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Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin

Jail Inmates, 1990

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At midyear 1990 local jails in the United States held an estimated 405,320 persons, a 2.5% increase from 1989. Overall jail occupancy was 104% of the rated capacity of the Nation's jails. The average daily jail population for the year ending June 29, 1990, was 408,075, a 5.5% increase since 1989. (See appendix table.) The percentage growth in both the midyear count and the average daily population was significantly lower than the increases recorded between 1988 and 1989 (15%). These findings are from the 1990 Annual Survey of Jails, which obtained data from 1,135 jails in 804 jurisdictions, approximately a

Table 1. Jail population: One-day count and average daily population, by legal status and sex, 1989-90

	Number of Jail Inmates		
	Annual Survey of Jails 1989	1990	Percent change, 1989-90
One-day count			
All inmates	395,553	405,320	2.5%
Adults	393,303	403,019	2.5
Male	356,050	365,821	2.7
Female	37,253	37,198	-
Juveniles*	2,250	2,301	2.3
Average daily population			
All inmates	386,845	408,075	5.5%
Adults	384,954	405,935	5.5
Male	349,180	368,091	5.4
Female	35,774	37,844	5.8
Juveniles*	1,891	2,140	13.2

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990.

-Less than 0.5%.

*Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because less than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

third of all jails. The jails surveyed are facilities administered by local officials and designed to hold persons for more than 48 hours but usually for less than 1 year.

Other survey findings include:

- During the year ending June 29, 1990, there were nearly 20 million jail admissions and releases.
 - Males constituted 91% and females, 9% of all jail inmates. Whites were 51% of the local jail population; blacks, 47%; and other races, 2% of those inmates reporting race. Hispanics were 14% of all inmates.
 - Unconvicted inmates (those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial) were 51% of the adults being held in jails; convicted inmates (those awaiting or serving a sentence or those returned to jail for violating probation or parole) were 49%.
 - Jails were operating at 104% of capacity in 1990, down from 108% in 1989.
 - There were 508 jurisdictions with at least 100 jail inmates as an average daily population in the most recent census (1988). In 1990 these jurisdictions operated 832 jails, which held a total of 327,917 inmates or about 81% of all jail inmates in the country.
- In these jurisdictions —
- overall occupancy was 111% of rated capacity;
 - 87% of the jurisdictions held inmates for other authorities;
 - of the 37,965 inmates held for other authorities in 1990, 24,238 were being held because of crowding elsewhere, principally in State prisons;

June 1991

This Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin presents findings from the Annual Survey of Jails, conducted on June 29, 1990. The survey provides estimates of the country's jail inmate population in the years between nationwide jail censuses. This is the seventh survey in the series and the second following the 1988 Census of Local Jails.

We at BJS hope that this Bulletin will assist policymakers, practitioners, and the general public in assessing the current demands of a vital component of the Nation's criminal justice system.

The 1990 Annual Survey of Jails and this Bulletin would not have been possible without the generous cooperation of jail administrators and staff whose facilities were selected for the survey.

Steven D. Dillingham, Ph.D.
Director

- 28% of the jurisdictions had at least one jail under court order to limit population, and 30% were under court order to improve one or more conditions of confinement;
- 35% of the jurisdictions reported at least one jail with an inmate death during the year;
- 494 inmate deaths were reported for these facilities during the year ending June 29, 1990, 42% from natural causes (other than AIDS);
- AIDS-related deaths accounted for 17% of all deaths, up from 14% in 1989.

One-day counts

On June 29, 1990, the estimated number of inmates held in local jails was 405,320, an increase of 2.5% over the number held on June 30, 1989 (table 1). Per capita, local jails held 162 persons for every 100,000 U.S. residents. One in every 457 adult residents of the United States was in jail on June 29, 1990.

Most juveniles in correctional custody are housed in juvenile facilities. Fewer than 1% of the inmates of the Nation's jails in 1990 were juveniles. An estimated 2,301 juveniles were housed in adult jails across the country on June 29, 1990. (For a definition of juveniles, see *Methodology*.)

Average daily population

The average daily population for the year ending June 29, 1990, was 408,075, an increase of 5.5% from 1989. The average daily population for males increased 5% from the number in 1989; during the same period, the female average daily population increased 6%. The average daily juvenile population for the year ending June 29, 1990, was 2,140.

Adult conviction status

On June 29, 1990, convicted inmates made up 49% of all adults inmates (table 2). The number of convicted inmates increased 4% since 1989. Convicted inmates include those awaiting sentencing or serving a sentence and those returned to jail because they had violated the conditions of their probation or parole.

Table 2. Conviction status of adult jail inmates, by sex, 1989-90

	Number of jail inmates in Annual Survey of Jails	
	1989	1990
Total number of adult inmates	393,303	403,019
Convicted	189,012	195,661
Male	171,181	177,619
Female	17,831	18,042
Unconvicted	204,291	207,358
Male	184,869	188,202
Female	19,422	19,156

Note: Data are for June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990. Annual Survey of Jails data may underestimate the number of convicted inmates and overestimate the number of unconvicted inmates. Some facility records do not distinguish inmates awaiting sentence (or other convicted persons) from unconvicted inmates. The 1989 Survey of Inmates of Local Jails figures indicate that 43% of the inmates were unconvicted and 57% were convicted.

From 1989 to 1990 the reported number of unconvicted inmates increased 2%. Unconvicted inmates include those on trial or awaiting arraignment or trial.

Demographic characteristics

Males accounted for 91% of the jail inmate population (table 3). The adult male inmate population increased 3% since 1989. For adults an estimated 1 in every 241 men and 1 in every 2,581 women residing in the United States were in a local jail on June 29, 1990.

White inmates made up 51% of the jail population; blacks, 47%; and other races (Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders), 2%. The Hispanic percentage of the jail population (14%) remained unchanged from 1989 to 1990.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of jail inmates, 1990

Characteristic	Percent of jail inmates
Total	100%
Sex	
Male	91%
Female	9
Race	
White	51%
Male	46
Female	5
Black	47
Male	43
Female	4
Other*	2
Male	1
Female	--
Ethnicity	
Hispanic	14%
Male	13
Female	1
Non-Hispanic	86
Male	78
Female	8

Note: Data are for June 29, 1990. Race was reported for 90% of the inmates in 1990. Detail may not add to total because of rounding.
 --Less than 0.5%.
 *Native Americans, Aleuts, Asians, and Pacific Islanders.

Population movement

During the year ending June 29, 1990, there were nearly 20 million admissions and releases from local jails, about equally divided between the two categories (table 4). The estimated volume of admissions increased by 3% between 1989 and 1990. Total admissions and releases for the year ending June 29, 1990, were 16,998 for juvenile females, 102,139 for juvenile males, 2.2 million for adult females, and 17.6 million for adult males.

Occupancy

The number of jail inmates increased 2.5% from 1989, while the total rated capacity of the Nation's jails rose 6% (table 5). Between 1989 and 1990 the percentage of rated capacity occupied fell 4 points to 104%.

Table 4. Annual jail admissions and releases, by legal status and sex, 1989-90

	Number of jail admissions and releases	
	1989	1990
Total admissions	9,774,096	10,064,927
Adults	9,720,102	10,005,138
Male	8,606,700	8,894,706
Female	1,113,402	1,110,432
Juveniles*	53,994	59,789
Male	45,294	51,226
Female	8,700	8,563
Total releases	9,494,814	9,870,546
Adults	9,442,773	9,811,198
Male	8,367,519	8,723,872
Female	1,075,254	1,087,326
Juveniles*	52,041	59,348
Male	43,559	50,913
Female	8,482	8,435

Note: Data are for years ending June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990.
 *Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court.

Table 5. Jail capacity and occupancy, selected years, 1978-90

	National Jail Census			Annual Survey of Jails	
	1978	1983	1988	1989	1990
Number of inmates	158,394	223,551	343,569	395,553	405,320
Rated capacity of jails	245,094	261,556	339,633	367,769	389,171
Percent of rated capacity occupied*	65%	85%	101%	108%	104%

Note: Data are for February 15, 1978, June 30, 1983, 1988, 1989, and June 29, 1990.
 *Percent of rated capacity occupied is based on the 1-day count of inmates.

