

Chronology

- 1556 The first Bridewell opens in London
- 1608 Captain George Kendall becomes the first recorded execution in the new colonies
- 1619 Beginning of the transportation of British convicts to the American colonies
- 1632 Jane Champion becomes the first woman executed in the new colonies
- 1656 *Hôpital Général* established in Paris, generally considered precursor to modern prison
- 1682 Great Law enacted (drafted by William Penn for the Pennsylvania Colony)
- 1764 Cesare Beccaria publishes *On Crimes and Punishments*
- 1772 Maison de Force founded in Ghent, Belgium
- 1773 Newgate Prison opens in London
Walnut Street Jail opens in Philadelphia
- 1774 First recorded American prison riot occurs at Simsbury, Connecticut
- 1777 John Howard publishes *The State of Prisons in England and Wales*
- 1779 England passes the Penitentiary Act
- 1787 Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, later known as the Pennsylvania Prison Society, is founded
Arrival of first convicts in Australia
- 1789 Jeremy Bentham publishes *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*
- 1790 Renovated Walnut Street Jail opened with a penitentiary wing
- 1797 Newgate Prison established in New York City
- 1816 Millbank Prison opens in London, provides a model for penitentiaries elsewhere
- 1819 Congregate, silent system implemented in Auburn Penitentiary, New York
- 1821 Western Penitentiary opens
Work begins on foundations and walls of Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia.
- 1825 Kentucky becomes the first state to employ a private contractor to manage its entire correctional facility system, and by the end of the Civil War the majority of southern states have followed suit
- 1826 Construction of Sing Sing in New York State begins; institution is originally known as Mount Pleasant State Penitentiary
- 1827 Elizabeth Fry publishes *Observations on the Siting, Superintendence and Government of Female Prisoners* in England
- 1829 Eastern State Penitentiary opens
- 1830s Jacksonian era**
- 1832 First escape from Eastern State Penitentiary
- 1833 Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont publish *On the Penitentiary System in the United States*
- 1841 John Augustus develops probation in Boston
- 1842 Pentonville Prison opens in London, based, in part, on Jeremy Bentham's panopticon design; prisoners are initially held in solitary confinement
- 1844 Women's Prison association formed in New York to improve the treatment of female offenders and to separate them from men

- 1858 Joliet Penitentiary opens in Illinois
- 1868 British transportation of convicts to Australia ends
- 1870–1919 Reformatory era**
- 1870 American Prison Congress (forerunner of American Correctional Association)—
 Declaration of Principles enacted
- 1871 *Ruffin v. Commonwealth* establishes that convicted felons not only forfeit liberty but are slaves
 of the state; this provides the legal justification for courts to maintain a hands-off doctrine
- 1873 The first women’s prison, the Indiana Reformatory Institution, opens
- 1876 Zebulon Brockway initiates America’s first parole system in Elmira Reformatory
- 1878 First probation law is passed in Massachusetts
- 1880 Louisiana State Prison opens at Angola
- 1890s–1930s Progressive era**
- 1891 Congress passes the Three Prisons Act, establishing federal prison system
- 1895 Gladstone Commission in United Kingdom ushers in new era of punishment
- 1899 First juvenile court established in Cook County, Illinois
- 1904 Parchman Farm opens in Mississippi
- 1914 Passing of the Harrison Act leads to incarceration of people convicted of
 narcotic-related offenses
- 1919 Volstead Act
- 1920 The American Civil Liberties Union founded
- 1926 Stateville Penitentiary is founded in Illinois
- 1927 The federal government opens its first women’s institution, the Federal Industrial
 Reformatory and Industrial Farm for Women at Alderson, West Virginia
- 1928–1931 Wickersham Commission
- 1929 Hawes-Cooper Act passed to regulate interstate sale of prisoner-made goods
- 1930s–1960s Medical model**
- 1930 The Federal Bureau of Prisons is established
- 1933 The Federal Bureau of Prisons establishes first prison medical center at FMC Springfield
- 1934 Alcatraz opens
- 1942 Relocation centers open to confine Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II
- 1946 Last of relocation centers closes
- 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War adopted
- 1950 Youth Corrections Act passed to create rehabilitative treatment for offenders under the age
 of 22 in the federal system and the District of Columbia
- 1958 Gresham Sykes publishes *The Society of Captives*
- 1960s–1970s Community model**
- 1961 *Monroe v. Pape* resurrected 19th-century post–Civil War legislation (Title 42 Section 1983)
 allowing federal litigation against those acting under color of state law for depriving
 of civil rights; provides the basis for prisoner civil rights litigation
- 1963 Alcatraz closes and U.S. Penitentiary Marion opens
- 1964 *Cooper v. Pate* overturns *Ruffin*, formally recognizing the constitutional rights of prisoners
- 1965 Congress passes Title IV of the Higher Education Act, which provides for Pell grants for
 prisoners to pursue college education
- President Lyndon Johnson creates the President’s Commission on Law Enforcement
 and the Administration of Justice
- 1966 *In re Kent*, “essentials of due process” required for juveniles
- The Black Panther Party (BPP) forms in Oakland, California
- 1967 *In re Gault*, Supreme Court rules that juvenile offenders are entitled to state-provided
 counsel and due process guarantees

