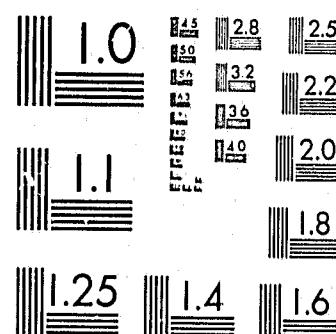


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PATTERNS OF CHANGE OVER TIME IN THE
ILLINOIS ADULT PRISON POPULATION:

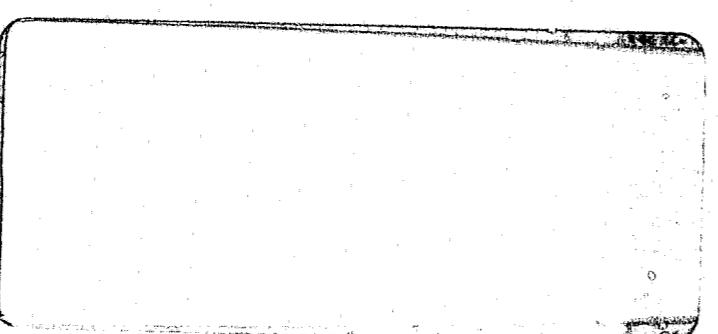
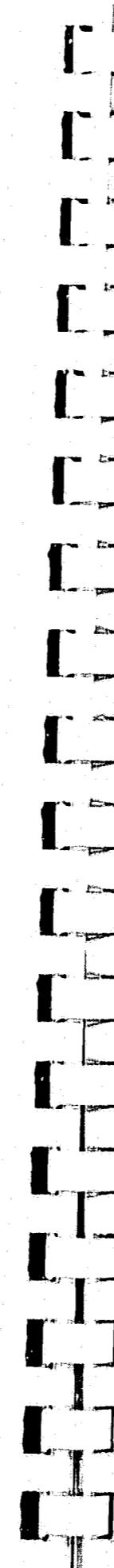
1941 to 1983

July 1983

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PATTERNS OF CHANGE OVER TIME IN THE
ILLINOIS ADULT PRISON POPULATION:
1941 to 1983

July 1983

by Louise S. Miller
Information Resource Center

ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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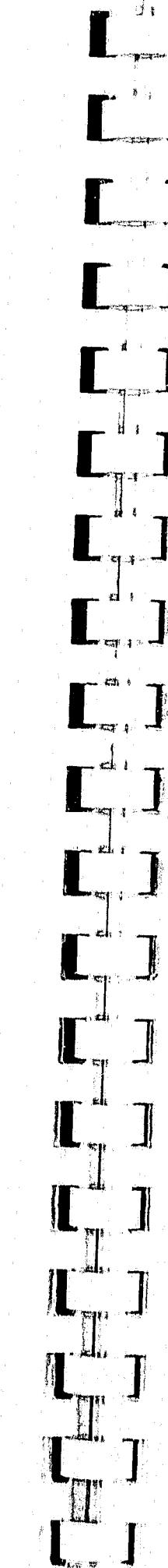
ACQUISITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines patterns of change over time in the Illinois adult prison population between June 1941 and April 1983. Using an Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) historical data set, more than 20 components of prison population are described, including male and female populations, felony and misdemeanor populations, several types of admissions and releases, and the parole/community supervision caseload.

The major findings of this report are summarized as follows:

- The Illinois adult prison population was as high in 1941 as it was in 1981, although there were only seven adult institutions in 1941 versus 13 in 1981.
- The vast majority (95 percent) of the Illinois adult prison population is made up of male felons. The next largest group is the total female population. The smallest group is the male misdemeanants.
- The increase in the total adult prison population since 1974 is attributable to both new admissions from court and readmissions of parole/supervision violators. This is true for both males and females.
- Although crime in Illinois generally increased in the early 1970s, the IDOC adult population declined through 1974, when it reached its lowest levels of the entire period examined. However, between 1975 and 1983, the adult prison population more than doubled.
- Through the use of "early" or "forced" release, the adult prison population has remained fairly steady at about 13,200 since 1982.



INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the pattern of change between 1941 and 1983 in the Illinois adult prison and supervision populations.¹ It includes a description of the total population housed in Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) adult institutions, as well as patterns of male felon, male misdemeanant and female end-of-month populations; male, female and total admissions and releases; and total supervision population. By analyzing trends over time in these components of the total population series, we can obtain an understanding of the dynamics behind the current prison population levels.

The total number of prison inmates is ultimately a function of two factors: the number of people coming in (admissions), and the number of people leaving (releases). There are several types of admissions: felony and misdemeanor; male and female; court commitments and supervision violation readmissions; and so on. In addition, there are several types of releases: parole and mandatory supervised release; male and female; and so on. By describing the general pattern of change over time in each component of inmate population, we can explain what went into the pattern of change over time in the whole.

This report addresses the following questions:

- How does the current prison population compare to the population 40 years earlier, and what happened in the years between?
- Can the pattern over time of the total prison population be attributed to the pattern of certain types of admissions or releases?
- Can the impact of statutory, court-ordered, and administrative policy changes be seen in the overall pattern description?

The goal here is description, not explanation. This report does not address basic societal causes (such as poverty, unemployment, or population age structure) of increases and decreases in the prison population. Nor does it examine rates or levels of reported crime. Instead, it simply describes the prison population increases and decreases. Such a description can provide a foundation for an explanation. If it is known that change in one component of inmate population accounts for change in the whole,

¹The report does not include any "Community Center" (work release) data or analyses. Although people residing in the Illinois Community Centers are under Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) jurisdiction, due to data limitations they cannot be included here.

then an explanatory analysis can focus on that particular component.²

Similarly, if the goal is to forecast the future, first the past must be described. Explaining the pattern of change over time in the components that make up the prison population, and clearly defining those components in relation to each other, will provide a solid foundation for prison population projections.

As a tool in describing the general pattern of each series, the pattern description method uses line segment fits to answer simple questions about the pattern of change in a variable over time. Line segment fits are regression lines with connected segments, superimposed on a graph of raw data. A line segment fit will tell you whether the variable generally increased, decreased, or stayed the same during the period in question; whether there was a change in the pattern (for example, from an increase to a decrease) and if there was a change, roughly when it occurred. For more information about pattern description, see Block and Miller (1982).

Because the total prison population is a function of the number of admissions and releases, this report is divided into three main sections: 1) patterns over time of the total population, 2) patterns over time of admissions, and 3) patterns over time of releases. Included also is a discussion of an additional data series: "End-of-Month Supervision Population" (those people who have been released from prison, but who are still under IDOC supervision).

Data Quality and Definitions

The first task in the description of the prison population was to establish an accurate set of data definitions. Pattern description provides a mechanism for doing this. The goal of pattern description is not only to describe the general pattern of change over time, but also to describe observations that deviate from that pattern. Possible errors, such as a discontinuity caused by changing data collection practices or an important outlier, may be overlooked when only a list of numbers is examined, but become clearly apparent in a pattern description graph.

²In some cases, the description provides an explanation. For example, when outliers or questionable observations appeared in the data, explanations were sought to determine whether the observation was in error, or just unusually high or low. If it was found to be in error, it was corrected; if it was found to be correct, and the reason for the extreme was known, it was noted (explained).

The time series description began with a historical data set that had been compiled several years ago by former IDOC staff. Initial pattern descriptions revealed a number of pattern deviations and inconsistencies that did not seem to agree with the definitions of the data. Fortunately, current IDOC staff were able to answer most of the questions raised by the descriptive analysis.

For example, several series had observations that seemed extremely high or low. In some cases, IDOC staff found that the data were accurate, but the definitions were inconsistent over time. In other cases, the data simply were incorrect. In both instances, the appropriate corrections were made.³

In addition to problems with questionable outliers, definitional changes over time appeared in several of the data series. The most important definitional change was in the male misdemeanant population data. In this series, there appeared to be a discontinuity about three-quarters of the way through (1974). This problem affected not only the misdemeanant count, but also the male felon population count, because the two series were not being properly separated. With information provided by IDOC, the data were corrected, making the current figures much more accurate. A similar problem occurred with the female population data at about the same time. Unfortunately, data are not available with which to correct that series.

Another problem involved the extent to which the admissions and releases data accounted for changes in the total prison population. In the historical data set, "total admissions" include commitments from court, readmission of parole/supervision violators, and miscellaneous admissions, such as the return of escapees. "Total releases" include end-of-sentence and good time releases, deaths, escapes, and several types of court-ordered releases. In the simplest terms, prison population is a function of two factors: the number of people entering prison (admissions), and the number of people leaving (releases). Theoretically, by adding the present month's admissions to the previous month's ending population, and then subtracting the present month's releases, the resulting figure should be the present month's ending population.

Using the data sets total population, total admissions and total releases, a graph was made to see if the

³There remain several extremely high or low observations that cannot be accounted for by IDOC or through the other data sets. Due to recordkeeping limitations, especially in the early years of data, there are no explanations for these apparent outliers. Such situations are noted in the text.

admissions and releases accounted for all of the monthly changes in population. For the early years of the series, the admissions and releases data are a close approximation of the population changes.⁴ However, in the later years, especially after about 1970, the graph shows too few releases (or too many admissions) to account for changes in the total population. IDOC staff explained that two factors combine to create this trend:

1) One factor influencing the prison population since 1969 is the utilization of community centers to house work release adult prisoners nearing the end of their sentences. Residents of community centers are not included in the historical population data. However, IDOC counts inmates moving from an institution to a center (and vice versa) as a transfer within the system, not as a release (or an admission). Therefore, "total admissions" does not include admissions from community centers, and "total releases" does not include releases to community centers, even though these transfers affect the "total population". Data available since July 1980, indicate that there are about two and one half times as many releases to community centers as admissions from the centers. Between July 1980 and April 1983, there were 122 to 246 releases each month to community centers, versus 39 to 97 monthly admissions from community centers. This helps explain the undercounting of releases that appeared in the graph of the effect of admissions and releases on population changes.

2) Another factor affecting the prison population in recent years involves temporary exits from prison. Once committed to an IDOC adult institution, there are several circumstances in which an inmate may be released for short periods of time. For example, temporary exits may be permitted for medical reasons, for family funerals or illnesses, or for court appearances.⁵ Apparently, in the early years of the series, there were very few temporary exits from IDOC adult institutions. Thus, monthly changes in the total population were due mostly to the number of people being admitted from court or as parole violators, and the number of people being released on parole or other discharge (or through death or escape). However, these temporary exits have apparently increased in the last decade. This increase has had a slight effect on month-to-month variations in the prison population.

⁴ Because people can be temporarily transferred in and out of prison, the figures could be expected to be slightly off.

⁵ Before December 1982, some of these temporary exits were counted as releases only if the person was out more than one day. Since then, the IDOC definition has changed, such that whenever someone leaves an institution, for whatever period of time, they are counted as having exited.

For example, between July 1980 (the earliest date for which data are available) and April 1983, 515 to 1,154 inmates were temporarily released from prison each month. In contrast, only 258 to 1,040 inmates exited through end-of-term, death or escape during the same period. As a result, the pattern over time of the number of releases, in recent years, may be more affected by temporary releases than the more long-term releases.

Due to constraints on the availability of data for the early years, not all of the series in the historical data set cover the same time period. The four population series (total, male felon, female, and male misdemeanant) all run from June 1941 through April 1983. All of the other series relating to males in this report begin either in July 1941 or January 1942. All of the other female and total (male and female combined) series begin in July 1953.

An important aspect of the description of patterns over time in a monthly variable is a description of the degree to which the variable fluctuates with the seasons. Each of the monthly series was examined for the presence of seasonal fluctuation.⁶ Only two of the series described in this paper showed any sign of varying according to the season of the year (see page 24). For complete details of the analysis of seasonality, please contact the author.

⁶ We use the Bell-Canada and U.S. Bureau of the Census X-11 programs. See Block (1983), "How to Handle Seasonality" for a discussion of the testing of time series for seasonality.

TOTAL END OF MONTH POPULATION

Because of daily fluctuations in the population, each of the "total monthly population" series measures the end-of-month population. Figure 1 shows the total, male felon, male misdemeanant, and female end-of-month populations between June 1941 and April 1983. The scale of the graph is between zero and 15,000. The vast majority of IDOC inmates are male felons. That population ranged from about 5,000 to about 12,600 during the 42 years of the series, versus a range of about 60 and 1,650 for the male misdemeanants, and about 90 and 450 for the total female population.

The IDOC total monthly population at the end of June 1941, was 12,052, but immediately began a fairly steady decline to fewer than 7,500 by July 1945.⁷ According to a January 1945, Department of Public Safety prison population report, the total prison population that month was the lowest since 1929. During this period, the largest single monthly decrease in total population (495) occurred in September 1943 (see Figure 1). In all but 10 cases, this decrease is attributable to a decrease in the male felon population. Much of this large decrease is due to the "War Parole Program", which was enacted during World War II (see p. 49).

Another large monthly decrease in population occurred in July 1945, in both the total and male felon populations. After mid-1945 (the end of World War II) the total prison population increased very steadily to about 9,000 by mid-1948, dipped slightly again to 8,500 by mid-1952, then gradually increased again to a high of almost 11,200 in late-1961. This 1961 population was the highest since 1942.

During 1960 and part of 1961, a "hump" in the total population can be seen. This can be attributed to increases in both the male felon and misdemeanant populations (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). After this brief "hump", the total population fell back to previous levels, and continued to decline, reaching about 8,400 by mid-1967. The population remained near this level until the beginning of 1970, when it began to decline again, hitting a low of 5,770 in April 1974. The prison population that month was the lowest of the entire series. At that time, there were 11 IDOC adult institutions housing this population. Immediately following this low point, however, the population began to increase very sharply. By late-1977, it had reached more than

⁷ Actually, by June 1941, the decline was already underway. IDOC records show that in 1939, there were 13,001 inmates housed in the seven adult institutions in existence at that time. This population level was not reached again until 1981, when IDOC had 13 adult institutions.

IDOC ADULT PRISON POPU

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

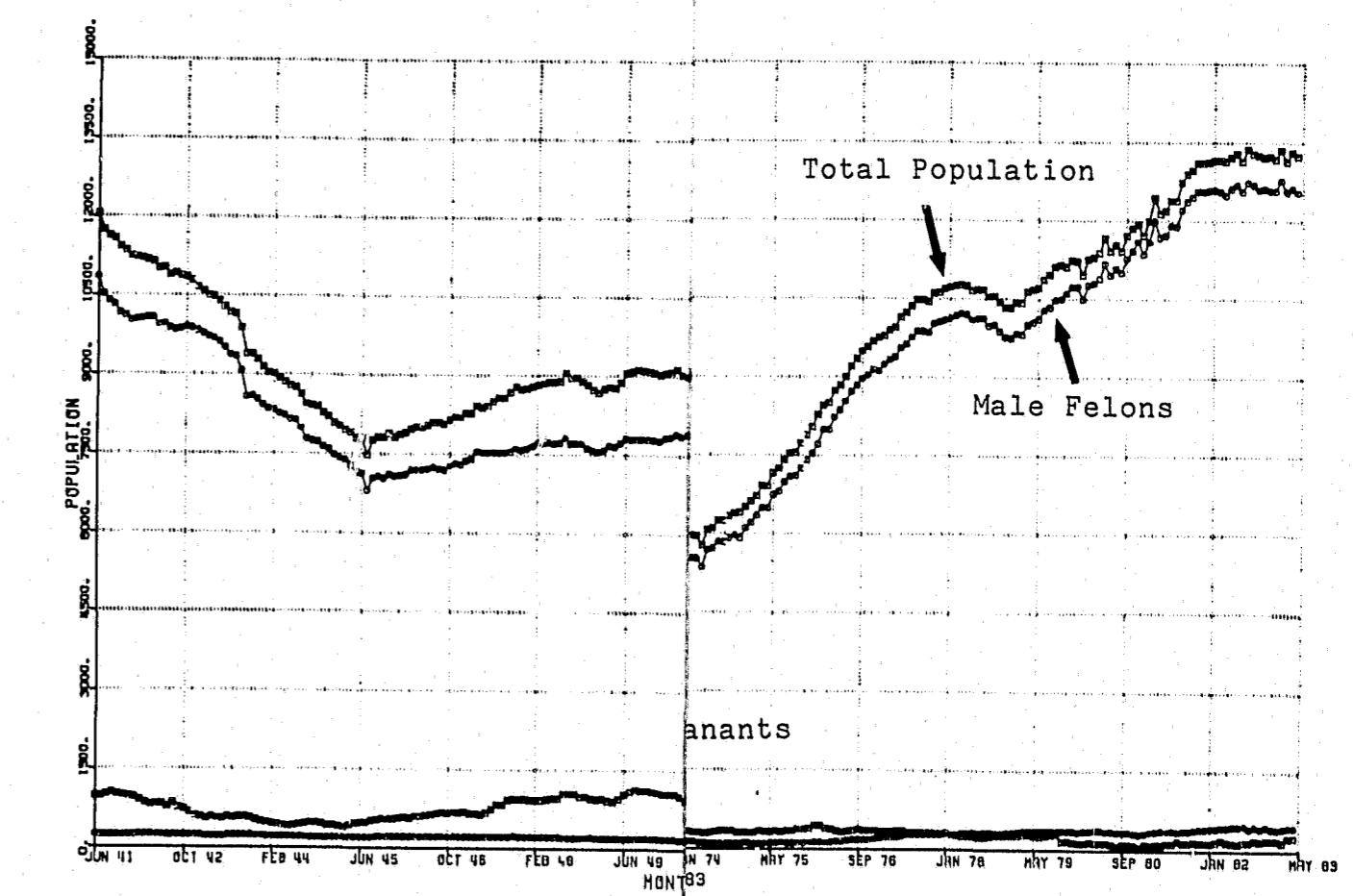
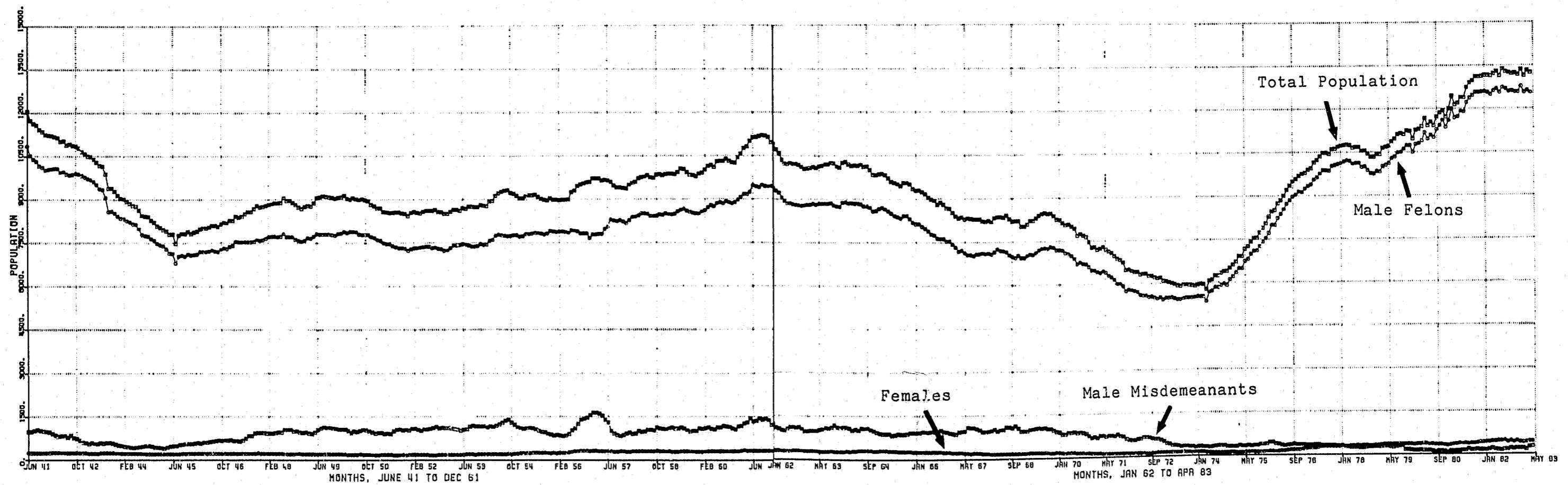


