



Prison Registers in Institutions And Organisations

Prisons were often in old buildings, such as castles. They tended to be damp, unhealthy, insanitary and over-crowded. All kinds of prisoners were mixed in together, men, women, children; the insane; serious criminals and petty criminals; people awaiting trial; and debtors. Each prison was run by the gaoler in his own way. He made up the rules. If

you could pay, you could buy extra privileges, such as private rooms, better food, more visitors, keeping pets, letters going in and out, and books to read. If you could not, the basic fare was grim. You even had to pay the gaoler to be let out when your sentence was finished.

Law and order was a major issue in Victorian Britain. Victorians were worried about the huge new cities that had grown up following the Industrial Revolution – how were the masses to be kept under control? They were worried about rising crime. They could see that transporting convicts to Australia was not the answer and by the 1830s Australia was complaining that they did not want to be the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals.

Discovering your ancestor in prison records doesn't necessarily make them a hardened criminal, nineteenth century law was harsh and children as well as adults were imprisoned for minor misdemeanours. These records are often very detailed and can include physical descriptions of height, weight and eye colour.

Morris Andrews Stole from William & John Long

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction
Accused	Andrews	Morris	36	Labourer	
Birth Year	1832				
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address	
Committing Magistrate (1)	Clapham	E.	Esq.		
Committing Magistrate (2)	Waylen	G.	Esq.		
Committing Magistrate (3)	Heard	T. J.	Esq.		
Name of Victim (1)	Long	William			
Name of Victim (2)	Long	John			
Date of Warrant	1870	5 March			
When Received into Custody	1870	2 March	On remand		
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Stealing a sack and 163 pounds weight of oats the property of William and John Long, at Devizes, on the 1st March 1870				
	Surname	Given Names	Title		
Before Whom Tried	Kelly	Baron	Chief		
Verdict of Jury	Guilty of Larceny				
Particulars of Previous					

Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court	
Sentence or Order of the Court	Imprisonment with hard labour for six calendar months.
Other crimes Committed	