

# An Occasional Paper

## IN PRISON

### TRANSITIONAL THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES

By Dennie Briggs

#### Program Descriptions

2. Beyond the Devil's Hole:  
Forestry Camp Communities.

The Inception:

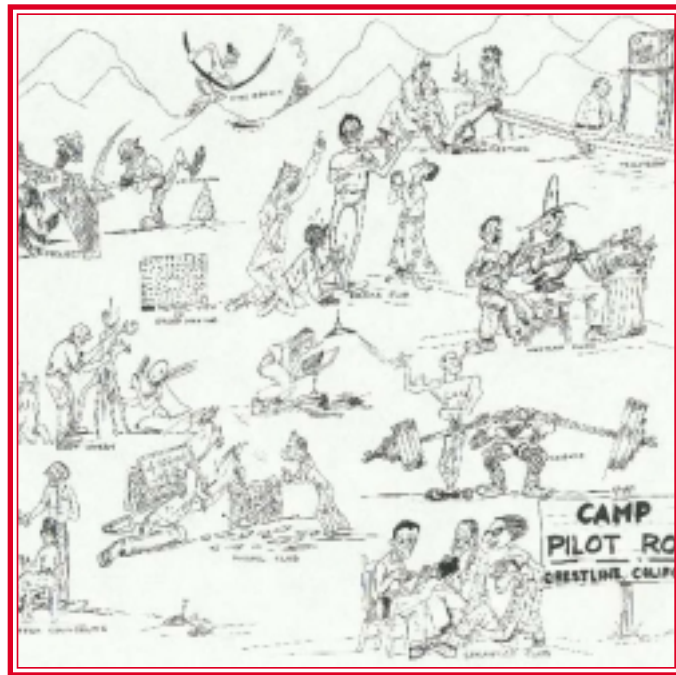
E.J.Oberhauser.

Camp Pilot Rock

Camp Don Lugo

Finally

Notes and References



Research and  
Demonstration Projects  
Conducted by the  
California Department of  
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1958-1965

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Craig Fees, PhD, Archivist

<http://www.pettarchiv.org.uk>

[craig@pettarchiv.org.uk](mailto:craig@pettarchiv.org.uk)

# IN PRISON: TRANSITIONAL THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

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## OVERVIEW

**T**HE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT is part of a manuscript originally written in 1965, and updated in 1999/2000. It contains an account of a period of experimentation and innovation in the California penal system which began with the war-time election of Earl Warren as Governor of California in 1943, and effectively came to an end when Ronald Reagan became Governor in 1966.

The complete text is in three parts.

- **Part One** consists of a Foreword prepared for the original document by the late Richard A. McGee in 1965, when he was Administrator of the Youth and Adult Corrections Agency for the State of California; an updated Preface, looking back at the projects, followed by the Introduction to the original manuscript; and a Sequel. The latter contains my brief reflections of the current state of penal reform—or its absence—in the U.S. and the contribution that these pioneering efforts in California nearly 40 years ago might make to current thinking and practice.

- **Part Two** is a description of two Forestry Camp transitional therapeutic communities. From 1960 to 1961, Maxwell Jones, while Visiting Commonwealth Professor of Social Psychiatry at Stanford University, gave the prestigious Issac Ray Lectures at the annual meetings of the American Psychiatric Association—its first Lecturer, incidentally from another country. In Lecture Four, Dr. Jones reviewed the prevailing status of psychiatry with regards to criminal justice in Britain and the U.S. He cited the research then being conducted into

the California Department of corrections, and detailed a prototype for the application of the therapeutic community approach in prisons. Richard McGee retained Maxwell Jones as a consultant examining the overall rehabilitation programs for the state's department, and assisting in establishing the approach he suggested, in a series of pilot projects. I was given the task of laying the groundwork, establishing the culture, training the staff, and consulting in these projects.

The early transitional therapeutic community projects began in 1960, in a state forestry service-affiliated fire-fighting and conservation camp in Southern California's San Bernadino Mountains. This was Conservation Camp Pilot Rock, and consisted of 100 youthful, first-adult offenders, with Correctional Officers, and Counselors, living and working together as an extension of the California Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. After it was established, it was moved in 1961 to a site adjacent to the California Institution for Men (C.I.M.) at Chino, named Camp Don Lugo. In closer proximity to the home prison, Camp Don Lugo ran as a transitional therapeutic community from 1961 to 1965, at the termination of the original terms of the research proposal.

• **Part Three** describes the creation of two transitional therapeutic communities within the grounds of the Chino prison itself. Where the Forestry Camps were relatively independent units, physically separated from the main prison at Chino, the Pine Hall Project initiated in 1959, was our attempt to construct a community for youthful offenders within the precincts of a much larger prison containing 2,000 inmates—an increasingly autonomous unit in a sense, but sharing work, leisure and other facilities with the prison at large.

The second of the prison-based pro-

jects, built on the Forestry Camp and Pine Hall models, was pioneered in 1961 both at San Quentin Prison in Northern California by Dr. Harry Wilmer, and, later in the year, at Chino. These projects, under the title of Programs for Increased Correctional Effectiveness (know as I.C.E.), mainly for the older more recalcitrant offender, were then extended to six other prisons, the total program being financed by diverting funds from the construction of an additional 1,200 unit prison. This program concluded in 1966, when the political atmosphere within California itself in relation to crime rehabilitation changed abruptly.

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**Note:** I hope that these documents can become a source of exchanges for comments and discussions about the treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners within the therapeutic community concept. I have sub-titled them as *program descriptions*, for they are meant to interest those who are engaged in experimental projects or are considering initiating them either in correctional settings or alternative environments. At the beginning and end of this paper, I have placed red annotation note pads for your suggestions and comments.



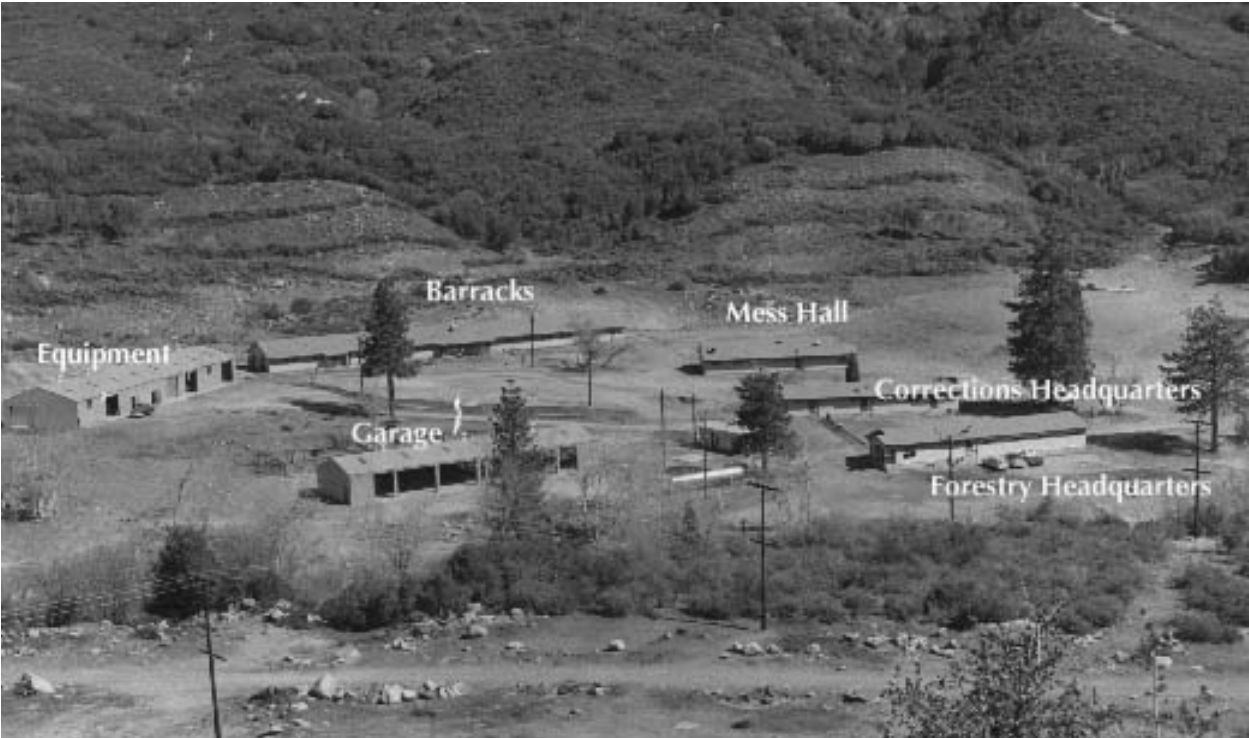
## 2. BEYOND THE DEVIL'S HOLE

### CONSERVATION CAMP PILOT ROCK (1960 to 1961)

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**S**OME MEN, DESPITE their failure to remain in society as solid citizens, are, nonetheless, strong individuals. It is to these men, or their type of man, that the average inmate looks up to. While some men need to be pushed into relating their feelings, others meanwhile need to be carefully and expertly aroused. Some men are strong enough to face their past failures and mistakes which led them to confinement, while others are not. They may not be seeking friendship, but they are seeking. These and many other pertinent facts are needed in finding a man, and in finding him find himself.

