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# A Historical Review of Mother and Child Programs for Incarcerated Women

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Programs for incarcerated mothers and their children have received little scholarly attention over the years. This article presents a historical review and discussion of programs for incarcerated mothers and their children in the United States. Recurring themes in the history of these programs include the pervasive effects of race and class, the state's attempt to regulate and control women's minds and bodies, and the persistent dilemmas posed by the presence of mothers in prison. The article begins with an examination of historical influences from England and continues with an overview of programs in the United States from the early 1800s to the present. A discussion and recommendations for further research are provided.

**Keywords:** *incarcerated women; historical mother and child prison programming*

In 1711, a woman named Mary Mattocks delivered a daughter. A few months later, Mattocks appeared before the court of Baltimore County, Maryland, charged with bearing an illegitimate child by a William Winespear. Found guilty of the crime of bastardy, Mattocks was fined four pounds of tobacco. Her sentence indicates she was probably a young single woman, as almost all indentured servants in the county were whipped as a punishment for the crime of bastardy, because few could afford the fines. Because Winespear does not appear in the court records, it would seem that he escaped punishment, which would have included paying child support or, if Mattocks had been an indentured servant, compensating her employer for having reduced the productivity of his servant through pregnancy. A man named George Elliot paid Mattocks's fine and took the child as an indentured servant, as it was the custom of the Maryland legal system to separate women from their illegitimate children and to place the offspring into servitude or the care of the parish. Later court records state that the

baby girl died after only 7 months and was buried by the Elliot family (Hinton, 2007; Peden, 2001).

The Maryland system of indenturing the illegitimate children of women convicted of bastardy may be one of the first, albeit grim, examples of a mother-child program for women offenders (Peden, 2001). As prisons and jails replaced corporal punishment for property and lifestyle crimes in post-colonial America, the number of prisoners increased. Among them were children as well as women convicted of such crimes as petty theft and loose living. A report on the prison population in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania between 1800 and 1840 indicated the presence of children (Zemans & Smith, 1946). In 1840, Dorothea Dix surveyed conditions of asylums, prisons, and poorhouses and counted 167 female prisoners from Maine to Virginia (Rafter, 1990). How many were mothers or had children with them is not known (Marshall, 1937).

This article presents a historical review and discussion of programs for incarcerated mothers and their children in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Recurring themes in the history of these programs include the pervasive effects of race and class; the state's attempts to regulate and control women's minds and bodies; and the persistent dilemmas posed by the presence of mothers and, at times, children in prison. The article begins with an examination of historical influences from England and continues with an overview of programs in the United States from the early 1800s to the present. A discussion and recommendations for further research are provided.

## **Historical Influence From England**

The emergence of mother and child programs in the United States dates back to early-19th-century England and a program for incarcerated mothers and their children at Newgate Gaol in London, where, by the early 1800s, women were allowed to keep their children with them (Rush, 1991). One of the most influential women in the study of prison conditions at the time was Elizabeth Gurney Fry, who in 1813 accompanied a group of the Society of Friends to Newgate Gaol (Ryder, 1884). Appalled at the women inmates' living conditions, Fry wrote in her diary that "nearly three hundred women, with their numerous children," were crowded into a small area and supervised "by a man and his son who had charge of them by night and by day" (Ryder, 1884, p. 122). Crowded like cattle, stripped of their dignity, and deprived of the satisfaction of basic needs, men, women, children,

syphilitic babies, sick and well, sane and insane, were tossed into the same cell with a single slop bucket, where they slept on the floor without bedding and with insufficient clothing (Harris, 1988).

Feeling compelled to return to Newgate, in 1817, Fry arrived at the gate only to be told she would not be allowed in, as it was too dangerous to go in among the prisoners (Ryder, 1884). Nevertheless, she persisted, and was advised to leave everything that could be removed easily, as the jailers described these women as depraved, more like wild beasts than human beings. Telling the jailers she would face the women just the way she was, Fry went in. According to Eliza Farnham (1864), a philanthropist of the same era, Fry's presence was a powerful influence among the women, and it did not take long for them to weep at Fry's compassion.

