



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	Ball	Charles	23	Labourer	Read and write imperfectly			
Birth Year	1882							
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address				
Committing Magistrate (1)	Temple	G. N., Esq.		Boreham Manor, Warminster				
Committing Magistrate (2)	And another							
Court	Devizes							
Name of Victim (1)	Macey	Rosellen						
Name of Victim (2)								
Date of Warrant	1905	08-Jul						
When Received into Custody	1905	26-Oct	Surrendered from bail at Court, 26th October			Date of Trial	1905	27-Oct
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Unlawfully did attempt to have unlawful carnal knowledge of a certain girl named Rosellen Macy, then about the age of 13 years and under the age of 16 years, at Longbridge Deverill on the 4th July 1905							
	Surname	Given Names	Title					
Before Whom Tried	Lawrance		Justice					
Verdict of Jury	Guilty of the act charged, but insane when it was done							
Particulars of Previous								

Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court	
Sentence or Order of the Court	To be kept in custody as a criminal lunatic in Devizes Prison until His Majesty's pleasure is known
Other crimes Committed	