To many, insane asylums are a relic of a bygone era. State governments took steps between 1950 and 1990 to minimize the involuntary confinement of people in mental hospitals, and many mental health facilities closed down. Yet, as this book reveals, the asylum did not die during deinstitutionalization. Instead, it returned in the modern prison industrial complex as the government shifted to a more punitive, institutional approach to social deviance, mental illness, and people with disabilities. Focusing on Pennsylvania, the state that ran one of the largest mental health systems in the country, the author tracks how the lack of community-based services, a fear-based politics around mental illness, and the economics of institutions meant that closing mental hospitals fed a cycle of incarceration that became an epidemic. This groundbreaking book recasts the political narrative of the late twentieth century, as the book charts how the history of asylums and prisons were inextricably intertwined. It argues that the politics of mass incarceration shaped the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric hospitals and social welfare policy, and vice versa. The book offers critical insight into how the prison took the place of the asylum and shaped the rise of the prison industrial complex and creating new forms of social marginality.
ethnography of the PCC is uniquely informed by her insider-outsider status. Prior to his acquittal, Biondi’s husband was incarcerated in a PCC-dominated prison for several years. During the period of Biondi’s intense and intimate visits with her husband and her extensive fieldwork in prisons and on the streets of São Paulo, the PCC effectively controlled more than 90 percent of São Paulo’s 147 prison facilities. Available for the first time in English, Biondi’s riveting portrait of the PCC illuminates how the organization operates inside and outside of prison, creatively elaborating on a decentered, non-hierarchical, and far-reaching command system. This system challenges both the police forces against which the PCC has declared war and the methods and analytic concepts traditionally employed by social scientists concerned with organized crime, incarceration, and policing. Biondi posits that the PCC embodies a “politics of transcendence,” a group identity that is braided together with, but also autonomous from, its decentralized parts. Biondi also situates the PCC in relation to redemocratization and rampant socioeconomic inequality in Brazil, as well as to counter-state movements, crime, and punishment in the Americas.

Jack London
Cecelia Tichi

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Item type: book

Jack London (1876–1916) found fame with his wolf-dog tales and sagas of the frozen North, but this text challenges the long-standing view of London as merely a mass-market producer of potboilers. A onetime child laborer, London led a life of poverty in the Gilded Age before rising to worldwide acclaim for stories, novels, and essays designed to hasten the social, economic, and political advance of America. In this major reinterpretation of London's career, the book examines how the beloved writer leveraged his written words as a force for the future. Tracing the arc of London's work from the late 1800s through the 1910s, the text profiles the writer's allies and adversaries in the cities, on the factory floor, inside prison walls, and in the farmlands. Thoroughly exploring London's importance as an artist and as a political and public figure, the book brings to life a man who merits recognition as one of America's foremost public intellectuals.
This book grapples with the history of U.S. prison camps that have confined people outside the boundaries of legal and civil rights. Removed from the social and political communities that would guarantee fundamental legal protections, these detainees are effectively rightless, stripped of the right even to have rights. Rightless people thus expose an essential paradox: while the United States purports to champion inalienable rights at home and internationally, it has built its global power in part by creating a regime of imprisonment that places certain populations perceived as threats beyond rights. The United States' status as the guardian of rights coincides with, indeed depends on, its creation of rightlessness. Yet rightless people are not silent. Drawing from an expansive testimonial archive of legal proceedings, truth commission records, poetry, and experimental video, this book shows how rightless people use their imprisonment to protest U.S. state violence. It examines demands for redress by Japanese Americans interned during World War II, testimonies of HIV-positive Haitian refugees detained at Guantánamo in the early 1990s, and appeals by Guantánamo's enemy combatants from the War on Terror. In doing so, Rightlessness reveals a powerful ongoing contest over the nature and meaning of the law, over civil liberties and global human rights, and over the power of the state in people's lives.
labor exploitation, practices of refusal and resistance, and visions of freedom and abolition, this book makes the intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and class central to the history of convict labor and Jim Crow modernity. No Mercy Here incorporates speculative historical narrative to highlight questions about black women’s interior lives and draws upon a wide array of archival documents to uncover black women’s experiences in local and state carceral institutions including mixed gender and all-women’s convict lease camps, chain gangs, and state prison farms. This study encompasses an analysis of a broad range of carceral technologies including criminalizing discourses, surveillance, arrest and prosecution, visual culture, reform legislation, and gendered racial terror. No Mercy Here examines black women’s organizational protest against convict leasing and examines the blues as a black feminist expressive culture within a black radical tradition, prefiguring the insights of critical race theory and asserting a black feminist abolition democracy through vivid and elaborate theorizations of racial, gendered, sexual, and economic justice and a world beyond prisons.