Robert E.  
Camp Don Lugo



CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CAMP PILOT ROCK, CRESTLINE, CALIFORNIA

## THE INCEPTION

By E.J. OBERHAUSER

**P**ILOT ROCK CONSERVATION Camp is an outgrowth of many people's ideas and is part of a trend in modern penology in which rehabilitative efforts of the men themselves are increasingly recognized and fostered in an attempt to give them opportunities to gain control and understanding.



**E.J. OBERHAUSER,  
SUPERINTENDENT,  
CALIFORNIA  
INSTITUTION FOR  
MEN**

**T**he men at Pilot Rock have been carefully selected and screened prior to arrival at camp; all are volunteers. Approximately one out of four who volunteer are finally selected. The selection criteria is based on the quality of the man's intentions to help himself, his capacities to gain understanding and an estimate of his over-all potentials for future growth. Most of the men in camp are youthful, first-adult offenders. Two-thirds, for example are under 30 years of age; three-fourths are serving their first adult prison sentence.

Our intention is to give them an opportunity to help themselves before

they become accustomed to institution routine and comfortable in their previous ways of living.

One of the tragedies of modern institutions—whether they be hospitals, schools or prisons—is the loss of individuality, creativity and a desire to understand. It is our hope that these will be minimized at Pilot Rock and that men may find opportunities to enhance their creative and productive resources to lead a more full and satisfying life.

The treatment philosophy is relatively simple, yet quite all-inclusive. It consists of a work program for the California Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, which includes an eight hour day of work, six days per week, and additional extra time for fires during summer. Fire suppression and conservation of the state's natural resources are the essential objectives of the work program. In addition, the men have opportunities to learn work habits. Many of the men who are in prison have had difficulties in working steady due to their unsettled nature, obstacles in forming close, binding relationships with others, and their inability to subordinate strong impulses especially in relation to authority.

Learning to live together and working through disturbing impulses and feelings toward others occupies a good deal of the men's time. They are assigned to fire crews of 16 members. As fire crews, they eat together, work together, and are



housed together. They discuss their feelings and problems together.

One of the most glaring factors in all forms of personality and emotional disorders is the inability to communicate feelings. Tensions, left unresolved, come out in many ways. In order to enhance opportunities for communication and to minimize the possibilities of loss of individuality, the camp meets together each evening six days per week, following the evening meal. We expect all men and staff to be present. This meeting is opened by the men themselves and may be used for any purpose they feel is important at the time. The meeting offers everyone a daily opportunity to talk about disturbing tensions before they have a chance to accumulate and build up to the point where they need to be discharged in acting them out destructively. Rules of good social behavior are discussed and practiced in this meeting and the men learn to express their discomforts, their feelings, their problems, in ways which will enhance understanding.

The men meet weekly for an hour discussion in their fire crews. On Sunday during visiting hours, there are husband-wife therapy groups in which problems within the family are worked through. Working with families and in the community is seen as a highly neglected area of rehabilitation, needing special attention. In the Sunday groups, the families occasionally invite others such as a neighbor in the community, a mother or a friend.

THE STAFF AT Pilot Rock have undergone much of the same process as the men. All were selected; all volunteered for the project. The correctional officers were chosen for their interest in the project, their experience working in camps and their adaptability to learn new ways of relating to the men. The forestry foremen were chosen as persons who wanted to work in the program, and were concerned with helping the men to learn good work habits and take an active interest in

conservation of natural resources.

The camp supervisor, **Floyd Chamlee**, was selected for his varied experience in corrections. He began as a Correctional Officer, then an institutional Parole Officer, and just prior to this assignment, he was a counselor in the Intensive Treatment Program at Chino.

The consulting staff includes persons who are experts in various areas of treatment, who have assisted in planning the program and who perform active assistance in the camp. They include:

**Maxwell Jones**, M.D., Director, Social Rehabilitation Unit, Belmont Hospital, Sutton, Surrey, England; currently Commonwealth Professor of Social Psychiatry at Stanford University Medical School. He is consultant to the World Health Organization of the United Nations. Dr. Jones is one of the originators of the therapeutic community concept which the camp is patterned after.

**Harry A. Wilmer**, M.D., PhD., psychoanalyst and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford Medical center. Dr. Wilmer is author of *Social Psychiatry in Action* and other books on psychiatric treatment. He initiated the first therapeutic community in North America.

Consultants from the Intensive Treatment Program at the California Institution for Men, include:

**Elmer W. Olsen**, Supervisor,  
**Richard B. Heim**, PhD, Senior Psychologist,

**Dennie Briggs**, who has worked with both Drs. Jones and Wilmer in their therapeutic communities.

THE PROGRAM AT Pilot Rock is part of the California Department of Corrections Research Division. The program in camp, the individuals participating and their subsequent behavior on parole will be carefully studied in a long term research project designed to enrich the rehabilitation efforts thus far attempted.

**March 26, 1960**

## CONSERVATION CAMP PILOT ROCK

**T**HE EVENING SKY was taking on black and purple clouds that seemed to devour the sun as it set over the mountains. Here and there a ranch house or cabin sent out a twinkling light through the heavy pines. Only the light wind caressing the trees and the odd bark of a dog somewhere in the distance disturbed the silence. Suddenly thunder burst through the canyon. A blue-white bolt of lightning flashed in the upper valley and came closer.

The Pilot Rock that had guided Brigham Young and the elders many years ago capped the mountain; now it turned gold, then purple as the last rays of the winter sun came over the hills. In minutes the valley was nearly dark. Then a tremendous flare of lightning struck the valley, just beyond the Devil's Hole. Suddenly there was total darkness. Sound returned at last, slowly at first, then more heavily as the rain lashed against the windows.

Instantly, the forestry camp went dark. Sitting on the floor in the small room used for visiting on wintry Sundays were twelve young men—Fire Crew Number Three—so intent on their discussion that no one commented about the storm outside or the lights going out.

"I've noticed a change in you, Dave, ever since Erv got caught with contraband in his locker. You straightenin' out so you won't get *your* locker cleaned?"

"Dave, the impression I get is that you talk about things that don't matter much. And you blow things up. Like calling the extra group the other night. I don't know if that was right or wrong. You got pretty hot about it. Had to have a meetin' right away—couldn't wait 'til next day."

Dave gave a long sigh, lit a cigarette. "Been thinkin' I could no longer be half and half."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I've been bad mostta my life. I just decided that I have to clean up my act with myself, my wife—with everyone. Even take on the lunch bucket routine. Or else I'm gonna spend mostta my life in these joints—or worse, end up in the gas chamber."

"Sensational again!"

"Hey man, I'm serious! And I wanna warn all you guys. If I see something wrong, I'm gonna confront you in the meetin'—or call a special one—regardless of what anyone says. Call me a 'snitch' or a 'rat,'—or 'confrontin' happy,'—but that's the way it's gonna be from now on."

"Oh, for Christ's sake! Another example of how you build up things to get your point across. 'Gas chamber!' Who are you trying to impress? You trying to tell us you're some kind of big-time gangster—you know, getting all the way to the chamber! You know you're not very keen or you'd still be out on the streets—probably pulling capers. You're small-time, man!"



PERHAPS THEY WERE frightened in the darkness. Perhaps I should have been, but somehow wasn't. I was too new to worry about my own safety in this group of angry young men and we *had* been together for six months. Now and then the glow of a cigarette reminded me that people were here. Thunder had plunged us into darkness; only voices remained.



FORESTRY CAMP PILOT ROCK FIRE CREW  
CLEARING BRUSH IN THE SAN BERNARDINO  
MOUNTAINS, CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CAMP Pilot Rock had just recently opened. The 104 inmates who were to come there had volunteered for the project and had never been in a wilderness area for very long. Many had known the streets of Los Angeles, particularly the Watts area where wide-scale destruction would soon take place in the mid 1960s; "Burn, baby, burn" was to become the rallying cry. None of the men had been incarcerated in an adult prison previously, although most of them had spent time in jail and in youth detention centers of various kinds.

SINCE OUR FIRST transitional community was to be established in a forestry camp, I needed to know more about life at camp. I'd visited several and had talked with inmates and Correctional

Officers who'd spent time in them, but I wanted to learn more of the internal workings. So I substituted for one of the camp lieutenants for a month while he went on vacation.

That all too brief experience gave me some important clues as to issues we might face. For one thing, I became acquainted with the work and attitudes of the forestry personnel. They were an energetic, serious group (many were young and relatively inexperienced, learning on the job) whose work vacillated between monotony and energized vigilance during fire season. Their activities resembled a military operation, with temporary base camps set up in remote areas, and sometimes near populous ones. While actually fighting fire, the men worked long hours under hazardous conditions and sometimes took enormous risks. Their work was only occasionally acknowledged in the press. Today, as I write this, I spotted a clip in the *New York Times*, dateline July 18, 1999:

PIRU, CALIF., A prison inmate who was trying to contain a Southern California wildfire died early today when he fell off a cliff.

The convict, who was not identified, was among about 50 prisoners put to work fighting the 2,000-acre brush fire. He was using a chainsaw before dawn when he went over the 150-foot drop, said Rose Regalado, a spokeswoman for the Ventura County Fire Department.

Supervised state prison inmates are commonly used to fight wildfires in California.

Nearly 660 Federal, state and local firefighters continued to fight the fire today about 60 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. The fire was 75 percent contained.

EACH FORESTRY FOREMAN maintained a crew of about 16 prisoners. He trained them and supervised their work, appointed an inmate foreman and delegated considerable authority to that inmate, who in turn, had influence over the others. Although they worked in crews, the forestry personnel had no training in interpersonal relationships.

When a Foreman believed that an inmate was not suitable for his crew, had violated a rule, or he simply could not get along with him, he fired him. The camp Lieutenant either found a job for him on his small inmate staff, or returned him to Chino for the prison's Captain to deal with. The forestry service made it clear that in the work situation, their authority was final and not to be challenged.

I could foresee many problems with the type of inmate we were planning to select, problems that could become integrated into the treatment program. In order to work out these difficulties, we would have to have the cooperation and active participation of the forestry personnel: this would be crucial. The forestry personnel themselves, however, would first require suitable training and involvement in the groups. But at this point there was no provision for this exposure to occur because the forestry and corrections staff at camps were separate, literally. In the camps, the forestry service had their own administration building, which contained rooms for the personnel on duty. The prison staff had a similar administration building with an office, and a small, glass enclosed room for occasional visiting during the week. The building also had sleeping rooms for the Correctional Officers, who worked on a three-day shift. Their Lieutenant and the Forestry Superintendent had separate state-owned homes as a fringe benefit located not too far from the camp, and they worked the normal

five day week.

The camps had a large military type barracks and a separate mess hall that doubled for recreation and family visits on the weekends in bad weather. Garages and tool storage buildings completed the camp layout. Usually the buildings were arranged in a semi-circle, with the corrections building placed so that the entire compound could be in view of the lieutenant's office.

During that first month of indoctrination at a typical camp, I was suddenly immersed into a life which bore similarities to the military. The inmate clerk anticipated my every need, beginning mornings with coffee and pastries. The work crew cleaned the office building, made the staff's beds, and then worked in the kitchen. The clerk was an intelligent man in his late thirties with a family. I was scarcely settled in the camp when he began filling me in on the workings of the place, its details, and hearsay about the inmates and both staffs. Before I knew it, he was volunteering information about his own criminal record and how he had been a victim of circumstances.

But inmates were not the only ones to carry tales. At first the Correctional Officers treated me very formally, calling me "Lieutenant," although I was not in uniform. Little by little, however, they became more personal, and in time, began confiding in me. Many of their complaints had to do with the camp Lieutenant I was replacing. He ran the camp in an autocratic manner and he was away from the camp a lot so the Correctional Officers had to cover for him. They wondered where he was during those days and what he was doing. And there was the question of his taking food home from the mess hall for his personal use. Again, I felt frustrated, for these were matters he should be confronted with. But there was no supportive means in which to do this.

He was the final authority.

It wasn't long either, before an inmate asked to see me in private. He told me that "pruno" (alcohol made from prunes) was being made in the camp, but wouldn't divulge which inmates were involved. Obviously he was not acting out of altruism, although he was taking considerable risk; inmate informers are killed for such "snitching." His reason for informing, as he made it clear to me, was simple enough: he didn't want any "heat" brought on the camp and those inmates who wanted to serve out their time there.

What was I to do with this information? I knew how to handle it in the context of a therapeutic community; but in this unfamiliar, quasi-military confinement, I felt at a loss. If I passed the information to the correctional officers (who probably already knew) they would scour the camp for the offenders and send them back to C.I.M. for disciplinary action. Life would become intolerable for the informer—even dangerous. Harry Wilmer wrote that in prison, "The 'rat' is the representative of the authorities in their midst much as a counterspy would be." Dr. Wilmer speculated that while "ratting" might appear to be self-preserving (as my informant had hinted at) in the end it's self-defeating: "The rat can't win, if for no other reason than there are other rats."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, I cautiously asked one of the Correctional Officers how they handled "contraband" in the camp and he assured me that when it was found, they took swift action and removed those involved from the camp. I took no action and waited to see what would happen, but to my knowledge, the pruno was either done away with, or the "still" went further underground. I did feel uneasy whenever my eyes met those of the inmate who had informed me. By default, I was a conspirator. I just didn't know what else to do in that situation. Those few wives and children who visited on Sundays kept

their distance from me; my presence was an unwelcome interference in the precious time they had with their husbands and fathers. And yet, I could see the sorrow, the humiliation, the anger, on their faces over their situations. Later, I was to learn from Harry Wilmer's study at San Quentin, that one half of the wives he'd interviewed had not told their children that their father was imprisoned.<sup>2</sup>

AFTER A MONTH at that camp, I returned to C.I.M., to replace the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant while he went on vacation. I thought I needed a glimpse of how the institution was managed. This assignment was as pleasant as the previous one had been frustrating. I sat in a glass enclosed office next to the Superintendent's, facing his congenial secretary, Audrey Pfeiser.

Now, I was better able to gain a glimpse into the intricate working of the whole prison. And I had daily contact with Superintendent Oberhauser—"Obie." He was recognized by his ability to delegate administrative matters; soon I was immersed in drafting letters for him, making phone calls, investigating delicate situations, and giving him counsel. He would take me with him when he visited areas of the prison, or talked to local civic groups; invited me into his office when staff were presenting problems to him, and he asked me to minute meetings. In all these situations, he would question me about how I would handle them differently in a therapeutic community?

I was quite touched one evening when, spontaneously, he phoned me at home and invited me to come to a social event at his residence. There he was hosting a group of inmates, with his wife and two young sons assisting, for an informal get together with refreshments and a sing-along. "This is my informal therapeutic community," he explained, patting me on the back!

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESEARCH Advisory Committee (which *ex officio*, included Doug Grant's research staff in the Department of Corrections headquarters in Sacramento) began to plan details to implement the first project. Various prison staff had raised a number of questions that additional experience would eventually answer, such as the type of inmate most suitable to this kind of experience and the important matter of security.

For the pilot project, Maxwell Jones recommended that the most "treatable" group of prisoners be selected, "after which the staff should be better equipped to deal with the more disturbed type of inmate."<sup>3</sup> He was referring to inmates whom Doug Grant identified as having higher social maturity or personality Integration Levels (I-Levels).<sup>4</sup>

One half of the prison population was at level three (those who used manipulation and conformity to get what they wanted).<sup>5</sup> As we looked at prisoners' backgrounds, however, the majority of those with higher levels of maturity had been convicted of more aggressive crimes—armed robberies, burglaries, and assault, including manslaughter and murder. All these offenses usually required confinement in institutions of higher security. We were also concerned that we not be deluged with inmates who had become institutionalized, and so preferred to select them as soon as possible after their commitment. The young, aggressive offender who posed a management problem at most prisons was the type we wanted. They comprised nearly 40 per cent of new admissions to prisons at that time.

Would large group meetings be feasible in living units of 100 men under conditions of minimum security? We had held meetings of this size in the Reception-Guidance Center (R-G.C.) on the grounds

of C.I.M. but those meetings were under conditions of maximum security and therefore we had some control over attendance. In the camp, would the men attend the meetings? Or if they did, when under this type of stress, would they escape?

To what extent could Correctional Officers safely take on new roles? They had the most direct contact with inmates, but were kept at a distance. There were departmental policies that prescribed the correctional officers' relationships with inmates. Would getting closer endanger security? Doug Grant had found that there was a positive effect on rehabilitation when the type of treatment offered was matched to personality types of prisoners; the effect was maximized by matching personality types of the staff who administered it.

**Activation.** As the construction of the camp progressed and a tentative date for the opening was scheduled, we began to take steps to implement the project. We needed a core group of "culture builders" to get the new project started. We began by taking a dormitory in the prison that housed 26 men to form the culture that was to be transported to the camp. There was a small core group of inmates that I'd been meeting with over the past six months and they were moved to this dorm to begin the build-up.

**Staffing.** Maxwell Jones suggested a "supervisor-teacher" to head the unit, "someone who is familiar with psychoanalytic and penal practices and with the social science field."<sup>6</sup> That person, he believed, should be involved in the total program, participating in the meetings, training staff, and administering the program. He recommended that an "outside analyst" or facilitator assist in

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*We needed a core group of "culture builders" to get the new project started.*

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staff training.

Floyd Chamlee was selected to head the camp. For the project, he was made a Correctional Lieutenant as with the other camps, but given the option of wearing a uniform, which he chose to do.

Forestry officials selected Joe Griggs, a friendly, amiable, veteran fire-fighter and administrator to head their side of the camp; not so much because of his interest in the program, but because he wanted to live in the area where the new camp was being constructed.

We selected five Correctional Officers from a list of those who had volunteered to work in the new camp. They chose not to wear uniforms. We were able to have the correctional officers and the camp clerk assigned to us for orientation a month before the camp opened. They attended daily meetings with the 26 men with whom they would be working. We assembled new arrivals in a second dorm, so now our community had built up to 50. In addition we had planning meetings on how we would operate the camp and problems we anticipated. We did role play sessions of situations that might occur. I gave them Max's paper on the social therapist, believing that there were ideas here that could be incorporated into their new roles.<sup>7</sup> The half dozen or so men with the necessary work skills for the forestry service were to be transferred from other camps, so would not arrive until the camp was opened.

