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The science of charity: The social network that restructured law and order in Baltimore, 1881-1901

Hope Elizabeth Byers

James Madison University

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The Science of Charity
The Social Network that Restructured Law and Order in Baltimore, 1881 – 1901
Hope E. Byers

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments ........................................................................................................... ii
List of Figures .................................................................................................................. iv
Abstract ............................................................................................................................ v
Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 1
I. Organizing Charity: Efficiently Saving Souls ................................................................. 22
II. Policing and Punishing Pauperism .................................................................................. 47
III: Expanding Methods of Reform: From Reformatories to City Jail ..................... 76
Epilogue: ........................................................................................................................... 105
Appendix ......................................................................................................................... 114
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 117
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Map of Officer Welsh’s Beat .................................................................114
Figure 2: Map of Officer Welsh’s Beat .................................................................114
Figure 3: Ethnicity of Neighborhood ..................................................................115
Figure 4: Graph of Peace-Cases in Baltimore City Jail .................................116
ABSTRACT

Social networks undeniably build more cohesive ideologies between its members. Historians can better understand the path that urban reform took at the end of the nineteenth by focusing on the social networks that participated in many different reform efforts. In Baltimore, a group of elite businessmen began a variety of association and societies to aid the poor in their midst. The Charity Organization Society best combined this group of men. The Charity Organization Society of Baltimore sought to uplift the poor through advice rather than monetary aid. The group’s campaign to remove alms distribution from the police department in the mid-1880s inspired other societies and associations to call for reform in policing and punishment. This work untangles how the Charity Organization Society’s activities inspired groups like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, and Women’s Christian Temperance Union to force changes in methods of policing, criminal sentencing, and punishing. Most importantly is that each organization was controlled by one or more of the elite Baltimoreans that began the COS. Using annual reports from each organization, the city jail, city legislation, and newspapers, this narrative adds a new perspective on early, urban progressive reform. It especially emphasizes how Baltimore’s social network of elite reformers transformed city government structure before widespread calls for government intervention began.
“A TERRIFIC BLOW…A MURDER ON AMITY STREET” read the Baltimore Sun on the morning of August 10th, 1896. Richard M. Lyons, described as “forty years of age, tall and muscular” struck his step-daughter Amelia Shipley, thirty four years of age, with a sledge hammer. Neighbors told reporters that Lyons was “insane” and “struck the blow while under the delusion that he was being pursued by enemies.” A widowed mother of four, Shipley lived with her mother and step-father. Witnesses Annie Klein and Nathan Ulman described the events that led to the deadly blow and claimed the Shipley and Lyons had been “quarreling for some time.” Ulman stated “it became so loud that the whole neighborhood was alarmed about 3 o’clock in the afternoon.” Just forty-two minutes later, Officer Randolph G. Welsh “was passing and came rushing up.” Welsh burst open the door of the home, as a crowd was building in front of the house.  

Mr. Ulman’s description of the scene inside the home read like a crime novel.

“The woman was lying on the floor in the center of the room with blood flowing from a

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1 R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
2 “A Terrific Blow,” Sun (Baltimore), August 10, 1896.
wound in her head and Lyons was standing beside her. He was looking intently at her. Near his feet was the sledgehammer with which he had struck the blow.” Welsh quickly walked in to retrieve Lyons and the murder weapon. He then led Lyons to the police station while Shipley was taken to the Maryland University Hospital, where she expired a short time later.  

The incident on Amity Street that August afternoon and the subsequent newspaper report do not just tell of a violent, disturbing incident, it begs us to ask questions. First and foremost, were there resources that Amelia Shipley and her mother could have employed to control Lyons’s delusions? Why does Officer Welsh only apprehend the assailant and take his weapon? Did he not feel any urgency to get Shipley medical care? The story also elicits additional questions about the environment in which the event took place. For example, what roles and responsibilities did police officers fulfill in the late-nineteenth century? One also wonders about the family. What resources did a poor, single mother like Amelia have? Would the city provide aid to Mrs. Lyons, who became the caretaker of four children and lost her husband (the income provider) in one afternoon? And what about Lyons? Did the prison system provide him with medical care? Could he work in the prison to provide for his family?

Officer Welsh’s small notebook opened a window into the one-on-one interactions between government officials and the urban dwellers. In 1895, Officer Welsh took a small notebook and began filling the pages with his daily interactions. A beat cop for the city of Baltimore, Randolph G. Welsh logged the details of his arrests in chronological order, including the charges, victims, witnesses, addresses, date, time, fine

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3 “A Terrific Blow,” Sun (Baltimore), August 10, 1896.
4 I describe Shipley and family as poor because the newspaper report described their home as “poorly furnished” and that Amelia and her children were found barefoot.
amount, judge, and judgment from September 1, 1895 to March 17, 1898.\(^5\) Paging through Welsh’s notebook led to a final question: How did Baltimore city manage the urban poor? Baltimore in the 1890s was seventh largest city in the country boasting over four hundred thousand residents.\(^6\) A city of that size would certainly contain structures in place to manage the droves of poor people in its midst. My research identified four structures that served the urban poor, be it delinquent or law-abiding: the city jail, the police department, private reformatories, and private charity organizations. Authority over the poor transferred hands in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century; some structures gained authority while others lost authority. The internal organization of these structures evolved as each pushed and forced change on the other organizations. This work seeks to untangle those influences that forced internal change, to trace shifts in authority, and to examine why such changes occurred.

The urban poor of Baltimore were managed by a variety of movements. In the last half of the century, public education in Baltimore had poor management and lacked standards for teachers or graduation. Most impoverished families chose to send their children to work instead of school, as many needed the extra income.\(^7\) Baltimore’s vast commercial expansion also put the urban poor at the mercy of landlords. Frequent moves by poor families were also forced by public improvement advocates who sought to destroy places of gambling and vice by widening streets and tearing down whole blocks in order replace them with more respectable homes. Unskilled laborers were also deeply

\(^5\) R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
affected by the business depression that occurred every couple years and in winters. As historian Sherry Olson noted in good times laborers in the building trades worked only 200 days a year, black brickmakers only 155. Therefore many of Baltimore’s urban poor in the late-nineteenth century were restricted by a variety of structures without available resources to improve their condition. In order to control the behavior of this uneducated, transient poor the Baltimore city jail, Charity Organization Society, and the police department had the most direct methods to control activities of the poor. Additionally all these entities were influenced by evolving notions on methods of uplifting the poor and about the origins of poverty.

Following the Civil War, massive industrial expansion initiated the divide between managerial middle-class and the working-class. Artisanal work withered as the unskilled labor class grew and pushed down income. As some individuals and families struggled to make ends meet, others were amassing immense amounts of wealth. In the 1870s, America boasted only 100 millionaires. In 1892, the New York Tribune counted over four thousand. Some of these nouveau riche, out of Christian duty or for perceived civility, gave away large sums of money for the betterment of society. Their donations affected the way a variety of social problems were managed. Donations for entire universities changed the way whole cities operated while the building of reformatories and orphanages expanded the publicity of urban poverty. An entire private sector of charitable organizations sprang up.

In Baltimore, Maryland, large philanthropic gifts changed the city’s landscape and expanded educational opportunities. Wealthy Baltimoreans like Johns Hopkins and

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Enoch Pratt earned their money in wholesale businesses and wise investment ventures. Luckily for Baltimore both men never bore children, which may have enhanced their desire to give money for the public good. Hopkins set aside a large sum of money in 1870 for the creation of a hospital as well as medical and nursing training colleges. The college eventually became the center of the discussions on how to manage charity and corrections for the city.\(^{10}\) Enoch Pratt bequeathed a large sum to the city for the erection of a public library in 1882, which was to be free for the public and open to all members of society.\(^{11}\) The creation of the Enoch Pratt Library and Johns Hopkins University were large donations towards the betterment of society, but connected in only cursory fashion with the lower classes.

Instead, Baltimore’s police and prison officers interacted most with the urban poor during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. These officers, whether on their beat or on the cell block, regularly interacted with the struggling poor of Baltimore. In the 1870s, it was the police department’s responsibility to manage activities of the poor through distribution of alms and enforcement of the law. In the last twenty years of the century, charity organizers usurped the distribution of alms while anti-vice associations pressured the department to focus on professionalizing law enforcement. Prison wardens too were supposed to manage the poor by reducing recidivism. In the late 1870s, wardens felt minimal pressure to reform their inmates; instead, they simply housed prisoners and made them perform productive labor. An expanding movement for reforming those in poverty pressured Baltimore city jail wardens to change their methods for punishing


criminals. By the end of the century, wardens were required to have a positive impact on prisoners and prepare them for success outside of their stone walls. By the end of the nineteenth century, Baltimore’s city jail had a daily routine that paralleled private juvenile reformatories.

The narrative of one person cannot begin to reveal the situation of the urban poor in Baltimore. Only through the experiences and actions of a variety of individuals can we understand how the city managed poverty on an individual and aggregate basis. In addition to the police department and city jail, private associations and institutions enforced a moral code on the needy poor. The charity organizations provided advice and aid to poor families yet worked together to prevent almsgiving to the “unworthy” poor. Reformatories and industrial schools removed juvenile offenders from the city jail and taught middle-class values in order to reform their inmates. “Worthy” and “unworthy” poor were old definitions used by mid-century reformers but lingered through the rest of the century. The two categories were based on a variety of factors including a person’s piety, morality, cleanliness, and reputation. Despite charity organizers claims to advanced scientific methods of research and analysis, middle-class moralizing crept into their methods of practice and eventually influenced the 1898 New City Charter to codify the categorical system of “worthy” and “unworthy” into the justice system.

The eradication of poverty was only one of a great number of reforms sparked in the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century, an era that came to be called the Progressive Era. The era is regarded as the period between 1890 and 1920, when political machines fell and progressive reformers took office. The periodization of the era was grounded on political history and caused historians to argue that one of the main
components of this movement was the belief that government intervention could positively impact society. Historian James B. Crooks claimed that the political overthrow of the Democratic political machine in Baltimore, in 1895, began the progressive movement in the city.\textsuperscript{12} Crooks, however, tried to analyze progressivism as a social movement while using a political timeline. Many social reforms that progressives called for could be achieved without government interference. The research on the social reforms of the 1880s and 1890s concluded that Gilded Age politics and social Darwinist theory prevented measurable changes. If one ignores the commonly accepted periodization as well as the assumptions about urban life in the late-nineteenth century and looks through political corruption, a vast network of social reformers appear. That network of individuals built a number of associations and organizations that attacked poverty and city government from a variety of angles. So despite the variety of organization names found in this work, the same group of men began the push that each association brought to fruition.

Historian Michael McGerr argued that progressives were middle-class individuals who disregarded both socialism and individualism. Instead, this “radical center” believed that between socialism and individual lay association or a “sense of neighborliness.” Progressives promoted security, intelligence, humanity, and order as cornerstones of society. McGerr contended that they were successful because unlike any other group in society, the progressive middle-class had a clear agenda, which included a “powerful blend of reworked domesticity, restrained pleasure, antiindividualism, association, and state power.” McGerr’s work revealed a middle-class core of reform. However,\textsuperscript{12}

Baltimore reformers in the 1880s and 1890s did not fit neatly into the scheme McGerr identified. As this work will argue, Baltimore reformers-wealthy or middle-class-rejected increased state power, promoted self-reliance, and rarely questioned domesticity, even if they did promote the canons of restricted pleasure and increased association.¹³

Baltimore reformers, who focused on bettering the lot of their urban poor, fit more directly into the interpretation of Robert Wiebe. Wiebe argued in *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, that new, middle-class professionals sought to create a rationalized, bureaucratic culture and force its perspective onto social and political infrastructures. Friendly visitors or civil service reformers, Baltimore’s middle-class called for efficiency, standardization, and specialization. Wiebe’s 1967 monograph was written in response to Richard Hofstader, who argued that progressives were anxious elites who feared losing political and social influence. Hofstader’s backward looking progressives sought reform out of self-interest. This perspective on progressives was powerful in its time, but a glance at the list of individuals who attended Baltimore’s 1887 conference on charities and corrections can dispel any monolithic image of progressives. Clergyman, middle-class women, college professionals, wealthy businessmen, judges, and successful attorneys were too broad a group to share similar anxieties about losing social influence.¹⁴

This essay will show that progressives were individuals that struggled to increase association, enforced middle-class values, increased efficiency in government, and argued for reformative, rather than punitive, methods for managing the poor. One

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important difference between Baltimore’s early progressives and twentieth century progressives is their confidence in government. After the Baltimore’s Great Fire of 1904, city planning became important to rebuilding the city and required government intervention. In the 1880s and 1890s, Baltimore reformers rarely called for government expansion; instead, they exclaimed the inefficiency of government operations. Police and city jail operations, to reformers, wasted valuable resources and failed to lower poverty or criminal activity. In response, reformers usurped as much authority from government as possible. For those duties that reformers could not take on, they instead climbed on their soap box and damned the city into internal efficiency.

But why did Baltimore reformers, despite being progressive, argue against government power? Many still subscribed to the ideas of social evolution and laissez-faire economics which prevented their support of government intervention. Instead, they encouraged charity organizers to find private solutions to poverty. Their belief in limited intervention was solidified by a popular theory of the time: social Darwinism. Social Darwinists believed that biological theories could be applied to humans, population pressure caused competition allowing for progress, and that interfering with natural selection could threaten progress. Historian Richard Hofstadter wrote that social Darwinism became popular because scientific theory of natural selection reflected the cutthroat industrial society of America. In short, according to Hofstadter, America was ripe for the adoption of social Darwinism. Social Darwinism, as historian James Allen Rogers contended, “offered the public authority of science by which they could attempt to legitimatize their private vision of human progress.” Historians like Irvin Wyllie and R. J. Wilson challenged Hofstadter and argued that businessmen did not justify their
actions using the theory of social Darwinism. Even though businessmen may not have personally identified their actions with social Darwinism, their actions reflected basic assumptions of the theory by stressing individual achievement and condemning almsgiving as detrimental to society. More pervasive than the ideals themselves was the social evolutionary discourse that posited a racial hierarchy, this discourse helped judges, police officers, and charity agents to determine the “worthiness” of an individual.

As Baltimore’s elite struggled to understand why crime and poverty increased, they rejected certain parts of social Darwinism in favor of the progressivism. Seen as mutually exclusive today, the two were easily combined by reformers in the 1880s and 1890s. Darwinism offered answers to biological and social differences between races and ethnicities, while progressivism offered tactics for managing the social problems.

Attitudes towards African Americans most clearly show the Darwinist attitude. The mass migration of African Americans to Baltimore from rural Maryland and Virginia forced the city to confront issues of poverty, education, as well as housing and labor shortages. In Baltimore, African Americans became segregated in back alleys in the smallest homes. Few if any efforts were put forth to help the African American community adjust to post-emancipation life because “according to the credo of Social Darwinism, Negro slums, if left along would dwindle away.” Legal historian Garrett Power stated that Baltimoreans, conservative or radical, believed a dole to the poor African American would only prevent their progress and encourage idleness. Therefore, an individual seeking social reform in

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the 1880s could reject one-to-one charity to a pauper because social evolutionary
discourse claimed that any interference with a man’s progress was harmful to the
environment, while still recognizing that poor single mothers required assistance from an
efficient, organized almsgiver. Mindsets like these occurred because racial hierarchies
placed women and children as dependent to men, therefore support for women and
children in need was not a deterrent to progress. Or as one social reformer claimed, social
reformers were “physicians of society” and must meddle in society wisely and only
enough to cure the problem.17 This meant that the majority of reforms directed at the poor
supported measures that encouraged one’s duty to support themselves, doles were only
provided if absolutely necessary.18 In short, the individuals who pushed through early
progressive reforms in Baltimore accepted that social evolutionary processes existed and
believed through efficient giving the “worthy” would thrive and the “unworthy” would
wane.

Some key associations and legislative acts that affected the urban poor marked the
eyear Progressive Era for Baltimore. The police department was removed of its
responsibility to care for delinquent women, children as well as those in need of
donations. First, the Charity Organization Society, created by a group of upper crust
Baltimoreans, but run by middle-class men and women, investigated all cases of need
before providing aid. Second, the Police Matrons, a group of women designated to
provide aid and advice for women and juvenile delinquents further limited the authority
of the police. Third, the Society for the Suppression of Vice, some Baltimore attorneys

18 Richard Paul Fuke, “Race and Public Policy in Post-Emancipation Baltimore” in From Mobtown to
Charm City: New Perspectives on Baltimore’s Past, ed. Jessica I Elfenbein, John R. Breihan and Thomas
L. Hollowak (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002), 142.
who dedicated a vast amount of time pressuring city boards and the police department to enforce laws on gambling, prostitution, and saloons. Also, the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association and the Visitors to the City Jail fought for improvements in conditions in the Baltimore City Jail that made their internal management very similar to private reformatories. Lastly, the New City Charter of 1898 successfully eliminated the spoils system, created an efficient bureaucracy for many city structures, and updated criminal codes to further restrict violators of the peace. Despite the fact that many of these groups pressured the city government to fulfill its duties, they did not believe that government should take on the responsibility of supplying aid for the poor.

In addition to the historiography on progressivism and social Darwinism, this work has depended on the research of historians on philanthropy and social work, police history, and criminal justice history. Although social work as a profession did not begin until well into the twentieth century, many social work histories have emphasized the origins which lie in the charity organization movement and settlement house movement. The field has also grown in recent years to include philanthropy studies, which vastly expanded the number of available sources. Police history is less popular and has received limited analytical research. Criminal justice history too is sparse but diverse in topic choice, those historians of legal history have at times fallen into this category, while authors on prison reform fit nicely, but tend to analyze the early nineteenth century. In spite of the limited secondary resources, a few key works have contributed greatly to this thesis.

Two works on police force operations, one general narrative and the other analytical, provided a great base for the first chapter. First, Clinton McCabe’s 1906
narrative of the Baltimore police force from its beginnings in the late-eighteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century simply captured the changes within a particular organization, without understanding their significance. McCabe’s work provided detailed changes in the structure of the department as well as information on the day-to-day experience of officers. Eric Monkkonen wrote *Police in Urban America, 1860-1920*, which argued that police officers held both a positive and negative position in society. They distributed alms to the poor and enforced law and order. Monkkonen claimed that standardization and efficiency of the department was inevitable as a corporate structure became standard at the end of the century, but reformers’ usurpation of the police department’s positive role was unexpected. As a result, police departments became controllers of the “dangerous class” of criminal poor. Baltimore’s state-controlled, city-funded police department reinforces Monkkonen’s argument, as it went through this exact process.\(^\text{19}\)

Unfortunately, prison history remains just as limited as police history. The majority of scholarship analyzed early creation of American penitentiaries. Late-nineteenth century historians turned their focus to industry, politics, or culture while criminal justice faded into the background as a kind of static social structure. Rebecca McLennan, in *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776-1941*, argued that profit-making became central to prison administration. In the North and West, contract prison labor, where business enterprises paid the state to put prisoners to work in highly-organized, profit-seeking enterprises, thrived. McLennan stated that by 1880, the contract prison system was in favor in every

\(^{19}\text{Clinton McCabe, } History of the Baltimore Police Department, 1774-1907 \text{ (Baltimore, MD: Fleet-McGinley Co. Printers, 1907); Eric H. Monkkonen, } Police in Urban America, 1860-1920 \text{ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).}
state within the nation.\textsuperscript{20} Although compelling, her argument maintained the standard business control of government narrative posited by bygone historians of the Gilded Age. McLennan did display the transition from Gilded Age convict labor to Progressive Era interventionism quite well. She showed that pockets of industrial workers and farmers began to question the system and pushed for investigations into prison policy.\textsuperscript{21} McLennan’s monograph remains unique because most historians failed to analyze prison policy in the Gilded Age. McLennan’s narrative may ring true for large-scale penitentiaries in this period, but in Baltimore, charitable associations, not workers and farmers, encouraged internal reforms. More research is needed on local city jails to further appreciate the impact of imprisonment on social structures; this work seeks to begin that much needed analysis.

