



Caught in the crossfire : violence against women, Butte, Montana, 1895-1920
by Stacy King-Powers

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History
Montana State University

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Abstract:

The period between 1895 and 1920 was one of advancement for American Women. Breaking out of the traditional molds, women gained recognition in the paid work force and made their greatest political impact by gaining the hard won right to vote. The desire to be recognized as separate entities and not as possessions of their fathers or husbands caused women to challenge customary beliefs and practices. The battle did not go unfought in Butte, Montana.

This study of early twentieth century Butte attempts to explain the patterns and effects of violence against women and the social attitudes this aggression reveals. Types of violence experienced by Butte women, and the city's response disclose women's status in this industrial mining city. Styles and frequency of assault perpetrated on females, public opinion toward physical brutality, and the judicial actions implemented against the aggressor reflect changing attitudes toward women. Patterns of assault experienced by Butte women seem to suggest that new ideas and technologies were not limited to the mining industry for which the city is renowned. The advancement of modern society touched the community in every realm.

Attempted reforms varied depending on the situation in which the women found herself. Those tied to conventional roles of wife and mother, at times, gambled with their own lives, as they struggled to loosen societal bonds. When the toss was lost, their husbands, out of frustration or insecurity, turned to violence in effort to gain control. For some, the fight for modification ended in tragic death at the hands of someone they had previously trusted, their husbands and lovers. For still others, the frustration and confusion that often accompanied a male-centered existence was overwhelming. Unable to confront a life void of the traditional roles they held sacred, these women opted to commit suicide.

When potential shifts in women's stature were perceived as a threat to Western growth and political leverage, society sided with economic progress and its guardians -Butte's men. Delving into the failed lives of the following women helps to discover what early twentieth century changes meant to those who survived.

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

BUTTE, MONTANA

1895-1920

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ABSTRACT

The period between 1895 and 1920 was one of advancement for American Women. Breaking out of the traditional molds, women gained recognition in the paid work force and made their greatest political impact by gaining the hard won right to vote. The desire to be recognized as separate entities and not as possessions of their fathers or husbands caused women to challenge customary beliefs and practices. The battle did not go unfought in Butte, Montana.

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CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

By most accounts, it was business as usual at the Eureka Saloon on April 4, 1900. Joe Creech, proprietor and chief bartender, engaged in conversation with the regulars, who had stopped by on their way home from an evening in the demimonde just around the corner. His wife, Fay, mingled with the men and the "ladies of the evening", who used the Eureka as their base of operations. As dawn began to break, the piano man finished his set and struck up conversation with a recent Butte arrival who had begun to frequent the bar.

The exact reasons for the events that followed will never be known, but suddenly Joe and the newcomer, later to be identified as an Australian named Blacky, were exchanging insults. Joe grabbed the long rubber hose he kept behind the bar and came out swinging. Blacky went out the front door, Joe out the side. The prostitutes apparently followed Blacky out the front while Fay exited behind her husband. As the unwanted guest came around the corner toward Joe, shots rang out. Fay was caught in the crossfire and staggered back into the bar to die in the arms of one of the regulars who had wisely stayed inside.

Although it was after 4 A.M., more than fifty people heard the shots and rushed to the corner of Mercury and Main to mill around outside the saloon and mull over the tragedy and the event's inconsistencies. For example, the investigating police officer reported that women's clothing and glass were scattered all over the room. Those who witnessed the scene could not remember what the stranger looked like. The Australian Blacky escaped and was not apprehended until he reached Salt Lake City. Although onlookers had been vague about the assailant immediately after the murder, on his return to Butte, everyone immediately identified him as the culprit.

Fay was a victim of the violence in her life-style. Those at the Eureka grieved briefly but were quickly back in business with Lillian Creech, Joe's new wife, filling not only Fay's shoes but the piano man's.¹

The ill-fated end of Fay Creech attracts interest with its Western glamour: the audaciousness, the shoot-out, and the hunt for the killer. Stories of the "wild and wooly West" tend to pit the bad guys against the good, with six-shooters usually solving the problem. Innocent victims lost their lives upon occasion, and though this was viewed as unfortunate, it did not seem to generate a need for change in the approach to law and order.

By 1900, this portrait of violence had become skewed. In reality, the majority of Butte's female murder and suicide victims from 1895 to 1920 were caught in the crossfire of another nature; between traditional expectations and changing possibilities for women lay a "no man's-land" where women might cross at their peril.

When added to the pressures of twenty-four hour mining and the frustrations of eking out an existence in a city not known for comfort and easy living, men often reached the breaking point and lashed out in anger and frustration. Women, present in the mining camp to provide domestic services for the miners' many needs, bore the brunt of these frustrations. Many literally gambled with their lives when they attempted to change or better their existences.

"Crazed Husband Kills Wife Because of Fancified Wrongs" greeted the eyes of the Butte Miner subscribers on August 4, 1906.² Extremely jealous and furious that his wife refused to live with him, Frank Marlot quietly entered the back door of the boarding house where his wife had sought refuge and employment. Uttering the words, "I will fix you," he fired three shots into her back as she stood at the kitchen stove preparing breakfast. Mary, a European immigrant of Slavic descent, who spoke no English, had fled Meaderville and her miner husband to escape repeated beatings. Three times she had sought relief through the courts, only to have the

charges dismissed. Fearing for her life, she went into hiding, but a short twenty days later, her greatest fear was realized. Frank, "one of the most cowardly ingrates within human conception," was never apprehended.³

Approximately 7,380 deaths were investigated by Silver Bow County coroners during this twenty-five year period. Inquests determine cause when a death is unattended, suspicious, or occurs through violence, either self-inflicted or at the hands of another. One hundred four of these investigations, thirty-two homicides and seventy-two known suicides, were into the termination of women's lives by violent means.⁴ The number is small compared to the total population of Silver Bow County.⁵ Yet the attitudes and opinions presented in the investigations and newspapers regarding each incident are key tools in discovering the overall beliefs and practices of the community.

Types of violence experienced by Butte women and the community's response disclosed women's status in this industrial mining city. Styles and frequency of assault perpetrated on females, public opinion toward physical brutality, and the judicial actions implemented against the aggressor reflect changing attitudes toward women. Butte was not only a major center in the world of copper mining, but a dominant influence in the development of Montana law

and politics.⁶ The state's history reflected Butte's pre-eminence, and it is quite possible that Butte society's reaction to women and their aspirations helped to shape laws beyond the county line.

The overwhelming majority of Butte women who died violently during this time were members of the service class, who depended directly on miners for their existence. Of these, most were miners' wives with children. Prostitutes ranked second, and others ran boarding houses or worked as housekeepers.⁷ Given the stress and frustrations that often accompanied life centered around the unpredictability of mining, a few women's deaths may not surprise us. The apathetic nature of the community's response, however, leads one to question the role of social change.