Maxwell Jones, as consultant to the Department of Corrections, came to C.I.M. to orient the prison staff through small group workshops with the superintendent. They briefed everyone about the new program and listened to concerns people had.

**Selection and Admission.** I took staff members with me on several trips to the newly constructed medium-security prison at Soledad where Glynn Smith, a

former social worker and now administrator, and his staff had begun daily community meetings in the cell blocks as they opened them. Their population had many of the type of inmates we were looking for and whom we believed could become natural leaders for our project. We arranged for those selected to be transferred to Chino where they joined the group already assembled in the two dormitories in preparation for the move to the camp.

The Superintendent personally met with all new arrivals each week to orient the men to the prison. As part of his orientation, he now added a brief description of the project. I often accompanied him to answer questions. Later, inmates from the project would take over this function. The records of the men who arrived each week at the prison were reviewed by staff members. Men who seemed to meet broad general criteria were interviewed by one of the staff to see if they were interested in coming into the project. The names of those who volunteered and were considered qualified were placed into a pool of eligibles. When vacancies came up, names were chosen at random by the Research Associate.

Lash, the inmate clerk who had been with me for the past six months, wanted to go along and continue to be my clerk. He was familiar with the project, having typed many of the proposals, and was now experienced in groups. Although he did not meet the criteria for assignment to minimum custody (he'd been sentenced for armed robbery), I was able to persuade officials to take a risk on him, and authorize his transfer as part of this group. The Camp Captain however, would not assign him as clerk, for he had one of his own men earmarked for that job. Lash was disappointed, but agreed to go as one of the fire crew members.

When the camp was fully operational, four months after it opened, nearly all

types of offenses were represented in the 104 inmates. Half of the men had at least entered the 11th grade in school, 60 percent had had military service (mainly during the Korean War), one-half of the group had problems with alcohol, and 13 percent with narcotics. As for I levels, most were I-4 and I-5s, with a few I-3s. Those were the men who did not meet our standards who had been selected by the prison Captain and the forestry department to meet their needs for certain skills.

There was to be a preliminary period of six months to train staff and establish a therapeutic climate in the camp. The aim, Maxwell Jones said, "would be to avoid preconceptions or at least to be prepared to examine critically the attitudes held by the staff, to see what validity they have."<sup>8</sup> He believed the staff must be given sufficient freedom of action within the social structure to be able to identify with inmates and their problems rather than maintaining the preconceptions of prison authorities. Sharing tasks in a work situation would be one way to provide informal contacts between staff and inmates.

As the project developed, Maxwell Jones envisioned a fluid structure evolving that "would favor the gradual development of a culture well suited to the more explicit tasks of observation, education, and rehabilitation."<sup>9</sup> After gaining experience, Max foresaw that therapeutic communities could be developed for other inmates such as those with the lower personality integration levels who comprised nearly two-thirds of the prison population. He believed maturation could be accelerated in projects such as this one.<sup>10</sup>

**The Camp Site.** It was an exciting day when we moved the first 50 men from Chino to the San Bernardino Mountain

site on February 23, 1960. There were mountain streams nearby, and abundant wildlife all around which would now share this part of their wilderness with us. Most of these men were from large cities and had had very little contact with nature. They were excited about the new experience: getting away from the prison and its restrictions, being outdoors, having better food, and the small wage that would give them some independence.

The day the first group arrived, a note appeared on each man's pillow, which read:

### WELCOME TO THE PILOT ROCK COMMUNITY

This is a new program sponsored by men of vision who see that punishment alone is not the answer to rehabilitation. Group Therapy has a short history in California, but a promising one. The group is here to help you all it can, you are now a part of it, and it follows, that it is a part of you. The group is not here to head-shrink you nor to hear righteous sounding phrases, it is here to draw out any problems you have in your personality traits. Not always coming up with the answers but kicking around the problem leaving you to think about the problems and the opinions expressed in the group.

Thank you,  
A Member...

I COULD STILL hear, ringing in my ears, "It would be desirable to initiate a small pilot project involving, say, 80 to 100 inmates and have a core staff who have

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*Maxwell Jones had given us the basics. What transpired would largely be up to us.*

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an interest in this approach and who have volunteered for such a project.”<sup>11</sup> Here we were with Maxwell Jones’ *basics*; to open the camp, we had brought 50 young, aggressive, volunteer inmates and our core staff of six: what transpired largely would be up to all of us.

Max came to visit soon after the camp opened, which gave the undertaking its proper blessing. He was indeed impressed with what had been done to activate the blueprint for this project.

The inmate-written monthly paper at C.I.M., *Pioneer News*, carried a story about the opening. The editor described the new program and then commented:

The Pilot Rock group first began having Community Counseling sessions around the middle of November [1959]. We have been fortunate in having had the opportunity to sit in on two of these sessions. With over four years of counseling behind us, it was a real treat to hear problems being discussed that were of interest to the whole group, rather than to the individual. Different solutions were discussed and dissected. And, the important point: every member of the group was genuinely concerned with each problem as it was brought out. We came away MUCH impressed. This is INDEED progressive penology. I think that Doctor [Robert] Lindner would be proud.<sup>12</sup>

THERE WERE MANY issues still to be worked on that could not be resolved

until the camp was in operation. For one thing, we had no direct access to the forestry personnel. Their attitudes and values often paralleled those of Correctional Officers, in that they believed in the importance of hard physical work for prisoners, along with discipline. They also shared the opinion with Correctional Officers that you had to separate work from personal involvement and that if



CAMP PILOT ROCK COMMUNITY MEETING. CRESTLINE, CALIFORNIA

you did allow any sort of intimacy, you were open to manipulation. Many men who sought employment in the forestry service could be seen as “loners,” men who were not especially keen on being around people. Each Forestry Foreman’s inmate assistant attended to equipment, rode in the cab of the truck with the Foreman and sometimes became his

confidant. For some, he was the forester’s “snitch.”

I lived the first month at camp to help get it going and was given a room in the staff quarters. I spent time with the camp supervisor, Floyd Chamlee and the correctional officers who were on duty; we had weekly training sessions. I also went out with the men on the fire crews to acquaint myself with working conditions and to get to know some of the forestry personnel. The staff and I ate with the men in the dining room. After the month, I came as a regular consultant on a weekly basis as did Psychologist Dick Heim

WE HAD PLANNED a daily community meeting followed by a staff review, and wanted the meetings to begin the day, with forestry personnel present. We needed their collaboration and thought this would be a good way to train them. But this part

of the plan was not approved; forestry officials maintained that it would interfere with their work schedule and that the correctional staff were there to do the counseling. Again, we were forced to compromise and hold the meetings after the evening meal, and during fire emergencies they were suspended.

Community meetings were held six nights a week, giving a break midweek on Wednesdays. The arrangement was not a good one—the men were tired after a day's work and it was hot in the summer, and cold in the winter. This concession precluded attendance by the forestry personnel, which we wanted, and meant that we now had no direct access to them at all in terms of training and integrating them into our program.

We'd also planned to have small group meetings—the fire crews seemed the ideal “natural” group. These weekly meetings also had to be held evenings following the large group; together with the community meetings, they took up a great deal of the men's free time.

WE WERE UNCERTAIN as to when to use our latent authority to make decisions, and when to leave matters to the community to take action. About three months into the project we had an opportunity to see what could happen when one issue was clarified. A few men, known in inmate argot as “shuckers”, were obstructing the community's development. They had managed to manipulate the staff into selecting them for the project when they had no real interest in it. Their speculation was that when they went to the parole board having been in the project, would be looked upon in their favor. Their motivations were eventually revealed and now they chided the others who were trying to make it work. As I visited the camp weekly I was able to follow the course of events, and could see no changes in them. The

residents continued their behavior and the community seemed to be immobilized to take any further action to alleviate the situation.

I arranged to take the psychologist's clerk, Carl W. to spend a few days in camp to make some observations. He immediately saw the impasse.

- **In his own words**

*In the background, during discussions, there is a considerable amount of unrest prevailing. Remarks such as, “we have been through this over and over again,” and similar phrases are prevalent showing that the serene face shown by the group though their steady and prompt attendance may not be so serene.*

Another inmate from C.I.M. who came to the camp to observe the program, wrote: “If they [the staff] are not sure of the ‘shuckers,’ that is, not certain just who they are, they had best avail themselves and all their compiled knowledge to find out, for to this writer, the shucker is the most harmful of all influences in this type of program.”

The community seemed at loggerheads, not knowing what to do about the trouble-makers, and their resistance, I believed, was seriously impinging on the others. I tried to get the staff to focus on this issue in the weekly staff meetings, to no avail. Floyd Chamlee was reluctant to take any action and the group was at a stand still. About this time, Floyd went on a vacation he had planned for some time. I substituted for him during this absence.

And so, in the community meeting, I reviewed what I had seen over the last two months and asked the community why they tolerated these men in their midst when they were merely in the camp for its physical advantages. After all, there

were half a dozen other camps where they could go for similar features, and they wouldn't have to participate in groups and so on. It was as if the community never realized that they could take such action; perhaps they were right, but now it was possible. I intended to make it so.

