REFORMING BLACK GIRLHOOD AND SEXUALITY AT THE MISSOURI STATE INDUSTRIAL HOME FOR NEGRO GIRLS, 1930-1948

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Spearheaded by appeals from the Federated Negro Women's Club of Missouri, the Missouri State Home for Negro Girls in Tipton, Missouri was established in 1916 to house, educate, and rehabilitate black girls who were convicted of crimes related to sexual deviancy. This paper explores the social and political conditions that defined black girls as "criminal" and how the Home shaped and documented black girl's carceral experiences during the late 19th to early 20th century. It finally makes a case for how this early criminalization of black girls and the implementation of reformatories influenced how current educational and juvenile justice systems treat black girls today.

Introduction

Malorie was one of many African American girls who were put away into reformatories for violating social norms of domesticity and virtue by participating in sexual indiscretions. Seventeen-year old Malorie grew up in Saint Louis, Missouri. She was a "slender" yet "attractive" young woman, with a light complexion, light brown hair, and bluish-gray eyes. Her father was a habitual drinker and worked to provide for the family as a janitor while her mother stayed at home to take care of all seven children. Malorie had a reputation for being a runaway and was sent to the Detention Home twice for general delinquency and running away from home. The second time Malorie ran away, she lived with her male "paramour" for almost a year. She also hung around "joints" during late hours of the night. She was charged with "Delinquency" and sent to the State Industrial Home for Negro Girls (i.e. "Tipton" as in Tipton, Missouri) for three years. She admitted to being "incorrigible, unmanageable, and habitually immoral" since she was nine years old.

At Tipton, she was classified as a "sex pervert" and often had a violent temper. She had temper tantrums, fought with other girls, and even attacked a matron and threw her down. Once, Malorie had to be subdued by wet towels to "bring her around." Her conduct led her to being in the third and fourth groups, which had the least privileges. At Tipton, she was considered "among the worst" but also "one of the nicest people here." Eventually, Malorie's conduct improved. Malorie was considered cheerful, calm, dependable, and industrious. She participated in the sewing room, yard & field, art room, and the emergency squad. When she left Tipton, she had "made a complete change." When she returned home, Malorie was so 'put-out' with the conduct and companions of her mother" that she begged to return to Tipton. She wrote letters to Tipton checking on how the girls and officers were doing and Superintendent Ethel Bowles, or as Malorie called her "Mother Bowles," offered Malorie

encouragement and support. "Mother Bowles" even helped her find a job. In the end, Malorie became "a well-adapted and useful citizen" because of Tipton.[1]

The Missouri State Home for Negro Girls in Tipton, Missouri was one of the few reformatories for black girls in the country, and its mission was to refashion "incorrigible," or deviant, girls into "useful citizens." At face value, it meant improving the girls' conduct, encouraging the girls to take up a creative hobby, and finding a job for the girls after they were released. However, the motivations behind the creation of reformatories for black girls were more injurious than what reform officers and leaders made them out to be. What was not included in Tipton's case histories were the deficient inner workings that made Tipton known as one of the worst reformatories in the country. What was even more hidden and systemically injurious were the motivations behind the reformatory's creation with racialized and gendered notions of who should be reformed, how they should be reformed, and why their "reformation" was beneficial to society.

This reformatory was a piece of a larger Progressive reform movement, and it caused tangible consequences that affect how the black community handles issues about chastity, "ladylike" behavior, and teen deviancy. Their "reformation" and shaming have led to the persistence of stereotypes that has defined black girls as transgressive, unruly, and incorrigible, and it has permeated into how they are treated and regarded today by the black community as well as wider society. These stereotypes have led to increased discipline, punishment, and imprisonment of black girls by those who are expected to protect them: parents, teachers, administrators, and the justice system. This article ultimately aims to answer the following questions: How did progressives and Tipton reformatory supporters and staff come to understand black girls as incorrigible, unmanageable, and habitually immoral like Malorie? How did these perceptions impact the formation of the "reformatory for black girls" as a progressive concept?

The article then makes a case for how this case study resembles a pre-history of the current stereotypes of African American girls as transgressive, unruly, and deviant--the stereotypes that lead to increased discipline, criminalization, and punishment in the current day.

