

Sheriff's Office Booking Registers

Some years ago, we were fortunate to receive permission from the Sheriff to borrow, copy and index the booking registers that had been found in a closet in the jail. The registers, numbered 7 through 16 covered the years 1924 to 1953. Volume 13 (1943-1945) was not found, perhaps during the war years no bound volume was created, or perhaps it has been lost. The first six volumes may be in the offsite collections of the San Mateo County Historical Association, however, they were not in their catalog the last time we checked.



These records can offer some great clues to locating ancestors. Prior to WWII, it was not uncommon for homeless residents to lodge in the jail. They would be picked up in the late evening and released in the morning without being booked. You can find not only the aged and disabled who had no means of support, but also those travelling into the county to find work. Often time of residence is listed as one day.

The records give a wealth of information. Besides the surname, given name and alias you will find the day of incarceration, occupation, age, height, weight, time in county, state and U, where picked up, by whom, the justice, the code under which the person was picked up, hour of arrest, hour of release, number of meals served, sentence, date of commitment, date of discharge, fines paid and a column for further remarks.

Barry Goyette hefted those volumes for many months creating the copies which can be found in the SMC GS Library. Jo Rebeck with a little help from Michelle McLaughlin worked endlessly creating the index you'll find here with over 60,000 entries. This is an index, giving only Name, Age, Book, Page and Line. Visit the library to obtain a copy or see the research page for information on ordering a full transcription of an entry.

Recently we have digitized the books in order to facilitate providing copies to patrons during our covid shutdown. Check the Research page for how to order a record from SMC GS.