- Report of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice is published with 200 recommendations for changes to the criminal justice system
- 1970 Eastern State Penitentiary closes
Through the efforts of Jerome Miller, Massachusetts becomes to first state to start closing all of its reform schools; all are closed by 1972
- 1971 Attica rebellion
The first black warden is appointed in the federal prison system
David Rothman publishes *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* that critically reevaluates the treatment of the mentally ill in the United States
- 1972 *Furman v. Georgia*, Supreme Court effectively voids 40 death penalty statutes and suspends the death penalty as "cruel and unusual punishment"
President Richard M. Nixon declares the initial "war on drugs"
ACLU founds the National Prison Project to strengthen prisoners' rights
- 1974 *Wolff v. McDonnell* allows inmates certain due-process rights in prison disciplinary hearings
Robert Martinson's article "What Works?" appears in *The Public Interest*
The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act passed
- 1975 Michel Foucault publishes *Surveiller et Punir*, translated into English as *Discipline and Punish* in 1977
- 1976 *Gregg v. Georgia* reinstates death penalty
Estelle v. Gamble deliberate indifference to medical needs violates constitutional rights
Maine is first U.S. state to abolish parole
The first female officer is appointed to work in a male federal prison at Lompoc, California
- 1977 Leonard Peltier imprisoned
Coker v. Georgia establishes that death penalty is an unconstitutional punishment for rape of an adult woman when the victim is not killed
Gary Gilmore is put to death by firing squad, the first person executed since the reinstatement of the death penalty
- 1979 *Bell v. Wolfish* signals a return to a hands-off approach by the courts
Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program repealed
Depression-era limitations on the interstate commerce in prison-made goods
Organization "Stop Prisoner Rape" is founded by survivors of prison rape
The Bureau of Justice Statistics is founded within the U.S. Department of Justice
- 1980s–present Crime control model**
- 1980 *Ruiz v. Estelle* establishes that conditions of confinement in entire Texas state prison system are unconstitutional
New Mexico Prison riot
- 1981 The first woman warden of a men's federal prison is appointed at Butner
Pat Carlen publishes *Women's Imprisonment* in Britain, one of the first critical sociological studies of a women's prison
- 1982 President Ronald Reagan declares a "war on drugs"
Federal Bureau of Prisons establishes residential staff training program at Glynco, Georgia
Federal Bureau of Prisons establishes first mandatory literacy program
- 1984 Congress passes the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, as part of the Comprehensive Crime Control Act and creates the U.S. Sentencing Commission
Velma Barfield becomes the first woman executed since reinstatement of the death penalty
Congress passes Young Offender Act
Hudson v. Palmer, Supreme Court rules that prison administrators are obligated to provide an environment for inmates and prison employees that is both secure and sanitary

