

Segregated Cellblocks: Race and Change at Eastern State Penitentiary

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Race is a social construct. Science recognizes variations in skin colors, hair textures, and many other physical characteristics among humans. However, it does not hold that any specific combination of traits makes one person a different biological race than another. And no specific combination of characteristics is inherently better than another.

Yet the idea of race, as humans have come to use it – classifying people by place of ancestral origin and by certain physical characteristics – has real world consequences. One of them is the tendency to divide ourselves and others by our ancestry and appearance, to segregate our communities and society through customs and the law.

This exhibit explores this segregation at Eastern State Penitentiary through items in the historic site's collection.

People who worked or were incarcerated at Eastern State saved most of these rare artifacts. Many of them took keepsakes when the building closed as a state prison in 1970. We thank these individuals for returning these fascinating objects to the historic site. Other artifacts were discovered here, abandoned with the penitentiary itself. 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 again next year at *Pop-Up Museum!*

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



Please note that in quoting historical documents this guide sometimes includes language that is now considered outdated and offensive. This language does not reflect Eastern State's views today.

**Parental Advisory:
Adult Subjects**

Case 1:

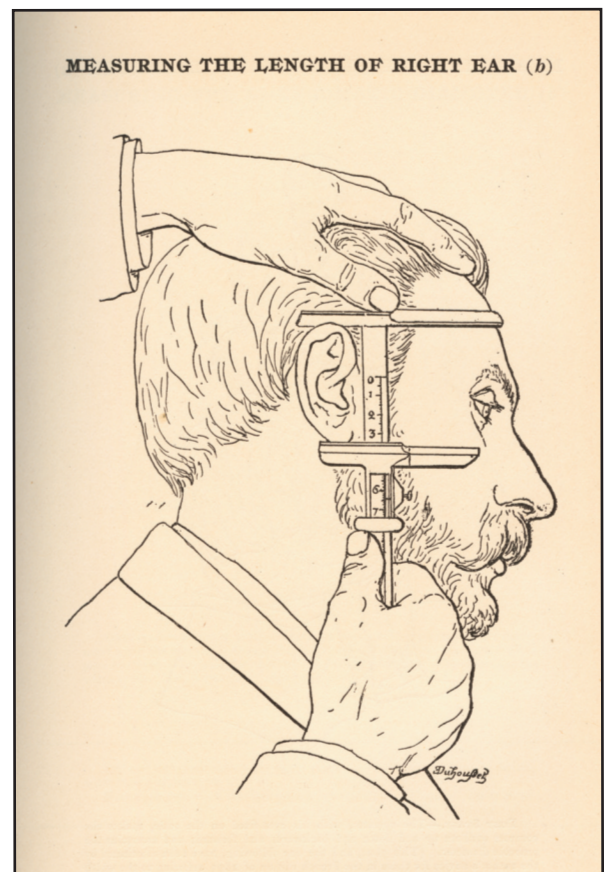
Classifying Race

Who decides what race a person is? Both within Eastern State and outside its walls, racial and ethnic categories are imprecise. Racial categories, and the descriptions that supported them, changed over time, and across contexts.

Over the years, incarcerated people of African descent at Eastern State were described in a variety of ways, including black, dark black, mulatto, bright mulatto, medium mulatto, light mulatto, florid, and Negro. (Usually these dated terms were not spelled with capital letters.) These descriptions included at least 35 individuals who had been enslaved before their incarceration.

Descriptions went beyond skin tone. Loosely following the Bertillon System of Identification, for at least two decades in the early 20th century, prisoners of African descent were often described as having “Maroon” eyes and “Black and Woolly” or “Black and Kinky” hair, regardless of their actual appearance.

On several occasions, individuals had their races changed in the records during their incarceration. Luther Benson (C-3318), for example, had his race changed from “White” to “Colored” in 1926. In 1936, Alvin Marsh’s (D-1627’s) race was changed from “Black” to “White” based on information received from the War Department. And Charles Jennings (D-7951) had his changed from “African American” to “White” in 1944.



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

In Case 1:

The Bertillon System of Identification, 1896. Designed by Parisian police clerk Alphonse Bertillon, this book illustrated on the left, describes an identification system. It outlines 14 specific bodily measurements that, along with descriptions of scars and other physical features, would ideally allow individuals in police custody to be distinguished easily from one another.