Historiography and Intervention

The idea of reformation directly influences the makeup of the prison system that perseveres today. Thus, it is important to note how historians have studied the creation of the prison system and how it has manifested to ensnare women, with special attention towards black women. Scholarship by Estelle B. Friedman, Nicole Rafter, and Karin Lorene Zipf have contributed to the fields of criminology and social history by bringing to the forefront the impact of the women's prison system on their subversion, criminalization, and sexual repression.[2]

They argue that women and girl inmates have been absent from the social reform and criminological discourses, especially those involving the development of prison models. These scholars have centered their focus on women through analyzing

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[1] DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE INDUSTRIAL HOME FOR NEGRO GIRLS (Tipton, Mo), CASE HISTORIES OF FEMALE JUVENILE OFFENDERS, 1931-1936, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO. These files are restricted for privacy reasons, therefore I am not including the box and folder numbers.

[2] See Estelle B. Friedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Nicole Hahn Rafter, *Partial Justice: Women, Prisons and Social Control*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990); Karin Lorene Zipf, *Bad Girls at Samarcand: Sexuality and Sterilization in a Southern Juvenile Reformatory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016).

sources including historical newspapers, institutional (reformatory and prison) records, prison organization/association reports, and court documents.

Likewise, black women historians including Kali N. Gross, Sarah Haley, Saidiya Hartman, Talitha L. LeFlouria, and LaKisha Simmons center on black women's narratives in prison, reformatory, and convict lease systems.[3] They analyze how themes such as deviancy, resistance, violence, girlhood/womanhood, criminalization, and respectability politics influenced the policing and surveillance of black women in prisons and reformatories. These scholars specifically analyzed primarily archival sources, including court documents, institutional records, punishment records, census documents, medical reports, and newspapers.

This article's original contribution and intervention into this field of black women's history is that it provides an intellectual historical analysis of the concept of "reformatories for black girls." The Missouri State Industrial Home for Negro Girls (Tipton) in 1930s to 1940s Missouri is an ideal case study to explore this concept because it was a state-sponsored reformatory which provides insight into how the state played a role on how black girls were stereotyped, treated, and "educated." Moreover, its study uncovers the overarching ideologies, logic, and sociocultural shifts that led to the persisting phenomenon of criminalization and reformation of black female sexuality in American society. They include the transgression of norms, forms of incorrigibility based on race and gender, institutionalization, reformation, surveillance, and the refashioning of human behavior (specifically sexuality). This article includes primary sources like institutional record collections from the Missouri State Archives about the Missouri State Penitentiary, State Home for Negro Girls, and the Department of Corrections. Specifically, it uses biennial reports from the Department of Corrections, case histories from the State Home for Negro Girls, and a 1946 dissertation titled "Industrial Home for Negro Girls, 1909-1944" by Nancy Ellen Cole. In summation, by focusing on Tipton's operations and the motivations behind its creation, this article detects a prehistory of how black girlhood and criminalization today has been influenced by the reformatory system.

The Origins of Reformation

The idea of the reformatory in the United States started with the Industrial Revolution, which ranged from the 18th century to the 19th century. Though it was a period of economic growth, innovation, and machine manufacturing, it also brought on a range of issues like overcrowding, pollution, dangerous working conditions, and, ultimately, crime. Out of this chaotic environment, Progressivism emerged and advocated for the improvement of society by reform. According to Progressives, the Industrial Revolution disrupted family-centered controls, which threatened public safety and child welfare.[4] Thus, children were seen as the victims of industrialization, and parents and family were viewed as unable to maintain their children's wellbeing. As a result, Progressives started to rely on the increasing power of the state in order to enact progress. During this period, the idea of the Parental State emerged and changed the

[3] See Kali N. Gross, *Colored Amazons* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2006); Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women and Queer Radicals* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2020); Talitha LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); LaKisha Simmons, *Crescent City Girls: The Lives of Young Black Women in Segregated New Orleans* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

[4] Geoff K. Ward, *The Black Child-Savers: Racial Democracy and Juvenile Justice* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 23-24.

nature of juvenile reform. Instead of the family disciplining their own children, the state became the surrogate parent of the nation and its children with the passing of the decision of Ex Parte Crouse in 1838.[5] The *parens patriae* doctrine gave the state the responsibility to care for those who are legally incapable of caring for themselves, creating a justification for juvenile justice advocates to protect other people's children. New laws and institutions were established to protect the well-being of children and prevent them from entering a life of crime. Soon, the idea of the reformatory and houses of refuge for children became tangible, and these buildings became the protectors of the nation's "deviant" children.

