

An Analysis of Massachusetts Forestry Camp Escapees

Massachusetts Department of Correction

**John J. Fitzpatrick,
Commissioner**

Researchers:

**M. Hyler,
Research Analyst**

**J. Labbe,
Public Service Intern Program**

December, 1970

**Acting Social Science Research Specialist
Carroll T. Miller**

Publication approved by Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent, No. 5461

INTRODUCTION

"Despite the expense involved in apprehending an escaped prisoner, the danger to himself and others coupled with his flight, the unfavorable publicity associated with the event, and the potential threat to penal programs which can result, there is a curious scarcity of research on the subject"¹

In a minimum security penal situation, escapes can be particularly harmful. An increase in the escape rate may force a crackdown in security measures, which can subsequently undermine the treatment aspects of a prison camp. If the camp man cannot behave responsibly under minimum security conditions, correctional officials might doubt that he will succeed in discharging his responsibilities in the community.

The three forestry camps are located in rural areas in Massachusetts. Plymouth² was opened in 1952, Monroe in 1955, and Warwick in 1964. Approximately 2300 men have passed through the camp system from 1952 to August 1970. No walls surround the sites. There are no weapons on camp grounds, and there are only three officers on duty at each camp at any time. It is interesting to note that only 70 men walked away from the camps during those seventeen and a half years -- just 3% of the total population. The purpose of this study is to determine what types of men are more likely, or less likely, to escape. This information may assist administrators in deciding which men ~~men~~ would be most suitable for camp transfer. It may also alert the camp staff to which men need closer supervision.

Another issue of equal importance is why 97% of forestry men do not escape, with no physical barriers to doing so. One answer, of course, lies in the near certainty of apprehension and the subsequent additional time served under maximum security conditions. A returned escapee loses all good time credits on the present

1. Loving, Stockwell, Dobbins, "Characteristics of Escapees," The Sociology of Punishment and Correction, Johnston, N., ed. John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1962. p. 144ff.

2. cf. "psychological wall" concept in description of Massachusetts forestry camps, Edward Dunn, Asst. Dir. of Camps, 1966.

sentence, and serves an additional term after trial for escape. Other reasons may lie in the nature of the camps themselves and in the counselor-supervisor position of the camp officer. There is no custody vs. treatment staff conflict because there are no separate staffs. There has also been less inmate-staff conflict, in part because they work together to complete various forestry work assignments. This report suggests a third factor: that proper selection of men for transfer to forestry reduces the likelihood of escapes.

Some specific details of escapes, i.e. when, how, etc. were summarized in a short paper distributed earlier and included as Appendix III of this report.

METHOD

Seventy men escaped from the forestry camps from 1952 until August, 1970. Data was unavailable on one man. These 69 escapees were compared to the 120 forestry men released in 1966. The differences between the escapees and the releasees will serve to spotlight the types of men more likely, or less likely, to escape. These two groups of men were compared on factors concerning background and admission characteristics, criminal history, present offense, and present incarceration. The differences this study will be concerned about are only those that are large enough for us to be confident that they are real (i.e. "statistically significant") and not just due to chance. Information was collected from the central office files.

There is one major problem of method. Some of the differences between the escapees from 1952 to 1970 and the releasees during 1966 may be due not to the real differences between the two groups, but rather to differences between camp men released during 1966 and those released in other years. As an example, escapees (1952-70) are less likely to be Black than are releasees (1966). This reflects not only that Blacks are less likely to escape but also that in 1966

there were more Blacks in the camps than in the other years. The findings below will be qualified ~~were~~¹ appropriate to take this possible problem into account. Data from another study can be used in this adjustment. A previous study on releasees from forestry camps covered men released from Plymouth and Monroe from 1959 to 1962.² This data describes the camp population midway between the time limits of the present study. Therefore, in those cases where appropriate, the earlier releasees data will be used to furnish further comparisons on releasees vs. escapees.

