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*The York Gaol 1810-1830:
Deviance and Social Change*

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York, Maine

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Preface

This is the first in a series of Occasional Papers published by the Old York Historical Society. Since the inception of the Elizabeth Perkins Fellowship Program in 1988, a tremendous amount of research has taken place at the museum. Additionally, staff members and Old York volunteers have conducted research for classes, exhibits and programs. It is our intention to make as much of this valuable information available to the public as is possible.

This paper is written by Susan Leonard Toll, a living history interpreter at the Old York Historical Society, for a graduate course in history at the University of New Hampshire. It was edited by Old York staff members and designed by Martha Drury, an Old York volunteer.

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The York Gaol 1810-1830: Deviance and Social Change

Theft, assault, and arson are crimes with which we are familiar in the twentieth century. If debt, adultery, bastardy, fornication, and gross lewdness are appended to this list, a picture of criminal deviance in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New England begins to emerge. The York County Gaol in York, Maine served as a detention site for local deviants from 1719 until the 1860s. During this period the Old Gaol, as it is now called, witnessed a variety of changes in both form and function. Renovations and additions to the original two stone cells were made throughout the eighteenth century, with the structure taking on its present form by 1799. The jail's function also adapted to the needs of the community; debtors were most commonly held, but the jail detained prisoners awaiting trial and occasionally even the mentally ill. Records of persons incarcerated in the York County Gaol offer a unique opportunity to quantitatively examine patterns of deviance over time. Jailers' record books from the late eighteenth century through the mid nineteenth century are available at the Old York Historical Society Library. Prior research has been completed on the records covering the years 1790-1799¹; the present study focuses on a later time period, 1810-1830.

Maine's transition from a province of Massachusetts to statehood in 1820 provides an interesting period of study. The years 1810-1830 inclusive were chosen with the aim of assessing the role of the York Gaol in the early years of the nineteenth century. Although the major focus of this study is the description of the records from 1810-1830, some comparisons are made with findings from previous research, and data are examined to study the phenomenon of recidivism.

A Local Jail

Before the analysis of data can be relevant, it is necessary to understand the role of imprisonment in the judicial system in both the time period studied and in the previous century. Crime in the eighteenth century was not considered a major social problem, nor did society shun deviant individuals.² Communities like York, Maine employed jails, but did not use imprisonment as a final punishment. David Rothman asserts:

A sentence of imprisonment was uncommon, and never used alone. Local jails held men caught up in the process of judgement, not those who had completed it: persons awaiting trial, those convicted but not yet punished, debtors who had still to meet their obligations.

¹Barbara Runkunas. 1990. "Ye Who Entered Here: The Prisoners of York Gaol 1790-1799" Unpublished manuscript, Old York Historical Society.

²David Rothman. 1971. *The Discovery of the Asylum*. Boston: Little, Brown.

ations. The idea of serving time in a prison as a method of correction was the invention of a later generation.³

Rothman argues that these notions of the eighteenth century were replaced in the first three decades of the nineteenth century by attitudes favoring the penitentiary. Prisons aimed at rehabilitation supplanted the whipping post and the stocks. With the development of institutions like the Maine State Prison in Thomaston, which opened in 1824, some powers of local jails were usurped by the state. Disputes over the location of county seats, like that involving York and Alfred, were also critical in determining which town jails were most prominent. Between 1810 and 1830, however, economics and changing attitudes toward debtors were most influential on imprisonment in the York Gaol.

A Debtor's Jail

The York Gaol was not a bastion of murderers and hardened criminals; rather, it was a county jail used to imprison local deviants. Felons were usually removed to more secure jails in Massachusetts prior to 1820, or sent to the jail in Alfred or to the State Prison in Thomaston after 1824.

Of the 508 incarcerations in the York County Gaol between 1810 and 1830, 204 (40.6%) were for debt. Debtors could be imprisoned on charges of a creditor, with the creditor paying to "diet" the prisoner. A debtor's jail provided a means by which a creditor could exert influence over his debtors, and, until 1787, the power of the creditors was unchecked. As long as the creditor was willing to pay the cost of imprisonment, he could determine whether or not his debtors would remain in jail. In 1787, the Law of Insolvency was passed in Massachusetts. If a debtor was unable to pay the debt, he or she could swear insolvency and "take the benefit of the law." If the creditor could not prove that the debtor was capable of paying the debt, the debtor would be released after thirty days in jail. After being released, however, the debtor was not immune from further charges by the creditor over the same debt. Aside from paying the debt or taking the benefit of the law, a debtor could simply wait until the creditor no longer wanted to support his or her stay in jail.

As Robert Feer demonstrated in his work on debt in Massachusetts, "By the end of the eighteenth century, it was no longer legally possible for a creditor to keep an insolvent debtor in jail indefinitely."⁴ Indeed, data from the York Gaol indicates that debtors were likely either to pay their debts and leave jail within a few days or take the benefit of the law and leave after thirty days. This finding is also consistent with research on York Gaol records from 1790-1799.⁵

Incarceration for debt was quite different from imprisonment for other crimes. Conditions varied greatly from jail to jail, but if debtors posted bonds, they were usually free to leave during the day to pursue work. Without a bond, most still had access to the jail yard. In some cases, "a jail yard was not a jail at all, but an invisible boundary around the central part of town."⁶ As Laurel Ulrich has written:

³*Ibid.*, p. 48

⁴Robert Feer, "Imprisonment for Debt in Massachusetts Before 1800," *Massachusetts Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 (Sept., 1961), p. 269.

⁵Runkunas, "Prisoners of York," p. 3

⁶Laurel Ulrich, 1990. *A Midwinter's Tale*. New York: Knopf.

Despite the embarrassment, such a confinement was hardly oppressive. [And] for an old man exhausted from years of physical labor, it may even have been a kind of vacation.⁷

People imprisoned for debt were often respectable citizens, including tax collectors whose books did not balance, and debtors were, in theory, to be separated from felons. Yet court records indicate that this segregation was not maintained consistently in York, and that conditions within the jail were less than ideal. In the mid eighteenth century, for example, the partition separating debtors from other prisoners was, "much broken . . . and other parts of the Prison being much decayed and weak."⁸ Furthermore, the flexibility of such incarceration did not mitigate the fact that debtors were often imprisoned repeatedly while trying to fulfill their obligations.

Other Crimes

Aside from debtors, the York Gaol held people accused and convicted of other crimes. Theft, burglary, and larceny combined to form the second most common type of offense. Ninety-nine of the 508 cases comprised this category, accounting for 19.4% of the total imprisonments. The third most common crime was assault, with 70 cases (13.9%). The remaining 26% of crimes committed included the failure to pay or collect taxes, abuse, adultery, counterfeiting, and murder, as well as myriad others. To make sense of the variety of charges, these crimes were categorized as shown in the following table:

Table 1 Frequency of Crimes by Category

Crime	Frequency	Percent
Debt/Taxes	242	47.6
Moral Crimes	29	5.7
Theft/Burglary/Larceny	99	19.5
Violent Crimes	86	16.9
Other	52	10.3
Total	508	100.0

The relatively high frequency of theft suggests that poverty was a problem in York. Alan Taylor has studied the settlement of the Maine frontier. He claims that poverty was widespread in Maine, and that in 1802 the average Maine settler possessed less than half of the assets of the average Massachusetts resident.⁹ Given the proximity to New Hampshire and Massachusetts, such indicators of poverty may be less valid for the town of York than for the rest of York County, but the high incidence of debt and theft indicates that York was not an affluent community in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, town records show a consistent effort to cope with the problem of the poor. Town doctors were paid with public funds for "medical attendance on the town poor," and between 1810 and 1830, the town struggled to devise a system that would accommodate the needs of the poor.¹⁰

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Massachusetts Court Records*, Gaol Sessions, Jan. 1741, Vol. 10, p. 307.

⁹Alan Taylor, 1990, *Liberty Men and Great Proportions*, Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press.

¹⁰*Town Records of York, Maine*, Vol. III, Microfilm, Old York Historical Society. See discussion of Change Over Time later in this paper for further information on York's policies regarding the poor.

Length of Stay

As previously mentioned, jails in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were not used to imprison deviants for extended periods of time; the average length of stay for people imprisoned in the York County Gaol between 1810 and 1830 was 43 days. However, the mode, or most common number of days a person was held was only two days. This data supports the supposition that, once imprisoned, people would hastily pay their debts or fines in order to be released. Indeed, length of stay data examined by crime reveals that debtors were likely to be in jail for a shorter time on average than other prisoners, and were most often imprisoned for only one day.

