

S2E13

Wednesday, July 21, 2021 8:39 PM

- [Early Life](#)
- [Victims](#)
- [Murder castle](#)
 - Like Jeffs place?
 - [2nd Floor](#)
 - [3rd Floor](#)
 - [Basement](#)
- [Arrest](#)
- [Death](#)

Timeline

- 1878 - Married Clara A Lovering
- 1881 - [Committed insurance fraud with cadaver and closest friend \(friend disappeared\)](#)
- 1882 - Went to Philidelipha, worked at an insane asylum and as a drug clerk
- 1885 - Went to Chicago and opened his own drug store
 - First started operating as Dr. Henry H. Holmes
- 1887 - Married Myrta Belknap (while still married to Clara)
- 1889 - Bought an empty lot to start building his "murder Castle"
 - Met Benjamin F. Pitezel
- 1891 - Completed the construction of the "Murder Castle"
 - **Julia and Pearl Conner murdered**
- 1892 - **Emeline Cigrand murdered**
- 1893 - Worlds Fair
 - Many would meet there deaths staying at the murder castle
 - **Minnie and Nannie Williams murdered**
 - Pitezel took a 10k insurance policy
- 1894 - Arrested for selling mortgaged property
 - Met Marion Hedgspeth in prsion, asked about a "slick" lawyer.
 - **Pitezel "dies" by misadventure**, body identified by wife and daughter
 - Married George Yoke
 - **Killed 3 of the Pitezel children**
 - Buried 2 in the basement
 - Cremated 1 in a large stove (Howard)
- 1895 - Arrested for the murder of Benjamin Pitezel.
- 1896 - Hanged

Early Life

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Herman Webster Mudgett (May 16, 1861 – May 7, 1896), better known as **Dr. Henry Howard Holmes** or **H. H. Holmes**, was an American **serial killer**^[a] active from December 1891 to November 1894. Despite his confession of 27 murders (including some people who were verifiably still alive) while awaiting execution,^[a] Holmes was convicted and sentenced to death for only one murder, that of accomplice and business partner Benjamin Pitezel.^[a] Victims were killed in a mixed-use building which he owned in **Chicago**, located about three miles (5 kilometers) west of the **1893 World's Fair: Columbian Exposition**, supposedly called the World's Fair Hotel (informally called "The Murder Castle"), though evidence suggests the hotel portion was never truly open for business.^[a]

Besides being a serial killer, Holmes was also a **con artist** and a **trigamist**, the subject of more than 50 lawsuits in Chicago alone. Holmes was executed on May 7, 1896, nine days before his 35th birthday.^[a]

Holmes was born as Herman Webster Mudgett in **Gilmanon, New Hampshire**, United States, on May 16, 1861, to Levi Horton Mudgett and Theodate Page Price, both of whom were descended from the first English immigrants in the area. Mudgett was his parents' third-born child; he had an older sister Ellen, an older brother Arthur, a younger brother Henry, and a younger sister Mary.^[a] Holmes' father was from a farming family, and at times he worked as a farmer, trader, and house painter; his parents were devout **Methodists**.^[a] Later attempts to fit Holmes into the patterns seen in modern **serial killers** have described him torturing animals and suffering from abuse at the hands of a violent father, but contemporary and eyewitness accounts of his childhood do not provide proof of either.^[a]

At the age of 16, Holmes graduated from **Phillips Exeter Academy** and took teaching jobs in Gilmanon and later in nearby **Alton**. On July 4, 1878, he married Clara Lovering in Alton; their son, Robert Lovering Mudgett, was born on February 3, 1880, in **Loudon, New Hampshire**. Robert became a certified public accountant and served as **city manager of Orlando, Florida**.^[a]^[a]^[a]

Holmes enrolled in the **University of Vermont** in **Burlington** at age 18 but was dissatisfied with the school and left after one year. In 1882, he entered the **University of Michigan's Department of Medicine and Surgery**^[a] and graduated in June 1884 after passing his exams.^[a] While enrolled, he worked in the anatomy lab under Professor Herdman, then the chief **anatomy** instructor. Holmes had apprenticed in New Hampshire under Nahum Wight, a noted advocate of human **dissection**.^[a] Years later, when Holmes was suspected of murder and claimed to be nothing but an insurance fraudster, he admitted to using **cadavers** to defraud life insurance companies several times in college.^[a]

Housemates described Holmes as treating Clara violently, and in 1884, before his graduation, she moved back to New Hampshire and later wrote she knew little of him afterwards.^[a] After he moved to **Mooers Forks, New York**, a rumor spread that Holmes had been seen with a little boy who later disappeared. Holmes claimed the boy went back to his home in **Massachusetts**. No investigation took place and Holmes quickly left town.^[a]^[a]

He later traveled to **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania** and got a job as a keeper at **Norristown State Hospital**, but quit after a few days. He later took a position at a drugstore in Philadelphia, but while he was working there, a boy died after taking medici ne that was purchased at the store. Holmes denied any involvement in the child's death and immediately left the city. Right before moving to **Chicago**, he changed his name to Henry Howard Holmes to avoid the possibility of being exposed by victims of his previous scams.^[a]

In his confession after his arrest, Holmes claimed he had killed his former medical school classmate, Robert Leacock, in 1886 for insurance money.^[a] Leacock, however, died in **Watford, Ontario**, in Canada on October 5, 1889.^[a] In late 1886, while still married to Clara, Holmes married Myrta Belknap (b. October 1862 in Pennsylvania)^[a] in **Minneapolis, Minnesota**. He filed for **divorce** from Clara a few weeks after marrying Myrta, alleging **infidelity** on her part. The claims could not be proven and the suit went nowhere. Surviving paperwork indicated she probably was never even informed of the suit.^[a] In any case, the divorce was never finalized;^[a]^[a] it was dismissed June 4, 1891, on the grounds of "want of prosecution."^[a]

Holmes had a daughter with Myrta, Lucy Theodate Holmes, who was born on July 4, 1889, in Englewood, Chicago, Illinois.^[a] Lucy became a public schoolteacher. Holmes lived with Myrta and Lucy in **Wilmette, Illinois**, and spent most of his time in Chicago tending to business. Holmes married Georgiana Yoke on January 17, 1894, in **Denver, Colorado**.^[a]^[a] while still married to both Clara and Myrta.^[a]

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._H._Holmes>

H.H. Holmes

Biography
(c. 1861–1896)

UPDATED:
JUN 12, 2020
ORIGINAL:
OCT 16, 2017

H.H. Holmes was the alias of one of America's first serial killers. During the 1893 Columbian Exposition, he lured victims into his elaborate 'Murder Castle.'

Who Was H.H. Holmes?

Herman Webster Mudgett, better known as H.H. Holmes, was a con artist and bigamist who was one of America's first serial killers. Sometimes referred to as the "Beast of Chicago," Holmes is believed to have killed somewhere between 20 and 200 people. He killed many of his victims in a specially constructed home, which was later nicknamed the "Murder Castle." Apprehended in 1894, he was hanged for his crimes two years later.

Early Life

Holmes was born Herman Webster Mudgett circa May 16, 1861, in Gilmanon, New Hampshire. Born into an affluent family, Holmes enjoyed a privileged childhood and was said to be unusually intelligent at an early age. Still, there were haunting signs of what was to come. He expressed an interest in medicine, which reportedly led him to practice surgery on animals. Some accounts indicate that he may have been responsible for the death of a friend.

Holmes' life of crime began with various frauds and scams. As a medical student at the University of Michigan, he stole corpses and used them to make false insurance claims. Holmes may have used the bodies for experiments, as well.

Schemes

Holmes left Chicago shortly after the World's Fair to continue his schemes, including a plan with an associate named Benjamin Pitezel in which Pitezel would fake his death to collect \$10,000 from a life insurance company. Jailed at one point for another fraud, Holmes confided in fellow inmate and notorious outlaw Marion Hedgpeath — who knew Holmes as H.M. Howard — about the life insurance scheme. Hedgpeath later helped investigators by revealing details of their discussion.

While the authorities eventually identified Howard as Holmes, they did not catch on soon enough to stop his final murders. Holmes killed Pitezel and, after telling his widow that her husband was still alive and in hiding, convinced her to let him travel with three of her five children, who also became his victims.

Arrest

After several weeks of outrunning authorities, Holmes was finally apprehended in November 1894. During his time in custody, he gave numerous stories to police, once admitting to killing 27 people.

<div>Henry H Holmes</div>	
 <div>c.1895 Mugshot</div>	
Born	<div>Herman Webster Mudgett</div> May 16, 1861 <div>Gilmanon, New Hampshire, U.S.</div>
Died	May 7, 1896 (aged 34) <div>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S.</div>
Other names	<div>See aliases show</div>
Alma mater	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">University of Vermont (1879–1880)University of Michigan (1882–1884)</div>
Occupation	Unknown physician <div>Former hospital keeper</div> <div>Former drugstore employe</div> <div>Hotel owner</div>
Criminal status	Deceased <div>(executed by hanging)</div>
Spouse(s)	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Clara Lovering</div> <div> </div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">(m. 1878)Myrta Belknap</div> <div> </div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">(m. 1886)Minnie Williams</div> <div> </div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">(m. 1893)Georgiana Yoke</div> <div> </div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">(m. 1894)</div>
Conviction(s)	First-degree murder
Criminal charge	Murder
Penalty	Death
Details	
Victims	10–34 killed <div>200+ estimated/possible</div>
Span of crimes	December 25, 1891–October 25, 1894 (confirmed)
Location(s)	Illinois <div>Indiana</div> <div>Ontario</div> <div>Pennsylvania</div>
Date apprehended	1894

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._H._Holmes>

QUICK FACTS

NAME
H.H. Holmes
BIRTH DATE
c. May 16, 1861

DEATH DATE
May 7, 1896

DID YOU KNOW?
H.H. Holmes was born into an affluent family and enjoyed a privileged childhood.

DID YOU KNOW?
Holmes killed an estimated 20 to as many as 200 victims.

EDUCATION
University of Michigan

PLACE OF BIRTH
Gilmanon, New Hampshire

PLACE OF DEATH
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

AKA
H.M. Howard
Herman Mudgett
Dr. Henry H. Holmes
Henry H. Holmes
Henry Holmes

FULL NAME
Herman Webster Mudgett

From <<https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/hh-holmes>>

Convicted in 1895, Holmes appealed his case but lost.

Estimates of the total number of people Holmes killed range from 20 to as many as 200 victims.

Death

Holmes died on May 7, 1896, when he was hanged for the Pitezel murder. He was buried in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

From <<https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/hh-holmes>>

H.H. HOLMES



In 1861, Herman Webster Mudgett was born in New Hampshire. It is said that at an early age he was fascinated with skeletons and soon became obsessed with death. It may have been this interest that led him to pursue medicine. After graduating high school at 16, Mudgett changed his name to Henry Howard Holmes, and later in life would be known as **H.H. Holmes**. Holmes studied medicine at a small school in Vermont before being accepted into the University of Michigan Medical School. While enrolled in medical school, Holmes stole cadavers from the laboratory, burned or disfigured them, and then planted the bodies making it look as if they had been killed in an accident. The scandal behind it was that Holmes would take out insurance policies on these people before planting the bodies and would collect money once the bodies were discovered.

In 1884 Holmes passed his medical exams and in 1885 he moved to Chicago where he got a job working at a pharmacy under the alias Dr. Henry H. Holmes. When the owner of the drugstore passed away, he left his wife to take over the responsibilities of the store; however, Holmes convinced the widow to let him buy the store. The widow soon went missing and was never seen again. Holmes claimed that she moved to California, but this could never be verified.

After Holmes had become the owner of the drugstore, he purchased an empty lot across the street. He designed and built a 3-story hotel, which the neighborhood called the "Castle." During its 1889 construction, Holmes hired and fired several construction crews so that no one would have a clear idea of what he was doing; he was designing a "Murder Castle." After construction was complete in 1891, Holmes placed ads in newspapers offering jobs for young women and advertised the Castle as a place of lodging. He also placed ads presenting himself as a wealthy man looking for a wife.

All of Holmes' employees, hotel guests, fiancés, and wives were required to have life insurance policies. Holmes paid the premiums as long as they listed him as the beneficiary. Most of his fiancés and wives would suddenly disappear, as did many of his employees and guests. People in the neighborhood eventually reported that they saw many women enter the Castle, but would never see them exit.

In 1893, Chicago was given the honor of hosting the World's Fair, a cultural and social event to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. The event was scheduled from May to October, and attracted millions of people from all over the world. When Holmes heard that the World's Fair was coming to Chicago, he looked at it as an opportunity. He knew many visitors would be searching for lodging near the fair and believed many of them would be women whom he could easily seduce into staying at his hotel. After being lured into the hotel, many of these out-of-town visitors would never be seen again.

