

Women at Eastern State

NO.	DATE OF BIRTH	3-9-81	NATIVITY	Germany	SEX	Female	
19	YEARS TAKEN OUT FIRST PAPERS		NATURALIZED		BUILD	medium	
HAIR	med. fair	EYES	brown	HAIR	dk. brown	FOOT	8 1/2
HEIGHT	5 FT. 2	WEIGHT	117	INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS	unapprtd.		
OCCUPATION	housework		WORKING WHEN ARRESTED	yes	HOW LONG BEFORE, IF NOT		
PARENTAL AT 16 YEARS	FATHER	living	MOTHER	living	AGE ON LEAVING HOME	13	
EDUCATIONAL: READS AND WRITES	native	SCHOOL	7	YEARS	SCHOOL	13	
SMOKE	moderate	ASSOCIATES	ordinary	RELIGION	protestant	SMOKE	no
CHIEW	no	CONJUGAL RELATIONS	widow	PROFANITY	no	CONJUGAL RELATIONS	widow
CHILDREN	1 child	LIVING WITH WIFE OR HUSBAND		CASH	4	DOLLARS	13
PROPERTY	3 bracelets, 2 earrings, 11 spoons, 1 watch & chain, 1 locket & chain, stone out, 8 rings, 3 stones out, 2 cuff buttons, 2 charms & breast pin.						
MARKS AND SCARS	1 large scar of burn on r fin frt. Ridge on nose flat. Num. brown moles on face & forehead						
NO.	COLOR	white	COUNTY	Phila.	TERM	216	
	CRIME	Murder			October, 1912	19	
	SENTENCE	MIN. 24 YRS. 3 MOS. MAX. 39 yrs. 4 mos. - 0 days.					
	DATE OF SENTENCE	12-29-13					
	NAME	Freda H. Frost					
	ALIASES	Freda H. Frost					
NO. OF CONVICTIONS	1	ADDITIONAL TIME TO BE SERVED					
NO.	NAME	Freda H. Frost	COUNTY	Philadelphia	MIN.	3-29-38	
B-6935					MAX.	4-29-53	

Last woman out. Freda Frost (or "Frost," in some records) seems to have been the last woman held at Eastern State. She served the first 13 years of her 24-year murder sentence inside this building.



B-2550: Kate Hogan was sentenced five times to Eastern State Penitentiary, at least four times for larceny (non-violent theft). More than half of the women sentenced to Eastern State were convicted of this crime.



B-3018: In 1904, Catherine Danz was convicted of murdering her husband with poison. Initially sentenced to death by hanging, her sentence was changed to life imprisonment. Mrs. Danz maintained her innocence, claiming that "she had bought powders...and administered them to her husband for the purpose of curing the drink habit." She received a full pardon and was released from Eastern State in 1911.



B-3094: Sadie Smith (alias Sadie Schowell) was a career shoplifter. She was sentenced to one year and six months at Eastern State for larceny.



B-2661: Rosa Pilnick and her husband (B-2662) were convicted of "Keeping a Bawdy or Disorderly House" in 1905. The couple was connected with at least ten houses of prostitution. They were previously convicted of "harboring a minor for immoral purposes."



C-1450: Lucy Stewart, her husband George, and another man were tried for the murder of a taxi driver in 1921. During the course of the trial George Stewart took full responsibility for the killing, trying to absolve his wife. His efforts were unsuccessful; Lucy Stewart received 9 to 15 years in prison. Her husband received the death penalty.



B-2731: Sarah Hines and two men were found with \$500 in counterfeit currency and "molds and materials for coining bogus money" in 1905. A federal court sentenced her to serve two years at Eastern State Penitentiary.



B-3026 and B-3027: According to their victim, Thomas Zell, Edna Hartz (left) and Mary Davis (right) allowed him to drink beer freely during a carriage ride until he became dizzy. They then "dealt [him] a terrific blow over the head with a beer bottle.... He fell to the ground unconscious," and the women stole \$50 from him. Edna Hartz received one year for "Robbery, Felonious Assault and Battery, and Administering Stupefying Drugs." Mary Davis received two years for robbery.



C-250: Eva Cole, a chamber maid in Dauphin County, was sentenced to one year for felonious assault.



B-3270: Emma Walker was convicted of larceny in 1906. She was sentenced to one year, six months. She was 23 years old.



B-2563: Mary Dunn was sentenced to 15 years for murdering her sister-in-law during a street brawl. The sentence was severe: a typical murder sentence for a woman at Eastern State was ten years or fewer.



C-721: Lillian Thomas, sentenced to one year, three months in Dauphin County for receiving stolen goods.



B-2637: Elizabeth Ashmead was convicted in 1905 for performing abortions. She was later sent to Kansas State Penitentiary where she was imprisoned for another five years for "Using the Mails...for the Purpose of Arranging for Illegal Operations."

Photos from the early 20th Century: most of Eastern State's female prisoners were never photographed. The first female prisoners arrived in 1831 but mug shots were not introduced until roughly 1904.

Photos of women convicted between 1904-1906 are taken from Eastern State Penitentiary's mug shot book. All other photos are taken from Intake ("Bertillon") Cards. Photos from the mug shot book and C-250: collection of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, gift of the Scheerer family. Photos of inmates B-6935, C-721 and C-1450: collection of Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site, gift of an anonymous donor.

Narrator



Kelly Otterson
Tour Program Manager
Eastern State Penitentiary
Historic Site

With



Elsie McKenty Hough
Warden's Daughter
Resident at Eastern State
Penitentiary, 1907-1925



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Many visitors are surprised to learn that Eastern State Penitentiary once housed female prisoners.

Women were always segregated from the men within the prison complex, but prison officials still found it challenging to house women (and sometimes their children) in the midst of this very masculine institution.

The last woman was transferred out of Eastern State in 1923.