Only 2% of the people imprisoned in York between 1810 and 1830 escaped or broke bond. Given the relative freedom of incarcerated debtors, it is not astonishing that so few people fled, but there were some notable escapes. Nathaniel Cole, according to tradition, smeared blood and grease on the saw teeth that barred the window of his cell, then hid in the chimney. He was the only prisoner at the time, and after his "escape" was discovered, Cole remained in the chimney until dark. He then slipped out of his unlocked cell and made his escape.¹¹ The percentage of escapes in this period, however, is remarkably lower than the 15% noted between 1790 and 1799.¹²

It is not surprising to find that people held for violent crimes were likely to be in jail longer than average, but it is interesting to note that people jailed for moral crimes were highest average length of stay, 65 days. The most common stay for moral crimes was twelve days. Although the frequency of moral crimes was relatively low, once people accused of crimes such as adultery, bastardy, and gross lewdness entered the York Gaol, they were likely to spend more time in prison than those accused of violent crimes, debt or other types of crimes.

Gross lewdness seems to have encompassed a wide range of behavior, including adultery and prostitution. The 1820 Maine Law indicates the severity of punishment for such behavior:

Be it further enacted, That if any man or woman, either or both of whom being then married, shall lewdly and lasciviously associate and cohabit together, or if any man or woman, married or unmarried, shall be guilty of open gross lewdness and lascivious behavior, and shall be thereof convicted before the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, they shall be punished by solitary imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months, and confinement to hard labor for a term, not exceeding five years.¹³

By 1820, this type of crime was supposed to be punished not with fines and whipping but with longer prison terms. In practice, however, people detained in the York Gaol were rarely imprisoned for more than a few months. The longer lengths of stay for those accused of moral crimes does suggest that the residents of York, Maine in the early nineteenth century retained some of the strict moral codes of their Puritan ancestors. As Douglas Greenberg says of his work on New York court records, this type of data is not necessarily conclusive evidence about a society; rather it is a reflection of a society's view of itself.¹⁴ York residents seem to have considered themselves part of a

¹¹ *Interpreter's Handbook*, Old Gaol Section, Old York Historical Society, p. 2. This is partially substantiated in the jail Keepers Record Book, March, 1819, p. 45–46.

¹² Runkunas, "Prisoners of York," p. 1.

¹³ *Laws of the State of Maine*, 1822. Hallowell: Calvin Spaulding.

¹⁴ Douglas Greenberg, 1976. *Crime & Law Enforcement in the Colony of New York 1691–1776*. Ithaca, NY.

moral society in terms of sexual behavior, and those who violated moral precepts were punished accordingly.

Gender Differences

The analysis of moral crimes led to an interesting finding regarding the disparate treatment of men and women held in the jail. Men were more likely to be accused violent crimes, while women were more likely to be charged with moral crimes. This in itself is not remarkable given women's roles at the time. Women had no legal rights, and female deviance was often corrected by a dominant male, usually a husband or father. "A good wife earned the dignity of anonymity,"¹⁵ and thus remained outside the sphere of courts or jails. Only the most wayward women found themselves in jail.

Between 1810 and 1830, only 37 women were imprisoned in the York Gaol. These women comprised only 7% of total incarcerations in spite of a relatively balanced sex ratio in the county. Eleven of those women were accused of moral crimes, eight were accused of theft, and nine were charged with debt. Only three were suspected of violent crimes; the remaining six were imprisoned for other miscellaneous charges. But an interesting disparity in the length of stay between the sexes is apparent in the data, particularly if the length of stay for those accused of violent crimes is compared with those accused of moral crimes.

Men associated with violent crimes averaged 55 days in jail, whereas the three women who were charged with violent crimes had an average length of stay of only three days. However, when moral crimes are examined, the opposite pattern becomes evident. The 18 men charged with moral crimes averaged 50 days in jail, but the women were detained for 90 days on average. This discrepancy suggests that although women were less likely to be placed in jail, those women who committed moral crimes were apt to remain in jail longer than men accused of similar crimes. Conversely, women accused of violent crimes may have been perceived as less threatening and therefore not detained as long as men.