Figure 1

IDOC ADULT PRISON POPULATIONS, JUNE 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



10,700. During most of 1978, the inmate population tapered off slightly, but beginning in 1979, the previous strong upward trend returned, bringing the population back to 1941 levels by 1980. By 1982, the population had reached its highest levels ever, more than 13,200. As a result of an administrative policy to maintain the institutional population at or near capacity, the population has leveled off in the last year to between approximately 13,100 and 13,350.

In response to the tremendous population increase in the last years of the series, the State was forced to make changes in its prison release standards, in an effort to ease crowding. Also, several changes in the law, such as the implementation of determinate sentencing, took place in the last years of the series. The combination of special releases and changes in the law produced greater differences between months in the size of the population during most of the end of the series.

Male Felon End-of-Month Population

As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of the total IDOC population is comprised of male felons. This series is almost identical to the total series. Beginning in about 1974, the proportion of the total population that was male felons increased. Between 1980 and mid-1981, the graphs of the male felon and total populations are barely distinguishable. However, in the last year and a half of the series, the proportion of male felons in the total population has decreased slightly.

Male Misdemeanant End-of-Month Population ⁸

In 1941, there were three branches of the Illinois State Penitentiary that housed male felons: Joliet (including Stateville prison), Menard, and Pontiac. Other institutions included Dwight (for women), the Illinois Security Hospital (for insane and "feeble-minded" criminals), and the State Farm at Vandalia, which housed misdemeanants.

Before 1974, the male misdemeanor end-of-month population figures were derived simply by taking the total population of the State Farm. This figure, however, could only closely approximate the misdemeanor population, as some misdemeanants were regularly transferred to other institutions for medical and security reasons. Similarly, a few felons were transferred to the State Farm from other institutions.

⁸This series does not represent the total number of misdemeanor inmates in Illinois. Most people sentenced to incarceration for a misdemeanor are held in county jails.

While exact figures are not available, there are indications that the male misdeemeanant population data derived from the State Farm population are at times much less accurate than at others times. For example, according to the 1961 Annual Report of the Department of Public Safety, "The (State Farm population) count has been kept below 1500 by transferring inmates to other institutions...Of 210 transfers to other institutions (during the fiscal year), 26 were medical transfers, the remainder for security and crowded conditions." These misdeemeanant transfers out of the count averaged about 17 per month, or less than 2 percent of the average State Farm population during the period. Similarly, the 1963 annual report mentions 509 transfers out (42 per month average or about 4 percent), as well as 17 felons who were transferred in.

By 1970, the State Farm population was declining, as was the total male felon population, and thus crowding was less of a problem. By January 1972, the State Farm population was about 600, and records show there were only four felons in the population. However, increasingly in the next three years, the misdeemeanant population began to fall, and the extra space at the State Farm was filled by felons transferred in. By January 1973, 11 percent of the State Farm population was felons; by January 1974, it was up to 53 percent.

In the historical data set the male misdeemeanant population data were taken directly from the State Farm population figures. Because of this, between 1972 and 1974 both the male misdeemeanant and felon data series became much less accurate, the former being too high, and the latter too low. Luckily, the original prison files were available for this period, and the figures were corrected. However, problems remain for the earlier years, particularly in the early 1960s when the State Farm population was high, because the original records are not available. Since 1972, the number of misdeemeanants and felons there have been reported separately, thus enabling a more accurate count of the number of misdeemeanants housed at Vandalia. Any misdeemeanants residing in other institutions (i.e. for medical or security reasons) are likely not included in the series totals.

Like the male felon series, this series also is high at the beginning (more than 1,000 in August 1941, Figure 2). After that, the misdeemeanor population decreased, reaching a low of 386 in March 1945. After the war, the population began to increase again, returning to 1941 levels by mid-1948. (Recall that the total population series did not return to 1941 levels until 1980.)

IDOC MALE MISDEMEANANT

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

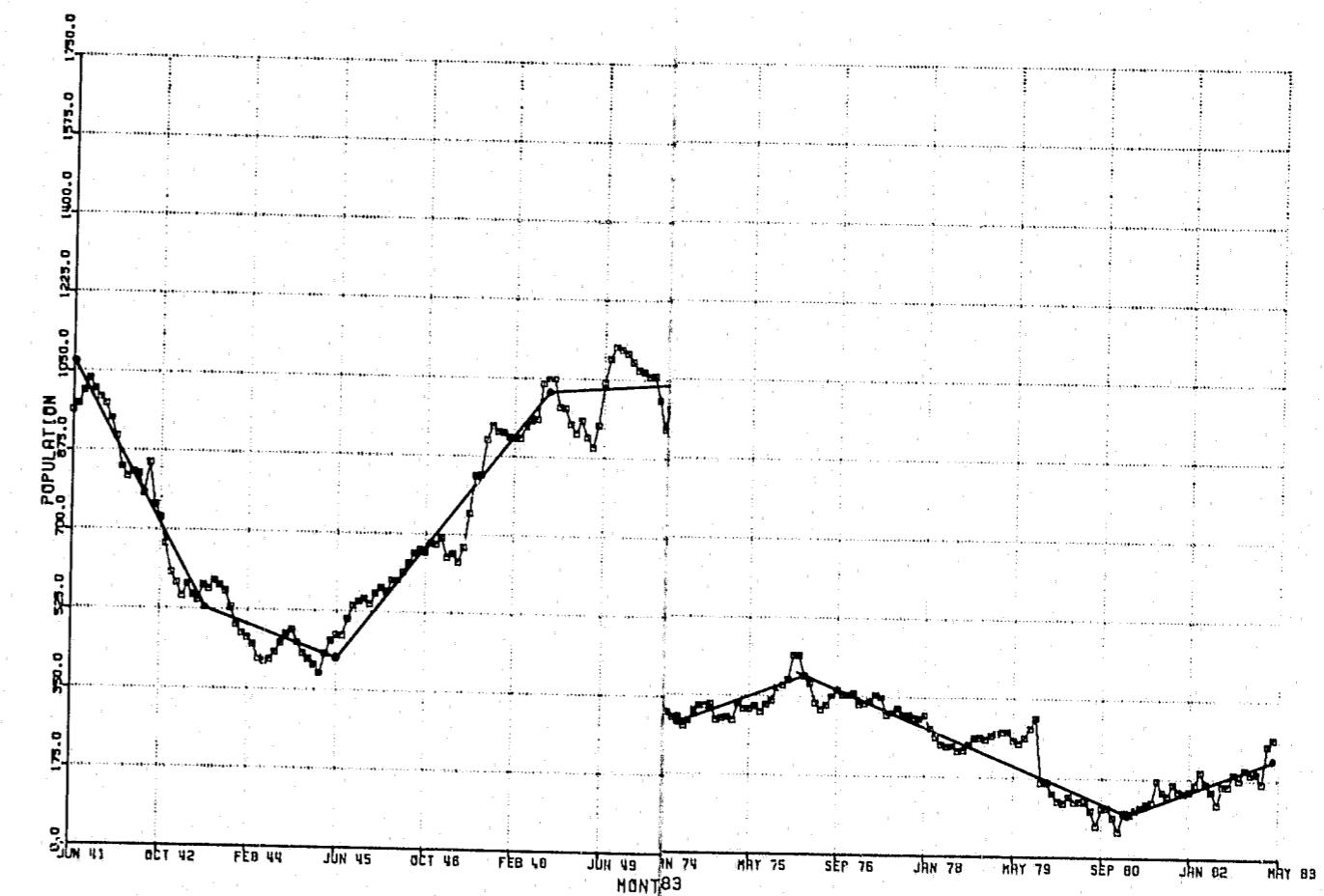
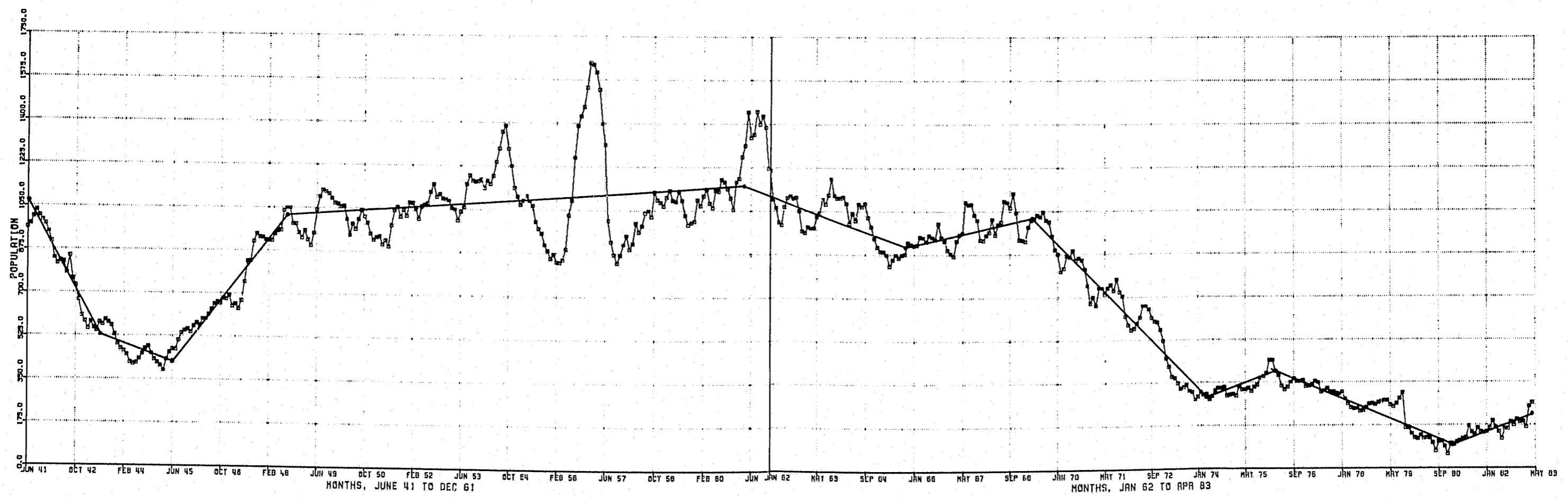


Figure 2

IDOC MALE MISDEMEANANT POPULATION, JUNE 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



Between mid-1948 and mid-1954, the male misdemeanant population fluctuated between about 900 and 1,200 per month, overall showing only a slight increasing trend. After a peak of almost 1,400 in September 1954, however, the population began a steady decline, falling to less than 840 by early 1956. Beginning in April of that year, the misdemeanant population began to increase rapidly, almost doubling in less than a year. The January 1957 population of 1,642 was the highest monthly total in this series. This huge increase was immediately followed by an equally rapid decrease, and by October 1957, the population had returned to early 1956 levels.

This "hump" in 1956-1957 can be attributed to an increase in the number of misdemeanor admissions during about a nine-month period (Figure 8, page 35). Although the number of misdemeanor releases also rose slightly during this period (Figure 16, page 61), there were not enough releases to offset the high number of admissions.

Following the 1956-1957 hump, the male misdemeanant population crept back up to about 1,100 per month by 1960. In 1961, another, smaller increase followed by a decrease in the population can be seen. This second hump, about a year in duration, reached a peak of more than 1,400 by mid-1961. The misdemeanor population never reached this height again.

After this movement, the series was erratic, but generally decreased to about 1,000 by 1968. Beginning in 1969, the series began to decrease very rapidly, reaching about 300 by 1974, when the series was interrupted (discussed above). Following the break, the estimated misdemeanant population briefly increased to more than 400 in 1976, then decreased again to fewer than 100 by 1981. During this period, a large one-month drop (142), possibly another break, occurred in October 1979. After a series low of 57 in December 1980, the male misdemeanant population increased through the end of the series, reaching 265 by April 1983.

Female End-of-Month Population

These data include all females (felons and misdemeanants) in the IDOC system. All female inmates are housed in the Dwight Prison. Although this is a comparatively small population, IDOC expressed concern that the population has risen enough in the past few years to cause a crowding problem among women.

Like the male population, the female population dropped during the WW II years, from about 240 in 1941-1942 to less than 200 by mid-1945 (Figure 3). However, this decrease was not as sharp as the corresponding drops in male population.