Most histories of the post-bellum era tend to include penitentiaries under a large umbrella of social problems, and focus on the vices that urban elites sought to combat. Studies of prostitution, larceny, gambling, and drunkenness placed public actions in the background to “new” private outreach programs led by churches, women’s organizations, and white elite reformers. Timothy Gilfoyle, for example, examined the underbelly of New York City in two of his monographs, \textit{The City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920} and \textit{A Pickpocket’s Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York}. His monographs covered the rise of prostitution into a pervasive part of city life and the criminal enterprises of opium dens, brothels, and money laundering. Penitentiary policy and experience were more deeply analyzed in \textit{A}

\textsuperscript{21} McLennan, \textit{The Crisis of Imprisonment}, 137.
Pickpocket’s Tale than in The City of Eros. Although he touched on major policies of convict labor and corporal punishment, Gilfoyle failed to reveal the influences for policy changes.\footnote{22}{Timothy J. Gilfoyle, City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); Timothy J. Gilfoyle, A Pickpocket’s Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).}

The study of philanthropy, also less popular than studies on vice, has recently captured historians’ attention. Whether in the creation of museums, theaters, or outreach programs, philanthropists and reformers alike thought that creating new urban places for refinement and education were important to uplifting the masses. As Thomas Adam displayed in his transnational analysis, Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s, philanthropy was popular for elites because it gave an opportunity for social mobility, it was an acceptable practice for both males and females, and it usually had undertones of religious piety. Adam stated that the act of providing endowments for large public projects was popular for the nouveau riche because it was a path to inclusion with the established elites of a city.\footnote{23}{Thomas Adam, Buying Respectability: Philanthropy and Urban Society in Transnational Perspective, 1840s to 1930s (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 95.} Although he concluded that giving to opera and ballet companies would be more popular than creating organizations for marginalized members of society, his analysis can still inform us of the mindset behind philanthropic deeds.

The study of philanthropy is new to historical scholarship. Olivier Zunz’s Philanthropy in America: A History, which was published in 2011, is one of the first comprehensive histories of American philanthropy. Zunz traced the development of giving from the philanthropic urges of great industrialists like Andrew Carnegie at the
end of the nineteenth century to the mass organized giving of the twentieth century. He argued that philanthropy began because individuals were able to “envision an unlimited agenda of works.” No longer confined to a particular cause, philanthropy promoted the bettering of mankind. Zunz optimistically argued that philanthropy in America has “enlarged” democracy. Although compelling, Zunz narrowly defined philanthropy and therefore restricts his periodization to post-Civil War period. A collection of essays edited by Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, published in 2003, encompasses the period from 1601 to 2001. Friedman, in the introduction, argued that philanthropic studies have been ignored by historians, which forced social workers and non-profit workers to drive the historical narrative. The collection of essays, according to Friedman, was a challenge against such narratives and a call to historians to professionalize the research on philanthropy. Useful as these two works are in content, their arguments ignore the complex relationships that philanthropists and charity organizers had with local government.24

The history of social work, as a profession, has also informed this work. Both the charity organization and settlement house movements contributed methods of practice for professional social work. Stanley Wenocur and Michael Reisch analyzed the development of professional social work through political and economic perspectives. Reisch and Wenocur argued that an organized effort by occupational entrepreneurs fought to “attain monopolistic control over a specialized competency.” The authors saw this organized effort as part of a larger movement beginning in the 1850s when numerous occupational groups actively began profession-building projects. Frank Bruno made a

similar argument in 1948, in his study based on the records of the National Conference of Social Work. Although Bruno dates professional social work’s beginnings earlier, in 1874, than Reisch and Wenocur who argued the process did not really start until the 1890s. John Ehrenreich then argued, in 1985, that professionalization of social work occurred after the turn of the century. The changes in charity management before this time were simply part of a process to rationalize society. Early charity outreach programs, like friendly visiting, imposed an American ideal of life based on specific habits, family patterns, and behaviors. Baltimore charity organizers rationalized their services in the 1890s and required the needy poor to live by this American ideal.  

Baltimore reformers projected the American ideal of life on to the urban poor through the Charity Organization Society, the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, the Society for the Suppression of Vice as well as reformatories. Although the tactics of the Charity Organization Society were most overt and well-documented, one can identify the methods of the other two through a detailed reading of newspaper, conference, and annual reports. Overlap in membership helps to reveal key beliefs amongst a variety of groups. These sources frame a narrative that reveals how and why Baltimore reformers managed the urban poor.

This work is organized around the three main structures in charge of the urban poor: the justice system, charity organizations, and correctional institutions. Chapter one recounts the development and methods of practice of the Charity Organization Society (COS), which commandeered the authority of alms distribution from the police. By

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uncovering the management structure and what kinds of individuals held positions in the 
COS, one can see the ideological origins of the society as well as the strong influence of 
Johns Hopkins University on its methods. This chapter argues that the Charity 
Organization Society embraced association and rationalization (key factors of the 
progressive ideology), but mistrusted the city government and therefore rejected its 
assistance of the poor. Chapter two chronologically outlines the changing position of the 
city’s police department from the 1870s to the turn of the twentieth century. It explains 
how the COS usurped distribution of alms from the police and inspired other groups to 
pressure police operations through legislative changes. Additionally, it covers how the 
police and the courts divided delinquents based on their habits, personal history, and 
perceived morality. This chapter argues that once the police force was unable to distribute 
alms to the poor, it could only enforce the American ideal of life through the negative 
action of arrest. Finally, chapter three analyzes the annual reports of the Baltimore city 
 jail and reformatories to understand how public institutions enforced the American ideal 
of life onto delinquent adolescents and adults. Specifically, it confronts the troubles of the 
city jail to manage and later reform peace-cases, or persons who are committed for minor 
offenses. Many of these individuals were extremely impoverished citizens who opted to 
brake the law in order to acquire a bed for the night. This chapter argues that the city jail 
took significantly longer to reform its internal struggle because of the spoils system, 
which hindered the management of the facility, and widespread disinterest from the 
community.

One man experiences helped to mold this narrative and provide an entry and exit 
to each topic covered. Officer Randolph G. Welsh’s small notebook landed in the
Maryland Historical Society special collection in 2011, labeled simply “police officer notebook.” With the help of census records and newspaper reports, we know that Welsh worked in Baltimore’s twentieth ward. Sitting just west of the harbor, the twentieth ward cut a shape similar to the state of Indiana, square at its northern borders and unevenly sloping northeast at its southern border. Approximately ten blocks wide and fourteen blocks long the twentieth ward was primarily a residential area. At its southern border ran the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, where Welsh patrolled every day.

Important places in the southern neighborhood include the House of the Good Shepard and two churches on W. Lombard as well as the southwestern police station at the corner of W. Pratt and S. Calhoun. Additionally, the streetcar line ran along South Gilmor, West Pratt, and West Lombard, attaching the neighborhood to the rest of the city.

Many of the ward’s southern most residents worked at the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad or the Cumberland Coal Co, which lay just east of the ward on Carey Street; however, the neighborhood’s main streets had a large number of middle-class shopkeepers and artisans. The main east-west streets of the neighborhood included West Pratt Street, McHenry Street and Ramsay Street, while the major north-south streets were South Fulton, South Mount, South Gilmor, and South Calhoun.26 Painters, carpenters, grocers, bakers and barbers dotted the main streets. More specialized professionals like boot makers, printers, cigar makers, chair caners, druggists and dentists could also be found in the neighborhood, albeit in much fewer numbers.27 The vast majority of first generation immigrants in the neighborhood hailed from Germany or Ireland. It is likely

26 See Figure 1 and 2 in Appendix for outline of the neighborhood.
the majority of the neighborhood was Irish or German, as mixing between recently
arrived and established immigrants was common on a number of the major streets.  

Beyond the middle-class façade, in back lots and alleyways were the lower-class
residents of the neighborhood. The three major employers – the coal yard, B&O, and
Mount Brewery on W. Pratt – needed unskilled as well as skilled laborers. The majority
of laborers lived on north-south streets of South Norris, South Bruce, South Vincent, and
South Parrish as well as the east-west alleyway, Lemmon Street. These narrow streets
were also more often filled with poorer Irish and German immigrants. There were also
pockets of African Americans, but they were sparse and relatively small. South Parrish
was the busiest of the back streets as it had two saloons on the 400 block. There were
three other saloons in the neighborhood, all on a corner of South Gilmor one at W. Pratt,
another at McHenry and finally on at Ramsay Street. Although, the saloons on South
Parrish caused the most problems for Officer Welsh, he also had numerous arrests on
South Parrish between Pratt and Cole streets.

Welsh’s own home was along his beat, at 209 South Gilmor Street, just past the
Bigelow & Gosnell tea and coffee store. Born in 1852, Welsh moved to South Gilmor
in the mid-1880s. There he and his wife, Ida raised four children, Robert L., Edith M.,
Carroll E., and Arthur K. According to city directories, Welsh began his police profession

28 See Figure 2 in Appendix
29 Unlike other American cities like New York or Chicago, Baltimore prided itself on not having
tenements for its poor population. Instead, Baltimore’s back alleys were filled with the poorest groups,
who lived in back buildings of long row house lots. By the 1890s, there were a few areas where majority
poor lived. Most poor immigrants, specifically Russians and Poles lived east of Jones Falls. Just south east
of Welsh’s neighborhood was Pig Town was an large pocket of black poverty, where the back alleys were
filled with garbage, cellars leached black waters, and open drains flooded the neighborhood regularly.
Garrett Power, “Deconstructing the Slums of Baltimore,” in From Mobtown to Charm City: New
Perspectives on Baltimore’s Past, ed. Jessica I Elfenbein, John R. Breihan and Thomas L. Hollowak
(Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2002), 51-55.
31 R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
between 1887 and 1889.\textsuperscript{32} It is unclear how or why Welsh came to be a police officer for the city of Baltimore, but his notebook still provides a window into this section of the twentieth ward and the criminal activities that were taking place. Officer Welsh’s daily beat frames this narrative and highlights his position on the front lines of the vast changes happening to the urban poor in the 1890s.

CHAPTER 1

ORGANIZING CHARITY: EFFICIENTLY SAVING SOULS

At 10:20, on the morning of Monday June 21st, 1897, Officer Randolph G. Welsh arrested Joseph M. Klees. It appears, according to his notebook, that three citizens filed complaints accusing Klees of habitual begging. Interestingly, only one of the witnesses listed lived on Welsh’s regular beat. Mary B. Lauch resided north of the district; Mary I. Simpson lived north of center city; while the third, Edward Stockill, lived on Welsh’s beat. These three complainants presented enough evidence for Judge Roberts to commit Klees to the Bay View Asylum for two months.\(^{33}\) The asylum served both poor and mentally deficient individuals. These citizens were likely influenced by the Charity Organization Society (COS), which transformed notions about poverty management beginning in the 1880s. The network that built the COS had distinct beliefs about the nature of charity. These beliefs influenced how law and order were regulated in Baltimore. This chapter reveals who created the COS and why as well as how the organization became significant in Baltimore.

This chapter argues that the Baltimore COS, formed by progressive minded business elites, employed both Social Darwinist beliefs and progressive beliefs in their system of poverty management. Eventually, because of the influence of social science, the Baltimore COS argued that mother’s pensions, sanitation improvements, and compulsory education were the responsibility of the government.

The COS stood at an interesting crossroads of ideologies surrounding social welfare. They believed that individuals could be uplifted out of poverty, and therefore, rejected a basic tenet of social Darwinism – that interfering with social progress was

\(^{33}\)R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
detrimental to society. They also believed that personal weakness in morality and values caused poverty.\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, the society rejected the twentieth-century progressive opinion that the government should alleviate social problems. At its creation in the early 1880s, corrupt, inefficient government and passionate support of laissez-faire economics caused the group to reject government responsibility of poor management. But by the late 1890s, the Society had reevaluated its positions. After collecting information on each needy family’s situation and struggling to help the poor in times of deep economic depression, the Society acquiesced and espoused government intervention to protect widowed mothers from poverty, keep children in school, and support rehabilitative methods of punishment like probation.\textsuperscript{35}

Many historians have studied the COS and pigeon-holed the group into one ideology or the other. Frank Bruno defined them as public servants with a business-mind, who looked forward to progress “not backward toward a golden age.”\textsuperscript{36} Stephen T. Ziliak, an economic historian, praised the movement for professionalizing social work, institutionalizing house-to-house visitation, and its systematic collection of data.\textsuperscript{37} Judith Sealander also praised the COS by arguing that all experiments with scientific philanthropy meant “wholeheartedly embrac[ing] a version of the Social Gospel, even if

\textsuperscript{34} Stephen T. Ziliak, "Self Reliance Before the Welfare State: Evidence from the Charity Organization Movement in the United States," \textit{Economic History} 64, no. 2 (June 2004), 436.


they did not specifically employ the phrase.”38 Historian Thomas Bender, argued that the COS was “deeply conservative” and sought to impose social control upon the lower classes.39 Historian Julia B. Rauch wisely rejected both parties on the issue by claiming that the wide variety of individuals that were attracted to the movement automatically discounted the idea that conservative social anxiety or liberal progressive ideology could have united the group for object of gaining social control.40 Rauch, however, failed to highlight the dynamic shift in ideology within the movement from 1880 to 1900. Tracing the COS from its onset in Baltimore in 1881 until the end of the century displays the shortcomings of these historians in properly defining the ideology of the movement. The Baltimore COS developed from a protector of wealthy almsgivers to an advocate of government reform because they were founded and managed by a group of Baltimoreans well versed in charity management, connected with Johns Hopkins University, and deeply interested in bettering society.

Baltimore had a long history with charitable organizations, most of which began after an economic depression or recession. Historian Sherry Olson noted that Baltimore’s associations which focused on the blight of the poor were started in 1804, 1822, 1849, and 1881.41 Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor (AICP), which started 1849, and operated under the belief that organized giving provided more relief

38 Judith Sealander, "Curing Evils at Their Source: The Arrival of Scientific Giving," in Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History . Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 226. To be clear, Sealander only defined the Social Gospelers as people that believed “society should not live by the rules of the jungle”; so broad a phrase that almost all of society could be included.
than individual giving. Founders of the organizations believed the city had severed the connection between the rich and the poor, like the Jacksonian reformers before them. Unlike the Jacksonians, who built institutions to reform dependent individuals, the AICP sought to reform individuals without removing them from society.\footnote{Bender, \textit{Toward an Urban Vision}, 133-5.} However, its founders’ original plan was soon forgotten. By the 1880s, the Poor Association refused to force individuals in need or permanent relief to go to the almshouse and gave monetary relief after little to no investigation. The COS argued that the AICP gave out monetary aid to so many people the organization failed to give any family adequate relief to become self-sufficient. Baltimore elites that created their local COS were seeking to fix an existing system. However, the AICP did not acquiesce easily, which hindered the amount of cooperation the COS received from other Baltimore charities.\footnote{Report of a Conference on Charities and on other Subjects Pertaining to the Prevention of Suffering, Pauperism and Crime, held in Baltimore, April 15 and 16, 1887. Under the Auspices of the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore (Baltimore: Wm. K. Boyle & Son, 1887), 152. Eventually the AICP came to support the COS and followed their guidelines for distribution but remained a separate entity.}

Initially, the COS founders were motivated to prevent the mass charity fraud they perceived. One local pastor recounted a personal experience with charity fraud:

> Sitting in my study one day, a woman called and asked for help to pay her rent. She had a pitiful story of poverty. I took her address, and one of my church members called upon her, to find she had deceived me with a wrong number. A year after, the same woman called at my house with a different story, asking for help to by a sewing machine.\footnote{William F. Slocum, Jr., “The Relation of Private and Public to Organized Charity,” in \textit{The Charity Organization Society of Baltimore City} ([Baltimore?]: n.p., n.d.), 14.}

The COS in another instance found “twenty cases” that were “all impostors.” He claimed that “These are a few of the cases of which we could each, doubtless, cite many.” Creating the COS, according to its founders, would protect the charity giver and those honestly in need as well as rectify the problems faced by the AICP.\footnote{Slocum, “The Relation of Private and Public to Organized Charity,” 10, 14.}
Daniel C. Gilman began the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore after hearing about the Charity Organization Society of London. Gilman was president of Johns Hopkins University and focused much of his attention on advancing educational opportunities for Baltimore citizens. He had long been involved in a variety of charity initiatives in Baltimore prior to creating the COS. He was a trustee of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Peabody Institute. He was also a member of the Board of Education, after its reform as part of the New City Charter in 1898. Gilman attended a conference held by the American Social Science Association in 1881, where he learned about the work of the Charity Organization Society. Upon his return, Gilman worked with Charles Bonaparte and John Glenn to create the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore. Gilman’s position at Johns Hopkins University became integral to the development of the COS.

A few important upper-class Baltimore businessmen became involved with the COS, their pasts reveal why they became involved, what made them unique in the late-nineteenth century society, and what understandings about poverty they brought to the organization. Historian Tracy Matthew Melton wrote, “[P]ersonal networks were the natural product of a pervasive associational culture played out every day and every night in the city’s homes, streets, shops, taverns, clubs, offices, and churches.” He was speaking of the network of individuals that helped to create and update the electrical network of Baltimore city in the 1880s. Yet, his assertion applies to many other

46 The American Social Science Association vigilantly supported civil service reform and the National Conference of Charities of Corrections split from the Association in 1879 but continued to support civil service reform. Instead of focusing on social science research the NCCC focused on methods of practice. Bruno, Trends in Social Work, 6-7.
47 Crooks, Politics and Progress, 158.
individuals and networks in the urban landscape. The network of men who built
Baltimore’s COS had worked together in other charitable institutions like reformatories,
hospitals, etc. Additionally, many of these men lived relatively close to one another,
attended the same clubs, worked in the same industries, and occasionally, attended the
same churches.

Historian Bruno Frank asserted that these progressive businessmen were “public
servants of a rare quality” because “they combined a high intellectual capacity and the
practical wisdom of the market place with a passion for social justice.” Frank identified
John Glenn, an aging Baltimore attorney, and his son John M. Glenn as models of rare
public servants. The two were involved with scientific charity on a local and national
basis, working within government on the Board of Supervisors of the City Charities and
through the National Conference on Charities and Correction, not to mention their long
tenures on the board of managers for the Baltimore COS. Elites that supported the
Charity Organization Society held a responsibility to their city.49

As the number of these homes and hospitals expanded, elites struggled to rid their
city of vice and immorality in order to eradicate poverty from Baltimore’s streets.
Wealthy men knew that “with the growth of cities also comes the growth of charity.”50
Although some Gilded Age capitalists were less entangled with city politics and social
issues, others continued to believe that their private fortunes depended on the prosperity
of their city.51 A few wealthy businessmen supported the urban poor through charitable
institutions and then became involved with the COS. In Baltimore these elite men

49 Frank Bruno, *Trends in Social Work as reflected in the Proceedings of the National Conference of
50 “Charity Organization,” *Sun* (Baltimore), January 25, 1887.
51 Eric H. Monkkonen, *Police in Urban America, 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1981), 12.
included bankers Eugene and Joshua Levering, attorney Charles Bonaparte, as well as the Glenn’s.

Born in 1845, Eugene Levering and his twin brother Joshua grew up children of a successful grocery businessman. Provided a private education, Eugene became a successful banker, eventually creating the National Bank of Commerce. He also created the Baltimore Trust Company in 1890. His success allowed him to influence all of Baltimore’s trade networks, eventually leading him to become President of Baltimore’s Board of Trade. A devout Baptist, Levering also spent an immense amount of money and time on Baptist missionary work and support for the poor. He was a member of the Maryland Sunday School Association. He also served on the board of directors for the Home for Incurables, the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, and the Charity Organization Society. Levering was treasurer of Homeopathic Hospital, and served as the president of the Society for the Prevention of Vice.