**Chained in Silence**

Talitha L. LeFlouria

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In 1868, the state of Georgia began to make its rapidly growing population of prisoners available for hire. The resulting convict leasing system ensnared not only men but also African-American women, who were forced to labor in camps and factories to make profits for private investors. This book draws from a rich array of primary sources to piece together the stories of these women, recounting what they endured in Georgia's prison system and what their labor accomplished.

**Carolina Israeliite**

Kimberly Hartnett

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Item type: book

This biography of Jewish American writer and humorist Harry Golden (1903–1981) illuminates a remarkable life intertwined with the rise of the civil rights movement, Jewish popular culture, and the sometimes precarious position of Jews in the South and across America during the 1950s. After recounting Golden’s childhood on New York’s Lower East
Side, the text points to his stint in prison as a young man, after a widely publicized conviction for investment fraud during the Great Depression, as the root of his empathy for the underdog in any story. During World War II, the cigar-smoking, bourbon-loving raconteur landed in Charlotte, North Carolina, and founded the Carolina Israelite newspaper, which was published into the 1960s. Golden’s writings on race relations and equal rights attracted a huge popular readership. Golden used his celebrity to editorialize for civil rights as the momentous story unfolded. He charmed his way into friendships and lively correspondence with Carl Sandburg, Adlai Stevenson, Robert Kennedy, and Billy Graham, among other notable Americans, and he appeared on the Tonight Show as well as other national television programs.

Hotel Life
Caroline Levander and Matthew Guterl
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: January 2016
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What is a hotel? As this book shows, even though hotels are everywhere around us, we rarely consider their essential role in our modern existence and how they help frame our sense of who and what we are. They are, in fact, as centrally important as other powerful places like prisons, hospitals, or universities. Guiding readers through the story of hotels as places of troublesome possibility, as mazelike physical buildings, as inspirational touchstones for art and literature, and as unsettling, even disturbing, backdrops for the drama of everyday life, this text examines the hotel from a unique perspective.

Custodialism Reborn
Anne E. Parsons
in From Asylum to Prison: Deinstitutionalization and the Rise of Mass Incarceration after 1945
Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2019
Publisher: University of North Carolina Press
DOI: 10.5149/northcarolina/9781469640631.003.0005
Item type: chapter

By the end of the 1960s, anti-institutionalism had extended beyond mental health and bled into prison reform. This chapter tracks the rise and fall of efforts to find alternatives to prisons. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, changes in psychiatry, politics, and the law led to a deinstitutionalization in both mental health and corrections policy.
making. Not only did politicians and advocates look for alternatives to mental hospitals, they also sought alternatives to prisons. They expanded probation, parole, and furlough and created community corrections initiatives such as halfway houses and work-release programs. The number of people in prisons and jails fell, even during a time of increased policing. These reforms came under attack, however, as politicians depicted people in prison as dangerous criminals and ushered in harsh sentencing reforms. A law and order politics that relied on racial discrimination halted efforts to deinstitutionalize prisons. By the mid-1970s, after more than a decade of decline, new prison construction began and the number of imprisoned people nationwide rose. These changes had a devastating effect on individuals with mental health conditions. Many of them were caught in the web of this new era of mass incarceration.

Cruel Choices
Anne E. Parsons

in From Asylum to Prison: Deinstitutionalization and the Rise of Mass Incarceration after 1945

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Item type: chapter

This chapter explores how the 1980s hastened the shrinking of state mental health services and the rise of more punitive practices. President Ronald Reagan supported the continued downsizing of mental hospitals at both the state and federal levels. Homelessness and poverty became more immediate social concerns, since many states lacked adequate community-based mental health services. In Pennsylvania, Republican governor Dick Thornburgh closed mental hospitals and cut social welfare programs, strengthening neoliberalism in the state’s government. At the same time, he supported law and order policies and sentencing reforms, which targeted urban African American communities. The new prison construction siphoned money away from social welfare services. Many states even turned their abandoned mental institutions into prisons, and the chapter studies Farview State Hospital and the Retreat State Hospital as examples. In response, advocates at organizations such as the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania fought for the right to the least restrictive environment. They promoted adequate medical, mental health, and social services outside of institutions and worked in coalition with others to ethically close the Philadelphia State Hospital. This effort offered a model for alleviating the problems of deinstitutionalization.
In That Prison, Things Unbelievable and Monstrous
Cecelia Tichi

in Jack London: A Writer's Fight for a Better America

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DOI: 10.5149/northcarolina/9781469622668.003.0007