It is interesting to note that the jailers at Newgate attempted to dissuade Fry from bringing with her any easily stolen personal belongings because of the putative animalism of the women inmates. In the early 1800s, a new gender ideology was emerging among the middle class, stemming from socioeconomic changes, notably the shift from a household economy to free-market capitalism based on factory work. The new ideology defined different social roles for men and women, so that, by the early 1800s, men and women began to inhabit separate social spheres. Men were to occupy the world of work, whereas the home became the world of women. This "cult of domesticity" defined the tasks, viewpoints, and actions of the proper woman, whose duty was to create a home that was a stable, nurturing refuge from the harsh, competitive world of work. The proper woman was sexually innocent, devout, domestic, delicate, and supportive of and submissive toward her husband. The cult of domesticity placed a premium on sexual purity and abstinence from alcohol, deviations from which women, but not men, were sanctioned with arrest and imprisonment. In contrast was the "fallen woman," who indulged in drink and was presumably impure, impious, and sexually promiscuous (Nicolaidis, 1996). These attitudes may have been the basis of the Newgate jailers' portrayal of their charges.

Despite the appalling conditions, the public was slow to sympathize with women in prison because ideologies such as the cult of domesticity implied that crime was unnatural to women. Women should not be criminals; those who offended were considered especially heinous (Feinman, 1986). A woman who broke the law was labeled as *depraved*, *fallen*, *non-conforming*, and *evil* and stood outside the culturally valued roles of wife and mother. When she committed a crime, she had offended not only society, but God as well. The criminal justice system was often given the

task of bringing her back to higher standards (Feinman, 1986; Harris, 1988; Quinlin, 1991), standards that themselves were defined by emerging middle-class conceptions of female propriety. Under English law in the 1800s, women were imprisoned for offenses such as disobeying their husbands or committing adultery, and all degrees of forgery were punishable by death (Ryder, 1884).

Fry's concern for the women and children resulted in her own effort at reforming both them and the prison, and with help from her Quaker associates, she brought clean clothes for them; read the Bible to them; and taught them needlepoint, knitting, and other activities to keep them occupied. It seems reasonable to regard Fry's efforts as perhaps the first mother and child program in which both mothers and children were incarcerated.

In March 1817, Fry pointed out to the mothers the dreadful deprivation of their children. To obtain their help in making things better, she told them she would consider starting a school for the children if the mothers would work out the details. Then she left for the day. When she returned, the women had chosen a teacher, Mary Conner, a well-qualified former schoolmistress imprisoned for stealing a watch. Conner's teaching duties eventually earned her an early pardon. Prevailing on skeptical prison officials, Fry succeeded in getting one of the empty cells for a classroom and opened the school for children and persons younger than 25 years of age. Other, older prisoners asked to attend the school, but lack of space made this impossible. By April 1817, the Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate was formed (Ryder, 1884). The mission statement, not dissimilar to those of prisons today, read,

To provide for the clothing, the instruction and the employment of the women; to introduce them to a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and to form in them, as much as possible, those habits of order, sobriety and industry which may render them peaceable, whilst in prison, and respectable when they leave it. (Ryder, 1884, p. 127)

Unfortunately, overcrowding undermined these efforts, and unhealthy conditions, riots, and other problems caused the Newgate Gaol to close in 1828 (Barnes, 1972; Harris, 1988; Ryder, 1884). Nevertheless, Elizabeth Fry's work was not in vain. She had shown not only that there were humane ways to manage prisoners but also that that incarcerated women and children could be rehabilitated.

## The U.S. System

### The Early Years

Early in the history of the United States, prison systems were built on a custodial model designed to separate inmates from the community to limit exposure to outside corruption so they could focus on reform (Allen, Latessa, Ponder, & Simonson, 2007). As in England, women were locked up for living “chronically sinful” lives (Brenzel, 1978). Women with lesser offenses and mothers with children were less likely to be sent to prison. Because judges considered women less dangerous than men, they did not sentence women to prison as often as they did men.

