

Fusion Mayor Reformed DOC&C

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vents proper assistance to those incapable of self-support and prohibits the best results from being obtained from corrective discipline."

With such mayoral encouragement, the state Legislature passed the agency division bill. In order for it to become law, city "acceptance" had to be communicated officially to Gov. Levi Morton, a prerequisite to the latter signing it into law. Since Mayor Strong had advocated, encouraged and supported the legislation, his formal approval was a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, on May 7, 1895, he conducted a hearing, as legally required, on whether the city wanted the legislation signed into law. After leading social reformers spoke in favor of approving the bill and no one spoke in opposition, the mayor declared: "I have given this bill a great deal of consideration and I am entirely in accord with its provisions. I shall, therefore, take great pleasure in approving the bill."

When on Dec. 21, 1895, in



John William Goff
City Recorder



Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst
Crime Prevention Society leader

compliance with the new law's provisions, the mayor named the new commissioners of the separated agencies, he remarked that the management history of the combined agency had not been satisfactory but that he expected the new leadership of the new agencies would bring major improvement.

A few weeks later in his annual message, January 1896, he noted:

"On the first of this month the provisions of the statute passed at the last session of the Legislature went into effect, dividing the then existing Department of Charities and Correction into two separate departments, to be known as the Department of Public Charities and the Department of Correction. Provision was made for three Commissioners of Public Charities and for one Commissioner of Correction. These appointments have already been made.

"I am quite sure that our citizens generally do not appreciate the magnitude of the present departments referred to, or the work imposed upon the former Department of Charities and Correction. The management of the City Prisons, the care of the insane and paupers, and the care of the Penitentiary, together with the hospitals, covers already about 17,000 people, when originally not a quarter of that number was in contemplation.

"The condition of our City Prisons, to speak

broadly, is execrable, and the accommodations in the Almshouse and Workhouse insufficient, inadequate and incomprehensible, while overcrowding is a startling characteristic of the penitentiary.

"The division of Charities and Correction and the increased appropriations for these departments is proper and necessary, and will, I believe, obviate many of the criticisms heretofore properly posed."

Splitting the Charities/Correction Department into two distinct agencies was among the reforms endorsed by a group known as the Committee of Seventy formed in Sept. 6, 1894, by many of the city's leading citizens -- Democrats, United Laborites, and independents as well as Republicans -- meeting in Cooper Union.

Their choice of name was deliberately designed to evoke memories of an identically named committee that had defeated "Boss" William M. Tweed's Tammany Hall machine in 1871.

As in the earlier era, disclosures of institutionalized corruption in city government spurred the various anti-Tammany forces to put aside differences, this

time to unite in battle against another machine in the Tweed mold headed by a successor "Boss" -- Richard Croker, a former Fourth Ave. Tunnel youth gang leader.

On Sunday, March 13, 1892, the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, head of the Society for Prevention of Crime, preached a sermon at his Madison Square Presbyterian Church charging City Hall, Tammany and the Police with protecting criminal elements. He backed up his accusatory rhetoric with sworn affidavits from private detectives he had hired and accompanied as they investigated the links between vice houses, station-houses and political club-houses.

The sermon and affidavits fired public indignation prompting a probe in the spring of 1894 by a state legislative committee. The vigorous and uncompromising efforts of its chief counsel, Democrat attorney John Goff, uncovered systemic police and political corruption raking in more than \$7 million

annually and involving payoffs for promotions up the ranks. Goff eventually became Strong's running mate.

Among Mayor Strong's most important appointments was naming Theodore Roosevelt as Police Commissioner. Former Assemblyman Roosevelt, who served as U.S. Civil Service commissioner in President Harrison's administration, promoted the merit system approach within the Police Department as Commissioner.