Fig

IDOC FEMALE POPULATION

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

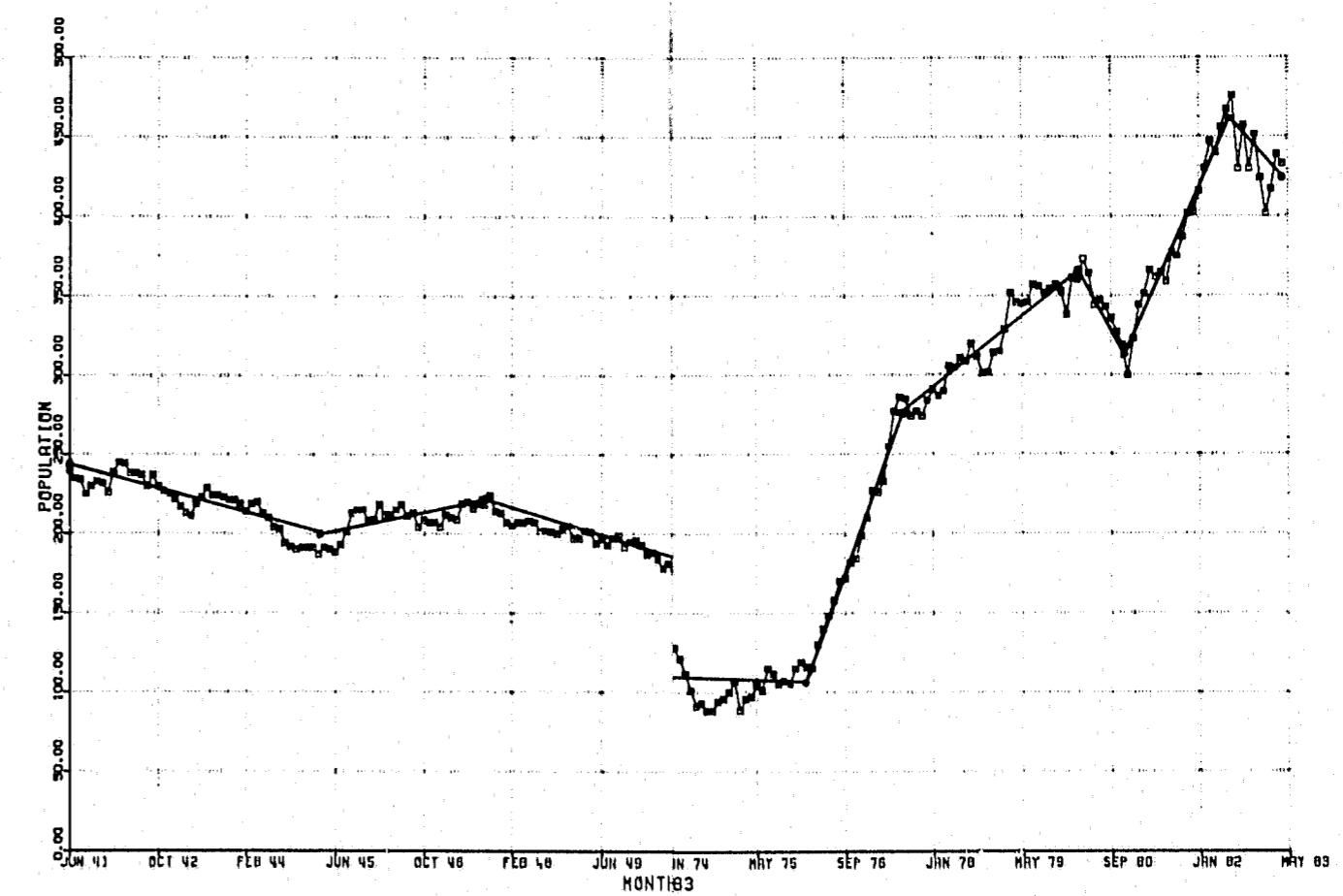
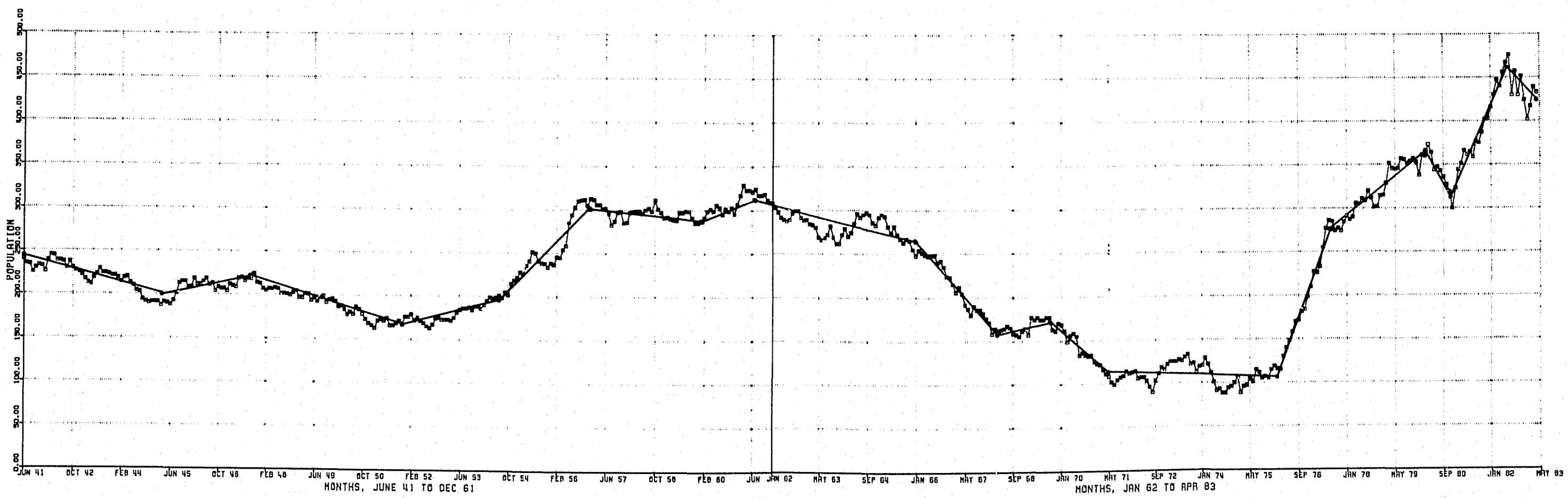


Figure 3

IDOC FEMALE POPULATION, JUNE 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



The female population declined by about one-fourth, versus a one-third drop for male felons, and almost two-thirds for male misdemeanants, over roughly the same time period. After the war, there was a slight increase in the female population through 1947. This increase was about as sharp as the post-war increase in the male felon population, but not as sharp as in the male misdemeanor series. From about 1948 through 1951, the female population decreased slightly again to about 170 per month. Changes from month to month were very small up to this point.

Beginning in 1952, the female population began to increase, reaching the previously high 1941 level of about 240 by mid-1955. (Recall that the male misdemeanor series returned to its 1941 levels by mid-1948.) The female population continued to increase through 1956, then leveled off at about 300. The series remained steady at this level, hitting the highest point in the series so far (329), in March 1961.

The female population generally decreased in the 1960s, reaching its lowest point (88) in mid-1974. However, the data for the period between mid-1974 and the beginning of 1977 apparently undercount the number of females in the IDOC population.

According to the 1981 IDOC Population and Capacity Report (IDOC, p. 80-81), Dwight and Vienna prisons housed both male and female inmates during this period. Vienna's program ran from July 1974 through January 1977; Dwight's program continued through June 1977. Data that differentiate the number of males and females in prison are available for Dwight from August 1973 through March 1977. However, population data for Vienna do not distinguish between males and females. According to IDOC, the largest number of females ever housed at Vienna in any month was 50. During this period, there were between 113 (June 1974) and 245 (March 1977) females housed at Dwight. Thus, the maximum of 50 women from Vienna represent a maximum of 31 percent of the total female population undercounted at any one time. Because 50 in a month is the maximum, the actual undercounting is probably less. In addition, because of this undercounting of females, the total male population is necessarily overcounted by a corresponding number (but by a much smaller proportion--less than one percent--of the total male population.)

From mid-1971 to the end of 1975, the female population hovered around 100 inmates per month. Beginning in 1976, the female population began to increase very sharply, more than doubling in about a year and a half. From mid-1977 to the beginning of 1980, the population continued to increase, though less rapidly, and surpassed the 1961 high of 329 by early 1979. The population decreased again during 1980,

from 373 to 300, this decrease corresponding to the early release program. It increased rapidly again from 1981 through mid-1982, reaching an all time high of 476 in July 1982. The population then decreased slightly through the end of the series to about 425. Because the rated capacity of Dwight is 400, IDOC has expressed concern about female crowding.

In summary, in the last 42 years, changes in the IDOC adult population have been affected mostly by changes in the male felon population. However, certain trends in the total pattern are attributable to changes in the male misdemeanant population, especially in 1956-1957, and in the most recent years, by increases in the number of females and male misdemeanants.

TOTAL ADMISSIONS

The series "total admissions" includes all new commitments from court and all felon defaults. A default, commonly called a "parole or supervision violation," is a readmission of a felon who had been released through parole or other supervised release, but who is still under IDOC jurisdiction. A default follows either a conviction for a new crime, or a technical violation of conditions of parole or release.⁹ Because misdemeanants are not subject to supervision upon release, by definition they cannot default.

Each of the male felony admissions series begins in January 1942. Because the data for females begin in 1953, the total admissions series also starts then. The male misdemeanor admissions series, however, extends back to mid-1941.

The total number of monthly admissions (Figure 4) was approximately 390 at the beginning of the series in July 1953. Although there was a great deal of monthly variation, the series generally increased through mid-1961, reaching about 480 per month. During this period, the monthly number of admissions ranged from a low of about 270 in August 1957, to a high of about 660 in May 1961.

Through most of the 1960s, the monthly number of admissions generally remained upwards of 400, again with much monthly variation. Beginning in mid-1969, however, the number of admissions began to drop off, reaching approximately 330 by the end of 1972. Beginning in 1973, this downward trend was reversed, and the monthly number of admissions began to increase very rapidly. By the end of the series, there were generally more than 900 admissions per month, and for a few months the total reached 1,000 or more.

Figure 4A shows the same admissions series, but with admissions from community centers (work release) since July 1980 added in. Note that the actual number of people coming into the adult institutions is somewhat higher during these last 34 months, reaching about 1,250 in March 1983. Data are not available on these additional admissions between 1969 (when they began) and June 1980.

Total Male Felony Commitments

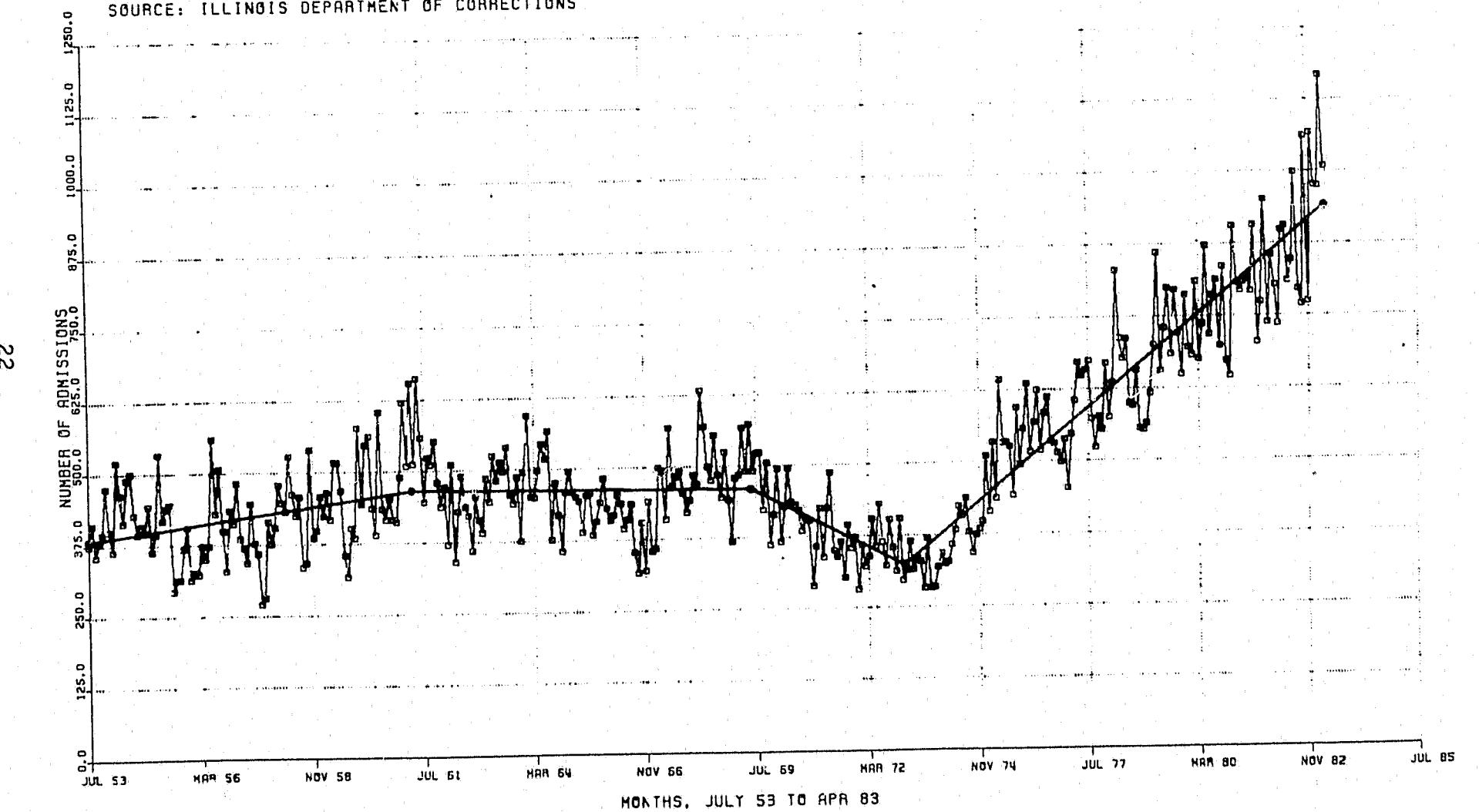
This series includes all male felony commitments from court and male defaults. Because misdemeanants are not released under supervision, they cannot default. From 1942

⁹ Such conditions may include leaving the State while under supervision, possessing a firearm, etc. Committing a crime also violates conditions of release.

Figure 4

IDOC TOTAL ADMISSIONS, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



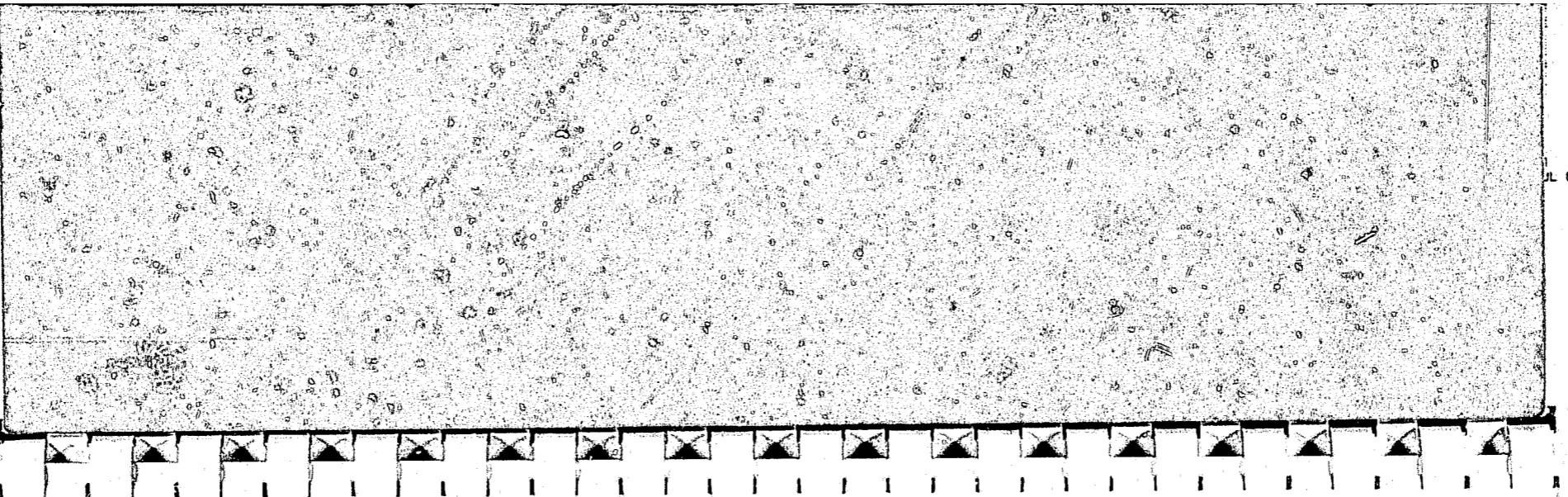
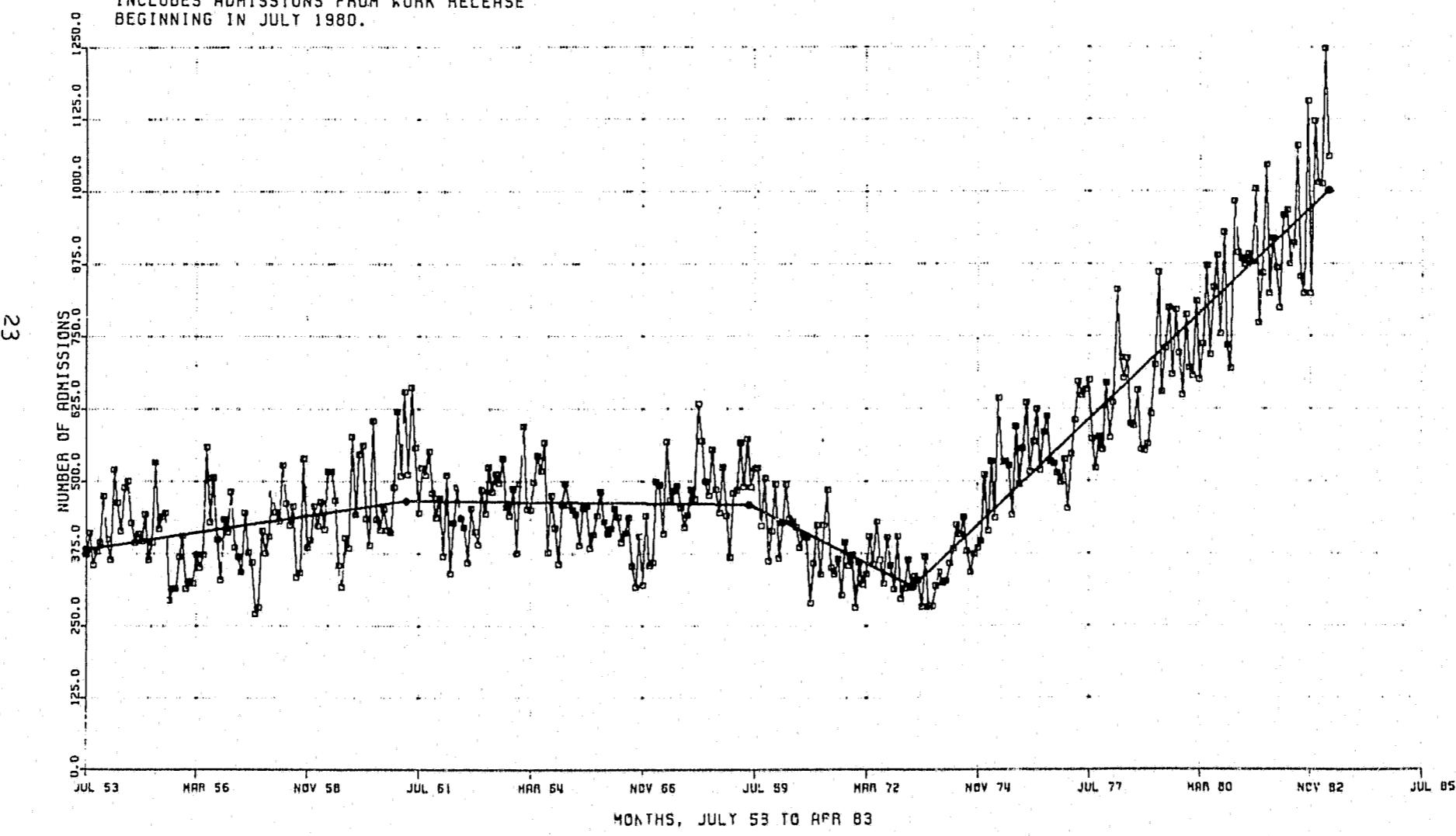


Figure 4A

IDOC TOTAL ADMISSIONS, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.
INCLUDES ADMISSIONS FROM WORK RELEASE
BEGINNING IN JULY 1980.



to mid-1944, the number of male felons committed to prison generally decreased from about 200 per month to less than 100 per month (Figure 5). The commitments returned to previous levels by 1946, and varied between 100 and 200 per month through 1951. Although the number of commitments increased after mid-1944, the total male felon population continued to decrease through mid-1945, because releases remained higher than commitments. Up to this time, male felon commitments were generally a little higher than misdemeanor commitments.