The first floor of the Castle had several stores; the two upper levels contained Holmes' office and over 100 rooms that were used as living quarters. Some of these rooms were soundproof and contained gas lines so that Holmes could asphyxiate his guests whenever he felt like it. Throughout the building, there were trap doors, peepholes, stairways that led nowhere, and chutes that led into the basement. The basement was designed as Holmes' own lab; it had a dissecting table, stretching rack, and crematory. Sometimes he would send the bodies down the chute, dissect them, strip them of the flesh and sell them as human skeleton models to medical schools. In other cases, he would choose to cremate or place the bodies into pits of acids.

Through it all, Holmes traveled throughout the U.S. committing insurance scams with his accomplice, Benjamin Pitezel. Once the World's Fair had ended, Chicago's economy was in a slump; therefore, Holmes abandoned the Castle and focused on insurance scams – committing random murders along the way. During this time, Holmes stole horses from Texas, shipped them to St. Louis, and sold them – making a fortune. He was arrested for this swindle and sent to jail.

While in jail, he concocted a new insurance scam with his cellmate, Marion Hedgepeth. Holmes said he would take out an insurance policy for \$10,000, fake his own death, and then provide Hedgepeth with \$500 in exchange for a lawyer who could help him if any problems arose. Once Holmes was released from jail on bail, he attempted his plan; however, the insurance company was suspicious and did not pay him. Holmes then decided to attempt a similar plan in Philadelphia. This time he would have Pitezel fake his own death; however, during this scam Holmes actually killed Pitezel and collected the money for himself.

In 1894, Marion Hedgepeth, who was angry that he did not receive any money in the initial scam, told police about the scam Holmes had planned. The police tracked Holmes, finally catching up to him in Boston where they arrested him and held him on an outstanding warrant for the Texas horse swindle. At the time of his arrest, Holmes appeared as if he was prepared to flee the country and police became suspicious of him. Chicago police investigated Holmes' Castle where they discovered his strange and efficient methods for committing tortuous murders. Many of the bodies they located were so badly dismembered and decomposed that it was hard for them to determine exactly how many bodies there really were.

The police investigation spread through Chicago, Indianapolis, and Toronto. While conducting their investigation in Toronto, police discovered the bodies of the Pitezel children, who had gone missing sometime during Holmes' insurance fraud spree. Linking Holmes to their murders, police arrested him and he was convicted of their murders. He also confessed to 28 other murders; however, through investigations and missing person's reports, it is believed that Holmes is responsible for up to 200 murders.

In May 1896, one of America's first serial killers, H.H. Holmes, was **hanged**. The Castle was remodeled as an attraction and named the "Holmes Horror Castle"; however, it burned to the ground shortly before its opening.

From <<https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/serial-killers/hh-holmes/>>

Murder Castle

Monday, July 26, 2021 5:57 PM

'Murder Castle'

In 1885, Holmes moved to Chicago, Illinois. He soon found work in a pharmacy, using his now infamous alias, Dr. Henry H. Holmes. He eventually took over the business and was later rumored to have killed its original owner.

Holmes had a three-story building constructed nearby, creating an elaborate house of horrors. The upper floors contained his living quarters and many small rooms where he tortured and killed his victims. There were also trapdoors and chutes that enabled him to move the bodies down to the basement, where he could burn the remains in a kiln or dispose of them in other ways.

During the 1893 Columbian Exposition, Holmes opened up his home as a hotel for visitors. Unfortunately, many guests did not survive in what became known as the "Murder Castle." Many of these victims — no one knows for certain the total number — were women who were seduced, swindled and then killed. Holmes had a habit of getting engaged to a woman, only for his fiancée to suddenly "disappear." Other victims were lured there by the offer of employment.

From <<https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/hh-holmes>>

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From <<https://www.biography.com/crime-figure/hh-holmes>>

The 'Murder Castle'

Historians believe Holmes, a masterful and charismatic con artist, had swindled money from his drugstore employers. He purchased an empty lot in the Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, and built a labyrinthine structure with shops on the first floor and small apartments above.

This edifice became known as Holmes' booby-trapped Murder Castle. According to sensationalist reports, the space featured soundproof rooms, secret passages and a disorienting maze of hallways and staircases. The rooms were also allegedly outfitted with trapdoors over chutes that dropped Holmes' unsuspecting victims to the building's basement.

The basement, claims said, was a macabre facility of acid vats, pits of quicklime (often used on decaying corpses) and a crematorium, which the killer used to finish off his victims. All of these descriptions, however, were described by what were likely overly embellished or even fabricated news reports in the 1890s.

From <<https://www.history.com/topics/crime/murder-castle>>

The Sinister Story of H.H. Holmes and His Murder Castle

Holmes, whose original name was Herman Webster Mudgett, is often referred to as America's first serial killer.

While the facts of this story are true, they are also quite graphic. Please be advised before reading on.

The year is 1892; crews are working around the clock in order to prepare Jackson Park for the event of the century. In just one year, the 500-acre park on the South Side of Chicago will host the Columbian Exposition World's Fair. Just three miles west, similar preparations are taking place, albeit of a much more sinister nature. On the corner of South Wallace Avenue and West 63rd Street in Englewood, H.H. Holmes is putting the finishing touches on what will later be known as the Murder Castle.



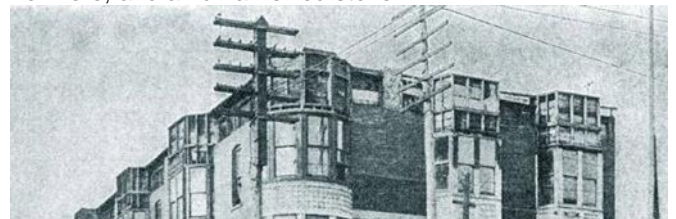
In 1893, Chicago was given the honor of hosting the World's Fair, a cultural and social event to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of America. The event was scheduled from May to October, and attracted millions of people from all over the world. When Holmes heard that the World's Fair was coming to Chicago, he looked at it as an opportunity. He knew many visitors would be searching for lodging near the fair and believed many of them would be women whom he could easily seduce into staying at his hotel. After being lured into the hotel, many of these out-of-town visitors would never be seen again.

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From <<https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/serial-killers/hh-holmes/>>



The 100 rooms of the H. H. Holmes house were allegedly filled with trapdoors, gas chambers, staircases to nowhere, and a human-sized stove.



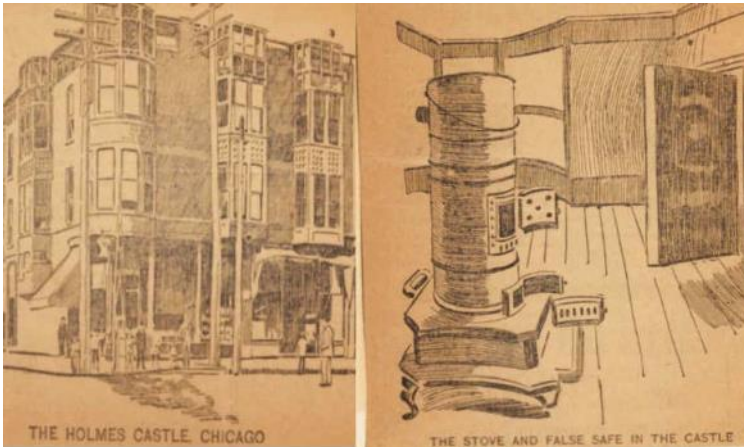


H.H. Holmes and his "Murder Castle."

Holmes, whose original name was Herman Webster Mudgett, is often referred to as America's first serial killer. And while speculation runs amok when it comes to Holmes, there are a few things we know for sure. He was born in 1861 in Gilmanton, New Hampshire. At the age of five, he had a traumatic experience in which two older school mates forced him into the office of a doctor who Holmes feared greatly, and would not let him out until he met face to face with one of the doctor's educational skeletons. He was first married at the age of 17 to Clara Lovering, and had a son just two years later. He would marry two more times (without actually divorcing Clara): once in 1887 to Myrta Belknap, with whom he had a daughter, and again in 1894 to Georgiana Yoke. He graduated from the University of Michigan's Department of Medicine and Surgery in 1894, and apprenticed in New Hampshire under Dr. Nahum Wight, noted for his support of human dissection.

By the time Holmes arrived in Illinois in 1886, he had built up quite the wrap sheet; rumors and accusations seemed to follow Holmes wherever he went. During his time in med school, Holmes would steal cadavers and use them to make false insurance claims. While living in Mooers Forks, New York, Holmes was said to be last-seen with a boy who would later disappear. When questioned about the missing child, Holmes claimed he had simply went back to his home in Massachusetts. After avoiding an official investigation, Holmes left town. At one point, Holmes took a job at a drugstore in Philadelphia, where shortly after his hiring a boy died from taking medicine purchased at the store. Again, Holmes denied any accusations and immediately left town.

The Murder Castle



Sketchings of the outside of Holmes' castle, the stove, and the false safe inside. Retrieved from the Library of Congress.

Upon arriving to Chicago, Holmes changed his name to Henry Howard Holmes in order to avoid being exposed by the victims of his past crimes. He found a job at Elizabeth S. Holton's drugstore, and began to ingratiate himself to the owners. Eventually Holmes purchased the drug store, and an empty lot across from it as well. It was at this location where Holmes would construct his Murder Castle in 1887. The castle began as a mixed-use two story building with apartments on the top floor and retail space below, including another pharmacy.

Though the building may have looked perfectly normal from the outside, the construction and the plans were anything but. Holmes' designs included several doorways that opened to brick walls, countless windowless rooms, stairs that would lead to nowhere, trap doors, chutes that could suspiciously fit a body, and a large kiln in the basement. He also built gas jets into the walls, and a walk-in bank vault. During construction, Holmes would routinely fire workers in order to keep suspicion low. This also provided the added benefit of Holmes not having to pay for their work, as he would claim shoddy craftsmanship and refuse to pay. By 1892, construction was complete, just in time for the 1893 World's Fair. Holmes intended to rent out the second floor of his building as a hotel to the fair's guests, albeit with much darker motives than any of them realized.

Crimes and Capture

One of Holmes' earliest victims was thought to be his mistress, Julia Smythe. Smythe was the wife of Alex Conner, an employee who worked at the pharmacy's jewelry counter in the Holmes building. After learning of his wife's affair, Conner moved away, leaving his wife and their daughter, Pearl, together at the hotel. The two disappeared on Christmas of 1891 with Holmes



Wikimedia CommonsThe infamous H. H. Holmes hotel in Chicago, built in the late 19th century.

If you were staying at the World's Fair Hotel — more commonly known as the H. H. Holmes hotel — you might run up a flight of stairs and find that it led to nowhere.

You'd open doors and see only solid brick. You'd enter a bedroom and suddenly smell gas seeping in. You'd try to run, only to realize you were locked in. Even if you could open the door, you probably couldn't find your way out of the house. And before long, you'd meet your gruesome end.

Or at least, that's how the story of H. H. Holmes goes. As one of America's first known serial killers, H. H. Holmes became infamous not only for his crimes but also for his legendary "murder hotel" in Chicago. Sometimes called a "murder castle" or a "murder mansion," this mysterious building was initially believed to be a normal hotel — and just a way for Holmes to make money during the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

But a police investigation later revealed something far more sinister. While it remains unknown how many people Holmes murdered in his house of horrors, he once boasted of killing 27 people. However, some estimates claim the actual number may have been as low as 9 — or as high as 200.

In recent years, some historians have [cast doubt](#) on whether the H. H. Holmes house was really a "murder castle" at all. While there's no doubt that Holmes was a serial killer, experts have suggested that some of the most sordid details of his home — like the homemade gas chambers and trapdoors — may have been mere products of yellow journalism.

But at the end of the day, only H. H. Holmes himself ever knew all of the home's secrets — and how many people died within its walls.

H. H. Holmes Arrives In Chicago



Wikimedia CommonsA mugshot of serial killer H. H. Holmes from 1895.

[H. H. Holmes](#) first came to Chicago in 1886, leaving behind more than one previous life. Born Herman Webster Mudgett, previous scandals gave him good reason to change his name. Like in college, when he worked in the anatomy lab and mutilated cadavers to defraud life insurance companies. Or when he was the last person to have been seen with a missing little boy in New York. Or when he worked as a pharmacist in Philadelphia and a

One of Holmes' earliest victims was thought to be his mistress, Julia Smythe. Smythe was the wife of Alex Conner, an employee who worked at the pharmacy's jewelry counter in the Holmes building. After learning of his wife's affair, Conner moved away, leaving his wife and their daughter, Pearl, together at the hotel. The two disappeared on Christmas of 1891, with Holmes claiming that she had passed away from an abortion. Several other young women would disappear under mysterious circumstances during their time at the Holmes building, including Emeline Cigrande, an employee at one of the building's shops, and Minnie Williams, an actress, who was never seen again after July 5, 1893.

