

## ***Hangmen, Headsmen, and other Fun Ways to Die***

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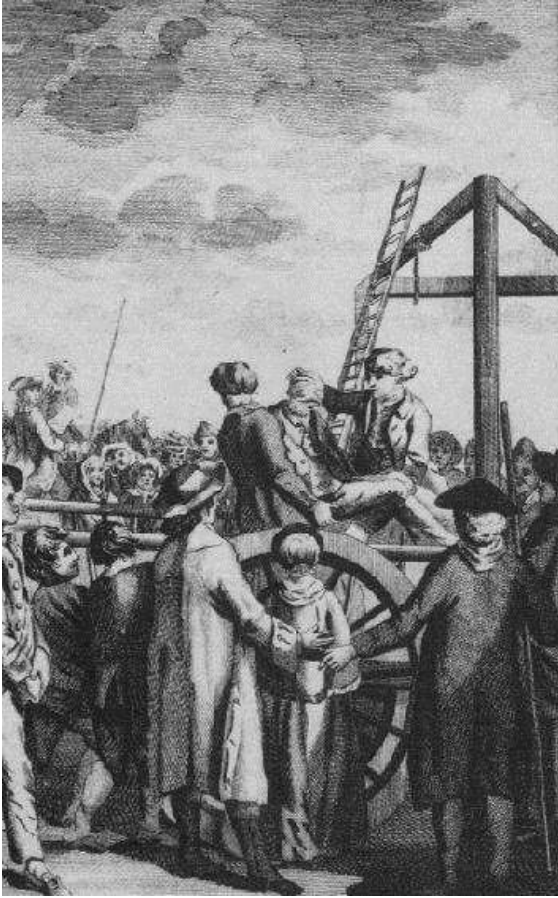
*This class will focus on a discussion of capital punishment in period. In particular, we will focus on hangings and beheadings, as well as the hangmen and headsmen who performed them, but we will also discuss a few more unusual forms of capital punishment.*

- I. Well-known Forms of Capital Punishment
  - a. Hanging
  - b. Beheading
  - c. Gibbeting
  - d. Drowning
  - e. Boiling
  - f. Burning
- II. Early History of Capital Punishment
  - a. See chart on page 3.
- III. Ways to Escape Death
  - a. Benefit of clergy
  - b. Royal pardon
  - c. Begging for a husband
- IV. Hanging
  - a. Evolution of hanging
    - i. Primitive gallows
    - ii. Cart substitution
    - iii. Knot placement change
    - iv. Drop length
  - b. Location of hangings
    - i. The Elms
    - ii. Discussion of Tyburn
      - 1. Traveling to the gallows at Tyburn
      - 2. “Triple Tree”
  - c. Reasons to attend a hanging
    - i. Entertainment
    - ii. Prevent dissection
    - iii. Prevent burial after ineffective hanging/resuscitation
    - iv. Obtain a cure

- v. Instructional purposes
    - d. Famous hangmen
    - e. About hangmen
      - i. Who were the hangmen?
      - ii. Attitudes about hangmen
      - iii. London vs. Scotland
- V. Beheading
  - a. Executioner's Axe
    - i. Dimensions
    - ii. Materials
    - iii. Practice/protocols
    - iv. Location of use
  - b. Executioner's Sword
    - i. Dimensions
    - ii. Materials
    - iii. Practice/protocols
    - iv. Location of use
  - c. Famous people who were beheaded
  - d. Halifax Gibbet
    - i. Dimensions
    - ii. Materials
  - e. Scottish Maiden
    - i. Dimensions
    - ii. Materials
- VI. Gibbeting
- VII. Drowning and Boiling
- VIII. Burning