These assaults seemed to have occurred in direct correlation with women's attempts to expand their horizons or improve their position. Challenging traditional roles and reacting against the beliefs centered in the "cult of true womanhood" resulted in their deaths. In addition, the legal and social sectors of the city, possibly unwilling to upset the working-class structure in Butte, seemed swayed not by the acts of violence but by the class identity of the women who died. Their concentration on where the women may have overstepped social boundaries provided justification

for the violent acts brought against them. Unwritten approval of keeping women in their proper place seemed to be an undercurrent affecting community reactions. When social expectations of control resulted in violence against women and reached the public eye, the general population's response was to quickly dispose of the incident and move on.

The statistical aspects of this study come from the public record kept in Silver Bow County and the city of Butte, Montana.⁸ Because the community depended on hard-rock mining for its livelihood, the majority of the population fits what is considered today working class.⁹ Documentation of daily events and life-style by the local papers followed the patterns of the laboring population. Assault, murder, and suspicious deaths were reported primarily among miners, their families, and cohorts. Events involving middle- and upper-class women don't appear in the archives. Possibly these groups were able to, for the most part, successfully conceal any violence they were experiencing or that methods used to encourage conformity were more discreet. Mental cruelty and strong social chastisement could have been used more frequently among the higher classes, creating different and more subtle behavior. Money and social position provided better access to legal and medical attention,

keeping violent outbursts in the private sector, and out of the public eye.

Because this study is limited to one community, the samples and conclusions that appear in the following pages cannot be considered valid for all women living during the years 1895 to 1920. It does, however, give us an idea of what problems existed in Butte, and how those roadblocks helped or hindered the lives of its people. Because Butte played such a major role in Montana politics, we can also speculate on what Montana women may have faced in their struggle for greater rights and freedom.¹⁰

As the United States gained recognition in the economic and political realms of the late nineteenth century, another equally challenging phenomenon was taking place, the fight for emancipation of women and the broadening of their roles. Eighteenth century industrialization and the values inherent in the early-to-mid nineteenth century Victorian Era resulted in a redefinition of woman's position.¹¹ As the work place moved away from home, manufactured goods replaced those previously made by women. No longer the center of production, the home evolved into a tranquil, comfortable refuge, far removed from the hustle and bustle of the workaday world.

Women's roles ceased to be directly linked to economic survival. Their primary duties became maintaining the

home's sanctity, meeting husbands' needs, and supervising children. Limited to the household, a woman's existence depended on the man who supported her. The outside worlds of industry, politics, and economics became the travesties of men. Society quickly justified restrictions placed on women by promoting a "separate spheres" dichotomy.¹²

The cult of true womanhood, a hallmark of the Victorian era, set the standard for women's behavior. Women belonged in the home for the physical and mental well-being of themselves and their families. Considered morally superior, they were expected to train their children accordingly. Responsible for setting high social and moral standards, women prepared their sons to handle the worries of the outside world and their daughters to know the duties of homemaking.

Although this ideology was promoted as a separate but equal doctrine, with little economic and political power, women grew increasingly dependent on men. The domestic world may have been the woman's responsibility, but in the eyes of society the real power in the family belonged to the supporting male. All major decisions that affected the family were connected to the public sector. Banned from participation by social and legal limitations, women had little voice. Men were the true heads of the household.

While the cult of true womanhood promoted a division between public and private lives, not all women agreed with this doctrine and for many it did not reflect reality. For a variety of reasons women often crossed the boundary between the private and public spheres and struggled to survive in the marketplace.¹³

By the turn of the century, this domestic ideology had been severely challenged. Some women had begun to question their limited legal, economic, and social position. Western women's efforts to dismantle the cult of true womanhood dovetailed with other changes that were occurring in the West. These alterations often worked in women's favor.¹⁴ But when potential changes in women's status were perceived as a threat to western growth and the political status quo, society sided with economic progress and its guardians - Butte's men.

The growth of Butte is an excellent example of the struggles that took place as the West defined its new-found roles. By 1895, Butte, perched at 5,000 feet in the northern Rockies, had developed into a fine-tuned mining town well on its way to becoming the copper capital of the world. First established as a placer gold camp in 1864, Butte then turned to silver, which soon gave way to copper. As industry developed better smelting techniques and as World War I increased the demand for the metal, the city

quickly climbed the ranks to become the "richest hill on earth." From 1895 to 1920, Butte more than quadrupled in size and Silver Bow County more than tripled.¹⁵ Attracted by the high wages and unlimited work, miners of all ethnic and racial groups flocked to Butte to claim a fortune. Irish, German, Slavic, and Chinese all found their way to the hill and clamored to work in the mines for the copper giants, Marcus Daley, W. A. Clark, and Augustus Heinze.¹⁶

Butte soon grew from a small camp to a major metropolitan center. Peak population estimates vary from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand.¹⁷ Hailed as the San Francisco of the Rockies, Butte attracted influential people, powerful politicians, and big money. When the battle for control of copper erupted, the entire mining industry watched tensely for the outcome. By 1906, when the dust had settled and the Anaconda Company was clearly in control of the "Hill," as it was called, Butte had become a powerful entity not only in Montana but in Western politics as well.¹⁸

Prosperity did not come without its price. Fumes from the smelters soon choked the valley; grass, trees, and shrubbery could not compete, and turned the countryside barren and bleak. Visibility, at times, was so limited that street lights were lit twenty-four hours a day, so people could conduct their business.

Although a large part of the population was male, women and children soon began to add to the populace as families prepared to make Butte their home. Approximately one third of the Butte residents were female, key to the miner's service community.¹⁹ Saloons and dance halls provided alcohol to wet the whistle and women to help a miner forget his troubles. For those who sought more than dancing, cribs and brothels lined Butte's streets, and prostitutes of numerous nationalities catered to the miners' more intimate desires. For the more mundane necessities of life, such as eating and sleeping, women ran the boarding houses and eateries. Women appeared here, too, as cook, laundress, or housekeeper.²⁰

Unmarried male Butte arrivals found a wide variety of partners to choose from. Once married, they often set up a traditional household. If the wife continued to earn money, it was by boarding miners, cooking or doing laundry, all within the home.

Food, shelter, clothing, and sex. The women in the service community worked hard to provide these four essential ingredients for the city's male workers. In return, the working class men that made up the core of Butte's population expected and were given control over their personal lives and family. With all other aspects of life governed by the rigid structure of mining, being "the

boss" at home played an important part in maintaining self-respect. It was necessary for women to assume a submissive and self-sacrificing role.