This chapter focuses on Jack London's campaign for prison reform which he articulated in the 1915 novel The Star Rover (published as The Jacket in England). After becoming aware of provocative issues that swirled about the criminal justice system in the 1910s, London decided to write a prison novel. This was a novel that would challenge and change public assumptions about crime and imprisonment. The Star Rover/The Jacket was based on the life story of Edward Morrell, a former San Joaquin Valley gang member and ex-convict who frequently lectured on the need for prison reform. The novel raised the stakes of reform by exposing the horrors of the straitjacket and other death-dealing torments inflicted by public officials on prisoners. The Star Rover/The Jacket's revelations about the prisons, the use of the straitjacket, and torture were made known to the public.

Lethal State
Seth Kotch

Published in print: 2019 Published Online: January 2020
DOI: 10.5149/northcarolina/9781469649870.001.0001

For years, American states have tinkered with the machinery of death, seeking to align capital punishment with evolving social standards and public will. Against this backdrop, North Carolina had long stood out as a prolific executioner with harsh mandatory sentencing statutes. But as the state sought to remake its image as modern and business-progressive in the early twentieth century, the question of execution preoccupied lawmakers, reformers, and state boosters alike. In this book, Seth Kotch recounts the history of the death penalty, including lynching, in North Carolina from its colonial origins to the present. He tracks the attempts to reform and sanitize the administration of death in a state as dedicated to its image as it was to rigid racial hierarchies. Through this lens, Lethal State helps explain not only Americans' deep and growing uncertainty about the death penalty but also their commitment to it. Kotch argues that Jim Crow justice continued to reign in the guise of a modernizing, orderly state and offers essential insight into the relationship between
race, violence, and power in North Carolina. The history of capital punishment in North Carolina, as in other states wrestling with similar issues, emerges as one of state-building through lethal punishment.

The Last Battleground
Philip Gerard

To understand the long march of events in North Carolina from secession to surrender is to understand the entire Civil War—a personal war waged by Confederates and Unionists, free blacks and the enslaved, farm women and plantation belles, Cherokees and mountaineers, conscripts and volunteers, gentleman officers and poor privates. In the state’s complex loyalties, its sprawling and diverse geography, and its dual role as a home front and a battlefield, North Carolina embodies the essence of the whole epic struggle in all its terrible glory. Philip Gerard presents this dramatic convergence of events through the stories of the individuals who endured them—reporting the war as if it were happening in the present rather than with settled hindsight—to capture the dreadful suspense of lives caught up in a conflict whose ending had not yet been written. As Gerard reveals, whatever the grand political causes for war, whatever great battles decided its outcome, and however abstract it might seem to readers a century and a half later, the war was always personal.

Introduction
Anne E. Parsons

The introduction reviews the relevant histories of prisons, mental health policy, and the social welfare state. It highlights how recent scholarship has not connected the history of mental hospitals to the broader history of imprisonment. From Asylum to Prison frames historic mental hospitals as part of a broader carceral state and charts how the rise of mass incarceration shaped the closure of mental hospitals. Law and order politics served to criminalize mental health conditions.
and substance abuse. New prison construction in the 1980s took money away from mental health services and prisons absorbed many functions of the former mental health system. Finally, this history of deinstitutionalization offers lesson for people working to reduce mass incarceration in the twenty-first century United States. The introduction closes with a discussion of people-centered language and key terms such as institutions, carceral state, and mental illness.

Epilogue
Anne E. Parsons

in From Asylum to Prison: Deinstitutionalization and the Rise of Mass Incarceration after 1945
Published in print: 2018 Published Online: May 2019
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Item type: chapter

The epilogue reflects on the contemporary crisis of mass incarceration in the United States, which has particularly affected people with mental health conditions and substance abuse disorders. It argues that today’s crisis is deeply rooted in the past history of mental health policy and offers a few main lessons for people working to make change. First, restrictive environments such as prisons and mental hospitals are inappropriate places to hold people on a mass scale. Second, it cautions people who are working to decarcerate prisons today. The history of deinstitutionalization proved that that cost-cutting cannot be the main reason for change, as it led to inadequate resources. People invested in prison reform should also be cautious that decarceration does not lead to new forms of restrictive environments, which happened during deinstitutionalization.

