

## *Pop-Up Museum: Sports & Leisure*

*March 3 – March 13, 2016*

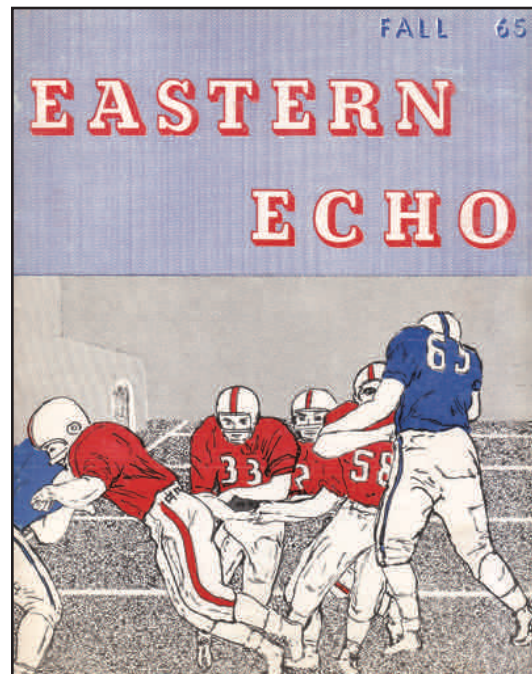
Locked safely away in Eastern State Penitentiary's old darkroom, just a few steps from here, hundreds of numbered artifacts rest in neatly organized drawers. Thousands of photographs, also carefully numbered, fill museum storage boxes. Rare books line the shelves.

The darkroom has been fitted with modern climate control systems to preserve the collection. Each object—from a weapon hidden by an Eastern State inmate to a photograph developed in the darkroom where it is stored today—is irreplaceable. It tells part of Eastern State's story.

**Officers and inmates** saved most of these rare artifacts. Many of them took keepsakes when Eastern State closed as a state prison in 1970. We thank these men and women for returning these fascinating objects to the historic site. Other artifacts were discovered here, abandoned with the penitentiary itself.

Plans are currently under way to build a museum-quality exhibit space inside the penitentiary. Until then, visitors can view photo reproductions (hundreds appear on signs throughout the building), while scholars carefully study the original artifacts.

And, once a year, here in the historic site's climate-controlled conference room, we'll display some of these precious artifacts for our visitors. Join us next year at *Pop-Up Museum!*



### **On the Walls and In the Air:**

**Floor Plan of Eastern State Penitentiary.** Color coded by year of construction. From the exhibit *Crucible of Good Intentions*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1994.

**"Athletic Dept." folding chair.** Discovered by historic site staff.

**Video: Eastern Penitentiary Sports, 1929.** Courtesy of the University of South Carolina's Moving Image Research Collections.

**Song: "Sugar Blues," performed by Clyde McCoy, 1931.** Inmates were photographed with sheet music of this song in 1939.

**Song: "How Strange," performed by The Four Naturals.** This song was written by Eastern State Penitentiary inmates.

**Article: "Prison Tunesmiths Crash Big Time," from the Eastern Echo, Summer 1959.** Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

**All of the artifacts in this exhibit are from the Collection of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site unless otherwise noted.**

## Case 1:

# *Sports and Such*

Inmates found purpose through their labor and leisure activities. Sports and other diversions interrupted the monotony of prison, relieved stress, and readied inmates for life beyond the walls.

In the 1920s, Board President Alfred Fleisher (to whom the penitentiary's synagogue is dedicated) praised the sports program at Eastern State, saying, "I have seen the value of athletics in prison life... and I am sure that any attempt to eliminate the present program of athletics would bring about disastrous results."



In addition to sports, inmates participated in a variety of clubs and classes. The *Eastern Echo*, a quarterly magazine produced in the 1950s and 60s, was written, edited, illustrated, and printed by inmates. Feature stories covered sports at the prison, inmate perspectives on criminal justice issues, fiction, poems, and highlights about the prison's staff.

*Onsite connection:* Learn about one of the most popular games at Eastern State Penitentiary by visiting the Bocce Court near the Greenhouse. Conditions permitting, you can try a game yourself!