Characteristics of jurisdictions with large jail populations

On June 29, 1990, 81% of the Nation's local jail inmates were housed in the facilities of 508 jurisdictions, each with an average daily population of at least 100 incarcerated persons at the time of the 1988 Census of Local Jails (table 6). These jurisdictions accounted for 832 jails holding 327,917 inmates. The annual growth in the number of inmates housed in large jails (1.7%) was lower than the 2.5% growth of the total jail population.

Approximately 87% of the jurisdictions with large jail populations had one or more jails holding inmates for other authorities on June 29, 1990 — approximately the same proportion as in 1989. About 78% of the jurisdictions that were holding inmates for other authorities were holding them for State authorities. Approximately 12% of all inmates in large jail jurisdictions were being held for other authorities, nearly 4,100 fewer than in 1989. The number being held for State authorities in 1990 was 17% lower than in the previous year — a development that contributed to slower jail population growth in 1990.

Table 6. Impact of inmates held for other authorities, 1989-90

	Number of jurisdictions/inmates	
	1989	1990
Jurisdictions with large jail populations	508	508
Jurisdictions holding inmates for other authorities: *	446	444
Federal	250	246
State	341	346
Local	229	225
Jurisdictions holding inmates because of crowding elsewhere:	259	262
All inmates in jurisdictions with large jail populations	322,314	327,917
Inmates being held for other authorities:	42,053	37,965
Federal	7,301	8,182
State	31,814	26,277
Local	2,938	3,506
Inmates being held because of crowding elsewhere:	29,358	24,238

Note: Data are for June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990, and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more at the time of the 1988 Census of Local Jails.

*Detail adds to more than total because some jurisdictions hold inmates for more than one authority.

Table 7. Rated capacity and percent of capacity occupied, 1989-90

Jurisdictions with large jail populations	Number of jurisdictions		Rated Capacity		Number of jail inmates		Percent of capacity occupied	
	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990
Total	508	508	276,706	294,965	322,314	327,917	116%	111%
Jurisdictions with no jail under court order to reduce population	374	366	198,764	149,339	160,129	162,792	115%	109%
Jurisdictions with at least one jail under court order to reduce population	134	142	137,942	145,626	162,185	165,125	118%	113%

However, the number of inmates being held for both Federal authorities and other local authorities was higher than in 1989.

A majority of jurisdictions with large jail populations (52%) was holding inmates on June 29, 1990, because of crowding elsewhere. Of the 37,965 local jail inmates held for other authorities in 1990, 64% or 24,238 were detained because of crowding elsewhere, mostly in State prisons.

While overall occupancy in the Nation's jails was 4% above rated capacity in 1990, occupancy in jurisdictions with large jail populations was 11% above rated capacity (table 7). The number of large jail jurisdictions with at least 1 jail under court order to reduce crowding increased from 134 in 1989 to 142 in 1990.

Jail administrators responded to these judicial demands by increasing the rated capacity of facilities in large jail jurisdictions by 7% in 1990 — an expansion approximately 4 times greater than inmate population growth in large jurisdictions.

Jail administrators also responded to court directives to improve specific conditions of confinement. There were 152 large jail jurisdictions under court order for specific conditions in 1990, compared to 156 in 1989 (table 8). Appreciably fewer jurisdictions were operating under court orders to improve disciplinary procedures, administrative segregation policies, medical facilities or services, inmate classification practices, and grievance procedures. However, 1 more jurisdiction was under court order for crowded living conditions in 1990 (128) than in 1989 (127).

Table 8. Jurisdictions under court order to reduce population or to improve conditions of confinement, 1989 and 1990

	Number of jurisdictions with large jail populations					
	Total		Ordered to limit population		Not ordered to limit population	
	1989	1990	1989	1990	1989	1990
Total	508	508	134	142	374	366
Jurisdictions under court order citing specific conditions of confinement	156	152	125	128	31	24
Subject of court order:						
Crowded living units	127	128	115	119	12	9
Recreational facilities	71	67	55	56	16	11
Medical facilities or services	60	50	45	41	15	9
Visitation practices or policies	51	42	40	37	11	5
Disciplinary procedures or policies	49	32	39	25	10	7
Food service	36	36	29	30	7	6
Administrative segregation procedures or policies	40	26	33	23	7	3
Staffing patterns	57	51	47	43	10	8
Grievance procedures or policies	44	34	35	28	9	6
Education or training programs	27	16	20	14	7	2
Fire hazards	27	14	24	11	3	3
Counseling programs	24	20	17	17	7	3
Inmate classification	47	37	38	32	9	5
Library services	51	50	36	41	15	9
Other	14	14	10	11	4	3
Totality of conditions	38	37	33	34	5	3