Richard Croker
Tammany Hall Leader

Acknowledgments & Appreciations

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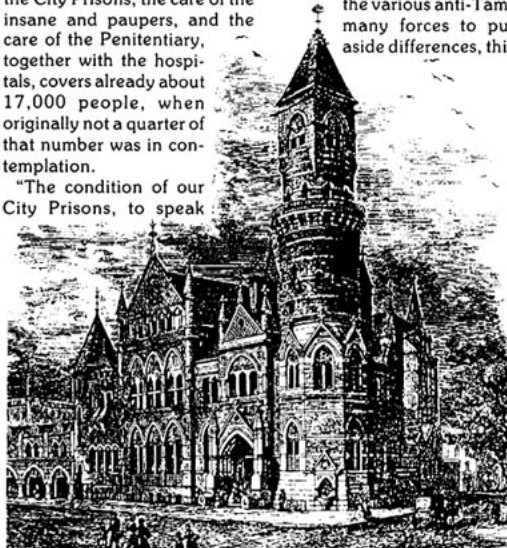
Most drawings depicting Tombs/Jefferson Market Prison scenes came from Police Museum curator John R. Podracky. Another source: *Darkness and Daylight* by Hartford (Conn.) Publishing Co. in 1897.

The Archives provided access to relevant *City Record* volumes and to pictorial histories such as *Notable New Yorkers of 1896-1899*, by Moses King, 1899, N.Y.; *The Brown Book: A Biographical Record of Public Officials of the City of New York for 1898-99*, Martin B. Brown Co., N.Y., 1899, and the *Kings Handbook of New York*, circa 1899, also by Moses King, excellent sources for period photos of individuals and institutions. Additionally the Archives provided access to such authoritative volumes as the *History of the State of New York*, by Columbia University Press, 1934 N.Y., and *Four Famous New Yorkers: The Political Careers of Cleveland, Platt, Hill and Roosevelt*, by Henry Holt & Co., 1923, N.Y.

The Academy made available old training manuals that contained useful information. Other books used by the editor in gathering historical details included *New York by Gaslight*, an 1882 guide by James D. McCabe Jr., published by Greenwich House, N.Y.; *History of Tammany Hall* by Gustavus Myers, by Dover Publications, 1901, N.Y.; *The Good Old Days -- They Were Terrible* by Otto L. Betterman, 1974, Random House; *The WPA Guide to New York (of the 1930s)*, 1939, Pantheon Books, N.Y.; *The Encyclopedia of American Crime*, by Facts on File Inc., 1982, N.Y.

Queensborough Library filmed copies of 1895 *New York Times* issues provided relevant accounts concerning Chapter 912.

-- Thomas McCarthy, Editor



Jefferson Market Prison -- a Tombs annex.

Police Courts, Jails Often Joined

Jefferson Market Prison, at 6th and Greenwich Avenues and 10th St., was built in 1868. It featured a tall tower on northeast corner with lighted clock dial. The police court, jail and market shared the same building. The jail served as an annex of Tombs.

The judges at the Jefferson Market Police Court, like those at the Tombs, Essex Market, Yorkville and Morrisania police court/jails were named by the mayor but, unlike the Criminal Court judges today, they did not have to be attorneys. Terms ran for 10 years at \$8,000 per annum.

Most charges involved drunkenness, disorderliness, assaultive conduct, and petty larceny.

Most of the sentences consisted of modest fines and/or short imprisonments. Those inmates charged with serious crimes were held for higher courts.

NYC Department of Correction



Robert A. Van Wyck
First Greater NY Mayor

1st Commissioners: R. J. Wright, F. J. Lantry

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His appointment as DOC's first commissioner was fully expected because he was already familiar with its operation.

While Wright was DOC's first commissioner, his successor -- Francis J. Lantry -- was its first commissioner when New York changed from a one-county city to a multi-county city in 1898.

With Fusion forces divided in 1897, Tammany's candidate, City Court Judge Robert A. Van Wyck, won election as the first Mayor of Greater New York. Among Van Wyck's appointments Jan. 1, 1898, Lantry -- variously a butcher, a butchers union leader, and an Alderman, was named Correction Commissioner. Lantry also was the Tammany leader in the 16th District where the new Mayor lived.

After scandals during the Van Wyck administration inspired anti-Tammany forces to unite again, the Fusionists successfully fielded Columbia University president Seth Low as their mayoral candidate in 1901. He named Thomas W. Hynes to replace Lantry in 1902. When Tammany's nominee, George B. McClellan, son of the famous Civil War general and Presidential candidate, defeated Low in the mayoralty of 1903, Lantry was reappointed DOC Commissioner Jan. 1, 1904. Thus he became the only City Correction Commissioner ever to serve twice.

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