Please ask any staff member for directions or more information about the artifacts.

## In Case 1:

**Eastern Echo, Fall 1965 (front cover).**

“The cover was designed by S. R. Cantoral and Calvin Milligan. It is an attempt to convey ‘football’ behind these walls in our exercise yard.”

Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

**Eastern Echo, Winter 1964, “July 4th Field Events.”** Gift of the William F. Derau Family.

**Photograph of long jump near old Shop Building, c. 1955.** This building was torn down to create the present-day baseball field. Gift of the family of James McKenna.

**Softball.** Found by historic site staff.

**Photograph of inmates playing baseball on the field between Cellblocks 3 and 4, c. 1960.** The roof of Cellblock 3 provided a good vantage to watch the game. Gift of Jack Flynn.

**Photograph of football players on the baseball field, c. 1960.** One inmate is in a wheelchair.

**Mug shot of Frank Pisano (inmate D-2602).** Pisano was serving a 50 to 100 year term for armed robbery when his skull was fractured during a football game at Eastern State. On October 23, 1939, the Warden reported in his journal that Pisano “kept on playing in the

game until about 3 pm when he complained of muscular pains in his right leg. He was taken to the dispensary and later removed to the hospital. He lost consciousness and his mother was notified. He was visited in the hospital at 10:45 pm by his mother, brother and sister.” Pisano never regained consciousness and died early the next morning. The Warden stated, “He was a well behaved prisoner and officers and prisoners alike spoke good of him at all times.”

**Photograph of two crouching inmates in football uniforms, c. 1940.** Gift of the L. Schwartz Family.

**Photograph of Eastern State Penitentiary football team in uniforms with numbers, c. 1960.**

**Photograph of Eastern State Penitentiary football team, 1961.** Gift of Dan McCloud.

**Baseball.** Found by historic site staff.

**Photograph of inmates shaking hands and posing while gathered on the ball field for a football game, c. 1960.**

**Eastern Echo, Fall 1961, “Around the Yard or Who’s Who in Sports.”** Gift given in honor of Howard H. Haines, Captain of the Guards.

**Inlaid wooden chessboard, c. 1933.**

C-9034 is written on the back of the board: this could be the number of the inmate who made or owned the board. Chess was a popular activity at Eastern State and outside leagues and players would frequently visit the institution for matches.

**Chess pieces, c. 1960.** Dr. Richard Fulmer was a corrections counselor in the late 1960s. He purchased the chess pieces with a board made at Eastern State (not currently on display). Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

**Bocce ball.** Found by historic site staff near Cellblock 3.

**Photograph of a group of inmates in matching shirts standing in front of a basketball hoop, c 1960.** The man on the far right wears a whistle around his neck.

**Photograph of five inmates: one is holding a baseball or a handball, c. 1960.**

**Remnants of a softball.** Found by historic site staff in the front Administration Building.

## Case 2:

# Visits and Vocabularies

Writing allowed prisoners to remain connected to their communities and their creativity. Visits and letters from family and friends allowed inmates and staff to share comfort, news, and information with those on the outside.



Not all visitors to the penitentiary had a personal connection to the inmates or staff, however. Many celebrities (including President Andrew Jackson, author Charles Dickens, political scientist Alexis de Toqueville, social reformer Dorothea Dix, composer John Philip Sousa, baseball great Babe Ruth, and evangelist Billy Graham, among others) visited Eastern State during its years of operation.

Their objectives, like your reasons for touring today, varied. They may have come to entertain and engage the inmates, learn about prison conditions, study the architecture, or satisfy a curiosity about the place during *their* leisure time. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, anyone could apply to one of the penitentiary's inspectors for admission tickets.

*Onsite connection:* Stop at the Visitation Room near the penitentiary's front entrance to see where visits took place in the 1950s and 60s.

*Please ask any staff member for directions or more information about the artifacts.*

## In Case 2:

### **Death Ledger (1830-1896, 1904-1936).**

Open to the year 1935. Joseph Doman (inmate C-9065) is shown in the picture below with heavyweight boxing champion Max Baer seven months before Doman died of mitral stenosis (narrowing of the heart's mitral valve).

