

# AT THE END OF THE ROPE

*Researched & written by Detective Sergeant John Burchill*

Shortly after midnight on Tuesday, December 11, 1962, Arthur Lucas and Ronald Turpin were handcuffed and led from their death row cells in Toronto's Don Jail to the execution chamber some forty feet away. Once in the chamber the executioner placed them back to back, secured their arms and legs, placed a hood over each of their heads, and dropped ropes around their necks. With the pull of a lever, the hangman plunged the two men into history as being the last men to hang in Canada.

Arthur Lucas had been sentenced to hang for the November 17, 1961, murders of Therland Carter and Carol Newman. Lucas, a Detroit native, had driven to Toronto to execute Crater who was a material witness in a pending American narcotics trial. Newman was just unlucky enough to be in the room when Lucas arrived to carry out his deed. Ronald Turpin was convicted for the February 12, 1962, murder of Metropolitan Toronto police constable Frederick Nash. Turpin, who was wanted for questioning in Toronto for an October 25, 1961, shooting incident, had just robbed the Red Rooster Restaurant of \$632.84 when Nash pulled him over for a routine traffic violation. Turpin was carrying a loaded .32 calibre handgun at the time and shot Nash in the chest. He was apprehended immediately after the incident trying to escape in Nash's cruiser car. Both men were sentenced to hang by the neck until they were dead.

No one will ever know how many men, women and children in Canada have been executed for capital offences since it was first settled. However, one of the earliest known executions occurred in the fall of 1542 after Sieur de Roberval led an expedition to St. Lawrence and established a settlement at Cape Rouge. The Colony was desperately short of rations and one man was hung for theft. Another early execution was reported in 1608 when Samuel de Champlain, who established the first permanent settlement at Quebec in New France, put to death the ringleader of a company of men who had conspired to overthrow him.

The first official execution in what was to become Winnipeg, occurred in the Red River Settlement on September 6, 1845, when Capinnesseweet, a Saulteaux Indian, was hung for the murder of a fellow Saulteaux. The alleged offence, which took place only seven days earlier, occurred when Capinnesseweet shot and killed the other male at Fort Garry during a meeting between the Sioux and Saulteaux. After a hasty trial, Capinnesseweet was sentenced to death by Adam Thom, the first "Recorder" of Rupert's Land (as Thom was an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was responsible for the administration of justice in Rupert's Land, he could not be called a Judge as he was not appointed by the Crown). Roy St. George Stubbs, in his book the Four Recorders of Rupert's Land, has suggested that Thom lacked the jurisdiction to pass the sentence of death and that "it may well be that the first execution in Red River was a wanton miscarriage of justice".

It was not until Canada became a Dominion on July 1, 1867, with its own Department of Justice, that any systematic effort was made to accurately record the names, dates and places of executions. Between 1867 and when the death penalty was abolished, 1481 people were sentenced to death, 710 of these were executed. Of the 710 executed, 697 were men, and 13 were women.

The first executions to be performed after Confederation were Modiste Villebrun in Sorel, Quebec; Ethan Allan in Kingston, Ontario; Joseph Ruel in St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, and John Hoag, in Walkerton, Ontario. There are not many details regarding the incidents behind these hangings, but the first to gain national attention was the hanging of Patrick Whelan in Ottawa on February 11, 1869. Whelan had been convicted of killing Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a member of Parliament and a "Father of Confederation". McGee, a close friend of then Prime Minister John A. MacDonald, was returning home after a late-night Parliament session when someone shot him in the head at point-blank range as he was about to open his door on April 7, 1868. It is believed that Whelan, a Fenian (a group of revolutionary Irishman), killed McGee because of his public campaigns against them. Whelan's execution attracted more than 5000 people in Ottawa.