A Study of the Bertillon Method of Identification, 1922. Published by the University of Applied Science in Chicago, this pamphlet introduces students to the measuring tools and techniques central to the Bertillon Method.

Wanted poster for Wyvone Burk / Wynone Barrin (B-3158), 1915. Rather than noting a “Color” or race, Burk (or Barrin) is described as a native of Australia. It’s unclear if this means that he was an indigenous Australian.

Bertillon (Intake) card for Mario Pacheco (D-1119), 1936. Prisoner Mario Pacheco was Puerto Rican by birth and likely had a combination of European,

Indigenous, and African descent. No race or “Color” is listed, but he is described as having a “Swarthy” complexion. The Warden’s Daily Journal lists him as “Black.”

Caliper rule. This device was used to measure various aspects of a prisoner’s body under the Bertillon System of Identification. According to the donor, who received it from Warden Joseph Brierley, this one was used at Eastern State. Gift of William Robinson.

Wanted poster for Tony Lopez (C-3892), 1931. Also known by the alias William Lee Humphrey, Lopez is described as having a “lt. brown” complexion with “maroon” eyes and “black and woolly” hair. It is unknown whether Lopez was of Hispanic and/or Latino ancestry.

Wanted poster for Julius H. Allison (B-5273), 1913. While most Black prisoners in the 20th Century are described as having “maroon” eyes, the description of Allison’s eyes as “Yellow and Blue” is unusual.

Bertillon (Intake) card for Carl Taylor (C-8819), 1933. This card notes that prisoner Carl Taylor is also known as Chief Running Wolf. Newspaper reports from the time of his arrest and trial emphasize his membership in the Mescalero Apache Tribe, and describe him as wearing a “colorful native costume,” yet this card describes him in the standard way used for Black prisoners in the 20th Century.

Mug Shot Book, Vol. 1, 1904-1906. Prison officials may have been stumped as to how to classify George Atlas (B-3174), a native of Egypt. “Race” is left blank on his official record. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

Mug shot page featuring Lee Gum You (A-8527). Eastern State housed few people of Asian descent. Lee Gum You, incarcerated in 1896, was noted as a native of China, with a “Dark” complexion, black eyes and black hair. His discharge record lists him as a white male. Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

Bertillon (Intake) cards for select prisoners classified as “Black”

Name	Number	Complexion	Eye Color	Hair Color
Llewellyn Gordon	D-5773	Dark Brown	Maroon	Black & Woolly
John Alexander	D-4102	Medium Mulatto	Maroon	Black & Kinky
Claude Cyprin Harris	C-7320	Medium Dark	Maroon	Black & Woolly
Isabella Muepin	C-1278	Dark Medium	Maroon	Black & Woolly

Bertillon (Intake) cards for select prisoners classified as “White”

Name	Number	Complexion	Eye Color	Hair Color
Freda Frost	B-6935	Medium Fair	Brown	Dark Brown
Joseph Cashman	C-3147	Medium Dark	Hazel	Dark Chestnut
Wilfred Jones	C-5889	Medium Fair	Dark Chestnut	Dark Mahogany Red
Danny Day Del Giorno	C-7477	Dark	Hazel	Black

White prisoners with brown or black hair or eyes are described with greater variation than were Black prisoners.

Case 2:

From Separate Cells to Segregation

In its first years, prisoners at Eastern State were held in individual cells to encourage penitence and reflection. Prison officials do not appear to have further separated prisoners by race at that time.

Still, segregation impacted Eastern State in its earliest days. White children and teens who were sentenced for crimes were placed in the nearby House of Refuge during the 1800s. Children and teens of other races, some as young as 11 years old, were housed at Eastern State alongside adults until the House of Refuge for Colored Children was opened more than 20 years after its counterpart.



The first four women imprisoned at Eastern State, in the early 1830s, were African American. In 1913, a separate institution was opened for women, called the Industrial Home for Women at Muncy (now SCI-Muncy). In 1921, eight years after the institution had opened, the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Prison Society noted, "The law establishing the institution makes no distinction as to race or color so far as the reception of inmates is concerned. Still we trust an additional cottage can be constructed where the colored prisoners may have suitable care."

