



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.

	Surname	Given Names	Age	Trade or Occupation	Degree of Instruction			
Accused	Bartholomew	Thomas	20	Woodcutter				
Birth Year	1888							
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address				
Committing Magistrate (1)	Giffard	H. R. Esq.		Lockeridge House, Marlborough				
Committing Magistrate (2)								
Court	Salisbury							
	Name of Victim (1)	Annie Elizabeth						
Date of Warrant	1908	08-Feb						
When Received into Custody	No date given			Date of Trial	1908	01-Jun		
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Feloniously did assault one Annie Elizabeth Elkins, and did then against her will violently and feloniously ravish and carnally know her, at Great Bedwyn, on the 31st January 1908							
	Surname	Given Names	Title					
Before Whom Tried								
Verdict of Jury	Bill for Rape ignored							
Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court								

Sentence or Order of the Court	Discharged	
Other crimes Committed	Nil	