It is dangerous to draw conclusions about the treatment of women accused of violent crimes based on only three cases. Yet the length of stay data does demonstrate that women accused of moral crimes were, for some reason, detained longer than men. This pattern may be a result of the legal and financial status of women; once accused of a crime, women may have had more difficulty than men in raising money for surety or bond. Moreover, all the women charged with moral crimes were single women or widows. Lacking a male partner, these women were perhaps more vulnerable to legal charges than married women, and their finances were perhaps quite tenuous. But the size of the disparity between length of stay for men and women accused of moral crimes suggested that women may indeed have been judged by a more strict moral code than men.

Occupational Differences

The occupations of people jailed were as varied as the crimes they committed, and in order to analyze the range of data from 1810 to 1830, occupations were also categorized as they are in Table 2.

¹⁵ Laurel Ulrich, 1980. *Good Wives*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Table 2 Frequency of Incarceration by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Gentlemen/Merchants	46	9.1
Artisans	43	8.5
Laborers	107	21.1
Agricultural	158	31.1
Mariners	38	7.5
Women/Minors	64	12.6
Other/Missing	52	10.1
Totals	508	100.0

York was a seaport with significant agricultural activity, and the occupations of those imprisoned in the York Gaol reflect the diversity of its population. Debt was the most common crime of those in the jail, and agricultural workers and gentlemen were more likely to be imprisoned for debt than those in other occupational categories. This is not to imply that gentlemen were more often in jail than, say, laborers; rather, if gentlemen were jailed, it was most often for debt as opposed to violent or moral crimes.

Another interesting trend in the length of stay data emerged when occupational status was used as a control. Gentlemen and merchants had a longer average length of stay (76 days) than the total population (43 days). Yet a closer inspection of the data indicates that the average length of stay for Gentlemen/Merchants is drastically skewed by two cases in which the length of stays were over 635 days. If these cases are removed from calculations, Gentlemen/Merchants average only 26 days in jail.

Agricultural workers, on the other hand, had an average length of stay of 32 days. This reflects the fact that many of the agricultural laborers took the benefit of the law for insolvency, stayed in jail for approximately 30 days, and were released. The 30 day imprisonment stipulation of the law of insolvency was not always exact. In one case in 1820 a man was released one month after he was incarcerated, but did not stay a full 30 days because he was detained in February. In general, occupation, and subsequently social status, were critical in determining the length of time an individual would be incarcerated. Those of more lucrative occupations were apt to be in jail for shorter periods, whereas agricultural workers and common laborers often remained in jail 30 days or longer.

The Mentally Ill

The York County Gaol records also reveal a society's struggle with the issue of mental illness. Vagrant or indigent, the mentally ill were frequently placed in local jails and supported by the town. Between 1801 and 1830 eleven men were identified as "deranged" or "lunatic/mad" and put in jail. The records expose the dilemma of categorizing these individuals. The jailer listed eight of these men as "deranged" under occupation, and in the other three cases the crime as "lunatic/mad." Was mental illness an occupation or a crime? The ambiguity of the jail records mirror the uncertainty of society. Americans in the early nineteenth century were merely beginning to address the complexities of mental illness and society's responsibility toward the mentally ill.

Change Over Time

Part of the rationale for choosing 1810–1830 as a period of study was to examine possible changes over time as Maine became a state. Although it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the wider implications of Maine's statehood, it is possible to investigate differences in imprisonment in the York Gaol by using a simple pre-post test. Using 1820 as the middle point, data was divided into pre-1820 and post-1820, and then compared to determine significant changes over time. Crime rates were also calculated to include the year 1820 in the analysis, and to provide comparisons that account for changes in the population.

Before a simple pre-post test can be used to garner any insight into patterns of imprisonment, larger historical trends of time must be examined. Migration, for example, had a tremendous impact on York County between 1810 and 1830. Census data for York County reveals that the population increased by almost 10,000 people. This is an increase of almost 20% in twenty years; obviously the influx of such a large number of settlers would predict a rise in the number of people involved in crimes and therefore incarcerations in the county jail. Indeed, records from the jail indicate that the total number of imprisonment for the ten years prior to 1820 was 171, and between 1820 and 1830 the total was 303.

Crime rates for this period indicate changes in the number of crimes per thousand people in the population. Diagram 1 illustrates trends in various categories of crime as well as the overall crime rate. The years 1820–1825 had a higher per capita crime rate than the other five year periods analyzed in this study.

