

American Crime and Criminal Justice, Series 1-3, 1664-1819

Nearly every printed work from this era about criminal acts, criminal law and the justice system



Quick Facts

The most comprehensive collection of primary source documents on early American crime and criminal justice

For students and scholars in History, Law, Criminal Justice, Women's Studies, Gender Studies, Slavery and Ethnic Studies, and Sociology

Features text analysis tools, author biographies, and suggested search paths for easy browsing and discovery

Overview

Crime and criminal justice continues to be one of the most widely taught and researched topics in colleges and universities. The printed record of crime and punishment within *American Crime and Criminal Justice, 1664-1819*, offers unparalleled insight into the society, economy and morality of early America. It paints a vivid picture of not only the wealthy officials and clergy who controlled the nascent nation, but of the women, indentured servants, enslaved Africans and Native Americans who lived under that control.

American Crime and Criminal Justice is the only digital collection of primary source documents covering this formative aspect of American history and culture. It features more than 8,000 items printed or reprinted in America during the Colonial Era and Early National Period, including books, pamphlets, broadsides, speeches, sermons, letters, trial records, and much more. Among these additional items are captivity narratives, statements by victims and defendants, biographies of criminals, and the last words of executed prisoners.

A wealth of material to inform and illuminate

Without codified criminal law, criminal justice in the American colonies was prone to inconsistency and corruption. Victims were largely responsible for pressing charges and covering court expenses, and lawyers and juries were rare. In addition to theft, rape and murder, many "crimes" were related to the church, including idolatry, sodomy, blasphemy and witchcraft. And without prisons, punishment often consisted of fines, whipping, branding or public placement in the stocks.

The shortcomings of the criminal justice system fueled American anger toward Britain, and were foundational in the evolution of legal principles underlying the American Constitution and Bill of Rights. As such, the printed record of early American crime and punishment is essential to understanding American law; police and prison history; women's and gender studies; sociology; and African American and Native American history. Scholars and students in these and other fields will find a wealth of material to inform and illuminate their research.

An expansive, expertly catalogued resource

American Crime and Criminal Justice, 1664-1819, is based on the renowned bibliographies by Charles Evans and Roger Bristol and by Ralph R. Shaw and Richard H. Shoemaker. The materials were sourced at the American Antiquarian Society, based on their holdings and those of many other institutions, and the Library Company of Philadelphia. Every work has been expertly catalogued and may be browsed by genre, subject, author, printing history, place of publication, and language. Readex's intuitive online interface features text analysis tools, author biographies and suggested search paths for easy browsing and discovery.



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