Freedman (1981) has argued that women’s increasing rate of incarceration from 1815 to 1860 is attributable to urbanization and to the appearance of new agents of social control, including city police and moral reformers who promoted sexual purity and temperance for both women and men, and who were instrumental to the prohibition movement as well as to the passing of laws raising the age of consent (Odem, 1995). These social influences meant a change in the types of crimes for which women were prosecuted: “not serious crimes against persons or property, but unlawful personal behavior—drunkenness, idle and disorderly conduct, and vagrancy—brought the majority of criminals of both sexes into the courts and prisons” (Freedman, 1981, p. 14). Furthermore, Freedman noted that more restrictive behavioral codes for women resulted in women’s greater probability of being convicted of such crimes. According to Freedman, fewer work opportunities and lower wages for women served to marginalize them economically and put pressure on them to resort to prostitution, legalization of which was strongly and successfully opposed by the social purity movement (Odem, 1995). The term for a 19th-century female criminal was “fallen woman”; “because of this stigma, the female prisoner was largely neglected and often subjected to overcrowding, harsh treatment, and sexual abuse” (Freedman, 1981, p. 15).

As a consequence of women’s lower representation in the prison system, their presence created some confusion as to what to do with them (Brenzel, 1978). Because of inadequate provisions within the prisons, there was simply no place to house women (Brenzel, 1978), who were frequently placed in the same facilities as men. This practice had consequences that contributed to the development of separate facilities for women (Hawkes, 1994).

During this early period, disciplinary measures used to control women inmates included strapping, handcuffing, solitary confinement, removing jewelry, taking their babies away, flogging, and abuse by male prisoners

(Brenzel, 1978; Feinman, 1986). Pregnant women and newborn babies were so poorly treated at New York's Sing Sing Prison that the infant mortality rate was shockingly high (Brenzel, 1978). In a notorious case, Rachel Welch died in childbirth in New York's Auburn Prison on January 12, 1826, after becoming pregnant while in solitary confinement. Her death was attributed to "severe floggings" while pregnant (Feinman, 1986; Freedman, 1981). A grand jury investigation and public knowledge of the incident may have contributed to the passage of the 1828 law requiring separation of male and female prisoners.

Elizabeth Farnham, head matron of the women's section of Sing Sing Prison between 1844 and 1848, had earlier advocated separate units for men and women. In a forerunner to the current trend of family programs, she provided a home atmosphere for the staff and inmates. Books, plants, household fixtures, and music became part of the women's quarters (Sargent, 1984). Farnham was asked to leave Sing Sing after only 4 years (Brenzel, 1978).

In 1870, at the National Prison Congress in Cincinnati, penologists and reformers endorsed separate prisons for women (Harris, 1988; Hawkes, 1994). The first all-female state correctional institution opened in 1873 as the Indiana Reform Institution for Women. The first federal prison for women opened in 1927 in Alderson, West Virginia (Gwinn, 1991; Sargent, 1984). However, women's prisons were staffed by males, and reformers lobbied the government between 1870 and 1920 for a number of changes, including "a separate prison system for women *staffed* by women" (Feinman, 1986, p. 14). Separate prisons for women slowly became a reality, and though often headed by women, they still have not become fully staffed by women, as the reformers had hoped.

## Reformatories

During the 1800s, women felons were usually found guilty of property crimes such as petty theft or lifestyle crimes such as prostitution, but only about one in three was convicted of violent crimes (Kurshan, 1992). As expectations of appropriate female behavior became increasingly defined by middle-class norms (Freedman, 1981; Nicolaidis, 1996; Odem, 1995), another kind of institution, designed to reshape the character of women convicted of what would now be considered lifestyle offenses, was established (Rafter, 1990). Called reformatories, they were designed to reform women who had committed public order offenses such as fornication, adultery, or drunkenness and return them to society (Kurshan, 1992). Many

were modeled on reform schools for delinquent girls, the first of which had been established in 1856 in Lancaster, Massachusetts.

