

Reader's Guide



“History is nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes,” wrote eighteenth-century French writer Voltaire. There certainly is more to history than criminal deeds, misdemeanors, and misfortunes, but these offenses do offer fascinating lessons in history. The life stories of outlaws provide a glimpse into other times and other places, as well as provocative insight into contemporary issues.

WHO'S INCLUDED

Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks, Volume 5, presents the life stories of twenty-three outlaws who lived (or committed crimes) from the nineteenth century to the present day—from The Dalton Gang, who robbed banks in the late 1800s, to terrorist Timothy McVeigh.

Everyone's familiar with John Gotti, the Sundance Kid, and Lizzie Borden. But how many know the *whole* story: what their childhoods were like, what their first crime was, who worked with them—and against them—and how they ended up? *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks* offers a thorough and provocative look at the people and events involved in these stories.

Familiar figures such as Pretty Boy Floyd and Byron de la Beckwith are present, as are lesser-known outlaws whose careers reveal much about the times in which they lived. David Smith, for instance, created a computer virus called Melissa that disrupted operations for as many as one million users, showing how susceptible computers in the twentieth century could be to viruses. Also included are criminals such as Charles Whitman, whose crime was an event—the University of Texas tower shooting—that is remembered more than his name, and lawmen who sometimes stood on the wrong side of the law. The many men and women who have been labeled outlaws over the

course of three centuries cannot all be profiled in one volume. But those whose stories are told in *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks*, Volume 5, includes some of the best-known, least-known, weirdest, scariest, most despised, and least understood outlaws. In short, this work is intended as an overview of criminals—a jumping-off point for further inquiry.

Also included are updates of four criminals from the first four volumes of *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks*, where you'll find recent information about mobster John Gotti, terrorist Timothy McVeigh, and others. You'll learn who's been pardoned, whose parole was denied, and what some of these onetime crooks are up to now.

LEGENDS, MYTHS, AND OUTRIGHT LIES

Many of the men and women profiled in Volume 5 have been surrounded by legends that have grown to enormous proportions, making it difficult to separate fact from fiction. For example, Lizzie Borden, who was never convicted of her father's murder, was rumored to have given him "forty-one whacks" with an axe when in reality he was struck ten times. In some cases, legends have grown out of fictionalized contemporary accounts. Others stem from stories distorted by the criminals themselves, the lawmen who pursued them, and even the families and friends of both victims and perpetrators. Some are accurate first-person accounts. Others are sensational exaggerations of true events. And some are wholesale fabrications.

Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks, Volume 5, attempts to present a fair and complete account of what is known about the lives and activities of twenty-three outlaws. When appropriate, entries mention the myths, unconventional theories, and alternate versions of accepted history that apply to a particular criminal—without suggesting that they are either truthful or based in fact.

ARRANGEMENT AND PRESENTATION

Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks, Volume 5, is a continuation of U•X•L's 4-volume *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks* series. The biographies are arranged alphabetically by the criminal's last name or by the first letter in their better known nickname, as in the cases of Pretty Boy Floyd and the Sundance Kid. The entries

range from three to eleven pages in length, and include given names and aliases, birth and death information, and portraits of the subjects as well as additional photos.

Entries are lively, easy to read, and written in a straightforward style that is geared to challenge—but not frustrate—students. Difficult words are defined within the text; some words also have pronunciations listed. Technical words and legal terms are also explained within entries, enabling students to learn the vocabulary appropriate to a particular subject without having to consult other sources for definitions.

WHAT'S INSIDE

What's inside is a detailed look at what they did, why they did it, and how their stories ended. Entries focus on the entire picture—not just the headline news—to provide the following sorts of information:

- **Personal background:** interesting details about the subject's family, upbringing, and youth
- **Crimes and misdeeds:** an in-depth look at the subject's criminal history
- **Aftermath:** from jail time, to legal and illegal executions, to mysterious disappearances, entries relate what happened after the dirty deeds were done
- **A look at the other side of the law:** extensive information on the other side of the law—the lawmen and others who were involved in the pursuit, capture, or prosecution of the outlaw profiled

ADDED FEATURES

Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks, Volume 5, includes a number of additional features that help make the connection between people, places, and historic events.

- Update entries keep readers current on selected criminals profiled in *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks*, Volumes 1 to 4.
- A timeline at the beginning of the volume provides a listing of outlaw landmarks and important international events.

- Sidebars provide fascinating supplemental information, such as sketches of criminal associates, profiles of law enforcement officials and agencies, and explanations of the political and social scenes of the era. Sidebars also offer a contemporary perspective of people and events through excerpts of letters written by the criminal profiled, citations from newspapers and journals of the day, and much more.
- Quotes—both by and about the outlaws—provide insight into what motivated them.
- 46 photographs and illustrations bring the outlaws to life.
- Suggestions for related books and movies—both fictional and fact-based—are liberally sprinkled throughout the entries.
- A list of sources for more information at the end of each entry includes books, newspaper and magazine articles, and Internet addresses for additional and bibliographical information.
- A comprehensive index at the end of the volume provides easy access to the people, places, and events mentioned throughout all five volumes of *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks*.

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COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We welcome your comments on *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks: From the Old West to the Internet*, Volume 5, and suggestions for other criminals to be featured in future editions. Please write: Editors, *Outlaws, Mobsters & Crooks*, U•X•L, 27500 Drake Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan, 48331-3535; call toll-free: 800-877-4253; fax to: 248-699-8097; or send e-mail via <http://www.gale.com>.