Beginning in 1952, the number of male felon commitments generally increased, with much month-to-month variation, reaching about 250 by early 1961. Between 1961 and 1972, the number of male felon commitments generally stayed between 200 and 300 per month, with a low of 79 in September 1966, and a high of 383 in January 1964.

Beginning in late 1973, the monthly number of commitments began to increase very sharply, reaching about 400 by mid-1975, and then continuing upward, at a little slower rate, to about 850 by the end of the series. There is also a lot of variation between months in the last five years of the series. This is attributable to changes in both court commitments and defaults (see pages 27 and 31). For the first time, in March 1983, there were over 1,000 male felony commitments in a single month.

This series showed weak seasonal fluctuation during the first 30 years, but none for the final years. Of the two components of this series--male felon court commitments and defaults--only the former showed the same hint of seasonal influence in the early years.

Male Felony Court Commitments

The pattern of male felony court commitments (Figure 6) is almost identical to the total male felony commitments series. The monthly number of commitments in 1942 was about 100. Almost 30 years later, the monthly number had increased to about 200. Beginning in late 1971, the monthly number of male commitments from court began to increase much more rapidly, though steadily, to more than 600 per month by 1983.

The number of commitments between January 1981 and July 1981, is rather high, compared to the rest of the series. A possible explanation is that more judges were added at this time to help move the backlog of cases, but that this was not a permanent phenomenon.

This series shows a hint of seasonality. The first 30 years show weak seasonal fluctuation, but the final 10 years, when the number of court commitments began to

Figure 5

IDOC TOTAL MALE FELONY COMMITMENTS, JANUARY 1942 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

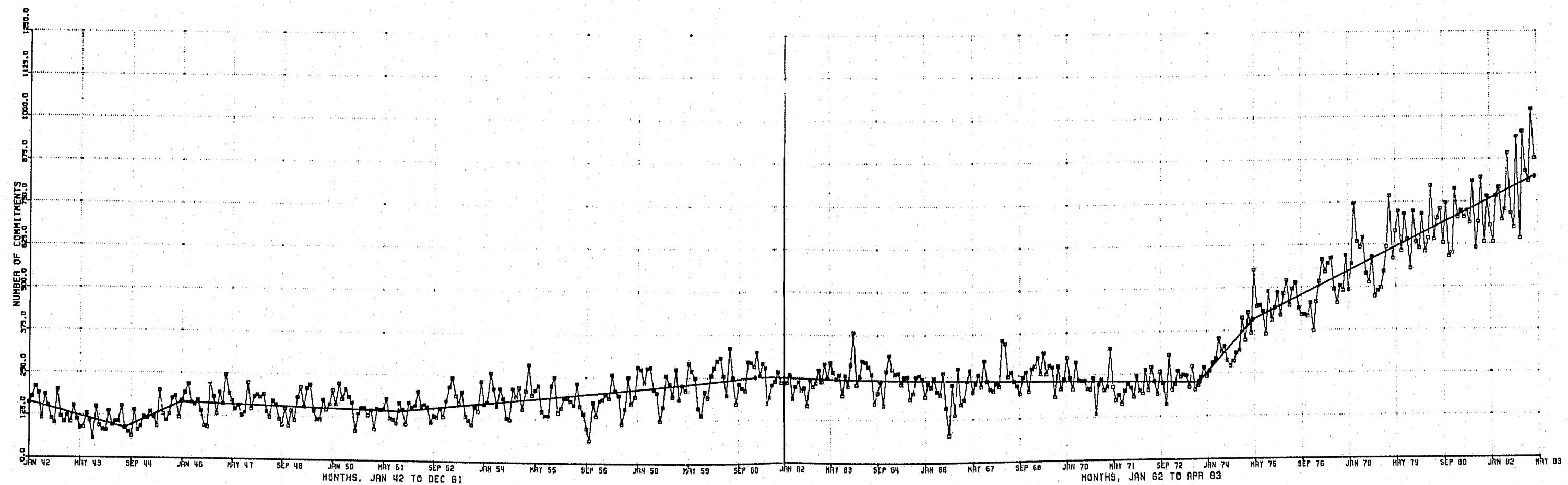
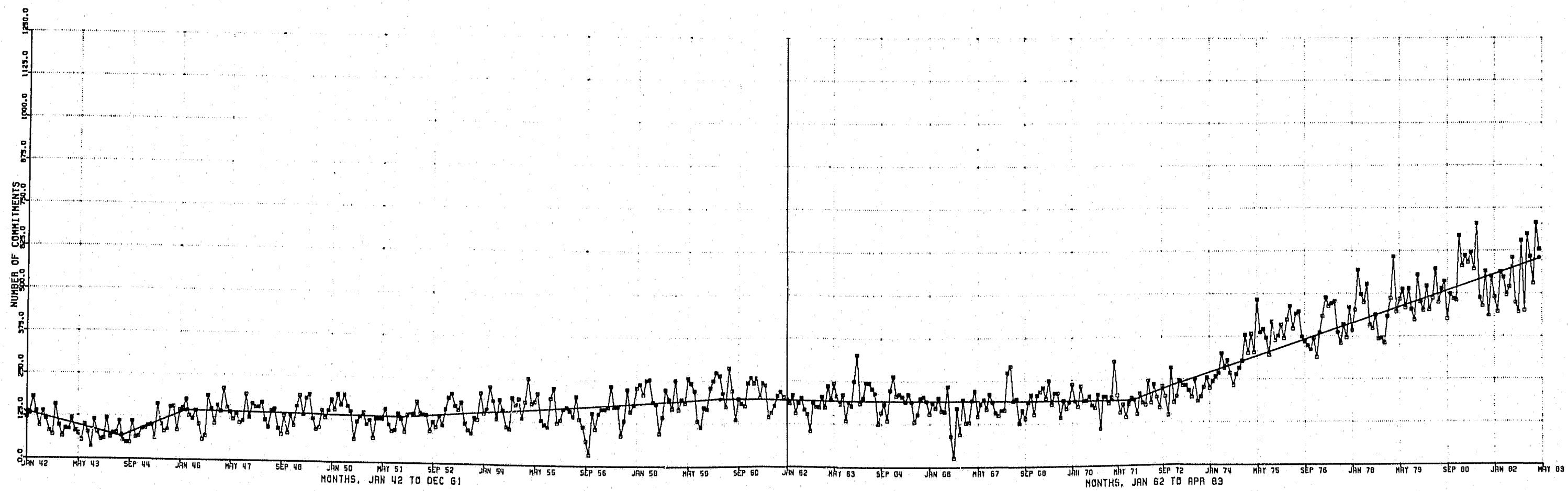


Figure 6

IDOC MALE FELONY COURT COMMITMENTS, JANUARY 1942 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



increase rapidly after years of relative stability, are not seasonal.

For the first 30 years of the series, there is statistically little seasonal effect on the monthly number of male felony court commitments, although several months do seem to be consistently high or low. In particular, March generally had between 20 and 40 (12.5 to 25 percent) more commitments than the average month, while August and September consistently had between 25 and 80 (16 to 50 percent) fewer commitments.¹⁰

It is interesting to note that as far back as 1946, the Department of Public Safety's statistician, using fairly unsophisticated methods noticed seasonal fluctuation in admissions. In the October 1946 Department of Public Safety Monthly Population Movement Report, Statistician W. G. Beals wrote, "Offenders admitted to the penitentiary (this month) total 198 plus 26 defaulters. This is in line with experience of the last quarter century, October admissions being far above average." In the early years of our data series (1942-1947), October admissions were generally high, especially in contrast to August and September, which were usually low. After about 1947, however, October admissions became less extreme.

Male Defaults

Defaults are defined as readmissions of felons currently on release under IDOC supervision. The readmission may occur because of a technical violation (of release terms, such as leaving the State, for example), or a new sentence.

The monthly number of male defaults is about 30 at the beginning of the series, and decreases gradually to about 15 per month by the end of 1952 (Figure 7). From 1953 to 1969, the number of defaults increased fairly steadily, reaching about 60 per month by the end of the period. Until about 1966, there was little variance in the series. That year, however, several high observations can be seen, the highest (108) occurring in July 1968.

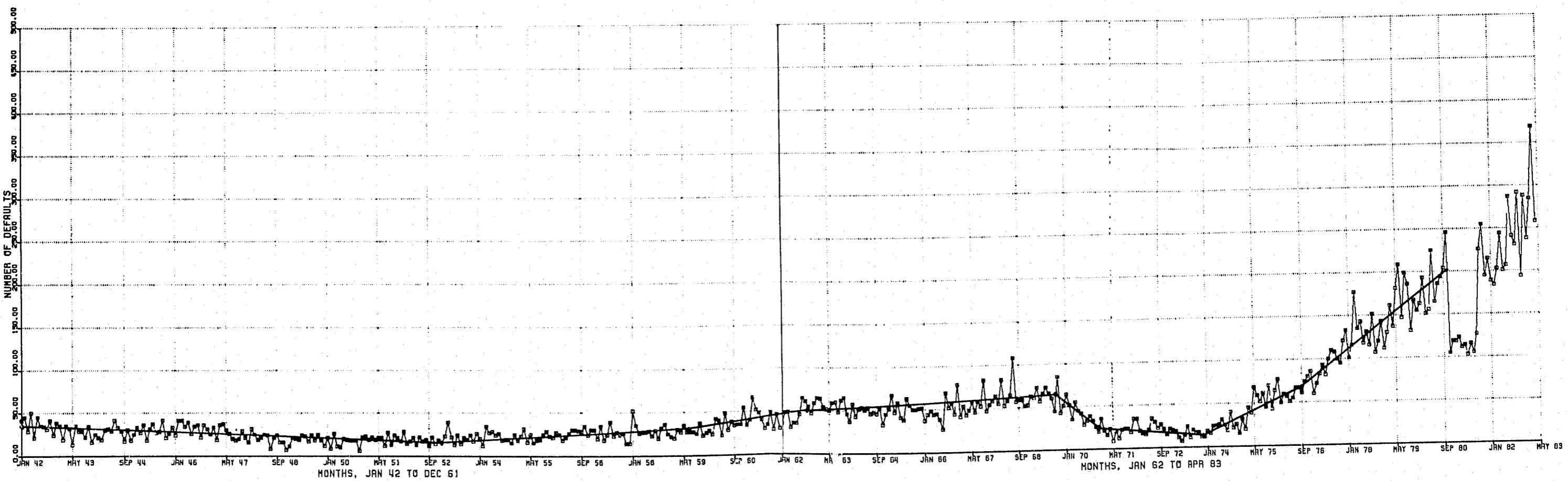
Beginning in 1969, the number of male defaults began to decline, reaching a low of between 10 and 20 per month in 1973. After the mid-73 low, however, a very rapid increase began, reaching a high of 254 defaults in October 1980. This large increase during the last years of the series began about two years after the big increase in male court commitments began (see above). Also influencing this increase was the institution of "statutory parole" in 1973.

¹⁰ Details of the seasonal analysis are available on request from the author.

Figure 7

IDOC MALE DEFAULTS, JANUARY 1942 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.
DEFAULTS ARE FELONS UNDER SUPERVISION WHO ARE
READMITTED FOR EITHER A TECHNICAL VIOLATION OR
A NEW SENTENCE.



According to Bill Kaufman of the Prisoner Review Board,¹¹ the result of this law was to increase the number of people released to supervision (not the number of people released), thus increasing the number of potential defaulters. There is, however, no way to distinguish what proportion of the increase in defaults is due to people on statutory parole.

After 1978, the month to month changes increased noticeably. After reaching 249 in October 1980, there was a sudden drop in the monthly number of male defaults. For slightly less than a year, the number dropped to between about 115 and 135 per month, but then returned to an all time high of 387 in March 1983. The monthly defaults have varied, but remained high, for the rest of the series. Apparently there was an administrative decision, because of prison crowding problems, to reduce the number of technical violations during that 10 month period.¹²

Male Misdemeanor Commitments

At the beginning of this series, there was approximately the same number of male misdemeanor commitments monthly as male felony commitments (note that the misdemeanor series begins six months earlier). As with many of the IDOC series, admissions were high at the beginning, around 200 per month in 1941, but generally decreased during the war years (Figure 8). After reaching a low of 58 in November 1944, the monthly number of misdemeanor admissions began to increase again, at about the same rate as the decrease during the previous three years. By mid-1948, the monthly number of misdemeanor admissions had returned to about 210. Recall that the number of male felony commitments began to increase in about mid-1944. The increase in misdemeanor commitments followed about six months later.

For about the next 21 years (mid-1948 to mid-1969), there was very little trend in the series. While at times there was great month-to-month variation (1955, 1956, and 1961, in particular,) there was only a slight increase, to about 220.

Beginning in June 1956 the monthly number of misdemeanor admissions remained high for a period of eight months. In August of that year, there were about 350 misdemeanor admissions, the highest monthly total so far in the series. This brief surge in admissions caused the "hump" in the misdemeanor population series, described above

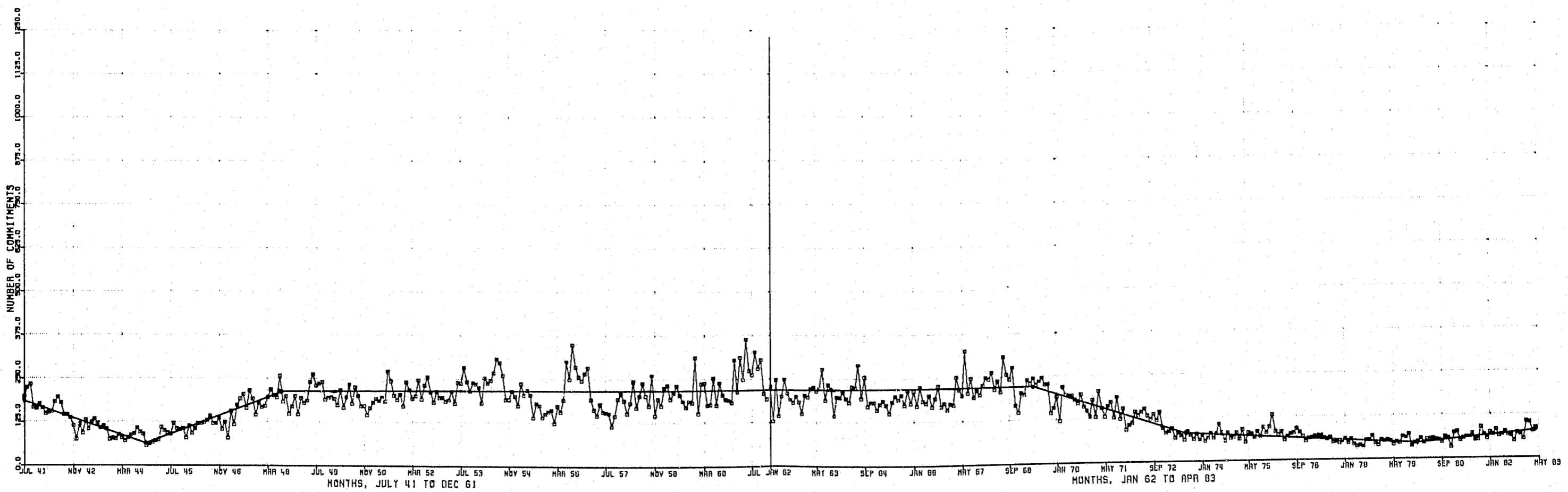
¹¹ Conversation, March 23, 1983.

