

Leo Mitchell



Singer, songwriter, poet, and thief

Leo Mitchell

49

Height 1 m	69.4	Rem.		H.M. lght	18.9	Rem.		L. Foot	23.0	Rem.		Circle		Age	25 yrs
Eng. H't	56.3			" width	13.8			L. Mid F	11.4			Peeph.	14		
Outs. A. 1 m	73.4			Ck width	14.3			L. Litt. F	8.8			Color of L. Eye	Blue	Born in	Mich
Trunk	40.3			R. Ear.	6.4			L. Fore A	45.0			Pecul			

Remarks incident to Measurements :



DESCRIPTIVE

FOREHEAD.	Incl.	Le. Rec.	NOSE.	Profile	Ridge	Le. base	RIGHT EAR.	Big	Bd.	Hair	Le. of
	Hght.	m		Base	Root	Complexion		m. Fr.			
	Width.	m		DIMENSIONS.				Weight	152		
	Pecul.			Length.	Projection.	Breadth.		Build	m.		

Measured at O. P. Columbus, Ohio, April 13th 1909, by John H. Davis.

Bertillon Card courtesy of The Ohio History Connection

Leo Mitchell

397-861

OHIO STATE PENITENTIARY.

NAME Leo Mitchell Reg. No. 36186
 County X Alt. L. O. Pope
 County Sulton Crime Burglary & Larceny Sentence 14 Mos.
 Occupation Painter Known or Admitted Former Imprisonment

Conv. in Kingston Canada Painting

MARKS, SCARS AND MOLES.

Numerical Order	Description
<u>1</u>	<u>Scar on 2nd long of hand L. H.</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>" " " " " " " " " " index finger.</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>" " " " " " " " " " 3rd "</u>
<u>"</u>	<u>" " " " " " " " " " 1st hand 3rd ab. base little finger</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>Red hair L. ear notched.</u>

7951

Dis. by Commutation Jan 8th 1913.
by Wm. Hammond.

13 10
17 000 11

Bertillon Card courtesy of The Ohio History Connection



Leo Mitchell 1879-1947: Although he was most commonly known as Leo Mitchell, this man's real name was Leon E. Osowski (also spelled Ososki and Ososke). He was born in Bay City, Michigan, but moved to Toledo, Ohio, in the early part of the 20th century.

One news report indicates that he was first in trouble with the law at the age of 12. In 1893, Leo's father Frank Ososki caught him stealing money from his meat market and turned him over to the police.

By 1901 Leo was living in Toledo and was arrested there, but no record can be found indicating if he was jailed for this offense. An examination of Mitchell's Bertillon card reveals that he was sent to prison in Canada, and a news report states that this was in the year 1902.

In 1905, using the name L. E. Pope, he and two other men blew open a safe in a post office at a little town in Fulton County, Ohio, called Oakshade. This resulted in a 14-year sentence in the Ohio State Penitentiary, and Mitchell shows up as a prisoner in Columbus in the 1910 United States census.

Also noted on his Bertillon card is the pardon Mitchell received from Governor Harmon on January 8, 1913. This was a result of the fact that Mitchell wrote a poem that asked for mercy. This poem, named "Another Chance", so moved the governor's wife that she showed it to her husband and begged him to pardon Mitchell.

On February 14, 1913, Mitchell with Joseph Hill (aka Joe Forrest), Bert Donaldson, James Cordano, and George "Dutch" Anderson, robbed the Philip Present jewelry store in Rochester, New York. They attempted to blow a safe containing about \$300,000 in diamonds. They were able to open an outer door of the safe but were unable to reach the large cache of diamonds because the safe was protected by a heavy inner door.

They escaped with about \$3,000 in jewelry, but most of this was later recovered. The five men were chased across the country and two of the men, Bert Donaldson and Joseph Hill, were caught in Milwaukee in March of 1913. Mitchell was caught in Michigan on July 2, 1913, and was sent to prison there. He wasn't prosecuted for the Present robbery until 1917. On December 19, 1917, he was sent to Auburn prison in New York. Mitchell, Joseph Hill, Dutch Anderson, and Gerald Chapman were all in Auburn prison from 1917 until 1919, and all went to Toledo in that year.

All four of these men apparently joined the Cowboy Hill gang in the year 1919. There is no specific record as to when this occurred, but there is strong circumstantial evidence to support this theory.

Some reports indicate that Mitchell was seen in Norwalk, Ohio, in 1920 when Cowboy Hill was living there in January, February, and March. These reports can't be confirmed, and there is no specific record of Mitchell being involved in any of the numerous robberies that were perpetrated by this gang.

Mitchell managed to avoid arrest until November of 1921 when he was again caught in Toledo. It can be assumed that he was sent back to prison, but this can't be verified. Information about him is minimal after this point in time. A Sing Sing admission record dated May 19, 1928, indicates that he was sent there from Auburn.

Sing Sing was often used for temporary imprisonment of inmates being transferred to other prisons. This might explain why a man named Leo Mitchell is shown incarcerated in Great Meadow State Prison in New York in the 1930 census. Since his place of birth is Michigan and his age is approximately correct, it is likely that this is Leon Osowski alias Leo Mitchell.

In 1931 Mitchell was arrested in Canada, and apparently again served time in the Kingston penitentiary. There is no record as to how long Mitchell was imprisoned, but by 1943 he had moved back to Detroit where he was living with his sister. His WWII draft registration card (showing the name Leo Ososke) indicates that he was born on June 25, 1879. His death record of January 28, 1947, indicates the place of death as Eloise, Wayne County, Michigan. At that time Eloise was the location of a state mental hospital.