In 1869 the new Canadian government under John A. MacDonald consolidated and revised the statutes covering capital punishment to just three offences. For the most part, criminal justice before Confederation was based on the laws and practices of France and England where, at one time, almost any crime could carry the death sentence. For example, in 1760, shortly before the Treaty of Paris gave control over most French possessions in North America to the English, William Blackstone reported that there were 160 offences in English law punishable by death. However, with the passage of the Upper Canada Act of 1800 the number of capital offences was significantly reduced and in 1832 the death penalty was abolished for cattle stealing and larceny.

By 1859, offences punishable by death in Canada included: murder, rape, treason, administering poison or wounding with intent to commit murder, unlawfully abusing a girl under ten, buggery with man or beast, robbery with wounding, burglary with assault, arson, casting away a ship, and exhibiting a false signal endangering a ship. However, by 1869 only murder, rape and treason were punishable by death. But, in reality, only murder carried the death penalty as no one was ever executed for rape and only one (Louis Riel) was executed for treason. Interestingly, in 1872 four men were condemned to death for Piracy in British Columbia, and in 1876 three were condemned to death for burglary in Prince Edward Island. The sentences in all seven cases were commuted (as B.C. and P.E.I. did not enter Confederation until 1871 and 1873 respectively, it is believed the offences occurred prior to Confederation when the two provinces were still colonies of England and subject to British law).

On August 31, 1874, Joseph Michaud became the first person executed in Manitoba, and in fact the entire west, under the jurisdiction of the new Dominion of Canada. Michaud was a 23-year-old gunner with the Dominion Artillery and had killed a man

named James Brown when Brown tried to break up a fight between Michaud and another soldier. Michaud was found guilty and sent to the Provincial prison, which was then located in Winnipeg at Main Street and William Avenue. The execution was to be carried out in the prison yard at 8:00 am and invitations to watch the hanging could be obtained from the Sheriff's office located just next door. After the date for the hanging had been established by the officials at the Department of Justice in Ottawa, Winnipeg Police Chief Jack Ingram (appointed as the first Chief of Police in Winnipeg on February 24, 1874) set out to find an executioner. Just before the hanging was to take place, Chief Ingram appointed Robert Hodson to be the executioner. Hodson had approached the Chief and advised him that he had acted as an assistant to the famous English hangman, Calcraft, and was willing to do the job.

According to the Nor'Wester (newspaper) the hanging attracted a very large crowd and went off without a hitch:

*"Soon after seven o'clock this morning the black flag was hoisted on the Courthouse telling the people that a human being was about to be ushered into eternity. A very large crowd assembled in the rear of the jail to witness the execution, and quite a number were admitted into the courtroom by tickets issued by the Sheriff ...*

*At the hour of eight o'clock, the time appointed for the execution, the bells of St. Boniface began to toll ... Michaud arrived in the courtroom accompanied by the Sheriff and spiritual advisers ... Before leaving the courtroom to ascend the gallows the hangman securely bound the arms of the prisoner by means of a belt and when Michaud reached the trap he was instructed to kneel ...*

*The rope was quickly adjusted to the neck of the unfortunate man, and the cap drawn over the face. Then came a horrible pause of a few moments until, at a signal from the Sheriff, a few blows on the bolt by the hangman, Michaud was launched into eternity. Death seems to have been instantaneous, for there was no struggling, there being only a sort of smothered gasp as he descended the drop".*

However the province's second hanging, that of Angus McIvor was anything but "pleasant". McIvor, who had killed a man named Atkinson at Fort Ellice in the Northwest Territories, was brought to Winnipeg by the Mounted Police for trial. He was convicted and sentenced to hang on January 7, 1876. The previous "executioner" was not available and the new one was chosen from several applicants. Unfortunately, he bungled the job, the Free Press newspaper reporting that the victim's neck was not broken by the fall, with the result that he died of slow strangulation.

Things were back to normal on April 28, 1876, when a trained executioner from the East was brought in for Winnipeg's third hanging, that of Louis Thomas who was accused of killing a man in Rat River. His was to be the last hanging in Winnipeg for

nearly 23 years (although there was one hanging in Brandon in 1888) and the last one to take place at the old courthouse and jail on Main Street at William.