The idea of the reformatory was accompanied with support for corrective punishment. Corrective punishment aimed to "reset" the soul and change their behavior for the greater good. American society regarded the "the criminal" as a dangerous threat at the turn of the nineteenth century, so society believed corrective punishment of the criminals' mind would put an end to crime. In a Biennial Report from the Missouri Board of Charities and Correction, there is a passage in a chapter called "The Crime Question" that indicates the way Missourian criminal justice system regarded criminals and the importance of corrective punishment:

> Who are prisoners? They are persons who have offended against individuals and society. [...] Neither society nor the person is benefited by imprisonment, unless a change takes place in the person, and to some extent in society in relation to them. The reformatory purpose is to effect the necessary change, so that the man shall cease to do evil and learn to do well. […] The real question is how to best save society from the criminal.[6]

Although this passage suggests that society needed to be changed ("to some extent"), it is evident that the prisoner was seen as the most in need of change to "save society." According to this passage, "prisoners" should have their behaviors and mindset readjusted to societal norms, placing the responsibility on the individual rather than the conditions that produced them. Essentially, since society needed to be protected, the public should have the power to decide who should be judged for punishment and reform: "[…] the power to judge should no longer depend on the innumerable, discontinuous, sometimes contradictory privileges of sovereignty, but on the continuously distributed effects of public power."[7] Thus, strategies on how to decrease crime rested in the hands of the public.

THE MISSOURI STATE TRAINING SCHOOLS

Boonville: Missouri's First Reformatory

This article primarily focuses on Tipton, but it is also important to analyze the State Training School for Girls in Chillicothe, Missouri and the State Training School for Boys in Boonville, Missouri in order to illuminate how each reformatory had different methods of education and discipline that catered to the implied racist and gendered assumptions about what needed to be amended about each group. These two reformatories were created first in Missouri because of the state's prioritizing of white children's rehabilitation. The Missouri Training School for Boys, opened in 1889 in Boonville, MO. Boys (all white) who were committed to Boonville typically did crimes against persons or property. Education at Boonville was catered for white boys to gain practical skills that they could bring into the workforce, and their activities

[5] Ward, *The Black Child-Savers*, 25-26.

[6] Bound copy of 1901-1907 Biennial Reports, Box 30, STATE BOARD OF CHARITIES AND CORRECTIONS: BIENNIAL REPORTS, 1899-1932, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE DOCUMENTS, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO, 13-17.

[7] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Pantheon Books, 1977), 81.

indicate a gendered notion of what boyhood and masculine values are in late nineteenth-century Missouri. Furthermore, "[Boonville] was considered an experiment by progressive minds of the day – child savers wanted 'wayward youths' to grow up in a rural environment, thinking that hard work, clean air and green grass would transform troubled young people into model citizens."[8] Boonville had a multitude of activities and jobs that encouraged trade work, and establishing a work ethic:

> […] industries were added throughout the years, including a rock quarry, cobbler shop, printing plant, paint and carpenter shops, laundry, ice plant, waterworks, electric generating and distributing system, a cannery, plumbing, a blacksmith shop, a dairy, and even a greenhouse. The boys sold their products to the locals and learned the value of hard work – and, ideally, a trade that would help them once they were released. Baseball and football teams were organized, and there was even a magazine written and published by the inmates named Our Boys.[9]

The same gendered curriculum was applied to the reformatories for girls. Within the same year, the State Training School for Girls was founded in Chillicothe, Missouri.

Chillicothe and the Emergence of Policing Sexuality

The focus on policing sexuality is important to note because it informed the starkly different types of offenses under which girls were charged. White girls were charged for 1) delinquency, 2) associating with immoral persons, and 3) incorrigibility, terms that were related to sexual deviancy. The ultimate goal of the Training School for Girls at Chillicothe was to stop the girls' sexual deviancy and implement domestic ideals and values to change their behavior. Like Boonville, this institution was intended to provide education and work skills to rehabilitate these girls into useful citizens. For instance, at the Training School for Girls, "[...] domestic skills were taught to the girls. Cooking, baking, laundry and sewing filled the long days."[10] Reforming girls was imperative to the upholding of a social system of patriarchal norms and values and the racial hierarchy that was prevalent. If there was any deviation from domestic ideals and norms, girls were put into reformatories to be "reformed" and refashioned to follow those norms. If they did not, they were considered "failures" and were susceptible to shaming and ostracization.