From <<https://dustydthing.com/holmes-murder-castle/>>

standards gave him good reason to change his name.

Like in college, when he worked in the anatomy lab and mutilated cadavers to defraud life insurance companies. Or when he was the last person to have been seen with a missing little boy in New York. Or when he worked as a pharmacist in Philadelphia and a customer died after taking his pills.

After all these incidents, Mudgett simply skipped town and eventually changed his name to Henry Howard Holmes. Soon after his arrival in the Windy City, Holmes got a job in a drugstore on 63rd Street, using his knowledge of medicine and his charming personality to secure the position.

Holmes was fashionable, bright, and likable. In fact, he was so likable that at one point in his life, he was married to three unknowing women at once.

In 1887, he bought an empty lot across the street from the store where he worked and began construction on a three-story building, which he said would be used for apartments and shops.

The structure was ugly and large — containing more than 100 rooms and stretching for an entire block. But Chicago was a city on the rise, and new construction was going up all over this part of the American Midwest.

After all, Chicago was perfectly situated on the shores of Lake Michigan as a central hub for the expansive railroad networks that crisscrossed the nation, all extending like spokes in a wheel from the city.

Little did residents know that a house of horrors was about to emerge in that very same place.

The “Murder Mansion” Of Chicago



Holly Carden/[Carden Illustration](#)/Purchasable [here](#)An artist's illustration of the H. H. Holmes hotel.

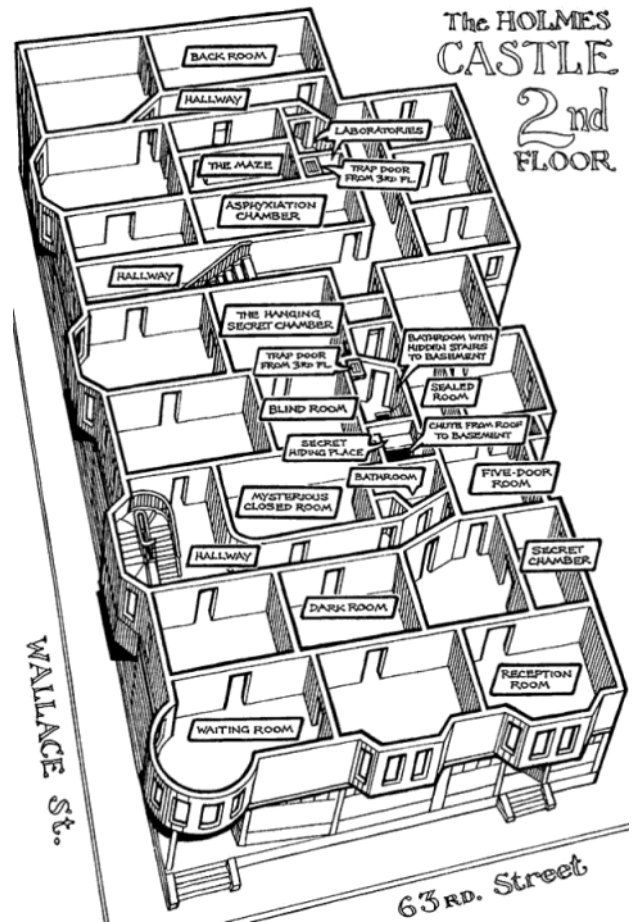
For his mansion, H. H. Holmes planned for the first floor to contain an entire block of storefronts that he would be able to rent out to the flood of new businesses opening up in the city.

The third floor would contain apartments for new residents looking to make it big in the Windy City. Eerily, some of those unsuspecting residents may have eventually become Holmes's victims.

Those victims got to see the second floor — one that was allegedly full of “asphyxiation chambers,” mazes, and hidden stairs. And the especially unlucky victims made it down to the basement, which hid the elaborate horrors for which the H. H. Holmes house is now famous.

Throughout the building's construction, Holmes apparently switched builders and architects frequently, so that no one involved was able to realize the gruesome end goal of all the odd parts.

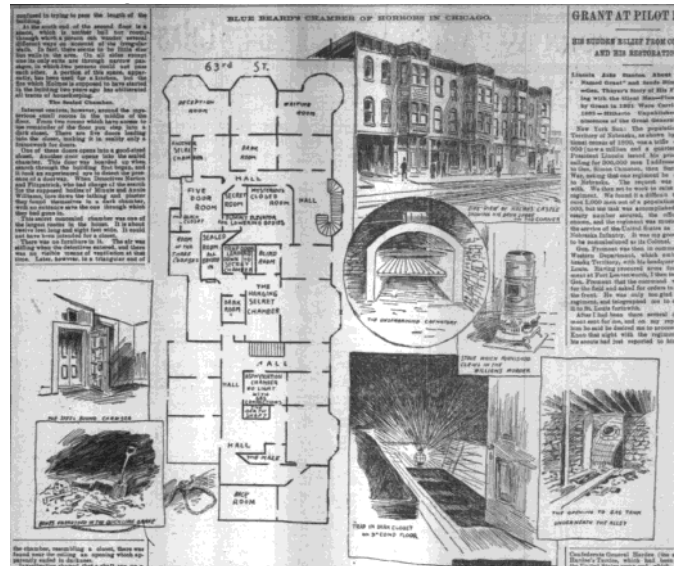
The house was completed in 1892. And by 1894, police would be exploring its winding passages while Holmes sat behind bars. At first, authorities were confused by what they found.



The second floor of the H. H. Holmes house. There were hinged walls and false partitions. Some rooms had five doors and others had none. Secret, airless chambers were found underneath floorboards — and iron plate-lined walls appeared to stifle all sound.

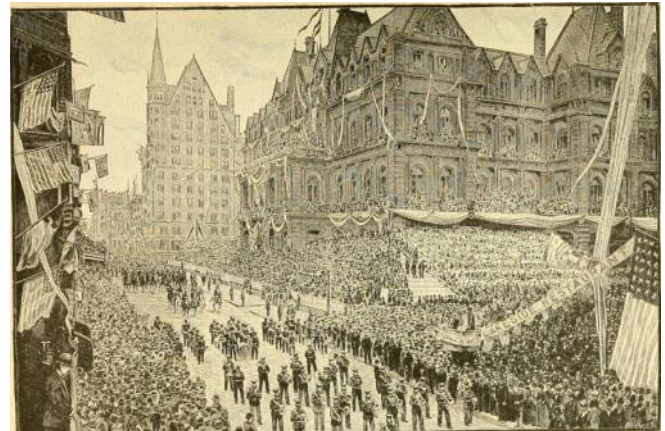
As for Holmes's own apartment, it had a trapdoor in the bathroom, which opened to reveal a staircase that led to a windowless cubicle. In the cubicle, there was allegedly a large chute that tunneled through to the basement. (Spoiler alert: It wasn't used for dirty laundry.)

One notable room was lined with gas fixtures. Here, Holmes would apparently seal his victims in, flip a switch in an adjacent room, and wait for the horror to unfold. Another chute was found nearby. All of the doors and some of the steps were connected to an intricate alarm system. Whenever someone stepped into the hall or headed downstairs, a buzzer sounded in Holmes's bedroom. It should be noted that these descriptions have been met with some skepticism by historians — [especially in recent years](#) — and so it's worth keeping in mind that at least some of the designs may have been exaggerated or even invented by the newspapers of the era. Uncovering The H. H. Holmes "Murder Hotel"



Illinois State Historical Library An old newspaper floor plan of the H. Holmes hotel.

The first clue about the bizarre floor plan's true purpose came to the cops in a pile of bones. Most of the bones were from animals, but some of them were human. They were so small that they almost certainly belonged to a child, one who was no more than six or seven years old. And when authorities descended into the cellar, the scope of the building's hidden horrors was finally revealed. Beside a blood-soaked operating table, they found a woman's clothes. Another surgical surface was nearby — along with a crematory, an array of medical tools, a bizarre torture device, and shelves of disintegrating acids. Holmes's fascination with dead bodies had apparently lasted long past college, as had his surgical skills. After dropping his victims down through the chutes, he reportedly dissected them, cleaned them, and then sold the organs or skeletons to medical institutions or on the black market. How An Influx Of Transient Workers Provided Fresh Boarders



Wikimedia Commons A sketch of the opening of Chicago's Columbia Expedition, also known as the World's Fair, in 1893. Though the mansion didn't look inviting in the least, it's unlikely that any of the victims were dragged into its depths. They entered on their own volition, likely enchanted by the owner's flattery and apparent affluence.

[Rich People in Nepean Want This Video Banned from the Internet! Watch Now Investing Only \\$250 in Amazon Could Give You Second Income](#)
 In some cases, they may have even been his employees. During his two short years in the castle, Holmes hired more than 150 women to work as his stenographers. A few of them were known to be his mistresses as well. Holmes sometimes photographed his favorites. They were young, beautiful, and trusting of this gentleman in the big and unfamiliar city. As a city on the rise that was well-connected thanks to its railway hub, Chicago undoubtedly had a fresh flow of people coming in and out of Holmes's mansion.

But despite the well-connected women who went missing under his employment, suspicions of murder weren't what led to Holmes's demise.



Illinois Historical Society

An illustration of H. H. Holmes in a newspaper from the time. People come and go all the time in a big city, often without notice. And before the age of advanced technology, it was especially hard to trace them. So the disappearance of the young women working under Holmes could've always been excused as them simply moving on or heading back home.

Ultimately, theft and poorly-planned financial schemes were what led to the arrest of Holmes in Boston on November 17, 1894. After decades of criminal activity (the scale and complexity of which you really need a book to fully grasp), H. H. Holmes was behind bars.

While he was in jail, connections between him and at least one murder were revealed — and a pile of financial charges were obscured by the more sinister accusations that emerged. When all was said and done, Holmes was [officially linked to 9 murders](#) total.

Though he boasted of committing at least 27 murders, he gave three different confessions while imprisoned — all with contradicting numbers.

The true amount of victims was impossible to corroborate because the home was specially equipped for Holmes to disintegrate leftover body parts in acid baths or to burn them in a human-sized stove. (In one pile of ashes, investigators found a small gold chain from a woman's shoe.)

The Devil In The White City



Boston Public Library/FlickrA painting of the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The attendees allegedly provided H. H. Holmes with a constant supply of new victims.

"I was born with the devil in me," Holmes would later explain. "I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can help the inspiration to sing."

As recounted in Erik Larson's book [The Devil In The White City](#), H. H. Holmes began his murder spree at a moment in history when an unprecedented throng of unknown, unaccompanied strangers were flooding the streets of Chicago, looking for temporary housing. The 1893 Chicago World's Fair was one of the most attended cultural events of the era, with millions of people [participating in the historic celebration](#).

Noting the thousands of people who went missing during the World's Fair, some papers suggested the actual count of Holmes's victims may have numbered in the hundreds.



Smithsonian Institution Archives/PicrylA picture taken of "The White City," as the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 would come to be called.

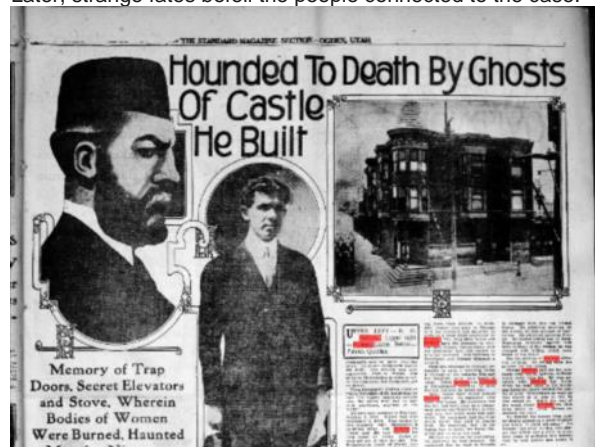
For the most part, Holmes represented himself at his trial — displaying his classic grace and a "remarkable familiarity with the law," according to one paper of the time.

However, his charm wasn't enough for the jurors — and he was unanimously sentenced to death by hanging.

Very familiar with what could be done to a person's corpse after death, Holmes asked if his body could be encased in cement within his coffin.

Shortly before his death in 1896, H. H. Holmes suggested that he was turning into the devil. Even his face, he said, was taking on a demonic look.