In addition, Levering supported the Boys’ Home in the city, provided for a Baptist mission school in South Baltimore, supported the Young Men’s Christian Association, presided over Temperance Alliance meetings, and ran for city offices as member of the Prohibition Party. Moreover, he founded a “workingmen’s club”, which provided a wholesome environment for young workers. Levering was also deeply involved in the creation and expansion of The Johns Hopkins University, to which he donated Levering Hall, a building now located behind the Eisenhower library. The Levering family used

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52 In 1928, his bank merged with Citizens National Bank.
53 “Maryland Sunday Schools: Thirteenth Annual Convention of the State Union – List of Delegates,” Sun (Baltimore), December 15, 1880; “City News in Brief,” Sun (Baltimore), February 26, 1890; Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, Twelfth Annual Report of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association (Baltimore: Edward J. Welch & Co., 1881), 2; “The Charity Organization Society,” Sun (Baltimore), February 12, 1885;“Urging the Pool Bill,” Sun (Baltimore), March 26, 1890.
Levering Hall to hold conventions and bring religious and progressive lecturers for
Hopkins students and the public.\textsuperscript{54}

Joshua Levering also supported many charities although he was most loyal to the
Young Men’s Christian Association, where he served as president. He believed that
youths could be reclaimed and transformed. Therefore, he also supported the House of
Refuge, acted as treasurer for the Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty and
Immorality and served as superintendent of the Sabbath school on Eutaw Place. Also a
Baptist, he served as a member of the Maryland Baptist Union Association. Joshua was
also more successful in politics than his brother. In 1896, the Prohibition Party nominated
him as party candidate for President of the United States.\textsuperscript{55}

The women of the family also dabbled in philanthropy. Ann Levering, Joshua and
Eugene’s mother, and Mary, Eugene’s wife, helped to manage the Young Women’s
Christian Association. They planned lodging arrangements, luncheons and organized
classes in typewriting, stenography, bookkeeping, dressmaking and cooking, among other
things. The women of the Levering family also visited rural Maryland institutions and
amusements to organize charity work through the Free Excursion Society. The group
sought to provide free rural experiences for urban orphans during the summers.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} “Boys’ Home Anniversary,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), March 29, 1881; “Lee Street Baptist Church,” \textit{Sun}
(Baltimore), May 24, 1882; “Convention of the Temperance Alliance,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), April 4, 1890;
“Prohibition Congressional Candidates of Maryland,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), November 1, 1896. “A
Workingmen’s Club. In the Old Armory of the Sixth Maryland Regiment,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), November
11, 1893; John Levering, \textit{Levering Family: History and Genealogy} (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell’s Sons,
1897), 881-2; “Hopkins University: President Gilman Makes Several Important Announcement,” \textit{Sun}
(Baltimore), February 2, 1891.

\textsuperscript{55} “Young Men’s Christian Association,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), January 1, 1887; Levering, \textit{Levering Family},
882; \textit{Prospectus for the Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty and Immorality of Baltimore
City} (Baltimore: Edward J. Welch & Co., 1878), 2; Levering, \textit{Levering Family}, 882.

\textsuperscript{56} “Aiding Young Women,” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), February 13, 1894; “A Visit to Chesterwood,” \textit{Sun}
(Baltimore), May 18, 1883.
Another prominent attorney in Baltimore was known for more than his legal prowess: Charles J. Bonaparte. Great-nephew of Napoleon I, Charles began the American line of the Bonaparte family, although they would never be recognized by their European kin. Bonaparte was outspoken and liberal-minded. Graduating from Harvard University, Charles became a prominent attorney in Baltimore, his hometown. Beyond his family name, he is best known for his tenure as Attorney General under President Theodore Roosevelt. Yet, Bonaparte constructed his progressive ideas in the 1880s and 1890s in Baltimore.57

His influence is likely to have been the driving force behind Baltimore’s early love affair with progressivism. Bonaparte participated in every reform institution he could, if one did not exist – he founded one himself. Founder of the Reform League, Chairman of the Charity Organization Society, Attorney for the Baltimore Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty and Immorality, member of the Board of Managers for the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, and Vice President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice were only a few of the titles Mr. Bonaparte held in Baltimore. He also sought to eliminate waste and fraud among charity organizations in the same way his Reform League sought to rid city government of the fraud created through the spoils system. To Charles, progressive tactics like merit-based assistance and consolidated management of relief were the most reasonable methods to uplift the poor.58

Elites that became executives in the Charity Organization Society (COS) participated in many other charitable institutions, which meant that upon formation many individuals who ran the COS did not believe all the tenets of Social Darwinism. These individuals conducted charitable giving and charitable homes with a strong business sense. They believed efficiency, consistency, and bureaucracy served as great tools for bettering the management of relief. Their process began by usurping the position of police departments as the primary charitable distributors in the city. By the late-1880s, they created a great federation of Baltimore charities, many of which they had controlled before the creation of the COS.  

Participants in the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore were of a similar kind and arranged in a similar organization to other cities’ societies. Historian James Crooks investigated the members of the COS of Baltimore and found that the organization was comprised of “predominantly upper- and upper-middle class. Of forty-five officers and managers listed in the annual report of 1885, 71 percent were members of Baltimore's Social Register.” Professional men like lawyers, clergymen, and doctors composed the board of managers, and the agents who investigated cases of need were usually college graduates who studied social science. The volunteers were primarily middle-class women.

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*Baltimore City* (Baltimore: Young & Selden, 1893), 1; “How and When to Give: The Good Advice of the Charity Organization of Baltimore,” *Sun* (Baltimore), December 10, 1890.


60 Julia Rauch found that the COS in Philadelphia was composed of mostly “native-born white businessmen or professionals” in their late forties or early fifties. Many sat on local boards of banking or insurance, while middle-class leisured women filled the volunteer positions. Rauch, “The Charity Organization Movement in Philadelphia,” 56, 60.

Women played a crucial role as upper-class wives challenged legislatures and city boards to improve conditions in schools, prisons, and in the home. Some middle-class women became directly involved as treasurers or secretaries of charity organizations, like Mary Ellen Richmond who began her famous social work career through the Baltimore COS. Women entered the public sphere during this period as volunteers so most women did not hold positions on board of managers of charitable institutions or organizations. Historian Kathleen D. McCarthy argued that women’s ability to contribute time was a “source of political strength,” since they were the only group in industrial society with financial security and leisure time to make volunteerism a career. Many women involved in the COS became friendly visitors, not agents or board positions. Friendly visitors were volunteers who visited needy families and supply them with guidance. According to social work scholars Stanley Wenocur and Michael Reisch, for middle-class women who volunteered in the COS, “social work was simultaneously cause and career.” These educated professionals and middle-class women recognized the interdependence of all people in society and fought to ameliorate the difference between classes for the betterment of society at large.

Beyond providing an opportunity for a variety of individuals, the Charity Organization Society revolutionized welfare services by emphasizing advice instead of monetary aid. They believed that weaknesses in character led to destitution, which was consistent with social Darwinist ideology. However, Charles Bonaparte stated that although the Charity Organization Society could not create miracles and make Baltimore

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into Eden, “it is even a greater… error to think that we can do nothing to make the world better.” This statement displayed his outright rejection of social Darwinist theory. The COS also believed that it was possible to rebuild proper character traits that would make the poor self-reliant.

The charity organization movement became popular because a variety of beliefs about poverty were pulled together under one umbrella movement. Those that thought the poor were abusing charitable giving promoted the movement because it prevented fraud. Others, who believed industrial society further separated social classes and feared it may turn into class warfare, championed the COS’s ability to bridge social divides, while women and young professionals saw opportunities for their own personal and professional growth in the movement. Faithful, God fearing, individuals championed the society’s ability to persuade paupers onto a moral life path. Elites may have seen it as a way to control the dangerous lower class. Whether social control, genuine betterment, or a societal solution, the charity organization movement attracted support from a wide swath of people.

For example, Pastor William F. Slocum of Baltimore’s First Congregational Church and devote member of the COS believed that the tactics of the COS would eliminate crime through scientific giving. After reading R. L. Dugdale’s study on the

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64 “How and When to Give: The Good Advice of the Charity Organization of Baltimore,” Sun (Baltimore), December 10, 1890.
66 Richard Dugdale studied county jails and state prisons in New York in the 1870s. He found a large number of criminals in a particular family. After studying that family he concluded that although they lived in an area that fostered pauperism, family members that moved away still committed crimes. He
heredity of pauperism, Slocum saw pauperism as a preventable disease. He wrote “experience shows that pauperism leads to iniquity.” Families inclined towards pauperism tended “very strongly towards crime.” Therefore, pauperism helped “to produce the ‘dangerous class’.” This theory led Slocum and many other COS members to conclude that criminality could be prevented as much as pauperism could be prevented. The society minimized its relationship with prison reform in light of these facts. In Maryland, the COS did not call for prison reform directly, rather, the group’s beliefs, because of cross-membership, influence the tactics of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association (discussed in Chapter 3).67

There was a basic agreement among the Charity Organization Society that indiscriminate charity was bad for society and prevented the poor from financial improvement. In many other cities, the local government appropriated funds directly to the poor. Therefore, the COS branches in many other cities were forced to battle the city government. Baltimore however was unique because it did not provide aid through the city treasury. Instead, local people sent alms to the police stations, where police officers decided who would receive the goods. Richard T. Ely wrote a report for distribution in Baltimore’s paper in 1887, which emphasized this principle. His opening statements presented the society’s condemnation of “unwise administration of charity,” which “tends to pauperize the masses and to impoverish the nation.” Even the giving of individual aid from person to person could pauperize. “The danger in gifts and clothing” was, according to Ely, “that people will cease to try to exert themselves and will become miserable

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dependents on the bounty of others, losing their self-respect and manhood.” Manhood and self-respect took on greater importance at the end of the nineteenth century because industrial life was minimizing men’s ability to achieve good character, making its preservation all the more crucial. Ely’s statements reflect the merger of two philosophies: that individual success was integral to society’s success and that manhood was increasingly difficult to realize in industrial society.68

Baltimore’s Charity Organization Society focused on uplifting the individual through one-on-one mentoring because they believed that each individual affected the prosperity of the whole. Pastor Slocum remarked that “The effective force of society is made up of the strength is made up of the strength of its individual members.” He claimed “the deterioration of any members of the community, even though he be a pauper or a criminal, lowers, to a certain extent, the moral standard of the whole.” In fact, Slocum believed that pauperism was “a disease upon the community,” which meant it could be cured.69 Frederick Howard Wines, an Illinois prison and charity reformer, gave an address before the Baltimore COS in 1891 in which he agreed with Pastor Slocum. He claimed the social reformers were “the physicians of society” because they “meddle[d] with the processes of nature on the large scale.” He stressed that because of this meddling, it was all the more important that the COS interfere properly.70

The COS planned a methodical, two-prong approach to reform the poor: operate giving efficiently to reduce fraudulent requests for aid and provide neighborly moral advice to the poor. Rev. Dr. Peabody explained, “Wise charity is good business. Observe

the Charity Organization system. It had its mechanism—disciplinary, negative, stern—and it had its friendly visitors bearing a moral motive to the poor.”71 The attitude that charity required both professional organization and loving support was pervasive in Baltimore by the end of the 1880s.

General agents of the society, later called social workers, collected the information for the society and allocated out the monetary aid. Historian Ziliak outlined the process the society took to investigate those in need. It began when a general agent visited the home of a family that had come to the attention of the society. The worker entered the home and took notes on the “dress, cleanliness, literacy, room size, race, ethnicity, and furnishing.” Afterward, the agent asked the family a variety of questions to inquire about the “moral, economic, medical, and criminal history” of each member of the family.”72 Then the agent moved on to interview neighbors, employers, and clergyman of the family. Processing the families information allowed agents to collect general information on the status of poverty within the city and decide which category of need the family would be placed.

The majority of applicants fell into the category of needing work rather than relief or deserved temporary relief, but all applicants other than those that did not need relief were assigned a friendly visitor. Visiting was originally implemented by the COS in London. When it was transferred to the United States organizations many claimed that visiting would “bring the rich and the poor together.” He hoped that personal contact could make the rich and the poor better individuals as well as partially bridge “the gulf

71 “Problem of Charity. Lecture by Rev. Dr. Peabody, of Harvard University,” Sun (Baltimore), November 13, 1893.
which separates social classes.” Mary E. Richmond stated that in 1890, Baltimore COS had 150 people who made up an organized system of “volunteer or friendly visiting.” In each district these “visitors” roamed the streets to find “out the condition of the unfortunate in the districts” and provide to each “an uplifting hand a patient, persevering, faithful friend, who, by the power of that strongest thing on earth—personal influence—will gradually teach them habits of industry and self-control.” In 1899, Richmond wrote a manual for friendly visitors and social scientists.

Friendly visiting was used by volunteers of the Charity Organization Society to instill middle-class beliefs into the urban poor. Richmond’s guide for friendly visitors, published in 1899, defined the goals of friendly visitors, how to investigate the needs of each family, and when and what kind of assistance should be given to clients. First and foremost, she reminded friendly visitors that like the wealthy, the poor had different “tastes, aims, virtues, and vices.” It was the job of visitors to befriend each family member, uncover their unique tastes, aim, virtues, and vices, and mold them into reliable citizens. The case-by-case approach, according to historian David Rothman, tied together all progressive reform of poverty. Varying ideas about the cause of criminality or deviant behavior could not be combined to form a “single all-embracing explanation” but there was an “agreed-upon method.” For early progressive reformers like Richmond understanding the circumstances and life history of a case gave access to the problem and the solution.

74 “How and When to Give: The Good Advice of the Charity Organization of Baltimore,” Sun (Baltimore), December 10, 1890.
75 Mary E. Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, 10.
76 Rothman, Conscience and Convenience, 50.
Of course, most of the visitors were volunteer middle-class women, and therefore not equipped to identify every need of the family nor did they have special training in the variety of services that could improve their condition. Richmond was wise enough to notice this and offered a variety of solutions. She wrote, “It is true that she could do her work better, as will appear in this book, if she were in her own person a lawyer, a sanitary engineer, a trained cook, a kindergartner, and an expert financier; but she may be none of these things and still be a very good friendly visitor.” She encouraged women to consult lawyers, teachers, agents of other charitable organizations, or businessmen if the visitor did not have personal expertise in such a field. Richmond followed with an example from Baltimore where a visitor had been trying to help a family eat more healthfully. The visitor had tried the plan of meeting her friends in market, and pointing out to them the best cuts of meat, the best place to buy vegetables, etc. But her greatest success in introducing new dishes has been through the children. She has been wise enough to secure the cooperation of her cook, and, by inviting the children into her own kitchen on Saturday mornings, has taught them the best way to prepare simple dishes.

The social connections of these visitors became a great asset to the urban poor. Mutual aid had been a tactic of the poor for generations but the new system of visiting forced interactions between the middle-class and the lowest classes of society. These exchanges, according to Richmond, allowed for greater use of urban resources and empowered the poor to better their own lives.

However, the COS’s method of friendly visiting continued to be used as a tactic of social control. Lower-class society from an upper-class perspective situated itself around the brothel, saloon, and low theatre houses. Eliminating poverty through moral

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77 Mary E. Richmond, *Friendly Visiting Among the Poor*, 42.
78 Mary E. Richmond, *Friendly Visiting Among the Poor*, 67.
guidance uplifted individuals by replacing lower-class amusements with middle-class amusements was integral to the COS. Richmond emphasized this point in 1899 when she suggested that friendly visitors concentrate on child beggars in the families they aided. The person who gave to a child beggar supported a habit of spending on candy and cigarettes, she noted. But as the child grew older, begging supplied money for “gambling and low theatres.” After which, the child would likely evolve into a petty thief and failing to be halted early in life, inevitably became career criminal. Therefore, Richmond supported the replacement of amusements like gambling and low theatres with “healthier excitements” like the workingman’s club created by Eugene Levering.

Friendly visitors also instilled middle-class leisure activities in the home. Richmond wrote that games could introduce a “love of pure fun into the family circle.” She included thirty wholesome children’s games in her manual for friendly visitors; she emphasized story-telling as an “unfailing resource” for playing with children. Additionally, Richmond suggested that families visit the country “at frequent intervals.” She grumbled that poor urban families dreaded the countryside but “to teach them country pleasures is to restore to them a birthright of which they have been robbed.” Window-gardening, according to Richmond, may perk their interest in the country and provide “another healthful pleasure.” Guiding leisure time towards riding bicycles, enjoying books and music, and frequenting associations like the YMCA, which provided leisure and instructional activities to the poor, were meant to diminish social disorder in the lower classes and undermine their interest in immoral amusements.

79 Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, 88-9.
80 Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, 128.
81 Richmond, Friendly Visiting Among the Poor, 130-2.
No matter how close to the family a friendly visitor became, it was important to remember that self-help and self-reliance were the ultimate goal for each case. Therefore, the friendly visitor could never allow the family to lessen their commitment to betterment. “If outside help is needed, it should be made conditional upon renewed efforts at work or in school, upon willingness to receive training, upon cleanliness, or upon some other development with the family that will aid in their uplifting,” Richmond insisted. The COS required that resources only be expended if the family complied with these conditions and showed that neighborliness between social classes came with a catch. Many historians have used this middle-class moralizing of the poor to claim the COS operated strictly for the purposes of social control; however, the COS also took the early steps on the way to twentieth century progressivism.

The leaders of the COS, like Bonaparte, Gilman and Glenn brought special conferences and lectures to Baltimore that legitimized the organization within the urban community. In 1887, they arranged a conference on charities and corrections, which gave the group positive publicity in the local papers and exposed attendees to a number of innovations pertaining to the methods, beliefs, and goals behind the COS. Many COS supporters attended the conference, as did reformers and elites from around the country; albeit many were from New England and the Mid-West, where the movement was strongest. A close reading of the report on the conference revealed a vast network of communication between reformers. They discussed forthcoming projects from their own city, newly passed legislation, and even methods on how to sell the wood chopped by poor fellows who worked for room and board in the society’s Friendly Inn. Coordination across charitable groups and across the country improved the methods of each
organization’s efforts. The Baltimore COS was grounded in a deep network of charity organizations throughout the country because the leaders of the organizations valued innovation and exchange.

Locally, the most significant influence on the organization was Johns Hopkins University. In 1890, President Gilman and Glenn brought the National Conference on Charities and Corrections to meet in Baltimore, which provided opportunity for intelligent discussion about organized charity and reform methods. The Charity Organization Society believed a new method of “intelligently directed” charity could more permanently uplift the poor. In a lecture held by the Charity Organization Society in 1893, Rev. Dr. Peabody of Harvard University claimed that “[t]he old charities satisfied the giver by alms, the new charity educates the receiver to do without alms. It is better charity to find work that to relieve want, to teach a trade than to encourage the trade of mendicancy, to provide stimulus for thrift than to make thrift unnecessary.” Successful management of charity involved first “comprehensive and scientific knowledge” of the “total dimensions of destitution, the types to be dealt with, their relative size and special character.”

The Johns Hopkins University supported social science and worked with the COS to improve investigational methods, statistical analysis, as well as educating friendly visitors and agents.

Johns Hopkins legitimized the COS by providing public lectures on charity and corrections, and establishing a strong social science program within the university.

Richard T. Ely, mentioned above, worked as an associate professor for the university and

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82 “Problem of Charity. Lecture by Rev. Dr. Peabody, of Harvard University,” Sun (Baltimore), November 13, 1893.
wrote articles for the newspaper that admonished indiscriminate giving.\textsuperscript{83} He also argued that “diligent inquiry” would lead to the “economic, intellectual, and ethical elevation” of society.\textsuperscript{84} University professors also held a public lecture series on a variety of topics including literature, archeology, and, most important for this work, charities. In 1899, the Dr. Jeffery R. Brackett and Professor J. H. Hollander taught a course of twenty lectures titled “Studies of the Modern City.” Both Hollander and Brackett were on the Board of Managers and Executive Committee for Baltimore COS and likely used the public lectures to spread the COS’s message to the public.\textsuperscript{85} Part one titled “Public Aid, Charity and Correction”, led by Brackett, covered social conditions in American cities, including the condition in Baltimore, as well as “general tendencies towards the restoration of dependents and the prevention of dependence.” Hollander taught part two, which focused on “city government and city improvement.” His lecture schedule compared the municipal organization of Great Britain, France, and Germany to the United States, ending with a final lecture titled “The Possibilities of the American City.”\textsuperscript{86} The backing of Johns Hopkins University gave the COS increased legitimacy and helped to spread its ideology.