As the number of families increased, outcries for control of the brothels, bars, gambling halls, and other entertainments geared toward the single miner increased. Social stratification within the population generated a need for clear distinctions between acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

The large population of working men remained essential for continued mining prosperity, however, and the city fathers, who profited from this venture, realized that after-hour amusements were necessary diversions for these men, single and married. Rather than ban such entertainment, they devised a system of law and order that often over-looked minor "illegalities." Hours regulating saloons and laws restricting prostitution and gambling were vague or understandably overlooked (often for a bribe) by the police. Occasional outbreaks of "rough" behavior were not considered harmful, especially if they took place within the loosely defined red-light district or the area known as the Cabbage Patch.

Social control, rather than written law, was the most effective tool in governing Butte residents' behavior. Women in good standing knew which areas of the city to avoid

and mothers taught their children well. Social hierarchies played an important role; women falling into disfavor often ended with shattered life plans. When a lady's private life-style became public, as at the time of her death, the court used her past social behavior as a guide when bringing judgment against any suspected assailants. Who a woman was, what she did, and how she acted were essential tools in the legal system's and society's response.

Butte's dependence on the mining population directly affected its women. Responsible for morality, they faced an uphill battle in a mining community that refused to relinquish its pleasures. They feared for their sons and husbands and the chance that they might be enticed by the available entertainments of the underworld. The women who worked to feed, clothe, and house the miners faced a rigidly defined job market, gambling with social respect as they navigated between economic need and non-traditional work. Women who married miners felt the hardships of strikes, unemployment, accidents and the unending stress inescapably linked to their lives. Prostitutes in Venus Alley, perhaps, faced the most difficult times. Vulnerable to all aspects of a troubled life-style, they experienced much of the pains and little of the comforts.

No matter their station, the women in Butte and Silver Bow County attempted to better their lives. The public

record from 1895 to 1920 documents their efforts. Despite the numerous cultural and ethnic mores and a legal system that was more concerned with mine-shaft ownership than a woman's self-preservation, they pushed both subtly and openly for a bigger voice.

During this time, Butte was unionized, elected a socialist mayor, helped elect Janet Rankin as the first woman in the U.S. House of Representatives and weathered prohibition. The success of women's suffrage in 1914 has been interpreted by many to mean that women's fight to broaden their roles was experiencing some success. These changes did not come easily, and some women were casualties in the process. Attempts to alter tradition or the status quo and struggles to succeed in a competitive capitalistic world were not beneficial to everyone. Murder and suicide victims were truly caught in the crossfire. Their failures and frustrations provide insight into the roadblocks and hidden avenues that turn-of-the-century women faced.

NOTES-CHAPTER I

¹Inquest No.2610, Office of the Clerk of Court Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner, April 4, 1900; April 5, 1900; Anaconda Standard, April 22, 1900; April 23, 1900; April 24, 1900; Miller v. Miller, Court docket No.8138, Office of the Clerk of Court Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

²Butte Miner, August 4, 1906.

³Inquest No.3968, Office of the Clerk of Court Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

⁴Verdicts by inquest juries that determined cause of death from illness, poor health or alcohol and drug abuse are not included in this study. When circumstances surrounding the loss of a woman's life generated suspicion of unnatural causes the case was included.

⁵One hundred four inquests were used to compile this information, thirty-two murders and seventy-two suicides. Identified through the inquest files located in the Office of Clerk and Recorder, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana. The U.S. Census Bureau shows the county population at 23,744 in 1890; 47,635 in 1900; 39,165 in 1910; and 60,313 in 1920. Abstract of the 12th Census, 1900 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 162; Thirteenth Census of the United States...1910: Vol. 2, Population, p. 1143; Fourteenth Census of the United States...1920: Vol. 1, Population, p. 506.

⁶For discussions on Butte and its role in Montana politics, see Michael Malone The Battle for Butte (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981); Michael Malone and Richard Roeder Montana: A History of Two Centuries (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976).

⁷Analyzing the known occupations of the dead women or of their husbands, all but two of one hundred and three were employed in positions of service. Excluding prostitution, boarding house work, waitressing and entertainment made up the core of women's employment. Twenty-five, or 24.2% of those who died violently can be classified as prostitutes. Husbands were primarily blue-collar workers with the

exception of one jeweler and a police chief. Twenty-two, or 21.3% of the women were either married to or residing with a miner at the time of their death.

⁸The inquest files used for this study are located at the Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

⁹Occupations at the Twelfth Census, Special Reports (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), pp.434-435. For a more complete description of Butte life styles, see Michael Malone, The Battle for Butte (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).

¹⁰For discussions on Butte and its role in Montana politics, see Michael Malone The Battle for Butte (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981); Michael Malone and Richard Roeder Montana: A History of Two Centuries (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976).

¹¹Nancy F. Cott The Bonds of Womanhood (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977) provides an excellent explanation of this process.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid. For a discussion on Butte women, see Mary Murphy "Women on the Line: Prostitution in Butte, Montana, 1878-1917" (Masters Thesis, University of North Carolina, 1983).

¹⁴Julie Roy Jeffrey, Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi, 1840-1880 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979); T.A. Larson, "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot; Woman Suffrage in the Treasure State." Montana Magazine Vol. XXIII, No. 1 (January, 1983); "Woman's Role in the American West." Montana Magazine Vol. XXIV, No. 3 (July, 1974.) Paula Petrik, "Mothers and Daughters of Eldorado: The Fisk Family of Helena, Montana, 1867-1902" Montana Magazine Vol. 32, No. 3, (Summer, 1982).

¹⁵Abstract of the 12th Census, 1900 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902), p. 100, 162. Thirteenth Census of the United States...1910: Vol. 2, Population, p. 1143; Fourteenth Census of the United States...1920: Vol. 1, Population, p. 506.

¹⁶Malone, pp. 64-70.

¹⁷As noted in Malone, p. 58.

¹⁸Complete histories of the struggles in Butte are included in several books on Montana History. In addition to those already cited, see C.B. Glasscock, The War of the Copper Kings (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1935).

¹⁹Abstract of the 13th Census, 1910, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913, p. 1143; Fourteen Census of the United States...1920: Vol. 1, Population, p. 506.

²⁰Murphy, pp. 8-10.

TIL DEATH DO US PART

The Brown family returned to Butte from the Klondike in spring 1901. Liddie and her three teenage children from a previous marriage were happy to be back in the bustling city and close to friends and family. William Brown secured a position on the night shift in one of the mines. Liddie and the children loved the culture and entertainment and made a regular habit of attending the theatre and seeing the sights while he was at work. William became increasingly unhappy with his wife's newfound freedom. A firm believer that a woman's place was in the home, he attempted to control his wife through threats and abusive behavior. Liddie, possibly encouraged by her children and friends, continued to socialize.