His execution was an agonizing affair. When the floor was dropped beneath him, his neck didn't snap like it was supposed to. He lay twitching for about 20 minutes before he was pronounced dead. Later, strange fates befell the people connected to the case.



Library of Congress Article on the suicide of mansion caretaker Patrick Quinlan from *The Ogden Standard* in 1914.

The man who had initially tipped off the police to H. H. Holmes's illegal dealings was shot by a Chicago police officer. The warden at the prison where Holmes had been held killed himself. The office of the district attorney (who argued the famous case) caught on fire.

And Patrick Quinlan — the former caretaker of the castle who, after Holmes, knew the most about the haunted building — died by suicide in 1914.

He left a one-sentence [note](#): "I could not sleep."

As for the murder castle itself, it is no longer standing today. In 1895, the mansion was gutted by a fire — which may have been started by two men who were seen entering the building at night. The remaining structure was torn down in 1938. And today, it's the site of an unassuming post office.

From <<https://allthatsinteresting.com/hh-holmes-hotel>>

Arrest

Monday, July 26, 2021 7:18 PM

With insurance companies pressing to prosecute him for [arson](#), Holmes left Chicago in July 1894. He reappeared in Fort Worth, where he had inherited property from the Williams sisters, at the intersection of modern-day Commerce Street and 2nd Street. Here, he once again attempted to build an incomplete structure without paying his suppliers and contractors. This building, unlike the former of his properties, was not a site of any additional killings.^[a]

In July 1894, Holmes was arrested and briefly jailed for the first time, on the charge of selling mortgaged goods in [St. Louis, Missouri](#).^[a] He was promptly [bailed](#) out, but while in jail he struck up a conversation with a convicted outlaw named [Marion Hedgepeth](#), who was serving a 25-year sentence. Holmes had concocted a plan to swindle an insurance company out of \$10,000 by taking out a policy on himself and then faking his death.^[a]

Holmes promised Hedgepeth a \$500 commission in exchange for the name of a lawyer who could be trusted. Holmes was directed to a young St. Louis attorney named Jephtha Howe. Howe was in practice with his older brother, Alphonso Howe, who had no involvement with Holmes or Pitezel or their fraudulent activities. Jephtha Howe, however, found Holmes' scheme brilliant. Nevertheless, Holmes' plan to fake his own death failed when the insurance company became suspicious and refused to pay. Holmes did not press the claim; instead, he concocted a similar plan with Pitezel.^[a]

Pitezel agreed to fake his own death so that his wife could collect on a \$10,000 life insurance policy,^[a] which she was to split with Holmes and Jephtha Howe. The scheme, which was to take place in Philadelphia, called for Pitezel to set himself up as an [inventor](#) under the name B. F. Perry, and then be killed and disfigured in a lab explosion. Holmes was to find an appropriate cadaver to play the role of Pitezel. Instead, Holmes killed Pitezel by knocking him unconscious with [chloroform](#) and setting his body on fire with the use of [benzene](#). In his confession, Holmes implied Pitezel was still alive after he used the chloroform on him, before he set him on fire. However, forensic evidence presented at Holmes' later trial showed chloroform had been administered *after* Pitezel's death (a fact which the insurance company was unaware of), presumably to fake [suicide](#) to exonerate Holmes should he be charged with murder.^{[a][a]}

Holmes collected the insurance payout on the basis of the genuine Pitezel corpse. Holmes then went on to manipulate Pitezel's unsuspecting wife into allowing three of her five children (Alice, Nellie and Howard) to be placed in his custody. The eldest daughter and the baby remained with Mrs. Pitezel. Holmes and the three Pitezel children traveled throughout the [northern United States](#) and into [Canada](#). Simultaneously, he escorted Mrs. Pitezel along a parallel route, all the while using various aliases and lying to Mrs. Pitezel concerning her husband's death (claiming Pitezel was hiding in [London](#)).^{[a][a]} as well as lying to her about the true whereabouts of her three missing children. In [Detroit](#), just before entering Canada, they were only separated by a few blocks.^[a]

In an even more audacious move, Holmes was staying at another location with his wife, who was unaware of the whole affair. Holmes would later confess to murdering Alice and Nellie by forcing them into a large trunk and locking them inside. He drilled a hole in the lid of the trunk and put one end of a hose through the hole, attaching the other end to a gas line to asphyxiate the girls. Holmes buried their nude bodies in the cellar of his rental house at 16 St. Vincent Street in [Toronto](#).^{[a][a]} This home and address no longer exist, St. Vincent Street having long since been realigned into a part of [Bay Street](#).

[Frank Geyer](#), a Philadelphia police detective assigned to investigate Holmes and find the three missing children, found the decomposed bodies of the two Pitezel girls in the cellar of the Toronto home. Detective Geyer wrote, "The deeper we dug, the more horrible the odor became, and when we reached the depth of three feet, we discovered what appeared to be the bone of the forearm of a human being."^{[a][a]} Geyer then went to [Indianapolis](#), where Holmes had rented a cottage. Holmes was reported to have visited a local pharmacy to purchase the drugs which he used to kill young Howard Pitezel, and a repair shop to sharpen the knives he used to chop up the body before he burned it. The boy's teeth and bits of bone were discovered in the home's chimney.^{[a][a]}

Holmes' murder spree finally ended when he was arrested in Boston on November 17, 1894, after being tracked there from Philadelphia by the [Pinkertons](#). He was held on an outstanding warrant for horse theft in Texas because the authorities had become more suspicious at this point and Holmes appeared poised to flee the country in the company of his unsuspecting third wife.^{[a][a]}

Following the discovery of Alice and Nellie's bodies, in July 1895, Chicago police and reporters began investigating Holmes' building in Englewood, now locally referred to as *The Castle*. Though many sensational claims were made, no evidence was found which could have convicted Holmes in Chicago.^[a] According to Selzer, stories of torture equipment found in the building are 20th-century fiction.^[a]

In October 1895, Holmes was put on trial for the murder of Benjamin Pitezel, and was found guilty and [sentenced to death](#). By then, it was evident Holmes had also murdered the three missing Pitezel children. Following his conviction, Holmes confessed to 27 murders in Chicago, Indianapolis, and Toronto (though some people he "confessed" to murdering were still alive), and six [attempted murders](#). Holmes was paid \$7,500^[a] by the [Hearst newspapers](#) in exchange for his confession, which was quickly found to be mostly nonsense.^[a]

Holmes gave various contradictory accounts of his life, initially claiming innocence and later that he was [possessed](#) by [Satan](#). His propensity for lying has made it difficult for researchers to ascertain the truth on the basis of his statements.^[a] While writing his confessions in prison, Holmes mentioned how drastically his facial appearance had changed since his imprisonment.^[a] He described his new, grim appearance as "gruesome and taking a Satanical Cast", and wrote he was now convinced that after everything that he had done, he was beginning to resemble the Devil.^[a]^[*citation needed*]

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._H._Holmes>

In 1894, Marion Hedgepeth, who was angry that he did not receive any money in the initial scam, told police about the scam Holmes had planned. The police tracked Holmes, finally catching up to him in Boston where they arrested him and held him on an outstanding warrant for the Texas horse swindle. At the time of his arrest, Holmes appeared as if he was prepared to flee the country and police became suspicious of him. Chicago police investigated Holmes' Castle where they discovered his strange and efficient methods for committing tortuous murders. Many of the bodies they located were so badly dismembered and decomposed that it was hard for them to determine exactly how many bodies there really were.

The police investigation spread through Chicago, Indianapolis, and Toronto. While conducting their investigation in Toronto, police discovered the bodies of the Pitezel children, who had gone missing sometime during Holmes' insurance fraud spree. Linking Holmes to their murders, police arrested him and he was convicted of their murders. He also confessed to 28 other murders; however, through investigations and missing person's reports, it is believe that Holmes is responsible for up to 200 murders.

From <https://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/serial-killers/hh-holmes/>>

On June 15, 1894, while Holmes, then known as Howard, was in St. Louis arranging details for his latest scheme, he purchased a drug store, upon which he gave a mortgage. Shortly afterward he sold this mortgaged property, and on July 19 he was arrested on a charge of obtaining money by false pretenses in connection with this sale.

While in jail he met Marion Hedgspeth, who, with three others, robbed a train near St. Louis in 1891, and was captured in San Francisco. (See history of Marion Hedgspeth.) Holmes asked Hedgspeth if he knew of any slick lawyer.

The train robber recommended him to J. D. Howe, of St. Louis, and Holmes then foolishly unfolded his whole scheme in regard to Pitezel, to Hedgspeth, and told him that he would give him \$500 for his services if the plan worked.

On July 31 Holmes was released on bail furnished by his third "wife." A few days after being released he proceeded to Philadelphia, where he met Pitezel, alias Perry, and on August 17, the day on which the latter opened his office in Callowhill Street, Holmes accompanied him to a secondhand furniture store located at 1037 Buttonwood Street, and assisted him in selecting furniture.

From <https://www.historicalcrimedetective.com/ccca/h-h-holmes-born-herman-mudgett/>>

10 Things You May Not Know About the Pinkertons

Long before there was a Federal Bureau of Investigation, there was the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. Check out 10 little-known facts about the detective agency that helped usher in the modern era of law enforcement.

1. Its founder became a detective by accident.



Allan Pinkerton, 1860. (Credit: Chicago History Museum/Getty Images)
In 1842, Allan Pinkerton immigrated to the Chicago area and opened a cooperage, or barrel-making business. His detective career began just five years later, when he stumbled upon a band of counterfeiters while scrounging for lumber on an island in the Fox River. The Scotsman conducted informal surveillance on the gang, and was hailed as a local hero after he helped police make arrests. "The affair was in everybody's mouth," he later wrote, "and I suddenly found myself called upon from every quarter to undertake matters requiring detective skill." Pinkerton soon won a gig as a small town sheriff. He went on to work as Chicago's first police detective and as an agent for the U.S. Post Office. Around 1850, he opened the private investigation firm that became the Pinkerton National Detective Agency.

2. The Pinkertons inspired the term "private eye."

The Pinkerton agency first made its name in the late-1850s for hunting down outlaws and providing private security for railroads. As the company's profile grew, its iconic logo—a large, unblinking eye accompanied by the slogan "We Never Sleep"—gave rise to the term "private eye" as a nickname for detectives.



3. They hired the nation's first female detective.



Pinkerton Detective Agency – For 150 Years



Pinkerton National Detective Agency

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency is a private security guard and detective agency established in 1850 by Scottish immigrant, [Allan Pinkerton](#). The organization became famous when Allan Pinkerton claimed to have foiled a plot to assassinate president-elect [Abraham Lincoln](#), who later hired Pinkerton agents for his personal security during the [Civil War](#).

Born in Scotland on August 25, 1819, Allan Pinkerton worked as a barrel maker before immigrating to the United States in 1842. Settling near [Chicago, Illinois](#), he went to work at Lill's Brewery as a barrel maker. However, Pinkerton soon determined that working for himself would be more profitable for his family and they moved to a small town called Dundee, some 40 miles northwest of Chicago.

Making barrels once again, he quickly gained control of the market due to the superior quality and low prices of his product. Always thrifty, Pinkerton thought that he could save some money by not paying someone else for poles to make barrel hoops. Before long, he found a small deserted island in the middle of the Fox River and rowed out to cut down a supply of his own.

However, when he got to the island he found signs that someone had been there and knowing that counterfeiters had been working in the area, he wondered if the island might be their hideout.



Allan Pinkerton, 1862

When he returned, he notified the local sheriff of his suspicions and the two teamed up to stake out the island which soon led to the arrest of the counterfeit band. However, they failed to catch the ringleader. Pinkerton found himself involved in the search for the leader and soon tracked him down, as well.

This accidental involvement in justice led to Pinkerton's appointment as a deputy sheriff for Kane County and in 1850 he became Chicago's first police detective. That same year, he, along with Chicago attorney, Edward Rucker, founded, the North-Western Police Agency.

In the meantime, Allan's brother, Robert, had his formed his own business called "Pinkerton & Co" as early as 1843. Robert's organization was originally established as a railroad contractor, but somewhere along the line, he began to work as a railroad detective. Through his contacts in the railroad business, Robert had also secured a number of contracts with [Wells Fargo](#) to provide guards on [stagecoaches](#). Robert's business grew so rapidly that he hired several men as railroad and stagecoach guards.

When Allan and Rucker's business dissolved a year after it was formed, Allan joined his brother Robert in his already established company and the name was changed to the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. The "new" company provided a variety of detective services, from private military contractors to security guards, but specialized in the capture of counterfeiters and train robbers. Though there were a few other detective agencies at the time, most had unsavory reputations and the Pinkerton Agency was the first to set uniform fees and establish practices which quickly earned respect for the organization.