Essentially, the norms of American society at the time informed penal reformers of what to do to reform these women and girls. Specifically,"[…] whereas the juridical systems define juridical subjects according to universal norms, the disciplines characterize, classify specialize; they distribute along a scale, around a norm, hierarchize individuals in relation to one another and, if necessary, disqualify and invalidate."[11] To clarify, norms are evaluators of who belongs and who does not. Those who do not conform to norms are excluded. One of the major norms that impacted how women were policed and reformed was sexuality. During the Progressive Era, "[…] the individual man could traverse respectability and vice with little risk to personal reputation, class standing, or status as a citizen. This was in stark contrast to the gendered world that women negotiated, which cleaved to standards of sexual behavior and an idealization of sexual purity in the unmarried, and sexual

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[8] Hannah Litwiller, "Boonville's Reformatory for Boys: 1889-1940," Katy Tales, last modified July 19, 2017.
[9] Litwiller, "Boonville's Reformatory for Boys: 1889-1940."
[10] Mark S. Schreiber, et al., *Somewhere in Time: 170 Year History of Missouri Corrections* (Marceline: Walsworth Publishing Company, 2004), 41.
[11] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 223.

fidelity in the married."[12] The fear of deviation from this norm informed the legal precautions that reformers took to "protect" young women from sexual exploitation. This double standard of sexuality restricted women's sexual behavior and shaped early-twentieth century conceptions of victimhood, protection, and morality as well.[13]

These dominant conceptions of womanhood meant closely policing young women's sexuality, frequently criminalizing their sexual activity, and punishing young women under the guise of protecting them.[14] Women and girls who violated the norms of chastity were considered deviant and non-respectable. This had drastic consequences where women and girls forfeited legal and, possibly, familial protection. As a result, these women and girls were at the mercy of the state. Thus, the reformatory became a place where sexually deviant girls could be retaught the societal values that they pulled away from.

THE STATE INDUSTRIAL HOME FOR NEGRO GIRLS

It took almost thirty years since the construction of Boonville and Chillicothe to build a reformatory for black girls, and those same goals for Chillicothe were implemented at Tipton as well. In 1908, a 12-year-old black girl was committed to the Missouri State Penitentiary, and the Federated Negro Women's Club of Missouri took action. The President of the Federated Negro Women's Club of Missouri appealed to the Attorney General, and when the General became Governor, he used his influence to establish a "special institution" for "Negro Girls."[15] Attempts to build the institution faced resistance from White residents.[16] Regardless, the state government found a location in Tipton, Missouri and the State Industrial Home for Negro Girls opened in 1916.

African American Superintendents of Tipton sent numerous Biennial Reports to the Boards and Departments of Penal Institutions from early 1900 to the 1940s. The purpose of these reports was to assure the Boards and Departments that the Home was running smoothly and that its purpose is for the betterment of these girls:

> [...] the great purpose of this Home which is to provide for our delinquent girls such wise conditions of modern education and training as will restore them to useful citizenship […] Every girl is made to feel at home here; the institution is not a place of punishment, but a school where she may be taught to establish an upright character and habits of industry, and advance them in the branches of knowledge taught in public schools of the State.[17]

"Restoring" these "delinquent" girls implies that the Superintendent regarded the girls' actions as criminal and that they had lost their usefulness as "citizens" of America. As with these Chillicothe girls, Tipton girls were mostly charged for 1) delinquency, 2) associating with immoral persons, and 3) incorrigibility; within their case histories, many were called "sex perverts" or "sex problems." The African-American staff also believed that the girls only cared about their bodies and therefore didn't have intelligent mental capacities: "Some of our girls come to us wholly untrained, unbelievably near the animal stage without the least rudimental knowledge

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[12] Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: the Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Harvard University Press, 2014), 5.
[13] Pliley, *Policing Sexuality*, 5.
[14] Pliley, *Policing Sexuality*, 6.
[15] Douglas E. Abrams, *A Very Special Place in Life: The History of Juvenile Justice in Missouri* (Missouri Juvenile Justice Association, 2003), 12.
[16] Abrams, *A Very Special Place in Life*, 15.
[17] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1929-1930 Biennial Report. Box 1, Folder 3. ANNUAL & BIENNIAL REPORTS, 1920-2010. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE DOCUMENTS. Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO, 275.

of clean and decent living and with no respect for law and order."[18] Saying these girls were "near the animal stage" is an "othering" tactic that is used to imply the "other" is more dangerous and vicious than any "ordinary" human. These assumptions are debilitating and harmful, and the Superintendents, who were sworn to protect them, "cared for" these girls with these biased assumptions in mind.

