

## Murder in America: a history



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America had managed to make a fetish of South Central murders and yet still ignore them. The principal aspect of the plague - agony - was constantly underrated. What history shows is that in areas where a poor community feels repressed and vulnerable, when major crimes go unpunished while the citizens feel harassed by the force failing to protect them, it breeds murder. In LA the police resources were dedicated mainly to crime prevention, not crime investigation and homicide clearance rates had fallen to abysmal levels. Murder History. The most reliable measure of violent crime is the homicide rate. Americans kill one another at a much higher rate - double, quadruple, or more - than do residents of comparable western European nations. This gap persists despite a roughly 40 percent drop in our homicide rate in the last 15 years or so. Americans have been notably more violent than western Europeans since about the mid- or late 19th century. This graph shows the American homicide rate over the last century-plus. Claude Fischer is the author of Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character. The article above was originally published in Made in America: Notes on American life from American history. \*\*\* Some Readings: <> Adler, J. S. 2001.