Portrait of Scottish-born American private detective Allan Pinkerton (1819 – 1884) who founded the world's first and most famous private security service, the Pinkerton Agency which exists to this day, late 19th Century. (Photo by Pictorial Parade/Getty Images)

In 1856, 23-year-old widow Kate Warne walked into Pinkerton's Chicago office and requested a job as a detective. Allan Pinkerton was hesitant to hire a female investigator, but he gave in after Warne convinced him that she could "worm out secrets in many places to which it was impossible for male detectives to gain access." True to her word, Warne proved to be an expert at working undercover, once busting a thief by cozing up to his wife and convincing her to reveal the location of the loot. During another case, she got a suspect to feed her crucial information by disguising herself as a fortune-teller. Pinkerton would later list Warne as one of the best investigators he ever hired. Following her death in 1868, he even had her buried in his family plot.

4. The Pinkertons may have foiled an assassination attempt on Abraham Lincoln.



Allan Pinkerton (left) with President Abraham Lincoln and Union Major General John McClernand.

Shortly before Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration in March 1861, Allan Pinkerton traveled to Baltimore on a mission for a railroad company. The detective was investigating rumors that Southern sympathizers might sabotage the rail lines to Washington, D.C., but while gathering undercover intelligence, he learned that a secret cabal also planned to assassinate Lincoln—then on a whistle-stop tour—as he switched trains in Baltimore on his way to the capital.

Pinkerton immediately tracked down the president-elect and informed him of the alleged plot. With the help of Kate Warne and several other agents, he then arranged for Lincoln to secretly board an overnight train and pass through Baltimore several hours ahead of his published schedule. Pinkerton operatives also cut telegraph lines to ensure the conspirators couldn't communicate with one another, and Warne had Lincoln pose as her invalid brother to cover up his identity. The president-elect arrived safely in Washington the next morning, but his decision to skirt through Baltimore saw him lampooned and labeled a coward in the press. Meanwhile, none of the would-be assassins was ever arrested, leading some historians to conclude that the threat may have been exaggerated or even invented by Pinkerton.

5. They spied for the Union Army during the Civil War.



Allan Pinkerton, President Lincoln, and Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand, 1862

In 1861, while investigating a railway case, the agency uncovered an assassination plot against Abraham Lincoln, where conspirators intended to kill Lincoln in Baltimore during a stop on his way to his inauguration. However, with Pinkerton's warning, Lincoln's itinerary was changed. During the Civil War, President Lincoln hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to organize a "secret service" to obtain military information on the Confederates and sometimes act as Lincoln's bodyguard. Working diligently, Allan Pinkerton traveled under the pseudonym of "Major E.J. Allen."

After the war, Allan Pinkerton returned to his duties at the detective agency, which was often hired by the government to perform many of the same duties that are now regularly assigned to the Secret Service, the FBI, and the CIA. The agency also worked for the railroads and overland stage companies, playing an active role in chasing down a number of [outlaws](#) including [Jesse James](#), the [Reno Brothers](#), and [Butch Cassidy](#) and his [Wild Bunch](#).

On their three-story Chicago building, their logo, a black and white eye, claimed: "We Never Sleep." This was the origin of the term "private eye."

When Robert Pinkerton died in 1868, Allan assumed full control of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. However, just a year later, in the autumn of 1869, Allan suffered a paralyzing stroke which nearly killed him. Both Robert and Allan's sons then took on most of the responsibilities of running the business. However, there was rivalry between them, and the agency struggled without leadership. At the same time, the agency began to suffer financially.

Despite the challenges, by the early 1870s, the agency had the world's largest collection of mug shots and a "criminal database." During the height of its existence, the Pinkertons had more agents than the standing army of the United States of America, causing the state of Ohio to outlaw the agency, due to the possibility of its being hired out as a "private army" or militia.

Fortunes were to decrease once again for the agency when, in 1871, Chicago suffered the Great Fire which began on the evening of October 7th. Before it burned itself out three days later, the entire business district was destroyed, including the Pinkerton buildings and many of their records. When the fire was finally extinguished, martial law was declared in Chicago and guards from the Pinkerton Detective Agency were hired to prevent looting. Robert's widow, Alice Isabella Pinkerton, and his dependents were also left homeless. When she approached Allan for assistance, he encouraged them to return to Great Britain. Offering to pay for the journey, Alice and her sons accepted his offer and sailed for Liverpool, leaving the agency entirely in the hands of Allan and his sons.



Pinkerton Agents

When Allan Pinkerton passed away in 1884, the agency was taken over by his sons, Robert and William. They soon became involved in the labor unrest of the late 19th century when they were hired by a number of businesses to keep strikers and suspected unionists out of their factories.

However, the rapidly expanding agency became known for less admirable activities as they often became the "law" in of themselves. Accused of using heavy-handed tactics, such as firebombing [Jesse James'](#) mother's home and using intimidation against union sympathizers, the public support began to turn away from the agency.

Many labor sympathizers accused the Pinkertons of inciting riots and their reputation continued to suffer. The most notorious example of this was the Homestead Strike of 1892 when Pinkerton agents killed 11 people while enforcing strikebreaking measures. In order to restore order, two brigades of state militia had to be called out.

Continuing their involvement against the labor movement into the 20th century, their reputation was harmed for years in the public consciousness.

However, the agency endured. In 1907, the agency was inherited by the founder's grandson, Allan Pinkerton II and his great-grandson, Robert II, in 1930. When Robert Pinkerton II died in 1967, without a male heir, the family direction of the corporation came to an end.

Pinkerton's Inc. has since grown to a \$1.5 billion organization that provides a wide range of security services. The company has its U.S. headquarters in Westlake Village, [California](#), and is a subsidiary of the Securitas Group of Stockholm, Sweden, a world leader in the security industry.



Allan Pinkerton and his agents at Antietam, Maryland, in October 1862. (Credit: PhotoQuest/Getty Images)

Allan Pinkerton was a staunch abolitionist and Union man, and during the Civil War, he organized a secret intelligence service for General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac. Operating under the name E.J. Allen, Pinkerton set up spy rings behind enemy lines and infiltrated southern sympathizer groups in the North. He even had agents interview escaped slaves to glean information about the Confederacy. The operation produced reams of intelligence, but not all of it proved accurate. A famous misstep came during 1862's Peninsula Campaign, when Pinkerton reported that the Confederate forces around Richmond were more than twice their actual size. McClellan believed the faulty intel, and despite outnumbering the rebels by a large margin, he delayed his advance and made repeated calls for reinforcements.

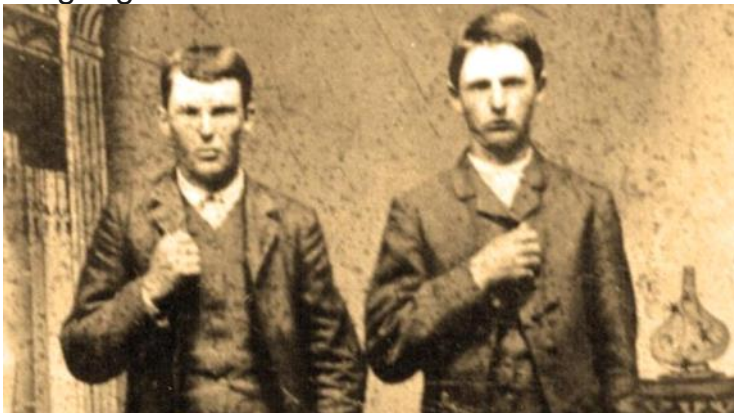
6. The Pinkertons created one of the world's earliest criminal databases.



Pinkerton mug shot of bank robber Eddie Guerin.

One of the many ways the Pinkertons revolutionized law enforcement was with their so-called "Rogues' Gallery," a collection of mug shots and case histories that the agency used to research and keep track of wanted men. Along with noting suspects' distinguishing marks and scars, agents also collected newspaper clippings and generated rap sheets detailing their previous arrests, known associates and areas of expertise. A more sophisticated criminal library wouldn't be assembled until the early 20th century and the birth of the FBI.

7. The Pinkertons warred with Jesse James and his gang.



Jesse and Frank James, c. 1872.

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From <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/pinkertons/>

During the era of frontier expansion, express companies and railroads often employed the Pinkertons as Wild West bounty hunters. The agency famously infiltrated the Reno gang—perpetrators of the nation’s first train robbery—and later chased after Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch. The Pinkertons usually got their man, but in the 1870s, they spent months engaged in a fruitless hunt for the bank robbers Jesse and Frank James. One of their agents was murdered while trying to infiltrate the brothers’ Missouri-based gang, and two more died in a shootout.

The hunt came to a bloody end in 1875, when the Pinkertons launched a raid on the James brothers’ mother’s house in Clay County, Missouri. Frank and Jesse were nowhere to be found—they’d been tipped off—but the Pinkertons got into an argument with their mother, Zerelda Samuel. During the standoff, a member of the detectives’ posse tossed an incendiary device through Samuel’s window, blowing part of her arm off and killing the James brothers’ 8-year-old half brother. The botched raid turned public opinion against the Pinkertons. After seeing his detectives denounced as murderers in the papers, Allan Pinkerton reluctantly called off his war against the James gang. Jesse would go on to elude the authorities for another seven years before being killed by an assassin’s bullet in 1882.

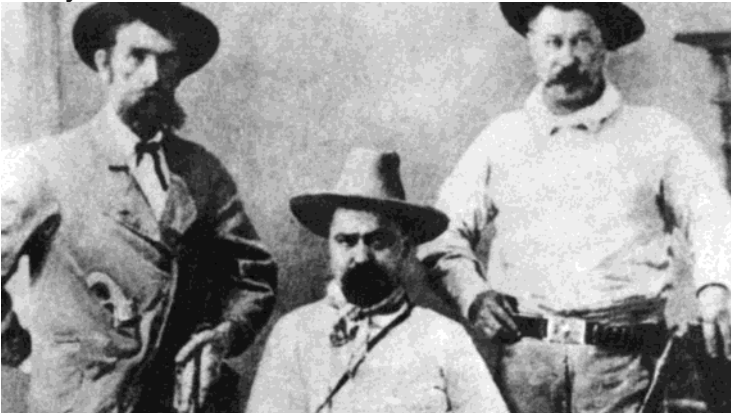
8. They played a role in 1892’s infamous Homestead Mill Strike.



Pinkerton guards break up a strike in Buchtel, Ohio in 1884.

Along with their exploits in the Wild West, the Pinkertons also had a more sinister reputation as the paramilitary wing of big business. Industrialists used them to spy on unions or act as guards and strikebreakers, and detectives clashed with workers on several occasions. During an 1892 strike by the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the Carnegie Steel Company paid some 300 Pinkertons to act as security at its mill in Homestead, Pennsylvania. After arriving at the plant on river barges, the agents squared off with thousands of striking workers in an all-day battle waged with guns, bricks and even dynamite. By the time the outnumbered Pinkertons finally surrendered, at least a dozen people were dead and several more wounded. The fallout from the melee crippled the steel union, but many also branded the Pinkertons as “hired thugs,” leading several states to pass laws banning the use of outside guards in labor disputes.

9. The Pinkertons were once larger than the U.S. Army.



William Pinkerton, flanked by two agents. (Credit: The Print Collector/Print Collector/Getty Images)

After Allan Pinkerton died in 1884, control of his agency fell to his two sons, Robert and William. The company continued to grow under their watch, and by the 1890s, it boasted 2,000 detectives and 30,000 reserves—more men than the standing army of the United States. Fearful that the agency could be hired as a private mercenary army, the state of Ohio later outlawed the Pinkertons altogether.

10. The agency still exists today.



Detectives from the Pinkerton Agency guard the coffin of Marilyn Monroe at her funeral in Westwood Memorial Park, in August 1962. (Credit: Keystone/Getty Images)

By the early 20th century, the Pinkertons' crime fighting duties had largely been absorbed by local police forces and agencies like the FBI. The company lived on as private security firm and guard service, however, and still operates today under the shortened name "Pinkerton."

From <https://www.history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-pinkertons>

Death

Monday, July 26, 2021 7:19 PM

On May 7, 1896, Holmes was hanged at [Moyamensing Prison](#), also known as the Philadelphia County Prison, for the murder of Pitezel.^{[2][43]} Until the moment of his death, Holmes remained calm and amiable, showing very few signs of fear, anxiety, or depression.^[44] Despite this, he asked for his coffin to be contained in cement and buried 10 feet deep, because he was concerned grave robbers would steal his body and use it for dissection.^{[2][9]} Holmes' neck did not break; he instead strangled to death slowly, twitching for over 15 minutes before being pronounced dead 20 minutes after the trap had been sprung.^{[43][45]} Upon his execution, Holmes's body was interred in an unmarked grave at Holy Cross Cemetery, a Catholic cemetery in the Philadelphia Western suburb of Yeadon, Pennsylvania.

