



## The Social History of Crime and Punishment in America: An Encyclopedia (5 Volume Set)

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Several encyclopedias overview the contemporary system of criminal justice in America, but full understanding of current social problems and contemporary strategies to deal with them can come only with clear appreciation of the historical underpinnings of those problems. Thus, this five-volume work surveys the history and philosophy of crime, punishment, and criminal justice institutions in America from colonial times to the present. It covers the whole of the criminal justice system, from crimes, law enforcement and policing, to courts, corrections and human services. Among other things, this encyclopedia: explicates philosophical foundations underpinning our system of justice; charts changing patterns in criminal activity and subsequent effects on legal responses; identifies major periods in the development of our system of criminal justice; and explores in the first four volumes - supplemented by a fifth volume containing annotated primary documents - evolving debates and conflicts on how best to address issues of crime and punishment. Its signed entries in the first four volumes-- supplemented by a fifth volume containing annotated primary documents-- provide the historical context for students to better understand contemporary criminological debates and the contemporary shape of the U.S. system of law and justice.

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## **Editorial Review**

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*\*Starred Review\** This unique, comprehensive work provides the reader with a wide understanding of the many aspects of crime and punishment. The editor, a social historian at SUNY–Stony Brook, is a specialist in U.S. criminal history. The more than 700 alphabetically arranged, signed entries in the first four volumes are clearly written, accurate, and up-to-date. A “Reader’s Guide” in the first volume provides an entryway to the entire work, breaking entries into thematic groups such as “Biographies”; “Courts, Corrections, Punishments”; “Historical Cities in Crime and Punishment”; “Police and Law Enforcement”; and “Socioeconomic, Political, and Religious Issues.” Volume 1 contains a chronology spanning from 1275 to 2012. The entries range widely, covering specific criminals and law enforcers as well as various locations, events, cases, causes, and theories. The total work is balanced and thorough. Entries range from 2 to 10 pages and include information on cities and states, court decisions and societal events, ethnic groups, specific periods in history, public leaders, and contemporary situations, including white-collar and environmental crimes. A variety of statistics enhance understanding. There are also notations throughout, and suggestions for further readings (with full bibliographical information) are at the end of each entry. Volume 5 contains primary documents arranged by time period, with full references for further information. An introduction to each period provides an important overview. The set concludes with a glossary; a “Resource Guide” (books, journals, and electronic resources); and an extensive index. Currency is shown in such entries as the number of police officers in one city in 2012 and books published on some of the topics in 2012. Controversial subjects from both past and present receive balanced treatment. This excellent work will be valuable for a wide range of users for assignments or general interest in public and academic libraries. --  
Arthur Meyers

### **Review**

*"This excellent work will be valuable for a wide range of users for assignments or general interest in public and academic libraries."* (Arthur Meyers *Booklist* 2013-01-07)

This addition to the crowded field of reference literature on crime is a notable improvement over similar titles... (CHOICE 2013-03-01)

A series of extended essays by period complemented by primary documents make this an excellent classroom resource.

(Library Journal 2013-03-01)

### **About the Author**

Wilbur R. (Bill) Miller received his B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1966 and his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1973. His teaching is varied and includes such courses as Civil War & Reconstruction, Gilded Age & Progressive Era, Immigration & Family History, and History of Crime & Criminal Justice in the U.S. His research interests include comparative police history, state and federal policing, representations of crime and criminal justice in popular literatures, and the general theme of authority in America. His prior publications include *Cops & Bobbies: Police Authority in New York City & London, 1830-1870* (University of Chicago Press, 1977; second edition, Ohio State University Press, 1995) and *Revenuers & Moonshiners: Enforcing Federal Liquor Law in the Mountain South* (University of North

Carolina Press, 1991). Prior to coming to SUNY-Stony Brook in 1975, he was a lecturer and assistant professor at Princeton University.

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