Poor children during the 1800s used petty theft as a way to provide themselves with the basic needs for survival.

These children used their earnings to pay for sources of entertainment such as the theater and other public attractions.

Society attempted to solve this problem by putting children into oppressively strict houses like the House of Refuge.

We can learn a lot about these children along with their time period through Material Culture.

House of Refuge Objectives

- Labor: Offenders contribute to the cost of their maintenance
  - Manual labor
- Moral Reformation: Rehabilitation
  - Honors class
  - Night duties
- Punishment: Make examples out of them
  - Penitentiary style discipline
  - Flagellation, whipping, solitary confinement
- The House of Refuge inspired prisons to run under the same conditions as them, such as: Auburn & Mount Pleasant
  - Solitary night cells
  - Labor & meals performed in silence
  - Prompt punishment

Conclusion

- Poor children turned to crime as a way to survive as well as a way to pass the free time.
- The House of Refuge was a way to take these children off the streets and rehabilitate them.
- It enforced a strict and often inhumane discipline system which became an inspiration for new penitentiaries like Auburn and Mount Pleasant.
- These penitentiaries began following the same strict levels of discipline.
- People started to realize that in order to stop crime, harshly punishing these children was not the way.
- Society realized that these children needed to be educated and employed as opposed to being punished through cruel treatment.
- The School of Reform was then developed as a way to educate and make these children useful members of society.
- The children reacted positively to this change and the results were becoming more evident that this was the solution.
- The new solution helped transform petty juvenile criminals into the future of the United States.