- The state of Tennessee ushers in the new age of privatization by contracting Hamilton County Jail facility to be run by Corrections Corporation of America
- 1985 Nicole Hahn Rafter publishes *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons and Social Control*
- 1986 Congress passes first Anti-Drug Abuse Act that increases prison sentences for the sale and possession of drugs, eliminates probation or parole for certain drug offenders, increases fines, and provides for the forfeiture of assets
- 1987 *McCleskey v. Kemp*, Supreme Court rules that racial disparities not recognized as a constitutional violation of “equal protection of the law” unless intentional racial discrimination against the defendant can be shown
- Cuban detainees, from the Mariel boat lift, riot at the Atlanta and Oakdale, Louisiana, federal prisons
- 1988 *Thompson v. Oklahoma* establishes that executions of offenders ages 15 and younger at the time of their crimes is unconstitutional
- Congress passes the Civil Liberties Act and apologizes to Japanese American community for wartime detention in relocation centers
- Congress passes second Anti-Drug Abuse Act that introduces differential treatment for crack and powder cocaine and mandatory imprisonment for simple possession of more than 5 grams of crack cocaine
- California State Prison, Corcoran, opens; it is later dubbed “America’s most violent prison”
- 1989 *Penry v. Lynaugh*, Supreme Court rules that executing persons with mental retardation is not a violation of the Eighth Amendment
- Number of black people incarcerated becomes greater than number of whites across the United States penal system for the first time
- Stanford v. Kentucky* and *Wilkins v. Missouri*, Court rules that Eighth Amendment does not prohibit the death penalty for crimes committed at age 16 or 17
- John Braithwaite publishes *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*, which proposes a new approach to punishment based on restorative justice
- 1990 David Garland publishes *Punishment and Modern Society*
- Wilson v. Seiter* establishes that prisoners must demonstrate that prison staff acted with “deliberate indifference” to prove “cruel and unusual” conditions
- The Solicitor General of Canada publishes *Creating Choices*, the first government report on women’s prisons that is based on feminist or women-centered principles
- 1992 Washington State becomes the first jurisdiction to enact legislation known as “three strikes you’re out”
- 1994 Congress passes the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act
- California brings in three-strikes legislation
- The Federal Bureau of Prisons opens its supermaximum secure facility, ADX Florence
- New Jersey passes Megan’s Law requiring public notification of presence of former sex offenders in the community
- 1995 Pell grants are abolished for prisoners as a result of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act
- Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin reinstate chain gangs
- Religious Freedom Restoration Act expands rights of prisoners to practice their religion in prison
- 1996 Congress passes the Prison Litigation Reform Act (PLRA) to limit prisoner litigation
- Congress passes the Illegal Immigration Reform Immigrant Responsibility Act that expands the capacity of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to detain foreigners
- California Supreme Court rules in *People v. Superior Court* that judges may dismiss allegations of prior felonies in second- and third-strike cases “in the interest of justice”

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- 1997 Congress passes the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act abolishing the D.C. system of corrections
Critical Resistance established in Berkeley, California
- 1998 Allen Hornblum publishes *Acres of Skin: Human Experiments at Holmesburg Prison* that reveals extent of medical experiments on prisoners
- 1999 Number of people incarcerated in the U.S. is, for the first time, greater than 2 million
Eleven of the Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned since the 1980s are granted presidential pardons by President Bill Clinton
- 2000 Attica Brothers Legal Defense Fund wins a \$12 million settlement for survivors of the Attica rebellion
Illinois Governor George Ryan announces a moratorium on capital punishment in Illinois
- 2001 USA PATRIOT Act passed, in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States
Enemy combatants are placed at Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba without trial or access to lawyers for an indefinite period of time
- 2002 *Ring v. Arizona*, Supreme Court rules that only a jury may pass a death sentence
Atkins v. Virginia, Supreme Court rules that executing persons with mental retardation is unconstitutional
Camp Delta, a permanent detention center for enemy combatants, opens at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba
- 2003 Congress passes Prisoner Rape Elimination Act designed to end prisoner rape
Illinois Governor George Ryan commutes the death penalty of 160 inmates on death row
- 2004 First military tribunals held for inmates from Guantánamo Bay
Abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq, by U.S. military personnel becomes public
Blakely v. Washington, Supreme Court rules that judges may not use their discretion to enhance sentences; activists believe this decision may affect the federal sentencing guidelines, particularly as they have been applied to those convicted of drug offenses