Returning home on June 16, 1901, after a night in the mine, William became enraged with Liddie. The reason: an evening at the theatre with her aunt. Liddie's daughter, Myrtle, heard him screaming at her mother for disobeying his stipulation against theatre going, but as this was not unusual, she paid no attention and continued to prepare for work. As Liddie attempted to pacify her husband with a nice breakfast, he came up behind her and slit her throat. In

the parlor Myrtle turned in time to see her astonished mother collapse on the couch. Liddie's aunt commented on Mr. Brown after the incident, "He was very kind except when she went out or talked to someone."¹

The Browns were not unusual. They were a typical miner and his wife attempting to get ahead in Butte at the turn of the century. They lived in a small, two story flat in a neighborhood of mining families. Liddie was thirty-nine years old at the time of her death, slightly older than many of the women in this study, but other aspects of her daily life were quite similar.² She worked at home, responsible for the upbringing of her children and meeting her husband's domestic needs at all hours. William worked on the night shift and it was quite likely that Liddie's daily chores were planned around his sleeping and eating, so as not to disturb him. With shifts starting and ending at odd hours, miners' wives were adept at accommodating unusual schedules.

William Brown's response to his wife's disobedience followed a pattern that surfaced in other families. Perceiving Liddie's desire to enjoy some of Butte's culture as a threat to his position of power in the family, he became increasingly agitated. Starting with verbal reprimands, William resorted to physical abuse when she continued to follow her own plans. But Liddie was not the

only woman faced with this situation. With respect to women, violence, normally a public affair, invaded private space and was, as it is in the late twentieth century, a personal matter.³

Mining meant long hours with many hazards. It is understandable that workers would desire a nice, neat, quiet place to relax with their wishes catered to, where they were boss and people listened and respected them. This place was home, the private refuge from the hectic and dangerous atmosphere of the mines.

Mining and the harsh living conditions that surrounded it generated a high degree of stress. If a mine shut down for legal or economic reasons, hundreds of men could be out of work. Before the days of welfare and unemployment insurance, when a mining community could not absorb this huge influx, many families went hungry. Job insecurity and stress exacerbated any dissatisfactions or distress in the family. Economic need curtailed displays of displeasure toward the source of miners' distress, the mining companies. Instead, the miner's frustrations surfaced not only in the saloons, but at home where he was boss. For some, the desire to dominate and control triumphed over reason, and a woman's death resulted.

Such was the case with Charles Antila, who slit his wife's throat and then his own because he suspected her of

having an affair.⁴ Albert Becker shot Helen Kelley six times because she refused to marry him.⁵ May Brown lost her life because she went to dances without her husband's permission. Mr. Brown's brother believed that Brown's "jealous ways led his wife to seek relief in dancing."⁶ If a woman viewed her roles differently than her husband or enjoyed a life-style not consonant with his expectations, she ran the risk of assault, at the least, and death, at the most.

Abuse of women occurred primarily in connection with two values present in the Victorian cult of true womanhood beliefs. Violence in order to control and repress stemmed from the wife's attempt to broaden her horizons, to establish a life beyond the boundaries of her home. Such ill-treatment primarily affected blue-collar, miners' wives. The second pattern touched another class of service women, primarily the prostitutes and dance hall entertainers. Although miners' wives and prostitutes are not normally classified in the same category, the two shared an intimate tie to mining and mines. Women like Lillian Creech became victims of circumstances directly resulting from their lifestyles. Butte, because of its livelihood, attracted many single men seeking their fortunes through mining. Entertainment and social stimulation became the outlet for the frustrations of the working man. Saloons, dance halls,

and the red-light district allowed him to forget his worries for a short time and cater to his own dreams. The sporting life attracted a marginal population; hence, gamblers, prostitutes, professional fighters, and drifters comprised a large part of the after-hours society.

Women surfaced here for many reasons. The fascination with the life of the fast crowd drew some. For others, a life "gone wrong" led them to the world of prostitution, or the failure of the traditional role of wife and mother forced them to cross the line of respectability to seek employment. While prostitutes may have rejected women's traditional roles, not all abandoned the beliefs they had grown up with. Marrying a miner, for many, was an avenue out of the demimonde and into nineteenth century normality. Rather than abandoning traditional values entirely, these women hoped to redeem themselves in the eyes of society and regain the cult of true womanhood through marriage. Probably a few were successful; they do not appear here. Choosing a husband from the men they met involved a degree of risk. Some men saw involvement with prostitutes as a way to get ahead themselves. They planned on using women's talents to their own benefit and then casting their female partners aside when the liaison no longer proved lucrative. The violence experienced by ladies of the underworld was, again, a form of restraint, denying them the role they

longed to recover. Women like Maggie Dempsey paid dearly when they refused to depart quietly.

In 1899 Maggie was operating a boarding house on East Broadway. Enamored with the seemingly exciting life of the entertainment world, Maggie rented her rooms to those employed in that fashion and soon adopted their idiosyncrasies. Peter Dempsey, a ne'er-do-well, unemployed miner was one of her boarders. Attracted by his suave and mysterious ways, Maggie became romantically involved. Discovering Peter had no intention of marrying her, she had him arrested for seduction. The case was settled by their subsequent union.⁷ Thus, began a rather short and turbulent relationship. Maggie sought a husband who would provide for her in the traditional manner and take her away from the doldrums of boarding house living. Peter had other plans. Accounts of their life together suggest that Peter attempted to use Maggie as a means of income through prostitution. Both fell into serious drinking and became increasingly unhappy. Physical abuse and violent quarrels were common. Maggie, in an unusual move for the time, went to the police, requesting intervention, and three days before her death sought refuge overnight in the jail. Legal protection did not extend to arresting Peter.⁸

By now Dempsey, coerced into the marriage to begin with, was ready to be rid of Maggie. In a carefully planned

manner, he met Maggie at their rented room on April 19, 1900, shot her twice, placed the gun at her side and left, expecting the coroner's jury to rule her death a suicide. Dempsey, with bags packed and a ticket for South Africa and to the Boer War, did not anticipate witnesses. Unfortunately for him, the landlady had observed both his entrance and exit. He was found guilty of premeditated murder.⁹

Many of the murdered "fallen" women had similar backgrounds. They had sought stability and an escape from professions that did little to improve their life and added only to lowered self-esteem and continued abuse. The men they had attached themselves to did not fulfill their dreams. The women coveted the values of traditional womanhood and hoped to obtain a reputable position. The men used them for their own purposes, often with malicious intent. With few options open for social advancement, the unfortunate ladies pursuit of nineteenth-century domesticity was understandable.