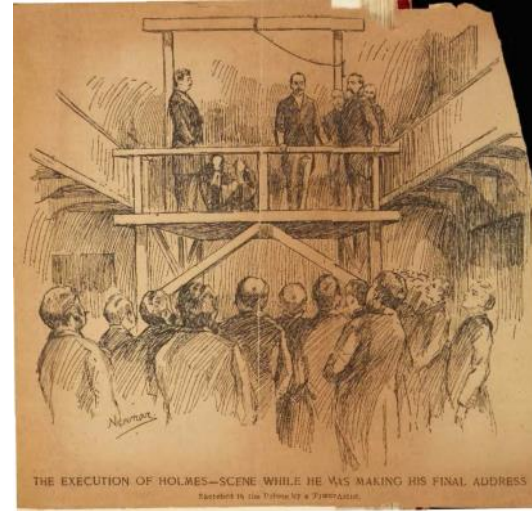
On New Year's Eve 1909, Hedgepeth, who had been [pardoned](#) for informing on Holmes,^[2] was shot and killed by police officer Edward Jaburek during a holdup at a Chicago saloon.^[46]

On March 7, 1914, the [Chicago Tribune](#) reported that, with the death of Patrick Quinlan, the former caretaker of the castle, "the mysteries of Holmes' castle" would remain unexplained. Quinlan had committed suicide by taking [strychnine](#). His body was found in his bedroom with a note that read, "I couldn't sleep."^[47] Quinlan's surviving relatives claimed he had been "haunted" for several months and was suffering from hallucinations.^[48]

The castle itself was mysteriously gutted by fire in August 1895. According to a newspaper clipping from [The New York Times](#), two men were seen entering the back of the building between 8 and 9 p.m. About half an hour later, they were seen exiting the building and rapidly running away. Following several explosions, the castle went up in flames. Afterwards, investigators found a half-empty gas can underneath the back steps of the building. The building survived the fire and remained in use until it was torn down in 1938. The site is occupied by the Englewood branch of the [United States Postal Service](#).^[49]

In 2017, amid allegations Holmes had in fact escaped execution, Holmes' body was exhumed for testing led by [Janet Monge](#) of the [University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology](#). Due to his coffin being contained in cement, his body was found not to have decomposed normally. His clothes were almost perfectly preserved and his mustache was found to be intact. The body was positively identified by his teeth as being that of Holmes. Holmes was then reburied.^[49]

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H. H. Holmes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._H._Holmes)



Victims

Monday, July 26, 2021 7:21 PM

Holmes' victims

The Pitezel Family were the known victims of Holmes: Father Ben and his three children, daughters Alice and Nellie, and little son Howard.

The family was killed during the fall of 1894. Instead of using a cadaver, Holmes used former business partner Ben as part of his insurance fraud scheme. Holmes knocked Ben out and killed him by setting him on fire.

On July 15, 1895 Alice and Nellie's bodies were found in a Toronto cellar. Later, authorities found teeth and pieces of bone among charred ruins that belonged to Howard in an Indianapolis cottage that Holmes had rented.

Of Holmes' assumed victims were: Julia and her daughter Pearl Connor (1891), Emeline Cigrand (1892) and sisters Minnie and Nannie Williams (1893). (Minnie had married Holmes, who swindled her out of her inheritance.)

The bodies of Julia, Emeline, and Minnie and Nannie were never found but rumor had it Holmes probably sold their cadavers to medical schools. He had consistently stated that Julia and Emeline died while undergoing illegal abortions. Julia was allegedly Holmes' lover and Emeline was Holmes' former secretary whom he later purportedly proposed to.

While searching Holmes' hotel, authorities recovered Minnie's watch chain and Nannie's garter buckle in one of the ovens. Although forensic evidence was rudimentary at the time, bones found in the basement most likely belonged to 12-year-old Pearl Connor, whom he allegedly poisoned. As for Emeline, the police believed they had come upon her hair and bones. One account claims that an eyewitness saw Holmes and his janitor haul out a big trunk the day after her disappearance.

Although there is a lengthy list of other potential victims Holmes may have murdered, these nine victims have been plausibly attributed to the serial killer's killing spree.

From <https://www.biography.com/news/hh-holmes-victims>

Holmes' Victims

While reports suggest Holmes killed as many as 200 people in his sinister lair, his actual number of victims may have been much lower. The number of his victims is still debated by historians.

Holmes was apprehended soon after he fled Chicago, in October 1893, following the conclusion of the World's Fair. He was arrested in Boston and eventually suspected of murdering his assistant, Benjamin Pitezel, and two of Pitezel's children.

Interestingly, while on the run, Holmes had misled Pitezel's wife as well, collecting the insurance money for his former assistant and living with his widow and three of their children. Police eventually discovered the body of one of the murdered children, and this discovery led to Holmes' arrest.

Following his arrest, Holmes claimed to have killed more than 200 people in his Murder Castle. He ultimately confessed to murdering Pitezel and two of his daughters. And experts now believe he may have, in fact, killed as few as nine—still a significant number, but not the scores the killer claimed.

While in captivity, awaiting his trial and sentencing, Holmes authored an autobiography, *Holmes' Own Story*, in which he wrote, "I could not help the fact that I was a murderer, no more than the poet can help the inspiration to sing."

From <https://www.history.com/topics/crime/murder-castle>

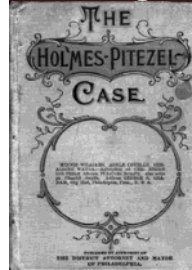
The Scheme That Went Wrong



Benjamin Pitezel

In 1894, Holmes used his longtime associate, Benjamin Pitezel, to assist in what was supposed to be a successful con. In this plan Pitezel was to fake his own death and have his wife collect the ten thousand dollar policy. This money was supposed to be split between the Pitezel family, Holmes, and the lawyer, Howe. Pitezel was supposed to fake his death by pretending to be blown up in a lab explosion and then he was instructed to go into hiding. Instead, Holmes actually killed Pitezel. Holmes made the death look like a suicide (Mrs. Pitezel was kept in the dark about the drastic change in the plans) and was therefore able to collect the money.

Preceding the Capture



Becoming concerned that the five Pitezel children might expose him, he went away with three of the children, eventually killing them. A Philadelphia detective, Frank P. Geyer, had tracked Holmes, finding the decomposed bodies of the two Pitezel girls in Toronto buried in the cellar of 16 St. Vincent Street. He then followed Holmes to Indianapolis, where Holmes had rented a cottage. Holmes was reported to have visited a local pharmacy to purchase the drugs which he used to kill Howard Pitezel, and a repair shop to sharpen the knives he used to chop up the body before he burned it. The boy's teeth and bits of bone were discovered in the home's chimney.



From <https://hhholmes.weebly.com/holmes-pitezel-case.html>

H.H. Holmes Confessions: A Cheat Sheet

In April, 1896, HH Holmes published a "confession" in which he claimed to have killed twenty-seven people. Actually, there were two, and possibly three, confessions written out from his prison cell.

The main confession was written for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Consisting of about 10,000 words, he claimed early on that he had killed twenty seven people, and proceeded to detail each murder. However, he may have left a couple out; he only actually mentions 24 or 25 of them (including a couple of unborn babies). A few of the people he confessed to killing, though, were actually still alive, and others appeared never to have existed in the first place. One (Gertrude Conner) was found to have died of neuralgia of the heart several weeks after leaving Holmes' employ, and was presumably not a victim (though a slow acting poison isn't out of the question). A couple more were un-named. The police claimed at the time that they only suspected Holmes of killing nine or ten people, and that the confession didn't give them a single reliable name to add to the list. They may have been wrong; there was one girl, Anna Betts, whose death certificate may back Holmes' story up. A few others were unnamed and couldn't be confirmed or denied.

The other confession was written for the *New York Morning Journal*. Like the *Inquirer*, it ran a hand-written statement from Holmes saying that this would be his only confession. It was largely the same as the *Inquirer*, but with stories of six or seven victims omitted, one story expanded, and few minor word changes (most likely, Holmes wrote out the first and then copied it down, making minor changes as he went). This was the version that was published in most of the regional papers, including the *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*.

The day before these two were published, another confession appeared in the *Philadelphia North American*. The paper claimed to have seen advance copies of the confession that was to be published the next day, and a few things it lend credibility to the idea that they had, in fact, seen a copy. However, most of the text of their version, including a story about mutilation his son and the famous "I was born with the devil in me" section, was not present in either of the confessions published the next day, and the *Inquirer* included a hand-written bit from Holmes saying that other confessions printed were "false." So, where this one came from is sort of a mystery. It's possible that they saw an earlier draft, and it's possible that Holmes sold them another version under the table (this is just the sort of thing he WOULD have done). The writing style of this version is a bit more dramatic, though, and my guess is that they saw or heard just a bit of the confession and wrote up a bunch of extra stuff themselves. But papers of the day seemed to believe them; many papers, including the *Tribune*, published excerpts.

A century later, we're really no further on the case than the police were. We still can't really NAME more than a dozen or so victims. We suspect the number is much higher, but we don't have much more information about who those other victims might be! I'll be running a Devil in the White City tour tonight with Ursula Bielski and Jeff Mudgett, Holmes' great great grandson. If you want to know more about what was in the confession, there's a new ebook which includes the full texts (with notes on differences between versions) and contains highly detailed analysis of how the confession lines up with what we know of the truth

From <<https://mysteriouschicago.com/h-h-holmes-confessions-a-cheat-sheet/>>

1893 Worlds Fair

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 5:39 PM

1893 World's Fair



1892 was the four hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus' historic voyage to the Americas and there was going to be a celebration. In a fierce competition of world-class cities including New York, St Louis, Chicago and Washington DC to host the event, President Harrison announced on 25 April 1890 that Chicago will be the chosen site.



Hand colored panorama by William Henry Jackson.

Extending from Cottage Grove Avenue to Lake Michigan, and from 56th Street to 67th Street, the grounds for the World's Columbian Exposition was the site of a massive building effort. If Chicago owes its physical supremacy directly to the Great Fire, which swept away the cheap wooden and flimsy structures and left a clear field for a city of stone, steel, glass and cement, it owes its cultural supremacy and its international fame to the World's Columbian Exposition.

It was decided early in the planning that in order for the Fair to succeed it would have to be held during the summer months. Due to New York's Grand Parade on Columbus Day, 1892, Christopher Columbus' birthday, the Chicago ceremonies started on 21 October 1892 with a Dedication Day Parade. The date coincided with the actual date of Columbus' landing in the Americas. The formal opening was held on 1 May 1893, but all the buildings were still not completed and some scaffolding still in place, nevertheless the celebrations continued.

Present at the opening day ceremonies were President Grover Cleveland and the Duke of Veragua who was a linear descendant of Christopher Columbus.

Due to the temporary building material used, only two of the 200 buildings of the Fair survived – the Columbus Memorial Building, which is now La Rabida, a hospital for cardiac children, and the Fine Arts Building, which eventually became the Museum of Science and Industry. In addition, the current Osaka Gardens, originally the Ho-o-den exhibit from the Wooded Island, continues to this day in Jackson Park. Between the time of the Fair and the 1933-1934 Century of Progress Exposition, the Fine Arts Building was the original Field Museum of Natural History. After the exposition, the museum moved to its current Grant Park location. A 24-foot replica of the original 65-foot Statue of the Republic stands at the foot of 65th Street. Another building, the German Building, served as a museum till a fire destroyed it on 31 March 1925.

Many prominent civic, professional, and commercial leaders from around the United States participated in the financing, coordination, and management of the Fair, including Chicago shoe tycoon Charles Schwab, Chicago railroad and manufacturing magnate John Whitfield Bunn, and Connecticut banking, insurance, and iron products magnate Milo Barnum Richardson, among many others.

During the six months that the Fair was open, 27,539,000 visited the Fair. The Fair's last day was 30 October 1893. The biggest single day of the Fair was Chicago Day, which commemorated the anniversary of the Great Fire of 1871. 716,881 people attended that day. The exposition was such a major event in Chicago that one of the stars on the municipal flag honors it

The Fair, however, did not close on a very positive note. Just three days prior to its closing, Chicago's mayor, Carter H. Harrison, Sr., was shot five times by a visitor in his home. This visitor was Patrick Eugene Joseph Prendergast, a follower of the single tax enthusiast, Henry George. The motive of Mr. Prendergast was to get even with the mayor for not appointing him as corporation counsel. Mr. Prendergast turned himself in and the jury took only an hour to find him guilty of first degree murder. This was Clarence Darrow's first murder case, unsuccessfully arguing that his client should be declared mentally unfit to stand trial. It was a very somber closing of the Fair.