The university also provided research analysis, which led to a deeper understanding of the social aspects of poverty. President Gilman made sure research was the university’s “fundamental and initial concern,” according to Abraham Flexner. Flexner, a student of the university who later analyzed the status of American medical

\textsuperscript{84} Ely, “Philanthropy”, 1.
\textsuperscript{85} Eighteenth Annual Report of the Charity Organization Society of Baltimore City for the Year Ending November 1, 1899 (Baltimore: John Murphy Company: 1899), 4-5.
\textsuperscript{86} Herbert Baxter Adams, Economic History-Maryland and the South, vol. 12 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1899), 34.
schools, believed that Johns Hopkins University was the model of the American university system. He praised Gilman for his stress on professionalism and research.  

Gilman, the founder of the Baltimore COS and president of the society from 1891 to 1901, favored students of the political economy and political science who pursued research on contemporary social problems. Charles Hirschfeld in his 1941 social history of Baltimore argued that Johns Hopkins University influenced not just the creation of the COS, but led it to accept that social problems, not immoral character caused some poverty. Gilman facilitated this process by allowing students and faculty to use the COS to further their research in social science.  

Between the regular national conferences and the influence of Johns Hopkins University, the Baltimore COS was continuously exposed to a variety of methods of practice and theories on the origin of poverty.

As social science expanded as a field, it became common for organizations to attempt to quantify many social ills, as would become a leading factor of progressive reform. Daniel Gilman, Jeffery Brackett and J. H. Hollander facilitated the use of statistics in the Charity Organization Society. As evident in the newspaper report, which printed that 811 families had been taken under the care of the organization. If this had been a sufficient amount of information in previous decades, it was not by 1894. The COS compiled and created statistics about the reason for need, described as follows:

Lack of employment is given as the cause for the need of the largest proportion of these cases, 22 per cent, while 18 per cent of the cases, the next largest proportion, resulted from sickness. Intemperence was to

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blame for 6 per cent of the need, and [?] and inefficiency cause 9 per cent. Five per cent resulted from the lack of support by male relatives; 2 per cent, from large families; 3 percent, poorly paid employment; 7½ per cent, insufficient employment; ½ percent, unhealthy or dangerous employment; ½ per cent ignorance of English; 1 per cent, insanity of bread-winner; ½ percent, imprisonment of bread-winner; 6½ percent, physical defects; 3 percent, accident; 1 per cent, nature and location of abode; 1 per cent, abandonment of children by parents; 1 per cent, dishonesty; 2 per cent, roving disposition; 4½ per cent, old age; 1½ per cent, causes unknown.89

In addition to this wealth of information, the society also provided the numbers for those given aid. However this number was also subdivided into categories consisting of: continuous relief, intermittent relief, temporary relief, needed work rather than relief, institutional relief, transportation from the city, visitation and advice only, deserved discipline, and did not require relief.90 The increased investigations guaranteed that almsgiving would efficiently deliver aid exactly where it was needed.

Through the influence of Johns Hopkins University and national associations the COS came to accept that social problems restricted the poor from becoming successful. By 1899, Richmond identified a variety of social problems that needed correction. She claimed that “municipal reform is inextricably connected with any effort to improve the condition of the poor in their homes, and no charity worker can afford to ignore this connection.” After years of friendly visiting she also found that a man who worked in an organized trade was “stronger and steadier” leading her to support trade unions. Finally, she stated that “no one can work among the poor in their homes without realizing the need for compulsory education laws.” Her vision for the future of Baltimore

89“Charity’s Cause. Large Increase in the World of the Organization Society,” Sun (Baltimore), January 10, 1894.
90 “Charity’s Cause. Large Increase in the World of the Organization Society,” Sun (Baltimore), January 10, 1894.
encompassed many twentieth century progressives’ successes; including civil service reform, labor reform, compulsory education, and cooperative social analysis.\(^91\)

However, these ideas were not present in the early records of the organizations and slowly crept into the society’s ideology after years of studying urban poverty. At first the Baltimore COS, sounded similar to their Jacksonian forbearers of reform. Emphasizing moral weakness presented the society as punishers of the pauper, detectives of the charity abusers, and most significantly protectors of wealthy do-gooders. However, by the end of the century the society’s ideals looked much more like progressives. Progressives diverged from Jacksonian reformers on one basic assumption: Jacksonians posited that a flaw in America’s urban society created moral weakness,\(^92\) while progressives believed that it was not the fundamental structure of society, rather, particular aspects of it were not reaching all members of society. Hence progressives called for spreading resources to the poor and guiding their uplift, while Jacksonians built institutions which removed individuals from society for reform. Mary Richmond’s calls for mother’s pensions, compulsory education laws, and municipal reform displayed the society’s development from an organization based on social Darwinist views to one that supported limited government intervention, a trait that became most prominent in twentieth century progressives.

The Baltimore Charity Organization Society, built by a network of progressive-minded businessmen who were invested in their city’s prosperity, successfully gained legitimacy and authority over poverty management and almsgiving by the end of the 1880s. Working on a case-by-case basis the group attempted to bridge the gap between


\(^{92}\) Rothman, *Conscience and Conveniences*, 51.
the classes through friendly visiting. The COS may have been founded as an organization of social control, but as it struggled to uplift the poor and punish the pauper the group began to accept the need for social reforms for social causes of poverty. However, the organizations initial thrust for legitimacy proposed beliefs about poverty that resonated through the criminal justice system. First, it hit the police operations as the COS’s campaign to gain legitimacy in the early 1880s eventually metastasized into a campaign against the police department. Later, at the end of the century the COS’s beliefs crept into the local city jail. As the next chapter will show, the fight against police distribution of alms changed the way officers on their beat interacted with poor peoples. Officer Welsh stood at the front line of these changes.
CHAPTER 2
POLICING AND PUNISHING PAUPERISM

Officer Randolph Welsh likely started his day on Friday, October 18, 1895 by leaving his morning meetings at the southwestern police station, located on the corner of Calhoun and West Pratt Street, in the middle of the district. He may have walked the main drag, Pratt Street, westward and circled down to McHenry, its southern parallel street. As he reached the end of the 1600 block of McHenry, where it crossed South Gilmor, he might have heard a crying child, or received a complaint from a neighbor, or little James McGiff may have run out of his corner row house. Only three years old, James suffered from neglect. Often Officer Welsh found the mother, Agnes McGiff, and escorted her to the police station, which was equipped with a Justice of the Peace and a courtroom. There, Judge Kirkland heard the accusations of neglect. That Friday morning, Kirkland deemed her unfit and committed little James to the Children’s Hospital. The records of the proceedings, hospital records, and McGiff’s reaction to the loss of her child have disappeared from the historical record. Only Officer Welsh’s small notebook outlines the events of that Friday morning.¹

Officer Welsh’s actions on behalf of James McGiff reflected the vast changes in the police’s position in the community between 1850 and 1900. In the 1850s, the Baltimore police department was a loose network of citizen street patrollers. It was not until 1853 that funds provided the city’s police department with much needed supplies like guns, badges, and a marshal to mandate districts. Over the next four decades, Baltimore, like many other cities, implemented standardization and training for basic city

¹ R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
government employees, including the police. The expanded city administration also began to provide more “rationalized services,” like sewer and water management, fire and police protection, and health outreach programs. Until progressives usurped the responsibility of reforming children, prostitutes, and paupers, the police provided basic needs for these groups. Officer Welsh’s interventionist actions on behalf of little James McGiff demonstrate the role of police officers in the late nineteenth century. About the time of Welsh’s action, a transition of power from police officers and judges to reformers and private institutions was underway.2

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, partisan politics in Maryland and Baltimore helped create a unique police force that the state rather than the city controlled. Playing off strong nativist and unionist beliefs, city administration was controlled by the Know-Nothing Party in the 1850s3, officially named the American party, which had grown out of the collapse of the older Whig party...4 Know-Nothings were certain of three things: “America’s heritage was Anglo-Saxon; Anglo-Saxons were neither foreign-born Irish and Germans nor Catholics; and Anglo-Saxons were naturally superior to others.” They appointed police officers, judges, clerks, and other city employees who were loyal to the party rather than qualified for position.5

The reign of the Know-Nothings earned Baltimore the nickname “Mobtown”.

Firehouse gangs claimed names like Rip-Raps, Blood Tubs, and Plug Uglies. Loyal to

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2 Eric H. Monkkonen, Police in Urban America, 1860-1920 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 147. Monkkonen argues that police attention shifted away from providing basic needs because of a change in expected behavior. This was caused by natural growth of police bureaucracy and the public demand for services. The confiscation of caring for children and the poor was unpredictable.
3 They were deemed the Know-Nothings by outsiders because when asked about the club, members would answer “I know nothing”. In Baltimore, the club was so secretive, newspapers joked they were fictitious.
nativist views, these gangs suppressed Democrat party politicians through violence. Historian David Detzer observed, “Some of the gangs were relatively small. Others numbered in the hundreds. They were in fact proto-fascist packs with close ties to political organizations. They terrorized voters; they beat citizens with brass knuckles and clubs; they used their fists and knives and guns to murder rivals. Their political violence lay like rancid slime atop normal levels of urban crime.”

Violence regularly erupted on Election Day throughout the 1850s. Police officers appointed by the Know-Nothings, either participated in the violence or made little effort to suppress it, making it painfully clear who controlled the city.

As the violence of the Know-Nothings affected more citizens, a reform movement germinated. By 1859, various groups actively combated the Know-Nothings in politics and city management. The groups drafted the “Police Bill” which intended to remove control of the police department from city authorities. On February 2, 1860, the Maryland legislature passed the act, which created a Board of Police Commissioners. This commission usurped the power of the Mayor and City Council to appoint officers and manage policing in Baltimore city. Only St. Louis, Boston, and Cincinnati had police departments controlled by the state legislature or governor rather than the mayor and city council. This act greatly affected the position of the police department within Baltimore’s urban culture until the end of the century.

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After the new police bill was enacted, the police department remained under the control of the state government for the rest of the century. It was not until 1900 that the state legislature changed the law to give the authority to appoint Police Commissioners to the Governor rather than to the legislature at large. This centralization created a focus for criticism -- the Governor; whereas, previously blame had been spread across the legislature when misdeeds or poor management occurred. The 1900 law also included a provision to create a Board of Examiners to investigate the mental and moral qualifications of candidates for police service.\(^9\) Despite these changes the state rather than the city ran the Baltimore Police Department for over half of the nineteenth century.

State management focused on police responsibility to combat vice and punish lawbreakers as well as distributing alms to the poor. As historian Charlotte Cannon Rhines explained, the police department was responsible for caring for the homeless. Rhines argued that Baltimore struggled to combat sanitation and poverty issues because of philosophies derived from Social Darwinism and laissez-faire economics. Yet Rhines claimed that the police department was the most successful and consistent in helping the poor because they were state regulated and had a well-functioning bureaucracy. For example: As winter swept across the city, the homeless and poor would regularly go to the police station to sleep for the night. Wealthier Baltimore citizens sent their own extra fuel and food as well as donations like clothes to local police precincts. It was up to police officers, like Randolph G. Welsh, to identify the needy in their district, request aid from their superior officers, and then deliver the aid.\(^{10}\)

\(^{10}\) Rhines, “A City and Its Social Problems,” 359, 363.
Police in the 1870s had conflicting relationships with the poor, that of enforcer and also of deliverer. Officers on their street patrol used their knowledge of locals to decide to let beggars or drunks off with a warning or refuse to request aid for persons with questionable morals. An officer’s position was a staple of the community and allowed him a certain amount of autonomy. Although Officer Welsh’s notebook is from a later period, it is evident that some of this autonomy preceded his career. It is unlikely that Welsh recorded every interaction he had every day since his notebook had only two or three entries each day. Instead, Welsh chose to document only the arrests. But one can imagine that he may have told loitering children to return home, observed persons wandering in and out of the local saloon, or listened to the complaints of railway workers. Had James McGiff been neglected in the 1870s, instead of the 1890s, Officer Welsh may have provided food and clothing to his mother to improve his condition, instead of removing him from her care. Without access to these goods, Officer Welsh could only use the justice system to better James’s situation. An officer’s observations of individuals before they committed any crimes likely served as a way for him to divide the good and the bad of the community.

Officers of the 1870s were able to divide criminals into “worthy” and “unworthy” categories. Judges also exercised this authority when deciding punishment for crimes. In short, a “worthy” individual was one who was remorseful for their crime, had a sincere urge to change their ways, or was forced into criminal activity by the fault of another. Usually “worthy” criminals were women and children. Seen as dependents of society, they were “worthy” of kinder punishment and reform. “Unworthy” criminals were those that acted with intent, engaged in immoral activities regularly, and anyone who
committed serious crimes like rape or murder. These individuals were usually male, black or white, and were of adult age. Yet this system -- like all others -- was constantly under scrutiny. The individuals officers labeled “worthy” and “unworthy” changed depending on exact details of the crime, the amount of public outcry and press coverage, and most importantly the economic situation in the city.  

Baltimore police confronted a variety of crimes from petty thievery to disorderly conduct and public nuisances, as well as lost children, beggars, and vagrants. In the 1870s petty thieves, pickpockets, and vagrants most frequently disturbed the police officers and city residents. Those individuals convicted of vagrancy were forced to leave the city or go to jail, and many accepted the former. Pickpockets swarmed railway stations, shopping districts, and church gatherings. Robberies increased over the summer when wealthy residents moved into the county on vacation. Their empty homes were perfect targets for the more daring thieves who claimed to be movers for the owners. As the number of these petty crimes rose, the Police Department struggled to limit the visibility of crime. They repeatedly reminded city residences to help out by locking their businesses at night and by telling police about their vacations. Despite these efforts, petty crimes continued.  

The police department was responsible for ridding the streets of these nuisance individuals. Over time, because of the growing standardization created through an improved bureaucracy, the police force focused on controlling the “dangerous class” of poor, transient individuals. Historian Eric Monkkonen contended that urban police forces were at the forefront of social control through the negative power of arrest and the

positive power of charity. He claimed that the department should have expected increased standardization and professionalization as a corporate business model became standard for all organizations. However, he argued that stripping the police department’s authority to provide aid to the poor was unexpected. This left police departments without a positive impact in their communities, which increased tension between communities and officers.\textsuperscript{13}

By the end of the century, police officers walking their beat in Baltimore were strictly responsible for crime control. Beyond maintaining peace in the community, they were responsible for serving warrants, identifying criminals and vagrants, listening to grievances, and investigating crime scenes. Police officers walked quickly and diligently through the streets and were required to complete their beat every 45 minutes.\textsuperscript{14} The Board of Police Commissioners created the districts and appointed captains to manage each district’s station house. Captains assigned beats and daily tasks. Those arrested appeared before a state-elected judge or a governor-appointed justice of the peace for the administration of justice.\textsuperscript{15} Those in need of aid were forced to search for other organizations, as stationhouses no longer collected donations.

Beginning in the 1880s, a variety of articles in \textit{The Sun} instructed the public on how to support the poor. These articles urged the public to support the Charity Organization Society or the Poor Association directly rather than delivering goods and money to the police station. Their efforts to shift the location for donations usurped the positive role of police departments. Poor Baltimoreans that depended on the open

\textsuperscript{13} Monkkonen, \textit{Police in Urban America}, 10, 147.
\textsuperscript{14} Rhines, “A City and Its Social Problems”, 370.
\textsuperscript{15} J.H. Hollander, \textit{The Financial History of Baltimore} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1899), 238.
availability of goods through the police department in their neighborhood were now required to apply for aid through the Charity Organization Society (COS), answer a variety of questions about their life, and wait patiently for the society’s decision to provide or deny aid. The change also usurped the power of city government. The police distribution of charitable goods could be handled by a ward-leader loyal to the Democratic machine. An extra form of patronage, the spoils system corrupted the system of charitable giving. The COS sought to rid the city of a corrupt almmsgiving system in the same fashion that municipal reforms sought to eliminate the patronage system.

In the 1880s, The Poor Association used newspapers to convince citizens to change their method of almmsgiving. In October, the Sun printed the proceedings of a Poor Association meeting that focused on almmsgiving. Joseph Merrefield spoke candidly “To support the poor would not only pauperize them, but invite the many lazy, thriftless loafers, who are able but unwilling to work, to be in their turn supported by the alms of the industrious and thrifty.” Merrefield worked diligently with G. S. Griffith and earlier, Johns Hopkins, to create hospitals, houses of refuge, and industrial schools. He was adamant that systematic relief through organizations like the Poor Association was more advantageous to impoverished individuals because it subdivided the poor into worthy and unworthy recipients and prevented fraud. Merrefield called on philanthropic Baltimoreans to use their alms wisely:

To speak plainly, is not this very evil effected by those of our general citizens who, instead of sending their contributions to his society, send them to the police stations for indiscriminate relief, which is given out to all applicants, without the necessary pre-examination in each case which

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will prevent the lazy, able-bodied from getting what is so sorely needed by the sick, destitute poor? The distribution by the police force is not, and of course cannot be systematic, as their other duties and want of information as to the condition of those relieved would preclude the possibility of their investigating the real necessity of each applicant, as is done by the agents of the Poor Association. By their want of system, through ignorance, the police force distribute what is sent them to the most clamorous and importunate.  

Most important in his statement is the emphasis on the Poor Association’s ability to do what the police force could not: be systematic and collect information on the condition of applicants. Applicants were required to reveal their living conditions, work habits, and personal beliefs to investigators before relief of any kind was provided. However, the Poor Association generally provided the same type of relief as that of the police stations. They collected goods like remnant cloth, and food from producers and middle-class families.

The effort to rid the police department of alms management was generally successful except in time of extreme winter weather. In February 1899, a terrible blizzard hit Baltimore and some benevolent citizens reverted back to police distribution. With temperatures at seven below zero, heavy winds, massive snow drifts, and then the next day drenching rain, the city ceased to function. Small shops could not receive deliveries of life-sustaining goods, coal and fuel became difficult to acquire (and sold at much higher prices), basements flooded from the snow melt and heavy rainfall. During the blizzard week, the COS and the Poor Association attempted to provide aid, finding 175 cases of “absolute destitution.” However, a number of citizens sent supplies to seven

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18 “The Poor Association: Tilting Against Police Almsgiving,” *Sun* (Baltimore), October 12, 1887.
police stations. This attracted crowds of poor to the police stations. The COS regretted to say that most who came during the storm were children. The COS stated “The attitude of parents who sent their children, but would not go themselves, might be difficult to understand, if we did not remember that a public and free distribution always brings out the meanest traits in human nature.”

The COS challenged the public to understand how police relief negatively affected the poor by indiscriminately dividing aid. The police stations tried to use the system of patrolmen advising on the need for aid in communities during the storm but the COS claimed that they had “ample proof that large numbers who came without orders were helped, and helped sometimes in another police district than their own.” Indiscriminate giving was most troubling to the society who claimed the “police-stations [were] the feeding and clothing of homeless men who did not care to do the work at the Inn.” Some of the clothing soon found its way, of course, to shops on March Market Space.” The society complained that men were needed to shovel snow and the police, instead of putting them to work, allowed these men to “loaf” outside of the stationhouse while “snow-balling one another.” According to the COS, the inability of police officers to investigate applicants and needs of the community hurt the poor in the long term and wasted donations from the good citizens of Baltimore.