The Stakes of Reforming Black Children

As it is crucial to understand the gendered conceptions of reformation, it is especially crucial to understand the racial conceptions and assumptions of reforming black children. The main difference between the Chillicothe girls and the Tipton girls was race, and race impacted the difference in treatment and how their programs were structured. Policies governing these facilities were informed by racist mindsets that decided black juvenile offenders were incapable of development ("incorrigible") while white juvenile offenders were considered susceptible to moral suasion and given a chance to change their ways. In fact, "Black children in white-dominated civil society experienced this denial of black humanity and civil rights, which distorted utilitarian notions of juvenile justice by reconstructing black children as inferior human clay, devoid of the developmental capacity and civil standing presupposed by citizen-building ideals."[19] Why would states care to make reformatories at all if it viewed black children as "inferior human clay"? Instead of treating black children as capable of becoming full, moral citizens, these reformatories treated black children as bodies that could be trained to benefit the state and uphold white supremacy. The reformatory "underdeveloped" them to maintain the boundaries of a white democracy.[20] For black children, reformatories were machines used to churn out, as Foucault terms, "docile bodies" who would work for and uphold the white, patriarchal state. To the white state, "'Proper education' […] meant preparing black youths for roles as servants in a presumably continuingly white-dominated culture, economy, and polity."[21] For black boys, they were trained to do manual labor. Black girls were trained to become cooks, maids, and seamstresses.

Reformers put particular emphasis on controlling the sexuality of Black girls because their sexual autonomy was seen as a danger to white and black progress. Specifically, "Black women's sexuality became an important measure of African American progress."[22] Three fears of the early twentieth century that were associated with African American women were 1) rampant and uncontrolled female sexuality; 2) fear of miscegenation; and 3) independent black female desire.[23] Chillicothe's superintendent said in a letter to the state Board of Managers, "In accordance with [the Board of Managers'] instructions, I have refused to accept negroes to the present time as it is impossible to keep them separate from the white girls and an intermingling of the races would inevitably result in the demoralization of the whites and nullify, to a great extent, the good we are doing now."[24] White Superintendents and the Department of Corrections viewed black girls as parasites who would debase white progress. To the white Board of Managers and superintendent of Chillicothe, black girls needed to be separated from the white girls not because of overcrowding but

[18] Nancy Ellen Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls, Tipton, Missouri, 1909-1944," M.A. Thesis, Washington University, 1946, 15.
[19] Ward, *The Black Child-Savers*, 44.
[20] Ward, *The Black Child-Savers*, 47.
[21] Ward, *The Black Child-Savers*, 46.
[22] Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 71.
[23] Collins, *Black Sexual Politics*, 71.
[24] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 11.

because they viewed black girls would negatively stunt the progression of the white girls. Specifically, the superintendent said black girls, "'would create a disturbance among the inmates and virtually put an end to the reformatory features of the institution, thus making it a prison instead of a reform school.'"[25] This is a startling assumption that black girls were regarded as criminals who are morally worse than the white girls who were sentenced for the same offenses. In their minds, black girls would stunt the growth of the white girls, so the black girls needed to be separated to protect the integrity of white purity.

On the other hand, why would the black community (including the black staff and Superintendents) support having a reformatory for black girls? The black community truly believed sending their girls to reformatories would make them into better citizens and young, respectable ladies who would contribute to the race's uplift through work or marriage. Some parents even took their girls to Tipton directly. The norms of this patriarchal society impacted the black community and their norms. In order to challenge the prevailing ideology of black women and girls' sexual immorality and protect themselves from further scrutiny, middle-class black women adopted and advocated a "politics of respectability" which was "characterized by cleanliness of person and property, temperance, thrift, polite manners, and sexual purity."[26] In addition to their sexuality, the Tipton girls' existence outside the institution of the nuclear family excluded them. The girls who were sent to Tipton came from broken homes or families in extreme poverty. According to one Biennial Report, "These girls have had no training in homemaking and, in many instances, know little or nothing of personal care. Some have been the victims of social diseases and their cultural training been negligible."[27] This "cultural training" alludes to training these girls to adhere to the social and cultural norms that made them into docile bodies to the social norms of the black community. Specifically, the black community also wanted to make sure these girls would gain domestic and/or work skills. If the girls were married or worked, they were considered to be living a "right woman's life." To the black officers and clubwomen, learning the "domestic arts" had a double advantage: it not only made girls marketable, but marriageable as well. Ergo, without these tools, girls were never considered "useful citizens" to American society and their own communities.

