Due to a group of wealthy businessmen, the New York House of Refuge became the first movement in what was to later become the juvenile justice system. Cadwallader Colden, John Griscom, Stephen Allen, Thomas Eddy began as the “Society for the Prevention of Pauperism.” Sending juveniles to prison was “barbaric” and “inhumane.” The aim of the justice system was to eradicate the habit and the desire of “vicious indulgence.” Revenue sources were deemed appropriate since societal leaders blamed immigration for juvenile crime.

“The design of the proposed institution is, to furnish, in the first place, an asylum, in which boys under a certain age, who become subject to the notice of our police, either as vagrants, or homeless, or charged with petty crimes, may be received, judiciously classed according to their degree of depravity or innocence, put to work at such employments as will tend to encourage industry and ingenuity, taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and most carefully instructed in the nature of their moral and religious obligations while at the same time, they are subjected to a course of treatment, that will afford a prompt and energetic corrective of their vicious propensities, and hold out every possible inducement to reformation and good conduct.”

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