



Crime & Punishment

Topic Guide for Chronicling America (<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>)

Introduction

Crime has always been a part of our society, and the American press regularly reported on criminal acts and the police investigations, arrests, trials and sentences that followed. These articles, whether about petty theft or murder, give unique insight on the thoughts and feelings of the people living at the time.

Important Dates

- July 7, 1865: Mary Surratt, a co-conspirator in President Lincoln's assassination, is the first woman executed by the federal government.
- February 13, 1866: The Younger-James gang commits the first peace-time, daylight, bank robbery in the United States, robbing the Clay County Savings Association in Liberty, Missouri.
- 1883: Carl Bach dismembers his wife, Mary Bach, for not completing her daily chores. He is hanged on the last day of the Wood County Fair in Ohio.
- October 7, 1898: Carl D. Saxton, brother of First Lady Ida McKinley, is murdered in Canton, Ohio. The alleged shooter, Mrs. Anna E. George, is found not guilty.

Suggested Search Strategies

- Try the following terms in combination (as an "all" word search), or proximity search: hang, electrocute, death penalty, crime, execute, guilty, prison, jail, sentence, jury, trial, outlaw, victim.
- If you are looking for a specific type of crime, be sure to add it to the search terms (murder, robbery, blackmail, smuggle, etc.).
- If there is a specific person you are looking for, try searching for his or her name.
- If you know the exact or approximate date of a crime or punishment, limit the date range to get better results.

Sample Articles from Chronicling America

- "[Sentence of the Assassins](#)" *Norfolk Post* (Norfolk, VA), July 8, 1865, Image 2, col. 2-3.
- "[A Curious Question At Law](#)" *Holmes County Republican* (Millersburg, OH), March 28, 1872, Image 2, col. 5
- "[Carl Bach, His Last Moments On Earth](#)" *Perrysburg Journal* (Perrysburg, OH), October 19, 1883, Image 2, col. 2-3.
- "[Wheels Move](#)" *Stark County Democrat* (Canton, OH), April 6, 1899, Image 1, col. 1-7.
- "[Mayor Doyle Imposes Sentence!](#)" *Akron Daily Democrat* (Akron, OH), July 20, 1901, Image 9, col. 1-7.
- "[Mysterious Bank Robbery Solved](#)" *Perrysburg Journal* (Perrysburg, OH), November 17, 1905, Image 3, col. 1-4.
- "[What Would a Fashionable Society Woman Do in Jail?](#)" *Omaha Daily Bee* (Omaha, NE), February 27, 1916, Image 35, col. 1-6.