But not all the pre and post 1820 differences can be explained by the influence of people settling in the area. The percentage of debt cases, for instance, declined after 1820. Prior to 1820 debt was the crime of 57% of the imprisonments, whereas after 1820, debt was the charge in only 30% of the imprisonments. In spite of a rapidly growing population, the total number of people jailed for debt actually decreased after 1820. The crime rate for debt between 1810 and 1815 was 1.5 per thousand; between 1815 and 1825 it rose to 2.5, and by the last period studied, 1825–1830, the crime rate for debt had fallen to .9 per thousand.

To suggest that the decrease of debt cases in York from pre-1820 to post-1820 was solely the result of increasing prosperity in the town would be simplistic. Yet there were certain economic factors that weighed heavily in the town of York. Jefferson's Embargo Act of 1807 and the War of 1812 seriously disrupted trade, particularly in New England. Laura Sprague has written about the effects of these foreign policies on commerce in southern Maine. She says of 1807 that, "poverty and failure would soon become common."¹⁶ Although Sprague claims that the shipping industry was not completely ruined by the embargo and the war, she does paint a grim picture of their effects on the economies of southern Maine towns. These events certainly contributed to the high rate of imprisonment of debtors in the York Gaol prior to 1820.

Furthermore, it is probable that changing attitudes toward debt as a crime led to the decrease in debt charges after 1820. Again David Rothman's work, *The Discovery of the*

¹⁶ Laura Sprague, 1987, *Agreeable Simulations*. Kennebunk, ME: Brick Store Museum.

Asylum, lends insight into changing attitudes toward the poor. "In the 1820s and 1830s... Americans considered the poor a social problem, a potential source of unrest and the proper object of a reform movement."¹⁷ Poverty was transformed from a crime of the individual to the problem of society.

Records from York town meetings indicate that poor relief was a persistent concern between 1810 and 1830. The agenda of a town meeting in February, 1812 included a motion "to take into consideration another request to have a committee appointed to prescribe some other mode of supporting the poor than the mode now practiced."¹⁸ In March, 1817 the town had not resolved the issue; a committee was instructed to "consider the expediency of adopting some method for supporting the poor of the town different from that now in practice."¹⁹ The town of York ultimately addressed poor relief by building an almshouse in 1838.²⁰ Poverty had become the target of reform, and although poverty and debt are not synonymous, the decrease in the number of debtors imprisoned in the York Gaol correspond to the perception of poverty as a concern of society.

Data on trends in the number of debtors over time is complemented by data on changing reasons people were discharged. Prior to 1820, 32% of those imprisoned for debt took the benefit of the law; after 1820, only 26% used the law for insolvency. But these figures are even more striking if one assumes that the categories for "taking the benefit of the law" and "staying more than 30 days" represent the same reason for discharge. Between 1810 and 1820, 44% of debtors were released by taking the benefit of the law or staying 30 days, while between 1820 and 1830, only 34% claimed insolvency or stayed 30 days. The decrease in the percentage of debtors taking the benefit of the law suggests that a higher percentage of debtors were not insolvent, but merely delinquent. Overall, crime rates during this period were rising. Although imprisonment of debt was waning, more individuals were being jailed for theft and violent crimes (see Diagram 1).

Recidivism

When sifting through the records of the Old Gaol certain names appear repeatedly. In an attempt to discern whether these were indeed the same individuals or just common family names, an assumption was made that if two cases had identical last names, first initial, sex, abode, and occupation, they represented the same individual. A recidivism rate of 20% was calculated based upon this assumption. This figure is a ratio of the number of individuals identified as recidivists incarcerated between 1810 and 1830 to the total number of cases of incarceration during that time. It should be understood that people being held before trial and who were committed again after sentencing were not considered recidivists. Rather, 20% of all individuals incarcerated in the jail were imprisoned on more than one occasion.

Of the 102 people identified as recidivists, 74 were jailed for a crime for which they had been previously imprisoned. This calculation was based upon prior imprisonments only during the period studied, and therefore does not take into consideration the possibility that someone jailed between 1810 and 1830 might also have been jailed prior to 1810. Thus both the calculations on recidivism and repeated offenses are conservative.

¹⁷Rothman, *Discovery*.

¹⁸*York Town Meeting Records*, Microfilm, Vol. III, p. 124. Old York Historical Society.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 183.

²⁰For further information see Sarah Giffen, "The Debate of the Poorhouse, York, Maine: 1817-1837" (Unpublished manuscript, Old York Historical Society, 1989).