Meanwhile, as space became limited at Eastern State and the population of Black prisoners grew, housing segregation became a routine practice. Sometimes prisoners helped enforce this; it was comfortable to be near people who had known similar life experiences, it didn't test the status quo, and it could offer safety from the aggression of others. In 1901, the Warden's Daily Journal noted that when two prisoners of different races were temporarily housed together due to overcrowding, "There could be no excuse accepted by pleading ignorance as the colored man raised an objection..."

Decades later, former prisoner John McCullough noted that in the 1960s, "We all was in the same condition. So they tried to get along. But then you had die-hards on both sides, you know, want to hold on to the old ways. Whites would be over here, and Blacks over here. It's almost like the same thing you see on TV nowadays..." In the intervening years, there were multiple examples of prisoners banding together along racial lines, or fears that they would do so.

Segregated housing lasted until the mid-1960s.

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

In Case 2:

Death Ledger, 1830-1896, 1904-1935.

The largest cause of death among people incarcerated at Eastern State in the mid-19th century was tuberculosis. Prisoners of African descent died at a higher rate than that of white prisoners. This likely reflects inequalities due to both race and economic status.

The entry for Mathias Maccumsey (102), who died after being forced to wear an iron gag placed on his head in 1833, records his cause of death as “apoplexy,” a historical term for a stroke. Warden Samuel Wood, who ordered the gag’s placement, was investigated for inflicting cruel and unusual punishment upon Maccumsey. He was found not guilty.

A Concise History of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, Together with a Detailed Statement of the Proceedings of the Committee, Appointed by the Legislature, 1835. Solitary confinement was, and is, dangerous to the mental health of incarcerated people.

Restraints and techniques like the ones pictured in this report were used to control prisoners who were perceived to be a danger to themselves or others. They were also used as punishment, as in the case of Mathias Maccumsey, an African American man who was placed in an iron gag at Eastern State in 1833 for trying to speak with other prisoners. He died while wearing it, sparking this 1834-35 investigation and report.

Photograph of a hooded prisoner, 1890. As cellblocks were added to ease overcrowding at Eastern State, the facility could no longer provide individual yards for each prisoner. To preserve the desired atmosphere and outcomes of solitary confinement, prisoners were issued hoods. Eastern

State ended solitary confinement and related practices in 1913. Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

Transactions of the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, Volume III, Part I, 1843. In this journal article, Dr. Benjamin Coates explored the disproportionate number of deaths among prisoners of African descent at Eastern State in the early 1800s. He believed that these prisoners deprived themselves of ventilation because they didn’t like cold, fresh air. This, he argued, led the “cheerful, merry, lounging, and careless...Ethiopian American [who] deeply enjoys the sun and light” to experience a long imprisonment as “far more depressing to his vitality” than did white prisoners.

Philadelphia and Its Solitary Prison, by Charles Dickens, reprinted 1916. When English author Charles Dickens visited Eastern State in 1842, he interviewed several prisoners. Upon seeing what he described as “a pretty coloured boy,” he asked the child, “Is there no refuge for young criminals in Philadelphia, then?” Per Dickens, the child responded, “Yes, but only for white children.”

Assorted locks and keys.

Large lock, c. 1937. Gift of Katharine W. Sharp.

Cellblocks 5 and 10 signs. In the late 1940s, the ground floor of Cellblock 5 and the entirety of Cellblock 10 were two of several locations that were designated to house African Americans. Cellblock 5 was adjacent to the prison kitchen, whose staff was “disproportionately Black.” Gift of Ron Lazenby in memory of Charles Utz.

Photograph of people attending a variety show in the chapel, 1954.

This photograph was taken prior to integration in the 1960s and may show prisoners segregated by cellblock or by personal choice. Gift in remembrance of E. Parke Brown, Jr., Band Director, by the Brown Family.

Photograph of white prisoners and staff at Christmas, 1956. Gift of the Kowalkowski Family.

Photograph of Black prisoners and white staff at Christmas in Cellblock 6, 1958. Gift of Ray Bednarek.

These photos are two of many that seem to show prisoners and their guards posing in segregated cellblocks.

Autobiography of Malcolm X, by Malcolm X and Alex Haley, 1966.