Education and Refashioning of Tipton Girls

Thus, Tipton executed a special curriculum to "restore" the girls. The state's correctional methods did not try to restore the individual to the place in society they had lost by breaking the law. Instead, those methods aimed to create an obedient subject who obeyed rules without question. This was implemented by timetables, compulsory movements, regular activities, solitary meditation, work in common, silence, application, respect, and good habits.[28] Systems of grading offender behavior (merit systems) and classifying individual offenders were also developed. Besides educational opportunities and vocational training, military conduct and discipline were adopted.[29]

According to one report, there were educational classes that varied from elementary to high school each period, depending on the girls' ages. The girls could

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[25] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 10-11.
[26] Collins, *Black Sexual Politics*, 71.
[27] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1937-1938 Biennial Report, Box 1, Folder 6, ANNUAL & BIENNIAL REPORTS, 1920-2010, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE DOCUMENTS, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO, 323.
[28] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 128-129.
[29] Mark S. Schreiber, et al., *Somewhere in Time*, 36.

participate in outdoor recreation like baseball, basketball, volleyball, handball, drills, etc.[30] The girls participated in music by playing instruments and singing, and underwent "religious training" where they attended Sunday school and had song services.[31] Tipton girls were also taught the same domestic and vocational skills at Chillicothe, including cooking, baking, laundry and sewing. Every three months the girls were "detailed" in classes like Domestic Science, Domestic Art, Laundry, Practical Nurse Training, Beauty Culture, Commercial Poultry Raising, Dairy Work, Beautifying and Caring for the Campus, and Gardening.[32] Domestic Science consisted of learning how to cook, preparing & baking food, and canning and preserving food.[33] In Beauty Culture, the girls learned about beauty culture, like shampooing hair every two weeks. In Domestic Art, the girls were taught crocheting, tatting, wax-fabric and wood painting, raffia work, basket weaving, embroidering, hemstitching, applique, bead work, and sketches in water coloring.[34]

Superintendent Ethel Bowles at Tipton also enacted a "Merit System" which, "[…] enables girls to adjust themselves and keep check on their own behavior and attainments. Two merits are given each day for perfect performance in the following:

- Work (Good, bad, or indifferent; punctuality; alertness)
- Conduct
- Attitude
- Personal Appearance
- Sportsmanship."[35]

Rewards for good behavior included privileges, honors, parties, good clothes, leadership, and freedom. In order to classify these girls, the girls were placed into four groups from C.O.C to the "Fourth Group." C.O.C stands for "Cream of the Crop" and these girls had the highest honors and privileges, and this could be achieved from having a consistent, perfect performance. The second group would get a party at the end of the month, and the third and fourth groups would have "minimal privileges."[36] The girls also had after-care after they were paroled from Tipton to ensure that the girls did not "relapse" their criminal behavior. They had a Big Sisters program where the Federated Women's Club of Missouri allowed for girls to be placed in private homes and jobs. They had parole officers and social workers connected with the institution to give updates about the girls to the Superintendent. The girls even wrote letters to the Superintendent, addressing her as "mother." A few thanked the Superintendent for believing in them and having faith in them. A few said they found jobs, found love, or had children. Tipton was painted as a success.

Inequitable Conditions at Tipton

At face value, the Biennial Reports showed how effective Tipton was at helping these girls be educated, foster a family, and maintain a livelihood after they left. However, behind the scenes, the institution was so poorly maintained that it gained a reputation as one of the worst reformatories in the United States. This was due to the lack of funds and the mistreatment of the girls. Boonville had appropriated funds of

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[30] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1933-1934 Biennial Report, Box 1, Folder 4, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE DOCUMENTS, ANNUAL & BIENNIAL REPORTS, 1920-2010, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO, 438.
[31] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1933-1934 Biennial Report, 439.
[32] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1929-1930 Biennial Report, 280.
[33] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1929-1930 Biennial Report, 282.
[34] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1929-1930 Biennial Report, 282.
[35] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1933-1934 Biennial Report, 436-437.
[36] Report of the Department of Penal Institutions: 1933-1934 Biennial Report, 436-437.

$1,215,000 for 224 boys ($5,424 per boy), Chillicothe had appropriated funds for $318,600 for 137 girls ($2,325.55 per child), and Tipton had $48,000 for 28 girls ($1,714.28 per girl).[37] These calculations demonstrate how the children's race and gender affected how much money the State invested into each child.