## Early History of Capital Punishment

Date	Practitioner	Reason	Method	Notes
2070 BC - 1600 BC	Ancient China	Five Punishments of the Xia Dynasty	Beheading	500 offenses punishable
1750 B.C.	Babylon	Hammurabi's Code - "Eye for an eye"	Not specified	First code of law ever established, which lays out a penalty of death for 25 specific crimes.
450 B.C.	England	Basic criminal activities.	Thrown into a quagmire	Earliest record of capital punishment in England
400 B.C.	Jews	Basic criminal activities.	Stoning primarily, but also hanging, beheading, crucifixion, burning alive, and throwing a criminal from a rock.	Beheading was seen as a more honorable death and usually reserved for enemies. Burning alive was used for arsonists. Crucifixion was copied from the Romans.
80 B.C.	Roman Law	Parricides (murdering one's father, mother, or other near relative)	Thrown into the water in a sack which contained a dog, a cock, a viper and an ape	Superstitions regarding the loss of the soul.
500 A.D.	Anglo-Saxon Britain	Any major crimes.	Hanging	Freemen were required to take an oath not to commit any major crimes
871–899 A.D.	King Alfred the Great	First in England to make hanging the official punishment for murder.	Hanging	Created the beginnings of English Common Law
1066-1087 A.D.	William the Conqueror	Basic criminal activities.	Mutilation	Temporarily abolished the death penalty, because fighting men were too valuable to be hanged for minor offences
1100–1135 A.D.	Henry I	High and petty treason, all felonies except mayhem and petty larceny or theft of property worth less than one shilling were capital crimes. Murder, manslaughter, arson, highway robbery, burglary and larceny were all punishable by death.	Reinstated the death penalty. Hanging, drowning, burning at the stake, and beheading	Beheading was reserved for the wealthy. Hanging was particularly for homicide because it was messy and squalid, beheading for the wealthy, and burning at the stake for women because it was felt that exposing the body or mangling it was improper.
1241 A.D.	Henry III	Initially for the piracy committed by William Maurice	Hanging, drawing, and quartering was invented.	Became the standard for men convicted of high treason by 1351 (women were burned at the stake instead, for decency)
1500	Henry VII/Henry VIII	8 Capital Crimes defined: Treason, petty treason, murder, robbery, larceny, rape, and arson	Hanging mostly, but drowning, burning at the stake, and beheading where appropriate	~72,000 people were executed during Henry VII's reign (via hanging, boiling, burning) which is roughly 2000 a year



“Triple Tree at Tyburn”

From: <http://listverse.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/tripple-tree-gallows.jpg>



