

OVERSEERS REPORTS

1824

To the Hon. General Assembly of the State of Connecticut to be convened at New Haven in said state on the first Wednesday of May instantly....

The Overseers of New Gate Prison beg leave to present the following report...

There have been 47 convicts committed to said Prison the year past, and 24 discharged.

The number of Prisoners has been uniformly and rapidly increasing for several years past, as will appear by the following statements.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Jan. 1822, the number was 66. On the first day of Jan. 1823 - 99. And on the first day of Jan. 1824 - 114. The present number is 124 - so that the number has nearly doubled in a little more than two years. Forty-four of the present number are Blacks. Seven are under sentences for life. Eighteen are committed for the second, one for the third, and one for the fourth offence.

Two deaths have occurred during the past year, one of palsey, the other of consumption. The health of the convicts has been usually good.

The employment of the prisoners is, in general, as follows viz. 22 shoe makers, 10 waggon, plough & machine makers, 11 coopers, 20 nailers, 5 blacksmiths, 2 stone cutters, 1 mason, 3 cooks, 2 washers, 3 basketmakers, 3 taylors, 5 shop & yard waiters, 3 old and infirm, 4 employed in any necessary labor about the prison and 30 on the stepping mill.

In the last annual report of the Overseers, it was mentioned that the practice of exposing the rations for the Prison to sale to the lowest bidder had been discontinued and the provisions furnished by private contracts of the Overseers.

This method is still continued from the persuasion that it is more economical and in other respects preferable to the former mode.

In pursuance of the appropriation made at the last session of the Gen. Assembly, a stone building has been erected 64 ft. long by 26 ft. wide and 4 stories high. In one end of the building are 2 lodging rooms, which will accommodate 50 convicts, a hospital for the accommodation of the sick, and an office, in which the books and papers belonging to the Prison are kept.

In the other part are the Stepping Mill, two rooms <sup>for</sup> ~~for~~ cooking, a grain loft, etc.

Attached to the Mill is one run of mill stones, which will grind from 3 to 4 Bushels of grain an hour, and employ 30 prisoners. The quality of the flour manufactured in the Mill is equal to that made by any mill propelled by water power. The Stepping Mill having been but recently put in operation, it cannot be expected that an opinion can be formed, from actual experiment of the effect which will be produced upon the convicts.

From the amount of labor necessary to keep the Mill in operation, it will easily be perceived that it cannot be regarded as a source of revenue, but still it affords employment for those convicts, who from the shortness of their sentences, their incapacity for mechanical business, or from disinclination to labor cannot be better employed.

It is also confidently believed that the severity of the labour (although by no means cruel) will have a tendency ultimately to reduce the numbers of prisoners by operating as "a terror to evil doers" and in that way render an essential service to the community.

The Overseers would beg leave to suggest the propriety of the appointment of a committee from your Hon. Body with instruction to visit the Institution and inform themselves of the manner in which the affairs of the Prison are administered.

All of which is respectfully submitted by your Honors' most obedient and very humble servants.

New Gate Prison  
May 1<sup>st</sup> 1824

Martin Sheldon  
Jon.<sup>a</sup> Pettibone Jr.  
Tho' K. Bruce

} overseers of  
New Gate Prison