson was dramatized. On July 2, 1830, a criminal named Porter was executed publicly in the city. According to the Journal, “In consequence of the execution of Porter today the children were assembled in the chapel and addressed with reference to the case of that unhappy man and vice in general.”

Discipline was one of the thorniest problems of the administrators. The inmates were underprivileged and, in many instances, depraved. Most of them came from undisciplined homes and from ignorant, intemperate parents. The managers had assumed the responsibility of training such urchins so that they could accept a life of self-reliance, in keeping with their social status. There was little free schooling in those days, and therefore few of the children

28 From the Journal of the House of Refuge.
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had even the rudiments of an education. Many were too young even to have had any experience in the apprenticeship system that flourished at the time. The administration believed that a modicum of formal education and a trade were necessary in molding their charges into self-supporting citizens.

But many of the inmates rebelled against the stultifying routine of the House. There were escapes, incipient riots, and fire settings. During the first three years of the institution’s existence at least three fires were set by the children. There were cases of open defiance against the rules or the authority of teachers, shop foremen, and superintendent. The only course to be pursued in such cases was punishment. Children were flogged, placed in dark cells, obliged to stand up at meals, and severely admonished. Boys and girls who failed to measure up to the program were demoted to the lowest class. Following are a few examples of discipline:

December 26: James Quinn was confined this evening [1828] for making disturbance in school. His conversation and conduct since have merited further punishment.

December 27: James Quinn having made suitable con-
cessions and fair promises and apparently being much humbled was liberated from his cell about 10 o’clock this morning.

January 2: [1829] Thos. Dereckson, for disorderly conduct and lying, was allowed his choice, either of being confined . . . or being punished with a rattan on the hand—he chose the latter—and for using improper and threat-
ing language immediately after, he received further punishment of the same kind.

January 8: Joseph Gidelle was sentenced to be de-
prived of his dinner for intentionally spitting in another boy’s face while at work. John Geyer for negligence and in-
attention to his work was confined from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. We have already dis-
covered that some of the boys do not like work.

March 19: Applied the cat to John Geyer for hiding his tools.

March 31: Frederick Marsh and John Welsh recd. each twenty lashes with the cat, Hartley
15 and Kane 11. The cat was also applied to John Harmon for making use of improper expressions respecting the boys who are confined.

The management had its difficulties with some of the girls also. Recorded on May 19, 1829, is a graphic case:

Eliza Philips was this day chastised with the cat in consequence of most flagrant and outrageous conduct. Her behavior for several weeks has been marked with insubordination and insolent language. All milder means had been used, but so far from producing good they made her worse and insubordination was spreading among her companions by her example to a most vexatious extent. Her language was so horrible and polluted and expressed in so vociferous a manner as to destroy all hopes of any good from means less severe than corporal punishment. She bid open defiance to all the authority in the House and fearlessly persuaded her companions to behave in the same manner. This brought matters to a point and a most severe flagellation was necessary to bring her to submission. This, however, was effected and I have since been informed by the matron that her department has not been so quiet for many weeks as it has since the termination of this distressing process.

The first child indentured, or “bound out,” was Henry Saul who had been committed on March 9, 1829, on a charge of vagrancy. He was only nine years of age when he entered the Refuge. He had no father but his mother apparently did not want him, so he had lived with his grandmother. The record says of him, “He had been to school and can read intelligently; he has also been to Mr. Martin’s Sunday School in Cherry Street; he seems unable to give any further account of himself except that his Grand Mother did not like to have the trouble of him.” He was indentured on June 24, 1829, to a Mr. Horace Cady of Lima, Peru. There is no further record of him. The first girl to be indentured was Elizabeth Ferris, the first girl to be sent to the Refuge. She was “bound out” to George Malin of Chester County.

Some of the boys were sent to sea when it was believed they

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19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
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were ready for release. They were taken to New England ports, such as New Bedford, Massachusetts, or Bristol, Rhode Island, and placed on whaling ships. There is one account of such indenture in the records that bears some recounting. Edwin Young, assistant superintendent, took four boys to New York “on the Dispatch Line” where he stayed overnight at the New York House of Refuge. He secured “deck passage” for the boys on a boat to Newport the next day. He related what happened as follows:

Early in the morning of the 25th of November 1829 when about 20 miles from Newport, two trunks belonging to two passengers were missed and could not, after diligent search, be found. One belonged to Capt. Cushing of Phipsburg, Maine, late commander of the brig Ceylon and lost off the coast of Holland. Capt. Cushing was on his return to Boston and his trunk containing his protest and other papers, such as vouchers, etc. He stated that the evening previous he had put into his trunk several half dollars, quarters, 12½ ct. pieces, etc. and that there was also a gold piece in it.