The William Street Jail was located right where Market Square reaches through to Main Street beside the old McDonald Shoe Store. After the Vaughan Street Jail was built, and a new Police station opened at 221 James Street, at the end of 1883 the Jail and attached Court House were turned into the Hub Hotel. During the mid-seventies, this building burnt to the ground and the forty-four cells that were leftover from the original Jail were back-filled to make the park that stands there now. Photographs of the old cells, taken before they were backfilled, show that there was barely enough room to stand in, let alone sleep.



*Manitoba Provincial Police  
Headquarters, Jail and Court House  
William & Main, c. 1880*

Hodson again appeared as an executioner on November 27, 1885, in Battleford, Saskatchewan. Hodson had been at Fort Pitt when a band of Cree Indians attacked the Fort during the Riel Rebellion (March 20 - May 10, 1885) and massacred several whites and took the rest prisoner. At the conclusion of the Rebellion eight of the Cree were arrested and tried for various murders. All were found guilty and sentenced to death. It would be the largest single mass hanging in Canadian history. A massive gallows was built in the center of the North West Mounted Police post and, much to the astonishment of the condemned Cree Indians, their onetime captive, Hodson, was now their executioner. Outside of these eight Cree Indians, the only other person hung for his part in the Rebellion was Louis Riel himself. Riel was convicted of High Treason in a Regina Court and hung on November 16, 1885, by a man named Jack Henderson. Riel, coincidentally, held Henderson, prisoner 15 years earlier at Fort Garry during the Manitoba Uprising of 1869-70. (Henderson attempted to hang two more people but the results were disastrous. On June 13, 1888, he miscalculated the weight of one of the accused and the resulting drop pulled his head off. Henderson was never permitted to officiate again and took with him to the grave his reputation as "the man who hung Riel".)

Between 1890 and 1913 John Radclive was to dominate the gallows in Canada as the executioner of choice. His one contribution to the "science of hanging" was the construction of a gallows that had a rope go over the top beam. One end of the rope was fastened around the neck of the accused and the other end held an iron weight (350 lbs.) which was dropped thus yanking the victim off the ground and dislocating his neck, resulting in instantaneous death (a technique affectionately known as the "jerk'em up gallows"). His first subject was Reginald Birchall who was sentenced to death for murdering Frederick Benwell in Woodstock, Ontario. The execution took place in Woodstock Jail on November 14, 1890. The new technique was not a success for Radclive, as Birchall died of strangulation 18 minutes after the weight fell because the "drop" did not dislocate his neck. Radclive discarded his invention and went back

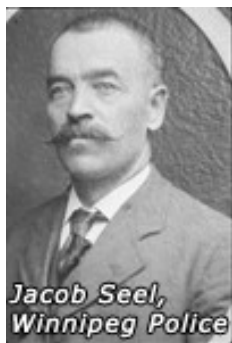
to conventional hanging. Radclive died in Toronto in 1912 from excessive drinking after hanging 132 persons. He was one person who used his real name when acting as executioner. He used the alias of Thomas Ratley for his social life.

In 1899 John Radcliff made his first "official" visit to Winnipeg to carry out the executions of Manitoba's first mass murders, Wazyl Guszczak and Simeon Czubej on May 27. The executions were carried out at the new Vaughan Street Jail and according to an interview with Radcliff in the Winnipeg Tribune newspaper, the hangings went off without a hitch:

*"The arrangements in the jail were splendid; it is seldom I see anything so well arranged. There was none of the usual crowding and my task was comparatively easy. If all sheriff's and governors were as careful and thoughtful as yours in Winnipeg, things would be all right, and the executioner would have nothing to complain about. As for the hanging, the men never moved after the drop and I consider the work a success".*

Guszczak and Czubej had been arrested for the murders of Wasyl Bojecko and his four children aged 3 - 10 (Peter, Domka, Anna & Jurko) who had been killed in October 1898. The motive had been robbery. When Mr. Bojecko refused to give the robbers any money they killed him and then killed his children to silence them. The newspapers reported that the murder scene looked like a "slaughterhouse".

