



# The Farm: Life Inside a Women's Prison

Andi Rierden

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Written by a journalist, this book depicts the day-to-day struggles and concerns of inmates a the Connecticut Correctional Institution in Niantic (renamed the Janet S. York correctional Institution), the state's only prison for women. Build in 1917 as a work farm for prostitutes, unwed mothers, and other women of allegedly immoral character, "the Farm," as it is still called, has long served as a barometer of prevailing social attitudes toward women.

In the summer of 1992, Andi Rierden obtained permission from the warden at Niantic to conduct research on life inside the institution. During the next three and a half years, she spent more than fifteen hundred hours among the women, recording interviews, strolling the grounds with inmates and corrections officers, sharing meals, attending classes and group counseling sessions, and tracking former inmates after their release.

The stories these women tell shed light ton a wide range of issues, from the effects of more stringent drug laws and sentences to the rise of violence among inmates. In the process it becomes clear that the ideal of rehabilitation has been largely abandoned and replaced by a belief in punishment and retribution.



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