1909-1907-1906-1904-1903-1901-1894-1888-1886-

The existing concrete walls and associated towers were built

Annie Bruce, the last female inmate to be

The state penitentiary purchases a woolen mill at

The broom factory is burnt down by prisoners. Frank

Two consecutive days, nearly thirty inmates escape through the wooden stockade, killing Rawlins resident, Charles Stressner. Three inmates (Paseo, Baxtrum, and Richardson) are killed before they are returned to the penitentiary.

Joseph Seng is executed on May 24, 1912 on the Julien Gallows, the same apparatus used to hang Tom Horn in Cheyenne in 1903. The broom factory is burnt down by prisoners. Frank Wigfall, held for the rape of an elderly Rawlins woman, is lynched by the other inmates. On two consecutive days, nearly thirty inmates escape through the wooden stockade, killing Rawlins resident, Charles Stressner. Three inmates (Paseo, Baxtrum, and Richardson) are killed before they are returned to the penitentiary.

1913-1915-1917-1919-

The shirt factory is burnt down and promptly rebuilt.

J. Warren Jenkins is fined and then executed by hanging.

W.F. Carrick is shot and killed his third night on duty, foiling an escape attempt.

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The existing concrete walls and associated towers were built onto the west end of the cell house.

Overcrowding requires thirty-two additional cells be built onto the west end of the cell house.

The cell house is complete with 104 cells, no electricity or running water, and inadequate heating.

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Charles Stressner. Three inmates (Paseo, Baxtrum, and Richardson) are killed before they are returned to the penitentiary.

Willard Flanders, W.P. Palmer, and Oscar White are finally completed to prevent any more mass escapes.

Another cell block addition on the west end is built to house approximately eighty men. George Brownfield and Charles Aragon are hanged.

Talton Talor is the last man to be hanged by the state of Wyoming.

The federal Hawes-Cooper law prohibits the sale or transportation of prison manufactured goods from one state to another. This was the demise of the shirt factory, ending an era of significant revenue.

The outbreak of World War II curtailed any major construction projects owing to material shortages and diminished prison population. Under the direction of Jack Masson, the prison woolen mill produces the highest quality wool blankets for the military and was awarded the “Navy E”. Stanley Lantzer is executed with lethal gas.

The area above the shower room that had been converted to a recreation area is closed following the death of an officer killed by inmates.

Hole” is converted to additional classroom space. The Gymnasium and Chapel complex were completed on the second story of C Block.

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The state penitentiary purchases a woolen mill at Oconto, Wisconsin for a new prison industry.

Inmate paintings adorn the walls throughout the prison.

Yee Geow is executed by hanging on March 11, 1921.

Inmates were fed at steel tables in the kitchen cafeteria.
While outlaws roamed the windswept high plains, canyons and mountains of post-Civil War Wyoming, the Territorial Legislature was planning a state-of-the-art penitentiary at Rawlins in anticipation of statehood. This new Wyoming State Penitentiary, which served from 1901 until 1981, would send a strong message to free-wheeling desperados: Wyoming would NO LONGER be a haven for the lawless.

The Old Pen, as the Wyoming Frontier Prison is affectionately called today, is “haunted by history”. Tales of great train robbers, wily escapes and of women driven to crimes of passion are told on the regularly scheduled guided tours offered daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Group tours and off season tours are also available.

Visitors may browse through history in the prison museum where historical information sits side-by-side with confiscated inmate-made weapons and an exhibit of the movie, “Prison”, filmed on location in 1987.

The Old Pen Gift Shop offers souvenirs and western gifts. The proceeds from the tours and gift shop are used to support the Historic Site with restoration efforts and operational costs.

The Friends of the Old Pen are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1991 to support the Wyoming Frontier Prison in our efforts to preserve and share the history of our great historic site. This is a membership based organization, and the support of this group has been immensely helpful over the years. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Friends of the Old Pen, please visit wyomingfrontierprison.org for more information.

You can also write to:
Friends of the Old Pen
500 W. Walnut St.
Rawlins, WY 82301

Guided Tours, Museum, Gift Shop & Nature Area
Stand inside a dark tiny cell, sit in the Gas Chamber, and fill your senses with the history of old Wyoming. Observe inmate artwork with an ominous message and walk within the great stone walls. Explore the 49.5 acre facility where approximately 13,500 inmates lived and worked, under often brutal conditions, over the 80 year operation of Wyoming’s first state penitentiary.

wyomingfrontierprison.org