¹² See Miller (1981) *Prison Population Projections*, page 77. Also, Bill Kauffman of the Prisoner Review Board speculated that the policy decision was to declare only firearm technical violators to be in default.

Figure 8

IDOC MALE MISDEMEANOR COMMITMENTS, JULY 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



(see Figure 2). Another brief surge in misdemeanor admissions occurred during 10 months in 1961, when the monthly figures were often above 300. In June 1961, the monthly figure hit 363, the highest observation of the entire series. This activity can also be seen as a hump in the misdemeanor population. However, because misdemeanor releases were also high at this time (see p. 61), the 1961 misdemeanor population hump is not as great as the one occurring in 1956.

After 21 years of monthly variation with almost no trend, the number of misdemeanor admissions began to decrease in mid-1969. This decrease occurred at about the same rate as the 1941-1944 decrease in the same series, and continued until about mid-1973, when the monthly number of misdemeanor admissions was only about 80. From 1974 through the end of the series, there was much less month-to-month variation, the monthly figures decreasing slightly to about 50 by 1980, and then increasing slightly to about 80 by the end of the series. However, because of the break in the misdemeanor population series due to data collection problems, (see p. 3), it is not clear whether there are data definition changes in the final years of this series as well.

Female Court Commitments

This series begins in July 1953, with less than 10 commitments from court per month (Figure 9). The series does not include female defaults.

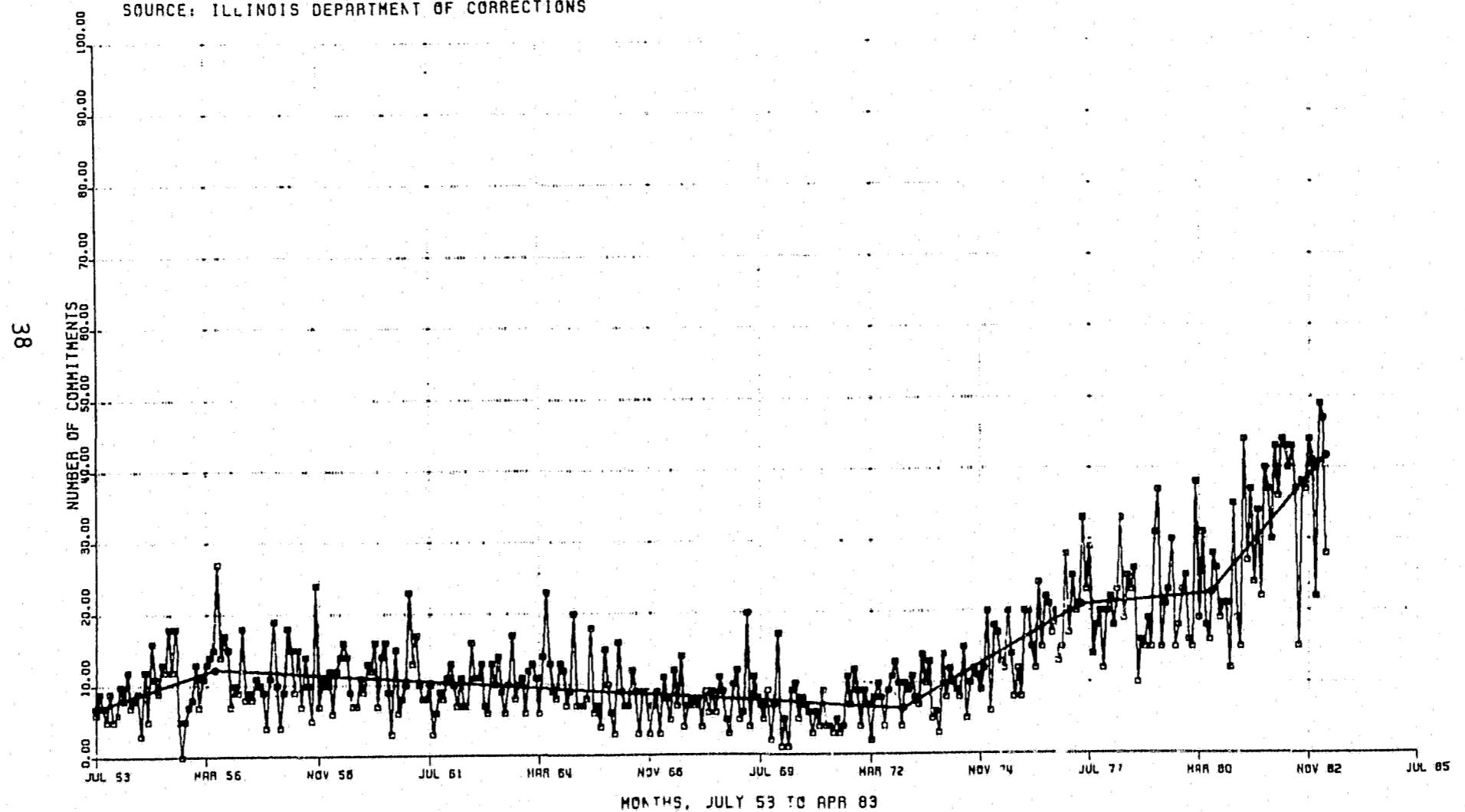
The number of female commitments generally increased between mid-1953 and mid-1956, varying between a low of zero (August 1955) and a high of 27 (June 1956). After that high month, the number of commitments began to decrease, from about twelve to seven by the end of 1971. Beginning in 1972, the number of court commitments began to increase again, reaching about 21 by mid-1977. The number remained at about that level, but with more monthly variation than in earlier years, until 1981, when another, sharper increase began. In the next year and a half (to the end of the series), the number of female commitments from court doubled, reaching almost 50 by the end of the series. However, despite the increasing trend, there are several low observations in the last year of data, resulting in great variation between months at the end of the series.

Interestingly, the 1972 increase in the female court commitment series began around the time of a similar increase in the male court commitment series.

Figure 9

IDOC FEMALE COURT COMMITMENTS, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Female Defaults

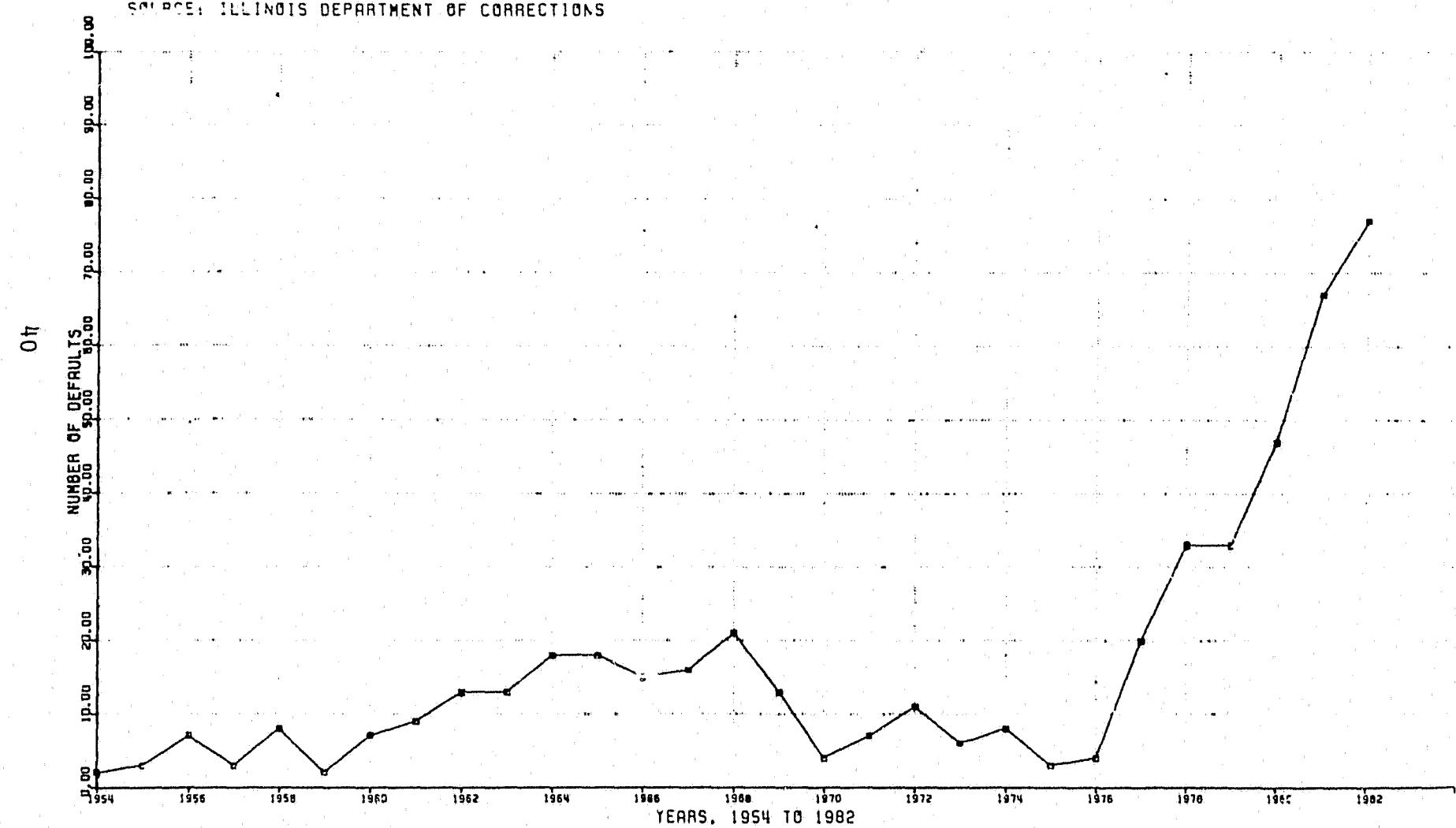
Because there are comparatively few female defaults, especially in the early years, this series can best be analyzed using yearly data. Between 1954 and 1961, there were fewer than 10 female defaults yearly (Figure 10). Thus, early in the series, defaulters were not a significant part of female admissions to IDOC. During the 1960s, the number of female defaulters increased to between 13 and 21 per year, but in the 1970s these numbers fell again. However, beginning in 1978, the yearly number of defaults began to increase rapidly, reaching 77 (more than 6 per month on the average), or more than 14 percent of all female admissions in 1982.

Increases in all types of admissions in about the last decade combine to create the increase in the total IDOC adult prison population. Not only were there increases in male felons and females sentenced from court, but also increases in the number of male and female supervision violators. In fact, between July 1980 and April 1983 (based on IDOC fiscal year data), the percent of admissions, excluding temporary transfers, that were supervision violators increased from 18 to 27 percent per year. Of the 27 percent (2,716 people) since July 1982, 46 percent (1,246) were technical violators.

Figure 10

IDOC YEARLY NUMBER OF FEMALE DEFAULTS, 1954 - 1982

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



TOTAL RELEASES

There are several ways that an inmate may be released from prison in Illinois:

- Expiration of Sentence. Before 1973, people who had served the maximum amount of time on their sentence were discharged from IDOC custody, and were not subject to a period of supervision. This is sometimes referred to as "maxing out." Since 1973, people sentenced to indeterminate sentences who "maxed out" have been required by law to serve an additional term of supervision. This is called "statutory parole."

- Parole. Before 1978, Illinois used indeterminate sentencing for convicted offenders. Under this system, a person was eligible for supervised parole after serving the minimum sentence, less statutory good time. People still serving indeterminate sentences as of February 1978, were given the option of keeping their parole eligibility status, or having their remaining time recalculated with good time credits, thus making them eligible for Mandatory Supervised Release rather than parole.

- Mandatory Release. This applies to people who were sentenced before 1978, and who have chosen to keep their parole option of release. Such people, when they have served their full term without ever achieving parole, are released under supervision six months before the end of their statutory term.

- Mandatory Supervised Release (MSR). In February 1978, Illinois switched from indeterminate to determinate, or fixed, sentencing. Now people convicted and sentenced to prison are given a fixed sentence, with a stated release date, and for felons, a stated period of post-release community supervision. Under this system, a felony prisoner can earn good conduct credits at a rate of one day for each day served. Thus, a felony prisoner may be eligible for MSR after serving half of his or her sentence. Good time credit for misdemeanants is earned at a rate of up to 72 days out of a one year sentence.¹³

- Early Release. This is also known as "forced release." Under law, the Director of IDOC may award "meritorious good time" to inmates, in increments of 90 days at a time. Under the early release program, selected inmates are awarded enough meritorious good time, in addition to their earned good time credit, to make them

¹³By law, misdemeanants cannot be sentenced to more than a year of imprisonment.

eligible for MSR. This program has had the effect of keeping the institutional population at or near capacity.¹⁴

• Other Releases. Included here are Executive Clemency (release by order of the Governor, on the recommendation of the Prisoner Review Board), court-ordered releases (such a habeas corpus release), death, and other miscellaneous releases.

The graph of total monthly releases (Figure 11), from July 1953 through April 1983, is similar in scale (but only somewhat similar in pattern) to the graph of total monthly admissions (Figure 5). Although releases tend to follow closely, or lag behind admissions, there is not always an exact correspondence.

In mid-1953, when the total prison population was about 8,700, there were approximately 400 monthly releases from prison, although for a few months, releases hovered near 500. Overall, the series generally declined to about 350 by early 1956. The monthly number of releases increased again to about 480 by about 1960, and remained at that level for about the next 10 years.

During this period, there are several unusually high observations, particularly July 1957 (662) and December 1959 (715) through April 1960 (629 average). The earlier extreme is reflected in the large drop in the total misdemeanant population series, which can be seen as the tail end of the 1956-1957 "hump" illustrated above in Figure 2. However, only about 300 of these releases are accounted for in that series. Interestingly, the male felon end-of-month population actually increased by about 250 in July 1957, and the total female population stayed about the same. Because there were 359 admissions and 662 releases that month, and only a decrease of 65 in the total population, 238 releases remain unaccounted for.

Between 1970 and 1974, the number of releases declined to about 260 per month, but increased sharply from 1975 through mid-1978 to about 625 per month. In March 1978, there were 752 releases, the highest monthly total so far in the series. After a brief decline to about 450 per month in late 1979, the number of releases increased sharply, although with much month-to-month variation, through the end of the series. The highest number of releases occurred in February 1983 (1,040).

In January 1980, 466 people were released from prison in Illinois as a result of the Johnson v. Franzen court decision. This Illinois Supreme Court case dealt with

¹⁴This practice of giving multiple 90 day meritorious good time increments to prisoners was invalidated by the Illinois Supreme Court on July 12, 1983.