FINDINGS

Background Factors

Age at Incarceration Escapees were younger at the present incarceration than were the releasees. Significantly more escapees than releasees were 23 or less at incarceration. The average age for escapees was 26.2 years, for releasees 28.4 years.

Race Whites were more likely to escape than were Blacks.³ Blacks made up 5.8% of the escapees and 16.6% of the 1966 releasees. However, the real difference between Blacks and Whites is somewhat less, as in the 1959-62 group Blacks made up a much smaller proportion of camp men -- 8.4%.

A partial explanation of the difference in escape rate between Blacks and Whites may be that Blacks in the camps seem to be a select group, that is, proportionately fewer Blacks are transferred to the camps than are present in the institutional population. Of the 1966 releasees from Massachusetts correctional institutions, 16% of Forestry men and 26% of Walpole and Norfolk men were Black.

2. Carney, F.J. & Bottome, E. "An Analysis of the Recidivism of Inmates Released from the Forestry Camps," Mass. Dept. of Correction, mimeo, 1967.

3. Other studies have found similar differences. A 1956 Federal Bureau of Prisons study found that under 1% of 1953 and 2% of 1954 escapees were Black, although Blacks comprised 27% of the Federal prison population. Statistics from the state of Virginia showed that Blacks made up 54% of the prison population but only 28% of the escapees. Two Massachusetts Department of Correction studies found that Blacks were less likely to be transferred to the Departmental Segregation Unit and less likely to be returned from Norfolk to Walpole as custody problems.

Education Escapees completed significantly fewer years of education than did releasees. Seventeen per cent of the escapees and 35% of the 1966 releasees (and 35% of the 1959-62 releasees) completed ten or more years of schooling.

Stability of Employment Escapees had significantly less stable work histories than did releasees. Fifteen per cent of the escapees and 30% of the releasees had regular work histories, i.e., continuous employment throughout their working life. Twelve per cent of the escapees and 25% of the releasees had held one job for three years or more.

Military Service. For those who had served some time in the military, escapees were more likely to have been discharged dishonorably than were releasees. However, the two groups did not significantly differ in the likelihood of having served.

Marital Status There was no significant difference between escapees and releasees in their marital status at commitment. However, there is some suggestion that marital problems are related to escape. Reports submitted by camp officials indicate a man's reason for absconding if he volunteers this information. Of the 26 men for whom some reason was mentioned, nine-- over one-third-- suffered some marital problem during their stay at the camp. Usually, this consisted of divorce action desired by wife. Thus, while the proportion of single, married, widowed or divorced men do not differ appreciably between the two sample, marital problems may often be an important factor in escape. This factor may warrant consideration in the issue of social work assistance at the camps.

Other Background Factors Escapees and releasees did not differ significantly on other background characteristics. These included birthplace, last civilian address, relation of emergency addressee, marital status, and the type of job most frequently held prior to commitment. As was noted above, the length of time a man spent at work was related to escape, but the type of work held did not have the same importance in the issue of escapees vs. releasees.

Escapees, then, are more likely to be men who have failed to successfully

adjust to various areas of life on the outside -- work, the military, school, marriage. They are more likely to have unstable employment histories, other than honorable military discharges, less education, and perhaps more marital problems. Failing to adjust to life on the outside, they also fail to adjust to minimum security conditions.⁴ In addition, escapees are more likely to be younger (23 or less) at incarceration, and to be white.

Criminal History

Escapees are characterized by a consistently more serious criminal history. On all but 4 of 15 variables concerning criminal background, escapees have deeper criminal involvement.

Early Criminal Behavior Criminal history for escapees began at an earlier age than for releasees. Forty-two per cent were 14 or younger at first arrest while only 24% of non-escapees were that age. A significantly greater proportion of escapees had served some juvenile time (54% vs. 32% for the releasees). Escapees were incarcerated as juveniles for longer periods of time -- 40% had served one year or more vs 18% of the releasees. Thus, escapees experienced an earlier onset of criminal activity, were more likely to be committed as juveniles, and spent greater amounts of time institutionalized as juvenile offenders.