The upshot was that the community decided just that, and without hesitation, told five of the men to pack their bags and asked if I'd take them to Chino. I had a state car with me, and after the community meeting, I took them back to the prison. During the hour's ride, they said how relieved they were to be out of this camp and that they believed it was not the right place for them. The custody officials who received them at Chino were aghast that I had taken such a dangerous course, and brought them back by myself, not in handcuffs, at night, and in a state car. They pointed out all the things that could have happened to me, and suggested that I myself might have been prosecuted with "aiding and abetting" had they escaped. Happily, they hadn't. I was able to convince the prison's Captain not to bring charges against them and he re-assigned them to other camps.

Maxwell Jones had always stressed the importance of taking risks in running a therapeutic community. He spoke of the usefulness of an "interventionist" who could support risk-takers. And he wrote that "Such crisis situations given favorable circumstances can lead to social learning."<sup>12</sup> I thought it was important at this moment in the community's development to implement the decision that the community had made. To have waited for prison routine might have jeopardized not only the urgency of the moment, but the status of the five prisoners who were involved. Normally, charges would have to have been made and the men removed by prison custodial staff—that could have taken days. Now the community could

reassess itself and grow stronger.

The roles the staff played were crucial in developing an environment in which change could begin. Above all, we needed to develop trust between the staff and the residents within the boundaries that we were given. That meant taking calculated risks and then noting any changes that occurred. I remember one night during that month I was filling in for Floyd. After the meetings, I was reading in bed. There was a knock at the door and a head poked in:

"Mr B., if you aren't already asleep, could we come in and talk with you for a while?"

Eleven of the prisoners followed, some sitting on my bed while others rustled up folding chairs from other rooms, and some squatted on the floor. There was an uneasy silence until one spoke up and said that there was a problem with one of the men and they didn't know how to handle it. Actually, it turned out, there were two matters. They began to talk about Joe, who had left the camp for two weeks to return to Chino for medical attention. Upon his return, he felt that people treated him differently; in fact, he saw *them* as being different. He was well-liked at camp and the men had looked forward to his return.

I felt a little uneasy that they should be talking about someone who was not there and so asked who it was.

"It's me!" A voice spoke up from the floor. Joe said how confused he had become from his short stay away from camp. He'd got used to life in the camp. There *were* the routines involved in taking care of one's person, work, socializing with the others and the groups. Although most of their time was accounted for, there were empty spaces in between all these activities, spaces that were difficult to fill. There was the stillness of the forest, the quietness at camp, the temptation to run off; and the camaraderie which he had

never known previously was unsettling.

Then the sudden shift: he was back at Chino, amongst 2,000 other prisoners where routine was for its own sake. Suddenly *that* experience didn't seem real to him and he longed to return to camp, where he thought he would feel down to earth once more. In the two weeks away, he found himself immersed in the invariable maze that constitutes a prison—life at camp was gradually fading away for him. Immediately upon his return, he had felt out of place, out of step, out of anything familiar. Even the men he had felt close to before that brief absence now seemed strange to him. He was afraid he was losing his mind. Was all this worth it, he asked?

As if his confusion was not enough, the forestry foreman welcomed him back by making him his assistant. The new position put him close to the foreman but took him away from his crew. This “promotion” had made him feel even more detached from the others, heightening his sense of aloneness. Soon others were voicing *their* feelings of solitude here in the mountains and away from prison activities, and they felt it especially at night.

I was amazed at their candor—and tenderness—as they listened to him describe his feelings, and attempted to understand his feelings and relate them to their own. A few of the men could not empathize with him though they tried,

but most seemed to grasp his anguish and bewilderment. I suppose some would have said he was experiencing an existential crisis.

And then Lash spoke up: “I hate to break up this very moving discussion, but we have another problem. One of the men here is thinking about escaping and I'd feel responsible if he did.”

Angrily, Darrel W., known as “Duke,”

burst forth and told Lash to “mind his own God-damned business!” He was the person Lash was referring to. A hot argument pursued with Duke's easily aroused temper erupting. Others came to the rescue and supported Lash, echoing their concern about Duke's safety and the repercussions if he escaped. Although popular with the others, he was undergoing an intense inner struggle and wasn't sure he wanted to go much further. Bright, swift-minded, he'd been involved in robberies and burglaries for many years and had found excitement and purpose in life. Lash and Duke had known one another before coming to prison. One night in his small group, Duke had recounted how he kept a scrap book of news clippings of his criminal activities—including those for which he'd never been caught—and showed this record of achievement to his friends with pride when they visited him and his wife.

Along with his quick-wittedness, he had artistic talent, and was doing some impressive water colors and mosaics since he'd been at camp. But as time went on, he began to think he might have to give up his former stimulating life and lead what might prove to be a dull, monotonous nine-to-five routine. Consequently, he was having second thoughts and longed to get back to his old life. He'd confided the predicament to his best friend and now Lash had betrayed him. For inmates such as Duke, this


was precisely the kind of dilemma we'd envisioned would occur while they were undergoing change and the disclosure by his friend was the impetus needed to get the process moving.

How do you handle such a crisis after eleven o' clock at night in a remote mountain area? A Correctional Officer and I were the only staff in the camp. I remembered a similar incident when I was

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*How do you  
handle a crisis at  
11 o'clock at  
night in a remote  
mountain area?*

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visiting Maxwell Jones at his Henderson Hospital community. The nurse on duty had gotten everyone up and held a crisis group then and there. I didn't know what would happen at this early stage if I took similar action. But the men were concerned that Duke would make good his intentions to escape during the night, so they volunteered to take turns remaining with him until dawn and they'd bring it up in the meeting the following night. They had agreed to take on a tremendous responsibility.

The men left, thanking me for lending an ear, and cleared the room. I was concerned about Duke as he was one of those we'd brought from Soledad. And then I heard a ruckus outside my window; when I looked out, saw flashlights, and the men, including Duke, circling around a baby skunk that had lost its way in the dark. After futile attempts at rescue, they had to leave their clothing outside the barracks, take prolonged showers, and finally got to bed—all including Duke.

There were other times when we weren't so lucky. John P., another from Soledad, had been involved in armed robbery. He seemed to be getting along well, but was upset over his young wife who was having financial problems and found it difficult to manage emotionally without him. He confided to his best friend Tommy W. that he was thinking about escaping so he could be with her temporarily to settle things. But instead of bringing this information to the group, as Lash had, so they could help John, Tommy decided to accompany him; and so, one Sunday afternoon during visiting hours, when the camp was most relaxed, the two took off. They were later apprehended in Nevada, where they'd committed some robberies, and subsequently were sentenced to serve time in that state's prison.

The camp community was indeed

saddened by this, our first catastrophe. Some of the men felt guilty that they had not suspected that John was this depressed. He was what they called a "loner" and did not mix with many of them. They were angry with Tommy—that he'd not only let John down, but aided him when he was on the edge, and helped him to make this fatal decision. We were all grateful that at least they had not committed their robberies in the nearby community which would have jeopardized the project considerably at this early stage.

John wrote me shortly after being reconfined:

*How does one tell a person that he has let down, that he is extremely upset by an impetuous act on my part? Your kindness and help has made a mark in my way of life that will never be changed and I hope that some day I will be able to put to good use some of the things that I have learned. Please do not judge Duke too harshly for not stopping me, it was a last minute decision without the knowledge of anyone else. A person never realizes how much he is turning his back on until too late.*

*Please say hello to Duke for me and Tommy sends his best regards.*

He asked if we could save the mosaic he was working on before he escaped. Two years later, he wrote me from Soledad prison, where he'd been reconfined to serve his original sentence.

*Sometimes a person gets to thinking what am I? when there are so many that are alone to carry on, or to do the things that have to be done in this world, yet giving an opportunity to prove oneself. I have failed time and time again, maybe eventually I will do or be something that*



*people that have put their trust in me will say to themselves, "at last!"*

Sometime after John and his companion escaped, three others left together, again on a Sunday during visiting hours. Eleven escaped during the first year—three times the average for the other camps. By now, we were razzed by some of the custody officials that in contrast to most other escapes from Chino camps—which were individuals—*everything* we did was in groups!

When a man escapes from prison, it is much like he has died. Next of kin are informed, the police often visit his home to alert his family and see if he has returned. His personal belongings are inventoried and put into storage. His bed is remade and assigned to someone else. There are regrets by some inmates, and for others a sigh of relief that at least he is no longer incarcerated, even knowing that chances are slim that he'll beat the system.

THERE WERE RELAXING times at camp, especially on Sundays when the men were totally free of work. There were times when I took a group of those who

RESIDENTS  
ON HIKES  
IN THE  
MOUNTAINS ON  
OFF DUTY  
TIMES.



didn't have visitors hiking—it turned out they took me, for by now they knew their way in the forest. The cooks prepared us a picnic lunch and we took off for the better part of the day. Duke and Lash were usually along and brought their sketch pads. This was an intimate time with 10 of the men to enjoy nature. They looked

for wild flowers and birds, and found a mountain stream they traced to a waterfall that formed a lovely, clear pool at its base. Some took off their clothes and played as children under the cold waterfall and in the pool below.