Although Czubej was a suspect, the police lacked any information to lay a charge. As a result, they turned to Jacob Seel, a native Galician with some police experience in his home country, to infiltrate the Galician community. Seel, posing as a land buyer, succeeded in getting Czubej's confidence and he ultimately confessed to the crime - implicating Guszczak as well. On March 22, 1899, both men were found guilty of murder and sentenced to hang.



Jacob Seel went on to join the Winnipeg Police department on November 22, 1902. At age 42 he was the oldest recruit, but he went on to have a 23-year career as a detective with the Winnipeg Police Force. He died on May 29, 1926, at the age of 66.

One interesting comment made in the Tribune article was that the hangman was entitled to all the personal belongings of the dead men. However, in this case, he only took Simeon Czubej's coat which he was going to send to a friend "who makes a collection of such gruesome relics". Radcliff was to return again to Winnipeg in 1907 for the execution of Salvatore Macri and in 1909 for the execution of Mike Pidhorney.

Traditionally it had been the duty of the Sheriff of the judicial district in which the prisoner was being held to perform the actual hanging. Normally the Sheriffs employed someone to perform the mechanical parts of the execution although they were required to be present themselves. Thus it was clear that the executioner was

not a civil servant, just a tradesman selling a particular kind of service. However, with the loss of Radclive in 1912, there was a need for an experienced hangman for the Dominion. Arthur English, an ex-English army officer serving in the Middle East as an executioner was unofficially approached by the Canadian government to move to Canada. English came from a family of executioners who worked in England for almost 300 years and whose uncle was then an official hangman in England under the pseudonym of John Ellis. English accepted the offer and moved to Montreal where he took the trade name of Arthur Ellis after his uncle.



*Arthur Ellis*



*John Larry (Jack) Krafchenko*

One of the very first hangings carried out by Ellis in Canada was that of John Krafchenko on July 9, 1914, at the Vaughan Street Jail in Winnipeg. Krafchenko was convicted of robbing the bank in Plum Coulee, Manitoba, of \$4000.00 before shooting and killing the bank manager. This is a long and interesting story and further details can be found in the story, Bloody Jack.

On April 23, 1920, Ellis was required at the first and only hanging of an ex-police officer in Canada. Detective Sergeant John Wilson of the Royal NorthWest Mounted Police was convicted of murdering his wife. Wilson had wanted to marry his sweetheart but couldn't ask his wife of 10 years for a divorce so he used his service revolver, shot her in the head, buried her in a ditch and then burned his auto to cover up the murder. That same day he took out a marriage license and the very next day he was married to his sweetheart. Over one year after the murder on December 11, 1918, the body of his wife was discovered and Wilson stood trial for murder. (NOTE: Wilson was not the only ex-police officer to be sentenced to the gallows. On January 22, 1922, John Francis Gallagher, a former Alberta Provincial Police officer, was convicted of murdering John Coward in Carbon, Alberta. He was sentenced to hang on April 16, 1922, however, 2-days before the sentence was to be carried out his conviction, was overturned and a new trial was ordered. At his re-trial on May 30, 1922, Gallagher was acquitted).

In all his years as the "Official Executioner to the Dominion of Canada," the one hanging that Ellis was most happy to officiate at was that of Earle Leonard Nelson on January 13, 1928, at the Vaughan Street Jail in Winnipeg. Nelson was accused of murdering 24 women and one child throughout the United States between October 18, 1925, and June 1, 1927, before coming to Winnipeg to carry on his "trade". On Thursday, June 9, 1927, Nelson rented a room at 133 Smith Street and then left for the evening. While he was out wandering he



*Earle Nelson  
Back In Custody*

approached 14-year old Lola Cowan of 3 University Place, took her back to his room, strangled her and brutally raped her before stuffing her under his bed. The next day Nelson went to 100 Riverton Avenue where he strangled 27-year-old Emily Patterson to death assaulted her and then stuffed her under her bed. Nelson then left the city but was eventually captured in Killarney, Manitoba, on June 16, 1927, by members of the Manitoba Provincial Police. Surprisingly, Nelson's body was claimed by his wife Mary Martin of Palo Alto, California, and shipped to her following his death. Further details about Earle Nelson can be found in the story *The Strangler*.