Prior Arrests Together with the earlier onset of criminal activity, escapees had a higher total of prior arrests. Nearly a fifth (19.2%) of the releasees had two or fewer prior arrests, while the corresponding figure for escapees is less than 3%. Escapees had both more person arrests and more property arrests than releasees. There was no difference between the samples in narcotic, sex

4. Similar findings were reported in a study of the types of men transferred from Norfolk to Walpole as disciplinary problems. That is, these same factors are related to poor adjustment to the less-secure situation -- medium and minimum security. See Callahan, E., "Factors Related to Inmate Adjustment in a Medium Security Correctional Institution: A Study at M.C.I., Norfolk", Mass. Dept. of Correction, mimeo, February, 1970.

or drunkenness offense histories. Probation history was similar for both groups, although more escapees have been on juvenile probation: 25% vs. 15% of the releasees.

Prior Incarcerations The escapees' greater involvement with the law extends into longer and more frequent incarcerations. The more serious juvenile record of escapees continues into their adult criminal history. Escapees more often had House of Correction commitments, and they spent more time incarcerated. Thirteen per cent spent two years or more in houses of correction, while this was true of 6% of the releasees. Escapees were also more likely to have served a prior state or federal commitment and to have served a longer total period of time. Over twice as many escapees as releasees have spent thirty months or more in a state or federal prison: 33% vs. 14%. All the previous incarceration time cited above, when combined into an overall total figure of time served for escapees, is the single most important difference between the two samples. That is, the biggest difference between escapees and releasees was that escapees (prior to the present incarceration) had spent more time in prisons, houses of correction, and juvenile institutions.

5. On this very significant variable of prior state or federal incarcerations, it is interesting to note that a previous study on the adjustment of camp men showed approximately equal results. This study found that camp men who successfully adjusted and were not returned to the institution were significantly less likely to have served a prior prison term. The percentages are highly similar:

Prior State or Fed. Incar.	UnSuccessful Adjustment	Successful Adjustment	Escapees	Releasees
None	47.8%	61.8%	46.4%	65.8%
Some	52.2%	38.2%	53.6%	34.2%

(cf. Tosti, A. "A Comparison of those who adjusted and those who did not adjust at the Forestry Camps," mimeo, Mass. Dept. of Correction, May, 1967.)

Present Incarceration and Institutional Behavior

Escapees appear to be generally more serious offenders on factors relating to the present incarceration. They are more likely than releasees to be committed to Walpole or Charlestown (than Concord), on new commitments rather than on parole violations, with longer sentences, for armed robbery or breaking or entering (rather than for other offenses). Escapees had more serious disciplinary records before camp transfer and were more likely to agree with the official version of the present offense.

Institution Committed to Escapees were more likely to be committed to Walpole or Charlestown than to Concord or a House of Correction. Eighty-four per cent of the escape group and 68% of the released group were committed to State Prison. This contrasts with the finding that older men are less likely to escape. Place of commitment is related to the seriousness of the prior record apart from the present offense.

Minimum Sentence The same seems to hold true for men with longer minimum sentences. Men in the escape group were committed with a longer minimum sentence than were the releasees. More escapees (36%) had minimum sentences of 6 years or more than did the releasees (17%). Spending a longer time incarcerated may help to formalize escape desires.⁶

Parole Violation Escapees were also more often incarcerated on new commitments rather than returned as parole violators. Seventy-eight per cent of releasees and 65% of escapees were incarcerated as parole violators. Escapees, therefore, would have a longer period of time to serve on the present incarceration.

6. The real difference in the figures may be somewhat overestimated as the trend in Massachusetts has been a reduction in length of time incarcerated for all offenses over the years. The comparison of the escape group from 1952 to 1970 with a sample released in 1966 shows that men are spending less time incarcerated on the present offense. However, it is doubtful that as great a difference as 19% would be accounted for by this trend only. Escapees have a longer minimum to serve regardless of actual time incarcerated. cf. Berman, L. "Trends in Length of Time Incarcerated in Massachusetts Correctional Institutions: 1945-1966," Mass. Dept. of Correction, mimeo, February 1968.