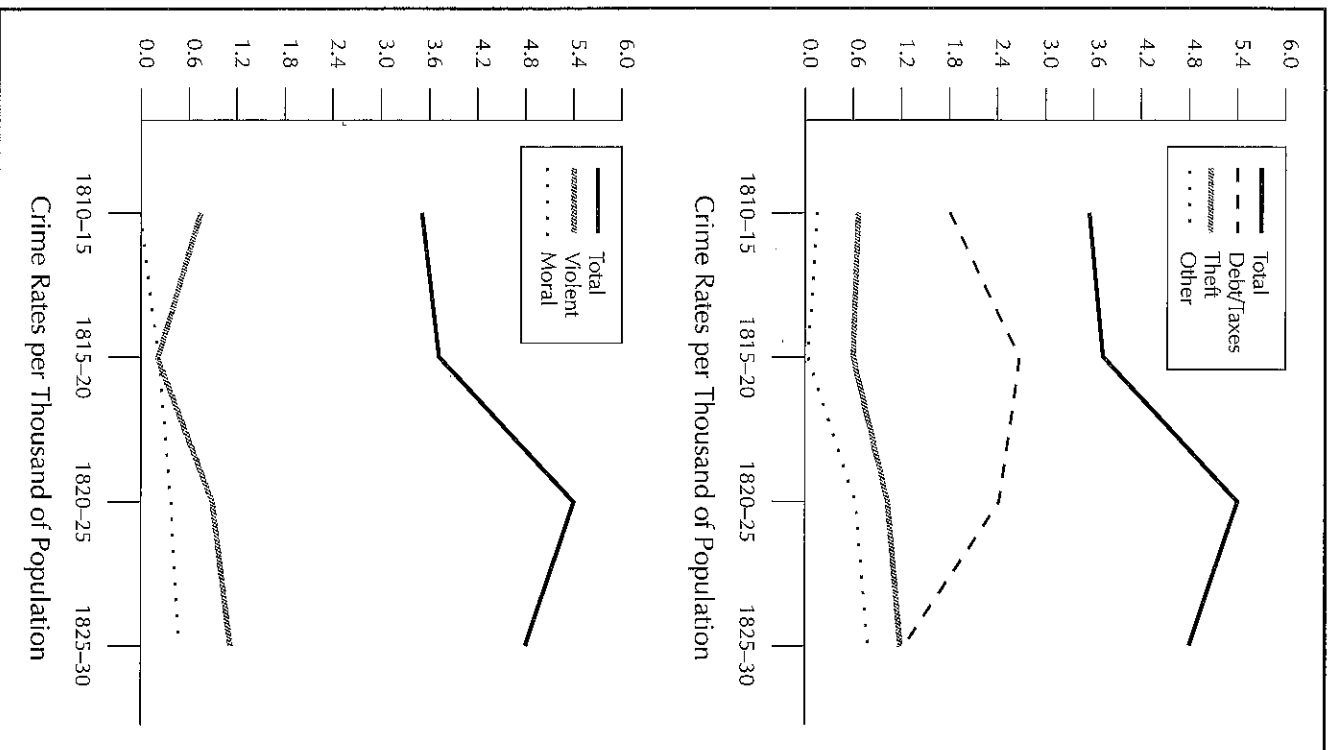


Diagram 1

Debtors comprised 53% of recidivists who were jailed for the same crime repeatedly, and 73% of recidivists also jailed on multiple charges.²¹ Such high percentages may reflect the difficulties of paying debts, or the possibility that one would borrow from

²¹See Appendix for information on multiple charges.

one source to repay another and subsequently be jailed for the second debt. Michael Hindus' work *Prison & Plantation* provides data on imprisonment for debt in Massachusetts. Between 1810 and 1830, debtors comprised 39 to 56% of all commitments in Boston, and although he fails to offer any specific figures, Hindus states that recidivism rates in Massachusetts were "high."²²

Data on recidivism before and after 1820 further illustrate the impact of a weak economy prior to 1820. Between 1810 and 1820, 63% of recidivists were debtors; between 1820 and 1830, however, 38% of recidivists were jailed for debt. Although 38% is still a high portion of recidivist debtors, the decrease from an astounding 63% indicates that debtors were more easily able to escape subsequent debts after 1820 than between 1810 and 1820.

