



# THE CASE OF THE 12-YEAR-OLD SHERIFF KILLER

HERBERT NICCOLLS AND THE WASHINGTON JUSTICE SYSTEM

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Bartley, Nancy. *The Boy Who Shot the Sheriff: The Redemption of Herbert Niccolls Jr.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013.

Bartley, Nancy. "Tender Mercies: The Redemption of Herbert Niccolls." *Pacific Northwest: The Seattle Times Magazine*. June 20, 2004.  
<http://old.seattletimes.com/pacificnw/2004/0620/cover.html>

Dougherty, Phil. "Twelve-year-old Herbert Niccolls Jr. shoots and kills Asotin County Sheriff John Wormell on August 5, 1931." In HistoryLink.org: The Free Online Encyclopedia of Washington State History. Article published February 4, 2006.  
[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=7634](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=7634)

## SOME QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How well were the objectives of punishment and protection/reform balanced in the Niccolls case?

Was the outcome of the case influenced by the fact that the victim, John Wormell, was a law enforcement officer?

Child welfare reformers and many members of the public were alarmed when Herbert Niccolls was sentenced to life in the state penitentiary. If he had been sentenced to a term in a juvenile facility instead, what might his life have been like in 1941, the year of his pardon?

Did Herbert Niccolls's physical appearance influence public sentiment, and his treatment within the corrections system?

The officials of the Washington State Penitentiary made special accommodations for Niccolls, complying with the orders of the trial court to segregate him from the general population and provide him with an education. How important were these accommodations in securing his clemency in 1941?

Compare the facts of this historical case with a current example of an unlawful killing by a child of a similar age (12).