Earle Nelson was the 13th person to be hung at the Vaughan Street Jail since it was built in 1884. After his execution, all further hangings were carried out at the newly opened Headingley Jail complex just outside the city (Headingley Jail still has a working gallows). The change in sites may be related to the fact that the University of Manitoba was situated on the corner of Broadway and Memorial at the time and had rented space in the old Court House that overlooked the execution grounds. Although executions were no longer carried out in public, the university students discovered that certain upper story windows provided a clear view of the proceedings

Interestingly, at the time, section 1071 of the Criminal Code, provided that "the body of every offender executed shall be buried within the walls of the prison within which judgment of death is executed on him". Such was not the case at the Vaughan Street as there was a standing Order-in-Council to have all the unclaimed bodies of persons executed at the jail buried in a Potter's Field at Brookside Cemetery. In Brandon, the unclaimed bodies of those executed there were buried on the jail's property as were those hung at Headingley. (Note: The bodies of 16 of the 18 men hung and buried at Headingley Jail between 1929 and 1952 have been exhumed and are interned in a field a few kilometers west of the jail. The burial site is marked with a plaque and a large white cross).

Besides Earle Nelson, one of the last to hang at Winnipeg's Vaughn Street Jail was John Stanton for the murder of John Penny. Stanton was a petty criminal who believed that John Penny, a bachelor, kept a hoard of cash and diamonds hidden in his Young Street house. Allegedly Stanton beat Penny to death with a hammer on December 19, 1921, when all he could find in the house was \$40.

A.E. (Happy) Horton, who was in the house with Stanton, identified him as the killer and received a 7-year sentence for being an accessory. Stanton, however, had fled to the United States and was not caught for another 4 years until he was arrested in Indiana and returned to Canada for trial.

Although many police departments, including the US Department of Justice, had been collecting fingerprints since the turn of the century, there was no central repository in the United States until 1924 when the International Association of Chiefs of Police turned their collection over to the newly created FBI which, under J. Edgar Hoover merged them with those of the Department of Justice.

John Stanton's fingerprints had been sent to the FBI and on June 15, 1925, the Winnipeg Police received correspondence from J. Edgar Hoover himself that Stanton had been arrested in Indiana for petty larceny under the name of John Baker and sentenced to 90-days on May 15, 1925, at the Indiana State Farm. A search of his fingerprints identified him as John Stanton.

Stanton was subsequently returned to Winnipeg and was convicted of murder before Judge Adamson on November 23, 1925. He was sentenced to hang on February 9, 1926, at the Vaughan Street Jail.

Ellis's last hanging was done at the famous Bordeaux Jail in Montreal on March 28, 1935. Ellis had been called to Montreal to execute Leon Gagliardi, Angelo Donafrie and Mrs. Thomasina Sarao after they were found guilty of killing Nicholas Sarao in an intricate insurance scam. Ellis was now 71 years old and had either assisted at or performed over 600 executions throughout his career in England, the Middle East and Canada. He was a master at his trade, yet this hanging would be his last because of a disastrous set of events that had him boycotted from further hangings. It seems that when Ellis went to weigh Mrs. Sarao at the Women's Jail he was not permitted access and had to be satisfied with the weight handed to him on a piece of paper. Based on the weight given to him Ellis calculated the length of rope needed to break Mrs. Sarao's neck. On the morning of the hanging, Mrs. Sarao walked to the gallows some 32 pounds heavier than what had been scratched on the piece of paper and when she plunged to her death the extra weight supplied enough force to decapitate her. It was not the first execution in which Ellis had miscalculated the condemned person's weight. On August 25, 1926, Ellis was called to carry out the execution of 240 pound Dan Prockiwi at Headingly Jail. Prockiwi, a former real-estate owner in Winnipeg, had been convicted of the March 18th beating death of his common-law wife, Annie Cardno. The drop was too much for Prockiwi's heavy body and the result was it jerked his head right off his body. However because it was a woman that was decapitated, the execution of Mrs. Sarao marked the end of Ellis's 22-year career as Canada's "Official" Hangman and it effectively ended the practice of allowing the public to attend hangings. Ellis died three years later in his hotel room in Montreal.