During one hike, Duke said he wanted to tell me something. He wanted me to know that he hadn't *exactly* set me up, but in a way he had done just that. He had to know if I was *real* or not. When he'd confided in Lash that he was toying with the possibility of escaping from the camp, knowing that Lash was close to me, he was aware that Lash might inform on him. But he never considered the possibility that his friend would reveal his untold wish in a group of the other men. When I didn't turn him in that night and let *him* make the ultimate decision as to whether to escape or not, then he knew that I was *real*, as he put it, and it was safe for him to continue to explore himself.

I remembered an incident André Gide cited in one of his books where he watched in a mirror a boy steal an object and didn't do anything about it. The irony was that the boy knew that Gide had seen him in the mirror.

It was only sometime later that custodial officials at Chino raised the question of the extreme risk I had taken being in the forest alone with these men: they could have have taken me hostage and all escaped.

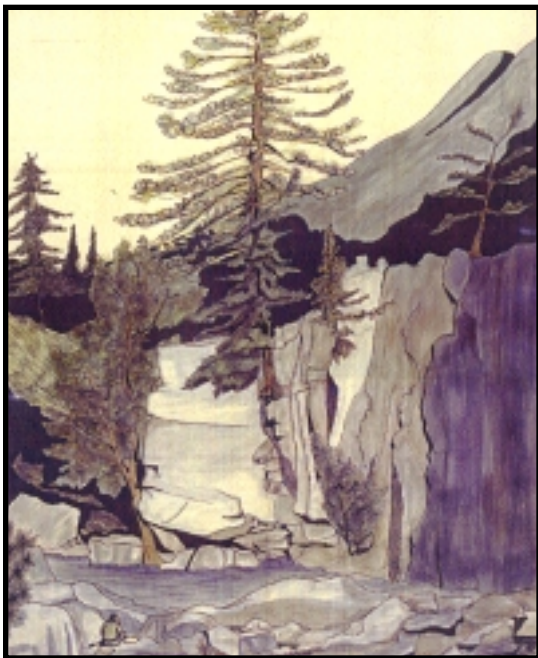
But they didn't.

The thought frankly had never entered my mind, but I also had difficulty imagining John robbing some one with a gun. I didn't know to what extent it was my naïveté or an instinctive response to the trust that had been built. In retrospect, I probably should have taken a correctional officer along—not for security reasons, but for the experience of interacting with the inmates in this fashion. But this was not possible, as only one was on duty on Sunday.



Being alone with the men in the forest was in some respects similar to the incident I recounted early in the camp's existence, when the lights went out during a meeting of the fire crew—the men were so engrossed in their discussion the blackout wasn't even mentioned. On this occasion there was only one Correctional Officer in the camp who was attending another meeting—and me. Once more, custodial officials pointed out in retrospect how the inmates could have taken advantage of the situation and all escaped, taking the two of us hostage.

Again they hadn't.



MOUNTAIN STREAM AS SEEN BY LASH

An important part of the answer could be found in understanding what was keeping the camp community together, despite the pressures from all angles—the work itself, the restrictions, different relationships between the inmates and staff, the scarcity of family visits, the recent escapes, and so on. I was amazed that most of the men held up so well. I don't recall that anyone seriously

asked to be removed from the camp, although some brought it up from time to time in the meetings.

Then my thoughts returned to August Aichhorn's experiences in his "school" for delinquents in Vienna. He wrote that it wasn't the methods you used, but the way you brought people into the reality of life *outside* institutions—his notion was to make institutional life "conform" to the social community outside.<sup>14</sup>

THE FIVE CORRECTIONAL Officers understandably, were having a difficult time learning how to function in this new



AS SEEN BY DUKE

setting. They had their required custodial duties to perform—counting the men at prescribed times, for instance. The officers also had to assume other duties they were not accustomed to at the prison, such as providing clothing, supplies, equipment, and food, for the men, and maintaining the camp.

Now they were called on to experiment with the human relations side as

well. Although everyone assumed that there would be a great deal of support and backing from the project administration, the Correctional Officers were also accountable ultimately to the prison's Captain. If a man escaped, there were reports to be written.

Conventional wisdom and their instructions had previously told them to maintain a certain distance from inmates. Just how much was not specified in their manual, but there were instructions such as that they were not to engage in sports activities *with* inmates. And they were even forbidden to sit on an inmate's bed—which in prison was often referred to as his "house." As the inmate had no chair (considered to be a potential weapon) the officer was placed in a rather authoritarian or intimidating position standing there looking down at an inmate who was sitting on his bed.

The philosophy of our project, in contrast, was to break down barriers between staff and inmates so that a new kind of relationship could occur. The inmates had preconceptions of the "bulls", as they were traditionally known. A primary dictum was to keep officers at a distance. We were trying to bridge that chasm. Floyd Chamlee was in a precarious position. His uniform symbolized blatant authority; his recent experience as a counselor had relied on moral authority. I remembered how much Harry Wilmer stressed the difference between being *authoritarian* and having *authority*.

Authoritarianism, an emotionally determined method of exercising authority, is one thing; it crushes by penalties all opinions save that of the one, ignores the feelings, wishes, and judgments of subordinates, yet demands obedience and conformance to an ideal of goals, tasks, and method decided by the

senior authority, with rewards and punishments following automatically and without exception. But *authority* is another matter; it implies responsibility accompanied by sufficient power to discharge it.

It is the way authority is used that distinguishes the therapeutic community. Here the person in authority makes an inexorable demand of an unusual order, which is this: while he is ready to lend the community his professional skills, the community is not to expect him to solve by administrative fiat, *ex cathedra* pronouncements, or punitive disciplinary measures those of its problems which are created for it by its own unruly members; instead it should join with him in regular discussions to identify and clarify such problems, to lay bare the nature of the tensions both personal and interpersonal that give rise to these problems, and to decide if and how these can be modified; and in all the authority demands for himself, his staff, and his patients, not co-equality of power or responsibility or role-status, but co-equality of human rights in such matters as opinion, feeling, and needs. These authoritative demands are neither small nor few, and are no simple matter for staff.<sup>15</sup>

The "residents" (we'd decided to use that term rather than *inmate* following a visit to Eric Trist at the Stanford think tank<sup>16</sup> were grappling with their dual feelings of real threat and desire to be closer to the staff. Carl W. (the psychologists' clerk) was very perceptive and had a good grasp on what we were doing,

wrote up some of his observations:

- **In his own words**

*The thing that stands out in my mind above all else while at Pilot Rock, is that the staff, though definitely qualified and interested, is nonetheless unable to attain the closeness to the men they desire. That is to say that to ever really understand men in prisons, whether it be in an honor camp or behind gray walls, the staff is going to have to win the trust and faith of the men. This can only be accomplished of course, by closer contact with the men. Pilot Rock is not sufficiently staffed for this operation. Inmates' hostilities toward staff and custody is an easy thing to understand, since the men, most of them that is, have resented any kind of authority for as long as they have lived.*

Carl's observations had caused me to think a great deal about the camp and what was happening there. In the early stages, the men had experimented with the new opportunities of camp life and with the limited freedom that they experienced. In addition to the escapes, it soon became known that some were taking off at night after the small group meetings and going on a "liquor run" to the nearest store in the community. Narcotics were also coming into the camp, and there was a considerable amount of gambling (forbidden by prison rules). These matters came up in the group constantly and, as there was no action taken by the staff, the group finally decided to police itself.

Carl, who often came to the camp as an observer, wrote:

- **In his own words**

*The antisocial behavior has practically ceased, but only due to the external pressure caused by the group's need to please the parent, and not because the individuals do not feel the need to act-out antisocially, or want to stop acting antisocially. After thinking a moment, I can think of suppression of antisocial behavior in this manner as almost antisocial in itself as it is providing for a need in the individual and not at all considering the feelings of those who are not strong enough to stand alone and need the support of the card game, needle, or the bottle. Custody wise, the camp now is in better shape than it would be with a ten-foot wall and a goon squad.<sup>17</sup> But as one fellow put it: "This camp seems to me sometimes like a volcano that someone keeps throwing water on but never does the fire go out."*

I wasn't sure what Carl meant specifically, however it was apparent that he was warning us that superficial conformity without understanding would be no different in its after-effects than any of the other programs in prison. His remarks about pleasing the parent also bothered me, for I'd sensed a kind of paternalism developing at the camp between the staff and the inmates. There was too much emphasis on individual counseling in my view, to the detriment of the groups. Besides, not enough of the material that inmates were now confiding in the staff, especially Floyd, came back into the group. The staff were beginning to experience the satisfaction of intimate personal revelations, similar to many practitioners in the helping professions. (Carl continued):

- **In his own words**

*Now, however, this relationship has progressed at Pilot Rock, the*





Drawing by Lash

“...THE PARENT HAS PROVIDED A TRUSTWORTHY RELATIONSHIP FOR THE CHILD, AND THE NEED WHICH IS EXTREMELY GREAT TO HAVE A PARENT CLOSE TO THEM.”