We Took the Weight Incarcerated Writers and Artists in the Black Arts Movement
Lee Bernstein

in America Is the Prison: Arts and Politics in Prison in the 1970s
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DOI: 10.5149/9780807898321_bernstein.8
Item type: chapter

This chapter focuses on the time when prison rehabilitative efforts seemed too narrow to the point where trying to scare people straight was the most visible prison program in the country. At the same time,
alternative visions of prison life found numerous venues for expression and distribution. The work of prison writers appeared in small distribution publications such as the Fortune Society's Fortune News and Joseph Bruchac's Greenfield Review. Some found their work picked up by specialty houses such as Dudley Randall's Broadside Press, major university presses, and even some trade publishers. Perhaps the greatest incubators and benefactors of prison culture during the 1970s, however, were the movements for cultural nationalism among African Americans and Latinos.

Introduction
Dan Berger

in Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era
Published in print: 2015 Published Online: May 2015
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DOI: 10.5149/northcarolina/9781469618241.003.0001
Item type: chapter

This introductory chapter shows how prisoners associated prison life with the pursuit of social justice. It all started with a strike at the Folsom State Prison where prisoners demanded improved prison conditions, individual liberties, political reforms, and other freedoms. They were partly successful so other prisoners followed suit. The focus in the following chapters is how the struggle for black freedom used prison life to understand what freedom meant while in confinement. An interesting phenomena is how such prison activity could be connected and associated with other kinds of black activism. Black activists and artists have used the prison as a metaphor for confrontations against the American state. Hence, black prison organizing went beyond the prison walls onto the streets. Prison organizing revolved around the theme of freedom, and from the viewpoint of mass incarceration, freedom is a pastime, an avocation, that is chosen.

Reading Is My Window
Megan Sweeney

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Drawing on extensive interviews with ninety-four women prisoners, this book examines how incarcerated women use available reading materials to come to terms with their pasts, negotiate their present experiences, and reach toward different futures. Foregrounding the voices of African
American women, the book analyzes how prisoners read three popular genres: narratives of victimization, urban crime fiction, and self-help books. It outlines the history of reading and education in U.S. prisons, highlighting how the increasing dehumanization of prisoners has resulted in diminished prison libraries and restricted opportunities for reading. Although penal officials have sometimes endorsed reading as a means to control prisoners, the book illuminates the resourceful ways in which prisoners educate and empower themselves through reading. Given the scarcity of counseling and education in prisons, women use books to make meaning from their experiences, to gain guidance and support, to experiment with new ways of being, and to maintain connections with the world.

The Furnace of Affliction
Jennifer Graber

Published in print: 2011 Published Online: July 2014

Focusing on the intersection of Christianity and politics in the American penitentiary system, this book explores evangelical Protestants' efforts to make religion central to emerging practices and philosophies of prison discipline from the 1790s through the 1850s. Initially, state and prison officials welcomed Protestant reformers' and ministers' recommendations, particularly their ideas about inmate suffering and redemption. Over time, however, officials proved less receptive to the reformers' activities, and inmates also opposed them. Ensuing debates between reformers, officials, and inmates revealed deep disagreements over religion's place in prisons and in the wider public sphere as the separation of church and state took hold and the nation's religious environment became more diverse and competitive. Examining the innovative New York prison system, the author shows how Protestant reformers failed to realize their dreams of large-scale inmate conversion or of prisons that reflected their values. To keep a foothold in prisons, reformers were forced to relinquish their Protestant terminology and practices and instead to adopt secular ideas about American morals, virtues, and citizenship. The author argues that, by revising their original understanding of prisoner suffering and redemption, reformers learned to see inmates' afflictions not as a necessary prelude to a sinner's experience of grace but as the required punishment for breaking the new nation's laws.
This chapter describes how Sing Sing Prison's agent assaulted the resident chaplain and threw him out of the prison. The institution had no minister until a year later when a new head administrator took over. The new agent, Robert Wiltse, was also dubious about prison chaplains. In a report presented to the state legislature in 1834, Wiltse questioned the claims of inmate reformation boasted by prison ministers. “How much risk do they run of being deceived by hypocritical protestations?” he asked. Wiltse assured the legislature that “the hope once entertained of producing a general and radical reformation of offenders through a penitentiary system, is abandoned by the most intelligent philanthropists, who now think its chief benefit is the prevention of crime.” In order to suppress lawbreaking, Wiltse argued, “criminals must be made to submit through corporal punishment.”