Debtors were not the only recidivists in the York Gaol. Those imprisoned for violent crimes accounted for 24% of all recidivists between 1810 and 1830. There was virtually no difference in the percentages of violent crime recidivists before and after 1820, which suggests that violent crimes such as abuse, arson, and assault were not predicted by economic cycles. The rates of recidivism for both debt and violent crimes do imply that a segment of York society in the early nineteenth century was having difficulty living within the expectations of their community.

A Period of Social Change

The nineteenth century was critical in the formation of contemporary legal traditions,²³ and methods of coping with deviance. The York Gaol records from 1810 to 1830 provide insight into patterns of incarceration and deviance, but also offer a glimpse of burgeoning social change. Nineteenth-century notions of jail sentences as a mode of reform supplanted eighteenth-century stocks and fines. Town officials addressed the needs of the poor and the nature of imprisonment for debt changed dramatically. Debtors were less frequently jailed during the 1820s, but crime rates increased as more people were jailed for theft and violent crimes. Concomitantly, state penitentiaries were constructed to reform criminals, and the autonomy of local jails decreased. When the York County seat gradually shifted to Alfred between 1813 and 1832, the prominence of the town of York diminished. And as the town's importance waned, so too did the position of the York Gaol. By the 1860s the York Gaol was obsolete. Felons were sent to jail in Alfred or to the State Penitentiary in Thomaston. The mentally ill were taken to the institute in Augusta, and debtors were no longer jailed. Although this study cannot possibly address the myriad changes in Maine's legal system or the vast reform movements of this era, the more modest goal of a description of the York Gaol records is meaningless without reference to the rapid pace of social and political change occurring at the time.

²²Michael Hindus, 1980. *Prison & Plantation: Crime, Justice, and Authority in Massachusetts and South Carolina, 1767-1878*. Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press.

²³*Ibid.*, p. xii.

Appendix

The Data

The record books from the York County Gaol consist of ledgers in which the jailer recorded the prisoner's name, place of abode, occupation, the crime he/she committed, the date of incarceration, the date of discharge, and the reason he/she was discharged. Each of these variables was coded and another variable was used to record whether or not that person was being held for multiple charges. Thus if John Doe was jailed for debt to three people, John Doe's name appeared on three consecutive entries in the ledger with identical information in each entry. This information was recorded only once, and John Doe was noted as being incarcerated for multiple charges. The dates of incarceration and discharge were used to calculate a length of stay variable, measured in days.

Recidivism

Recidivism was studied by calculating the number of entries in the record book, not including separate entries for multiple charges, and then estimating the number of different individuals involved. As assumption was made that if two entries had the same first initial, last name, sex, place of abode, and occupation that the entries represented the same individual. This is, if anything, a conservative estimate of recidivism because inconsistent spellings and relocation would lead to an underestimation rather than overestimation of the number of recidivists in the population.

Multiple Charges

Multiple charges were recorded for 59 individuals between 1810 and 1830. Of these 59, 36 (61%) were also recidivists according to the stipulations described above. A large majority (73%) of recidivists who were also jailed on some occasion for multiple charges were jailed for debt.

Abode

Data on the location of residence of those imprisoned was coded by town and then examined to determine the percentage of those incarcerated from York County. Persons removed from the Alfred jail were coded separately because their residence was unknown. Inspection of this data proves that the York Gaol was predominantly a local institution.

Table 3 Frequency of Abode

From York County	460	90.6%
From Alfred jail	9	1.8%
From outside York County	39	7.7%
Total	508	100.0%

Seasonal Patterns

Dates of incarceration were recorded in an attempt to discern possible seasonal patterns. Although spring months (April and May) periodically show slightly higher rates

of incarceration, the differences are neither consistent nor of a magnitude which suggest that seasonal patterns were critical to crime.

Crime Rates

Crime rates were calculated by using York County Census data to estimate the population likely to be involved in criminal behavior. The method of recording census data changed, and the most consistently documented age for children was under 10. Thus in an effort to exclude children from the possible criminal population, those individuals under 10 years of age were not included in population totals. Estimates for non-census years (1815 and 1825) were calculated by averaging available data from the census taken at the beginning of the decade. For example, the population estimate for 1815 is the average of 1810 and 1820 total populations, after children under 10 are excluded. The crime rate is the frequency of a given crime divided by the population (in thousands).

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