Present Offense Escapees did not differ from releasees in the general type of present offense, i.e person, property or other. (Sex offenders are not admitted to the camps.) However, escapees were significantly more likely to have had armed robbery or breaking and entering as their present offense. Thirty-two per cent of the escape sample and 17% of the release sample were committed for b&e; 38% of the escapees and 30% of the releasees were committed for armed robbery; 30% of the escapees and 53% of the releasees were committed for other offenses.

Inmate Version of Present Offense Escapees are more likely to agree with the official version of their present offense. A significantly higher proportion of escapees (85%) than releasees (70%) agreed without qualification. The theory that escapees would most probably be those who felt unjustly imprisoned is not borne out.

This finding holds in particular for those men with more serious criminal history among the escapees, as shown below:

Overall Total Prior Time Incarcerated and Inmate Version of Present Offense

	Short Total Time (0-9mos.)		Long Total Time (10mos. or more)	
	Es.	Rel.	Es.	Rel.
agrees(no qualifications)	13(92.8)	40(97.6)	44(83.0)	42(55.3)
disagrees	1(7.2)	1(3.9)	9(17.0)	34(44.7)
Total	14	41	53	76
			2	
			$\chi^2 = 10.82, df=1, p<.001$	

Age at First Arrest and Inmate Version of Present Offense

	Younger (14 or less)		Older (15 or more)	
	Es.	Rel.	Es.	Rel.
agrees (no qualifications)	26(89.7)	21(43.7)	31(81.5)	61(88.4)
disagrees	3(10.3)	27(56.3)	7(18.5)	8(11.6)
Total	29	48	38	69
	2			
	$\chi^2 = 16.02, df=1, p<.001$			

When a man has a longer criminal history -- ten or more months previously incarcerated, or fourteen or younger at first arrest -- his tendency to agree with the official version of the present offense becomes much greater for escapees and less likely for releasees. There is no appreciable difference between the groups for those with short total time, or who were older at first arrest. One possible explanation for this finding may be that those with long involvement with criminal authorities (police, courts, prisons) --escapees-- may be used to the fact that agreement is what the authorities want to hear, and that the penalty is easier without resistance.

Institutional Behavior Escapees were far more likely to have had some disciplinary action during the present incarceration: 35% of the escapees had at least one while this was true of only 12% of the releasees. Consequently, number of good conduct days withheld differed significantly between the groups. Sixteen per cent of the escapees and only 5% of the releasees had had some good conduct days withheld. This may be related to their longer minimum sentences, to the longer period of time they have in which to accumulate disciplinary reports. It may also be that their institutional adjustment was adversely affected by the lengthy incarcerations they faced, following their longer periods of prior incarcerations.

Other Present Incarceration Factors There was no significant difference between the escape and released samples in type of release (parole or discharge). More escapees had one or more codefendants involved in the present offense. This finding is just short of statistical significance.

The following list summarizes the significant differences between the samples in order of their importance:

Escapees were more likely to have:

- been incarcerated for a longer period of time on prior commitments (6 mos. or more)
- had more prior arrests (3 or more)
- had some disciplinary reports (before camp transfer, on this commitment)
- a longer minimum sentence on the present offense (6 years or more)
- some juvenile incarcerations
- some prior property arrests
- some house of correction incarcerations
- some prior state or federal incarcerations
- fewer years of education (9 or less)
- been younger at first arrest (14 or less)
- had some good conduct days withheld before camp transfer
- been discharged other than honorably from the military
- a less stable job history (escapees were less likely to have held a job for at least three years)
- been white
- been younger at the present incarceration (23 or less)
- more prior person arrests (2 or more)
- been incarcerated for a new offense (rather than as a parole violator)

SUMMARY OF FORESTRY ESCAPEE STUDY

The study compared all men who escaped from the forestry camps between 1952 and August 1970 with all men released from the camps during 1966 (information collected for the base expectancy studies). The purpose was to discover what types of men were more likely, or less likely, to escape from the forestry camps.