By one account, because 19th-century middle-class values held that women were sensitive and domestic by nature, it was judged that females could not be reformed in traditional prison settings (Rafter, 1990). Consistent with such class- and race-based conceptions, the women sent to the first reformatories were almost invariably White northerners (Kurshan, 1992), women who were seen by their benefactors as redeemable. Public order offenses of African American women and most offenses of white women, Kurshan (1992) wrote, were usually overlooked by the southern justice system, whereas female African American felons were typically sentenced to penal servitude. Thus, White, northern women with public order offenses went to reformatories, whereas non-White female felons were kept in custodial prisons (Herrick, 1938; Kurshan, 1992).

The Progressive era saw the flowering of the reformatory movement. Between 1901 and 1933, 17 women's reformatories were established across the United States. They started in the eastern states and moved to the Midwest, with three in the southern states and one in the West. The first opened in New York in 1901, the last in California in 1933. They were built with several housing units, called cottages, which the women managed in a home-like atmosphere. They were built out in the "open country," owing to the salutary effects of the outdoors and the simple labors of farming and domestic chores (Rafter, 1990). The children of prisoners up to the age of 2 years could live with their mothers in most reformatories (Allen, 1974; Kurshan, 1992).

The federal prison at Alderson, West Virginia, was built in 1927 with 14 cottages laid out in a horseshoe pattern. Each had a kitchen and room for 30 women. As in most reformatories, offenders were segregated by race (Flynn, 1963; Rafter, 1990). Though these programs had the middle-class goal of making the women more ladylike as well as better homemakers and wives (Rafter, 1990), the intention to reform them in this way conflicted with the working-class status of the inmates—as many as 80% at New York State's Albion Reformatory had worked for wages prior to conviction—and were directed primarily at the 88% who were White (Kurshan, 1992). Training in domesticity, then, reflected both a preoccupation with middle-class values as well as a lack of understanding of the economic and social realities of the inmates, who would return not to a life of middle-class homemaking but to one of economic hardship. Such women would have been better served if occupational training had focused on factory or office work instead of homemaking.

## Children and the Penal System

Although the Progressive-era reformatories were where babies and children were most likely to be found because of the home-like atmosphere in the cottages, evidence of children in the earlier prisons exists. A report on the prison population in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania between 1800 and 1840 suggested children were among those present (Zemans & Smith, 1946). Some states had laws allowing children to remain with their mothers in prisons and in jails, but these were often ignored, and children were not allowed to stay with their mothers (Zemans & Smith, 1946). Records from New York's Western House of Refuge at Albion, which operated between 1894 and 1931, showed that babies born in the prison could stay with their mothers up to age 2. The assumption on which these Progressive-era maternity programs was that the mothers should care for the babies after birth because this would make them feel responsible for them after their release from the institution.

One of the best-known facilities where children stayed, and continue to stay today, with their mothers is the State Correction Institution at Bedford Hills, New York. This facility has been in existence since 1901, when unwed mothers could keep their babies until the child's first birthday. In 1930, legislation enacted in New York allowed mothers in prison to keep their babies with them for one year. That law has remained unchanged in New York (Baunach, 1985; Bedford Hills, 1993; "Behind Bars," 1990; Gabel & Johnston, 1995; Harris, personal communication, 1993).

One of the more extensive early prison programs to allow babies to stay with their mothers was at the State Reformatory for Women at Sherborn, Massachusetts (Freedman, 1981). In 1935, when many other programs were closing down because of Depression-era funding problems, two new cottages were added, one for mothers and babies and the other for junior girls aged 17 to 21. A photograph of the nursery cottage shows a large, neat room with baby cribs along both walls (*The American Prison*, 1983). These two cottages were described as follows:

Comfortably and modernly equipped and provide separation from older offenders for these two groups. The physical needs of the women and children at the Reformatory are carefully looked after. The medical staff consists of a resident woman physician, eight nurses, four of whom are especially for the children, an X-ray and laboratory technician, several interns from Harvard and Tufts Medical Schools who devote part time to this work as do a senior surgeon, an ear, eye and nose specialist, a pediatrician, a psychiatrist, and a dentist. (Glueck & Glueck, 1934, pp. 25-26)

The mother and child cottage had a nursery under the direction of a trained nurse, a consulting pediatrician, and a Harvard Medical School intern as resident pediatrician. Pregnant women received special prenatal care, including a special diet and physical checkups. Six weeks before confinement, the women were transferred to the State Infirmary at Tewksbury (Glueck & Glueck, 1934), the state hospital that accepted those from Sherborn Prison (State Hospital at Tewksbury, 1906).

