



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	Ballard	Joseph	18	Labourer	Read and write imperfectly					
Birth Year	1885									
	Surname	Given Name	Title	Address						
Committing Magistrate (1)	Rogers	F. N. Esq.		Rainscombe, Pewsey						
Court	Devizes									
Date of Warrant	1903	10th July								
When Received into Custody	1903	27th October			Date of Trial	1903	27th October			
Offence as Charged in the Commitment	Attempting to commit the abominable crime of buggery with a gelding, at Wilcot, on the 10th July 1903									
	Surname	Given Names	Title							
Before Whom Tried	Wills		Justice							
Verdict of Jury	Not Guilty Buggery									
Particulars of Previous Convictions Charged in the Indictment and Proved in Court	none									
Sentence or Order of the	Discharged									

Court						
Other crimes Committed	none					

OPC Note: