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Lorton Reformatory:



BEYOND



TIME

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FOREWORD

The causes responsible for an individual's internment at Lorton, or other penal institution, are many. If we were to make a dedicated effort to analyze the causes of social unrest, to restructure our institutions, beginning with the home, we could do much to influence social behavior. It is our purpose in this exhibit to provide a forum for a greater involvement with these problems and a deeper realization of what is needed.

We offer this exhibit to the public so that they may gain some understanding and appreciation of how the men at Lorton "spend the time" during their imposed sentences. This display of art work and of various crafts, the presentation of musical and dramatic programs, all attest to the creative spirit of these men whose talents are expressed here and who speak to us through this exhibit.

It is hoped that what is seen and heard here will help us realize the exciting possibilities for developing more extensive services for the men at Lorton—services that will be more realistic to their needs when they re-enter society.

A discussion on the causes of crime, on the meaning of justice and penal reform is of paramount importance to all of us. After all, our concern is not for strangers, unknown to us, but for our neighbors—for those related to us by blood and marriage—in a word—our concern is for our brothers.

Credit is due to all of the staff at the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum for the enthusiastic way they have taken on this most challenging exhibit. I especially wish to commend Miss Zora Martin, our Assistant Director, Mr. James Mayo, Exhibits Specialist, Mr. Fletcher Smith, Coordinator of the Mobile Division, and Mr. Michael Fischer, Staff Photographer who made several visits to Lorton to work out the details for the entire project with the staff and the residents.

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum of the Smithsonian Institution is grateful for the cooperation and enthusiasm which the administrative staff of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections has shown from the outset in our plans for this exhibit, which has been produced through the efforts of the staff and residents of the Lorton Reformatory and the staff of the Anacostia Museum. We are especially grateful to Mr. Kenneth L. Hardy, Director of the D.C. Department of Corrections, Mr. John D. Boone, the Superintendent of Lorton Reformatory, Mr. John Johnson who is Supervisor of Education, and Mr. Salvador Anzalony, Supervisor Arts and Crafts, both at the Reformatory. May their good work continue.

John R. Kinard
Director

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October

- Sunday, 11 Opening of the exhibition from 1:00 until 6:00 p.m.
Dramatic presentation by the Inner Voices, a creative expression company composed of Lorton residents. 4:00 p.m.
- Monday, 12 Demonstration by a Lorton artist or craftsman. For daytime tour groups.
- Tuesday, 13 Presentations by members of the Gavel Club of Lorton. Discussion to follow. 8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, 14 "From Laurel to Lorton," an address by the Honorable John D. Faunteroy, Associate Judge of the D.C. Juvenile Court. 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, 15 Daytime demonstration for tour groups.
Panel discussion by members of Bonabond, Inc., a group composed mainly of ex-addicts and ex-convicts who help others like themselves. Their concerns are in the areas of drug abuse and employment. Mr. Hiawatha Burris, Director. 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday, 18 The D.C. Department of Corrections Protestant Choir and the Gospel Giants of Lorton in concert. 4:00 p.m.
- Monday, 19 Daytime demonstration for tour groups.
Panel discussion by the Lorton Youth Guidance Council. 8:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, 20 Discussion by members of the Committee for Rehabilitation Efforts Attained Through Education (CREATE), a Lorton self-help group. 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, 22 "What Society Can Do to Help the Ex-Convict." Panel discussion by members of Efforts for Ex-Cons (EFEC). This group is made up of former Lorton inmates who work with ex-convicts by counseling them and by helping them to find meaningful employment. The Reverend Griffin Smith, Director. 8:00 p.m.
- Sunday, 25 Concert by the Lorton D.C. Band. 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, 27 "The Role of the Muslims in the Penal System and at Lorton." Dr. Lonnie Shabazz, Minister of Muhammad's Mosque No. 4 and Director of Muhammad's University No. 4. 8:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, 28 "Drug Abuse and Related Problems." A discussion by members of the Narcotic Awareness Group of Lorton. 8:00 p.m.
- Thursday, 29 Mr. Kenneth L. Hardy, Director of the D. C. Department of Corrections, and Mr. John D. Boone, Superintendent of the Lorton Reformatory are special guests. Discussion will follow their presentations. 8:00 p.m.

LORTON REFORMATORY: BEYOND TIME

Zora B. Martin
Assistant Director
The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum

Last December and in January of this year, Congressional hearings were held on H.R. 11956 which, if passed, would transfer responsibility for the Lorton Reformatory to the federal government. The reformatory was opened in 1915 and is located on 3,500 acres in Fairfax County, Virginia, twenty miles south of Washington. Now under the D.C. Department of Corrections headed by Mr. Kenneth L. Hardy, the reformatory is one of five institutions under the Department: the Lorton Youth Center, D.C. Jail, the Women's Detention Center, and the Minimum Security Facility.

During the hearings there were a number of charges leveled at the reformatory: a lack of security and discipline; harassment of the correctional force; widespread use of narcotics and of a homemade brew called "shoots"; idleness among the men and the lack of an industrial program; homosexuality; missing tableware, especially knives; and, finally, the difficulty in attempting to work with a new breed of inner city inmate who has brought with him "militant ideas." On this last charge, it was felt that if Lorton were federalized, "inmates from the District could be sent to penal institutions throughout the country and the militants would not need to be concentrated in one industrial complex."

For the average citizen whose knowledge of the penal system is limited to television movies on the Late Show, Lorton Reformatory, an institution handling both misdemeanants and felons, is a far cry from what one might expect. One of our neighbors in Anacostia was surprised to learn that residents (a euphemism for inmates or prisoners) were allowed to walk the streets of the complex and was shocked to discover that they no longer wore striped uniforms. But, like they say, "You've come a long way, baby."

A long way, indeed! A long way from the seventeenth century belief that offenders were possessed of evil spirits or witches or the devil and, therefore, required unduly harsh punishment—flogging, the cutting off of an ear or arm, the putting out of an eye, boiling in water, breaking at the wheel, or confinement in an iron coffin. A long way from the 18th century theory that men deliberately committed crimes "to seek pleasure and avoid pain." A long way from the same theory which later added "extenuating circumstances," thus exempting children under seven and those judged to be insane. A long way from the theory that criminals could be identified by features resembling those of primitive or savage man.

The practice of transporting convicts to the American colonies and to Australia was abolished only gradually. It took even longer for the authorities to pay attention to basic human needs such as sanitary conditions and the separation of the sexes. Neither did they give consideration to the types of punishment to be administered for various offenses or the importance of work assignments for prisoners.

Along with the development of state and federal penal systems, a heavy emphasis on prison industries was felt to be the answer to prison employment. Millions of dollars worth of goods made by prisoners and sold on the open market helped offset operational costs of the prisons and kept prisoners busy. After 1935, however, most states took prison-made products off the open market. Today, Lorton products may be sold only to federal government agencies.

Many feel that the greatest strides in penal reform have occurred only during the last half century. They point to the greater emphasis placed on the training of prisoners rather than on the maximum production of goods. They also point to the psychiatric and psychological services available in many institutions today.

The Lorton correctional complex includes a walled area known as the Maximum Security Facility. As of late September of this year the resident population of the entire Lorton complex was 1,600. The capacity is about 1,100. Most of the residents come from Washington and are black. In contrast, the majority of the 289 guards are white.

The director of the department has been charged with permissiveness and with allowing residents too much freedom. To answer this he has stated that he will not run a "black hole of Calcutta." He subscribes to the philosophy that men are incarcerated "as punishment, not for punishment." He quickly points out that during his brief tenure he has been able to implement 20 of the 22 recommendations of the 1966 President's Commission on Crime in the District of Columbia.

At Lorton, educational opportunities for the men have expanded with the extension of Federal City College courses to the complex. A total of 615 students or 38 percent of the population is enrolled in the overall education program, including 40 who are part of the FCC program. In addition, residents are enrolled in vocational education programs which include radio and television repairs, bricklaying, auto mechanic and body repair, food services, electricity, barbering, and printing. The industries program includes some 234 men organized into squads: manufacture of clothing and license tags, print shop, laundry, business office, warehouse, and furniture-making.

During a recent "rap" session held at the Museum by nearly twenty men, some without prison records and others who had been interned at Lorton and at federal penitentiaries around the country, there was high praise for the Lorton academic programs. In marked contrast, many of the men bitterly assailed the industrial program as far from adequate. "Where," they asked, "could a man find employment making sewer tops, stop signs, or license tags after his release from Lorton?" They were equally critical of a system in which an inmate was prevented from earning more than \$13.00 a month during his period of confinement. They suggested that the reason white felons chose to do time at the Atlanta penitentiary in preference to Lorton, aside from the black-white ratio, was because they were well aware of the opportunity to accumulate a financial "stake" by the time of their release. There was a strong feeling that the "militancy" of Lorton residents had done much to accelerate prison reform. They spoke, however, of the need for additional correctional officers

with a greater understanding of those inmates who came from urban areas and loudly complained of the "clans" of families living near the Lorton complex who were employed by the reformatory. One man felt that the antipoverty programs had been the greatest thing that ever happened to ex-convicts insofar as jobs were concerned.

During the past month, we have heard Lorton described variously as "The Hill," "The Short Walk," "the poor man's institution," and a facility for "mass genocide." We learned about "residents" and the "moving population" and other terms used by both inmates and staff. Men described "the hole" and talked about punishment for "insolence" and for "silent insolence." While there was no complete agreement on all of the things they felt were either all right or all wrong with Lorton, they applauded the establishment of the Half Way Houses and the Work Release Program—programs that softened their re-entry into society and helped them to become self-supporting and productive human beings.

In general, those at the "rap" session felt that Lorton had undergone many changes for the better. They mentioned the variety of self-help groups established at the complex and the efforts of these groups to reinforce ties with community institutions.

The Anacostia Neighborhood Museum takes great pleasure in presenting the following resident groups from the Lorton Reformatory who will participate in programs during the length of the exhibit.

THE INNER VOICES

The Inner Voices was established in 1969. The idea for such a group was conceived during the fall of 1968 by Ken Kitch, an associate of the Barbwire Theatre and Arena Stage, who tried to establish a drama workshop at the correctional complex. Although the project itself was a failure, a binding relationship was formed between Mr. Kitch and Mr. Rohzier "Roach" Brown, founder of the Inner Voices. It was this relationship that helped inaugurate and sustain the latter's dedicated commitment to create a new group.

The primary objective of the original workshop was to entertain the residents with formal plays presented in the conventional manner. To most of the inmates this kind of dramatic fare was almost effeminate in its approach, contradicting the supermasculine image most of them held of themselves. From the practical point of view, it offered training and development in an art form few men were likely to pursue following their release from Lorton. Most important, however, it would have offered only another dull form of entertainment that had no bearing on the lives of the men.

"Roach" Brown began with a total rethinking and reevaluation of the drama workshop, which led to a new emphasis and new approach completely geared to the particular life style of the members. During a four-week period just prior to Christmas 1969, Mr. Brown, with the assistance of a number of nonresident professionals, wrote, produced, and directed a play called "X'mas in Time." Presented at the complex, the play was an overwhelming success. This was followed by "A Tribute to Martin Luther King," since acclaimed by

audiences as an extremely moving presentation of great depth and insight. Currently, the group is working on two presentations: "The Black Man's History in Poetry" and "The Black Woman's Plight."

Inner Voices today has become an accomplished and well-known company at the complex as well as outside the gates of Lorton. What was once nothing more than an idea has developed into a reality with unlimited possibilities.

THE GAVEL CLUB

An affiliate of the Toastmasters' International Club, the Gavel Club was the brain child of a counselor and a Lorton resident who felt that there was a need for more communication at the complex. The group which came into existence about two years ago proved to be the forerunner of the present club. After obtaining a charter from the Toastmasters' International Club, the Lorton group began to hold weekly meetings and sought to involve those who wished to speak and those who wished to listen. The group was inactive for a time until Leonard Meyers, a resident, became its president. After five months of regular meetings, Mr. Meyers attended a Toastmasters' Club meeting in Virginia where he delivered a speech and received a standing ovation. Members of the club have held a banquet at the complex, have spoken outside Lorton, and have sponsored a nine-week speech craft course for Lorton men.

The twenty-five members read numerous books, periodicals, and newspapers as they research their speeches. Their topics are those they consider relevant to poor blacks and to Lorton residents. Drugs, youth and crime, economics, black religion—all are presented with the aim of raising issues and provoking thought and discussion.

THE GOSPEL GIANTS

The Gospel Giants, numbering nine voices, has been in existence for approximately eight months. They have been making appearances in the community for only three months, but the group has performed regularly at Lorton during the Fifth Sunday Family Worship Services.

This past summer the Gospel Giants, under the sponsorship of Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., entertained the boys and girls at Camp Goodwill and Camp Pleasant. Both offer a residential camping experience for low income children. In the course of these appearances, the group expanded its repertoire to include rock and roll. The Gospel Giants hope to extend their community involvement through work with other organizations in the community.

YOUTH GUIDANCE COUNCIL

The creed of the Youth Guidance Council reads as follows:

Becoming whole means becoming more aware of exactly where we need to grow. Help us to help ourselves since understanding is the key to self development. Why let us settle for something less than we were meant to be?

Eight goals are being pursued by the Council: (1) To stress academic and vocational training and to get the best out of school and trade programs that training offers; (2) to provide constructive, competitive recreation and interesting entertainment for inmates at the reformatory; (3) to discourage, if not stop, the sexual attacks on the youth of the complex; (4) to coordinate with community rehabilitation programs in an effort to arrange employment when released in society by introducing a follow-up program; (5) to introduce unique proposals for conjugal visiting to counterbalance progressive homosexuality; (6) to aid the administration in understanding the feelings and attitudes of the human beings incarcerated in the institution; (7) to improve living conditions and make them as suitable as possible; and (8) to understand and research the problems and probable causes that create crime and to discover the possible solutions of deterring and preventing repeated performances.