“Executioner’s Axe”  
– Tower of London

From:  
<http://www.flickrriver.com/photos/jm999uk/2563984861/>

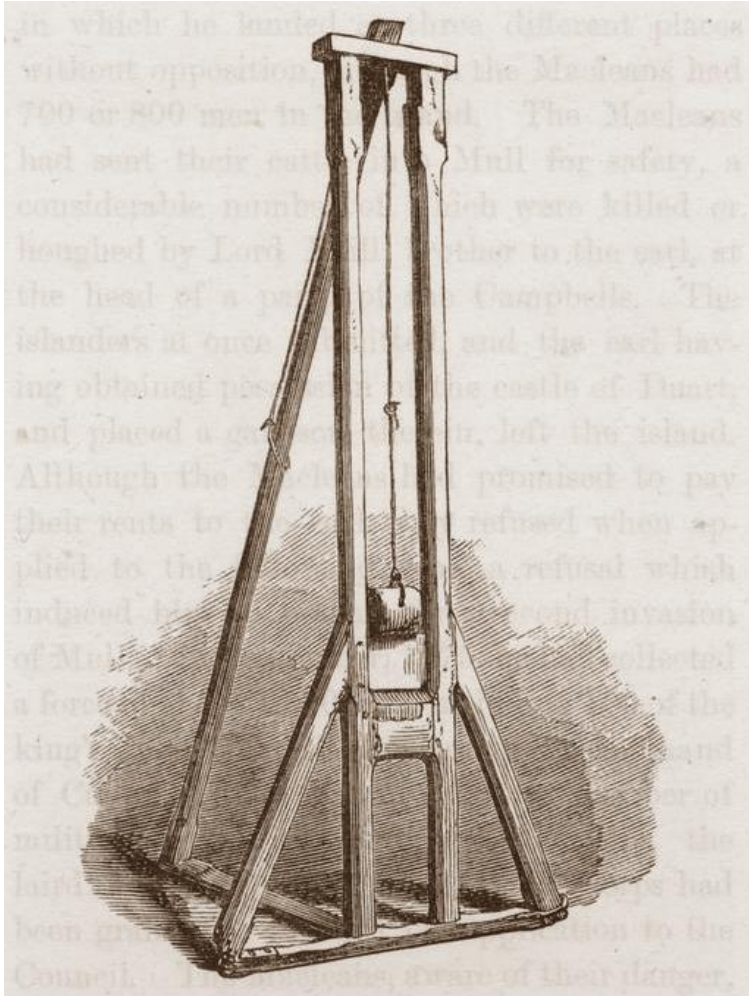


“Executioner’s Sword”  
(engraved with the motto) of the Frankfurt executioner, who - 1484-1537 - thus exercised his profession and at the Berger waiting. In the museum at Bergen-Enkheim.

From:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executioner%27s\\_sword#mediaviewer/File:Scharfrichterschwert-ffm002.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executioner%27s_sword#mediaviewer/File:Scharfrichterschwert-ffm002.jpg)

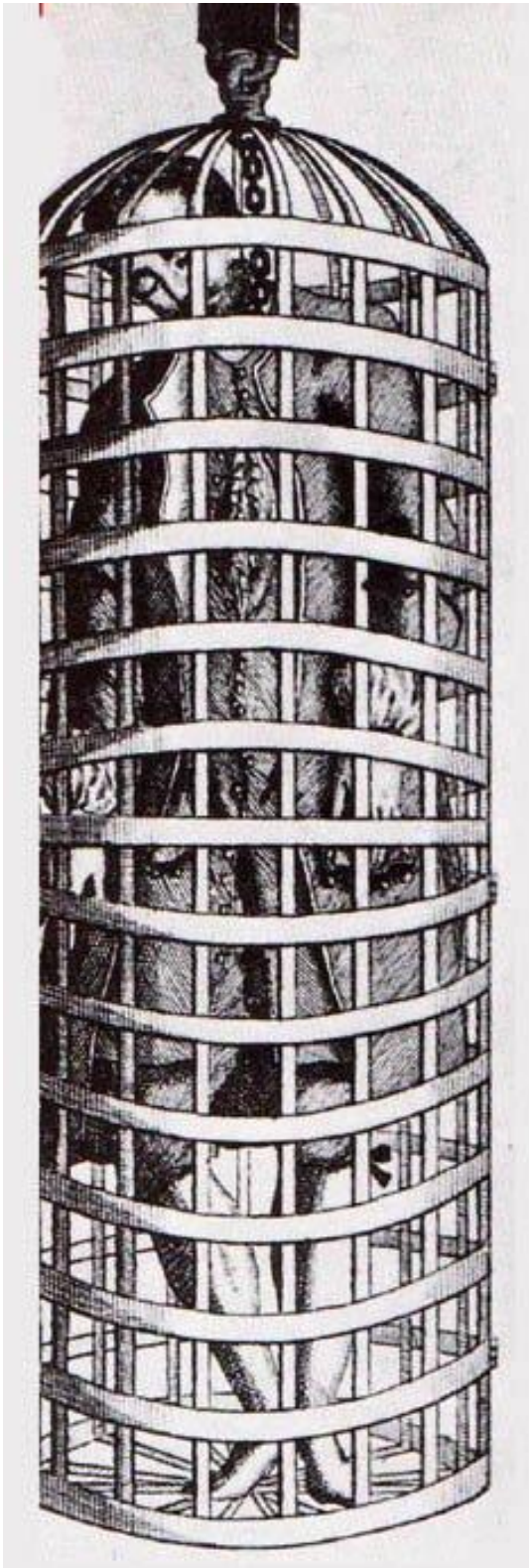


”Halifax Gibbet”  
From:  
<http://www.guillotine.dk/pages/gibbet.html>



“Scottish Maiden”

From: <http://from-bedroom-to-study.blogspot.com/2013/01/the-grisly-gadgetry-of-murderous-maiden.html>



Examples of gibbeting:

<http://www.medievalwarfare.info/torture.htm>

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