**Photograph of heavyweight boxing champion Max Baer with Joseph Doman (inmate C-9065).** Gift of John P. Farley, Mary B. Maiden, James J. Farley, Kate Farley, and Bernard C. Farley.

**Visitor's pass, c. 1885.**

**Visitor's Rules for The State Correctional Institution of Philadelphia and the Eastern Correctional Diagnostic and Classification Center, c. 1966.**

**Visitor's pass, c. 1945.**

**State Correctional Institution at Philadelphia Visitors' Handbook and Eastern Diagnostic and Classification Center Visitors' Handbook, c. 1966.** Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

**Visiting permits, 1963.**

**Bookends with locks and keys, c. 1970.** Gift of the Biedermann Family

**Inside the bookends: Warden Cassidy on Prisons and Convicts, 1897, and The Backward Bride: A Sicilian Scherzo, 1950.** The inside of *The Backward Bride* is stamped "Property of Eastern State Penitentiary" and "Library."

**Handbook: General Rules of the Eastern State Penitentiary for the Government of Inmates, c. 1945.** Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

**Padlock.** Gift of the Scheerer Family.

**Key to the original front door of Eastern State Penitentiary.** The original door was in place from 1823 to 1937, when it was replaced by the steel gate and doors seen today. The key, as well as bolts from the door incorporated into the bookends on this table, became a souvenir. "Front Gate" is stamped on handle. "ESP" is stamped at base of handle. "1823-1938" is stamped on shaft. Gift of Joseph B. Atkinson, Margaret Carter, and Suzanne Campbell.

**Photograph of visiting choir (possibly from Temple University) at Eastern State, c. 1960.** Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

**The Stranger's Guide in Philadelphia, 1964, and Magee's Illustrated Guide of Philadelphia and the Centennial Exhibition, 1876.** Both volumes note Eastern State Penitentiary as one of the important sites in Philadelphia.

**Postcard of Eastern Penitentiary, Philadelphia, PA, c. 1910.** The postcard shows the original front entrance to the penitentiary before it was replaced in 1937.

**Bertillon (Intake) card for Eva Cole (inmate C-250, formerly at Eastern State as B-8312).** Cole was serving 2-3 years for assault and robbery when she wrote the poem "Ode to Mr. Mouse" for the inmate newsletter *The Umpire* in 1917. Cole is one of two women known to have been published in *The Umpire*. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

**"Ode to Mr. Mouse," from The Umpire.** By Eva Cole (inmate B-8312), August 22, 1917.

**Two postcards from inmates at Eastern State Penitentiary and one postcard to an inmate, c. 1950.**

**Poems from Desolation.** By Harry W. Johnson (inmate D-6881), 1953. Johnson was serving a life sentence for murder when the book was published.

**Shaped like the prison's original front door, these inmate-made bookends feature heavy bolts from that door.** Gift of Katharine W. Sharp.

**A Tale of a Walled Town and Other Verses.** By Clarence Alexander Rae (inmate B-8266), 1921.

**Poems by a Prisoner of the E.S. Penitentiary Penna.: Buds and Flowers, of Leisure Hours.** By Harry Hawser (inmate 1292 and 2312), 1844.

### Case 3:

## *Women and Weapons*

Many of the regular leisure activities for women in prison at Eastern State Penitentiary remain a mystery. We know that women, like their male counterparts, attended religious services, movies, and vaudeville performances; made crafts; exercised in the yard; and received visitors.

Aside from their charitable activities, such as knitting sweaters for soldiers during World War I, and contributing over \$120 (roughly \$2,000 today) toward Red Cross Ambulances, women are rarely mentioned in the inmate newsletters that were published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. No mention is made of their participation in sports or games, and only two female inmates are identified as the authors of articles in the newsletters.

Inmates of all genders were known to have arguments, some of which were violent, during leisure times. It is unlikely that any of the weapons on this table were made by Eastern State's female inmates, who were transferred to other facilities in 1923. Nevertheless, prison records reveal that women at Eastern State possessed, and used, such knives.