The biggest set of differences between escapees and releasees was that the escapees had consistently more serious criminal histories. They were younger at their first arrest and had more juvenile incarcerations. They had more House of Correction incarcerations and more state and federal incarcerations. They had more total prior arrests and more prior person and property arrest. The biggest difference between the two samples was that escapees were more likely to have been previously incarcerated for a total of six months or more.

Escapees are more likely to be men who have failed to successfully adjust to various areas of life on the outside----work the military, school, marriage. Put differently, they have consistently rebelled against conventional norms. They are more likely to have unstable employment histories, other than honorable military discharges, less education, and perhaps more marital problems. In addition, escapees are more likely than releasees to be white and to be younger (23 or less) at incarceration.

Escapees were generally more serious crime offenders (or had been defined as such by the courts, perhaps because of their more serious criminal histories). They were more likely than releasees to be committed to Walpole or Charlestown, on new commitments (rather than on parole violations), with longer sentences, for armed robbery or breaking and entering. Escapees were more likely to have had disciplinary records before camp transfer and were more likely to agree with the official version of the present offense.

APPENDIX I

A COMPARISON OF FORESTRY ESCAPEES WITH 1966 FORESTRY RELEASEES

Variable	Escapees		Releasees	
	N	%	N	%
TOTAL	69	(100.0)	120	(100.0)
A. Background Factors				
1. Birthplace				
Boston	15	(21.9)	31	(25.8)
Other	54	(78.1)	89	(74.2)
		$\chi^2 = 0.40, df = 1, p < .70$		
2. Age at Incarceration				
23 or below	32	(46.4)	37	(30.8)
24 and above	37	(53.6)	83	(69.2)
		$\chi^2 = 4.57, df = 1, p < .05$		
3. Race				
White	65	(94.2)	100	(83.4)
Other	4	(5.8)	20	(16.6)
		$\chi^2 = 4.67, df = 1, p < .05$		
4. Marital Status				
Single	27	(39.3)	48	(40.0)
Married	25	(36.2)	48	(40.0)
Div., Sep., Wid., Common Law	17	(24.5)	24	(20.0)
		$\chi^2 = 0.68, df = 2, p < .80$		
5. Military Service Data				
Never Served	33	(47.8)	62	(51.7)
Served	36	(52.2)	58	(48.3)
		$\chi^2 = 0.26, df = 1, p < .70$		
6. Type of Military Discharge				
Honorable	12	(33.3)	34	(58.6)
Dishonorable	24	(66.7)	24	(41.4)
		$\chi^2 = 5.68, df = 1, p < .05$		

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Escapees</u>		<u>Releasees</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
7. <u>Last Civilian Address</u>				
Boston	18	(2.6)	39	(32.6)
Other	51	(73.9)	81	(67.4)
$\chi^2 = 0.86, df = 1, p < .50$				
8. <u>Relation of Emergency Addressee</u>				
Parent	36	(52.2)	56	(46.7)
Other	33	(47.8)	64	(53.3)
$\chi^2 = 1.26, df = 1, p < .30$				
9. <u>Last Grade Completed</u>				
9th or less (incl. sp. class)	57	(82.6)	78	(65.0)
10th and above	12	(17.4)	42	(35.0)
$\chi^2 = 6.66, df = 1, p < .01$				
10. <u>Occupational Status</u>				
Unskilled	48	(69.6)	70	(58.3)
Other	21	(30.4)	50	(41.7)
$\chi^2 = 2.35, df = 1, p < .20$				
11. <u>Job Stability</u>				
Regular	10	(14.5)	36	(30.0)
Other	59	(85.5)	84	(70.0)
$\chi^2 = 5.72, df = 1, p < .02$				
12. <u>Longest Period on One Job</u>				
up to 3 years	61	(88.4)	90	(75.0)
3 yrs. or more	8	(11.6)	30	(25.0)
$\chi^2 = 4.90, df = 1, p < .05$				