The institution was run and maintained extremely poorly. Sewage disposal was poor; delivery of supplies was slow; salaries for black staff were far lower than white staff at the white girls' training school at Chillicothe; the superintendent had to hire anyone who applied regardless of qualifications and training; budgetary restrictions made allocated for only the minimum essentials for food with little meat, milk, or fresh fruit; and the school had few medical supplies and no resident medical or dental care.[38] These conditions were unheard of at the reformatories for white girls at Chillicothe and for white boys at Boonville.

Overcrowding was a serious issue and a health hazard; three girls were often put into a room meant for one.[39] According to the staff, this posed an even more serious problem: "The difficulties of a small staff are further increased by the fact that the building is so constructed that it is not possible to see inside the congregate bedrooms in which many of the girls sleep, when the doors are closed, and as there are not enough matrons to provide one for each bedroom, there is the opportunity for the girls to enter into all sorts of unwholesome sex practices."[40] Because the staff could not control every sexual indiscretion that might have happened in the rooms or deviant behavior in classrooms, they resorted to more heinous disciplinary measures.

Tipton staff used methods including solitary confinement that staff called "dungeons," whippings, segregation, deprivation of privileges, and withholding of merits resulting in a lower grade standing.[41] The Superintendent responded to an Osborne Association report written about Tipton in 1938, "We have found that the nearest approach to them is through fear. Then we are able to develop 'Pride' and 'Self Respect' and make them realize that they must respect some authority or observe some rules of law and order. If not, they will be hurt physically their bodies are the only things they are conscious of, apparently."[42]

It is quite peculiar to say that their "bodies are the only things they are conscious of." It is unclear exactly what that means, but it can be implied that the Superintendent felt the girls were not concerned with their mental and possibly spiritual values. According to her, this needed to be corrected through fear and physical pain if the merit system proved inadequate to "reform" them. However, these measures are not only physically excruciating but also psychologically frightening and hurtful for the girls who were in these women's care. Their well-being was not cared for by the staff nor the state as it refused to allocate enough funds to hire professionals and provide adequate sustenance and resources. The allocation of funds and lack of concern for the horrible living conditions at Tipton reflected American society's priorities, and black girls were at the bottom of the priority list.

Conclusion: Harmful and Lasting Implications

The Tipton reformatory was not an isolated incident; more reformatories such as this one continued to be built across the country, intent on controlling the behavior and

[37] FY 1948 Annual Report, Box 35, Folder 2, STATE BOARD OF TRAINING SCHOOLS: ANNUAL REPORTS, 1947-1973, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, STATE DOCUMENTS, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, MO.
[38] Abrams, *A Very Special Place in Life,* 105.
[39] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 22.
[40] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 80-81.
[41] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 157-158.
[42] Cole, "Missouri Industrial Home for Negro Girls," 157-158.

conduct of black girls. State and local communities continued to police Black girls, leading to their continued criminalization, and this phenomenon has persisted and festered into the mass criminalization of black girls and women well into the twenty-first century. Although black girls cannot be arrested for delinquency, associating with immoral persons, and incorrigibility any longer, they are still being severely punished for the same "crimes" through disproportionate discrimination, strict discipline, and exclusionary punishment in schools. For example, current dress codes and hair discrimination in schools mirror the "Personal Appearance" component of the merit system at Tipton. While dress codes are said to create a more "suitable" environment for learning, it has done the opposite, in particular for black girls. A 2018 study by the National Women's Law Center found that black girls in Washington, D.C. schools are singled out by unfair dress codes.[43] When enforced, this policy can cause black girls to fall behind in school by removing them from the classroom and even sending them home. A few statements from the report stand out:

> Black girls [...] face adults' stereotyped perceptions that they are more sexually provocative because of their race, and thus more deserving of punishment for a low-cut shirt or short skirt. [...] Black girls are 20.8 times more likely to be suspended from D.C. schools than white girls. One reason for this disproportionate punishment is that adults often see Black girls as older and more sexual than their white peers. [...] When students see educators talking about girls' bodies, they learn to "sexualize" young women and view them as objects meant for others' pleasure rather than full human beings. Plus, when educators say girls are "distracting" boys or "asking for it," students get the message that boys are not responsible for how they behave, and girls who wear certain clothes or makeup deserve harassment and violence.[44]

Black girls are being criminalized because of the *perception* that they are embodying deviant sexuality, and they are punished because of these stereotypes. Hair discrimination also operates in a similar way, as schools expel black girls because of their hair, resulting in media outrage and solidarity in recent years.[45] Fundamentally, respectability politics is at play within these disproportionate discriminatory practices. Black girls' expression is stifled and suppressed, and black girls have to assimilate to the standards of an educational system that does not support their presence to avoid punishment.

