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WHAT CAUSED VICTORIAN CRIME?



One cause of Victorian crime was people being poor (poverty). People turned to crime because they needed money and food.



In September 1888 policemen were trying to catch Jack the Ripper, he killed 5 women in the slums of East London and was never caught even today over 100 years on we are still trying to work out who he was.



Middle-class Victorians thought that you tell a criminal from the appearance of their face.

WHO WERE THE 'FAMILY PEOPLE'?



The name 'family people' was a nickname used by professional criminals to describe themselves. They called themselves that because they thought themselves as one big criminal family and they looked down on those who obeyed the law.



Criminals had their own secret language called cant. This allowed them to communicate with fellow criminals without the outsiders knowing.



They even had their own pubs called 'flash houses' where they could meet to plan jobs and arrange the sale of stolen goods.

WHAT CRIMES DID CHILDREN COMMIT?



Professional criminals started at the very young age of 5. The smallest boys would be 'little snake'



Because children were small they could walk up to a busy crowd and talk things without being seen.



As they grew older they could specialise in harder robberies. E.g. 'Maltoolers' and 'Cracksmen'.

DID CRIME EVER PAY?



One type of criminals were very successful, they were called 'cracksmen'. They would only do one or two crimes a year but it would take months planning them. 'Cracksmen' dressed up as gentlemen because they stole a lot of money.



The most daring robbery of the Victorian period was the 'Great Train Robbery' of 1855. 39-year-old, cracksmen, named, Edward Agar and his partner stole 100kg in gold and replaced it with the same weight in lead. Eventually Agar was caught because his girlfriend betrayed him. When he was on trial he admitted that he was a professional criminal since the age of 18.

WHAT WERE GAROTTERS?



In 1862 there was an outburst of a certain type of crime called 'garrotting'. It included 2 or 3 men whom of which 1 person grabbed the victim round the neck whilst the others went through his/hers pockets.

Someone invented a collar with spikes on to keep garrotters away. To buy one of them it would cost you 7 shillings 6 pence.



Some people were so frightened they refused to leave their homes after darkness fell. Others formed an 'anti-garrotting' group and many innocent men and women were dragged to a police station.

WHY DID MURDERERS USE POISON?



Poison was easy to get from a chemist. Arsenic was sold as rat poison. You would put a coating on fly papers then soak these in water to make a poisonous liquid which would be added to food and drink.



The worst Victorian poisoner was Mary Ann Cotton in 20 years she poisoned 4 husbands, 8 children and 8 step-children, she gave them tea with arsenic in. She was caught after 20 years of poisoning.

WHAT WAS A 'PEELER'?



There was no police force in the early 1800's so a young gentleman called Sir Robert Peel founded the police force. He nicknamed them 'Peelers or Bobbies'. During one shift a policeman could walk 40 km.



An on duty police officer wore a blue uniform and a top hat. They carried a wooden truncheon, handcuffs and a rattle used to call for help.



WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE ARRESTED AND TRIED?



When a person was 'nibbed' they were taken to the nearest police station to be charged with the crime.



Victorian magistrates were usually rich and powerful, upper-class men because women had very few rights.

WHAT WAS 'BEING STRETCHED'?



Being stretched was the nickname for death for murderers. Until 1868 people were hung outside in front of crowds.



The most famous hanging was in 1849 where Frederick Manning and his wife Maria were hung outside Horsemonger Lane Prison. 30,000 people came to watch them die.



Charles Dickens was watching and said that he was surrounded by 'criminals and ruffians' who showed 'indecent delight'. He was so upset that he felt as if he was living in a 'city of devils'.

WHY WERE PRISONS OVERCROWDED?



Prisons were overcrowded because people were committing more crimes. In the early 1800's there was a big rise in criminals being sent to prison. hanging was punishment for over 200 different crimes. Newgate prison held the criminals until their trial awaited.



Convicts were also kept on hulks until they were transported (to Australia). These places were often dirty, disease-ridden and overcrowded.

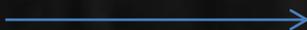
WHAT WAS 'GETTING THE BOAT'?



One answer to the problem of too many convicts was to send them half-way round the world. Transportation lasted from 1787-1868 and in that period over 160,000 men, women and children were transported.



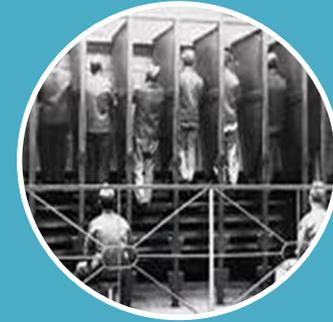
The voyage took 6 months with criminals locked under the deck in cages. Many people died because of the very poor conditions.



WHAT WAS THE 'SEPARATE SYSTEM'?



In 1842 there was a new way a of dealing with convicts and that was the separate system. By 1850 there was 54 new prisons using the separate system.



When convicts went to church there were placed in separate cubicles so there was absolutely no contact with other prisoners. Another punishment was the treadmill, convicts would the never-ending steps of the treadmill.



GLOSSARY

- arsenic- A poison used to kill rats, flies and murder victims.
- cant- Secret language used by Victorian criminals.
- convict- Someone found guilty of a crime, and sentenced to prison, or transportation.
- cracksman- Burglar or safe-breaker.
- family people- Members of the Victorian professional criminal class.
- hulk- a disused warship, used as a prison.
- magistrate-an unpaid, part- time judge
- peeler- a policeman
- Slums-run-down homes
- transportation-being moved to Australia.

BY

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