

RG0039.MI: "Penitentiary"

"Penitentiary was founded in 1870. first occupants were 37 convicts transferred from various country jails. All-time population peak was 981. It dropped to 700 in 1942

Picture of penitentiary in the 1880s

Penitentiary in 1960s

"Approaching the penitentiary through the main gate"

Main gate, two men coming out of a door, two men at jail gate, man unlocks door to let them in Man's handcuffs removed

"The prisoner is searched"

Prisoners pockets are checked, items are shown on table "prison clothes are provided – but there are no stripes."

Prisoner changes into blue prison shirt

"Through the second set of locked and guarded doors"

"Now to the east cell block"

"There are 852 beds in cells housing one, two or four men each."

Prison cell room – bunk beds, toilet

"A lever man controls doors at once or one at a time."

Lever man demonstrated the lever, all cell – doors opening balconies of the cell.

"A typical cell."

"Each new prisoner is assigned a number, photographed and fingerprinted. The studio is manned by an inmate under supervision of a captain of guards.

A camera is set up, a prisoner takes a picture of another prisoner Then, the prisoners finger prints are taken. Paperwork associate with that prisoner

"Mealtime"

Prisoners walk in a line to a different building. They sit at tables prison kitchen – large vat being stirred

"Men are assigned to the various prison jobs and shifted around as their talents suggest.

Work begins at 7 a.m. Here are some of the prison industries."

"Three hundred dozen brooms are turned out in a year. These and other products are sold to state institutions."

Prisoner making broom, men inspecting finished broom

"Smoking and chewing tobacco for inmates are prepared from leaf shipped from southern states A year's output runs to about 8,000 plugs of chewing tobacco, 7,500 pounds of smoking tobacco.

Tobacco leaves are examined. Machine presses tobacco, prisoner cuts it and wraps it, other are packaging loose tobacco.

"Dress shirts, work shirts, caps, overalls, handkerchiefs, coats, underwear, running into hundreds of dozens of each item annually, are made in the garment shop."

Prisoners sewing together clothes, buttonhole made, buttons put on.

"Nine hundred dozen pairs of socks are made in a year."

Prisoner making sock with machine

"Gloves and mittens are turned out by the hundreds of dozens."

Tracing glove pattern, cutting out material

"Cutting material for suits. Men become expert tailors."

Cutting out patterns and sewing together suits.

“Four thousand pairs of shoes are made annually.”

Cutting out and sewing together shoes, putting the soles on

“The machine shop, where inmates repair penitentiary equipment and become skilled in various phases of metal working.”

Inmate welding

“Vegetables from the penitentiary gardens are canned here. Surplus is sold to other institutions.”

Vegetables are washed and boiled, then put in cans

“The bakery supplies other institutions as well as the penitentiary dining room A year’s bread out put is worth \$7,000”

Dough being stirred and baked

“The laundry takes care of the needs of all inmates and officials.”

Laundry being washed and pressed

“Now for a view of some activities outside the walls.”

“The power plant supplies the capitol, the reformatory and the nearby state hospital; is the biggest revenue producing unit the penitentiary operates.”

Outside and inside of power plant

“The dairy. The forty cows milked averages near 10,000 pounds each annually.”

Dairy cattle

“A year’s pork output is in the neighborhood of ???”

“Ten thousand dozen eggs and thousands of pounds of meat are produced annually by the poultry flock.”

“Eighty acres are devoted to gardens.”

Inmates weeding and plowing garden raking hay, harvesting wheat

“Trusties return from work in the fields and gardens”

Inmates being searched at prison gates, large black door opening to barred gates, letting a car in.

“Library and printing shop. There is a working arrangement with the state library commission Donations of permanent volumes are badly needed.”

Prison library, inmate using printing machine, prison guard tower, inside the prison walls – inmates playing sports or walking around outside. Playing horseshoes and marbles, prison guard, penitentiary courtyard inmate mowing

“Prisoners handiwork sold at novelty counter near main entrance. The small handling charge goes into the amusement fund.”

Prisoners novelty counter rings and various items that are for sale

“Religious services for Protestants and Catholics are held in the chapel. Building also serves for general meetings and shows.” Chapel building also serves for general meetings and sing hymn and play instruments at service.

“All of this requires organization and a diversity of activities of which few citizens are aware. The following is presented with a belief it will help Nebraskans understand their penitentiary and its aims – Neil Olson Warden.”

“Rehabilitation is a vital part of the penitentiary program, and for te hundreds of men sentenced to the Nebraska penitentiary there is opportunity to make the most of the time they serve. There is hope that they can face the free world some day better fitted for life and with a...”