*parent has provided a trustworthy relationship for the child, and the need which is extremely great in some to have a parent close to them, is coming actively to the surface, and with this need, the feelings that accompany it, are fearful and require, if not understood or talked about, some means of escape. However, the need to do nothing to displease the parent overrides the need to escape as for the time being these feelings can be projected onto something else or denied or just suppressed.*

Carl had touched on the heart of the matter. As children learn to import people as good or bad objects into their psyches, residents were re-experiencing incorporation. Those who had experienced destructive identifications had adapted largely by surface conformity and manipulation. Now they were using the staff in a similar manner. We had selected men whom we believed had the capacity to utilize ambiguity to make new identifications, thus breaking from the mold of conformity. The stakes were high for the residents and would be apparent in the development of freer choices to fulfill their own needs, together with a new feeling of responsibility.

THE CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS were coming to some resolution about having to serve two masters and cautiously entered into the new program. In a short time, they were able to participate more freely in the groups. At first they were prone to giving typical “fatherly advice,” but soon found that advice was not what the inmates needed—or wanted. The officers became more observant, and they entered into new relationships with the men, such as in sports. This new involvement with the inmates and correctional officers caused a great deal of conflict within the officers at first, and with their

peers at the prison.

THE INMATES WERE struggling too: Don E., who was assigned as clerk for the second transitional community camp (Don Lugo), spent two months at Pilot Rock in preparation.

- **In his own words**

*When an inmate begins to trust an officer, he is having one of the greatest emotional fights within himself that he has ever experienced as an inmate. He feels many new things, none of which he is proud, for they are all a direct opposite to his past way of thinking—all against the so-called convict code. An inmate has to consider everything he does in prison very carefully. Firstly, for the staff or custody, his actions must appear as natural and not threatening. Secondly, in the eyes of his fellow inmates he must not look bad. Above all, he can never be connected with the term “snitch.” How does he handle all these feelings and still emerge as a winner in both the eyes of staff and his fellow inmates? Staff will have to concede to the reality that this does not place an inmate in a very enviable position.*

BY THE SUMMER (1960) we had a workable transitional community model. It was not ideal in the sense we had anticipated, but nonetheless, we had established a culture where 104 men and a staff of six were able to communicate effectively in the large and small groups and take stock of their roles and relationships. Conflicts arising in the work situation and those experienced socially were being brought into the meetings.

The family meetings on Sunday were well attended. Hobbies were abundant. Floyd Chamlee’s wife, an artist, had stimulated a good deal of interest in the



arts. The men collected manzanita roots while clearing fire trails which they made into lamps and art objects. Various other small groups had emerged: drama, languages, semantics, music, sports, weight-lifting, and so on. The residents and staff invited speakers from the outside. They assembled a library of donated books.

“The culture changed from restrictive to open,” concluded Fred Fromm, a writer and former inmate, who was employed by the research staff; “the regulations became less arbitrary, and inmates developed from merely being

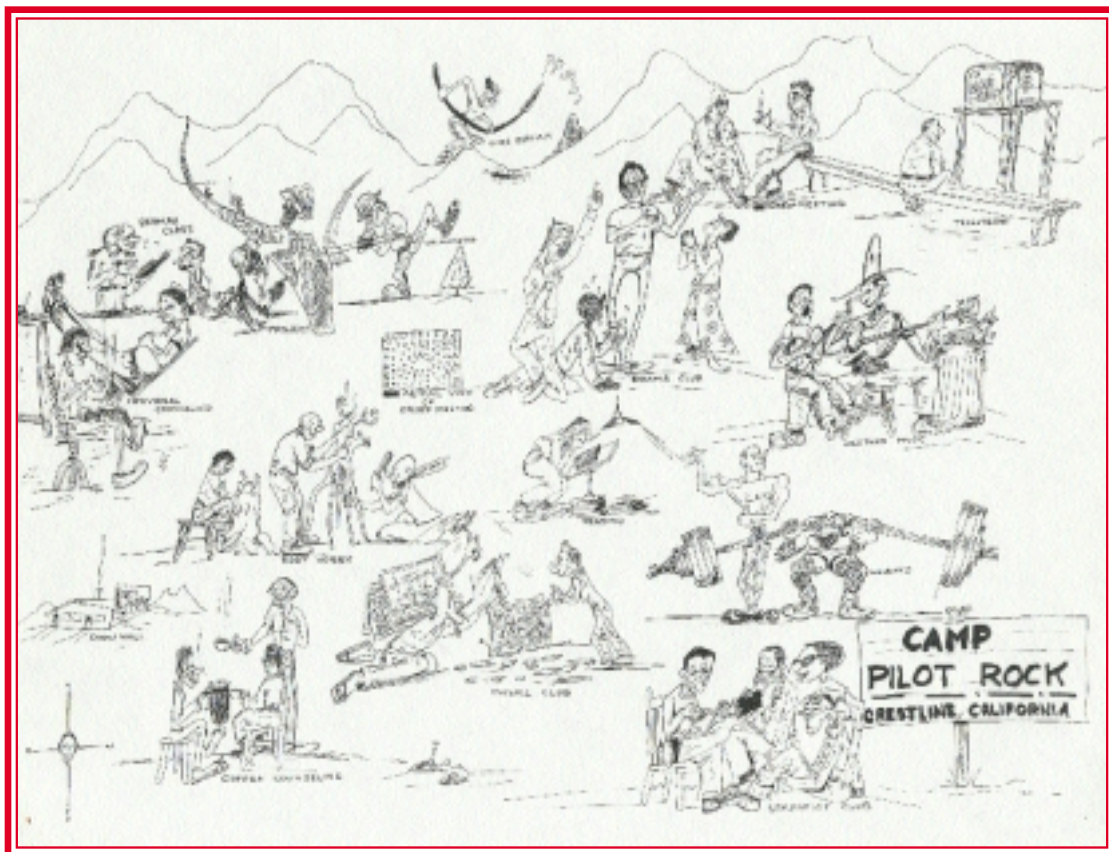
‘just inmates’ to participants in a total program that interrelated work and treatment demands.”<sup>18</sup>

There was a deluge of professional visitors from corrections as well as mental health and education, and the media.

The Los Angeles public radio station did a four hour documentary on the camp and its activities. True to their lifestyles, some of the residents boasted, in the interviews, about what they were doing and what was happening to them, for which their buddies subsequently attempted to hold them accountable.



DRAWING BY LASH





## CONSERVATION CAMP DON LUGO

(1961-1965)

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**T**HERE SEEMED TO be a general consensus that it would be advantageous to move the Pilot Rock program to the new forestry camp that was now under construction adjacent to the prison at Chino. Simultaneously, the second transitional community (Pine Hall) was begun on the grounds of the main institution (September, 1960). The same criteria for selection was applied and a similar program was developed.

One of the most pressing remaining problems was that of communication between the two separate staffs in the camp. "A lack of regular, consistent participation in the group meetings by Division of Forestry personnel enabled the inmate members to continue to manipulate these staff against Correctional Officers, and thus avoid looking at their own behaviors."<sup>19</sup>

As plans for the new camp community began to take form, a two year agreement was made with the forestry service to lower the size of the camp to approximately 80 men and have daily community meetings of 40 minutes five times a week, held first thing in the morning, with an hour long meeting on Saturday. In addition, the fire crews would meet for 45 minutes following a post-review staff meeting of the large group. The Forestry Foremen would now participate in the meetings.

Don Lugo's ready access to C.I.M. allowed the men more frequent contacts with their families, and cross-fertilization with the new community at the main institution. The position of the admin-

istrator of the camp was reclassified to a Supervisory Counselor in keeping with the administration of the two new communities being formed at C.I.M., and two additional counselor positions were added. The staff was now totally integrated into the project.

Early in the history of the program at Pilot Rock, men who had histories of arson, rape, child molestation and escape in their records, were excluded. As the camp settled down at its new location, these restrictions were relaxed. There were three escapes in the three and a half years Don Lugo was in operation and no "instances of danger to the public, despite almost daily contact with the public on the work projects away from the camp."<sup>20</sup>

The new location of the camp made it possible for Parole Agents to visit the camp and attend meetings. Some brought parolees to meetings to acquaint the residents with some of the situations they might encounter upon release and to give these parolees a sense of what they'd accomplished.

Family groups brought others into the program and afforded the residents

additional information about social behavior outside the camp. These meetings allowed the residents to try out changes they had made with others. While some family relationships became closer, others appeared to move further apart. As residents gained understanding, they often times felt that people they formerly had been close to no longer fulfilled the same needs as before. In short, some saw that they had outgrown relationships.

With more time for group discussion, a more fluid structure and more involvement, the camp community reached a point where it appeared to be flooded with information. So much material was becoming known openly, that other means for using it were needed. Committees appeared, new roles were conceived.

- An **Advisory Council**, similar to those in other prisons, was formed where residents met with the staff to discuss physical matters of the camp.
- A **Recreation Committee** handled sports activities and hobbies.
- An **Orientation Committee** greeted new members and got them settled in camp.
- An **Arts and Crafts Group** formed around the camp supervisor's wife.
- A **Branch Canteen** opened, entirely operated by the residents.
- A **Welfare Fund** assisted residents when they were broke.
- A **Research Clerk** was added to help the Research Technician collect, compile, and analyze data on project activities and functions.