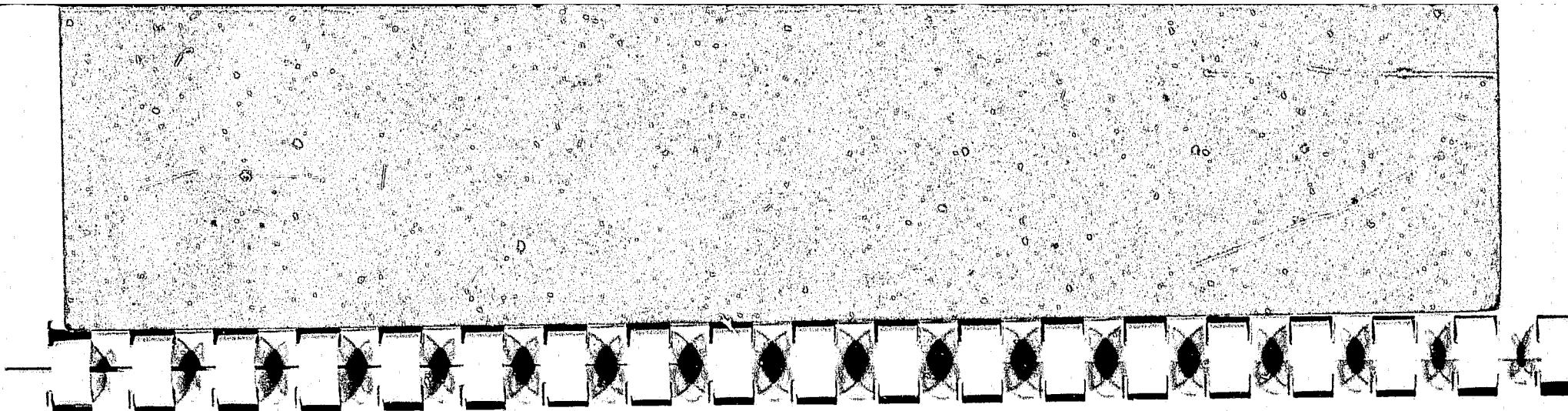
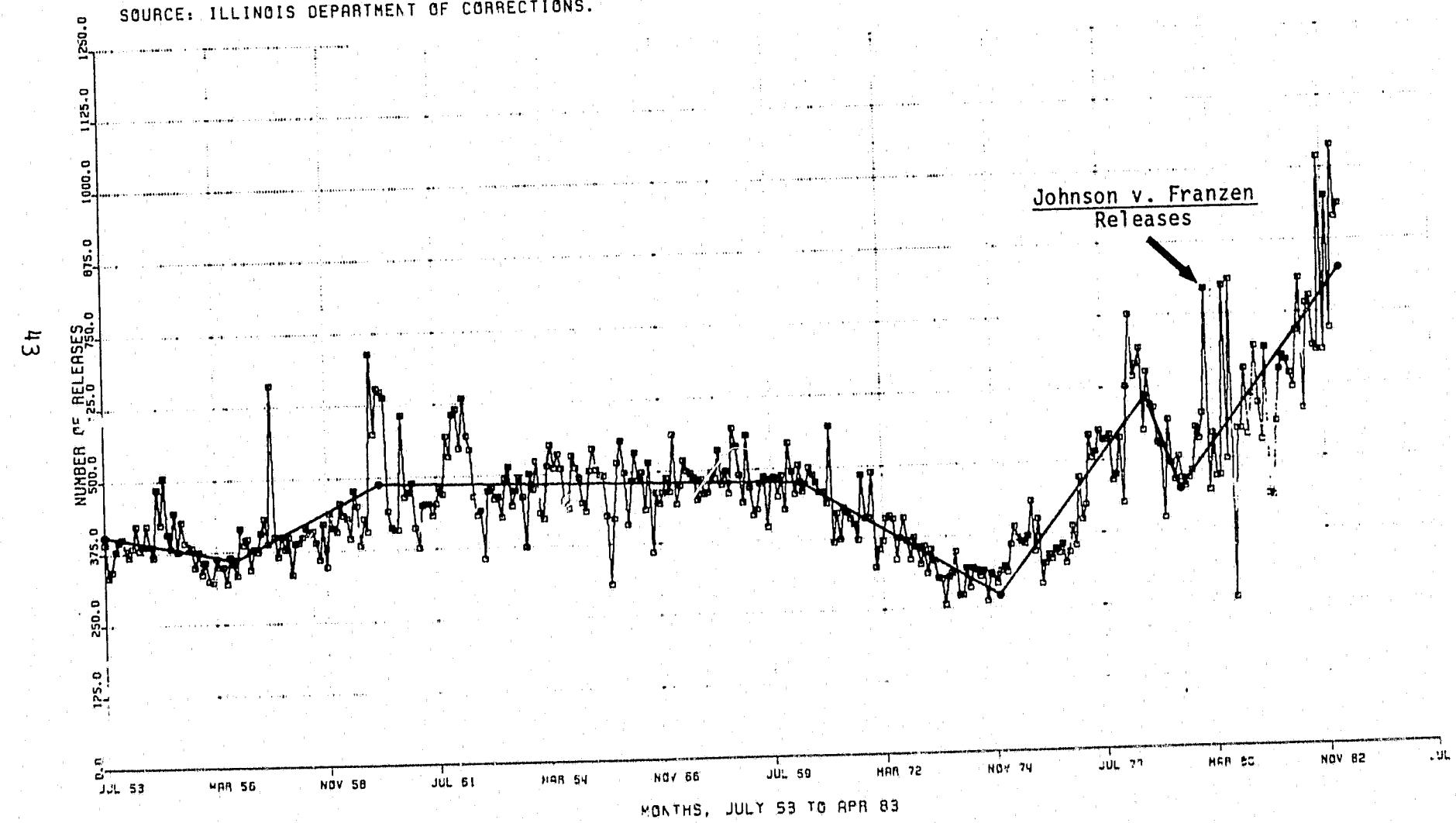


Figure 11

IDOC TOTAL RELEASES, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



IDOC's calculation of good time credits for inmates under determinate sentence. The Court ruled that IDOC was calculating good time credits incorrectly. Using the correct calculations, many inmates were immediately eligible for release. Figure 11 shows the effect of the ruling, with a high number of releases in January 1980.

Figure 11A shows the same total releases series, but with releases to community centers (work release) included monthly from July 1980. The addition of these releases raises monthly total releases to almost 1,250. This inclusion of people going to and from community centers has much more of an effect on the releases series than on the admissions series (Figure 5A). The slope of the final segment of the releases series is much steeper than the slope of the final segment of the admissions series. This difference indicates that releases from institutions, either to community supervision or work release, are increasing faster than admissions to institutions.¹⁵

Since 1978, several statutory, court-ordered, and administrative policy changes also have come to affect the pattern of total releases. Included are the 1978 determinate sentencing law, which substituted mandatory supervised release for parole, and the IDOC Director's use of "early" or "forced" release. The impact of each of these factors on the total number of releases is examined below.

Total Male Felony Releases

This series begins in January 1942, and is comprised of male parole, male mandatory supervised release, and "other" male felony discharges. The monthly number of male felony releases in early 1942 was between 350 and 400, but declined to about 300 by the end of the year.

As shown in Figure 12, the numbers of releases in August and September of 1943 were exceptionally high (458 and 672, respectively). These extremes were due to the "War Parole Program" that was undertaken during World War II (see p. 49).

The monthly number of male releases continued to decline through 1944, reaching about 250 by 1945. Recall that admissions also fell through 1944. Between 1945 and 1961, male releases increased slightly, but generally remained between 300 and 400 per month. March, April, and May of 1951, were exceptionally high months (between 530 and 620). July 1957, was also an extreme month (646). These extremes are due to high numbers of male felons released for reasons other than parole (i.e. expiration of sentence; see Figure 15).

¹⁵This is due, in part, to increased numbers of work release beds since 1978.

Figure 11A

IDOC TOTAL RELEASES, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.
INCLUDES RELEASES TO WORK RELEASE
BEGINNING IN JULY 1980.

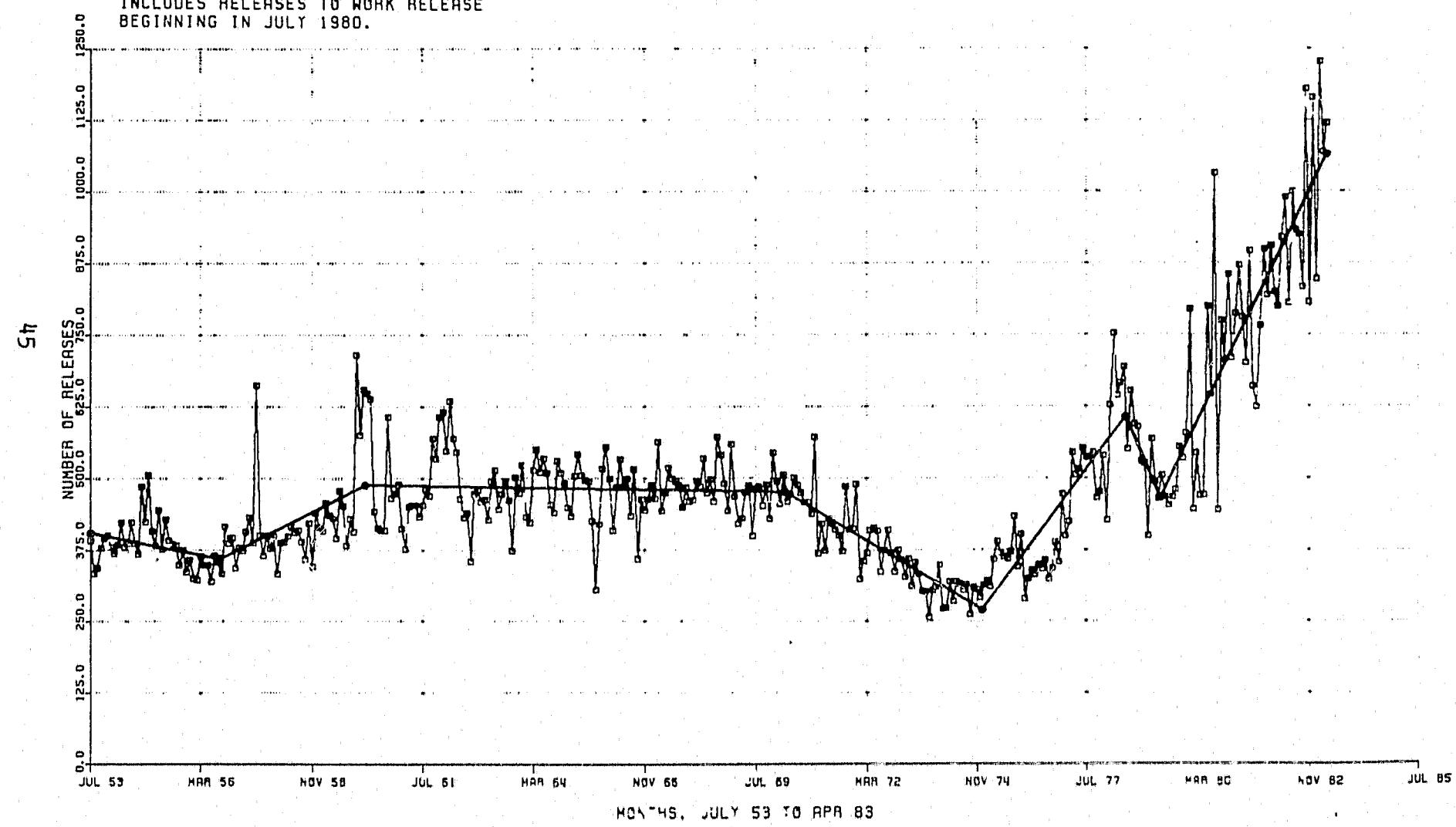
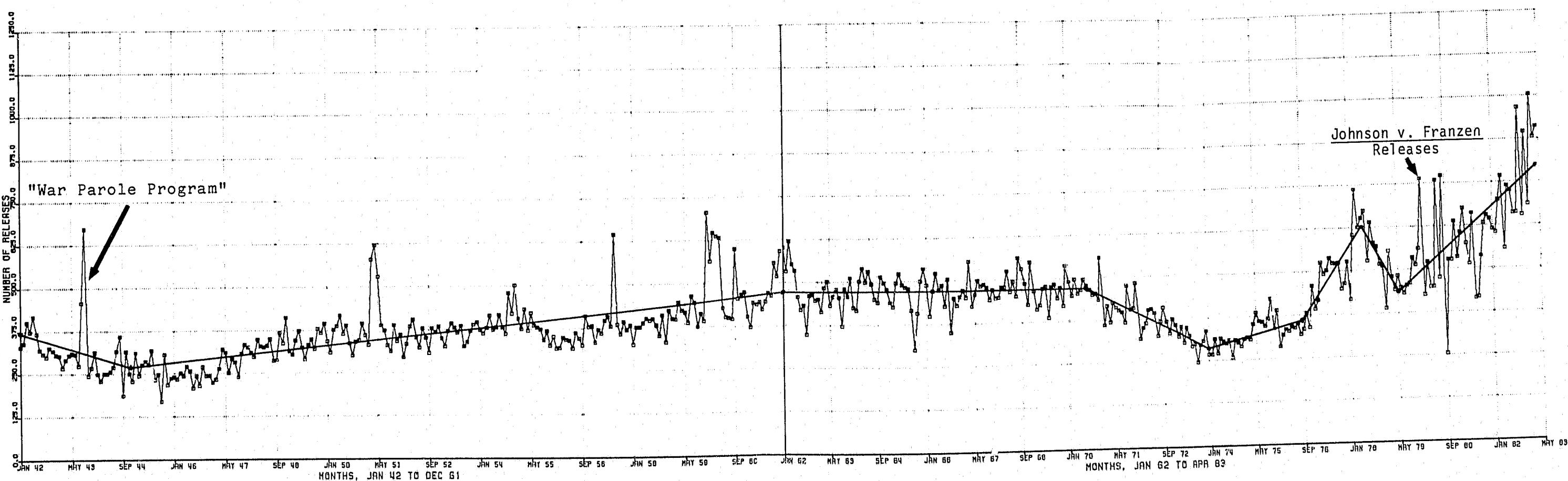


Figure 12

IDOC TOTAL MALE FELONY RELEASES, JANUARY 1942 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



Between December 1959 and mid-1962, the monthly number of releases fluctuated between about 400 and 700. After this, the differences between months settled down for several years, and the monthly releases remained at about 480 until mid-1970. This stable period was followed by a decrease in releases from late-1970 through 1973. During this time, the monthly number of releases fell to about 300. This decrease happened at a time when male commitments, which had been steady for many years, began to increase sharply.

From 1974 through mid-1978, the monthly number of male releases generally increased, then decreased for about a year, and then increased again to the end of the series. There is much variance in the final years of the series because of statutory changes and departmental early release programs. The pattern of total releases is, obviously, a composite of the patterns of its components: parole, mandatory supervised release, and other discretionary releases.

Male Felony Parole

For many years, especially before 1960, the number of males paroled from prison in Illinois accounted for only about one quarter of the total number of all males released.¹⁶

From 1941 through 1947, the monthly number of males paroled generally declined, from about 200 to 50 per month (Figure 13). There were noticeable differences between months throughout the war years, with August and September of 1943 being exceptionally high (316 and 496, respectively). The extremes are a result of the "War Parole Program", which was undertaken during World War II.

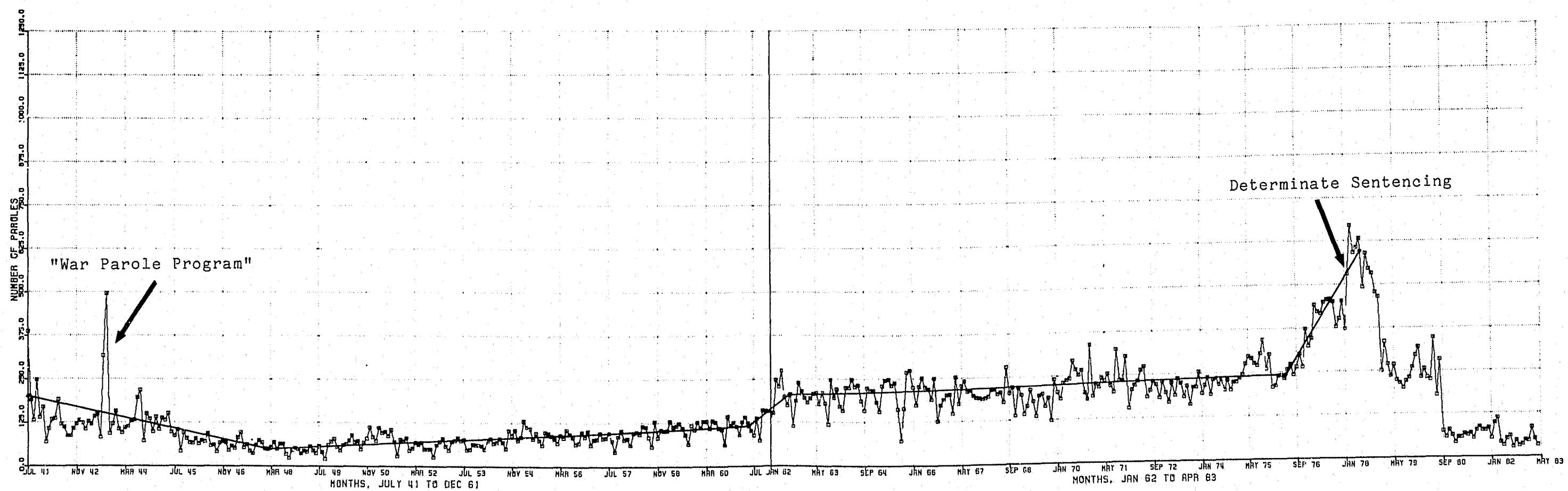
Recall that in the early 1940s, the total prison population was very high. According to the June 30, 1943 Monthly Population Movement Report, "Pearl Harbor marked the beginning of an epoch in the Illinois State Penitentiary, as it did in other prisons throughout the land. The inmates spontaneously appealed in great numbers to be inducted into military service of their country." In response to this appeal, and in an effort to reduce the prison population, eligible male prisoners were paroled to the army for periods of six months. If no problems arose in that time, the men were discharged from parole (although they remained in the army). As of June 30, 1945, 3,300 Illinois men had been paroled and inducted into the military through this program.

¹⁶Half of all male releasees during this period were misdemeanants; the remaining quarter were miscellaneous releases.

Figure 13

IDOC TOTAL MALE PAROLE, JULY 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



From 1948 through mid-1961, the monthly number of males paroled increased slightly, with little month-to-month variation, to just more than 100 per month. Between mid-1961 and mid-1962, there was a "jump" in the series, and the number of male paroles doubled to about 200. Recall that at this time the total IDOC population was at its highest level since 1942 (see Figure 1). While there were greater differences between months than in earlier years, the number of paroles only slightly increased overall between mid-1962 and 1975.

Beginning in 1976, the monthly number of males paroled from prison began to increase sharply, more than doubling in the next two years. In March 1978, 670 males were paroled, the highest monthly total in the series. This large increase corresponds to the legal institution of determinate sentencing, which brought the phase-out of parole and substituted mandatory supervised release. After the peak in March 1978, the monthly number of males paroled decreased sharply, reaching fewer than 50 per month by the end of the series. Eventually, every prisoner serving an indeterminate sentence will have been paroled, will have maxed out, or will have died in prison, and this data series will end.