The COS restated all their reasons for removing distribution from the police station. To be sure, they explained that the police were “for the most part a kind-hearted

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21 The Inn was a place where a destitute man could come and chop wood for the day and received room and board in return.

body of men, and honestly anxious to relieve suffering.” However, the role of the police
“should stand, in the minds of the whole community, for their own work of enforcing law
and order.” The COS believed that alms distribution was no longer a role of the police
officers and the community should avoid thinking of them as such. In closing, the COS
happily reported that “police relief is dying out, and is being replaced by quieter and
more adequate methods of relief.” By the end of the century, the police department gave
into the pressure from reformers to forego aid-giving and improve their ability to enforce
law and order.23

As reformers’ beliefs about how to care for the poor spread, another organization
weighed in on the role male police officers should have. The Women’s Christian
Temperance Union called for the protection of women and children in police stations.
Many other cities had appointed police matrons to care for incarcerated women and
children to protect them from hardened criminals influence or sexual abuse. By 1885, 11
cities had appointed permanent police matrons. The Baltimore Women’s Christian
Temperance Union, however, did not begin their thrust for appointing police matrons
until after the COS usurped police alms distribution. Historian Clarice Feinman remarked
that the police matron movement coincided with the professionalization of social work.
Many women who became police matrons applied social work methods and concepts the
COS championed to the care of women and juvenile delinquents.24

In 1892, the General Assembly of Maryland passed a law requiring the Police
Commissioners to appoint police matrons to each station house. The Sun, Baltimore’s

24 Clarice Feinman, Women in the Criminal Justice System, 3rd ed. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing
most prominent newspaper, called the legislation “a just, proper and progressive step in prison reform.”

Fourteen women were appointed to four-year terms. Police matrons used their authority to search all female prisoners, provide them with advice and supplies, and direct them to institutions fitting their needs. The matrons could arrange their transition to a new institution or hospital and escort them there. The appointment of police matrons to each stationhouse not only underscored the power of the reformers to create change but also put further limits on a police officer’s duties. The reform allowed women to care for women as the Baltimore Sun explained, policemen “do the best that men can do. They do everything in fact—even those things a woman should do for a woman—but how much better after all it would be to have a good woman do to these things.”

Essentially, the appointment of matrons displayed reformers’ belief that police officers were unable to properly handle delinquent women and children.

The police matrons dealt with their offenders differently than the police had previously. Each matron inquired into the “antecedents and cause for arrest” to divide those entrenched in vice from the novice offenders. Finding the source of criminal activity was an important new progressive interpretation of crime. Progressives believed that each crime was individual and criminals required individual treatment. Like the COS, police matrons wrote case histories and conducted interviews. The police matrons focused their efforts on “wayward girls” and children. Historian Clinton McCabe stated, “In the case of wayward girls who are taken to the police station the matrons, although not required by any printed regulation, always endeavor to sow the seeds of reform and

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25 “Matrons at Police Stations,” Sun (Baltimore), March 11, 1892.
26 McCabe, History of the Baltimore Police Department, 1774-1907, 142.
27 “The Need for Police Matrons,” Sun (Baltimore), March 19, 1892.
28 Feinman, Women in the Criminal Justice System, 93.
right living and to persuade them and wean them from leading dissolute lives.”

Using the methods of the COS, police matrons assisted women, wayward girls, boys under the age of fourteen by counseling them and helping them acquire clothing, housing, and employment. By the end of 1895, the Associated Committee of Police Matrons claimed they had cared for 19,705 persons including women, young girls, and young boys. In placing white women in a motherly role over delinquent females and children “of all races, colors and classes” the reformers that urged for the bill’s passage acknowledged their acceptance of social evolutionary theories. The matron, who could be referred to as the stationhouse mother, stayed in their prescribed gender role as mothers and caregivers despite their movement into a paid public position.

The police department had been stripped of its ability to distribute alms, been forced to allow women to manage two groups of criminals, and still faced pressure from reform organizations to better enforce law and order. Gambling, prostitution, and liquor sales increasingly became a target for Baltimore reformers. They believed if they could limit the accessibility of these vices it might be possible to prevent criminal activity and pauperism. In many states, reform meant enacting new laws, but in Baltimore, laws that restricted the licensing of saloons, banned gambling on a Sunday, and criminalized houses of ill-fame already existed. Eugene Levering, Charles Bonaparte, and John Glenn created in 1888, the Society for the Suppression of Vice of Baltimore City, which sought

29 McCabe, History of the Baltimore Police Department, 1774-1907, 142.
30 Feinman, Women in the Criminal Justice System, 93.
to publicize law enforcement’s shortcomings and influence the Board of Liquor License Commissioners to deny saloon licensing. The group regularly met in Levering Hall of Johns Hopkins University or at the Frist Congregational Church (Pastor Slocum’s church). The society combined the goals of civil service reformers and the COS as it believed more efficient, nonpartisan government could uplift the city through moral protection of urban dwellers. The Society’s battle against the Baltimore criminal justice system forced the professionalization of the police department.

The Society for the Suppression of Vice of Baltimore City’s membership was very similar to the COS. The Society believed police officers, commissioners, and judges were working together to regulate prostitution and gambling. Rather than call for additional legislation the group called on the police and city boards to better execute the laws.

While some further legislation may be desirable, we believe that a stern, zealous, impartial and efficient execution of the existing laws against various forms of gambling, by the officers whose sworn duty it is to see that these laws are obeyed, would suffice, if not to rid the community of this great evil, at least to render it of comparatively little importance. The Society saw these “officers” as city commissioners, judges, and beat cops. The system was riddled with, at best, lackadaisical management. Reverend Doctor Wharton, member of the society, remarked that the local police force was filled with officers “either unfriendly to the best interests of our people or else are in league with the transgressors.”

33 “To Suppress Vice: Pool Selling, Policy Gambling, Sunday Liquor Selling,” Sun (Baltimore), February 14, 1894; “American Cities: Features of their Moral Growth Strikingly Presented,” Sun (Baltimore), February 17, 1892.
36 “Vices of a City: Inquires to be Made Concerning Resorts for Immorality,” Sun (Baltimore), January 17, 1893.
their decisions. In spite of the fact that a simple change of commissioners might have solved the cities problems, the Society viewed commissioners, judges, and police officers as a single group of law enforcers, which meant they were all indicted by the Society’s criticism.37

The Society supported bills recommended by the Grand Jury in 1892 that included increased investigative powers for the Liquor Board and police officers. One of the bills, had it been enacted, would have given the “responsibility of the Police Commissioners for the enforcement of the Sunday liquor law even more direct and unequivocal.” The department would have the authority to train “special policemen and detectives to visit saloons at which there was any reason to suspect violations of the law and to remain there for such period as might be necessary to detect such violation.” Saloon keepers would also be forced to allow patrolmen into their establishment at any time. Another bill, which passed, empowered the Liquor Board to summon witnesses and administer oaths, which increased their ability to prevent notorious gambling dens from slipping through the licensing process. This suggestion came about after allegations of perjury in Board investigations. However “all the other recommendations of the Grand Jury were ignored.” The Society continued, regardless of setbacks, to protest the spread of gambling houses and saloons. In 1892, they submitted “one hundred and twenty-five protests against the granting of applications for liquor license.” The board issued few refusals. The following year the Society changed its method and began petitioning for a law that would allow neighborhoods to permit or deny the licensing of a saloon.38

The Society also continued to call for additional enforcement of the prohibition on Sunday gambling and liquor sales. In 1893, they prepared a bill for the state legislature requesting additional provisions for the law. They recommended that saloon owners be required to allow “a free an unobstructed view of the bar…from the highway.” This meant the lifting of blinds and screens on all windows facing the street. The bill also would compel the Liquor Board to repeal licenses for the saloons that failed to obey. Although the Society conceded that the bill would “not break up Sunday liquor selling,” it could afford for the easier identification of law breakers by beat cops.\(^{39}\) The Society believed these changes would force police officers to make arrests at for liquor sale violations.

In addition, the Society also kept their eyes peeled for any signs of illegal gambling. In 1893, the Society “called the attention of the Police Commissioners to some twenty-nine policy-writers, specifying the places at which they were in the habit of selling slips.” “Policy” was an illegal numbers game in which bettors could wager a few cents on the outcome of a random selection of numbers and possibly win huge returns. Historians have argued that political machines, who received cuts of the winnings, protected most policy houses.\(^{40}\) It is likely that the Baltimore Democratic machine protected certain gaming houses and appointed individuals to the Liquor Board who were willing to ignore backdoor gambling when they issued licenses. The Society believed that policy gaming tempted poor workers to wager an extra few cents instead of saving it for use in tough times. They also recognized that “if all the police department and the jail


officials were in serious earnest in their efforts to break up the business,” they would “have no great difficulty in securing sufficient admissions or confessions.” This statement alluded to the Society’s suspicion that city officials backed policy gaming and protected it from criminal prosecution.\(^{41}\)

Officer Randolph G. Welsh performed forty-two arrests for “gaming on a Sunday” between September 1895 and March 1898, according to his notebook. The majority of those caught were probably seen leaving a known gambling house. It is unfortunate that Officer Welsh never recorded the location of these incidences. Only five of the men arrested were African American, which reflected the limited number that lived in the neighborhood. The rest had a mix of German and Irish surnames, consistent with the diversity of the neighborhood. A majority of these individuals received fines of one dollar plus court costs. The judge committed those that could not afford to pay the fine to jail, and released the rest. It is clear from the regular number of arrests in his notebook that Officer Welsh’s actions failed to close the local gambling house.\(^{42}\)

Officer Welsh likely knew Richard Doyle, one of the forty-two gambling arrestees, fairly well. Welsh arrested Doyle eight times for a variety of charges including, profane language, assault, petty larceny, drunkenness, and, of course, gaming.\(^{43}\)

According to census records, Doyle was born in 1873, son of first generation Irish immigrants. His father was illiterate, but his mother could read. Doyle was the eldest of five children, and supported the family by following his father’s footsteps to work as a laborer for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Unlike his father, he learned to read and write, whether his mother taught him or he attended some schooling is unclear. Doyle

\(^{41}\) 1894 Report of the Society of the Suppression of Vice, 21-22.
\(^{42}\) R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
\(^{43}\) R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
lived the majority of his life in the twentieth ward, moving less than ten blocks from his childhood home on S. Strickler St to his 1910 home on S. Pulaski St.\textsuperscript{44} Richard Doyle was just the kind of person the Society for the Suppression of Vice was targeting in their proposed changes to legislation.

The Society for the Suppression of Vice continued to wage war against the gambling, prostitution, and liquor violations into the twentieth century, but its greatest effect during the 1890s lay in its ability to present government fraudulence and police ignorance. After the election of 1895 when the Democratic machine fell, the Society focused on civil service reform, which would force appointments of city officers to be based on merit not patronage.\textsuperscript{45}

As a consequence of the new political regime, a new city charter was written in 1898. In 1895, a group of individuals that disliked anti-Democratic machine, civil service reformers, and the Republican party tentatively fused together to win elections in important city offices. Historian James Crooks explained that Baltimore had been loyal to the Democratic Party in state and local politics since the Civil War. He attributed the success of Republicans in 1895 to “good-government advocates and anti-Gorman Democrats,” who organized and persuaded citizens into reform blocks. Local newspapers, which exposed the machines shortcomings, and the economic depression also helped to persuade citizens to vote against the party. For middle-class citizens, Crooks believes that they had compartmentalized their moral beliefs and had not applied


them to city government." Gradually they realized "that their right to vote was being
subverted and that boss rule was wrong." Historians have seen this election as the
beginning of progressive control of the city. The 1898 charter is considered the first
major change progressives accomplished after entering office.\(^{46}\)

Arguably, the city charter was miserably outdated, having been written in 1796.
The task of writing a new charter was given to a commission of bipartisan elite
Baltimoreans including Daniel C. Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins University,
William Pinckney Whyte, former mayor Ferdinand Latrobe, George Gaither, and Lewis
Putzel. The commission wrote a compromise charter that was likely to succeed politically
but as a result failed to fix all the problems of the previous charter. It did not address
home rule nor did it include the civil service reforms that so many progressives
supported. However, it increased efficiency in a number of departments, limited the
mayor’s appointive powers, and updated legal codes to reflect modern trends. The
changes in the legal code defined police responsibilities for controlling the urban and
gave judges extra discretion in regards to punishment.\(^{47}\)

Even though the new charter was progressive, it allowed judges to continue to
determine sentences based on the old system of “worthy” and “unworthy.” However, a
judge’s ability to send delinquents to a variety of different institutions forced a
relationship between private charity organizations and criminal justice. The charter also
bequeathed authority to directors of children’s institutions and the Supervisors of City

\(^{46}\)Crooks, *Politics and Progress*, 44.
\(^{47}\)Crooks, *Politics and Progress*, 93-5.
Charities of Baltimore. These changes reflected how the agenda of progressive reformers increasingly manipulated the system of law and order within the city.⁴⁸

In the *New City Charter* of 1898, vagrancy and pickpockets were given extra attention. Police officers were required to arrest “all persons whom they shall find in any passenger railway car, or in or about any railway depot in Baltimore City or in any place of public amusement, or in any street of the City, who they shall know or have good reason to believe are common thieves or pickpockets.” If any person entered a station house and claimed, under oath, that they knew the identity of a pickpocket or common thief, a warrant would be issued by a Judge or Justice of the Peace for their arrest. The 1898 charter took punishment for common thievery and pickpocketing seriously. Regulations stated that any person convicted of being a thief or pickpocket could “be imprisoned in jail not more than two years nor less than six months, and be fined not more than one hundred dollars.”⁴⁹

Subsequent offenses could earn the criminal a new title: common thief or common pickpocket. The law reserved this status for any person arrested a second time, or more, “at least one month since his last conviction or acquittal.” Any judge used the facts of the case, the suspect’s reputation, and their morals to decide their fate. The *New City Charter* stipulated “either facts or reputation proving that such a person is habitually and by practice a thief or pickpocket shall be sufficient for his conviction.” This meant that upon subsequent charges a pickpocket would be charged with being a common thief, which did not require proof of a specific crime, only a reputation for performing such

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⁴⁹ *The New Charter for Baltimore City*, 309.
acts. In addition, fines and jail time were left up to the judges and justices after the first charge.50

“Vagrants, paupers, beggars, vagabonds and disorderly persons” also plagued city streets, but the law treated them very differently. Judges and Justices of the Peace were required to issue warrants on any information about paupers in the city. On-duty officers then combed the streets for vagabonds to answer the charge in court. Officers had the authority to bring anyone suspicious of vagrancy to the stationhouse for examination. Those who could not claim a home and a job were deemed one of the five categories above. The law defined them as:

- Every person who has no visible means of maintenance from property or personal labor, or is not permanently supported by his or her friends or relatives, and lives idle, without employment, shall be deemed a pauper;
- and every person who habitually wanders about and begs in the streets, or from house to house, or sits, stands or takes a position in any place and begs from passers-by, either by words or gestures, shall be deemed a habitual beggar;
- and every person who wanders about and lodges in outhouses, market-places, or other public buildings or places, or in the open air, and has no permanent place of abode, or visible means of maintenance, shall be deemed a vagrant;
- and every person who leads a dissolute and disorderly course of life, and cannot give an account of the means by which he procures a livelihood, and every fortuneteller or common gambler, shall be deemed a vagabond or disorderly person.51

Unlike the 1870s, judges no longer allowed vagrants to leave the city. Instead, a more interventionist police department and local government utilized institutions in the hopes of reforming the criminal. By 1898, even the local prison used rehabilitative methods,

50 The New Charter for Baltimore City, 309.
51 The New Charter for Baltimore City, 335.
allowing the legal code to reflect the ideological change, from preservation of the city from crime to preservation of society from crime.\textsuperscript{52}

The criminal justice system of Baltimore divided vagabonds from vagrants based on the reason for their poverty. For example, a vagrant who came into poverty because of an illness that caused him to lose his job was more likely to be considered worthy of reform than a vagabond whose addiction to gambling thrust him into poverty. Therefore, judges and police officers held authority to subdivide impoverished persons into “worthy” and “unworthy” categories. Although the \textit{New City Charter} did not strictly define who was sent where, it did allow sentences for beggars to be spent at charity houses instead of the penitentiary. The charter stated that paupers, beggars and vagabonds could be sent “to the Almshouse for said City, or to such other suitable place as may be provided for said purpose by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore or to the Maryland House of Correction for the first offence.” However, in the second or subsequent offences, the person would be committed to the House of Correction.\textsuperscript{53}

The 1898 Charter further defined how Judges should approach sentencing.

According to Clause 869:

Whenever any house of refuge, house of correction, workhouse or other house, building or place shall be provided by the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, to which persons convicted under this sub-division of this Article may be sent, the said Court or said Justice may send them to any such house, building or place, if the Judge of said Court or said Justice

\textsuperscript{52} Rhines, “A City and Its Social Problems,” 374; “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1897,” in \textit{Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1897} (Baltimore: n. p., 1898), 417-8.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{The New Charter for Baltimore City}, 336.
consider it to be a more suitable place for the purpose than the Almshouse.\textsuperscript{54}

Discrepancies in the law let judges decide if they would follow the initial clause that claimed second offenders were to be placed in the House of Correction or emphasize the section of Clause 869 that stated “whenever any” place was deemed more suitable than the almshouse. To confuse things further, regulations for sentencing periods were standard for any institution:

\begin{quote}
The Time for which any person shall be sent to the almshouse, the Maryland House of Correction or other place… shall not be less than one week nor more than two months for the first conviction, and not less than one month nor more than six months for the second conviction, and not less than six months nor more than twelve months for the third or any subsequent conviction.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

Although the charter clearly defined sentence terms, judges relied on the old system of “worthy” and “unworthy” to designate the institution at which the sentence would be carried out.

By comparing the sentencing for pickpockets to those of homeless beggars, the ideological beliefs of charter commission becomes apparent. Homeless beggars on three or more offenses were sentenced to six months to two years, while a pickpocket’s first offense included the same jail time plus a fine. Laws regarding pauperism had flexibility based on one’s path into poverty and the discretion of the judge, while thievery was more strictly defined and more harshly punished.\textsuperscript{56} Thieves and beggars revealed the issues of morality that flowed through criminal law and outreach programs of the late nineteenth century. Even if a pickpocket and a beggar had come into poverty through the same path, perhaps an illness that caused them to lose employment, the beggar received leniency

\textsuperscript{54} The New Charter for Baltimore City. 336-7.
\textsuperscript{55} The New Charter for Baltimore City. 336-7.
\textsuperscript{56} The New Charter for Baltimore City, 309, 336-7.
because he upheld some moral standards. The immorality of stealing immediately disqualified an adult impoverished person from the institutions of charity. Therefore, any accused that broke the code of social morality was more likely sent to the city jail.

The Supervisors of City Charities of Baltimore influenced the law to make these moral distinctions between types of crime. The Supervisors and other officers were given the task of managing those individuals who were sent to charitable homes and work houses after sentencing. They were responsible for “keeping them during the time for which they are to be kept,” “shall put said persons… to the work which they are best able to do,” and shall have the “right to make proper rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying out” the sentences and their duties.\(^57\) These powers vested in the supervisors and charity managers were important because it placed them in the same authoritarian position that prison wardens held. The equality of power would become an important platform for charity organizers and penitentiary managers to debate reforms.

The type of crime was not the only factor used to divide marginalized groups in Baltimore. The criminal justice system treated men, women and children very differently based on their perceived autonomy. Men, for example, were given little sympathy because of the societal ideal of the self-made man. Gilded Age society perpetuated the view that man could succeed if he was moral, avoided vices, and worked hard. So destitute men, in the form of beggar or thief were likely to receive a harsher punishment than a female beggar or thief.\(^58\)

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\(^57\) *The New Charter for Baltimore City*, 336-7.
This attitude grew out of both Victorian ideals and racial hierarchies. Victorian ideals demanded that women remain pure, become mothers, and control the domestic sphere. Women were economically dependent upon men. Racial hierarchies, backed by pseudo-scientific research, perpetuated the idea that African Americans, Indians, and white women were subordinate to white men. In this sense, women who were impoverished were seen in two lights, depending on their path into poverty. One path involved a woman losing her provider, or husband. In this case the widow may have fallen into poverty through no fault of her own. Struggling to provide for herself or her children, a widow may beg, steal, or prostitute for the sake of survival. Alternatively, a woman who came to the city to work in the factory might fall prey to vice and drink. These addictions would pull a woman away from the pillars of morality, the church and the family. She then may become a prostitute to feed her vices. Although this path was more about personal weakness, society continued to blame white men and society. Reformers believed that poor rural fathers sent their daughters to the city to make money for the family, but in doing so exposed their innocent daughters to vice and temptations. Society considered both types as fallen women and the city continuously debated which deserved reform.59

Children were almost always considered worthy of charitable consideration. Baltimore society and America at large, tended to believe that children were particularly worthy of reform. Girls under the age of sixteen and boys under fourteen were not permitted to enter:

any saloon, place of entertainment or amusement known as dance-houses, concert saloon, theatre or varieties, where immoral, indecent, obscene or vulgar language, display or performance is permitted, allowed or carried on, or where any spirituous liquors, wines, intoxicating or malt liquors are sold, exchanged or given away, unless accompanied by parents or guardian.60

To keep saloon managers from letting children come and go, they could be fined ten dollars.