Our boys were suspected and they were searched without delay and the money . . . except the gold piece found in their possession. . . . The captain of the ship refused to permit us to land at Newport. Before we arrived at Providence, Marsh, one of the boys acknowledged that some time during the night, two trunks, one containing papers and some money, and the other, clothing and books, were opened by the four boys together. The money was divided and the trunks, papers, clothing, etc. were thrown overboard.

The boys were placed in the jail at Providence while Young went on to Bristol to confer with the owner of the whaling ship. This gentleman consented to take the boys regardless of their offense, but one of the boys refused to sign. The others went on board. Capt. Cushing agreed not to prosecute for the loss of the trunk.

Another embarrassing indenture is recorded in the record for March 2, 1831. John Uncelson, one of the boys was bound to Robert M. Sherer “near W. London X roads, Chester Co.” and “on Saturday last” absconded taking with him a double-barrelled pistol and several penknives and some small change. Mr. Sherer and a hired man pursued him on two horses, but the horses gave
out and they were unable to proceed. “They appeared to be under the operation of something that had been given them, probably by John, for the purpose of disabling them to prevent pursuit.” The record ends by stating that “Mr. Sherer was very well pleased with the boy until he left him.”

In appraising the management of an institution at any period in its historical development, it is especially fortunate to find some capable investigators who can supply an objective analysis. What we may think of the early days of the Philadelphia House of Refuge is of small moment. But there are some contemporary students of penal treatment who recorded their interpretations which have stood the test of time. We refer to the two French commissioners, Gustave de Beaumont and Alexis de Tocqueville, who had been sent by their government to study the American prison systems which were pioneering in the field of penal discipline. While in the country they visited the three Houses of Refuge, in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and they made comparisons.

They visited the Philadelphia institution on September 2, 1831, as recorded in the Journal of the Refuge. They talked with the superintendent, Edwin Young. Summarizing his remarks we find that Young felt that “after fifteen or sixteen years of age there is little hope of reformation . . . almost all young persons who have passed that age when they entered the Refuge have conducted themselves badly after leaving it.” He believed that of the 100 boys and 25 girls who had been released up to that time, about two-thirds had conducted themselves well “at least, to judge by the reports of the people with whom they are as apprentices.” He told the visitors that theft was the worst vice among boys and immorality among the girls and added that “a girl who has lived in prostitution must be considered nearly hopeless.” He stated that the labor of the children brought in about $2,000 per year, but the expenses of the school amounted to $12,000 of which $2,953 was allotted to salaries.  

The French visitors paid high tribute to the system of reformation practiced at the Boston institution which they maintained was largely due to the genius of the superintendent, the Rev. E.

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M. P. Wells. They commented that discipline was handled without any physical restraint, and that the honor system he had inaugurated was most remarkable. They stated that the work hours of the children were longer at the Philadelphia school than at Boston; eight in the former, five and a half in the latter. Their over-all appraisal was:

The Boston discipline belongs to a species of ideas much more elevated than that established in New York or Philadelphia; but it is difficult in practice. The system of these last establishments, founded upon a theory much more simple, has the merit of being within reach of all the world. It is possible to find superintendents who are fit for the Philadelphia system; but we cannot hope to meet often with such men as Mr. Wells.

Philadelphians were proud of their House of Refuge. It continued through the years, first moving to another set of buildings within the city (between Twenty-second and Twenty-fourth Streets and between Parrish and Poplar Streets) following 1850 and finally to the country. The boys' department established a new group of buildings in Delaware County in 1892, where it has been known since as the Glen Mills Schools. The girls were moved to a farm, also in Delaware County, not far from the boys' school, in 1910. This school is now known as Sleighton Farms School for Girls. Separate boards of directors were set up in 1931.

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82 Wells had suffered expulsion from Brown University because he had refused to inform on some pranksters. He had great faith in the inherent honor in children, so that his system of administration was unusual. For a description of his philosophy, see Orlando F. Lewis, *The Development of American Prisons and Prison Customs* (Albany, 1922), 303-307.