CREATE

The "Committee for Rehabilitation Efforts Attained Through Education" (CREATE) is composed of Lorton residents currently enrolled in the freshman studies curriculum of Federal City College, as well as of those who are former FCC students. Their link to FCC is Mr. Avalon Hawkins, class senator to the FCC Student Government Association and his secretary, Mr. John Davis. Organized in September 1969, the group once numbered twenty-five but now lists seven on its rolls.

The committee's goals are to act as Big Brothers or counselors and provide tutorial services (at present the group is tutoring Lorton residents); to set up summer employment opportunities for youth; and to further their own education. They are asking permission to be bussed to FCC as sophomores because there are no classes beyond the freshman level at Lorton. They would like to collect information that would aid other community programs and also to involve themselves in counseling in such programs.

CREATE meets once a week to rap. Those who have been released come back weekly for orientation-transition into the community, meeting each Thursday. The group is dedicated to the belief that "as a group they can rectify their individual pasts by serving humanity through helping underprivileged youth obtain insight into their present environment and, in so doing, achieve for them and ourselves a useful and productive role within the community."

THE D.C. BAND

Organized in 1962, the D.C. Band practiced on the recreation field at Lorton for nearly two years using instruments that, for the most part, belonged to the Department of Corrections or had been donated by nearby military groups.

By 1964, the band had received excellent reviews and featured a coed choir that included women then interned at Occoquan. The band has performed at the Watergate as well as at a number of conferences.

Currently, there are fourteen members, including four who have played professionally. All music is arranged by Mr. Charles Brown, one of the original members of the group, and the composer of the hit tune, "Staggerlee."

ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN THE LORTON EXHIBIT

The band practices five evenings a week. Membership is open to any Lorton resident who shows talent. There is a critical need for additional instruments—saxophones, trombones, drums, guitars, bass fiddles, and trumpets—to enable this self-help group to expand.

It is to their credit that a sizable number of former Lorton men have gone on to become professional singers and musicians. Mr. Adolphus Riley is the director.

NARCOTICS AWARENESS GROUP

The Narcotics Awareness Group is one of the oldest self-help groups at the Lorton complex. Originally called the Narcotics Anonymous Group, it was organized in 1958 by residents who sought a better understanding of drugs and of drug addiction. Its membership numbers 150 individuals.

Chaired by Mr. Adolphus "Snooks" Riley, the group conducts programs at the complex as well as in area schools. They currently are forming an outside chapter open to any persons interested in helping solve the problem of drug abuse. They believe they can be especially effective in focusing on youth in an effort to communicate with them and their families.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS PROTESTANT CHOIR

Membership in the Department of Corrections Protestant Choir is open to men of all faiths. The present name is the result of a period some time ago when there were two choirs, one Protestant and one Catholic. With the departure of the Catholic chaplain, that choir was disbanded and those who wished to continue simply joined the Protestant choir.

The group boasts twenty-three voices and a repertoire that includes cantatas, hymns, and gospel. The director, Mr. Norman H. Haley, is a professional musician and has been associated with the choir on a volunteer basis for more than twenty years. Until 1966, the group was permitted to perform only within the institution. Since that time, however, the choir has been seen on local television and has made more than ninety-five appearances, including one at the National Episcopal Cathedral, in the Washington area. They continue to be much in demand at local church worship services.

The choir is under the sponsorship of the Chaplain's Office of the complex. A number of churches make regular contributions of records and music, but the choir is eager to locate individuals or groups willing to donate sound equipment that can be used during their appearances outside the complex. They are also very much in need of robes to replace those donated to them many years ago.

As with former D.C. Band members, many who formerly sang with the choir are now affiliated with community choral groups.