*Onsite connection:* Find more information about Eastern State Penitentiary's female inmates at Audio Tour Stop 43 in Cellblock 7.

*Please ask any staff member for directions or more information about the artifacts.*

## In Case 3:

**Mug shot page, 1919 (inmates B-9615 to B-9624).** Florence Duke (inmate B-9624) was a notorious “girl auto bandit,” who stole between 25 and 30 cars prior to being sentenced to Eastern State. While she was at Eastern State, she had several misconducts, including the one shown in the ledger to the right (threatening to kill inmate C-1379). Gift of an anonymous donor.

**Inmate-made blackjack (club-type weapon).** Gift of the William F. Derau Family.

**Inmate-made knives (also called shivs or shanks).** Unless otherwise noted, all of the shivs in this case are gifts of the Scheerer Family. The Scheerer Collection was donated in memory of Andreas Scheerer, Captain of Maximum Security from 1946 to 1971. It is the largest collection donated by one family to Eastern State Penitentiary.

**Butter knife shiv (shank) with masking tape on the handle.** Discovered by historic site staff in Cellblock 14 in 2012, this weapon had been wedged into the base of a table for at least 40 years.

**Cellblock 2 (Women’s Block) Log Book.** On June 15, 1923, Florence Duke (inmate B-9624) threatened to kill fellow inmate Mary Lewis (C-1379). Lewis was paroled from Eastern State Penitentiary two days later. Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

**Film canister with reel.** Found by historic site staff.

**Miniature bone cutlery set.** The note accompanying this set states that it was made in 1856 for Mary Anna Kaighn by a prisoner in the “Spring Garden Street Prison Philadelphia.” He made them from the bones in his soup, using the blade of his jack knife. Mary Anna, a child at the time, visited the prison with her father, James Kaighn, a member of the Board of Visitors.

**Baby doll with knitted clothing.** The clothes were made by a female inmate and given as a gift to Mary Jane Fry, a social worker who volunteered at the prison. Mrs. Fry would visit the female inmates and her husband would visit the men. It is unlikely the doll itself originated at Eastern State. Gift of the Baginsky Family in memory of Albert and Mary Jane Fry.

**Bertillon (Intake) card for Freda Frost (inmate B-6935).** The last woman transferred out of Eastern State in 1923 when the institution became exclusively male, Frost is one of two women known to have been published in inmate newsletter *The Umpire*.

**“An Echo of Thanksgiving Day,” from *The Umpire*.** By Freda Frost (inmate B-6935), December 12, 1917.

**Mug shot page, 1916 (inmates B-8225 to B-8234).** Jennie Jackson (inmate B-8233), was recognized as a member of the Ladies’ Auxiliary of the Honor and Friendship Club, an inmate social and beneficial club. She was also thanked in *The Umpire* on December 12, 1917 because she “remembered us [after her parole] and sent [the female inmates] candy, cake and peanuts.” Gift of an anonymous donor.

**Shoe shaped pincushions.**

## Case 4: *Crafts and Color*

Generations of Eastern State inmates filled their hours with the careful, time-consuming work of making handicrafts. Inmates at Eastern State during its early years worked alone in their cells, but by the 1960s, workshops lined the prison's alleyways. Eastern State's "curio shop," which sold prison-made goods to the public, was once housed in



Cellblock 2, then in the center surveillance hub, and, later still, in the front gatehouse. Many of these crafts survive because they were abundantly available to penitentiary staff, visitors, and neighbors. Even today, many prisons have gift shops where inmates' crafts are sold directly to the public.

Eastern State's sports teams, like the prison's workshops, were often highly organized. Sports teams were structured similarly to professional teams on the outside, with managers, schedules, and tournaments.

Despite segregationist policies that lasted until the 1960s, some sports teams were racially mixed as early as the 1910s. Inmates B-4264 and C-451 (formerly B-6124), whose mug shots appear on this table, both played for the Cubs baseball team in 1913.