Twenty-five largest jail jurisdictions

The Nation's 25 largest jail jurisdictions had between 1 and 14 individual jails in their systems and average daily populations ranging from 2,110 to 21,984 inmates (table 9). Ten of the jurisdictions were in Califor-

nia, 4 in Texas, 3 in Florida, and 1 each in Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Tennessee. Nine of the jurisdictions had a lower average daily population in 1990 than in 1989, and eight had a lower population on June 29, 1990, than on June 30, 1989.

Table 9. Twenty-five largest jurisdictions in 1990: Average daily population and 1-day count, June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990

Jurisdiction	Number of jails in jurisdiction		Average daily population during		Population on	
	1989	1990	1989	1990	June 30, 1989	June 29, 1990
Los Angeles County, Calif.	8	8	22,426	21,984	22,100	21,610
New York City, N.Y.	14	14	16,500	17,538	16,597	16,916
Cook County, Ill.	—	—	7,000	6,825	7,081	7,169
Dallas County, Tex.	4	4	5,800	5,860	6,043	5,306
Harris County, Tex.	2	3	8,206	5,694	8,199	5,633
San Diego County, Calif.	11	12	4,477	5,089	4,987	4,803
Shelby County, Tenn.	2	2	4,452	4,932	4,838	4,894
Philadelphia County, Penn.	7	7	4,277	4,813	4,566	4,821
Dade County, Fla.	6	6	4,773	4,551	4,726	4,758
Orange County, Calif.	3	3	4,281	4,370	4,527	4,402
Santa Clara County, Calif.	10	7	4,316	4,177	4,162	4,217
Maricopa County, Ariz.	7	6	3,905	3,887	3,896	4,260
Alameda County, Calif.	4	4	3,110	3,610	3,214	3,505
Orleans Parish, La.	—	—	3,700	3,604	3,663	3,550
Sacramento County, Calif.	3	3	3,321	3,095	2,966	3,233
Broward County, Fla.	3	3	2,979	3,059	2,844	2,788
Tarrant County, Tex.	2	3	2,420	2,958	2,698	3,339
Orange County, Fla.	3	2	2,831	2,890	3,305	3,031
San Bernardino County, Calif.	2	2	2,404	2,852	2,395	2,909
Baltimore City, Md.	5	4	2,734	2,678	2,783	2,708
Fulton County, Ga.	4	4	2,278	2,517	2,316	3,151
Kern County, Calif.	3	3	2,302	2,383	2,291	2,595
Bexar County, Tex.	1	1	1,943	2,352	2,284	2,339
Fresno County, Calif.	3	3	1,829	2,309	2,101	2,246
Riverside County, Calif.	4	4	1,649	2,110	1,479	2,111

—These jurisdictions provided a single report covering all of their jail facilities.

Appendix table. One-day count and average daily population of jail inmates, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1989, and 1990

	Number of jail inmates				
	National Jail Census			Annual Survey of Jails	
	1978	1983	1988	1989	1990
One-day count					
All inmates	158,394	223,551	343,569	395,553	405,320
Adults	156,783	221,815	341,893	393,303	403,019
Male	147,506	206,163	311,594	356,050	365,821
Female	9,277	15,652	30,299	37,253	37,198
Juveniles*	1,611	1,736	1,676	2,250	2,301
Average daily population					
All inmates	157,930	227,541	336,017	386,845	408,075
Adults	156,190	225,781	334,566	384,954	405,935
Male	146,312	210,451	306,379	349,180	368,091
Female	9,878	15,330	28,187	35,774	37,844
Juveniles*	1,740	1,760	1,451	1,891	2,140

Note: Data for 1-day counts are for February 15, 1978, and June 30, 1983, 1988, and 1989, and June 29, 1990.
*Juveniles are persons defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18, and subject initially to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. Because less than 1% of the jail population were juveniles, caution must be used in interpreting any changes over time.