Altogether Arthur Ellis would have overseen 21 executions in Manitoba, the more notable ones being those of Phillip Johnston and Frank Sullivan for the murder of Constable Bernard Snowden in 1918; John Stanton for the murder of John Penny in 1922; Earle Nelson for the murders of Lola Gowan and Emily Patterson in 1927; and George Jayhan for the murder of Sergeant John Verne in 1934. Articles on all of these cases can be found on this website.

Although there were several people employed from time to time as hangmen, there were two prominent hangmen who succeeded Arthur Ellis before capital punishment was finally abolished. One adopted trade name of "Ellis" and the other was "Carmile" Branchaud. They worked in almost complete anonymity and between them executed the last 180 persons to go to the gallows in Canada, 16 of them in Manitoba, including the triple hanging of William Kanuka, Dan Prytuula and Peter Korzenowski in Dauphin



in 1939. Other notable executions were those of Ian Bryson for the murder of Constable Charles Gillis in 1936; Albert Westgate in 1944 for the murder of Edith Cook; Michael Vescio in 1948 for the murders of two 13-year old boys - Roy McGregor and George Smith; and Henry Malanik for the murder of Det. Sergeant "Ted" Sims in 1951. Again, the details of these cases can be found elsewhere on this website.

Women in Canada have seldom encountered the hangman – only thirteen have been executed since Confederation. The first execution of a woman after confederation was that of Phoebe Campbell in London, Ontario, on June 20, 1872. Phoebe, although married, had fallen in love with a young farmhand named Thomas Coyle. Her love for Thomas was so strong that she would do anything, including murder, to be with him. On July 14, 1871, Phoebe could no longer stand being away from her love so she took an axe and chopped up her husband, George until he expired. Initially, Phoebe claimed that it was two black men who had done the dirty deed but later admitted the offence and went to the gallows.

The first and only woman to hang in Manitoba was Hilda Blake of Brandon, Manitoba. Hilda went to the gallows in Brandon on December 27, 1899, for murdering her master's wife on July 5, 1899. Hilda was a young immigrant girl who was jealous of the treatment that her master's children received from their mother, Mrs. Robert Lane. In a jealous rage, Hilda went out and bought a handgun and ended the life of Mrs. Lane. Initially, Hilda claimed a tramp had come to the door looking for food and when he was turned down he shot Mrs. Lane. A short time after the incident an astute police officer located the gun in a garbage can down the road from the house and Hilda admitted the crime. There was a certain amount of public sympathy for Hilda, so much so, that one of her guards, Mrs. Strippe, even attempted to help her escape from the jail. The attempt failed and Mrs. Strippe was incarcerated for her part in the scheme. An appeal was made to the Minister of Justice for her sentence to be commuted, however, the request was denied and Hilda went to the gallows just four days before the birth of the 20th century.

The last woman executed in Canada was Marguerite Pitre for her role in the "Clockwork Bomb Case", one of the world's first airline bombings and largest mass murder in Canadian history.