Black Muslims leaned on the teachings of Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X to make sense of the racism they experienced and to imagine a world that placed them among God’s chosen people despite it. This book, found by historic site staff in Cellblock 12, might have belonged to one of them. Just a year after its publication, five people incarcerated at Eastern State accused the Pennsylvania prison system of denying their constitutional right to practice Islam on equal terms as other religions. In *Knuckles v. Prasse*, they demanded a Muslim chaplain and the ability to worship together, which they were awarded. They were denied access to religious texts and publications, the ability to correspond directly with Elijah Muhammad, and a special diet free of pork.

Case 3:

Work Assignments

Work assignments at Eastern State provided cheap labor for the penitentiary. They also provided incarcerated people with opportunities to gain new skills, socialize, and stay busy and mentally engaged.

Some jobs were considered better than others. Working in the print shop, for example, was considered a “choice” job, and until the 1960s, the people assigned

to work there were almost all white. Black prisoners, on the other hand, worked disproportionately in food service. A 1940 newspaper article noted that “colored” men were “discouraged from entering or actually being kept out” of jobs that would help develop their skills and provide better opportunities in life.



In the early 1960s, Warden Joseph Brierley was instructed to find a way to integrate the institution. He recalled later, “I gave it a great deal of thought and my best thinking came from inmates that I spoke with...as a result of our thinking, we hit upon a plan that we would integrate the institution according to work assignment.” He noted that it was a relatively smooth transition.

Brierley had help from the prisoners and others. *The Philadelphia Tribune* reported in a 1961 article about the prison’s first African American Protestant Chaplain, Dr. Arthur D. Williams, “A large number of racial minority prisoners work in the front offices, the library, school, dining rooms, printing plant, upholstery shop, dental office, medical department and the hospital.” The paper quoted Dr. Williams himself as saying, “The staff and bureau will not slacken their efforts until they have wiped out bias, and the work will go on without fanfare and as fast as practicable.”

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

In Case 3:

Two photographs of construction, c. 1955. Incarcerated people are shown working on the floor of the officers' mess hall. Prior to integration, Black prisoners were more likely than others to be assigned to serve food in this space. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

Installation of dehumidifier, 1963.

Gift given in honor of Howard H. Haines, Captain of the Guards.

Construction of Center Tower c. 1951.

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

Group of staff and prisoners in office, c. 1960.

In these photos, incarcerated people are shown in a variety of work environments within the prison, before and after the integration of work assignments.

Assorted cooking and serving tools found inside the building.

Eastern Echo, Fall 1966. Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

Photograph showing two Black prisoners in cook uniforms, c. 1940.

Gift of the family of Robert A. Cramer. Warden Brierley noted that the Eastern State kitchens were a predominantly Black workspace until integration of work assignments began.

These photographs, taken more than 20 years apart, show just a few of the Black prisoners responsible for cooking and serving the penitentiary's food.

"Spotlight on the dye shop," from *Eastern Echo*, Summer 1963. During his incarceration, Chris Rice was celebrated for his long experience, deep knowledge, and leadership within the color processing plant at Eastern State.

Photograph of prisoners working in the dye shop, c. 1960. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

Photo of two prisoners operating fabric pressing in the prison laundry under a guard's supervision, 1954. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

Annual Report of the Eastern State Penitentiary for the Year Ending May 31, 1925, showing the print shop.

Photographs of print shop workers and assorted products, c. 1960. Gifts of Alan J. LeFebvre.

According to Warden Brierley, the print shop was one of the "choice" work assignments, and incarcerated Black people were rarely placed there before work assignments were integrated.

A Manual of the Jewish Religion, 1894.
The Backward Bride: A Sicilian Scherzo, 1950.

The first book is stamped "The Jewish Library of the Eastern State Penitentiary." It is unknown whether this was part of the general library, like the second book that is simply stamped "Property of the Eastern State Penitentiary." If the Jewish Library was a part of the larger library, these books would have been managed by the "large number of racial minority prisoners" who worked in the library as early as 1961.

Rules for the Library: Eastern State Penitentiary, 1883. Gift of the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

Case 4:

Staff and Volunteers

For most of its history, Eastern State's paid staff and volunteers were entirely white. So, too, were the boards and oversight committees that shaped the prison's policies and procedures. Occasionally, however, there were exceptions.

In 1923, Ernest T. Atwell was appointed to Eastern State's Board of Trustees, the first African American person to hold this position. Four years later, he was the sole trustee to not be reappointed.