On 3 January 1894, Teresa Dean, a columnist for the *Chicago Daily Inter Ocean* wrote its obituary in these words:

For though the buildings remain, and the "people" at the last have their own, the White City is gone. It can never come again. Out of the ashes something may come more beautiful than we knew before, but never again will come what '93 has given to us. The White City is lifeless. Only the shell remains. It is heaven untenanted

The **World's Columbian Exposition** (the official shortened name for the **World's Fair: Columbian Exposition**,^[a] also known as the **Chicago World's Fair**) was a **world's fair** held in **Chicago** in 1893 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of **Christopher Columbus'** arrival in the **New World** in 1492.^[a] The centerpiece of the Fair, held in **Jackson Park**, was a large water pool representing the voyage Columbus took to the New World. Chicago had won the right to host the fair over several other cities, including **New York City**, **Washington, D.C.**, and **St. Louis**. The exposition was an influential social and cultural event and had a profound effect on **architecture**, sanitation, the arts, Chicago's self-image, and American industrial optimism. The layout of the Chicago Columbian Exposition was, in large part, designed by **John Wellborn Root**, **Daniel Burnham**, **Frederick Law Olmsted** and **Charles B. Atwood**.^[a] It was the prototype of what Burnham and his colleagues thought a city should be. It was designed to follow **Beaux-Arts** principles of design, namely **neoclassical architecture** principles based on symmetry, balance, and splendor. The color of the material generally used to cover the buildings' façades (white **staff**) gave the fairgrounds its nickname, the **White City**. Many prominent architects designed its 14 "great buildings". Artists and musicians were featured in exhibits and many also made depictions and works of art inspired by the exposition. The exposition covered 690 acres (2.8 km²), featuring nearly 200 new (but deliberately temporary) buildings of predominantly neoclassical architecture, **canals** and **lagoons**, and people and cultures from 46 countries.^[a] More than 27 million people attended the exposition during its six-month run. Its scale and grandeur far exceeded the other **world's fairs**, and it became a symbol of the emerging **American Exceptionalism**, much in the same way that **the Great Exhibition** became a symbol of the **Victorian era** United Kingdom.

Dedication ceremonies for the fair were held on October 21, 1892, but the fairgrounds were not actually opened to the public until May 1, 1893. The fair continued until October 30, 1893. In addition to recognizing the 400th anniversary of the discovery of the New World by Europeans, the fair also served to show the world that Chicago had risen from the ashes of the **Great Chicago Fire**, which had destroyed much of the city in 1871.^[a]

On October 9, 1893, the day designated as Chicago Day, the fair set a world record for outdoor event attendance, drawing 751,026 people. The debt for the fair was soon paid off with a check for \$1.5 million (equivalent to \$43.2 million in 2020).^[a] Chicago has commemorated the fair with one of the stars on its **municipal flag**.^[a]

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World%27s_Columbian_Exposition>





From <<https://chicagology.com/columbiaexpo/>>

Marion Hedgpeth

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 5:49 PM

Marion Hedgpeth, Gunslinger, Train Robber, HH Holmes Informant

On the night of November 30, 1891, two masked men boarded the “Frisco” Express train as it was leaving St. Louis, Mo. They remained in seclusion until they had traveled a few miles, and then crawling over the tender, they presented pistols at the heads of the engineer and fireman and ordered them to stop a few miles from St. Louis, where two accomplices of the highwaymen were stationed.

The engineer and fireman were then ordered from the cab and kept covered while the party proceeded to the express car, where the robbers demanded admission, but were refused by the messenger. The robbers then set off a stick of dynamite and blew in the side of the car, seriously injuring the messenger. They then entered, blew open the safe, and after taking \$10,000, made their escape.

The Pinkerton Detective Agency and Chief of Detectives Desmond of St. Louis investigated the case and gathered evidence which convinced them that the robbers were Marion Hedgpeth, James Francis, Dink Wilson and Adelbert Slye. The latter was traced to Los Angeles and arrested by Robert Pinkerton.

Hedgpeth was traced to San Francisco and was arrested at the general post office. It was learned that he was traveling under the name of H. B. Swanson, and a decoy letter was mailed and finally advertised. On January 14, 1892, a watch was set, consisting of Detectives Bryam, Whitaker and Silvey, and on February 10 Hedgpeth called for his mail. He was heavily armed and made a desperate struggle, but was overpowered by the officers.

Sly and Hedgpeth were returned to St. Louis and were sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment.

Francis was killed in Kansas while resisting arrest, and Wilson shot and killed Detective Harvey of Syracuse, N. Y., for which he was electrocuted at Sing Sing, N. Y.

While in jail in St. Louis, Hedgpeth gained the confidence of Holmes, the “criminal of the century,” and subsequently rendered great assistance to the authorities. ([See Holmes' case.](#))

—###—

Marion Hedgpeth

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Marion Columbus Hedgpeth (April 14, 1856 – December 31, 1909) – also known as the Handsome Bandit, the Debonair Bandit, the Derby Kid and the Montana Bandit – was a famous Wild West outlaw.

Early life

Hedgpeth was born in Prairie Home, Missouri on April 14, 1856. He ran away from home at age 15, worked as a cowboy, and was an outlaw by the time he was 20, having killed in Colorado and Wyoming, as well as having robbed trains.

Appearance and reputation

In a 1996 American Cowboy article titled “The Debonair Killer”, David P. Grady noted: “Marion Hedgpeth looked like a dude, but ‘dangerous’ and ‘deadly’ fit him better”. The dark-complexioned, wavy-haired six footer, who roamed from town to town as a hired gun, Grady wrote, maintained the fastidious, gentlemanly appearance of a dandy, sporting a bowler hat and diamond stickpin. WANTED posters noted that his shoes were usually polished.

An article published in the Express Gazette, Volume 20 by “a man from Missouri”, who described himself as “a disinterested student of train robbing”, indicated that appearances were strategically important to Marion and his crew. In preparation for the Glendale robbery, he noted, Hedgpeth, “his three pals” and his wife “assembled in that city and rented a house in a fashionable quarter of the town. They furnished the house well, and during the two or three weeks prior to the holdup, each robber purchased for himself swell attire piece by piece, so as not to attract attention.”

Despite his swell appearance, however, Hedgpeth “was a deadly killer and one of the fastest guns in the Wild, Wild West”. Allan Pinkerton, whose National Detective Agency had sought to capture Hedgpeth and his gang for years, noted that Marion Hedgpeth once gunned down another outlaw who had already unholstered his pistol before Hedgpeth had drawn his revolver.

Career

Marion Hedgpeth	
 <div>Hedgpeth's February 1892 arrest photo</div>	
Born	<div>Marion Columbus Hedgpeth</div> April 14, 1856 <div>Prairie Home, Missouri, U.S.</div>
Died	December 31, 1909 (aged 53) <div>Chicago, Illinois, U.S.</div>
Cause of death	Gunshot wound
Other names	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">The Handsome BanditDebonair BanditDerby KidMontana Bandit</div>
Conviction(s)	Larceny, jail breaking, armed robbery
Details	
Victims	2+
Country	United States
State(s)	Colorado, Wyoming, California, Missouri

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marion_Hedgpeth

In November, 1883, Hedgepeth was sentenced to serve a term of seven years in the Missouri State Penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri, on the charge of larceny and jail breaking. He was discharged on February 16, 1889.

Hedgepeth lived for a while in a lawless region of Kansas City, Missouri, known as "Seldom Seen" because the police were seldom seen there. He became a member of the "famous Slye-Wilson gang of safe blowers and highwaymen".

On November 30, 1891 Hedgepeth and the other members of Slye-Wilson gang (Adelbert Denton "Bertie" Slye, James "Illinois Jimmy" Francis and Lucius "Dink" Wilson) - which by 1890 newspapers referred to as the "Hedgepeth Four" - robbed a train of \$40,000 in Glendale, Missouri near St. Louis, Missouri personally escaping with some \$10,000. The gang fled to Salt Lake City and disbanded. After being relentlessly pursued by the Pinkertons, he was finally arrested on February 10, 1892 in San Francisco, along with Slye, and brought back to Missouri for trial. Convicted, he was sentenced in 1893 to 25 years in the Missouri State Penitentiary. Hedgepeth informed on a former cellmate, whom he knew as "H.M. Howard" but was really H. H. Holmes, which eventually resulted in the notorious killer's unmasking, conviction and execution in 1896. For this Hedgepeth was pardoned by Missouri state governor Joseph W. Folk 14 years into his 25-year term. He was released sick with tuberculosis and "looked like a skeleton and appeared 60 years old."

He was arrested in 1907 in Omaha, for the burglary of a storage house at Council Bluffs, Iowa. He was convicted and sent to the Iowa State Penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa in March, 1908, and was released after serving one year.

- Adelbert Slye was arrested in Los Angeles California
- James Francis killed a Ft Scott policeman S.B. McLemore January 23, 1892[9] and was killed in Pleasanton Kansas
- Lucius Wilson was involved in the killing of NY Syracuse Detective James A Harvey August 1, 1893 and was arrested; he was executed May 14, 1894

Death

Hedgepeth was shot and killed by police officer Edward Jaburek, on December 31, 1909 during a botched Chicago saloon robbery at 18th and Avers Avenue. He died at St. Anthony's Hospital and was buried in the Cook County Cemetery on the grounds of the Cook County Poor Farm at Dunning.

From <<https://www.historicalcrimedetective.com/ccca/marion-hedgepeth/>>

Benjamin F. Pitezel

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 5:53 PM



Benjamin Freelon Pitezel

BIRTH 19 May 1856
Galva, Henry County, Illinois, USA

DEATH 4 Sep 1894 (aged 38)
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, USA

BURIAL [Philadelphia Memorial Park](#)
Frazer, Chester County, Pennsylvania, USA

MEMORIAL ID 42925862 · [View Source](#)

Philadelphia, Sept. 1 - The decapitated body of B. F. Pitzel [sic], one of the supposed victims of [H. H. Holmes](#), was again exhumed from the American Mechanics' cemetery by the coroner's physicians. The coffin, with its ghastly burden, was carried into the toolshed of the cemetery, but the utmost vigilance was maintained to keep the object of the exhumation a secret. It was subsequently learned that one of the bones of the leg had been removed and the body reinterred. [Trenton Evening Times (New Jersey), 4 Sep 1895]

~~~~~  
No one guards the lonely grave of the murdered Benjamin F. Pitezel, in Mechanics' Cemetery, at Twenty-second and Norris streets. There the body, mutilated by law in the pursuit of justice, rests with no stone as yet to mark the spot or tell who lies beneath it. [The Philadelphia Inquirer (Pennsylvania), 8 May 1896]

~~~~~  
Mr. Pitezel was purportedly a partner in an insurance scam along with H. H. Holmes, who turned on him, and then murdered Pitezel's children.

From <<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/42925862/benjamin-freelon-pitezel>>

Benjamin F. Pitezel had worked as Holmes's right-hand man for years and had aided in several of Holmes's criminal schemes. Later during his own murder trial, Pitezel would be described as "Holmes' tool ... his creature". The scheme called for Pitezel to set himself up as an inventor under the name B.F. Perry, who would then be killed and disfigured in an accidental lab explosion. Holmes was to find an appropriate cadaver to play the role of Pitezel and together they would split the insurance payout. However, Holmes didn't stick to the plan and killed his friend using chloroform before setting his body on fire.

After telling Pitezel's wife the plan had been successful and that her husband was in hiding in London, Holmes convinced her to let him care for three of her five children, while she left town to rendezvous with her husband. Shortly before his own departure, Holmes killed and incinerated young Howard Pitezel, before taking his wife and the remaining children to Canada where he suffocated and buried Nellie and Alice Pitezel before once more departing with the insurance money. However, the insurance company grew suspicious when Marion Hedgepeth, angry that he had never received his \$500 promised by Holmes, contacted Police Chief Larry Harrigan with details of their failed insurance scam. And so it was in this way, the "Beast of Chicago" was finally apprehended.

From <<https://scarycarries.com/2018/11/02/h-h-holmes-murders-his-death/>>

On July 31 Holmes was released on bail furnished by his third "wife." A few days after being released he proceeded to Philadelphia, where he met Pitezel, alias Perry, and on August 17, the day on which the latter opened his office in Callowhill Street, Holmes accompanied him to a secondhand furniture store located at 1037 Buttonwood Street, and assisted him in selecting furniture.

