



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.

Ernest Aust

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction		
Accused	Aust	Ernest	31	Farmer			
Birth Year	1874						
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address			
Committing Magistrate (1)	Butler	D. W.	Esq.	Rowdefield, Devizes			
Court	Devizes						
Date of Warrant	1905	10-Jun					
When Received into Custody	1905	10-Jun		Date of Trial			
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Count 1:- Feloniously did forge and utter knowing the same to be forged, a certain order for the payment of money, to wit, a Postal Order for the payment of 12/- with intent thereby to defraud on the 31st May, 1905 at Littleton Panell Count 2:- Feloniously did forge and utter a certain receipt for money, to wit, 12/3 with intent to defraud, at Earlestone on the 31st May 1905 Count 3:- Feloniously did forge and utter a certain order for the payment of money to wit, a postal Order for payment of 12/- with intent to defraud at Poulshot, on 31st May 1905 Count 4:- Feloniously did demand and obtain 12/3 in money, the property of His Majesty's Post Master General, under and by virtue of a forged Postal order for 12/3 knowing the same to be forged, with intent to defraud at Edington, on 31st May 1905						
	Surname	Given Names	Title				

Before Whom Tried	Lawrance		Justice
Verdict of Jury	Confesses Forgery (3 indictments)		
Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court			
Sentence or Order of the Court	12 Calendar months Hard Labour		
Other crimes Committed			