

Four Prison Reformers

Captain Alexander Maconochie

Father of Parole

Captain Alexander Maconochie, a British naval officer, was the Governor of Norfolk Island from 1840- 1844. He established an incentive or 'mark' system at the prison, which included inmates being able to earn credits towards early release for participation in rehabilitative programs and through honest work, good conduct, vocational education towards post-release productivity, and study.



Maconochie developed adult schools and staffed them with educated convicts, and he rewarded prisoners with achievement prizes for things like reading aloud. He also founded a library in the prison. His ideas formed the basis of modern penal systems in the mid to late 20th century.

Links:

A [biography of Maconochie](#) from the Australian Dictionary of Biography

The [Wikipedia article on Maconochie](#)

A longer [biography of Maconochie by Hugh Clout](#), from the Department of Geography, University College London

Walter Frederick Crofton

He is sometimes cited as Alexander Maconochie's ideological heir, as he further refined the 'mark system'. Crofton was the chair of the Board of Directors of Convict Prisons for Ireland between 1854 and 1862. He introduced the Crofton system of prison administration, in this program, known as the Irish system, prisoners progressed through three stages of confinement before they were returned to civilian life. Release was dependent upon the continued good conduct of the offender, who could be returned to prison if necessary.

Links:

The [Wikipedia article on Crofton](#)

Zebulon Brockway

Father of Prison Reform

While warden at the Elmira Reformatory in Upstate New York from 1876 to 1900, Brockway introduced a classification and incentive system for various types of prisoners, individualized treatment emphasizing vocational education and industrial employment, indeterminate sentences and rewards for good behaviour, and parole or conditional release. The reformatory philosophy he advocated gradually permeated the entire U.S. prison system. Brockway believed that the primary reason to have a prisoner in custody was to rehabilitate and not simply just to punish. By giving them the moral and spiritual guidance that they needed, Brockway believed that this was the key to helping them become better and useful citizens.



Links:

The [Wikipedia article on Brockway](#).

An [account of Brockway](#) by his contemporary, Charles Richmond Henderson.

A [portrait of Brockway](#) from Connecticut History.org.

Austin McCormick

Father of Correctional Education

In 1931 Austin McCormick, an Assistant Director of US Bureau of Prisons wrote, "The Education of Adult Prisoners: A Survey and a Program." His work detailed an ideal model of how institutions could set up and run effective educational programs for incarcerated adults. MacCormick believed that prisoners deserved to be educated because they were undereducated not because they were incarcerated and that education would enrich the lives of prisoners allowing them to return to society as more responsible, involved and productive members. The responsibility for education was not solely in the hands of teachers but was shared by the entire institution. Education was interpreted in the broadest sense to include academic, vocational, social and cultural learning. He founded the Correctional Education Association and was its first President.

Links:

One of MacCormicks' conference papers, [*The Prison's Role in Crime Prevention*](#), delivered to the Forum for the Study and Prevention of Crime at Columbia University in 1950.

MacCormick's [*'In Memoriam'*](#), from University of California