Parents or guardians of children were responsible to monitor their children in saloons and on the street. Any child found begging on the street could be removed from their parents’ care. Clause 882 of the New City Charter stated parents “shall restrain such child from habitually begging, whether actually begging or under the pretense of peddling. Any person offending under this section shall be considered and deemed as incapable of taking care of and providing for such child.” The act of “habitually begging” was defined in the succeeding clause to include:

being in any street, road or public place for the purpose of so begging, gathering or receiving alms; that is found wandering and not having any home or settled place of abode or proper guardianship or visible means of subsistence; that is found destitute, either being an orphan or having a vicious parent who is undergoing penal servitude or imprisonment; that frequents the company of reputed thieves or prostitutes, or house of assignation or prostitution.61

Only one exception for children peddling on the street was for the sale of newspapers.62

These clauses allowed beat cops, like Officer Welsh, to intervene for the best interest of a child.

Children found in any of the previous situations were brought directly to the Justice of the Peace at the closest station house. If the justice found the minor guilty of

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60 The New Charter for Baltimore City, 338.
61 The New Charter for Baltimore City, 339.
62 The New Charter for Baltimore City, 339.
such acts, the justice “shall commit such child to an orphan asylum, charitable or other institute.” Some of the charitable organizations listed in the charter included the Boys’ Home, Dolan Children’s Aid Society, Hebrew Orphan Asylum, Home of the Friendless, Protestant Infant Asylum, St. Vincent’s Orphan Asylum and Henry Watson Children’s Aid Society. In brief, Baltimoreans’ focused their efforts save individuals from vice most strongly towards children.  

Although courts based the system of “worthy” and “unworthy” on how one descended into poverty and vice, blacks were seen through a different lens that defied the worthiness system. African Americans struggled in the late-nineteenth century to survive in Baltimore’s urban landscape. Although Baltimore prided itself on not having tenements like New York City, poverty abounded in the black neighborhoods. This was because blacks held the most menial of jobs. Marginalized to the lowest class, blacks struggled as more and more machinery took the place of lower skilled workers. The exclusion of blacks from skilled crafts limited their economic strength, which denied them opportunities like homeownership. Prejudice and economic marginalization forced blacks into poverty but these factors went unseen by judges and many progressives.

Social Darwinism allowed a racial system that classified blacks as ignorant, sexually deviant, and dangerous. The Darwinist hierarchy also purported that change in status or intelligence was not quickly possible; only over hundreds of years would an improvement be seen. Therefore, reforming blacks seemed nonsensical. Instead, courts punished blacks to deter malicious activity and encourage servitude and work. In essence,

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blacks were more likely to be sent to prison or the almshouse no matter the crime they committed. This was especially true even if a black criminal was simply given a fine. Inability to pay any fine allowed judges to place a person in the Baltimore City Jail to work off the fine. Baltimore’s criminal justice system had struggled to control the African American community in the years following the Civil War, when immigration from rural Maryland and Virginia greatly increased the black population of the city. Between 1864 and 1870, the number of arrests of blacks charged with petty offences increased dramatically and the press coverage over the increased number of blacks in the city jail only exacerbated the tensions between blacks and the criminal justice system. Throughout the nineteenth century the police perceived the black community as a source of civil disorder. Many of Baltimore’s newspapers claimed that the arrests were a result of African Americans inherent shortcomings, like shiftlessness, deviance, and viciousness.

Although the police department held a unique position in the Baltimore landscape, they were not free from the influence of Baltimore citizens. The Charity Organization Society and the Poor Association claimed police could not enforce law and order and perform proper charity work. Therefore, progressives stripped the police of their ability to distribute alms to the poor of their community. Officers only regulated activities on their beat; no longer did officers have a positive relationship with their constituents. By the time Officer Welsh began his arrest log in 1895, the department was required to have a police matron at every station. Each matron controlled first offenders and juvenile

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delinquents, removing a large group of criminals from the police’s responsibility. Then, the Society for the Suppression of Vice publically blamed police officers for the continuation of policy gaming and prostitution. Although the Society tried to give the department more investigative powers, they only managed to defame commissioners who protected illegal activities.

When the city government came under new leadership, the police department was specialized through a process of better defining criminal activity like vagrancy. However, moral sentiments continued to influence the new legislation, codifying the system of “worthy” and “unworthy”. The 1898 City Charter also showed how a network of individuals and organizations divided criminals amongst a variety of private and public institutions while still relying on the system of worthiness. Through the increasing outcry of reformers and real legislative changes, hints of the progressive mindset seeped into Baltimore’s criminal justice system. Officer Welsh’s experiences in the 1890s highlight the vast professionalization that had occurred since the 1850s. Welsh restricted his activities to the enforcement of the law by regularly arresting individuals for gambling violations, vagrancy, and neglect.
CHAPTER 3

EXPANDING METHODS OF REFORM:
FROM REFORMATORIES TO THE CITY JAIL

About a quarter of Officer Randolph Welsh’s arrests logged in his small notebook involved physical assaults. Most of these were minor and involved domestic issues, like Helen Bailey who pulled the beard of Frank Wett, or quarrels outside of saloons, like Richard Doyle’s fight in April 1896 in front of the saloon at 300 South Gilmor. Depending on the severity, some were sent to prison for a short stay, many others were released on the payment of fines. The same was true for the charge of disturbing the neighborhood. The majority of Welsh’s twenty-three charges for disturbing the neighborhood were released on costs, but by the 1890s repeat offenders were given increased punishments for such acts. For example, some of Welsh’s arrestees were given a $1.00 fine, others a $3.00 fine, one even received a $10.00 fine and six months in jail.\(^1\)

The unequal punishments were the result of prison wardens’s efforts to decrease the number of peace-cases in the prison. Over the last twenty years of the century, the prison struggled to manage criminals and created a variety of reforms to address the problem. After 1895 they finally decided on a system of scaled-punishments based on the number of offenses. The prison also began to concentrate on reforming prisoners. Understanding how and why these changes occurred is the goal of this chapter.

Criminality caused social anxiety for a number of reasons. Charity Organization Society (COS) supporters believed that criminality was a product of poverty. Those who could not muster the moral strength to confront life’s challenges fell into criminality. Police officers in the mid-1870s provided overnight shelter for the homeless beggar or

\(^1\) R.G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
vagrants, but after the COS usurped their role as welfare providers, they classified any individual who resorted to crime to survive as “unworthy” poor. Nowhere to turn, many of these homeless vagrants looked to the prison for shelter. A quick fight in a saloon or a disturbing the neighborhood charge could easily land them a short stay in the city jail, which supplied heated shelter, a bed, and meals. Committed to the city jail, these men experienced the influence of the Warden’s beliefs about rehabilitation and the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Associations brand of reformation.²

Justices and judges sent child delinquents, who were caught begging or in other mischievous behavior, to local reformatories or industrial schools instead of the jail. As Officer Welsh patrolled the streets of the southern part of the twentieth ward in Baltimore on Friday, August 6, 1897, he brought Charles Byington to a hearing charged as being a vagrant minor. After some investigation, it was concluded that Byington had run away from his home in Washington D. C., and Judge Roberts sentenced him to time in the St. Mary’s Industrial School.³ By the 1880s, reformers had convinced judges to send delinquent children to reform schools instead of the prison believing that they had a better chance of rehabilitation than adult criminals. Many of Baltimore’s reformatories and industrial schools had been built by private philanthropists, but were given public appropriations because the justice system sent them inmates.⁴

³ R. G. Welsh, Notebook, Maryland Historical Society Library, Baltimore, MD.
Juvenile reformatories proscribed a particular dose of rehabilitation that demanded hard-work, thrift, cleanliness, and obedience. These were the same values the COS prescribed to their cases. The same wealthy Baltimoreans that controlled the COS built and managed many of these reformatories. As a result, expectations of poor individuals shared many similarities across different organizations. But as an institution, reformatories had more control over their cases than friendly visitors. Reformatory managers had the same authority over juvenile inmates as prison wardens had over prisoners.

The great participatory overlap of membership across city reform organs allowed a transfer of ideas about reform. Most importantly for institutions was the transfer of reformatory institution standards to the Baltimore city jail. Although not an overt force of action, reformatories’ daily schedules, resources for inmates, and expectations of reform appeared nearly identical to the Baltimore city jail by the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter argues that increased numbers of peace-cases in the Baltimore city jail, caused by the COS’s campaign against indiscriminate giving, inspired wardens to turn to reformatory methods in order to reduce recidivism. However, the adoption of rehabilitative rather than punitive methods of practice came about slowly because of the turn-over in prison management, many wardens’ lack of experience, and convict labor problems.

One can best understand this transfer through the comparison of two institutions’ records. The annual reports from the Industrial Home for Colored Girls will show expectations, methods of practice, and reforms created in Baltimore reformatories over

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the twenty years from 1880 to 1900. The Industrial Home for Colored Girls, like many charitable institutions, released annual reports to the public to attract monetary support. These reports were undoubtedly biased in favor of the managers and operators of the home; however, it is possible to piece together the daily experiences of those who were placed in these kinds of homes. In addition, the reports reveal the advances in reformatory methods between 1880 and 1900. Although the home was located north of Baltimore proper, in Melvale, the city used it for delinquent and vagrant children. It was very common for institutions to be built outside of the city, as it was believed that rural surroundings were healthier. The annual reports to city council from the Board of Visitors to the Baltimore City Jail and the warden’s report in the same twenty year period, in comparison to the industrial school, will uncover how and why the prison adopted reformatory schools’ methods.

According to the 1890 Manual of the Baltimore Society for the Protection of Children, the city had a variety of reformatories. Some of the schools took both orphans and delinquents. The House of Reformation for Colored Boys and the Industrial Home for Colored Girls were the only homes for African-American children. White females were accepted at the House of the Good Shepard, the Female House of Refuge, St. Mary’s Female Orphan Asylum, and the Benevolent Society. White boys were accepted at St. Mary’s Industrial School, and the Boys’ Home. Other homes specialized in the care

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7 Records for the Baltimore City Jail can be found at the Maryland Historical Society in a series of books titled Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore. The annual reports for the Industrial Home for Colored Girls are located in the Enoch Pratt Library Maryland Room. The library is missing the 1883, 1885, 1888, and 1892 annual reports from the Industrial Home.
of infants such as, the Protestant Infant Asylum, St. Vincent Orphan Asylum, and the Nursery and Child’s Hospital. Institutions were also created for the feeble-minded and disabled. Only two institutions were based strictly on religious affiliation: the Protestant Infant Asylum and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum. The Industrial Home for Colored Girls will be used for comparison because it was created and managed by the same individual that established the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association. Although many other reformatories could show a similar pattern, the connection between the Industrial Home for Colored Girls and the Baltimore city jail was definitively linked by one individual. Additionally, the general agent of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association participated in the efforts of the Charity Organization Society. Archival sources uncovered these links and helped to show the crosspollination of reform ideas.

Charities like the Industrial Home for Colored Girls used a rigid system of discipline and education to rehabilitate their dependents, or, as they were often called, inmates. These inmates were sentenced to time in the home by the Baltimore city court system. The majority of reformatories were created because the criminal justice system failed to properly manage juvenile criminals. The executive committee of the home alleged “The large number of young colored girls found incarcerated…who, instead of

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9 Nurith Zmora displays in Orphanages Reconsidered that many Baltimore’s charity homes had a similarly day-to-day operations, which began at six in the morning and ended between seven and nine in evening. Schooling, cleaning, meals, and manual training or work were placed in a tight schedule which rarely allowed for free time. Zmora, Orphanages Reconsidered, 121.
punishment and exposure to graver evils, needed just such discipline and education as Home like ours could afford.” They claimed their purpose was “the moral rehabilitation of the girls” through a process that cultivated “habits of industry and thrift,” trained “the minds in at least an elementary education,” and encouraged “virtue and religion.”

Opened in 1883, the home was “a pioneer” because it was the “first Reformatory established in the United States to care distinctively for delinquent colored girls.” By the end of 1883, the home housed thirty girls.

Girls could be placed into apprenticeships after some time at the home or work in the sewing school inside the home. Those apprenticed usually worked as housekeepers, cooks, or nurses. The home tried to keep a close watch on apprenticed girls by requiring periodical reports from their employers. By 1896, the home’s annual report suggested that visitations by officers of the home would be more consistent and advantageous than the employer report system. The apprenticeship system provided much needed space for additional inmates and allowed nearly reformed girls an opportunity for professional training.

Those who were not apprenticed had a “fully occupied” day. The home reported, “Certain hours are set apart for work in the sewing school or in house work; others are devoted to study and recitation, whilst a reasonable time is also set apart for wholesome recreation.” In addition to industrial and intellectual education, the girls learned hard work and thrift by maintaining the home. Girls washed, ironed, and cooked for their fellow inmates in monthly turns. In addition, the girls made “all the garments used in the

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12 13th Annual Report, 5.
13 13th Annual Report, 12.
Home.” They manufactured dresses, undergarments, aprons, flannel skirts, night gowns, stockings, sheets, and towels in addition to performing “all the mending.” All this sewing was done in addition to the girls’ time in the sewing school, which specialized in the manufacturing of overalls. Seventy sewing machines used by the girls, powered by a gas engine, provided “considerable revenue” for the home. Older girls could also offer to perform extra work to earn a wage.

The home maintained a Sunday school, regular church services, and an “excellent day school.” The day school provided practical skills like cooking and baking as well as “reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, deportment, and also in knitting and sewing by hand.” All education and discipline was meant to change “these neglected, vicious and dependent girls” into “industrious, self-supporting and good girls.” The Sunday school and services were of high interest to the girls, especially because every first Sunday of the month G.S. Griffith led the services. Deeply involved in both of the homes for African-American children, Griffith had pioneered the creation of the Industrial Home for Colored Girls and kept a close watch on the methods of rehabilitation.

Goals of the Charity Organization Society, reformatories and city jail all sought to nurture a specific type of citizen: self-restrained, hard-working, and moral. Victorian American lifestyle, lived by Baltimore philanthropists, rested on “bedrock values of domesticity, hard work, self-restraint, and individualism.” These values led to the successes of Baltimore’s wealthiest families, who founded and operated these organizations. Of course the values of the contributors and builders of these institutions

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14 13th Annual Report, 12.
16 Eighth Annual Report, 7.
weighed heavily on the management and methods of the institutions. The Industrial Home for Colored Girls is just one example of how pervasive middle-class Victorian values were to the rehabilitation methods of delinquent children.

Managers of the home believed that instilling these values was the main goal of the facility, gaining a skill and an education were only tactics to acquire proper morals and values. In 1896, the home decided to extend the age limit for its girls to more deeply develop the values upon the girls. The annual report of 1896 states that “in many cases, that this age-limit was not adequate to obtain the most satisfactory results, we therefore secured the passage of a bill by the General Assembly, extending our age-limit to twenty-one years.” Retaining the girls for the additional three years, from eighteen to twenty-one, helped the home to sew and sell more overalls and likely allowed more time for the home to retain job positions for their girls. Reform through industrial and common education became the primary method used by the Baltimore City Jail after 1896.

The Industrial Home for Colored Girls also implemented a system of probation, which allowed girls to live at home but continued to monitor their progress. This process was likely started because experts in the expanding social science field had begun to recommend probation and parole as a way to lower the number of inmates in prisons and reform schools. Historian Nurith Zmora argued that philanthropic community of Baltimore, beyond feeling a responsibility to the community, viewed their contributions and work as important and valuable. Therefore, they sought to pursue the latest innovations in social engineering. Baltimore’s upper- and middle-class individuals dedicated to reform held positions on executive committees and board of managers for a


\[19\] 14th Annual Report, 5.
variety of homes and had more time and access to information about the changing field of social work and charitable giving to suggest these changes. Therefore, it is not surprising that reformatories began using probation earlier than the criminal justice system.\textsuperscript{20}

One man, Goldsborough S. Griffith, founder of the Industrial Home for Colored Girls and the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, most influenced the changes to criminal reform methods in Baltimore. Deeply involved in the German Reformed Church, Griffith represented the church in a variety of conferences in the United States and Europe. His dedication and fervor pushed Baltimore to develop hundreds of Sunday schools. A large portion of these were directed at African-American residents. In 1904, after Griffith’s death, the \textit{Afro-American}, Baltimore’s prominent African-American newspaper, urged the creation of a memorial fund in his honor. They also praised Griffith’s character: “He was entirely divested of prejudice against our race.” Griffith also encouraged Sunday schools in prisons; in 1859 the Maryland Penitentiary accepted his proposal. By 1892, he conducted religious services and provided Thanksgiving dinner for prisoners at the penitentiary.\textsuperscript{21}

Griffith spent most of his adult life striving for the good of others, as part of his Christian duty. He organized and participated in a variety of aid societies and institutions. He believed that supporting the disadvantaged with clothing, religious literature, and medical care, could help eliminate their shortcomings. Griffith rejected racial discrimination and stigmas placed on criminals. He believed any frugal, Christian man had the ability and right to be successful. Unlike young professionals involved in the

\textsuperscript{20} Zmora, \textit{Orphanages Reconsidered}, 36-37.

COS, Griffith believed deeply in the ability of institutions, hence his diligent effort to apply modern social science to penal and reform institutions.\textsuperscript{22}

Goldsborough Griffith founded the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association in 1869 to reduce recidivism through religious influence and practical aid.\textsuperscript{23} The organization focused the majority of its efforts in Baltimore, but by the end of the century it was inspecting prisons, reformatories, and almshouses throughout the state. As its president, Goldsborough S. Griffith studied prisons throughout the United States and Europe in order to implement the latest trends in penology to Maryland’s penal institutions. Although its influence was more strongly felt in the Maryland Penitentiary, where prisoners had longer sentences and, therefore, more time for the positive influences of the association’s agents, the Baltimore City Jail stood “second in importance among the penal institutions.”\textsuperscript{24} The association’s influence in the jail encouraged internal reforms and assisted “worthy” prisoners upon release. Baltimore City Jail struggled to manage the floods of vagrant, delinquent, poor, insane, and drunk citizens that cycled through its gates. Yet his powerful influence through the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association advanced prison operations at the Baltimore City Jail, eventually making it as rehabilitative as the Industrial Home for Colored Girls.\textsuperscript{25}

The Baltimore City Jail built in 1858, held droves of impoverished tramps, beggars, and drunks for short stints, as well as criminals sentenced in the city limits for stays less than two years. The Gothic-style building had a “massive, castlelike [sic]

\textsuperscript{23} 20\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of MPAA, 5.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio. September 22-26, 1900} (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 365.
\textsuperscript{25} 20\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of MPAA, 8.
structure of stone and metal” and sat next to the Maryland Penitentiary. Opened with
great jubilee from city leaders, the city jail’s construction failed to stand the test of time.\textsuperscript{26}
In the late nineteenth century, the physical problems distracted warden’s from
implementing new penal methods. The Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association persistently
argued for reform in the city jail and by the end of the century succeeded in applying
reformative methods.

Griffith called the “2000 drinking saloons” in the Baltimore proper “the great
feeder of the Jail.” He continued that “without such enticements pauperism and crime
would wonderfully be reduced and many bright and talented sons be returned to their
unhappy families, and many weak ones saved from ruin and misery.”\textsuperscript{27} The Prisoners’
Aid Association directed its influence to these peace cases by supporting internal and
external changes to the criminal law and penology. Their external efforts involved
supporting the same reforms as the Society for the Suppression of Vice, while their one-
on-one interactions reflected the ideology and methods of the Charity Organization
Society and private reformatories.