## In Case 4:

**Wood carving: antelope.** Gift of John P. Farley, Mary B. Maiden, James J. Farley, Kate Farley, and Bernard C. Farley.

**Miniature leather cowboy boots, c. 1910.** A note accompanying the boots reads, "These boots were made by hand by the prisoners at the Eastern Penitentiary and given to my father, as a gift, from one of the prisoners sometime before 1910. My father and also some other men visited the prisoners every Sunday afternoon and had prayer with them. Laura H. Shupert."

**Wood carving: horse.**

**Wood carving: cowboy.** Gift of John A. Eastman and Pamela Pertgen.

**Wood carving: black and white English Pointer dog.** Gift of Rev. and Mrs. Anthony DiBenedetto, Jr.

**Wood carving: hobo with black pants.** Gift of William Martin.

**Soap carving: Saint Bernard dog carved by inmate Harry Shank, (inmate E-2983), c. 1967.** Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

**Soap carving: Chow Chow dog.**

**Wallet made from Kool and Pall Mall cigarette packs.** This wallet was said to be created by inmate David Aiken, one of the 1945 tunnel escapees. Gift of Richard Griffin.

**Wood carvings of dogs: seated Boxer, Dachshund, and Highland Terrier (Scotty), c. 1950.** Given to a Salvation Army Correctional Services Program worker by an inmate.

**Photograph of display, located in Center, of crafts made in the shops, c. 1960.** Gift of the Biedermann Family.

**Photograph of Gatehouse interior with cabinet where inmate-made crafts for sale were displayed, c. 1960.** Gift of the family of Howard H. Haines, Captain of the Guards.

**Wood carving: goose.** Gift of the McIntyre Family.

**Cartoon, c. 1970.** Gift of Howard James.

**Wood carving: hoboes.** The *Eastern Echo*, Summer 1959, reported that "These caricatures of the Hoboes of the Road are a terrific selling item that have been featured by this shop for 9 years." At the time of the article, a single inmate hand-painted each and every statue from the shop.

**Mug Shot Book, 1906-1908 (inmates B-3375 to B-4374, open to pages featuring B-4255 to B-4264).** Gift of anonymous donor.

**Mug Shot page, 1908 (inmates C-445 to C-454).** Gift of anonymous donor.

**Photographs of parades before Eastern State Penitentiary Philadelphia vs. Graterford football game, November 12, 1933.** The back of the photo explains that inmates are shown mimicking a college alumni parade before the start of the game. Several players in the photograph are in blackface, a type of theatrical makeup used to represent Black people in a way that is today generally considered patronizing and offensive. Graterford was the more spacious "farm branch" of Eastern State Penitentiary: they were co-managed from the 1920s until the 1950s when they became separate institutions. Graterford remains an active state correctional institution. Acme Newspictures (Corbis).

**Photograph of Graterford, c. 1930.** Frank G. Martin (future warden of Eastern State) is shown with the first E.S.P. (Philadelphia) football team that played against E.S.P. (Graterford).

*Onsite connection: The Cellblock 7 alley once housed a row of workshops for carpentry, sculpture, plastic modeling, furniture manufacturing, wood carving and model shipbuilding.*

*Please ask any staff member for directions or more information about the artifacts.*

## Counter Cases: *Music and More*

Inmates at Eastern State Penitentiary often performed music for one another as well as on radio broadcasts generated from within the walls. One inmate, George Lee (B-5958), became so famous for singing on the radio that he was nationally known as “the ‘Singing Chinese’ of the Eastern Penitentiary” until his pardon in 1927. In the 1960s, the prison was home to a Country & Western Band, Stage Band, Jazz Band, Clarinet Sextet, Concert Band, and Dance Orchestra. Inmates even wrote and published songs.



In addition to housing many musically talented inmates, Eastern State was known as a source of inexpensive and well-crafted handmade items. People who lived in the neighborhood remember the outstanding quality of the crafts. After all, inmates had plenty of time to perfect their creations.