Lekkerkerker (1931), a Dutch researcher who studied reformatories in the United States, found the number of babies and facilities in reformatories varied among institutions. In some, pregnant women were immediately assigned to a maternity cottage, where they received special care until the birth. "In such a maternity cottage the women can also be more easily instructed in the proper hygiene regarding herself, in the making of layette and in the care of babies" (p. 528). Lekkerkerker described:

fine maternity cottages with nursery rooms, play- and sleeping-porches, etc., at, among others, those of Clinton Farms, NY and the Connecticut and Federal reformatories. . . . The care which is provided for the babies in some reformatories is excellent: In Connecticut, for example, the babies are under the supervision of a special pediatricist who comes to the institution at least once a week and in Clinton Farms, the babies are assembled every morning in a pre-nursery school which is conducted by the recreational director who is a trained Kindergartner. Everywhere the little ones are the objects of much attention on the part of both officers and inmates, and there is no doubt that the nursery not only forms an excellent opportunity for the inmates for practical training in children care, but that it also brightens much the reformatory life for the adults, and that to some of them the babies have been a genuine help in their adjustment. (p. 530)

Children were also allowed to stay with their mothers at the federal prison in Alderson between 1930 and 1960. The annual reports show there was a nursery; in 1937, triplets were born; and in 1940, three births took place. However, no formal records were kept on the children. Alderson's second warden, Helen Hironimus, "accompanied her annual reports with pictures of babies to remind the central office that the babies were uncounted inmates, lost in the cost account of the bureau" (Heffernan, 1972, p. 20). Whether these programs might have expanded with better communication and support among the various facilities throughout the country is not known, although it is likely that the disruptions caused by the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s contributed to a loss of funding and the closure of many reformatory programs, as

financial planning and management seemed to be lacking (Rafter, 1990). The war years brought a slight increase in the number of incarcerated women (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006), and both men and women prisoners were asked to join in the war effort in providing service and supplies (Zemans & Smith, 1946).

These changes in the country meant the closing of formal mother and child programs at correctional institutions. However, the cottages remained physically intact and continued to be run as domestic homes by women inmates. Thus, many of the children were able to stay in them with their mothers and other female inmates (Heffernan, 1993; Shepard & Zemans, 1950).

Though little evidence of formal programs in the prison was found, Zemans and Smith's (1946) study regarding the participation of inmate women and girls in the war effort indicated that some children remained with their mothers in prison. They found that in most states, there was no law regarding the commitment of pregnant women or the length of time babies could stay with their mothers. The most common practice was for superintendents to permit mothers to keep their babies for a short time or not to keep them at all. However, in two states, the time limit was 2 years, and in three states, there was no time limit (Zemans & Smith, 1946). The states in Zemans and Smith's report listed the number of women; however, none reported a figure for the number of children, though many alluded to their presence.

Shepard and Zemans (1950) conducted another survey of institutions in every state and territorial area regarding the number of babies born to inmates. These institutions included 57 training schools, 28 reformatories, and 26 penitentiaries. A total of 70 replies were received from the 111 surveys that were sent. Thirty-seven institutions reported that 364 babies were born to inmates in 1947, with just over 25% born in the prison and the rest using community hospitals. State laws governing children born to inmates varied, with 20 institutions reporting no such law, 13 indicating a law was in place, and others not responding to the question. The 13 states that had statutory provisions allowed infants to remain in institutions with their mothers for up to 2 years. These states were California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. Nearly half of these laws did not state a maximum time limit, though they suggested that children should be removed when it was no longer healthy for them to remain in prison (Baunach, 1985; Shepard & Zemans, 1950).