One recent education study demonstrates the continued scrutiny of black girls' comportment in the educational system today, specifically in extracurricular programs. Education researchers Tiffany M. Nyachae and Esther O. Ohito explored what primarily working-class black girls in an urban school were taught about girlhood and womanhood through written materials produced by an extracurricular program created for them. They found in their study that this program advanced respectability politics through three themes: 1) Shaming and blaming the individual, 2) Disciplining the black girl's body, and 3) Promoting moral (self) policing and sexual propriety.[46] This program's enforcement of these themes reflects the enforcement of the normative girl/womanhood at Tipton. This curriculum was geared

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[43] "DRESS CODED: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools," National Women's Law Center, last modified April 24, 2018.
[44] "DRESS CODED: Black Girls, Bodies, and Bias in D.C. Schools," 1, 16, 27.
[45] See D. Sharmin Arefi, "Is Hair Discrimination Race Discrimination?" last modified April 17, 2020; Marquaysa Battle, "Times Black Girls Were Suspended for Their Hairstyles," last modified May 16, 2017; Julia Jacobs and Dan Levin, "Black Girl Sent Home from School Over Hair Extensions," last modified August 21, 2018; Jaicey Bledsoe, "Black Voices: Respectability Politics Contribute to Social and Systemic Racism," last modified October 22, 2020.
[46] See Tiffany M. Nyachae and Esther O. Ohito, "No Disrespect: A Womanist Critique of Respectability Discourses in Extracurricular Programming for Black Girls," *Urban Education* 55, no. 10 (December 2019): 1-31.

to reforming this perceived inner aberrancy by promoting a certain ideal black girlhood: chaste, poised, graceful, dignified.

Based on the aforementioned historical phenomenon of reformation, it is clear that those who do not conform to the patriarchal norms become even more vulnerable to wrenching forms of gendered and racial discrimination as well as the heinous implementation of the carceral regime. This "carceral regime" consists of "the broad expanse of the criminal justice system (including officers, prosecutors, judges, the court, sentencing, parole, and prisons) and its vicissitudes (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, brutality, and corruption) that exist in the system's varied apparatuses."[47] Within this carceral regime, black girls are still regarded as sexual deviants. The carceral regime is becoming quite evident within the American school system. With increased surveillance and scrutiny through schools' architecture, policies, and practices, schools have become carceral sites where black girls are criminalized and even arrested at a young age.[48]

Currently, black girls in high schools are:

- 6 times more likely to be suspended from school than white girls
- 4 times more likely to be arrested than white girls
- 3 times more likely to be restrained than white girls
- 3 times more likely to receive one or more in-school suspensions than white girls
- 3 times more likely to be referred to law enforcement than white girls
- 2 times more likely to receive corporal punishments than white girls.[49]

These disproportionate statistics are the result of almost a hundred years of enforced normativity, shaming of non-normative comportments, and corporal and exclusionary discipline. There is opportunity for further study of the impact of these policies in disciplines such as sociology, education, law, etc., and there are many activists, scholars, educators, lawyers, etc. who are currently working hard to cut these deep roots. The main takeaway from this article is that the girls who were sentenced to go to Tipton did not fail to adjust themselves. Instead, the system failed to adjust itself for their needs, a fact that still rings true to this day, leaving black girls unprotected and unvalued as citizens and human beings.

[47] See Kali N. Gross, "Policing Black Women's and Black Girls' Bodies in the Carceral United States," *Souls* 20, no. 1 (2018): 1-13; Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 9; Dylan Rodriguez, *Forced Passages: Imprisoned Radical Intellectuals and the U.S. Prison Regime* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 41-44.

[48] See Carrie Spector, "Schools Need to Acknowledge their Part in the Criminalization of Black Youth, Stanford Scholar Says," last modified June 18, 2020; Connie Wun, "Not Only a Pipeline: Schools as Carceral Sites," *Occasional Paper Series*, no. 38 (October 2017): 1-6; Monique Morris, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls* (New York: The New Press, 2016).

[49] "Fact Sheet," Pushout Film, last modified 2019.

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