In 1937, a newspaper article referred to Richard Lowrie as the "lone Negro social investigator" to hold a position at Eastern State. He attended the American Prison Association's 67th annual meeting as a representative of the penitentiary.

Over the years, people worked both from within and outside of the facility to improve representation. In 1940, a pair of articles appeared in *The Philadelphia Tribune* demanding the appointment of African American guards and trustees. In 1946, *The Philadelphia Tribune* offered its endorsement of Wayne L. Hopkins to the Eastern State Board of Trustees, who, if chosen, would have been the first since Ernest T. Atwell. He was not selected.

In 1956, Eastern State hired Matt Epps, its first African American guard. By the 1960s, the prison employed Black staff across the institution, had several Black chaplains, and at least one Black member of the Parole Board. These changes did not solve most racial challenges at Eastern State but did serve as important steps forward.



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

In Case 4:

"It's later than you think," from *Eastern Echo*, Summer 1960. Rev. Paul Washington briefly served as the Episcopal Chaplain at Eastern State. Soon after, he became chaplain of Philadelphia's Church of the Advocate, actively supporting the Black Panthers and Black Power movements and advocating for civil and human rights.

"From our chaplains," *Eastern Echo*, Summer 1966. Rev. Nathaniel Williams served as a chaplain at Eastern State briefly in the 1960s before moving on to minister at SCI-Graterford in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

"Introducing Dr. Williams, Protestant Chaplain," from *Eastern Echo*, Winter 1960. Dr. Arthur D. Williams served as Eastern State's Protestant Chaplain in the early 1960s, the first person of African descent to hold this role. A 1961 article in *The Philadelphia Tribune*, the city's Black newspaper of record, ran with the headline "Fights Bias in Prison" and credited Dr. Williams with successfully "banishing segregation among the prisoners." Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

White guards and African American prisoners in front of a Christmas tree in Center, c. 1960. Gift of the Biedermann Family.

Photograph of Guard Joseph Ross at a desk, c. 1969. In the year before this photo was taken, four of Eastern State's approximately 54 African American guards filed a complaint with the state's Human Regulations Commission. They alleged that they were "treated like inmates," according to *The Philadelphia Tribune*. Warden Joseph Brierley disputed the claims, arguing, "All supervisors are told to treat each employee with respect" and noting that several key personnel were Black. Gift of Dr. Joseph L. Ross.

Photograph of Joseph Ross fingerprinting a prisoner, c. 1969. Gift of Dr. Joseph L. Ross.

Silver collar pin. This badge belonged to Dr. Joseph L. Ross during his time as one of the first Black guards at Eastern State.

Officer's gold insignia hat pin, date unknown.

Guard's hat. Gift of the McIntyre Family.

Annual Report of the Eastern State Penitentiary for the Year Ending May 31, 1924. Ernest T. Atwell is listed here as a Trustee of Eastern State, the first African American to serve in this role.

Trustee Badge, c. 1945. Ernest T. Atwell may have received a badge like this one to signify his role as a Trustee of the prison.

"New Parole Board Member," from *Eastern Echo*, Fall 1965. William F. Butler joined the Pennsylvania Parole Board in late 1964. According to *The Philadelphia Tribune* Black prisoners and community members had been pressing for Black representation on the board since at least 1953. Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

"Superintendent Joseph R. Brierley," *Eastern Echo*, January 1967. This message from Superintendent (or Warden) Brierley quotes Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in a call for racial unity during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. The day after King's assassination just a year later, the prison held a memorial service that was attended by both prisoners and staff. A caseworker at Eastern State at the time recalled that "it was very effective in calming the jail down."

Sergeant's badge in leather case with pad of paper. Gift of Amy, Rachel, and John—great grandchildren of Milton Sloan.

"Introducing," from *Eastern Echo*, Winter 1964. Staff Beatrice C. Burton and Leroy E. Fred are introduced in this edition of the prisoner-produced magazine. Gift of the William F. Derau Family.

Photograph of x-ray machine in operation, c. 1958. Taken in Eastern State's hospital block, this image shows an unknown Black doctor or technician taking an x-ray of a civilian patient with the assistance of a prisoner. Courtesy of Norman Maisenhelder's daughter.