The duties of the association and its agents were broad and diverse. Internal
efforts included “moral and religious influence,… earnest preaching of the gospel”
through Sunday-school instruction, “cell to cell visitation,” and “the general distribution
of library books and other good literature.” Upon discharge, the association also provided
“pecuniary aid, supervision and employment” to prisoners, at the agent’s discretion.\textsuperscript{28}

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\textsuperscript{26} Sherry H. Olson, \textit{Baltimore: The Building of an American City} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1980), 140-141.
\textsuperscript{27} 12\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of MPAA, 24.
\textsuperscript{28} Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association, \textit{Nineteenth Annual Report of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid
Association from April 1, 1887 to March 31, 1888} (Baltimore: John W. Kennedy & Co, 1888), 8. Here on
referred to as 19\textsuperscript{th} Annual Report of MPAA.
\end{flushleft}
External duties included “visiting families and parents of prisoners, praying with them and giving them material aid when in distress,” and “collecting funds to carry on the work.” Limited funds caused the association to provide aid only to prisoners they found “worthy” of reform. Like the COS, the association believed that a strong moral influence over the course of time would reform an individual, hence the group’s dedication to helping prisoners during and after incarceration.

The Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association also subscribed to the philosophies of the Charity Organization Society by encouraging thoughtful almsgiving. Reverend Louis Zinkhan, General Agent of the Association, presented his beliefs on the nature of charity in the nineteenth annual report of the Association. He stated, “there is no charity in helping a man who will make no effort to support himself; the world does not owe that man a living. There are many so afflicted that they are utterly helpless and dependent; it is a christian [sic] duty to aid and relieve these as we have the opportunity; as regards the other it may be a christian [sic] duty not to help them.” He went on to claim that the “true conception of charity” meant putting the man who is “dependent in a position to become self-supporting.”

Like the COS, he supported the idea of providing “opportunity and means” in the hand of the needy so they could “make an honest living.” Zinkhan’s beliefs about charity were likely influenced by the increasing publicity of the Charity Organization Society after 1885.

He also subscribed to the belief that indiscriminate charity was harmful to the poor. Zinkhan claimed that poverty was directly related to unregulated charity when he

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stated, “Pauperism is often encouraged by indiscriminate almsgiving.” His March 1889 report showed that he had personally began implementing these ideas through his role as general agent. He wrote,

We have exercised the utmost caution in giving assistance to discharged prisoners. Believing, as we do, that any charity which is indiscriminate is dangerous and fosters dependence and crime, we have sought to dissipate the notion that all must be helped, and hence we have as a rule only aided men and women where we felt assured that we were not only alleviating present distress but also helping to self-support and a better life.

As the Charity Organization Society grew in significance and influence, more leaders and charity workers began to repeat their ideas, which caused ever more institutions to feel the pressure of reform.

The association, like many of the wardens, focused their efforts on reforming the drunkards and peace-cases. The writers of the 1881 annual report grumbled,

During the past severe winter many of the poor, intemperate, friendless, homeless ‘vagrants’ and ‘bummers’ of our city have gladly sought the jail as a shelter from the cold and the storm. When released they would hurry to the nearest saloon, buy or beg enough strong drink to make them drunk, then get up a fight or disturbance, and frequently within twelve or twenty-four hours find themselves back in jail ‘booked’ for thirty or sixty days. Some of this unfortunate class are old men, haggard and feeble. Looking into their bloated, purpled, pimpled faces, one cannot help wondering how many ruined homes, heartbroken mothers and wives, wasted fortunes and ruined reputations, these wrecks of humanity represent.

Warden J. F. Morrison more simply defined a peace-case as “a class of people who, as a general rule, prefer idleness and imprisonment to labor and liberty.” Between 1880 and 1900 peace-cases made up an average of 68 percent of the Baltimore City Jail inmate

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33 20th Annual Report of MPAA, 16.
34 20th Annual Report of MPAA, 16.
36 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31st, 1880,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1880 (Baltimore: King Brothers, 1881), 877. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1880.
population. At times, peace-cases reached over 88 percent of the population. Because the number of peace-cases was so large, the issue of how to reform these inmates became the primary concern of the prison wardens and the Prisoners’ Aid Association.

Warden Morrison, whose tenure lasted from 1880 through 1886, was elected by the Board of Visitors to the City Jail, many of whom had close personal or business relationships with him. Upon entering the position, Morrison found the prison in dire need of repairs and expansion. Overcrowding, restrictions on convict labor, and the age of building weighed heavily in his annual reports. He urged the Board of Visitors and City Council annually for changes to legal code, major repairs, and protection for minors and witnesses. In spite of Morrison’s past in the telegraph and electric business, which may have seemed inapplicable to his new position, Morrison diligently reformed the prison. His most urgent calls pertained to prison maintenance and the peace-case population.

Upon entry to the warden position, Morrison was confronted with a problem of convict labor. Workingmen’s groups and labor unions protested against convict labor, as they claimed it was the same as slave labor. The battle raged throughout the 1880s and occupied a large amount of Morrison’s tenure. The twelfth annual report of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association urged the Board of Visitors to the City Jail to introduce industrial labor for prisoners in 1880. Their efforts were successful after the “determined and persistent effort” of “Hon. Judge Brown and Hon. Judge Pinkney.” They encouraged the change because the creation of industrial labor would “carry out the whole provision

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37 See Figure 4 in Appendix.
39 ARBVJBC, 1880, 877, 897.
of the law, by which a man is sentenced not only to imprisonment, but to hard labor.\textsuperscript{40}

When the convict labor law was questioned again in the late 1880s, the association supported Warden Morrison position that labor for prisoners encouraged good morals.\textsuperscript{41}

Pressure to abolish the system fomented again in 1888 when the state of New York abolished convict labor. However, the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association stated publically that convict labor, except the leasing-out system used in the South, was “the best system so far devised or practiced in the country, when surrounded by the most careful and guarded conditions.” The general agent also observed that many drunkards were “anxious to get [into the jail] because they can get their daily bread without working for it.” The association’s influence along with others helped to prevent the abolishment of convict labor in Maryland prisons. Surprisingly, the labor systems at reformatory schools were not questioned. The battle over convict labor obstructed the enactment of rehabilitative methods in the city jail.\textsuperscript{42}

In March 1887, John Waters was appointed as warden to solve the convict labor issue. Waters was a well-known builder as well as president of the Concord Club, a prominent “democratic political organization.” He never held public office before the Board of Visitors elected him unanimously. The \textit{Sun} commented by adding that “Mr. Waters had excellent executive abilities. He is cool headed and possessed of plenty of nerve, and his friends think he will make a competent officer.”\textsuperscript{43} Those friends were likely the members of the Board of Visitors. Warden of the jail was a prominent spoils position and the Democratic machine of Baltimore city used the position to maintain

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\item \textsuperscript{40} 12\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Annual Report of MPAA}, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{41} 20\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Annual Report of MPAA}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{42} 20\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Annual Report of MPAA}, 8, 10, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{43} “Warden of the Jail.” \textit{Sun} (Baltimore), March 30, 1887.
\end{itemize}
loyalty. In the case of John Waters, as with the case of J. F. Morrison, personal connections rather than experience or merit earned one the position of warden.

Despite his inexperience, Waters managed to bypass the convict contract labor issue that plagued Morrison, increased fiscal efficiency, and utilized the additional building completed in 1887. His policies were business-minded not reform-minded. Unlike Morrison who sought separate housing for witnesses and minors to prevent them from the influence of petty criminals, Waters sought to spruce up the prison and regulate excess spending. His efforts were helped by the six years of Morrison’s calls for a new building. By the end of 1887, Waters had more space because the new building, which he used to house the women inmates, allowed for 150 more cells to be used for peace cases. Additionally, he cut spending by reducing non-working inmates to two meals per day, rather than three.

His greatest achievement was the use of peace-case prisoners for general maintenance on the buildings and grounds. His list of improvements in his 1887 annual report included work completed to the sewers, a new fountain in the front yard, completion of the laundry, cleaned windows, newly painted and papered warden’s house, repairs to iron railings along with improvements to the foundry, the stable, the chapel, the roof, the rose and greenhouses, and the front gate. The prisoners also built a tool house, converted the old laundry into a hospital, and manufactured all new “Tinware” for the institution. By the middle of 1888, the Board of Visitors had also successful instituted

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44 Tracy Matthew Melton, “Power Networks,” 462.
45 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1887,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1887 (Baltimore: Stephen Tongue “City Printer”, 1888), 925-6. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1887.
46 ARBVJBC, 1887, 922-5.
legislation for the compulsory labor of peace-cases. Therefore, Waters in 1888 and 1889 had new contracts for carpet weaving, putting over 100 men to work on in the prison’s factory. His increased efficiency with money – helped by the fact that outside contractors were not hired for repairs – left six thousand dollars in the city’s appropriation fund at the end of 1888. Increasing profits of the prison pleased the city council, but the hard-work prisoners carried out provided no real skills outside of those walls. Unlike the Industrial Home for Colored Girls, the city jail under Waters authority did not focus on reforming its inmates, only balancing the budget. So despite the fact that convict labor was restored, it was emphasized to deter bummers not to reform them.

Physical condition of the Baltimore City Jail was also problematic to reform efforts. In his first report to City Council, Morrison wrote “In submitting this report I regret that I am compelled to abandon the time-honored custom of commending the condition of the Institution.” He reported that the poor construction had caused the cement to wear away leaving only stones, held in place by only their own weight. The prison also had badly ventilated and “ill lighted” workshops; dampness, which during bad weather leaked through the walls and made the back yard a “mud hole”; whitewash was necessary on all interior walls; the water supply was insufficient; the “steam heating apparatus” was “entirely inadequate” for the “calls made upon it” causing pipes to burst regularly. His calls were answered only in piece-meal, and hindered the efficiency and

47 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1889,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1889 (Baltimore: John Cox “City Printer”, 1890), 871; “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1888,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1888 (Baltimore: John Cox “City Printer”, 1889), 1192.
48 ARBVJBC, 1880, 895.
49 ARBVJBC, 1880, 895-6.
professionalism Morrison truly desired. Upon entering office the *Sun* quoted him saying that he intended “to make the jail a busy place, and in that respect especially uncongenial to the idle and viciously disposed.” As Morrison was forced to deal with abysmal physical conditions, he had little time to implement real changes to the day-to-day operations.

He did make a strong effort to reduce peace-cases through legislation changes. His first annual report showed he also felt restrictions on that front. In 1880, 4,729 persons were committed as peace-cases. Morrison “made an especially study of this class of prison habitués.” He leaned on Judge Campbell Pinkey of the Criminal Court for advice on the matter and between the two of them they “succeeded to some extent in ridding the prison of them.” The process was simple when a person was committed to the prison for drunkenness “two or more times within 30 or 60 days” or if he was known by the jail officers to belong to the “brotherhood of ‘Bums’ or ‘Tramps.’” Morrison sent the inmate’s name to the court with a memorandum attached stating the inmates regular criminal behavior. The court then sentenced the man to a fine and court costs, “which virtually means ’30 days in Jail.’” This forced the inmate to stay not just the night or a few days but a solid month, which Morrison likely believed would cause drunks to think twice before seeking out a warm prison bed.

By 1883 it was obvious the plan had backfired. Peace-cases were not required to perform compulsory labor during his tenure because their sentence was based on an inability to pay the fine not for the crime itself. Additionally, the longer stays for peace-cases exacerbated the issues of overcrowding and increased the need for repairs. The

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51 ARBVJBC, 1880, 877-8.
separation of sentenced prisoners, peace-cases, women, and witnesses caused the peace-case section of the prison to be very crowded. At the end of 1883, 312 prisoners were held in only 70 two-person cells, averaging over 4 persons per cell. Morrison angrily wrote the city council:

There are to-day confined in Baltimore City Jail over 300 prisoners, convicted of drunkenness and other misdemeanors, sentenced by the police justices, from who decisions, under the existing laws, there is no appeal. These prisoners are committed in default of the payment of one dollar and costs, amounting in the aggregate to three dollars and seventy cents each. The records show that during the past year 5,323 prisoners of this class served on an average of twenty days each, and the law prohibiting compulsory labor, the results are, enforced idleness, vicious association, and no possibility for reform or prevention of repetition of the offences for which they are in prison. To a few of these prisoners this confinement may be a genuine punishment, but to the great majority, especially during the winter months, it is a positive luxury.

Morrison had only 38 sentenced prisoners that were legally allowed to work in the prison. The miniscule amount of workers in a place that cycled through 7,783 prisoners and held a daily average of 381 prisoners truly threatened the relationships with contracted businesses. Just four months later, the company that used convict labor for carpet weaving declined its contract renewal because of the labor shortage. Another company abandoned its contract in December 1884 because of the limited number of workers. The Board of Visitors had asked the legislature for an act providing the compulsory labor of prisoners committed for breaches of the peace; however, city council had to grant the board increased authority, which stunted the enactment of the bill.

52 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1883,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1883 (Baltimore: John B. Piet & Co., 1884), 1124. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1883.

53 ARBVJBC, 1883, 1127-8.

54 ARBVJBC, 1883, 1127; “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1884,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1884.
Morrison’s issues with prison labor could not be solved during his tenure. At the end of 1886, his final full year as warden, he wrote that “the popular feeling against convict labor, and the universal prejudice against prison manufactures, the great difficulty in employing our surplus labor in the past will meet with greater opposition in the future, and I find, from a close observation” that there is “no remedy.” Defeated by the limits of the position, Warden Morrison did make some physical improvements to the city jail, but his efforts to make the prison a “busy place” failed in most regards.

In late 1890, a new warden was appointed, who would revolutionize the approach to peace-cases. Prior to his appointment, Daniel Constantine was superintendent of the Bayview Asylum. His obituary in the *Sun* in 1899, displayed a man with a unique life. Born in 1824 in Baltimore, Constantine learned to be a ship carpenter. He travelled to California during the Gold Rush, worked at a navy yard in Pensacola, Florida, and served for the Confederate navy as a captain. After the war, he held a position as Baltimore city councilman, special inspector of steam vessels as well as membership in the Hibernian Society, Knights of St. Patrick and the Catholic Club. Appointed as warden at the age of sixty-six, Constantine sought to better the prisoners’ circumstances without detriment to the city budget.

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55 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1885,” in *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1885* (Baltimore: Stephen Tongue “City Printer”, 1886), 686; ARBVJBC, 1884, 973.

56 “Telegraphic Summary, Etc.,” *Sun* (Baltimore), November 6, 1890.

57 “Captain Constantine Dead,” *Sun* (Baltimore), August 30, 1899.
His first change involved the problem of the peace cases. Unlike Morrison who believed that increased sentences for habitual lawbreakers would deter their entry, Constantine believed a more inmate specific sentence was justified. He stated after his first full year as warden that he had seen “industrious, hard working men committed for thirty days, whose only weakness, perhaps, would be that they would become intoxicated occasionally. The committal of such cases for thirty days often causes great hardship to their families, by reasons of the loss of employment of their protectors.” Constantine’s reforms mirrored the apprenticeship assignments used in the Industrial Home for Colored Girls. Rating the amount of reform needed had allowed the Industrial Home to send girls most reformed out on apprenticeships. Constantine’s scaled-punishment system worked similarly by identifying those least in need of reform, rare or occasional offenders, and giving them a minimum sentence.

Constantine also prescribed specific sentences for the scaled-punishment system. “Three days would be long enough for the first offence of this class of prisoners,” he stated. But for multiple offenders, Constantine recommended “six days for the second, if within a month, and for the third within the same month, six months.” For all well-known “bummers,” he prescribed “six months in Jail or House of Correction every time they are arrested.” His suggestion increased punishments for common vagrants that abused the prison system while protecting minor offenders. In essence, Constantine divided the peace-cases class of criminals into habitual and chance offenders. Constantine validated his reasoning based on his experience from the past year when he wrote,

58 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1891,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1891 (Baltimore: John Cox “City Printer”, 1892), 526-7. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1891.
The bummer class, with a six month imprisonment staring them in the face, would look for other fields to operate in, and those who might be arrested, while undergoing six months hard labor in prison, would have time to reflect and might possibly be redeemed. 59

No longer did every peace-case prisoners need thirty days for reform, instead, the sliding scale created a more individualized system of punishment. Similar to the COS methods, Constantine believed that those who could not conform to basic standards on a regular basis deserved zero aid and increased discipline.

Much like Morrison’s plan, however, Constantine’s sliding scale was enacted with limited success. In June 1891, the law was passed to include a new charge of “drunk and disorderly,” in which the new scale was attached. Although after the first six months the daily average of prisoners decreased by thirty persons, the 1892 annual report to the City Council displayed Constantine’s frustration with the criminal court:

The change has not had all the advantages expected from it, simply from the difficulty the station-house magistrates have of knowing when such cases are brought before them, whether it is the first, second, third, or fourth offense. There are individual cases within the period of sixty days, where the same person had been committed successively for 7 days by each one of several magistrates, they not knowing that the other had committed the same party for the same period. 60

A haphazard infrastructure in the criminal court system could not track the habitual “bummers” who knew the city’s penal system so well that they found loopholes in the law in fewer than six months. In response, Constantine suggested that the Board of Visitors to the City Jail be given the authority to change a habitual beggars’ sentence. He argued that prison officers would “always know when the prisoner is committed the

59 ARBVJBC, 1891, 527.
60 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1892,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1892 (Baltimore: John Cox “City Printer”, 1893), 711-2. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1892.
second, third, or fourth time within the fixed period,” therefore, the Board of Visitors to the City Jail should be endowed with the power to “fix the time for this class of prisoners.” Although his suggestions for increased authority were not accepted by City Council, Constantine’s sliding scale punishment for drunks lowered the percentage of peace-cases by over 5 percent during his wardenship.61

In line with popular prison reform trends, Constantine also suggested that indeterminate sentences be used for habitual offenders when he stated “the longer time should not be fixed…in hopes that it might subdue their desire for strong drink.” He implied that an indefinite sentence “of enforced industry and abstinence from strong drink,” may make the habitual drunkard receive the kind words of the “able chaplains and their assistants” allowing their reform.62 David Rothman argued that prison wardens supported indeterminate sentences because they believed it would make inmates more tractable and reduce discontent. Additionally, they saw that indeterminate sentence provided them a powerful weapon: the authority to determine an inmate’s release date. Indeterminate sentences also worked successfully at Elmira Reformatory in New York. Seen as the vanguard of progressive prison reform, Elmira’s policies became standards throughout the country.63 It seems for Constantine indeterminate sentencing was more about reforming drunkards than reducing discontent among inmates.

After Warden Constantine pushed the enactment of a graduated scale of punishment for peace cases, the Prisoners’ Aid Association improved the law two years later in 1894. President Griffith persuaded the legislature to give “judges discretionary

61 ARBVJBC, 1892, 711-2.
62 ARBVJBC, 1892, 712.
power in cases of young and first offenders” to suspend sentence and place offenders “under the supervision of the Parole Committee of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association.” Judge Charles E. Phelps of the city’s Circuit Court explained the process of this early probation system. He wrote: “Whenever a case apparently belonging to the class referred to comes up for action, the practice is to suspend judgment to await the investigation and report of the society upon that individual case.” The early probation system was another example of where private reforms rejected government authority, yet it is clear that the association kept a close relationship with judges and officials in the city.

The associate took responsibility for individuals released on suspended sentence and enforced the provisions of the parole law. Under the conditions of the law, the individuals on probation were required to “be continuously employed, for we hold that idleness is the open door to vice and crime” and to attend meetings “every Friday at 8 P.M., at the office of the association.” The association also visited “the homes of these cases from time to time” along with providing “religious instruction, good council, and cautioning them concerning the importance of living up to their parole in all particulars.” The responsibilities of the association towards parolees would eventually be transferred to government agencies, yet, the Prisoners’ Aid Association created standards for both supervisors and probationers.