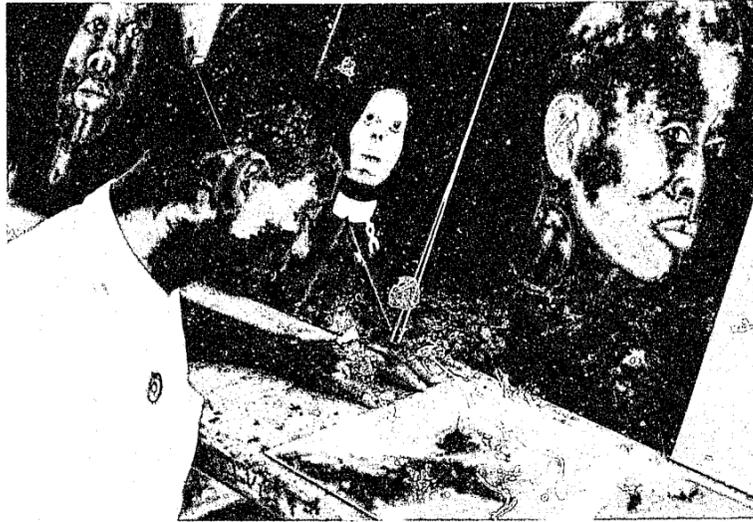


The Inner Voices

The Gospel Giants



The D. C. Band

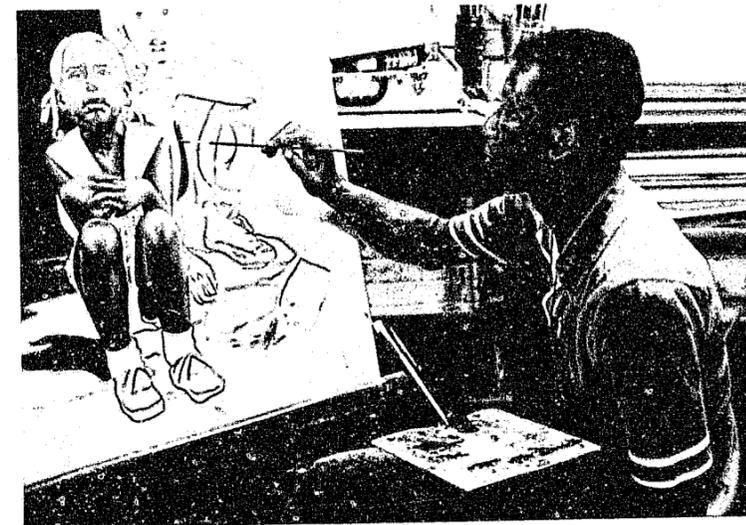


Benjamin X. Dickens



Thomas Ruffin

Willie Jones



George E. Stewart



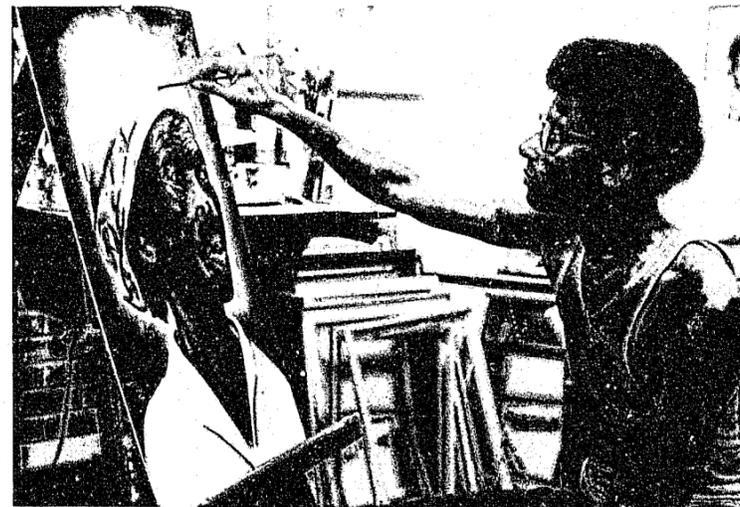
James Reynolds

Oscar Tyler





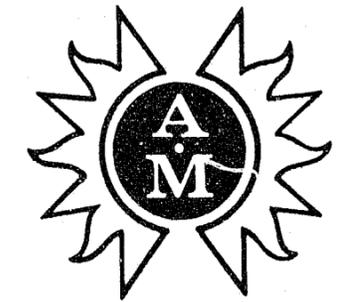
Alex Williams



Clive C. Gilmore



Robert X. Gray



THE STAFF

John R. Kinard
Zora B. Martin
Larry Erskine Thomas
James E. Mayo
John Bradshaw
James Campbell
Fletcher A. Smith
Balcha Fellows
Michael Fischer
Charles Lyles
Carolyn Margolis
Milton Jones
Georgia Mills Jessup
Reynolds Parziale
Barbara Bryant
Esther Nighbert
Audrey Archer
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Assistant Director
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Director of Public Affairs
Exhibits Specialist
Coordinator, Mobile Division
Special Projects Officer
Photographer
Museum Technician
Research Assistant
Museum Aid, Exhibits
Artist in Residence
Instructor, Pottery
Docent
Secretary
Secretary
Custodian-Engineer

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