

Louisiana State Penitentiary signed a contract with Sara, Inc.(a blood plasma company) that provided for the corporation to “bleed” inmates on penitentiary property for a fee to both the state and the inmate. Lab technicians, or sometimes fellow inmates, would draw inmate blood to extract the plasma for the laboratory. The inmates, faced with rising costs at the penitentiary-owned canteen, but earning two-cents an hour in the fields at the time, at first appreciated the “bleeding” as a way to earn extra money. The program was so popular that at one point, inmates were “bled” 24 hours a day and were woken up by guards for their shifts. In the 1980’s, inmates received \$6.50 per pint of plasma, and the state \$1.25 (placed in the inmate welfare fund). The lab however paid higher rates outside the prisons and the inmates organized a strike for better wages, though the strike was not successful. Sources: The Angolite (Sept. 1979 and July 1982)

“Money for this fund is derived mainly from income generated by the institution through the sale of goods purchased by inmates from the prison commissary and vending machines . Another major source of income for the welfare fund at LCIS is the blood plasma program conducted by SARA, Inc. During fiscal year 1973 this program produced and supplied revenues of \$20,289 to the welfare fund and \$70,235 to the inmate accounts.” Fn. 66, 1973 LA SAC to USCCR, Study of Adult Corrections at 44.