The uncompromising social structure hindered many women who attempted to escape oppressive situations. Marriage was an essential element for traditional life-styles. Respectability and reputation for most ladies was based on their ability to marry. Through marriage a woman entered fully into the roles and the place society had defined for

her. Divorce, no matter the reason, could severely damage a woman and her family.

By 1895, the state recognized six reasons or causes for divorce. Desertion was the most common and acceptable, followed by abandonment, adultery, drunkenness, neglect and extreme cruelty.¹⁰ Requesting a divorce meant many changes for a woman. She risked not only her reputation but also opened herself to the mercy of the marketplace. If she did not have a family to support her, she faced a limited job market. Women working outside the home, especially mothers, were frowned upon. To offset economic hardship, her options usually consisted of taking in boarders, serving meals to miners, or doing laundry. Butte society was no exception in viewing divorced women as failures in their traditional roles.¹¹

Because of the large population of single miners in Silver Bow County, remarriage was an attractive alternative. With the availability of single men, the chance to reemploy oneself as a wife was quite high.¹² Women who took the gamble and divorced may have been able to break the legal ties, but this did not mean they escaped the wrath of an ex-husband. Husbands who expected their wives to obey their wishes often became more distraught after the divorce or separation. Ending marriage, in many cases, only invited the violent retaliation.

Edith Grandis was not willing to endure the beatings her husband Joseph inflicted upon her. She petitioned for, and was granted, a divorce on the grounds of cruelty in the fall of 1919. At twenty-eight, Edith was exiting her second marriage. With her five children in tow, she set up a boarding house on Faucet Street, and only three weeks after the separation from Joseph, was preparing for a third marriage to one of the miners that boarded in her home. Although their legal relationship had been severed, Joseph was not willing to relinquish entirely his marital role. Outraged and overcome with jealousy, he came to her home one morning and shot and killed both Edith and himself.¹³

Divorcing the violent, abusive husband did not, then, always solve the problem. Gladys Bray, after numerous attacks, one in which she was forced to shoot her husband in the leg in self-defense, was granted a divorce in 1918. Even so, Martin Bray continued to harass and threaten to kill her. His actions became so severe that she left her home only when accompanied by her children or friends. The police were notified on several occasions, but, possibly because of Mr. Bray's position as shift boss at the Speculator Mine, the authorities did nothing. In May of 1918, Mr. Bray finally carried out his threats. As Gladys and her children were being escorted to the Broadway theater by a Mr. Kay Showers, Martin jumped out of a crowd on the

street and began shooting. Mr. Showers was killed instantly; Gladys died ten days later. Her eldest son fiercely kicked his former stepfather as he lay in the street from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.¹⁴ Although divorce was an option, some woman bet against heavy odds in the process.

Although, as in the case of Gladys Bray, there were instances of women seeking legal avenues, appealing to the courts and the police was not common. What took place in the privacy of one's home tends, even today, to be viewed as no one else's business.¹⁵ Respecting the assumed right of a man to control his household as he saw fit was, perhaps, even more prevalent in early twentieth century living. The police force was designed to curtail crime and keep the peace on the streets not in domestic situations. If a woman sought assistance, most often she looked to friends or family members.¹⁶

Abuse did not go unnoticed by children, relatives, and neighbors. Living in close proximity, these people often witnessed and at times broke up arguments and fights. Children often admitted observing their parents fight and were in fear for their own lives. Neighbors, friends, and relatives saw the infliction of bruises, cuts, and broken bones and frequently tended to the woman's needs afterwards. Onlookers concluded that abuse, culminating in violent death

was only a matter of time. Acquaintances did what they could to help but were not always successful or able to judge the situation accurately.

One daughter mistakenly convinced her mother to let her father sleep off his rage rather than have him arrested.¹⁷ Hilda Grandroth fled her husband's abuse and sought refuge in the home of a friend. When her ex-husband came to the door to see her, the friend misinterpreted his intentions and let him in. He quickly shot Hilda and then himself.¹⁸ Della O'Connell moved in with her parents to escape an excessively jealous husband. One night he went to the house six or seven times, demanding to be let in. The mother attempted to call the police but was unsuccessful. Della pleaded to no avail with her mother to let her run to the neighbors for safety. The husband finally got in, wounded his mother-in-law, and then killed his wife and himself.¹⁹

Becoming involved in domestic quarrels to protect a woman was dangerous. "While pleading and begging piteously for their lives, A.W. Tait and his wife were shot down in cold blood by Charles Paustian." The Taites had been hiding Charles' ex-wife for her own safety after the Paustians' divorce the day before.²⁰

Understandably, many who knew of or suspected, violence chose not to get involved. Neighbors and friends were not alone, as this basic approach played an integral role in how

the legal system ultimately chose to handle the women's murders.

The judicial system was reluctant to intervene in what were considered domestic matters. Underlying the procedures adopted by the court was the unwillingness to confront violence against women as an issue instead of as isolated incidents. In addition to the reflection of society's views in the legal conclusions, two other factors seemed to have played a major role. First, weighed against the other concerns of the Silver Bow courts, magistrates and jurors alike viewed the murders of these thirty-two women as trivial incidents. Mining litigation constantly tied up production and, thus, affected the economy and the legal system. Keeping the industry operating and producing was top priority. Solving claim disputes and union problems, not domestic problems, were what the courts cared about. Courts viewed domestic problems as minor interruptions that only served to hamper more important concerns.

The second important factor works back to these women's social position and their reason for being in Butte. They were members of the service community, the infrastructure on which Butte depended. The violence against women that surfaced in the public record was a problem closely related to Butte's fundamental economy. Butte's legal system did not make a large issue of these incidents, because it

realized that some violence and death was inevitable in its particular economy. Given the population, the stress that came with mining and the services devised to allow the miners to release their work-related frustration, the death of a few women in the process could be expected and condoned. This did not mean that the legal system condoned violence; certainly violence tended to upset the economy. On the contrary, Butte institutions handled the problems as they arose. The legal system, however, did not develop procedures to curtail or prevent violence against women. What courts did not recognize, they did not confront. When violence came to the public eye, it was dispensed with quietly and quickly.

Contending with the problem in this way resulted in the lack of any standard policy for aiding women. When a woman sought help from the police, the authorities were not prepared to assist. In the case of Maggie Dempsey, if a woman had nowhere else to go, she was faced with spending the night in jail. If a distraught wife called police to the scene, it was quite likely, just as it is today, that they would break up the dispute and then leave the couple still together.²¹ Clearly, Butte citizens saw that the duties of law enforcement did not include domestic problem-solving. Given this and other social attitudes, it is not

surprising to find women staying in a questionable or dangerous domestic situation and gambling with their lives.