"National sports figure appointed Athletic director," from *Eastern Echo*, Summer 1966. Andrew Johnson, formerly of the Harlem Globetrotters, Philadelphia Warriors, Chicago Zephyrs, and the Philadelphia Tapers, was appointed Athletic Director of Eastern State.

Photograph of Donald Vaughn, 1995. Donald Vaughn served as a guard at Eastern State in the late 1960s. It served as a launching point for his long career in the corrections field. He rose to become Superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Graterford in the late 1980s and later the Deputy Secretary of Corrections for the Eastern Region of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. *Morning Call* photo by John C. Anderson.

Male staff at Christmas, 1966. Gift of the estate of Officer Thomas C. Glenn graciously donated by his sons Norman R. and Thomas C. Glenn.
Female staff at Christmas, c. 1965. Gift of Carol Tanner.

By the mid-1960s, both the guards and other professional staff at Eastern State included people of African descent. The photos in this case, one of male guards and one of female administrative staff, were taken at Christmastime at the prison.

Cases 5 and 6:

Friends and Foes in Leisure Time

Holiday celebrations and leisure activities at Eastern State allowed incarcerated people to make connections with one another around shared interests. In some cases, these connections were forged across racial boundaries.

During the winter holidays, decorations, parties and worship services all served to lighten the atmosphere within the prison's walls and bring people together. Black and white prisoners, for example, helped to decorate the prison's chapel in 1934, even while housing and work assignments were largely segregated. The program of Christmas performances was often integrated, both across and within bands, choirs, and solo performances.

In fact, music regularly broke down barriers. As far back as the 1870s and 1890s, African American choirs visited Eastern State, to high praise. But African Americans were more than entertainment, they were talented musicians and partners in performances. Between at least the 1920s and 1950s, musical performances featured prisoners of varied backgrounds playing in concert with one another.



Sports – baseball, football, basketball, and boxing – also brought prisoners together, though this was not consistent across time. In the early 1900s, Black prisoners played on almost every team fielded by the prison. But in 1935, the “All-Star Colored Team” competed against the “All-Star White Team” in a baseball game. According to their oral histories, as late as the 1960s, former Warden Joseph Brierley and former prisoner John McCullough disagreed on whether baseball had been a scene of happy integration or one-sided racial domination.

Eastern State's leisure activities were documented through prisoner-produced publications, including the *Eastern Echo* and *The Umpire*. Through their writing as well as their staffing, these publications both reflected and described the challenges, hopes, and opportunities of racial segregation and integration at Eastern State.

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

In Case 5:

Father Gallagher directing prison choir, 1953. Eastern State's Catholic Chaplain is pictured directing the prison's integrated choir for a Christmas concert or rehearsal in 1953. Seen at the back left are two men perhaps of African American, Hispanic and/or Latino ancestry, labeled as "Chico" and "Curly." These identifications may have been made by Andreas Scheerer, the officer who saved the photograph.

Staff and prisoners with Santa, 1953. Gift of the Scheerer Family.

Staff and prisoners with Santa, c. 1960. Gift of the Biedermann Family. These two Christmas photos likely show life before and after the purposeful integration of cellblocks at Eastern State.

Ceramic holly leaf candy dish. Gift given in honor of Howard H. Haines, Captain of the Guards.

Soap carving of Santa with gift sack. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer. These Christmas decorations were made at Eastern State.

Silver Christmas ornament found at Eastern State Penitentiary.

Photograph of Warden Herbert Smith and William Yun, 1939.

William Yun (D-4345) composed and performed an original song, "When I Get Out Beloved," for Eastern State's 1939 Christmas Broadcast for KYW Radio. Sung in Chinese, his performance was very unusual at the

prison, as very few people of Asian descent were imprisoned at Eastern State over the course of its history. An earlier prisoner who also appeared on radio broadcasts, George Lee (B-5958), had been nicknamed "The 'Singing Chinese' of the Eastern Penitentiary." How he felt about this nickname is unknown. After his pardon in 1927, Lee was ordered deported to China.

Christmas Radio Broadcast Program, 1930. Radio station WIP broadcast Eastern State's 1930 Christmas program, featuring performances by prisoners of different backgrounds. David Lewis (B-9159), the leader of the String Band was Black, as was the performer of "I've Got It - But It Don't Do Me No Good," Charles Miller (C-478). The band was likely mixed-race.

"Christmas exercises," from *The Umpire*, 1916.