Monthly social get-togethers of residents, their families, and those of the staff, held in the evening, gave residents

an opportunity to socialize and enter into other activities such as playing games. Residents sometimes saved up their sugar allotments to donate to visitors to bake cakes, and so on. Mr. Fromm reports, "There were no instances of misbehavior, embarrassment, nor subtle intrigue, during the two and a half years get-togethers were held."<sup>21</sup>

When new residents entered camp, they were shown around by members of the Orientation Committee and in the evening they met with the Advisory Counsel composed of one representative of each of the five fire crews. Many of the new arrivals were "shocked" at the informality of the camp and having no "big yard" to cope with. Everyone in camp knew each other well and there was little idle time.

Within a few weeks, however, things began to change for new arrivals. The work was hard, the groups were fatiguing. Some felt more confined due to the lack of privacy and confrontations. They often let down their guard and began to resume delinquent activities. According to the culture, this meant that the transition was beginning to take place. Now the new resident began to experience the futility of his former behavior. He could no longer manipulate people as he had been accustomed to. And the other residents seemed to ignore him. He felt in limbo and indeed he was.

As the weeks went by and he observed newer arrivals, he could see that something was happening to him and he became more curious as to what was going on in this place that seemed so disorganized. Beneath the chaos, there were certain consistencies and regularities. There was the community meeting for one thing; everything came out there whether it was acted on or not. His fire crew meeting was more intimate and focused. He cautiously got interested in sports or

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*Some saw that they had outgrown relationships.*

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hobbies, and he might attend the monthly social. Oftentimes his delinquent ways ceased and he appeared to be depressed. He entertained thoughts of escaping and it would not be difficult to do.

But over time, he cautiously entered into more activities of camp life and things began to make more sense. Someone might urge him to become active in one of the committees and even put pressure on him to do so. Little by little, he participated more in the activities and revealed more of himself in the groups. The process seemed to take about six to eight months but of course, it didn't proceed all that smoothly. There were many ups and downs and re-starts from making bad judgements.

The staff were similarly absorbed into the project and seemed to follow a three-stage growth process: exclusion, inclusion, and finally incorporation. Regardless of their background, new staff came into the project with some degree of expertise. As they attempted to use their skills, they often found that they were not appropriate in the new situation and therefore not valued.

After attempting to counsel, advise, or "correct" residents, they seemed to become less active and more observant. They found that they weren't expected to perform any given set of tasks, but to become acquainted with the program and the residents.

For the next two months or so, they went through a period of being incor-

porated into the community. They learned where they could go to get help in understanding, which included the residents. She or he had to find a role that was compatible with the project and in which the incumbent felt comfortable. This turn of events was often accompanied by the staff member being the co-leader of a small group.

Over a period of about six months, new staff felt comfortable enough to risk trying new things to see what would work or not work.

THE FORESTRY STAFF underwent many of the changes that the correctional officers and counselors experienced. As they got more involved in the total program, many became quite skilled in the groups and handling situations outside them. In addition to attending the community meetings, each forestry foreman met with his fire crew as a small group with one of the counseling staff as a co-leader.

When the two year agreement with the Division of Forestry was over and community meetings were divided between the work day and evenings, some of the forestry personnel attended on their own time. The project administrator reported that even after the project ended, forestry personnel requested that the daily meetings during work time be continued—with their presence.<sup>22</sup>

## FINALLY...

**W**HAT STARTED OUT as a small pilot project in a forestry camp took off much more rapidly than any of us anticipated and was to have a wider effect on the Department of Corrections than originally intended. We had a lot of good fortune along with support and encouragement from the local and higher administrations.

The response of the inmate residents was the singly most impressive aspect to me and to visitors alike. All entered into the experiment with enthusiasm, trust, and the belief that what they were undertaking would benefit both themselves and residents to come. I was often amazed at their tolerance and forbearance while we were exploring different ways to learn together.

The men worked hard under difficult circumstances: clearing brush and so on during the day and then they attended the community meeting and sometimes small groups in the evenings. When there were fires, all other activities ceased and many times their lives were put in peril. The men received very little recognition for these efforts. Furthermore, they risked revealing their innermost thoughts and having their behavior put before the entire community, and most certainly, via the grapevine, to the whole prison population. In a remarkably short time, the residents successfully broke through the time-honored convict's code of ethics and gave us their trust. Personally, I only have to think back to my own temerity and how they respected me.

The staff likewise underwent a spectacular metamorphosis. The correctional officers took a gamble with their

futures. If the project fell short of its expectations, their participation might affect them adversely. I was in an easier predicament; while still on a probationary civil service appointment, I had potential opportunities to draw on if we failed. And if I erred, some expected that. But the correctional officers had more at stake. If they took certain risks, they could be held accountable; their careers might be jeopardized. As if that was not enough, they had to face the guffaws if not outright ridicule from fellow correctional officers.

What was common to all of us was the feeling that destiny hovered. We were on the brink of a New Frontier, a term that was about to be uttered.

We had little actual criticism from the many visitors who came to the mountains to view for themselves what they had heard was hap-

pening there. The comments and suggestions of the professionals were mainly concerned with detail rather than with substance. What was important was their very presence, a unifying agent that enhanced what we were doing.

We always held a meeting with visitors which some of the residents attended, to get their views. Often we were concerned that what they saw seemed easy, requiring little effort.

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To see Correctional Officers without uniforms was a small part of what that symbolized or had taken place to reach this point in the community's development. Hearing residents confront each other (or a staff member) in a group of 80 or 100 was impressive to most visitors, but that ability had taken time, patience, trust, pain, training, skill—and experience—to come about. The Project was much more than collecting a score of individuals together and seating them in concentric circles.

Many times I wondered what I had let loose when I learned of others who were planning similar experiments. How much training and experience would they need—would they get? I was continually discomfited that people might go away with only techniques to employ, rather

than understanding the essence of the total program. What mattered to me was the evolution of what we were doing and the firm groundwork that we had laid.

I was also excited about what was to follow on. We were already well along with the planning stages of the first community within the prison. There were staff who wanted to be part of our first undertaking but who had not wanted to make the move to the mountains. There were inmates who wanted to become involved, but who did not qualify for placement in camp. And there was the greater challenge—could we pull this off inside a large prison? I believed we could, but little did I anticipate the many frustrations and obstacles to building a new culture within an existing one—what a friend later termed a “ghetto of freedom.”



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 Harry Wilmer, "The Role of the 'Rat' in the Prison," *Federal Probation*, 29:44-49. (March, 1965).
- 2 Harry Wilmer, "Group Treatment of Prisoners and Their Families," *Mental Hygiene*, 50:380-389. (July, 1966) (co-author).
- 3 Maxwell Jones, *Social Psychiatry in the Community, in Hospitals, and in Prison*. Springfield, Illinois: (Charles C. Thomas, 1962).
- 4 Clyde Sullivan, Marguerite Grant, and J. Douglas Grant, "The Development of Interpersonal Maturity: Applications to Delinquency." *Psychiatry* 20:373-385 (November, 1957); J. Douglas and Marguerite Grant, "A Group Dynamics Approach to the Treatment of Nonconformists in the Navy," *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science* 322:126-135. (1959). Doug Grant's theory of personality integration bore a striking resemblance to the system of Chakras, which trace the path to consciousness.
5. Maxwell Jones, op. cit..
6. Maxwell Jones, op. cit., 87.
- 7 Maxwell Jones, "Nurse-Patient Interaction on the Ward, (*Pennsylvania Psychiatric Quarterly*, 1961):22.
8. Maxwell Jones, 1962, op. cit..
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, 140-143.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 12 Robert Lindner, *Must You Conform?* (New York: Rinehart, 1956)
- 13 Maxwell Jones, *Maturation of the Therapeutic Community: An Organic Approach to Health and Mental Health*. (New York: Human Sciences, 1976).
14. Aichhorn cautioned about the danger of losing sight of developing social rehabilitation to fit the needs of clients for life outside institutions: "There is a great danger in an institution that the individuality of the child does not develop along lines best suited to his needs but that rules are laid down in accordance with administrative requirements which reduce the child to a mere inmate with a number". August Aichhorn, *Wayward Youth*. (New York: Viking, 1925): 150. Harry Wilmer also recognized the importance of "deinstitutionalizing" inmates which he emphasized in his therapeutic community at San Quentin, to be discussed in Part 3.
- 15 Harry Wilmer, *Social Psychiatry in Action: A Therapeutic Community*. (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1958):13.
16. The Center for the Advanced Study of the Behavioral Sciences, funded by the Ford Foundation, located adjacent to Stanford University. Each year approximately 50 distinguished social and behavioral scientists were awarded fellowships for one year to pursue their studies.
17. Term used to identify an unofficial group of custodial officers who handle troublesome inmates, frequently using physical force, and are protected from revelation by the officer's code of silence.
- 18.. Fred Fromm, *The Intensive Treatment Program: Phase II*. [Application of Therapeutic Community concepts in Correctional Programming as applied in a demonstration project conducted at the California Institution for Men. A Condensation of Working Papers] (Sacramento, California: California Department of



Corrections Research Report, 1966),  
71.

19. *Ibid.*, 53.

20. *Ibid.*,

21. *Ibid.*, 113

22. *Ibid.*