B. Criminal History

1. <u>Age at First Arrest</u>				
14 or below	29	(42.0)	29	(24.2)
15 and above	40	(58.0)	91	(75.8)
$\chi^2 = 6.57, df = 1, p < .02$				

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Escapees</u>		<u>Releasees</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
2. <u>Number of Prior Arrests</u>				
0-2	2	(2.9)	23	(19.2)
3 or more	67	(97.1)	97	(80.8)
$\chi^2 = 10.10, df = 1, p < .01$				
3. <u>Number of Prior Arrests for Offenses vs. Persons</u>				
0-1	47	(68.1)	98	(81.7)
2 or more	22	(31.9)	22	(18.3)
$\chi^2 = 4.50, df = 1, p < .05$				
4. <u>Number of Prior Arrests vs. Sex</u>				
none	59	(85.5)	112	(93.3)
some	10	(14.5)	8	(6.7)
$\chi^2 = 3.11, df = 1, p < .10$				
5. <u>Number of Prior Arrests for Offense vs. Property</u>				
None	5	(7.2)	28	(23.3)
Some	64	(92.8)	92	(76.7)
$\chi^2 = 7.87, df = 1, p < .01$				
6. <u>Number of Prior Arrests for Narcotic Offenses</u>				
None	68	(98.6)	119	(99.2)
Some	1	(1.4)	1	(0.8)
$\chi^2 = 0.00, df = 1, p = 1.00$				
7. <u>Number of Prior Arrests for Drunkenness</u>				
None	38	(55.1)	52	(43.3)
Some	31	(44.9)	68	(56.7)
$\chi^2 = 2.42, df = 1, p < .20$				
8. <u>Number of Prior State or Federal Incarcerations</u>				
None	32	(46.4)	79	(65.8)
Some	37	(53.6)	41	(34.2)
$\chi^2 = 6.84, df = 1, p < .01$				
9. <u>Number of Prior H. of C. Incarcerations</u>				
None	18	(26.1)	55	(45.8)
Some	51	(73.9)	65	(54.2)
$\chi^2 = 7.20, df = 1, p < .01$				

Variable	Escapes		Releasees	
	N	%	N	%
10. <u>Number of Prior Juvenile Incarcerations</u>				
none	32	(46.4)	82	(68.3)
some	37	(53.6)	38	(31.7)
$\chi^2 = 8.82, df = 1, p < .01.$				
11. <u>Overall Prior Time Incarcerated</u>				
0-5 months	8	(11.6)	46	(38.3)
6 months or more	61	(88.4)	74	(61.7)
$\chi^2 = 15.4, df = 1, p < .001$				
12. <u>Ever on Probation?</u>				
No	23	(33.3)	48	(40.0)
Yes	46	(66.7)	72	(60.0)
$\chi^2 = .830, df = 1, p < .50$				

C. Present Incarceration

1. <u>Institution Committed to</u>				
Walpole or Charlestown	58	(84.1)	82	(68.3)
Concord or H. of C.	11	(15.9)	38	(31.7)
$\chi^2 = 5.64, df = 1, p < .02$				
2. <u>Present Offense</u>				
a) <u>Person Offense</u>	41	(59.4)	71	(59.2)
Property and other	28	(40.6)	49	(40.8)
$\chi^2 = 0.00, df = 1, p < .98$				
b) <u>Breaking and Entering</u>	22	(31.9)	21	(17.5)
Armed Robbery	26	(37.7)	36	(30.0)
Other Offense	21	(30.4)	63	(52.5)
$\chi^2 = 8.64, df = 1, p < .01$				
3. <u>Inmate's Version of Present Offense, as compared to Official Version^a</u>				
Agrees	57	(85.1)	82	(70.1)
Agrees with qualifications & disagrees	10	(14.9)	35	(29.9)
$\chi^2 = 5.18, df = 1, p < .05$				
a) This information was unavailable for two escapees				
b) Twenty-nine escapees had not yet been released				