*Onsite connection: Listen to Audio Tour Stop 14 to learn more about another “inmate,” Pep the Dog. Stop in the courtyard of Cellblock 7, across from the Catholic Chaplain’s Office, to see an image of Pep performing on the radio.*

*Please ask any staff member for directions or more information about the artifacts.*

## In Case 5:

**Silver Trophy presented to Hedda van den Beemt, Bandmaster of the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, Christmas 1922.** Gift of the van den Beemt Family.

**Small photograph of string musicians rehearsing, c. 1960.** Gift of the Scheerer Family.

**Small photograph of an inmate band, c. 1960.** Gift of the Scheerer Family.

**Program for Labor Day Concert, September 4, 1922.** Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

**Photograph of a Chinese Inmate and Warden Smith.** This inmate, whose name is unknown, composed a solo for the occasion and performed it during the prison's 1939 Christmas broadcast on radio station KYW. Warden Herbert Smith is pictured on the right. Acme Newspictures (Corbis).

**Photograph of an inmate bandleader (left) conducting fellow inmates during the 1939 Christmas broadcast on radio station KYW.** According to the sheet music, the band is playing the song "Sugar Blues." Acme Newspictures (Corbis).

**Music stand with female silhouettes.** Found by historic site staff.

**Photograph of Catholic Chaplain Father Edwin Gallagher directing an inmate choir in the chapel, 1953.** Gift of the Scheerer Family.

**Photograph of Fred Hoagland (inmate C-5895 [left]) and Thomas McIntyre (inmate C-5896 [right]), participating in the 1938 Christmas broadcast on radio station KYW.** During the broadcast, an appeal was

made for funds to aid prisoners' families. Acme Newspictures (Corbis).

**Inmate-painted portrait of Leona Sekula, the wife of a guard, c. 1960.** Gift of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

**Brown hand-tooled leather purse made by inmates, c. 1948.** Made as a gift for the Margaret Martin Atkinson, whose father became warden a few years later. Gift of Suzanne Campbell.

**Beaded turquoise and gold necklace, 1929.** The donor's father owned a bakery at 7th and Dickinson Streets in South Philadelphia, and brought doughnuts and bagels to Eastern State's prisoners. An inmate gave the baker this necklace, and he, in turn, gave it to his daughter.

**Beaded "Peggy" bracelet, c. 1947.** The donor's mother ordered it at the penitentiary to give to her as a gift. Gift of Margaret Moore Walker.

## In Case 6:

**Ceramic cat, c. 1960.** Gift of Mary, daughter of William F. Derau, a former guard at Eastern State.

**Oil painting of the Country Church, by Jos. Davis (most likely inmate B-6329), 1916.** The frame, made of oak, was added later.

**Ceramic Santa Claus party dish and mug.** Gift given in honor of Howard H. Haines, Captain of the Guards.

**Soap carving: Santa Claus with gift sack.** Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

**Soap carving: Snoopy with red hat.** Hand-carved by Harry Shank (inmate E-2983).

**Inlaid wood bowls, c. 1960.** Gifts in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

**Tinsel (foil) art piggy bank in the shape of a television, c. 1960.** Gift of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

**Wood carving: Boxer dog, c. 1950.** Given to a Salvation Army Correctional Services Program worker by an inmate.

**Tinsel (foil) art tray with peacocks, c. 1960.**

**Photograph of Connie Mack, manager of the Philadelphia Athletics baseball team (left), and Warden Cornelius J. Burke (right) looking at an inmate-made warship, August 18, 1949.** Mack had a long history of involvement at Eastern State. In 1913, he agreed to send the Athletics' old baseballs to the penitentiary for the inmates' use. He then advocated for several years on behalf of his former player Samuel "Red" Crane (inmate C-6131), who was incarcerated at Eastern State for second-degree murder from 1930 to 1944. The Athletics also visited the inmates and played at least one game at Graterford, Eastern State's "farm branch." Telephoto.

**Wood carving: Swordfish.**

**Wood carving: Barracuda fish.**

**Spanish Galleon Ship.**

**Wood carving: ship captain.** Gift of the Hassett and McNamee Family.



Drone photograph by Nick Lang.

# **EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY**

**America's Most Historic Prison**

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(215) 236-3300 [www.EasternState.org](http://www.EasternState.org)