When a woman was killed, the event set the local legal machinery, such as it was, in motion. Because no coherent investigative system existed, a complicated inquiry, designed to establish the woman's reputation, evolved. Although most women in this study fit the description of service class, not all were considered in the same light. Juries made a clear distinction between "good" women and "bad" women.

Who a woman was, what she did, who she associated with, where she lived, became vital to a jury's deliberations and often influenced the body's verdict. Similarly, information about the murderer and his position in Butte contributed to a jury's decision. Not until after the courts ground through this process was the sentence pronounced. "She was known to be a good women" meant that her morality and fidelity did not need to be questioned; the phrase, "her death was caused by her own bad habits," signified the woman's lower position in society. Gender description, rather than law, governed Butte residents' behavior on coroner's juries. This suggests that those sitting in judgment were not so much interested in "how" or "who" but whether the victim deserved her fate. If jury members considered a woman to be immoral, the testimony suggested

that perhaps death by violence was her just dessert. According to this thinking, a good, moral woman would not allow herself to become involved with vile men. This attitude revealed an early element regarding rape and other crimes of a sexual nature; that is, "bad women come to bad ends." In this manner, Butte juries justified women's homicides without passing judgment on the system that had developed to support the working class economy of Butte.

In another variation on this theme, juries used a similar technique in investigating violence against miners' wives. If a decent woman disobeyed her man, she sinned in another way, and the jury, it seemed, overlooked husbands' unfortunate and overharsh chastisement, even if it resulted in the woman's death. Once again, the fate of the woman was not based so much on the man's action as it was on her inability to adhere to traditional role patterns.

Coroner's juries did not view a long history of physical and mental abuse toward one's mate as a stepping-stone to premeditated murder. Husbands and boyfriends were rarely found guilty of premeditation, but rather were charged with manslaughter, the outburst attributed to the use of alcohol, and thus, the loss of control on the man's part. Despite testimony from friends and relatives about repeated attacks and seemingly planned action by the husband or boyfriend, this form of sentencing prevailed.²²

The closer the relationship between the woman and her murderer, the lesser the sentence. If, as in the case of Lillian Creech, the man was judged to be of lower character than the woman he killed, he could be sentenced for life. When the judge believed that both parties deserved their fates, the man was likely to be sentenced to forty to sixty years of hard labor. If a miner killed his wife for her unseemly behavior, he might get ten to twenty years, and in a few cases, where the death was eventually termed accidental, the man was not charged. Only one man received an execution sentence, Peter Dempsey in 1901.²³

At the turn of the century, a strict interpretation of gender roles characterized Butte society. Violence, furthermore, enforced such notions; residents of Butte not only tolerated crimes against women, but they also accepted judicial leniency.

NOTES-CHAPTER II

¹Inquest No. 3030, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner, June 18, 1901; Criminal Case No. 1317, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

²The average age of women murdered in Silver Bow County from 1895 to 1920 was thirty-six, the youngest being seventeen and the oldest, seventy-seven.

³Twenty-two, or roughly 73% of these women were killed in their own home, a friend's home, or within close proximity of these properties. Only seven, or roughly 23% were killed in a public area, the street, or social gathering place.

⁴Inquest No. 8573, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner October 4, 1919; Anaconda Standard October 4, 1919.

⁵Butte Miner October 16, 1903; October 17, 1903; October 20, 1903; October 25, 1903.

⁶Inquest No. 8041, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana, Anaconda Standard June 25, 1916.

⁷Butte Miner April 19, 1900; Anaconda Standard April 19, 1900.

⁸Ibid. Inquest No. 2611, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

⁹Criminal Case No. 1180, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner July 3, 1900.

¹⁰Paula Petrik, No Step Backward: Women and Family on the Rocky Mountain Frontier, Helena, Montana 1865-1900, (forthcoming, Montana Historical Society Press, 1986), Chapter 4.

¹¹Numerous statements to this regard appear throughout the investigation records. Public opinion promoted through the Butte Miner and the Anaconda Standard implied that women who were divorced were often considered second class ladies or "used merchandise."

¹²Despite negative public opinions at least ten of the women killed by their husbands had been married previously.

¹³Inquest No. 8572, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard October 15, 1919.

¹⁴Inquest No. 8326, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard May 17, 1918; May 17, 1918.

¹⁵Numerous books and articles have been published on the current problems of wife abuse and the patterns adopted by the judicial system. For an excellent overview with a historical perspective and bibliography of materials, see Donna M. Moore, ed. Battered Women (Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1979).

¹⁶Reams of testimony from neighbors, friends, children and other relatives appear throughout the investigations. Request for police assistance appeared only in Maggie Dempsey's case. Either it was not considered a valid point in other cases, or these women did not feel police protection was worth pursuing.

¹⁷Inquest No. 8573.

¹⁸Inquest No. 8153; Anaconda Standard April 20, 1917.

¹⁹Inquest No. 7093, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard July 16, 1909.

²⁰Inquest No. 2628, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner May 13, 1900.

²¹See footnote No. 15.

²²Although it was not mentioned in the sentencing, it is possible that judges hesitated to pass down strict judgements because the men were needed to "support the family". In addition, the belief that these interactions were private family matters and not the court's concern prevailed.

²³Difficulties arose in tracing the charges that were filed against these men. Some of the records were missing and only an untraceable criminal case number remained. Other men went to trial, were found guilty in the first degree and sentenced to hard labor in the state prison. In

checking records at the prison, their names did not appear, however. Of the thirteen cases where the inquest mentions that the murderer would be charged, only four actually appeared in the prison records. Although life imprisonment sentences were given, of those that appeared, the longest actual time served was eight years. Even though Peter Demsey was sentenced to hang on October 12, 1900, his appeal went all the way to the Montana Supreme Court. The appeal was denied, but any record of his actual execution does not appear. See Prison no.'s 2294, 4032, 6580 Montana State Prison, Deer Lodge, Montana, Criminal Case No.'s 1171, 1172, 1257, 1180, 1306, 1317, 2064, 3207, 5020, Office of the Clerk of Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; State ex rel Dempsey v. District Court of 2nd Judicial District, 24 Mont 566.

UNTO THYSELF

Suicide, what brings people to end their own lives remains a perplexing question. To avoid treating suicides as no more than statistical curiosity, it is necessary to research each person's background and speculate on what connections existed among these Butte women who reached their own critical threshold for suffering and frustration. Each reached her breaking point differently, presenting, again, a diverse group.