Thus, some babies were separated from the mothers immediately and some stayed with their mothers up to 3 years, depending on the state, the facility, and the mother's sentence. Some institutions had infirmaries or

cottages that allowed the mothers to keep their babies while working within the infirmary or cottage, and laws, policies and practices, and attitudes of the administration varied when it came to determining whether babies were allowed to stay with the mothers (Shepard & Zemans, 1950). Infants who did not stay with their mothers were sent to live with relatives, adoptive homes, or foster homes, similar to placement practices today.

Most statutes pertained to infants born in prison, not to other children in the family (Shepard & Zemans, 1950). Older children of inmates were occasionally allowed to live with their mothers, but it was less common than the practice of prison-born infants staying with the mothers (Shepard & Zemans, 1950).

Federal prisons also allowed children to remain with their mothers. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn (1963), a labor organizer and communist who was held in the federal prison in Alderson, West Virginia, from 1955 to 1957, wrote that mothers were required to live in the "food cottages," where they were expected to prepare three meals a day and care for their children while living there. "The presence of a baby in a cottage, wrote Flynn, "was a pleasant humanizing influence. The women fed it, watched over it [and] knitted caps, sweaters, booties. They criticized a mother who failed to take proper care of her baby" (p. 89). In contrast to Alderson in the 1940s, when children were allowed to stay with their mothers for up to 3 years, by the 1950s infants could remain only a few months. The separation often proved traumatic:

The parting of a mother and child, especially if she faced a long sentence, was heartrending. The grief and worry of these poor women affected their health and spirits, sometimes to the point of collapse. Certainly, in these cases there should be some special provisions, especially for first time offenders, to keep the mother and baby together. (Flynn, 1963, p. 89)

The era of nurseries in prison came to an end in the 1960s, when federal judges became concerned about the number of babies born at Alderson. Realizing that the nearest hospital for any kind of specialized prenatal or postnatal care was 50 miles away through mountainous roads, they sent social workers to evaluate the situation. Two social workers from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and who, according to Warden Virginia McLaughlin, were on a child-saving mission, declared that prison was no place for children (Heffernan, 1993). This declaration appears to have started the end of babies and children staying with their mothers in most prisons.

## Contemporary Mother and Child Programs

The incarceration rate of women had remained fairly steady from 1928 to 1976, except during the war years, when there was a slight increase (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). However, by the end of the 1970s, the number of women sent to prison had more than doubled, and between 1980 and 1990, that number more than tripled (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). It quadrupled between 1986 and 2006 (Alleyn, 2006; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006).

This escalation has resulted in a resurgence of interest in the problem of mothers in prison. The growing number of women offenders who are mothers has led to an effort to treat women for substance abuse during their incarceration (Wiewel & Mosley, 2006). Another development is increased efforts to provide parenting programs, to establish special visitation areas and programs, and to reintroduce prison nurseries (Kauffman, 2001; Loper & Tuerk, 2006; Snyder, Carlo, & Coats Mullins, 2001).

The increased number of incarcerated women has reawakened awareness of the possible impacts of imprisonment on inmates' well-being as well as on the mother-child relationship. These effects include, for inmates, higher levels of anxiety, depression, and somatization (Houck & Loper, 2002); stress (Tuerk & Loper, 2006); and increased acting out after visits with children (Casey, 1993); for children, multiple developmental risks (Dallaire, 2007; Myers, Smarsh, Amlund-Hagen, & Kennon, 1999; Thompson & Harm, 2000); and for the mother-child relationship, serious disruption (Thompson & Harm, 2000).

By 1994, more than 230 programs across the country existed for incarcerated mothers, most of them directly affiliated with correctional institutions. A 1992 survey of all 50 states and the District of Columbia on mother and child programs for incarcerated women was completed by Knight from the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. Twelve states had programs allowing some "boarding-in" of infants and children, and 7 states had plans for initiating such a program; 3 states had programs that they subsequently abandoned because of financial concerns (Knight, 1993). According to the American Correctional Association (ACA; 1992), a number of states developed daytime programs providing support for both the inmate mothers and children, including parenting classes; education courses; and support for staying in touch with their children, the caregiver, or the child's teacher.