Male Mandatory Supervised Release

On February 1, 1978, a determinate sentencing law for offenders went into effect. Under this law, inmates are eligible for "good conduct credits," at a rate of one day for each day served. Thus, for example, a person sentenced to 10 years may be entitled to five years of good time credit, and may be released in five years.

The Director of IDOC may also award "meritorious good time" at his or her discretion, in increments of up to 90 days. This practice has become the basis for an "early" or "forced" release program, whereby selected prisoners nearing the end of their sentence are given supervised release (see footnote 14, p. 42).

Now that determinate sentencing has replaced indeterminate sentencing and the parole system, prisoners who have served their sentence (with good time credit) are released to mandatory supervised release (MSR). As in the parole system, after release, these people are still under IDOC jurisdiction until the end of a stated supervision period. People who were sentenced before 1978 and who are still serving time have the choice of waiting for their regular parole, or having their remaining time recalculated with good time credit. Thus, there are increasingly fewer people being paroled after 1978.

Figure 14 shows the number of MSRs since 1979, along with the number of releases through parole. Note that, as paroles decreased from 1978, MSRs increased through the end of the series. By 1980, the number of monthly paroles and MSRs were roughly equal, hovering between about 200 and 400. By October 1982, MSRs hit almost 800 per month, surpassing the 1978 peak parole levels. By April 1983, there remained about 750 MSRs, but fewer than 50 paroles monthly.

Other Male Felony Releases (Non-parole and Non-MSR)

This series includes all male felons released for reasons other than parole and MSR. Included here are all expiration of sentences, including statutory paroles after 1973, Executive Clemencies, deaths, court-ordered, and other miscellaneous releases.

The pattern over time of the number of "other" male releases (Figure 15) is almost the opposite of the pattern of male paroles (Figure 13). Beginning in 1942, there were approximately 50 monthly other releases, increasing to about 90 per month by mid-1948. During this same time period, male paroles declined from about 150 to 50 per month. From 1948 through 1961, the number of other releases increased slightly, but generally remained between 90 and 120 per month.

During these 13 years, there were several months that had unusually high numbers of other releases. In March, April, and May of 1951, there were between 255 and 310 releases, versus only about 90 in surrounding months. In July 1957, there were 326 other male felon releases, all, according to IDOC, for expiration of sentence. Also, between December 1959 and April 1961, there was an average of 311 other male releases per month, mostly for expiration of sentence. After a final extreme month (246 in January 1962) the number of other releases dropped from about 140 to about 90 by 1963.

Note that from mid-1961 to mid-1962, the monthly number of male paroles doubled from about 100 to 200, and remained at that level for 12 years, while the monthly number of other male releases decreased to about 90, and remained there for seven years. The number of other releases then decreased again, reaching less than 20 per month by the end of 1973. However, from 1974 through the end of the series, the number of other releases began to increase again, reaching about 70 by 1983.



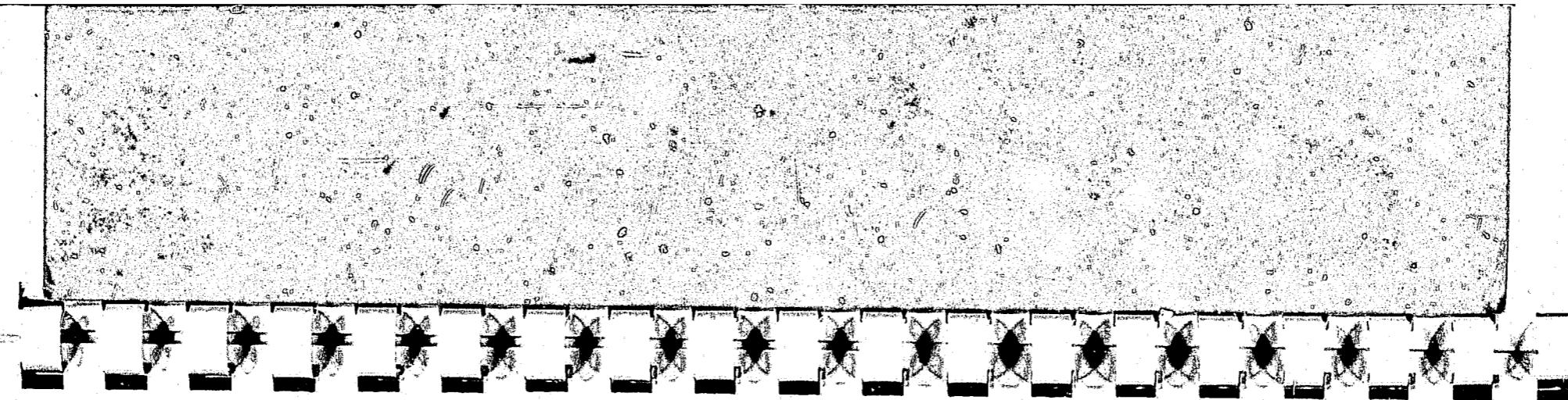


Figure 14

IDOC MALE PAROLE AND MANDATORY SUPERVISED RELEASES

PAROLE = ■
MANDATORY SUPERVISED RELEASE = ○

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

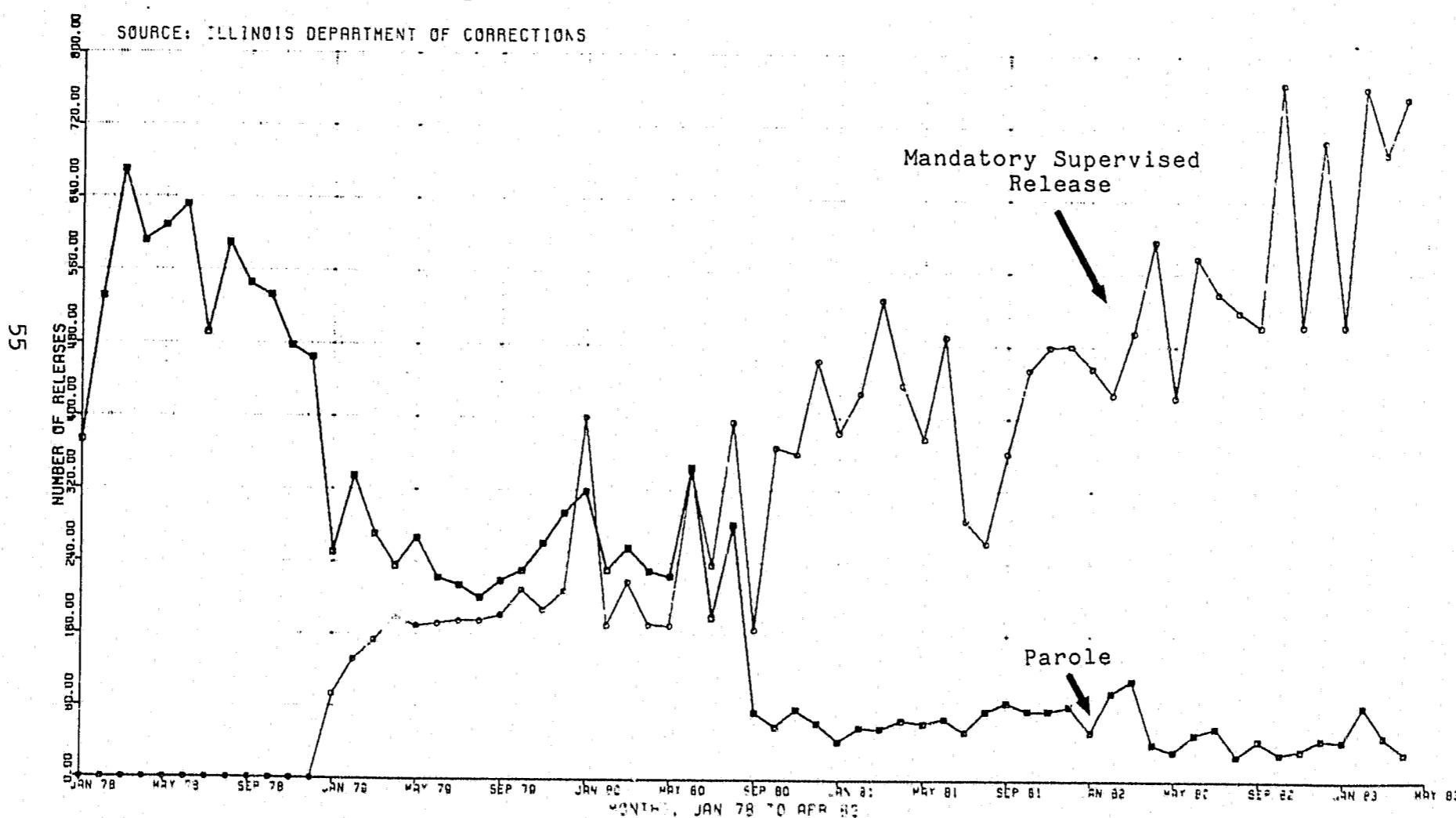
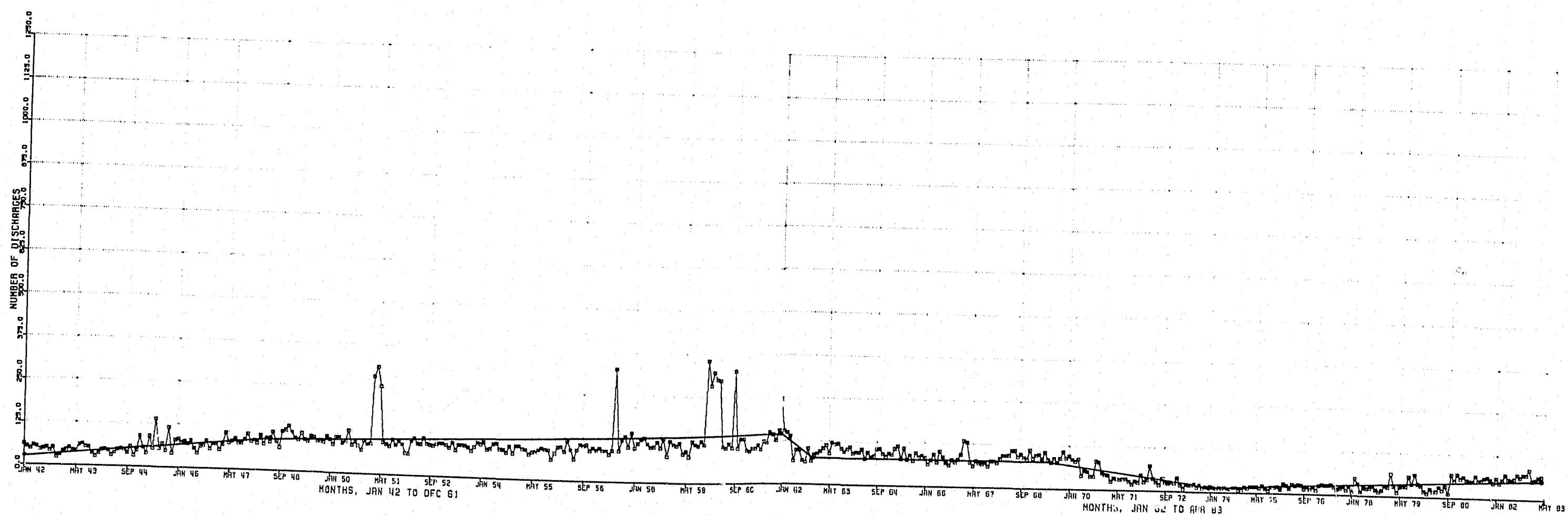


Figure 15

IDOC OTHER MALE FELONY RELEASES, JANUARY 1942 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

DISCHARGES ARE ALL THOSE OTHER THAN PAROLE AND HSR.



Male Misdemeanor Releases

This series is very similar to the male misdemeanor commitments series. The releases series began at just less than 200 per month, and declined during the war years. After reaching a low of about 65 in mid-1945, the number of releases began to increase again at about the same rate. This increase began about five months after the corresponding increase in misdemeanor commitments that began in early 1945. Figure 16 shows both the admissions and releases series. Note that the scales are the same for both series.

As with the misdemeanant commitments series, the misdemeanant releases series remained fairly steady through the 1950s and 1960s. The monthly number of releases varied throughout this period, but not by as much as monthly totals in the number of commitments. There was a slight overall decline in releases between 1949 and 1969, from just more than 200 to about 180 per month. In December 1954, there were 302 releases, the highest number in the series. This high number of releases may have been a reaction to a high number of admissions several months earlier, as releases tend to lag behind, but follow, admissions. This pattern can be seen again in late 1961, when releases increased for several months, reaching about 275 in December 1961. This increase in releases occurred almost immediately after the early 1961 surge in misdemeanor admissions.

Beginning in mid-1969, the number of releases began a steady decrease, reaching about 60 per month by 1974. After that, the number of releases leveled off for about two years, then declined again to about 25 per month by mid-1979. By 1983, the number of releases increased again to about 50 per month. Again, the decline in releases in the 1970s lags slightly behind the corresponding decrease in admissions.

Total Female Releases

This series (Figure 17) includes all types of female releases, including parole, MSR, expiration of sentence, and others. Data for females are not available separately for each type of release.

In mid-1953, there were fewer than 10 female releases per month, but by mid-1957, the number had increased to about 11. The monthly releases varied around this level until mid-1966, with a high of 23 in October 1963, and a low of one in September 1964. From mid-1957 until the end of 1974, the number of female releases decreased to about five per month.