On August 18, 1949, Marguerite walked into a Quebec City hardware store and purchased seven sticks of dynamite, electrical blasting caps and some electrical wire. On September 9, 1949, she turned up at the air-express counter at Ancienne-Lorette airport in Quebec and had her "religious statue" placed delicately aboard a Quebec Airways DC-3. Forty minutes later the plane exploded killing all twenty-three persons on board. A quick investigation led to Joseph Guay who had taken out a \$10,000 insurance policy on his wife just minutes before the plane took off from Quebec. Guay admitted that he had played a part in engineering the bombing because he had wanted to kill his wife who was on board so that he could move in with his girlfriend, a 17-year-old waitress. Guay implicated Marguerite and her brother, a clockmaker, as co-conspirators in a statement given to police shortly after his trial. Interestingly it

was Guay's statement that led police to Marguerite, however, he did not testify at her trial as the government saw fit to execute him first. The bottom dropped out for Marguerite on January 9, 1953, after her appeals to the Supreme Court and to the Queen of England were denied.

A total of 52 people were executed in Manitoba (35 in Winnipeg) between 1874 and 1952. These include Philip Johnston and Frank Sullivan for the murder of Constable Bernard Snowden in 1918 (for further details see *The Murder of Constable Snowden*); George Jayhan for the murder of Sergeant John Verne in 1934 (for further details see *The Murder of Sergeant Verne*); Ian Bryson for the murder of Constable Charles Gillis in 1936 (for further details see *The Murder of Constable Gillis*); Albert Westgate for the murder of Edith Cook in 1944 (for further details see *Wordless Westgate*); and Michael Vescio for the murder of two young boys in 1947 (for further details see *The Pervert Murders*). A complete list of those hanged in Manitoba can be found at the end of this article.

The last man to hang in Manitoba was Henry Malanik. Malanik fell to his death at precisely 2:13 am on June 16, 1952, after he was convicted of killing Detective James "Ted" Sims of the Winnipeg Police Department on July 16, 1950. Sims, along with two other police officers, had gone to 19 Argyle Street in response to a domestic dispute. The dispute seemed to be over when the officers arrived. They were taking a statement from the woman who had called when Malanik stormed into the house with a loaded shotgun and began pumping away. One of the shots killed Sims before Malanik was shot by one of the other officers. For further details regarding this incident see *The Murder of Detective Sergeant James Sims*.



*Henry Malanik  
(The last man to  
hang in Manitoba)*

Between the years of 1957 and 1963, the Conservative government under John Diefenbaker commuted fifty-two of sixty-six death sentences imposed by the courts, thus predicting that the end of capital punishment was near. On September 1, 1961, the government changed the Criminal Code to distinguish between capital and non-capital murder. Capital murder was a murder that was planned and deliberate, committed during the course of certain crimes of violence, and the murder of a police officer or prison warden acting in the course of duty. Only capital murder carried the death penalty. The code was again changed on November 30, 1967, for a five-year experimental period, so that capital punishment was only to be used for the murder of police officers and prison guards. On January 26, 1973, this partial ban was extended and on July 14, 1976, except for certain offences under the National Defence Act, the Trudeau government abolished capital punishment altogether by a vote of 130-124.

The eleven men sitting on death row on July 14, 1976, all had their sentences commuted to life in prison. The "lucky eleven" were:

1. Richard Ambrose (with James Hutchinson) for the 1974 murders of New Brunswick police officers Michael O'Leary and Aurele Bourgeois.
2. James Hutchinson (with Richard Amrose) for the 1974 murders of New Brunswick police officers Michael O'Leary and Aurele Bourgeois.
3. Real Chartrand for the 1971 murder of Quebec police officer Gabriel Labelle during a botched bank robbery.
4. Vincent Cockrell (with John Miller) for the 1974 murder of Vancouver RCMP officer Roger Pierlet.\*\*
5. John Miller (with Vincent Cockrell) for the 1974 murder of Vancouver RCMP officer Roger Pierlet.\*\*
6. John Connearney for the murder of Quebec police officer Richard Laurent during an attempted arrest (he was eventually killed when he tried to escape from Laval Penitentiary in 1980).
7. Mario Gauthier for the 1975 murder of Georges Nadeau, an Ontario prison instructor.
8. Giles Hebert for the murder of Montreal prison guard Paul Gosselin while on a medical pass.
9. Elery Long for the 1974 murder of Delta Municipal Police officer Ronald McKay during a domestic dispute.
10. George Peloquin for the 1974 murder of Stanley Green, a Stony Mountain Penitentiary guard (Peloquin was eventually given a new trial and acquitted).
11. Rene Vaillancourt for the murder of Toronto police officer Leslie Maitland.



