



Charles Ray Hatcher
Born: Mound City, Missouri
July 17, 1929 – December 7, 1984

Here is a very good reason to do your job to the very best of your ability because you never know who will be traveling through your area of the state.

From the mid-'50s to the early '80s, a period of more than 25 years, Charles Ray Hatcher kidnapped, raped, sodomized and killed his victims.

He was often apprehended and sent away to prison or mental institutions, but Charlie, despite his depraved lifestyle, was not insane. He knew exactly how to fake mental illnesses. He changed his name often and was always released to kill again.

Authorities never knew they were dealing with one man. When they came to realize this fact; it was too late for Charlie's victims.

A boy at an Iowa Target store was accosted by a man posing as store security. He took the boy straight out the back door, where the boy had sense enough to struggle. Through what must have been providential intervention, an officer was driving behind the store, saw what was happening and was able to subdue the man. This "store security officer" had a fake badge and pre-cut lengths of rope, along with identification indicating his name was Richard Clark.

An Iowa police department charged Richard Clark, fingerprinted him and put him in the city jail. The next morning he wouldn't come out of his cell and appeared to be catatonic. A judge ordered a psychiatric evaluation. "Richard Clark" was sent to Mt. Pleasant, where he convinced the state psychiatrist that he was mentally unstable and remained there. During that time, his print cards languished in a drawer at the police department. The identification person, at the time, never sent them in. This ended up to be a very serious error on the part of this employee. It is a prime example of why prints should be taken and submitted, per Iowa Code.

Mt. Pleasant turned Clark loose after about a year. He went to St. Joseph, Missouri, where two more children were killed; a four-year-old boy and an 11-year-old girl.

St. Joseph Police did submit his prints in a timely fashion. The person was identified as Charles Hatcher, wanted for murder throughout many locations. During his incarceration, he talked about a couple of murders and at least one body was located where he said he had put it. Then he tried the catatonic act again, convincing some Missouri psychiatrist that he was mentally unstable again, but he did not convince the jailer who videotaped him exercising when he thought no one was looking.

On October 13, 1983, in St. Joseph, Missouri, Charles Ray Hatcher pleaded guilty to the murder of four-year-old Eric Christgen and was sentenced to life imprisonment. A year later, he was convicted of murdering 11-year-old Michelle Steel. He received life imprisonment without the possibility of parole for 50 years. After serving only 10 weeks, Charles Hatcher hung himself in his cell at the Missouri State Penitentiary.

This information was obtained from a retired police officer (detective at the time of Hatcher's incarceration) and through use of the Internet.

The Identification of the “West Brothers”

Why the Bertillon Anthropometric System Failed

Alphonse Bertillon invented “anthropometrics”, a method with which to identify people based upon their individual measurements. His theory was that each person is highly individual. Therefore, no one else would possess another person’s exact measurements. This system was initially accepted and used by various law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. Bertillon cards were printed reflecting these measurements, and oddly enough, a fingerprint. Bertillon chose the following parts of the body for his measurements.

Body height, outstretched reach of both arms, trunk height, width of head, length of head, length of the right ear, width of the right ear, length of the left foot, length of the left middle finger, length of the left little finger, and length of the left forearm

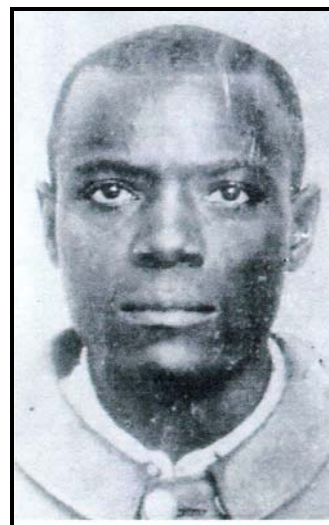
The choice between using the left or right sides was entirely arbitrary. Although the theory suggested that it would succeed, there were instances where it would fail. Anthropometrics relied upon the recorder being exact in his measurements. If the recorder was tired or inattentive, the measurements could fail to identify a person. Suspects who were drunk, ill, or uncooperative would also result in inaccurate measurements.

In 1903, a prisoner by the name of Will West was sentenced to incarceration at the United States Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. During his in-processing, the records clerk obtained Will West’s Bertillon measurements and photograph. Will West denied ever being incarcerated at the facility. The records clerk doubted this information, and referenced his Bertillon measurements into the system, retrieving the Bertillon card for a William West. Will West continued to deny that the William West card was his. Subsequent investigation disclosed that William West was already incarcerated in the facility as of September 9, 1901. By examining the photographs, one can see the failure of the Bertillon system. Compare the Bertillon measurements in particular, keeping in mind the various factors that would affect the measurements. This failure strengthened the science of fingerprints as the normally accepted method of personal identification. Recent opinions suggest that Will and William West were related, therefore the closeness in measurements.



Will West’s Bertillon Measurements

178.5; 187.0; 91.2; 19.7; 15.8; 14.8; 6.6; 28.2; 12.3; 9.7



William West’s Bertillon Measurements

177.5; 188.0; 91.3; 19.8; 15.9; 14.8; 6.5; 27.5; 12.2; 9.6; 50.3