Figure 16

IDOC MALE MISDEMEANOR COMMITMENTS AND RELEASES

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

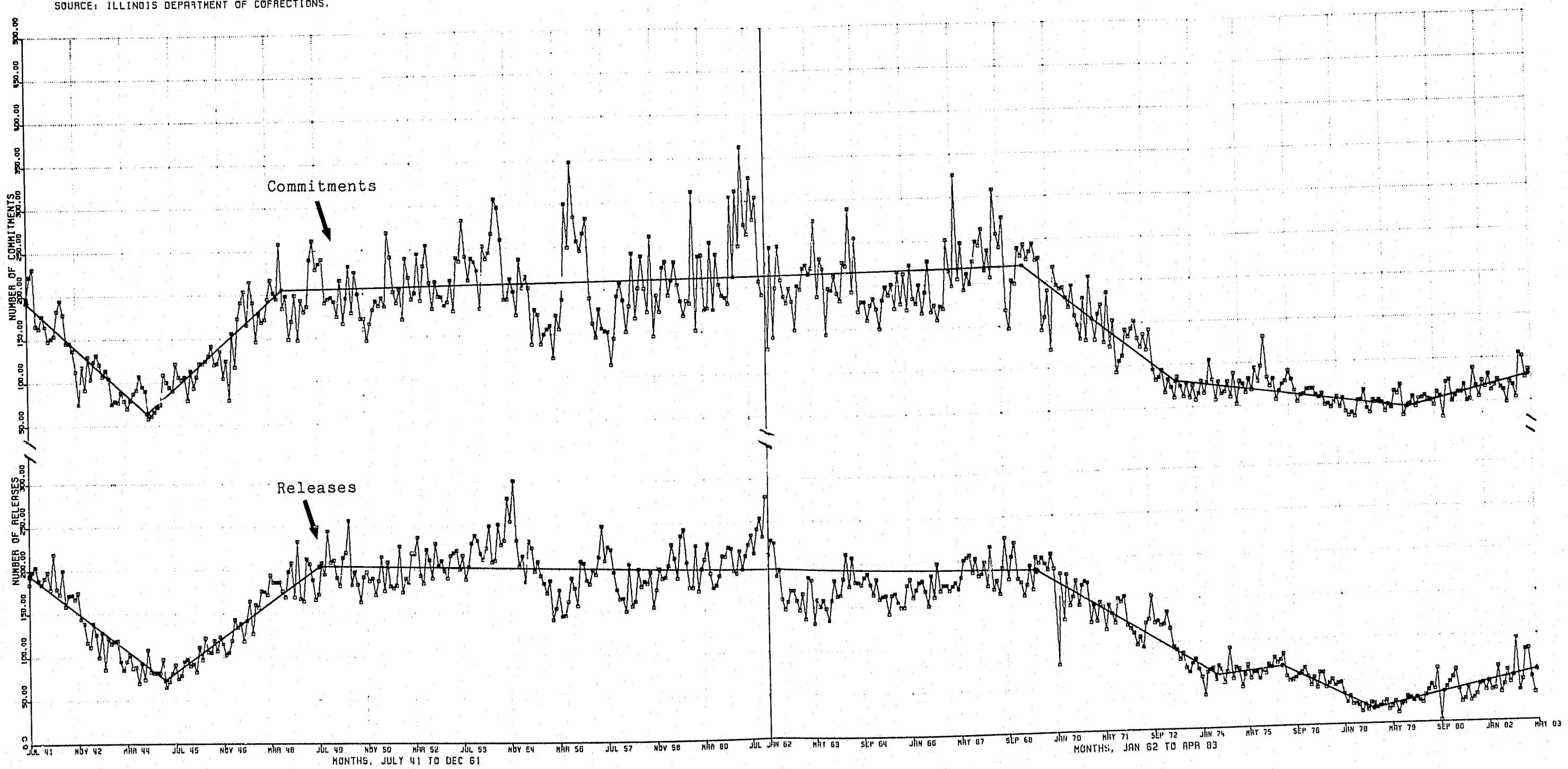
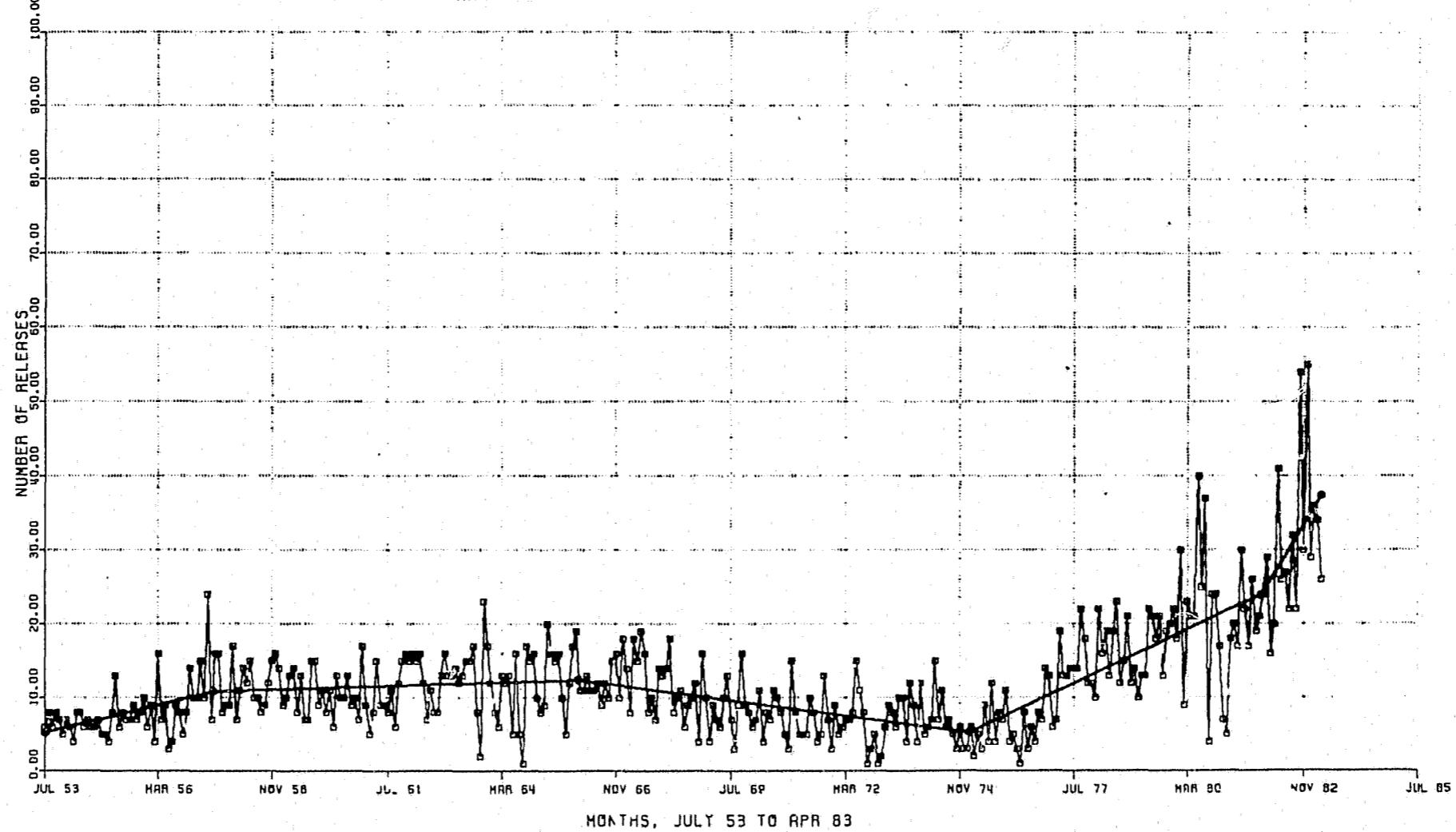


Figure 17

IDOC FEMALE RELEASES, JULY 1953 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



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1 OF 2

After 1974, the number of releases increased again, reaching about 24 by the end of 1981. Note that, as expected, the turning point of the female court commitments series from a decrease to an increase comes earlier than the corresponding turning point in the releases series (1973 versus 1975). In the final year of the series, the number of releases increased, due to two unusually high months; in October and December of 1982, there were 54 and 55 female releases, respectively. However, after about 1980, this series shows a great deal of month-to-month variation, with both very high and very low observations.

In summary, the releases series generally tend to follow, or lag, the admissions series. However, because of the exclusion of releases to community centers, each of the releases series is undercounted after 1969. Except for parole, which has continually decreased since the switch to determinate sentencing in 1978, and other miscellaneous discharges, all of the releases series have sharply increased in recent years to help accommodate increasing admissions, and to reduce the population levels.

End-of-Month Supervision Population

Originally called "Parolee Population," the title was changed to "Supervision Population" in 1978 with the advent of determinate sentencing and MSR. The series includes everyone released from prison who is still under some period of supervision.

The series begins at more than 4,200 per month in 1941 (Figure 18). After climbing to more than 4,600 for a few months, the number of people under supervision decreased by mid-1943 to less than 4,000. A large one month jump in the series of about 400 occurred in October 1943. This pattern roughly corresponds to the large number of male felons paroled in August and September of that year into the armed forces. Six months later, as expected, the supervision population decreased again, although not as much as the large corresponding war parole increase.

After this initial fluctuation, the series generally declined until late 1949, when it reached about 1,300. From late 1949 to about mid-1961, the series was very smooth, generally increasing very gradually, to about 2,100. Between mid-1961 and early 1963, there was a brief but sharp increase to about 3,000, after which the series leveled off. Following a slight decrease to about 2,700 by mid-1969, the number of people under supervision began to increase, slightly at first, to about 3,300 in mid-1974, then rapidly to more than 9,000 by the end of 1978. One month, December 1975, was abnormally low (3,572 versus 4,261 and 4,466 for the previous and following months). The number of males paroled around this period does not account for this extreme low observation.

The supervision population increase that began in late 1974 is a good example of the effects that different variables have on IDOC system flow. This increase can be attributed to the increase in total releases that began at about the same time. As releases increase, the number of people under supervision will increase as well. Recall that the increase in releases was prompted by an increase in total admissions that began in early 1974. With the large increase in admissions during the mid-1970s, prison crowding became problematic, and one of IDOC's ways of coping was to increase the number of people released. Also, with the beginning of statutory parole in 1973, more of the people released from prison were subject to supervision than before.

The large decrease in the supervision population during 1979 from about 9,000 to less than 7,000 occurred when an effort was made by IDOC to review and "clean" the supervision caseload (for example, removing people who had

died while under supervision, but who had never been removed from the population count). Since that decrease, the supervision population has resumed its increasing trend, except for a slight dip in 1981, reaching more than 10,500 in 1983.

IDOC SUPERVISION POPULATION

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.

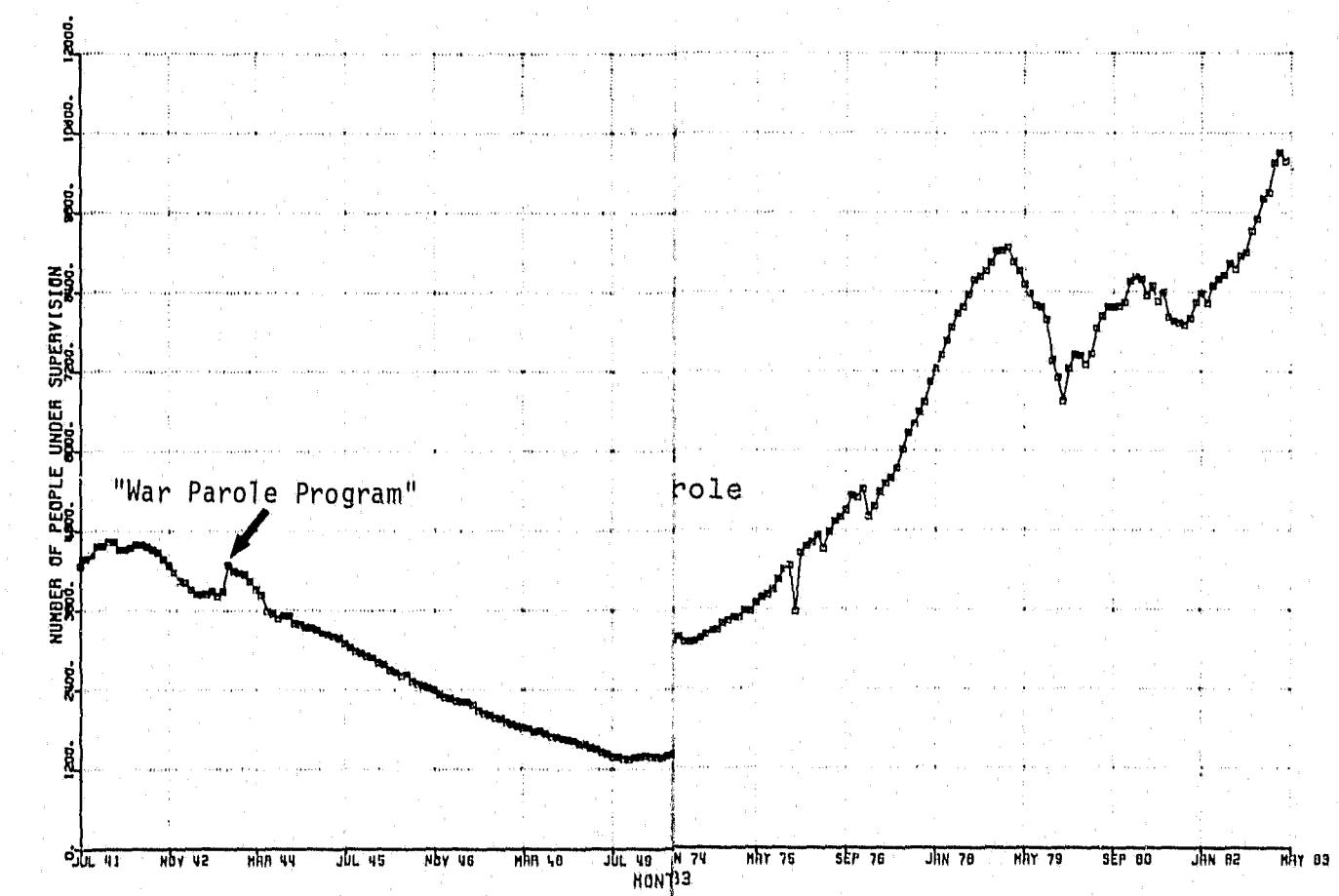
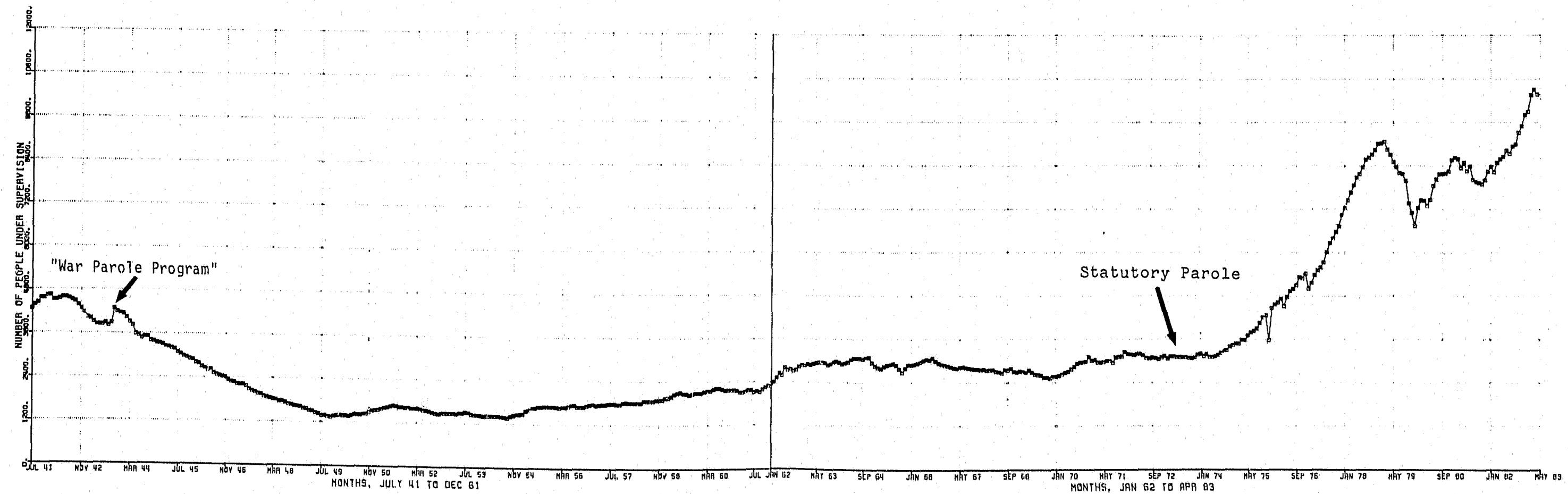


Figure 18

IDOC SUPERVISION POPULATION, JULY 1941 - APRIL 1983

SOURCE: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS.



SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Between 1974 and April 1983, the total IDOC population increased almost 125 percent, from less than 6,000 to more than 13,200. This population level is the highest since 1939.

Between 1941 and 1983, the prison population was influenced by several things. During World War II, the population rapidly decreased due to decreased admissions (more crime-prone-age males were entering the military), and increased releases (parole of more than 3,300 incarcerated males into the armed forces). After the war, the prison population increased, as adult males returned to civilian life. Through the 1950s, the prison population generally increased gradually, but with no large increases like those seen earlier. By 1961, the population had crept back up to 1940 levels.

The population peak in 1961 reflects not only increasing male, but also increasing female, inmate population. The female population was at a then all-time high in 1961, and constituted approximately 3 percent of the total IDOC adult population. Although the female population was not as strongly affected by the war as was the male population, the same factors that influenced the male prison population in 1961 may have also affected the female population. Because admissions were not especially high at this time (except, possibly for male misdemeanants), this population level may be explained by increased lengths of stay.

After 1961, the total population decreased, reaching, in 1974, the lowest level since 1929. This long decrease is interesting, given that arrests of both males and females generally increased during the early 1970s.¹⁷ Beginning in 1974, however, and continuing into 1983, the prison population more than doubled, and today remains at the highest level ever. Females still constitute approximately 3 percent of the total.

We have analyzed the patterns of all types of IDOC admissions and releases, and have found several interesting things. First, the large jump in prison population since 1974 is due not only to increases in male felony commitments from court, but also to increases in male defaults (readmissions) and to increases in female commitments and defaults.

¹⁷ See Lucas (1983) *Female Criminaity, 1970-1980: The U.S. and Illinois* for discussion of trends in male and female criminality based on arrest data.

One of the reasons for the increase in the number of defaults was the enactment of statutory parole in 1973. This law broadened the pool of prison releasees who are released to supervision (prior to enactment of the law, some would have been discharged without supervision.) The effect of this was to increase the number of potential defaulters. For example, without the law, people who were discharged, and then committed another crime, might end up in prison again as "commitments from court." However, under statutory parole, these same people, if convicted of a new crime while still under supervision, might be readmitted to prison as "defaulters." Thus, the statutory parole law probably had some effect on the increase in the default component of the prison population after 1973.

It is important to consider, however, whether the increase in defaults after 1973 was due to a high number of new sentence readmissions, or a high number of technical violation readmissions. If the former, the population increase due to this group of inmates would have occurred even without the statutory parole law. If the latter, perhaps the increase in defaults would have been lower, as one cannot be a technical violator unless released under supervision.

The second possibility seems to be the case, at least toward the end of the series. For several months in 1980 and 1981, there apparently was an administrative decision to revoke only the releases of certain types of technical violators. The number of monthly defaults dropped during that time by about half, indicating that a good proportion of male defaults are actually technical violators. A case-by-case analysis of the default series would probably give a better indication of the effect of the statutory parole law. In any event, we do know that this law did have an effect on the IDOC supervision population. The caseload increased rapidly after 1973.

Before the recent court decision ending its use, there had been much public debate over the use of the "early" or "forced" release program as a means of reducing the prison population. But, as we have seen, discretionary releases have been used for this and other reasons throughout Illinois prison history. The World War II war parole program, for example, lowered the prison population by more than 3,300. In the early 1960s, we saw high numbers of "other" (non-parole) releases, that undoubtedly helped ease crowding.

The pattern description methodology used in this report has helped accomplish three objectives. First, we defined and cleaned more than 40 years of IDOC data, and more than 20 component data sets. Second, we specified which components of the total population had important (and not so

important) effects on the pattern over time of the population. And finally, we have laid a solid foundation for future use of these data, for causal analyses, or prison population projections.

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