*Correctional Officer Boyd Johnson peers through the trapdoor of the gallows at Headingley Jail - Courtesy of Bob Holliday*

On June 30, 1987, the Mulroney government held a vote to reinstate capital punishment but it was rejected with a vote of 148-127. In 1998 Parliament removed the death penalty from the National Defence Act.

\*\* Miller and Cockrell are probably the luckiest as they appealed their death sentences to the Supreme Court of Canada on the grounds that capital punishment was cruel and unusual punishment contrary to s. 2 of the Canadian Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Miller's and Cockrell's death sentences, however, by then Parliament had repealed the law on capital punishment.

## EXECUTIONS IN MANITOBA

### Winnipeg

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Location of Conviction</b>
1874 -	Joseph Michaud	Winnipeg
1875 -	Angus McIvor	Winnipeg
1876 -	Loius Thomas	Winnipeg
1899 -	Wazyl Guszczak and Simeon Czubej	Winnipeg
1907 -	Salvatore Macri	Winnipeg
1909 -	Mike Pidhorney	Winnipeg
1915 -	Prokofy Malankoff	Winnipeg
1915 -	Jacob Kuzin	Winnipeg
1916 -	Bill Semoneur	Winnipeg
1918 -	Phillip Johnston and Frank Sullivan	Winnipeg
1925 -	John Stanton	Winnipeg
1925 -	Steve Nazar	Winnipeg
1926 -	Daniel Prockiwi	Winnipeg
1926 -	Wilfred Bonnin	Winnipeg
1927 -	Earle Nelson	Winnipeg
1931 -	John Streib	Winnipeg
1933 -	Peter Piniak	Winnipeg
1934 -	Andrew Orichowski	Winnipeg
1935 -	George Jayhan	Winnipeg
1936 -	John Pawluk	Winnipeg
1936 -	Ian Bryson	Winnipeg
1937 -	Peter Kidala	Winnipeg
1941 -	Nick Zhika	Winnipeg
1944 -	Albert Westgate	Winnipeg
1947 -	Lawrence Deacon	Winnipeg
1947 -	Michael Vescio	Winnipeg
1948 -	Clarence Richardson	Winnipeg

1950 -	Camille Allarie	Winnipeg
1950 -	William Lusanko	Winnipeg
1950 -	Walter Stoney	Winnipeg
1951 -	Henry Malanik	Winnipeg

### Outside Winnipeg

Date	Name	Location of Conviction
1888 -	William Webb	Brandon
1899 -	Hilda Blake	Brandon
1902 -	Walter Gordon	Brandon
1907 -	Lawrence Gowland	Morden
1913 -	John Baran	Portage la Prairie
1914 -	Jack Krafchenko	Morden
1915 -	Harry Green	Brandon
1916 -	Tymko Nackonyshyn	Portage
1918 -	Thomas Fletcher	Portage
1925 -	John Kooting	Portage
1931 -	Andrew Dodz	Dauphin
1931-	Joseph Verhoski	Dauphin
1931 -	James McGrath	Brandon
1933 -	Fred Stawycznyj	Minnedosa
1934	Julian Kormarnicki	Dauphin
1938 -	Peter Korzenowski	Dauphin
1938 -	William Kanuka	Dauphin
1938 -	Dan Prytula	Dauphin
1945 -	Baldwin Jonasson	Portage

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