Hanukkah song sheet, date unknown. As early as the 1840s, rabbis began regularly visiting Jewish prisoners. In 1914, the *Evening Public Ledger* reported on prisoners celebrating Yom Kippur in a service arranged "yearly" by Warden Robert McKenty. A purpose-built synagogue was constructed in 1924 and remained in use until the prison closed in 1971. This song sheet was found in the synagogue during its restoration.

Two photographs of the band performing in the chapel, 1954.

A mixed-race group of incarcerated people poses before or after performing together in Eastern State's 2nd Variety Show. They were directed by Band Director E. Parke Brown, Jr. The Brown Family donated the photographs in his memory.

Orchestra at Eastern State Penitentiary, 1968. Members of Eastern State's orchestra pose in formal dress just a few years before Eastern State's closing.

Silver trophy presented to Hedda van den Beemt, Bandmaster of the Eastern State Penitentiary of Pennsylvania, Christmas 1922. Members of the racially-mixed Eastern State Penitentiary Band awarded their Bandmaster this trophy at their Christmas concert in 1922. Gift of the van den Beemt Family.

Program for Labor Day Band Concert, 1922. While songs 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the 1922 Labor Day concert were composed by white prisoners, song 2 was composed by a Black person, Frank Gelespie (B-7065). Gift of the family of John D. Shearer.

In Case 6:

Sports balls found at Eastern State Penitentiary. Prisoners of all races and ethnicities likely used these balls during their recreational time at Eastern State.

Prisoners engaged in calisthenic exercises near the Industrial Building, 1924. A racially diverse group of people are led in a group workout while others watch and wait their turn. United Newspictures (Getty Images).

“Shed wins from Library,” from *The Umpire*, July 30, 1913. This edition of the prisoner-produced newsletter notes that the library’s baseball team is “all-colored” in their most recent game. This type of callout is unusual and suggests that the racial makeup of the team was generally mixed.

Armistice Day Program, 1933. This booklet outlines both the musical and sports elements of Armistice Day (now called Veterans Day) festivities. Eastern State (here referred to as Cherry Hill) and Graterford prisoners came together to celebrate at Graterford. This included a Mummers parade, band performances, and a football game. Performers and crowd alike were integrated. Gift of John P. Farley, Mary B. Maiden, James J. Farley, Kate Farley, and Bernard C. Farley.

***Grate-Phil News*, July 3, 1934.**

A large crowd of incarcerated men of all races gathered to watch a boxing match in the central photograph in this joint publication of Eastern State and Graterford Prison.

Two photographs of Mummers Parade before football game at Graterford, 1933. Prisoners of unclear races combine elements of minstrelsy, clowning, and/or mummery, during the annual football match between Eastern State and Graterford Prison for Armistice Day in 1933. Several players appear to be in blackface, a type of theatrical makeup that is today considered patronizing and offensive. Acme Newspictures (Getty Images).

“Staff members of the *Eastern Echo*,” from *Eastern Echo*, Spring 1957.

Journalists of color were not well represented among the staff of the *Eastern Echo* a prisoner-written and published magazine at Eastern State. Selvia R. Chandler reported on music under the heading “Themes and Variations.” Gift in memory of Retiree Bernard M. Sekula, Correction Officer I.

Bertillion (Intake) card for Eva Cole (C-250 formerly B-8312). Gift of the Scheerer Family. “Ode to Mr. Mouse,” from *The Umpire*, 1917.

Eva Cole was serving two to three years when she wrote the poem “Ode to Mr. Mouse” for the prisoner newsletter *The Umpire* in 1917. She is one of the only two women known to have been published in *The Umpire*, making her inclusion as a Black woman even more noteworthy.

Inlaid wooden chessboard, c. 1933. Chess Pieces, c. 1960. Gifts of Dr. and Mrs. Fulmer.

Warden Joseph Brierley recalled that chess united people of different races at Eastern State in the 1960s. He encouraged its play, and prisoners formed a chess club that drew teams from across the city and state for matches. The prison’s team won first place in the 1964 Philadelphia Industrial League Championship. Brierley remembered that African American prisoner Norman Pearson was “so skillful that he could play 20 boards blindfolded simultaneous games.”

**EASTERN STATE
PENITENTIARY**
America’s Most Historic Prison

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