Inmate deaths

A total of 180 large jail jurisdictions (35%) reported one or more jails with an inmate death during the year ending June 29, 1990, slightly fewer than during the previous annual period, 186 (37%) (table 10). About 7 of every 10 deaths reported in jurisdictions with large jail populations in 1990 resulted from either natural causes other than AIDS (42%) or from suicide (30%). AIDS-related deaths accounted for 17% of the total, up from 14% in 1989; injury by another person, 3%; and accidents or undetermined causes, 8%.

Table 10. Jurisdictions with large jail populations: Inmate deaths, 1989-90

Cause of death	Jurisdictions reporting deaths ^a		Inmate deaths	
	1989	1990	1989	1990
Total	186	180	414	494
Natural causes ^b	98	98	184	208
AIDS	27	32	57	84
Suicide	95	102	121	148
Injury by another person	15	11	22	14
Other ^c	24	22	30	40

Note: Data are for the year ending June 30, 1989, and June 29, 1990, and cover all jurisdictions with an average daily inmate population of 100 or more at the time of the 1988 Jail Census. The number of deaths from AIDS and other natural causes may have been under-reported in some jurisdictions that transferred sick inmates to outside hospitals and other medical facilities.

^aDetail adds to more than total because some jurisdictions reported more than one type of death.

^bExclude AIDS-related deaths.

^cIncludes accidents and undetermined causes of death.

Methodology

The 1990 Annual Survey of Jails was the seventh such survey in a series sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The first was conducted in 1982. Complete enumerations of the Nation's jails are conducted every 5 years. Annual surveys — which collect data on all jails in jurisdictions with 100 or more jail inmates and on a sample of all other jails — are done in each of the 4 years between full censuses. The reference date for the 1990 survey was June 29, 1990. Full censuses were done on February 15, 1978, June 30, 1983, and June 30, 1988.

A local jail is a facility that holds inmates beyond arraignment, usually for more than 48 hours, and is administered by local officials. Specifically excluded from the count were temporary lockups that house persons for less than 48 hours, physically separate drunk tanks, and other holding facilities that did not hold persons after they had been formally charged, Federal- or State-administered facilities, and the combined jail-prison systems of Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Included in the universe were five locally operated jails in Alaska and eight jails that were privately operated under contract for local governments.

The 1990 survey included 1,135 jails in 804 jurisdictions. A jurisdiction is a county, municipality, or township that administers one or more local jails. The jails in 508 jurisdictions were automatically included in the survey because the average daily inmate population in these jurisdictions was 100 or more in the 1988 census. The jurisdictions with large jail populations, called *certainty jurisdictions*, accounted for 832 jails and 327,917 inmates or 81% of the estimated inmate population on June 29, 1990.

Information referring to certainty jurisdictions is presented at the jurisdiction level. Prior to 1987 these data were presented for individual jails. The other jurisdictions surveyed constituted a stratified random sample of those jurisdictions whose average daily population was less than 100 in the 1988 jail census.

Data were obtained by mailed questionnaires. Two followup mailings and phone calls were used to encourage reporting. The response rate was 99% for all jails. For the nine jails in certainty jurisdictions and the three jails outside certainty jurisdic-

tions not responding to the survey, data were adjusted by applying the average growth factor for facilities in the same stratum and region and with the same type of inmates (men, women, or both sexes).

National estimates for the inmate population on June 29, 1990, were produced by sex, race, legal status, and conviction status; for the average daily population and for admissions and releases during the year ending June 29, 1990, by sex and legal status. National estimates were also produced for rated capacity. Administrators of jails in jurisdictions with large jail populations provided counts of inmates held for other authorities, inmate deaths, and jails under court order.

Sampling error

National estimates have an associated sampling error (standard error) because jails with an average daily population of less than 100 were sampled for the survey. Estimates based on a sample survey are apt to differ somewhat from the results of a survey canvassing all jurisdictions. Each of the samples that could have been selected using the same sample design could yield somewhat different results. Standard error is a measure of the variation among the estimates from all possible samples, stating the precision with which an estimate from a particular sample approximates the average result of all possible samples. The estimated relative sampling error for the total inmate population of 405,320 on June 29, 1990, was 0.44%, meaning that the reported total number of inmates may have varied by as much as 1,778 from the average result of all possible samples.