The mother and child program at Bedford Hills State Prison in New York is one of the largest and most well known. Other mother and child programs affiliated with corrections include Riker's Island in New York City; Prison

MATCH in North Carolina (Prison MATCH, 2008), and a mother and child program that was established in California at the federal prison in Pleasanton, and a forerunner used as the model for Pennsylvania's Project IMPACT;<sup>2</sup> Minnesota State Correctional Facility Parenting and Family Program, started in 1975 (Kopfmann, personal communication, January 20, 1995); Aid to Incarcerated Mothers (AIM) at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at Framingham, established in 1979; Project REACH in Georgia, started in 1985; Prison PATCH, started in 1985 in Missouri; and Mothers Inside Loving Kids (MILK) in Virginia, started in 1981 (ACA, 1992). Programs for mothers and their children working together are also available, such as the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars Program (Block & Potthast, 1998), as well as numerous camping programs. However, there is little consistency across the nation. Each state runs its own organization using the resources that are available.

Haney (1996) described two programs in California: one a minimum-security residential program in California for mothers of babies and infants, the other a juvenile probation program. Unlike the ideologies of 19th-century or Progressive-era programs for mothers, the ideology of the mother and child program described by Haney did not focus on making "ladies" out of the women. Rather, the message of the program was "independence" from the welfare system:

The Alliance staff viewed the girls as relying too heavily on government institutions. They thought their girls turned too readily to the "impersonal pyramid of men" for support. They worried most that these girls were tangled in the web of the system, which produced its own "cycle of dependency" . . . staff members frequently employed the "trope of the welfare mother" to instill fear in them. (p. 768)

On the other hand, the message of "independence" promoted by the juvenile probation program focused on getting the girls to relinquish their dependence on boyfriends, most of whom were in trouble with the law. Unlike early accounts, which tended to focus on the good intentions of the reformers and staff, and unlike empirical studies, which show general trends, Haney's (1996) ethnographic approach highlighted the various maneuvers of the staff as they attempted to cajole, preach, and pressure their charges into accepting their message, as well as the girls' resistance to the ideologies being conveyed to them. Accounts such as Haney's raise questions not only about the effort to rehabilitate but also about the extent to which early narratives about women's and children's programs in prison accurately depicted both the reformers and the reformed.

It is interesting to note that the criminalization of drug consumption, in combination with mandatory, gender-neutral sentencing laws and sentencing guidelines for drug possession (Dalley, 2002), have led not only to the exponential increase in the number of women inmates (Schroeder & Bell, 2005; "Treatment Programs Lacking for Incarcerated Women," 2007), but also to the custodial imprisonment of women who in the past might have been sent to reformatories. That is, where once women were imprisoned for adultery, fornication, or drinking, at present, most incarcerated women have been convicted for drug-related offenses (Bush-Baskette, 2000) and sentenced to prison. Moreover, most incarcerated women who are drug users are also mothers (Bogart, Stevens, Hill, & Estrada, 2005; Loper, 2006); in 1991, as many as 70% of all women convicts had a child under the age of 18, and 25% to 30% of these had a child under the age of 5 (Bruns, 2006). Among White women, 62% had a child under 18; for African American women, the proportion was 69%; for Hispanic women, the proportion was 72%; between 65% and 72% of these women had lived with their children prior to incarceration. This means that the children now lived with their fathers (25%), grandparents or relatives (71%), or friends (4%); were wards of the state (10%); or, in rare cases, lived on their own (2%) (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1994). Research consistently shows that most incarcerated mothers' life histories consist of "a grim and repetitive trajectory of childhood abuse, violence, and neglect that led to school failure, problematic relationships with men, early drug use, arrest, incarceration, and eventual loss of children" (Schroeder & Bell, 2005, p. 311). Consequences for children with incarcerated mothers include attachment disorders and disorganization in infants and toddlers, academic problems for school-aged children, and delinquency and behaviors that may place adolescents at risk for incarceration (Dallaire, 2007). In fact, the practice of imprisoning female, drug-abusing offenders with children has led to a child welfare crisis, as more than 75% of incarcerated women in 1998 were mothers who had custody of dependent children. Their mothers' imprisonment necessitates that these children become foster children whose caseworkers face the difficulties of helping the families stay in touch during the mothers' imprisonment and helping them reunify afterward (Beckerman, 1998). Imprisoning nonviolent, drug-abusing mothers also may be helping to create a vicious cycle. Grella and Greenwell (2006) found, among a sample of 438 substance-abusing women offenders, that the one third who had lost parental rights to a child were more likely to have been in foster care or adopted than others. This finding suggests that incarcerating mothers and sending the children to foster care may be counterproductive.