64 Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio, September 22-26, 1900 (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 367.
65 Charles E. Phelps to G. S. Griffith, September 12, 1900, in Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio, September 22-26, 1900 (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 368.
66 Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio, September 22-26, 1900 (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 367.
The new Parole Committee of the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association encouraged every individual on probation to appreciate the opportunity provided to them. They reminded them that the new law kept hundreds “from the blight of prison association and from a prison record, and thus changing the entire course of their lives, and urging them to a higher plane of living, and nobler manhood and womanhood in the after years of their lives.”\textsuperscript{67} Between 1894 and 1895 the number of peace cases in the Baltimore City Jail was reduced by over one thousand. The overall number of peace cases dropped about 5 percent.\textsuperscript{68} These numbers are surprising when in 1894 the national unemployment spiked to 18.4 percent.\textsuperscript{69} Judge Phelps recognized the crucial actions of the association when he wrote “The ‘parole system’ as thus practically worked, has proved an exceedingly valuable reform in our criminal jurisprudence, and the Prisoners’ Aid Association a most important, if not indispensable agency, in its efficient development.”\textsuperscript{70} Together Warden Constantine and the Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association drove through reforms in criminal law that provided more individualized punishment and bureaucratic efficiency.

Warden Constantine also increased the efficiency of the prison and professionalized the reports of the prison. He began keeping track of the annual cost of maintaining the prisoners per capita, and cost of food per prisoner per day. In the workshops, the warden required a record of pieces made and repaired. His assessment of the women’s department in 1893 annual report shows his detailed record keeping: “There

\textsuperscript{67} Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio, September 22-26, 1900 (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 367.

\textsuperscript{68} See Figure 4 in Appendix.


\textsuperscript{70} Charles E. Phelps to G. S. Griffith, September 12, 1900, in Proceedings of the Annual Congress of the National Prison Association of the United States held at Cleveland, Ohio, September 22-26, 1900 (Pittsburgh: Shaw Brothers, Printers, 1900), 369.
was a large amount of work done in the female department the past year. There was washing 156,000 pieces of clothes. Overalls made, 835 pairs; shirts made, 805; bed ticks made, 212; sheets made, 175; pillow cases made, 255; woman’s dresses made, 50; bed spreads made, 50; miscellaneous and repairs, 320.” The detailed records reflected Constantine’s dedication to frugality. He regularly wrote after the review of the prison’s figures that “every care had been taken to prevent waste.” The commitment to cut waste brought large dividends for the city as the prison began operating on surplus and returned large sums to the city treasury. One year it totaled over $13,000.00.

But in 1896 Constantine’s relationship with the Democratic machine ended his term as warden. The Republican party, in cahoots with the civil service reformers, had garnished enough public support to oust the Gorman-Rasin machine from local power. The power vacuum allowed the Republican party to provide some spoils to its supporters, but civil service reformers also pressured the party to choose wisely, not only out of patronage. Every member of the Board of Visitors to the City Jail lost their position. The new leadership even elected the first woman to the board, Mrs. Edward Robinson. The new board also ousted Warden Constantine and the general physician. The new board elected John Bailey to the position of warden, which was likely given as a kick back for

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71 ARBVJBC, 1892, 712; “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1893,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1893 (Baltimore: Wm J. C. Dulany, City Printer, 1894), 652, 699. Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1893.

72 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1890,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1890 (Baltimore: John Cox “City Printer”, 1891), 662.
support since Bailey had been the Republican councilman from the nineteenth ward before his wardenship.  

John Bailey was the first warden to change the day-to-day operations of the prison in order to focus on the reformation of prisoners. He focused on educating the prisoners, improving their diets, and encouraging outside organizations to provide assistance to prisoners. Bailey arranged for reading material and educational efforts to take place in the prison. By the end of 1897, he had created a boys school for the younger delinquents that were not accepted by reformatory schools. He also instituted lectures by local professionals. He claimed that his Sunday afternoon lectures afforded “the prisoners an opportunity to hear instructive talks along moral lines, from the brightest professional and business men the city affords.”

His first lecture series opened with Dr. L. Gibbons Smart speaking on the importance of hygiene. He coupled this emphasis on hygiene with “a more wholesome diet” along with “improved bathing appliances and electric lights.” Bailey also authorized three meals per day for non-working inmates rather than two meals instituted by Warden Waters. Although work was now required of many more inmates than had been in 1880, it is easy to see how much more physically comfortable one’s stay was in 1896 than years earlier. Although reform in the 1870s

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74 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1897,” in *Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1897* (Baltimore: n. p., 1898), 417-8 Here on referred to as ARBVJBC, 1897.

75 “Bits of News and Gossip Gathered Here and There in all Sections of Baltimore,” *Sun* (Baltimore), October 4, 1897.

76 ARBVJBC, 1896, 983.

77 ARBVJBC, 1897, 417.
required only housing prisoners, the 1890s expectations that reforming a prisoner involved readying him for society meant that prison should provide additional resources and amenities. Additionally, it is clear that these educational programs, which enforced practical, industrial training as well as general education, mirrored the reformatory model used in the Industrial Home for Colored Girls.

Bailey’s concentration on the education of inmates was the first step in the reform of the prison rehabilitation methods. The starts and stops of reform under the Democratic political machine finally ended. However, Morrison, Waters, and Constantine did force some reforms including the improvement of the labor system in the prison under Constantine, improved physical conditions supported by all three, and the scaling of punishment for peace-cases by Constantine.

Bailey focused the majority of his tenure on the minds of the inmates. He believed through education, influence, and moral instruction inmates could be rehabilitated. He allowed a variety of outside organizations to support him in these efforts. The Sunday church services had been provided through the Local Preachers’ Association and the Prisoners’ Aid Association for years, but now Bailey allowed new groups. A rotation of preachers from the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, joined with the chaplain, Rev. Louis F. Zinkhan. The “Ladies of the W. C. T. U.” (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) and the “Sisters of St. Joseph” came to provide Sunday School and practical instruction.78 In 1898, Bailey organized leaders of the Y. M. C. A., the Enoch Pratt Library, “and other friendly sources” to provide a collection of books totaling

78 ARBVJBC, 1896, 974.
“about thirty-five hundred volumes.” These organizations interest in reforming prisoners along with Warden Bailey’s commitment to educational reforms provided the final rehabilitative reforms that made the prisons daily activities like the Industrial Home for Colored Girls.

As Officer Randolph Welsh walked his beat in the 1890s, the criminals he caught for breaches of the peace experienced a very different prison than that of the 1870s. New criminal laws and internal policies rearranged who was sentenced to the Baltimore City Jail, how long they stayed, and how they integrated back into the urban environment. The influence of Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association had supported prisoners upon their release since the 1870s, but in the 1890s it drove the reform of criminal law that allowed criminals to forgo time in a cell in exchange for good behavior. Educational lectures and a prison library changed the day-to-day activities of the prison and displayed the increased commitment to rehabilitation of prisoners. The influences that seeped into the city jail came from a growing conversation about the nature of crime and poverty in the city. The last twenty years of the nineteenth century expanded the conversation about the role of charity and government, tested philosophies, and prepared the road for broad progressive reform in the decades to come.

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79 “Annual Report of the Board of Visitors of the Jail of Baltimore City, to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore, for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1898,” in Mayor’s Message and Reports of the City Officers made to the City Council of Baltimore for the year 1898 (Baltimore: Thos. J. Sheubrooks, City Printer, 1899), 824.
EPILOGUE

The southwest neighborhood of Baltimore where Randolph Welsh walked the streets looks much the same today as it did then. Each block is neatly lined with row homes, through some were built after 1900. Asphalt, streetlights, and road signs as well as corner stores with window ads for ATM machines and Newport cigarettes show the signs of modernity, but signs of deterioration and disrepair plague the neighborhood. Many of the streets are spotted with vacant lots and homes. Boarded up windows can be found every few homes and caved in roofs on burnt-out homes covering whole blocks seem to be spreading in from the north and west.

Untouched by the fire of 1904, Officer Welsh’s middle-class German and Irish dominated neighborhood is filled with an entirely new population.\(^1\) Baltimore’s 2011 health profile for the southwest district, which included areas west of the 1890s twentieth ward, revealed a marginalized neighborhood struggling to thrive. Over three-quarters of the population are now African-American while poverty and unemployment rates are well above the city’s averages. The majority of residents are poorly educated; only 29.8% of adults over twenty-five have high school diplomas. Domestic violence, shootings, and homicides have risen as drugs and the economic recession have plagued the neighborhood.\(^2\)

Today, much like the late-nineteenth century, Baltimore is not ignoring its problems. Instead, they are tackling them in new ways. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

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has shown a commitment to providing resources to decaying urban communities. In December 2012, she helped to negotiate the arrival of a supermarket into the southwest district as part of her initiative to end food deserts in the city. Rawlings-Blake has focused her campaign on helping struggling city dwellers by improving their health though increasing access to healthy foods, beginning exercise campaigns, and expanding access to health care. However, she also realized that Baltimore’s violent crime rates inevitably limit individuals from getting outdoor exercise, so Rawlings-Blake continues to encourage the Baltimore police department to enhance crime-fighting strategies. The Baltimore Police Commissioner is currently coordinating with the Chicago Police Department, which has had great success bringing down violent crime in the last few years. Proposals have also recently surfaced calling for more efficient communication between jail authorities and city courts to reduce the wait time for bail hearings. Under the banner of health, it seems that Rawlings-Blake must also improve city structures for her efforts to be noteworthy. Baltimore reformers in the late-nineteenth century understood this same concept, but worked outside of city politics.

The leaders of charity and reform in Baltimore held a deep dedication to their city. They recognized their battle against poverty must also improve criminal justice and

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penal institutions. The people who began the Baltimore Charity Organization Society were also involved in charity initiatives. Their memberships on executive boards, management boards, and various associations intertwined continuously throughout the second half of the century. Those interactions built a community which tackled poverty from a multitude of angles. The Society for the Suppression of Vice, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Baltimore COS saw opportunities to manipulate police policy to better battle poverty in addition to their personal interactions with the poor. The Maryland Prisoners’ Aid Association focused on the unworthy poor that populated the city’s jail and penitentiary. By rebuilding the network of individuals involved in controlling the poor, we can vividly see not only their ideology shifts through time but also how they influenced formal city structures.

Beginning research through a process of collecting information about how a certain group was controlled (in this case the poor) historians can emphasize different formal structures of control and how they were manipulated through informal methods. If one was to simply focus on the police department of Baltimore, they might conclude that police officers, through a process of professionalization, focused their efforts on controlling dangerous members of society. However, if you begin by asking who controlled the urban poor, you can uncover that the police department’s professionalization allowed other entities to more strictly define the department’s role in society. Therefore, the police department did not abandon the authority of a section of the poor. Instead, the police department’s professionalization was accelerated by those reformers who focused on poverty management. The public records from the Baltimore City Jail show an institution struggling with peace-case violations, which stunted the
growth of rehabilitative methods. But if one analyzes the powerful campaign of private
charity associations and reformatories, the increase in educational opportunities for
peace-case prisons was really a result of a pervasive change in the methods of uplift. By
identifying the interactions between different urban structures, historians can better
understand the dynamics of the urban environment. In this way, social historians can
show how active and dynamic the law and order system was in affecting the daily life of
citizens.

Most importantly, we can better understand multiple perspectives on a particular
issue over time, and how those perspectives affected different structures. When the
Charity Organization Society believed that charity fraud and indiscriminate almsgiving
was pauperizing the poor of Baltimore, they dismissed police distribution in favor of new
“scientific” giving. Over time, the COS was influence by Johns Hopkins University who,
in seeking to understand poverty, claimed that not all poverty was caused by personal
vice. This challenged the COS’s perspective of poverty and as a result their method for
controlling the poor. These ideas spread to other charity groups including the Society for
the Suppression of Vice, Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the Maryland
Prisoners’ Aid Association, all of whom used different understandings of poverty to
create change in urban life. Whether they urged for new legislation, expanded the role of
women in policing, or changed the reformative methods of the city jail, all these societies
sought to eliminate poverty.

The 1880s and 1890s were a pivotal time in which many different groups debated
the basic understandings of poverty. Those that believed poverty was a direct result of
poor judgment and weak morals purported a plan for eliminating poverty. Unlike pure
social Darwinists, these individuals rejected the belief that people were doomed to a particular place in society. Instead, they claimed that one could interfere minimally, and only on the behalf of the deserving poor, to better the community. Charity at this stage was provided to police stations and outreach groups in time of great need like economic depressions or severe weather as well as one-on-one when a person heard of a needy family and gave directly. In both circumstances, police or individuals had the power to discriminate between who received aid and who would not.

The Charity Organization Society distrusted police and one-to-one giving and sought to make almsgiving more efficient. To decide who received aid in a more “scientific” fashion, the Charity Organization Society and the criminal justice system used the common language of “worthy” and “unworthy.” These terms had previously been used by police officers and Jacksonian reformers in middle of the century. However, the usage of these categories allowed COS workers to moralize the poor and undermined their scientific approach. It also prevented these groups from further evaluating the reasons for poverty. Instead, groups like the COS concentrated on removing alms from the “undeserving” or “unworthy” poor. The influence of the burgeoning field of social science had implanted the idea that societal problems could be solved using scientific methods. The COS adopted scientific tactics which measures an impoverished person’s “worthiness” through their cleanliness, reputation, family history, and personal values. Although they accepted new methods for charity distribution, the COS continued to believe that the poor needed to help themselves. The belief that direct relief only increased laziness, a product of social Darwinist theory, allowed the COS to argue that advice from a friendly visitor was more fruitful than direct relief. By accepting only
portions of social science and social Darwinism, the COS measured and moralized the impoverished, but did little to actually eliminate poverty.

The COS did keep the debate surrounding poverty alive. Their regular articles in the newspaper and cooperation with Johns Hopkins University also allowed the conversation to continue. Johns Hopkins University also manipulated the COS’s understanding of poverty by holding lectures, which were open to the public. Sponsored by the leaders of the COS, lectures and conferences as well as the publicity from them, expanded the organizations legitimacy and revised the understanding of poverty. The COS perspective developed into a more nuanced understanding of poverty in which some were poor out of no fault of their own while others continued to create their own problems as a result of Johns Hopkins University’s involvement. From the 1886 conference on charities to the 1899 publication of Mary E. Richmond’s manual for friendly visiting, the belief that poverty was caused by moral weakness slowly diminished. Richmond’s manual called for mother’s pensions and compulsory education, which reflected the development of the COS to an organization of civil reform as well as poverty management.

By the time the COS had changed their understanding of poverty, the classifications of “worthy” and “unworthy” had been solidified in the local criminal justice system. Legislation in the 1898 New City Charter bestowed authority to judges to use a person’s “worthiness” for sentencing. Wardens and reformatory managers also used the “worthy” and “unworthy” rhetoric to decide how inmates should be cared for. Although delinquents and criminals could be classified distinctly different than the worthy poor, many of these people were impoverished individuals who were unable to
support themselves and committed petty offences to find shelter and survive. Therefore, peace-cases in the prison and juvenile delinquents in the reformatory needed the same kind of treatment, according to reformers like G. S. Griffith. Separated from society, under a strict and busy schedule that included hard-work and educational opportunities, these individuals had a chance at changing their lot in life.

Unlike the police department or the Charity Organization Society, the prison system could not change its method of rehabilitation quickly. Repeated attempts by wardens to reform the city jail had limited success because it was stunted by spoils system politics, physical limitations of space and safety, and the convict labor debate at the end of the 1880s. As a result, the Baltimore city jail did not embrace inmate rehabilitation methods until the end of the century. When they did, they adhered to the “worthiness” system because of the influence of the Prisoners’ Aid Association. The MPAA’s agent, Louis Zinkhan, helped to get educational tools like library books for inmates and followed their progress upon release. However, the association only helped inmates they deemed “worthy.” In 1889 Zinkhan wrote, “we have sought to dissipate the notion that all must be helped, and hence we have as a role only aided men and women where we felt assured that we were not only alleviating present distress but also helping to self-support and a better life.” The Charity Organization Society’s campaign against the police department, in order to gain authority over charity distribution, publically denounced indiscriminate giving and heralded only aid given to make a person self-supporting. It is obvious that the prison system reform was affected by this ideology and used it to decide which inmates to support during and after incarceration.

7 20th Annual Report of MPAA, 16.
The ability of the COS to disseminate and legitimize the “worthy” and “unworthy” system changed the urban environment in Baltimore. This promulgation was most powerful during the campaign against police distribution of alms, at which time the COS was positing that the majority of poverty was caused by moral weakness. By the end of the century the COS had made slight changes to their beliefs, concluding that compulsory education and mother’s pensions were a necessary responsibility of the government. It failed to fully spread those ideas as vigorously, which caused other organizations to manage impoverished peoples through the system of “worthy” and “unworthy.” This is most clearly displayed in the belated changes made to the city jail that continued to follow the old COS’s ideas. Baltimore’s public structures which regularly came in contact with the poor were deeply changed by the Charity Organization Society’s undying hunt to eliminate poverty. The network of individuals that created and controlled the COS also carried those beliefs to other associations, who then changed other public structures.

By 1901, the Baltimore COS had lost some of its most important members. Daniel Coit Gilman, president of The Johns Hopkins University and founder of the COS retired in 1901 to take on the presidency of the Carnegie Institution of Washington. Mary E. Richmond moved to Philadelphia in 1900 to become general secretary of the Philadelphia Society for Organizing Charity. That position eventually launched her into work at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York City. Charles Bonaparte, the dedicated civil service reformer and engineer of progressive reform in Baltimore, moved

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into national politics after the turn of the century, eventually becoming President Theodore Roosevelt’s Attorney General in 1905.  

G. S. Griffith died in 1904 at the age of eighty-nine. Levering Hall, donated by Eugene Levering, slowly lost its prowess as a center for charitable reform as Johns Hopkins University failed to hire the social scientists it trained. This caused the university to lose its position as the center of innovative social science. Despite all the work of these individuals, their failure to train a new leadership regime caused the movement to eradicate poverty to wane at the turn of the century. Not until after the fire of 1904 would the city see a revival of progressive action and then it would be through the government not private associations.

However, some of the developments from the Charity Organization Society remain today. “Worthy” and “unworthy”, although not explicitly used today, continues to be the system by which our criminal justice system sentences criminals and how the need for social services is gauged. And in similar fashion to the COS, the categories are vague, which can easily lead individuals to moralize those in court or those in need. Social workers still struggle to understand if their profession should aid only individuals or also challenge the societal problems that cause individuals to be in need. The answers to these problems are not easily accessible but a look to the Baltimore’s struggle with poverty at the end of the nineteenth may help urban residents improve their tactics for helping the marginalized in their midst.

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Top: Figure 1: Enlarged section of plate 28 of the *Atlas of the City of Baltimore Complete in One Volume* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1896) Red line designates the neighborhood, which Officer Welsh patrolled.

Bottom: Figure 2: Enlarged section from plate 3 of *Atlas of the City of Baltimore Complete in One Volume* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1896) Red line designates the neighborhood, which Officer Welsh patrolled.
Figure 3: Map of the neighborhood that Officer Welsh policed. Blue designates areas that had mostly native white or more than third generation immigrants. Purple displays areas were first generation immigrants were the majority. Red shows areas of second generation immigrants. Yellow shows an approximately equal amount of immigrants and native whites. Green designated majority African American. Map from Plates 28 and 3 in *Atlas of the City of Baltimore Complete in One Volume* (Philadelphia: G. W. Bromley & Co., 1896). Diversity information compiled from 1900 U. S. Census, Baltimore, MD, Ward 20, Precincts 259 through 263 or Districts 8 through 12.
Figure 4: Graph mapping the percent of peace-cases to the total population of the prison. The 1895 drop as well as the spike in 1886 when prison labor was under attack is significant. More vagrants and beggars used the prison in 1886 for shelter because compulsory labor was not required for peace-cases. The 1895 decrease of over 5% was caused by the bill for suspended sentences for first offenders.
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