
ORIGIN & FUNCTIONS

The Department of Juvenile Justice works with troubled youth to treat and control juvenile delinquency. In the colonial period, children who turned to crime, begging, or vagrancy were jailed with hardened criminals. By the end of the eighteenth century, they could be committed to an almshouse. County courts and local trustees of the poor also bound out such children to learn a trade so that local government would not have to support them. As Maryland built its first prison in 1811, the idea came into vogue that the State ultimately could save money by stopping children from embarking on a life of crime. Children would be separated from adults in places of detention and given a home, education, and training for a trade.

Private and Quasi-Public Reformatories. In 1830, the legislature passed "An Act to establish a House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents" (Chapter 64, Acts of 1830). A private corporation supported by member subscriptions, the House of Refuge nevertheless had ties to State and local government. Of its twenty-four managers, eight were appointed by the Governor and Council, eight by the membership, and eight by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore. Managers were to report annually to the legislature, and the institution's buildings and grounds would be tax-free. The House of Refuge was to admit minors who were arrested for begging in the streets of Baltimore; arrested, awaiting trial, or convicted of any criminal charge in the courts of Baltimore City or Baltimore County; found refractory by almshouse trustees; or convicted by a county court of an offense punishable by imprisonment in the Penitentiary. Instead of granting an outright appropriation to the fledgling institution, the General Assembly assigned up to \$5,000 annually for five years from the profits of the Maryland Penitentiary to support the House of Refuge. Those five years were unprofitable for the Penitentiary and consequently for the House of Refuge as well. Financial difficulties hampered construction and, by 1841, the managers were ready to return contributions (Chapter 3, Acts of 1841). In 1849, while the legislature appropriated no State funds to hasten construction, it did amend the 1830 law. Upon complaint of a parent or guardian, the House of Refuge now was authorized to admit incorrigible minors prior to arrest (Chapter 374, Acts of 1849). That same year the Penitentiary Warden in his annual report alluded to

... mere youths, who are here for their first offences, and whose offences it is but charitable to conclude, were the results more of thoughtlessness or of circumstances than of any confirmed principle of crime. Of this description we have three prisoners between the ages of 13 and 15, and 18 between the ages of 15 and 18, a majority of whom are in for trivial offences,—and may I not ask, would not fine or the alternative of confinement in a house of correction, as is the case in some of our sister states, be a more appropriate way of disposing of the perpetrators of such offences, than imprisonment in the Penitentiary?

In recommending State aid, a select committee of the House of Delegates noted in 1852 that the House of Refuge had been contemplated for thirty-eight years, with \$20,000 contributed thus far by the City of Baltimore, \$22,000 from private subscriptions, and not one penny from the State. By December 1855, the House of Refuge opened. A year later, another select committee visited and found it "a grand and noble institution," and the General Assembly appropriated \$10,000 annually to its support for five years (Chapter 288, Acts of 1856). By 1867, according to the annual report, the House of Refuge had housed 1,638 children: 1,394 boys and 244 girls.

Midcentury, private institutions, including orphanages and reformatories, proliferated, especially in Baltimore City. The Home of the Friendless was incorporated in 1854, followed by the Children's Aid Society in 1862, the House of the Good Shepherd in 1864, and St. Joseph's House of Industry and St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys in 1865. With State appointees on their governing boards and fairly regular government funding, these institutions became quasi-public in nature and received children committed by courts, magistrates, justices of the peace, parents, or guardians.

After the Civil War, reformatories for youth were established as private institutions segregated by race and gender. Four ultimately became public reformatories: the House of Refuge; the House of Reformation; the Maryland Industrial School for Girls; and the Industrial Home for Colored Girls. After the House of Refuge came the Maryland Industrial School for Girls, incorporated in 1866 for the "care, reformation and instruction of such girls as are not admitted into either the House of Refuge, the Home of the Friendless, or the Children's Aid Society, but who need the care of some public reformatory institution" (Chapter 156, Acts of 1866). Initially, directors of the School were chosen from the membership or appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore; the School received no State aid but its property was tax-exempt. By 1870, however, the Governor appointed ten of thirty directors (Chapter 391, Acts of 1870). The School was renamed the Female House of Refuge in 1880 (Chapter 173, Acts of 1880).

The House of Reformation and Instruction for Colored Children was incorporated in 1870 (Chapter 392, Acts of 1870), perhaps in response to the "Memorial of the Grand Jury of Baltimore City Praying that a Place of Punishment may be Provided for Minor Colored Children" (House Documents, X, February 5, 1867). The Governor appointed two of sixteen managers; buildings and grounds were tax-free; a report to the General Assembly was required; and, contingent on \$30,000 from private subscriptions, an appropriation of \$5,000