On August 22 a carpenter named Eugene Smith, who was of an inventive turn of mind, passed this office, and being attracted by the sign, stepped in to discuss the merits of a set-saw he had invented and desired to put on the market. "Perry" listened attentively to his description of the invention and asked him to bring a model the next day. Smith complied with the request, and after an examination of it, Perry predicted heavy sales.

On Monday, September 3, Smith called to ascertain how his device was selling. "Perry" was not in the office, but his hat and coat were there, and Smith, believing he had stepped out for a few moments, waited until he became impatient and left. He returned the next day and again saw no one, but observed that the coat and hat were in the same position. He then made inquiry in the neighborhood and learned that "Perry" had not been seen since Saturday.

His suspicions being aroused he decided to investigate. As "Perry" occupied both floors of the small two-story building, Smith proceeded upstairs, and in a back room he found the mutilated body of Perry. The breast and side of the face were badly burned; fragments of a large bottle were found near the corpse, and a tobacco pipe and burned match were also found.

The body was removed to the morgue, and after lying there until September 13 without being claimed, it was buried in the potter's field.

On September 19 Attorney Howe called on Mrs. Pitezel in St. Louis and informed her that her husband was dead, and requested that the fourteen-year-old daughter Alice accompany him to Philadelphia for the purpose of identifying the remains. Mrs. Pitezel then signed a paper prepared by Howe, which gave him power of attorney to collect the money, and he left with Alice, Mrs. Pitezel believing that the child would be instructed to identify the body of a stranger and that her husband was alive and well.

On September 21 Howe, Alice, Holmes and Smith, who discovered the body, called at the Philadelphia office of the insurance company, and after Smith was interrogated the party proceeded with the insurance officials to disinter the remains. Holmes explained that he was a close friend of the Pitezel family and knew that Pitezel was located at 1316 Callowhill Street, under the assumed name of Perry, because of financial troubles in Fort Worth.

When the body was exposed, Alice Pitezel and Holmes immediately identified the remains as those of Pitezel. While the cause of Pitezel's death was not perfectly clear to the insurance officials, they concluded that the large bottle which was found broken by his side contained some inflammable substance which exploded as the victim was evidently in the act of lighting his pipe.

Against this theory it was argued that the body reclined in a peaceful attitude and the stomach when opened gave forth a distinct odor of chloroform.

From <<https://www.historicalcrimedetective.com/ccca/h-h-holmes-born-herman-mudgett/>>

Doubts

Tuesday, July 27, 2021 6:17 PM

Did Serial Killer H.H. Holmes Really Build a 'Murder Castle'?

Holmes allegedly killed as many as 200 by luring visitors to his lair during the Chicago World's Fair. But historians say many of the stories about Holmes, the "devil," may be myth.

[BECKY LITTLE](#)

Chicago History Museum/Getty Images

H.H. Holmes is notoriously known as one of America's first serial killers who lured victims into his hotel dubbed the "[Murder Castle](#)" [during the Chicago World's Fair](#) in 1893. According to some claims, he killed up to 200 people inside his macabre hotel that was outfitted with trapdoors, gas chambers and a basement crematorium. But the actual story, while horrifying, may not be quite as sordid.

"There's a total of about nine [people] that we can say with some confidence he probably killed," says [Adam Selzer](#), author of [H.H. Holmes: The True History of the White City Devil](#). "He confessed to 27 at one point, but several of them were still alive at the time."

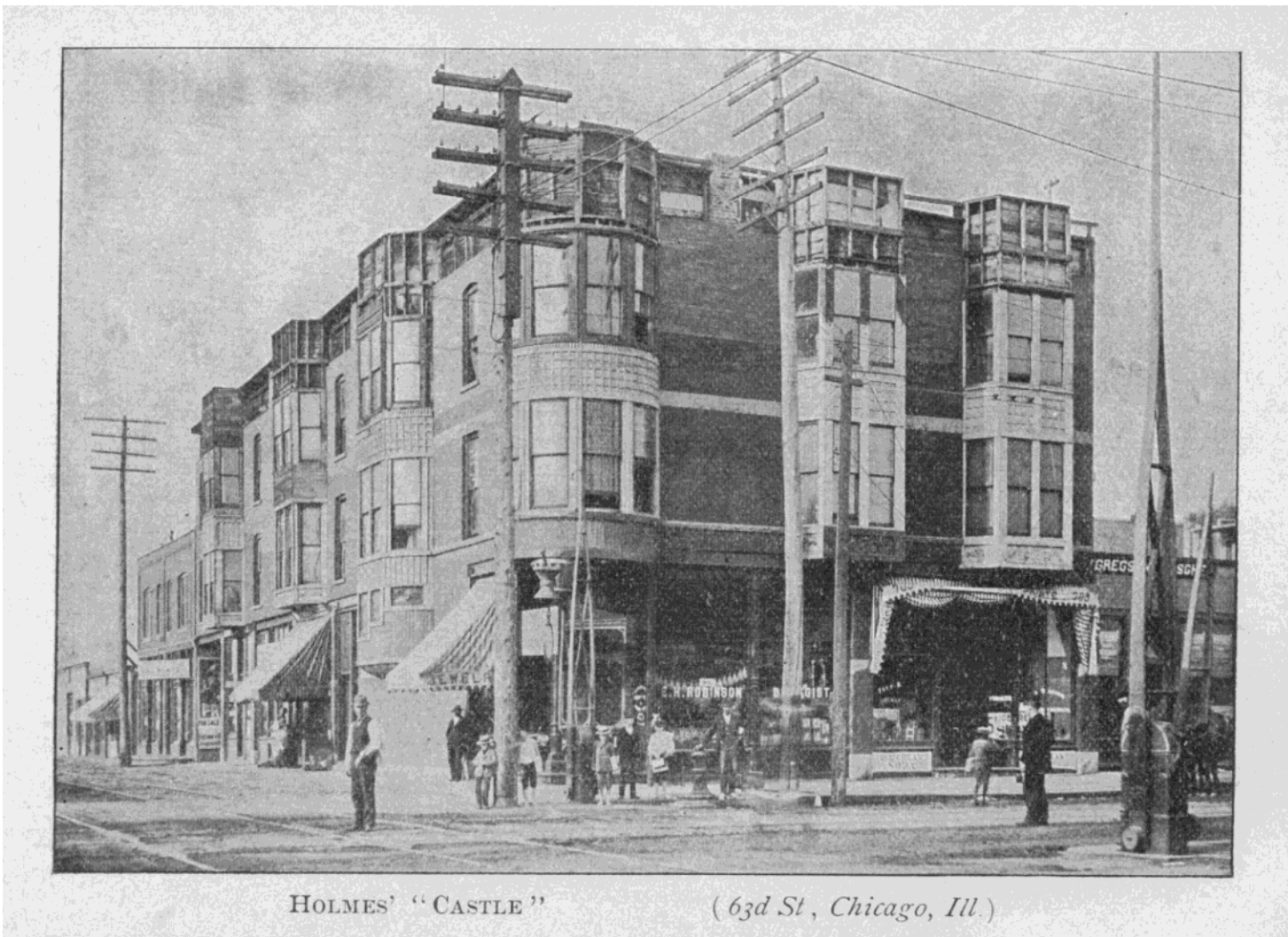
The inflated numbers of up to 200 victims likely started, Selzer says, with a pulp book published in 1940, called *Gem of the Prairie* by Herbert Asbury.

"It had kind of a throwaway line that some people suggested it may have been as many as 200 people," Selzer says. "Nobody had actually suggested that, in fact. But thereafter everybody else who [retold] the story threw in that same line until people started deciding that that was a real estimate or a real possibility."

There's also no evidence Holmes trapped strangers inside his hotel in an attempt to kill them. The nine people he likely killed were all people he already knew, and the building he owned wasn't a hotel. The first floor consisted of storefronts, and the second floor had apartments for long-term rental.

"When he added a third floor onto his building in 1892, he told people it was going to be a hotel space, but it was never finished or furnished or open to the public," Selzer says. "The whole idea was just a vehicle to swindle suppliers and investors and insurers."

Fraud, Affairs and Cover Ups



View of the World's Fair Hotel but also known as the 'Murder Castle,' on W. 63rd Street in Chicago, Illinois, mid 1890s. The structure was designed by serial murderer Herman Webster Mudgett, better known by his alias H.H. Holmes.

Chicago History Museum/Getty Images

Holmes was involved in a variety of fraud schemes, and it was actually his involvement in a horse swindle in Texas that led police to arrest him in Boston in 1894. Investigators soon began to suspect him of murdering his scammer associate Benjamin Pitezel in an insurance scheme, then murdering three of Pitezel's children—who were roughly seven to 14 years old—in an attempt to cover it up.

After Holmes' arrest, newspapers began printing lurid stories about his alleged Chicago "Murder Castle," claiming he'd outfitted it with trap doors and secret rooms to torture and kill guests. According to [Harold Schechter](#), author of [Depraved: The Definitive True Story of H. H. Holmes, Whose Grotesque Crimes Shattered Turn-of-the-Century Chicago](#), these sensational details can be attributed to yellow journalism, the practice of exaggerating or simply making up news stories that [flourished in the 1890s](#).

"It's my belief that probably all those stories about all these visitors to the World's Fair who were murdered in his quote-unquote 'Castle' were just complete sensationalistic fabrication by the yellow press," he says. "By the

time I reached the end of my book, I kind of realized even a lot of the stuff that I had written was probably exaggerated.” (His book was [originally published in 1994 as *Depraved: The Shocking True Story of America's First Serial Killer.*](#))

Without any evidence, newspapers claimed Holmes used his building’s chute to transport bodies to the basement (the fact that he had a chute was not unusual, since many buildings had laundry chutes connected to the basement). These stories turned Holmes’ building into an elaborate torture dungeon outfitted with gas pipes to asphyxiate victims and soundproof rooms to hide their screams.

“All these myths—which to some extent I myself, I think, helped perpetuate a little bit—grew up around Holmes,” Schechter says.

The Real, Likely Victims of H.H. Holmes

These myths can obscure the stories of Holmes’ actual likely victims. Two of the earliest were Julia Connor and her six-year-old daughter, Pearl. They disappeared around Christmas of 1891, after Holmes had an affair with Julia and involved her in his business schemes. During his life, Holmes alternatively denied killing Julia and confessed to accidentally killing her while performing an abortion. It’s still unclear what happened to her and Pearl.

Over the next two years, Holmes may have murdered Emeline Cigrand, Minnie Williams and her sister Nannie Williams. Both Emeline and Minnie appear to have had personal and business relationships with Holmes when they disappeared. But as with Julia and Pearl, it’s difficult to say for sure what happened to Emeline, Minnie and Nannie.

The evidence for Holmes’ murders of Ben Pitezel and his young children Howard, Nellie and Alice in 1894 is more solid. Even so, investigators only tried and convicted him for Ben’s murder. Holmes received the death sentence in 1896, and died by hanging in Philadelphia, about a week before his 35th birthday.

From <<https://www.history.com/news/murder-castle-h-h-holmes-chicago>>

Crazyboard

Sunday, August 1, 2021 4:43 PM

MURDER CASTLE

- TORTURE DUNGEON?
- GAS CHAMBERS?
- SECRET PASSAGES?
- YELLOW JOURNALISM?

CREMATORY

- WHEN ACID BATHS JUST WON'T DO?

DISSECTION TABLE

- GOOD FOR ORGAN HARVESTING AND CADAVER INSPECTION

BENJAMIN F. PITZEL

- HOLMES'S "CREATURE"
- ONLY MURDER HE WAS CHARGED WITH

ACID BATHS

- HELPS WITH CLEAN UP AND DISPOSAL
- WORKED FOR JOHN HAIGH...

H.H. HOLMES

- AKA: HERMAN WEBSTER MUDGETT
- AMERICA'S FIRST SERIAL KILLER?
- INSURANCE FRAUDSTER SUPREME
- 9 POTENTIAL VICTIMS. 200+ REPORTED...

MARION HEDGSPETH

- AKA: THE DERBY KID
- NARC'D OUT HOLMES IN PRISON

CHICAGO WORLDS FAIR

- 1893. GOOD TIME TO BE A KILLER?
- PRIME HUNTING GROUNDS

Pinkerton's National Detective Agency

- WE NEVER SLEEP
- PINKERTONS
- NAILED HOLMES FOR HORSE THEFT IN 1894

MOYAMENSING PRISON

- LAST STOP BEFORE THE GALLOWS

DEATH BY HANGING

- SWUNG FOR 20 MINUTES 1896