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Escapees</u>		<u>Releasees</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
4. <u>Present Incarceration Result of Parole Violation</u>				
Not a parole violation	24	(34.8)	26	(21.6)
parole violation	45	(65.2)	94	(78.4)
		$\chi^2 = 3.87, df = 1, p < .05$		
5. <u>Type of Release</u> ^b				
Parole	32	(80.0)	105	(87.5)
Discharge	8	(20.0)	15	(12.5)
		$\chi^2 = 1.37, df = 1, p < .30$		
6. <u>Number of Codefendants</u>				
none	17	(24.6)	46	(38.3)
some	52	(75.4)	74	(61.7)
		$\chi^2 = 3.70, df = 1, p < .10$		
7. <u>Sentence of Present Offense</u>				
5 years or less	44	(63.8)	100	(83.3)
6 years or more	25	(36.2)	20	(16.7)
		$\chi^2 = 9.25, df = 1, p < .01$		

D. Institutional Behavior

1. <u>Disciplinary Reports</u>				
none	45	(65.2)	106	(88.3)
some	24	(34.8)	14	(11.7)
		$\chi^2 = 14.57, df = 1, p < .001$		
2. <u>Good Conduct Days Withheld</u>				
none	58	(84.1)	114	(95.0)
some	11	(15.9)	6	(5.0)
		$\chi^2 = 6.41, df = 1, p < .02$		

APPENDIX II

The following information was distributed earlier as "Details Concerning Forestry Camp Escapes":

SEASONAL VARIATION The frequency of escapes appears to be, in part, a function of the season. Winter (December, January, February) shows the lowest incidence of escape with 7. Spring (March, April, May) is second with 17. Summer (June, July, August) is third with 21. Fall (September, October, November) with a total of 25 escapes appears to be the most favored time for runaways. Cold weather itself deters escapees. The monthly rate varies between 5 and 8 for the spring, summer and fall seasons but drops to about 2 per month for December, January and February.

YEARLY VARIATION The three camps are similar in the average number of escapes per year. Monroe averaged 1.5, Plymouth 1.8 and Warwick 2.3 escapes per year. (Escapes per year since the opening of the camp.) The combined yearly rate is 5.6 escapes. This is a total of 23 at Monroe, 33 at Plymouth and 14 at Warwick. 1968 and 1969 were particularly high with 10 and 8 escapes respectively. In the first seven months of 1970 there were 4 escapes.

HOOR AND DAY Over half of all escapes have taken place on the weekend -- Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Saturday alone accounts for one-quarter of all escapes. Monday has the fewest number. Half the escapes have taken place between 8 and 12 p.m., the evening leisure time. Darkness itself, however, does not account for frequency of late night escapes. Only 8.7% absconded between midnight and 9 a.m..

METHOD The vast majority of all escapes are walkaways: 64% from the camps, 3% from an outside work detail, and 1% during transportation to Walpole. Most of the men who used a vehicle in escaping took a car or truck on camp grounds. These men made up 23% of the sample. Another 4% stole a vehicle off camp grounds. One man had an accomplice on the outside drive him away, and another used force to have an employee drive him away.

Apart from these isolated incidents, a camp escape does not threaten the lives or security of camp men or personnel. A camp escape is apparently carried out with a minimum of planning and a maximum of footwork, and does not disturb the camp routine.

WITH WHOM The low escape rate may indicate some pressure from the inmate group not to run away. If a man is considering escape, he is likely to go with at least one other man. Over half of the escapees (54%) absconded with one other man. An additional 13% went in groups of three or more.

WHY: MARITAL PROBLEMS Reports submitted by camp officials after an inmate escapes indicate his reason for escape if he volunteered the information. In most of the files, no reason was given. The most frequent reason mentioned, however, was anxiety over marriage. Of the 26 men for whom some reason was mentioned, nine, or over one-third, were suffering marital difficulties. This finding is particularly interesting in light of an earlier escape study at M.C.I., Norfolk. Nelson Cochrane found marital strife to be a prime

factor characterizing the escapees. "Not one inmate who was on congenial terms with his wife escaped."** It is not apparent that the marital factor is quite as influential in forestry escapes. However, 7 of the 69 escapees had had divorce actions during their incarceration prior to their escape: either subject or wife desired divorce, or wife had divorced subject while he was serving time.

