

## The Warden's Theories

Warden Haynes was an administrator. He never made any systematic statement of his principles or theories about penology, and yet he had some very definite ideas about his work as warden. These ideas were expressed in messages to the men at Fort Madison, written for and printed in *The Presidio*, an inmate publication. There were three of these messages dated upon the third, fourth, and seventh anniversaries of his assumption of the office. Selections have been made from these statements giving some of his observations upon his experience as a prison administrator.

"I believe men are sent to the penitentiary as a punishment, not *for* punishment", declared Warden Haynes in *The Presidio*, September, 1936. "In other words the Warden's job as I see it, is to receive men who are legally sent here, keep them here until they are legally released, feed and clothe them, cause them to work, make rules and regulations for their conduct while here, and see to it that such rules and regulations are obeyed.

"Courts send men to the penitentiary for certain periods of years depending upon the crime of which they were convicted, the degree of punish-



ment being the length of time they are committed. Because of this, regardless of whether they were convicted of major crimes or minor crimes, upon entering the prison walls they start serving their sentences exactly on the same basis. If they obey the rules and regulations of the institution in the spirit and the letter they get along all right, if they don't, they get into trouble. True, some men get better jobs than others, some get pay jobs in the industries, others do not. A man's ability and experience have much to do with his work assignment, mistakes have been made in assigning men to work and of course pay jobs are limited. I hope to work out a better system of placing men on pay jobs, especially as to men with dependents, who will send what they can to their dependents.

"The point I want to make is this — when you come in you all look alike to the Warden. If you play the game on the square, with the quarters furnished you, the food you receive, the radio, library, the school privilege, the canteen, the recreation periods, the honor system, the general treatment you receive from all officers and employees, should make your time easier, should help you orient yourself, help you figure out for yourself whether it is better to go straight both inside and outside or to continue to try to beat the game. If we have succeeded in this with a majority of



you, I believe it has been worth while. If we have not succeeded, I believe I have failed in my objective and am just another keeper."

A year later in *The Presidio* for September, 1937, he commented on the character of the inmates of the prison. "Collectively the fifteen hundred prisoners here", he observed, "are in most respects like any group of fifteen hundred men of similar age who might be gathered up in any city or community in the state and placed in a penitentiary. They have the same likes and dislikes, the same envies and jealousies, the same desires. They have their leaders and followers, their braggarts, their wise and hard-boiled guys, their liars, their belly-achers, and their blankety blanks. They have their quiet, manly, generous, reliable men you find in any community, men you naturally like to have around you. As a group they are good sportsmen and almost invariably are for the losing team or the underdog. The great majority of the prisoners are attempting to do their own time, to obey the rules and regulations. They perform the work assigned to them without complaint, they do not whine about conditions. They never report to the hospital unless they are sick. They do not connive to secure some easy job or special privilege. They are respected by the majority of their fellow-prisoners and by all the officers and employees.



“The Warden and the officers of the penitentiary hate to see a man come back regardless of how good a prisoner he may have been when he served before. Knowing that practically every prisoner looks forward day by day to the time he will be released, it is impossible to understand why so many return. Of the 1530 men here 57 per cent are recidivists. This does not necessarily mean they are incorrigible criminals any more than the first term means that he is a first offender. The Warden does not believe these men return because of treatment they have had, either good or bad, when they served before. Economic conditions undoubtedly have something to do with it but not all. Seventy-one per cent of the inmates are here because of some sort of theft, they tried to get something for nothing. To give a satisfactory explanation of a man who will come to the penitentiary and work willingly and efficiently month after month and year after year and then go out as a free man and steal or connive to get something without working for it, is beyond the ability of the present Warden. It might be that many of these men would not return if there was some way of giving them intelligent supervision for two or three years after they have left the penitentiary.”

In his seventh and last anniversary message in *The Presidio*, September, 1940, Warden Haynes



referred to the "many changes in the conduct of the institution". Among those affecting the inmate population had been the acceptance in principle of the modern theory of penology: "that men are sent to the penitentiary as a punishment and not for punishment". He referred to this attitude in his first message, and consequently it seems fair to assume that it represents a cardinal principle in his penal philosophy. The actual incarceration constituted the punishment; treatment in the prison could be aimed at rehabilitation without incurring the criticism of coddling the prisoners.

This principle he believed had been "reflected in the general attitude of the civilian employees toward the prisoner: that of friendly coöperation, a desire on the part of the employee to help the prisoner who wants to do his part in the performance of the work of the institution as well as his general conduct, on the one hand, and the equally friendly coöperation of the majority of the prisoners with the civilian employees and with each other on the other hand."

His summary of the changes during his administration illustrates his method of applying this fundamental principle. "Prior to September, 1933," he explained, "there was no such thing as evening or Sunday afternoon yard privileges. If



there is such a thing as morale in a penitentiary, it is believed that this, together with the recreation activities during these periods, has had much to do in producing a high morale.

“Formerly, but few prisoners had the privilege of being assigned outside the wall to work and live. Now more than 200 men, and there have been many more, are rarely inside the walls, and then only to witness a baseball or football game or for medical treatment. An additional 200 men work outside the walls, returning for meals and sleep.

“Many hundreds of new books and magazines have been added to the library and a system installed so such books and magazines are issued to the inmates twice each week.

“To the prisoners who want to study there is a good opportunity through the correspondence school. More should take advantage of it.

“The physical plant has been improved. Cellhouses have been painted. Cellhouse E has been completed. The dining room has been enlarged, additional industries provided, a canteen installed, old buildings torn down, and the new yard is nearing completion. No greater improvement has been made anywhere than at the farms, not only in appearance of the farms and farm buildings, but in the products received from the farms.”



That the policies instituted by Warden Haynes were successful is attested by the respect he won from his prisoners. The men who were inside knew the meaning of fair treatment and the importance of human dignity. At the time of the warden's death the editor of *The Presidio* expressed the sense of loss that was generally felt. If hope of freedom was not entirely banished for many convicts, it was certainly depressed. "Warden Haynes", wrote the editor, "believed that the use of parole should be extended. He believed firmly that no man should serve more than twelve years — that, on the whole, Iowa's sentences were much too long. When Warden Haynes died, the old time lifer in Ft. Madison lost a very good friend."

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