As in the cases of murder, suicides occurred primarily among women in the service community. Miners' wives and prostitutes comprised the majority, suggesting that stress and hardships existed in their lives to the extent that they turned violence on themselves. Appearing in smaller numbers were women from the lower-middle, or upper-working class, such as shopkeepers' wives and those involved in support services, suggesting that suicide, a self-inflicted violence, was not a solution confined to the lower classes.¹

Women took their lives at a variety of ages with the average at thirty, again the prime of life. A fairly significant number of young women (thirteen to twenty-three)

also killed themselves, suggesting a difficult transition into womanhood and traditionally accepted roles.²

Suicide, by necessity, was a private affair. Women sought isolated or lonely places where they would not be found immediately. Many rented rooms in boardinghouses for an evening, knowing they would not be disturbed. The outhouse was also a popular private place for the final stroke. In a daring move, one woman waited until her husband slept, drank the laudanum, and crawled in beside him. When he woke in the morning, it was too late to save her.³

As they are today, drugs were overwhelmingly popular for committing suicide among women.⁴ The vast majority chose some form of easily available preparation. Drinking carbolic acid, a common cleaning aid, was almost always fatal, as it burned delicate tissues in the mouth, esophagus, and stomach. If the acid itself did not do the job, subsequent infection did. A painful death to be sure, but because it was readily available, women frequently used acid to exit their life. Laudanum, an opiate derivative, was found in many homes or easily obtainable from the local pharmacy, and women found the poppy soporific more friendly. Popular for medicinal purposes, laudanum aided sleep and quieted fussy children. Many women, too, were addicted to laudanum and used small doses daily to "calm the nerves."

Drinking a stout glass was a relatively painless form of death. One simply fell into a deep sleep, never to be reawakened.

Perhaps out of desperation or because they wanted to be sure to do the job, some women shot themselves.⁵ Guns were common in western life, and most homes had at least one. Reflecting a pattern that exists today, the use of guns for suicide came second to the quieter, slower form of drugs.⁶

Two cultural beliefs seem to have affected most suicide victims. Both reflect the strong traditional values of the cult of true womanhood and how it was perceived in Butte society. Because a woman's identity was tied to the man who supported her, being a good wife and mother was the ultimate fulfillment for women. If this system failed and the woman was forced to support the family, no acceptable avenues for remedy prevailed. If the man abused his wife and their children, the problems were laid at the wife's door, a classic case of "blaming the victim." What was she doing wrong that caused this situation. Trained to yield to their husbands and to fulfill themselves through the roles of wife and mother, these women believed themselves at fault when their primary function came under fire.

Not allowed to blame their men or society, they blamed themselves. Unlike husbands, who, when suspecting or disapproving of their wives' behavior, were able to

discipline a mate or abuse or kill a woman, women did not seem to strike out at the men. Instead wives turned on themselves, seeing themselves as failures and, unable to face the consequences, they committed suicide. When a woman stepped out of bounds, the man killed her; when a man crossed the line circumscribing his conduct, the woman killed herself. Emma Lenson, for example, wrote before her leavetaking:

"Dear Billy, I will write this little note to say good-bye. Do you remember what I said, when I made up with you, that if I could not live happy with you that I would end my sorrows. Well I find that I cannot, as you are not what you said you would be. Well, I have tried this before, but you found me. But I hope to God that no one will find me this time until it is too late. You know that I made your living for a long time by hard work. As for your trying to hold me under your thumb and not give me anything but something to eat and a place to lay my weary head and spend it all on yourself. And as far as you putting me out, you do not have to, for I will leave and not come in your house again. As you call it your house, take it and do what you will. Well I am going to try and make a good job of it this time, so good-bye. From Emma"⁷

By the time Emma Lenson was found, her effort had been successful. Battered and bruised from a recent beating by Billy, Emma rented a room at a boarding house and took morphine to end her sorrows.⁸

Women in working-class Butte took their roles seriously. Acceptable life-styles were limited, and when a woman fell from "true womanhood" grace surviving only became

harder. Cora Burgess' parents sent her to live with her uncle, when it was discovered that her father had committed incest with her. Cora hoped to save face by pressing charges against him. The rest of her family denied her allegations. Pregnant, she arrived in Butte alone in April 1896. She was befriended by a young man, and they set up housekeeping. But Cora's family censured her and considered her a "fast" woman, and her life only seemed to get worse. Her baby soon died and at nineteen, Cora reached the end of her rope. She sent a messenger boy to the pharmacy to retrieve some morphine for "pain" and killed herself.⁹

Emma Lenson, Cora Burgess, Mary Knaff, and Georgia Bradley believed strongly in the values bound up in the cult of true womanhood. They tried to accept what life, especially marriage, offered them and make the best of it. The expression "you've made your bed, now lie in it" seems to have been deeply ingrained in women like Mary and Georgia. Suicide was not something they flirted with but chose when it seemed there was no alternative.

After the murder of Mary Knaff in 1902, the coroner's jury commented on the lack of legal avenues, but yet the court continued to remain ambivalent and no changes occurred. The jury wrote, "It is unfortunate that there is no law through which John Knaff can be punished for his gross neglect, infidelity, and abuse of his wife, which

prompted her to destroy herself."¹⁰ The Knaff marriage failed to meet traditional expectations. John was unemployed and known for his drinking and carousing. Mary supported them by keeping boarders; her reward for hard work was her husband's physical and mental abuse. For reasons unknown, Mary did not consider divorce. Perhaps she believed in "until death do us part." Disillusioned and despondent over a dream turned sour, Mary parted from John and life by drinking carbolic acid.¹¹

A woman's need for a social identity as wife was a leitmotif among those who committed suicide. The cult of true womanhood continued to provide a sense of belonging for many, and those who committed suicide did not seem interested in abandoning or expanding their restricted world. Unlike some of the women who were murdered, they considered themselves lost without it. Georgia Bradley banked on her role as wife and mother to remove her family from Butte. Having agreed to move to Montana with her husband from Texas, she soon became homesick for friends and family. But Mr. Bradley, a jeweler, found the area profitable and had no desire to leave. After using every tactic she seemed to know, including moving out of their home, Mr. Bradley still refused to budge. Unable to convince his wife to stay, Mr. Bradley gave her one hundred dollars to allow her to return to Texas alone. Georgia

could not bear the prospect of facing her relatives bereft of marriage and her child. Having failed in her given role, she chose suicide instead.¹²

Self-inflicted but socially supported martyrdom assumed an additional form in Butte. Although both prostitutes and legitimate women could trace their problems to men, prostitutes' troubles also derived from society and its refusal to recognize or aid their plight. As miners' wives and working-class women tested the boundaries of their traditional roles, women in the underworld simply fought to end an empty life.