## Discussion

This review suggests that although the state has had different agendas at different times and places, it has consistently attempted to regulate and control women's minds and bodies toward ends that were not women's own. Nowhere is this more visible than in the state's relationship to offenders who are mothers, as women's reproductive capacity highlights, as nothing else, the issue of women's sexuality and society's need to regulate it. Thus, in colonial Maryland, indentured servants who gave birth to illegitimate children were, in effect, committing a property crime in that their pregnancy deprived their masters of their ability to work (Hinton, 2007). Whereas mother and child programs in the 1800s appear to have reflected their authors' preoccupation with bourgeois domestic values, Progressive-era programs, such as those described by Lekkerkerker (1931), appeared to focus on the "scientific" preoccupations of the Progressive movement; one gets the impression, reading Lekkerkerker's narrative, that all problems can be solved with soap, water, and a doctor's care. On the other hand, in 1990s California (Haney, 1996), the effort to reform offenders who are mothers, in keeping with the theme of welfare reform so prominent during that period, emphasized emancipation from the welfare system in addition to learning parenting and domestic skills. Although the solutions to the problems posed by offenders who are mothers have varied, society has consistently attempted to impose on these women its own image of womanhood.

This article raises a number of questions for further research. For example, a study comparing colonial Maryland's system of reprisals for bastardy (which was based on a growing plantation system) with those of colonial Massachusetts or colonial Pennsylvania might reveal a more nuanced account of early attempts to reform women whose offense was bearing illegitimate children. Such research may also lead to a more coherent view of contemporary societal values regarding rehabilitation of female offenders.

Further research is needed regarding the underlying values from which public concern for incarcerated mothers and children developed in the 1800s. In-depth qualitative analysis of historical texts on the subject (e.g., reformers' congressional testimony, contemporary accounts, diaries, and letters) could not only provide insight into these individuals' intentions but also reveal the rhetorical and semantic nets they wove in the process of persuading their audiences to take action. It is likely that 19th-century romanticization of childhood, together with the cult of domesticity, was associated with an increased valorization of motherhood, leading to a general recoil from the idea of incarcerating mothers and children. As William Ross Wallace so famously wrote in 1865,

*Blessings on the hand of women!  
Angels guard its strength and grace,  
In the palace, cottage, hovel,  
Oh, no matter where the place;  
Would that never storms assailed it,  
Rainbows ever gently curled;  
For the hand that rocks the cradle  
Is the hand that rules the world.  
Notably, Wallace did not mention prison.*

Research on the history of mother-child programs should also continue the line of inquiry pursued by Haney (1996), whose argument points to a need for both theorists and practitioners to examine the tensions between reformers and the reformed. Individuals who are trying to reform or rehabilitate women offenders, despite their desire to help, may not recognize that being part of some kind of state apparatus encourages prisoners to see helping professionals more as agents of social control than as helpers (cf. Goffman, 1961; Szasz, 1960). To the degree that early prison reformers were blind to their own entanglement in the state's apparatus of control, it is likely that historical accounts of programs for incarcerated mothers and children should be examined skeptically and with attention to subtexts that reveal women prisoners' ways of resisting their benefactors' attempts to help them.

## Notes

1. This review was researched drawing on a variety of databases and collections in several locations, including the Pennsylvania State University Library Archives and the Pennsylvania Prison Society Headquarters in Philadelphia archives of Benjamin Rush and Elizabeth Fry. In addition, Jean Harris's three books on her experience of incarceration and the mother and child programs she encountered in prison were sources, as well as a personal interview with her in 1993.

2. Prison MATCH no longer exists in the federal prison.

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