

# Missouri State Archives

## Finding Aid 213.2

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### MISSOURI STATE PENITENTIARY

#### Inmate Files

*Abstract:* Inmate files, Women, (1890s-1960s)

*Extent:* 6.6 cubic feet (20 Hollinger boxes)

*Physical Description:* Paper records, photographs.

*Location:* Missouri State Archives

### ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

*Alternative Formats:* None

*Access Restrictions:* Medical information is restricted for 50 years after the death of the inmate.

*Publication Restrictions:* Copyright is in the public domain.

*Preferred Citation:* [Item description], [box] [folder]; Inmate files; *Missouri State Penitentiary*, Record Group 213; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

*Acquisition Information:* Agency transfer. Accession 2016-0073.

*Processing Information:* Processing completed by MKS 2/6/2018.

### HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The Missouri State Penitentiary at Jefferson City was the first prison built west of the Mississippi River. In 1831 Governor John Miller told lawmakers that Missouri needed a prison and that it should be built in Jefferson City. In the fall of 1832, the first legislative proposals for a penitentiary were submitted and a bill was signed into law in January 1833. The bill provided for an appropriation of \$25,000 for a facility that would house 160 convicts with the stipulation that it be completed before October 1834.

When the penitentiary first opened there was no provision made for housing female inmates. Several women were sentenced to the Missouri State Penitentiary and pardoned by the governor before they arrived. On May 28, 1842 Ann Amelia Eady (also written Ann Aurelia Eddy) was the first woman to arrive at the penitentiary. She was pardoned by the governor three days later.

Martha Casto was the first woman to serve a significant portion of her sentence at the penitentiary. Convicted of murdering her husband with an axe, Martha Casto was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. She arrived on August 10, 1843. Martha Casto and the women who arrived after her were hired out as domestic servants to families near the penitentiary. When within the walls of the penitentiary, they were housed in the same buildings as the male prisoners.

By 1861, enough women were being sent to the Missouri State Penitentiary that the top floor of a penitentiary building was turned into the women's division. Once judges realized there was a place to house women in the penitentiary, they began sentencing more female criminals to time at the penitentiary. Women began working inside the walls of the prison during the 1870s, usually in sewing factories. Just as with the penitentiary as a whole, overcrowding was a constant issue in the women's division. A separate women's division building was finished in 1875.

Inmate #21669 Kate Richards O'Hare, a federal inmate convicted in 1919 of breaking the Sedition Act for her anti-war activism, was instrumental in improving the living conditions of female inmates. Her agitation forced the prison administration to improve the women's division kitchen and sanitary facilities.

In 1926 the women were moved to Prison Farm No. 1, located just east of the penitentiary. They were housed in a large farm-house and worked growing and canning fruit and vegetables.

Talk of transferring the inmates of the State Industrial Home for Negro Girls in Tipton to the Industrial Training School for Girls in Chillicothe and replacing them with the female inmates began as early as the 1940s. The General Assembly, and public opinion, decided it would be too expensive at the time, especially since segregated facilities would need to be built at Chillicothe.

After the Tipton Industrial School for Girls closed in 1956, the buildings were converted to an adult facility for women. The female inmates moved in 1960 and were integrated within a few months of arrival.

## ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

### Bibliography

O'Hare, Kate Richards. In Prison. 1923.

Nesheim, William Charles. A History of the Missouri State Penitentiary 1833-1875. 1971.

Rasmussen, Jamie Pamela. The Missouri State Penitentiary: 170 Years Inside the Walls. 2012.

Schreiber, Mark S. Somewhere in Time: A 170 Year History of Missouri Corrections. 2004.

### Related Material

RG213.001 Missouri State Penitentiary  
RG000.114 Department of Corrections State Documents  
Pardons, Record Group 5.20  
Commutations of Sentence  
Record of Commutations of Sentence  
Record of Conditional Commutations  
Revocation of Commutations of Sentence  
Revocation of Conditional Commutations

## SERIES

The records are broken down into the following series:

Inmate Files, Women

## Inmate Files, Women, 1890s-1960s

*Extent:* 6.6 cubic feet (20 Hollinger boxes)

*Arrangement:* Alphabetical

### Scope and Content

These inmate files are for female inmates, and may contain mug shots, classification reports, medical reports, visitor logs, arrest records, and correspondence.

Medical information is closed until 50 years after inmate death. All folders are restricted unless explicitly marked as open, and will need to be redacted before viewing.

### Container List

Box	Contents
1	A
2	Ba – Be
3	Be – Br
4	Br – Ca
5	Ca – Co
6	Co – D
7	Da – Di
8	Do – Ed
9	Ed – El
10	Em – Fa
11	Fe – Fr
12	G – Ga
13	Ga – Gr
14	Gr – Ha
15	Ha
16	Ha – He
17	He – Ho
18	Ho – Hu
19	Hu – Ke
20	Ke – Z