

Prison design history



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Compare and contrast the two competing systems of prison design in America. What were the pros and cons of each system? How were they similar? One system is still present in today's design, why is it still present and the other system is not? From the beginning of the 19th century, and continuing throughout the majority of the 20th century, there has been an ongoing competition between two competing prison systems: the Pennsylvania system and the Auburn system. Each system has its own pros and cons, and they share very few similarities. The Auburn system was eventually chosen to be the most effective system, and is still present today. The Pennsylvania system, also called the "separate" system, began in 1833, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the opening of the Eastern Penitentiary. It had a circular design with a center. Solitary confinement and silence was of the utmost importance, and any violation was harshly punished. Prisoners even labored in confinement in outside cells.

Some pros of this system include: easier control of prisoners, easier to see the needs of the prisoners, less spread of sickness and disease, and gave the prisoners more time to meditate and repent for their crimes. Cons of this system include that it was expensive to build and constant solitary confinement led many prisoners to insanity. The Auburn system, also called the "congregate" system, began in 1819, in Auburn, New York, with the opening of the New York State Prison. It is mostly opposite of the Pennsylvania system in that it is based on "inside cell" design and it is not based on the importance of solitary confinement. Cells are only used by prisoners for sleeping, and the rest of the day is spent doing congregate work in shops, only stopping to have a meal. Pros of this system include: lest

costly to construct, offered more vocational training, and produced more money for the state.

The cons include that less care is given to individual needs of the...