WHY: PRIOR ESCAPE HISTORY There is some evidence that running away from a minimum security situation is a repetition of a past behavior pattern of truancy, and runaways from juvenile institutions and AWOL while in the military. Over half (54%) of the sample were reported as truants and most of these reports included a juvenile commitment for truancy. Of the 37 escapees who had served juvenile time, 21 (57%) ran away at least once. Of the 39 escapees with a record of military service, 25 (64%) had been absent without leave. No comparison figures are available on the truancy, juvenile runaway or AWOL records of other camp men. However, it would seem that the truancy, AWOL and runaway rates are consistently high. This may indicate that some previous runaway history is common for the escapees.

Although many escapees have prior runaway records, few have made prior escape attempts from a House of Correction or other more secure prison situation. Of the sixty men who served prior adult time, four escaped from a House of Correction, two made unsuccessful escape attempts at a state or federal prison, one man walked away from a state farm, and another left a halfway house. Thus, for the 60 men who served any prior prison term, there were only 8 incidences of escape or attempted escape. The runaway history of the men as described above does not appear to carry over to any great extent in the more secure prisons and jails.

WHY: TIME AT CAMP Men are more likely to escape in their first few months at the camps, although few of the men escape immediately after transfer. The average time an escapee spent at the camp 76 days; only 2 (3%) ran in less than one week. Over half (52%) escaped between 15 and 89 days (two weeks to three months). The crucial adjustment period for a man appears to be during the second month at the camp. The highest incidence of escapes (26%) occurred at this time.

Almost 85% of the men had at least six months to serve until parole eligibility or minimum discharge date. The average time was 16 months. It may be that the long period under minimum security is a contributing factor to escape.

WHILE AT LARGE Thirty-seven of the escapees were involved in new crimes during the time at large. The great majority of these were non-violent property offenses: use without authority and car theft 48%, breaking and entering or other property offenses 17%. Person offenses amounted to 35% of all new offenses. Twenty of the thirty-seven escapees accused of new crimes did not receive any additional sentence for the crime. Seventeen men received a

**Cochrane, Nelson: "Escapes and Their Control", Prison World, May-June 1948. Quotation from page 29.

new disposition on that offense ranging from a short concurrent sentence to 15-20 years from and after.

At this time, the seventy escapees consist of 37 men with new offenses committed during the period at large, 29 with no new offense while at large, 3 not yet apprehended, and one man who died before he could be returned to Massachusetts authorities.

WHERE APPREHENDED Previously we noted that the escapes from camp are, for the most part, walkaways and are therefore not characterized by violence. Many men are apprehended soon after the escape is discovered (54% within 48 hours) or are arrested by the local police near the prison camp (30% within 25 miles).

DISPOSITION OF ESCAPE The legal disposition of the escape itself as a criminal offense gave over half the men (55%) a new from and after commitment. Another 3% received forthwith commitments and 22% received concurrent sentences. Five men (7%) are still awaiting trial. The most frequent penalty for the escape was 6 months to one year from and after. This group made up 44% of the total. Ten percent of the escapees are still at large or their cases were dismissed, filed, or put on probation.

Upon their return to prison after apprehension, twelve of the escapees spent time in the Departmental Segregation Unit. No one in the escape group had ever before been in segregation on that commitment. For 1967 and the years preceding, 13% of escapees spent time on return in DSU. For 1968 and years following, 27% spent time on return in DSU. Three of the four men who escaped in 1970 thus far have been sent to DSU upon their return. Although the percentage difference is not a significant one, this trend may point to some policy in current treatment of escapees from a minimum security institution.

Perhaps the most important point to make, however, in any discussion of camp escapes is not that escapes occur but that they do not occur much more frequently. The next research question is to ascertain which kinds of men are most likely (or least likely) to escape.

Printed by:

Central Reproduction Services
Executive Office for Administration & Finance