Results presented in this bulletin were tested to determine whether or not statistical significance could be associated with observed differences between values. Differences were tested to ascertain whether they were significant at 1.96 standard errors (the 95-percent-confidence level) or higher. Differences mentioned in the text meet or exceed this 95-percent-confidence level.

Measures of population

Two measures of inmate population are used: the average daily population for the year ending June 29 and the inmate count on June 29 of each year. The average daily inmate population balances out any extraordinary events that may render the 1-day count atypical. The 1-day count is useful because some characteristics of the

inmate population — such as race, ethnicity, and detention status — can be obtained for a specific date but may not be available on an annual basis.

All calculations in this report involving general population figures used Bureau of the Census projections of the population for July 1, 1989, reported in *U.S. Population Estimates, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1989*, Series P-25, No. 1057.

Juveniles

State statutes and judicial practices allow juveniles to be incarcerated in adult jails and prisons under a variety of circumstances. Juveniles are persons who are defined by State statute as being under a certain age, usually 18 years, and who are initially subject to juvenile court authority even if tried as adults in criminal court. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 requires sight and sound separation from adults for those juveniles not tried as adults in criminal court but held in adult jails. A 1980 amendment to that 1974 act requires the removal of juveniles from local jails, except those juveniles who are tried as adults for felonies. The proportion of juveniles who were housed in adult jails in accordance with these guidelines is not available.

Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletins are prepared principally by BJS staff. James Stephan and Louis Jankowski, statisticians, wrote this report. Thomas Hester edited it. Darrell Gilliard provided statistical assistance. Marilyn Marbrook, publications unit chief, administered production, assisted by Betty Sherman, Jayne Pugh, and Yvonne Boston. Collection and processing of the 1990 Jail Survey were conducted by Lisa McNellis, Betty Ford, Ellen Rhodes, Martha Greene, Linda Huang, and Dawn Crawford under the supervision of Diana Cull, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

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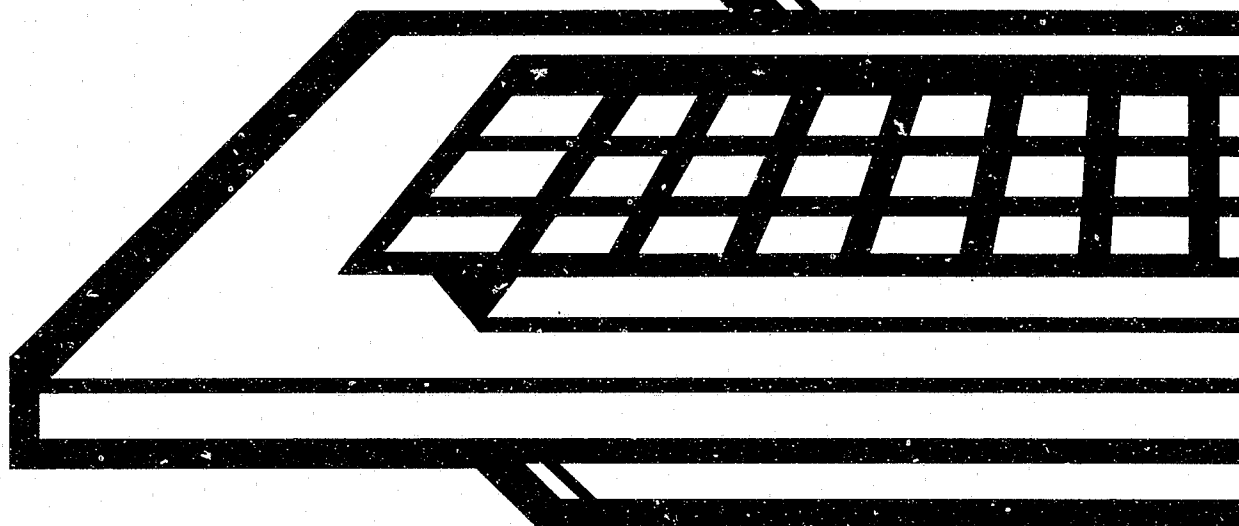
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