Not all prostitutes came to their profession by choice. They may have "fallen" after being misled in an earlier affair or found themselves destitute when they were abandoned by the man who had supported them. No matter the reason, economic, foul play, or adventure, many did not wish to remain in "the life" for long. The easiest escape was, of course, marriage, but this could be risky. Records of women's suicides support men's misrepresentation of marriage plans to "soiled doves." When a man revealed his real intentions, (usually a plan to make money off his wife's former employment), it destroyed whatever hope the fancy lady had, and, as a result, she quietly ended her life.

A second approach to leaving the world of hurdy-gurdy halls was developing a new skill or going into business for

oneself. Ladies of the evening often sought to establish themselves as seamstresses, boardinghouse keepers, waiter girls, and service workers. When successful, these ladies could begin to leave their past behind and enter into mainstream society.

This success depended on economic and, to an extent, social support. If a seamstress could not find work or a waiter girl's or housekeeper's job ended, the options were few. Returning to prostitution for survival was not an attractive proposition for many. Mary Burgess took her life savings and purchased a boardinghouse. When the business failed, Mary worked as a servant in another boardinghome. Depressed over her situation and making little money but not wanting to face the streets again, she began drinking. Out of despondency, she turned to wood alcohol to end her problems.¹³ Mattie Hoyer tried to give up the sporting life, also. She started over as a dressmaker, but "the shadow of her former ways seemed to pursue her..." For Mattie employment was hard to find and, even though a male friend offered to support her, she could not accept. Stunned at the sentence society handed down to her, she shot herself.¹⁴

The red-light district offered more than sexual favors, and many of its women availed themselves of alcohol and drugs. Possibly first used as part of the entertainment,

these habits soon helped to relieve the pain and provide a sense of escape as the women grew older and times got tougher. Victims of the lives they led, some women became increasingly despondent. Their sisters were not unaware of their fate, but because competition was stiff, most did not have time to care for someone less fortunate. The general citizenry, too, was not prepared to show compassion or gratitude for any previous services to the mining population's needs, so too, allowed the women to fall further into misfortune. All, including the hopelessly addicted, seemed to see their "bad end" as inevitable. When a lost soul did end her life, the papers often reported "another wretched life ended," or "an unfortunate of the half world takes leave of her horrible life."¹⁵

Social and cultural rules adopted by early twentieth century Butte encompassed rigid role requirements and made life difficult for any who could not follow them. Outrage by the general population or the legal system in response to suicides restricted itself to individual cases. The inequities of life that women faced were not really challenged. Once again, Butte apparently opted to face each problem as it arose and weigh carefully the outcome in light of the woman's reputation.

To obtain a sense of where suicidal women fit in the social picture of Butte, it is best to start with their

place in their families. As home was the proper domain for the early twentieth century female, their position there affected their place in general society. In fact, the women's perceptions of themselves as wifely failures often seemed to emanate from their own family. The families' reaction to the mothers' or wives' despondency suggests that many women were ghosts long before they actually left the living world. Several wives and mothers succeeded in killing themselves in the vicinity of their own homes with family members present. Elizabeth Wilton hung herself in the closet while the housekeeper and children went about their daily chores. The maid merely thought Mrs. Wilton was clipping and replacing buttons. An entire afternoon passed before anyone thought to check on her.¹⁶ Although Annie Johnson threatened to commit suicide following a heated argument at the supper table, her husband and two grown boys calmly finished eating. The family remained unconcerned about Annie's absence and did not discover her body, in the barn, until they started evening chores some time later.¹⁷

Value in their own home played a significant role in women's self-perception. Losing the respect of those that the women lived for made their lives void and empty; alternatives to their identity within the family did not exist. Even women in the underworld depended on some type of familial connection through a pimp, a brothel, or a

roommate. When those they loved or depended on no longer returned their affection, any doubts of self-worth quickly increased.

For young women, the attempt to balance new attitudes and Victorian expectations seemed to become increasingly difficult. Butte's diverse ethnic population had brought new mores; a girl did not necessarily have to marry the boy next door. In fact, trying one's hand at employment before settling down had become relatively acceptable. Many young women found temporary employment as counter girls in merchandise stores or as waitresses. Even though wages were small and most women continued to live with their parents, their new status gave them greater independence.¹⁸

This new role conflicted with traditional values of dependence, making it difficult to create a balance between the two worlds. Young women who wanted to establish a separate identity were tempted by the area's entertainment, and the many men with whom they could share adventures. On afternoons off, groups of young women window shopped or took the trolley to Columbia Gardens (the popular amusement park). The many dances and social gatherings provided excellent opportunity for harmless flirtations.

But new leisure opportunities did not overthrow old values and beliefs easily, and the crossfire generated by the changing values made it especially hard on a young girl

in Butte. A delicate balance existed between acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. The numerous ethnic communities continued to hold strong opinions about interaction between single men and women. A woman's reputation and, thus, her future could easily be ruined by one false move.

Such was the strength of society's hold that many young women faced with matrimonial failure turned to suicide. These new life-styles the young women hoped to adopt met with resistance from family and the social values of the cult of true womanhood. Because society was not yet ready to loose the bonds that held them, women who cast off their societal shackles were easily ostracized by their family and friends. Redemption was hard to obtain and short of banishing oneself to another location, almost impossible. For some, the only outlet seemed to be suicide.

A particularly sad case was the Moyle sisters'. Della at thirteen seemed to await eagerly the freedoms granted her older sister, Ida, and continually tested her mother's patience. Severely scolded for leaving the house without permission, Della decided to scare her mother in retaliation. She found the carbolic acid and drank it. To everyone's dismay, she took too much and did not recover.¹⁹ Six months later, Ida, upset over the death, her mother's

distress, and her necessary support of the family, chose at the age of eighteen to follow her sister's footsteps to the grave.²⁰

The public reacted to women's suicides as it did to women's murders. Juries viewed each death as an isolated incident and, again, reputation and class status became extremely important. The self-destruction of anyone linked to the underworld could easily be regarded as resulting from the life-style. Coroner's juries did not consider the absence of alternatives and relief. If a woman was weak enough to choose prostitution, then, according to jury members, it was not surprising that she could take her own life. After all, what else could she expect? When a soiled dove left the world by her own hand, society was more likely to show relief and smug satisfaction than outrage.

Young single women's experiences remain perplexing. Community reaction strove to pinpoint why a young lady would be prompted to take such measures. Their deaths were presented as unfortunate or sad, but at the same time, in almost heroic fashion. When the women had been "wronged" by a man, or had been overcome by newfound freedoms, it was as if the residents approved of the "face-saving" measures the woman chose. In many ways they seemed to condone this self-inflicted sentence as the preferred option, viewing suicide

as more appropriate than joining the ranks of prostitution and further shaming the family.

Reputation continued to dictate Butte citizens' response to women's suicides. During the testimony that surrounded Mary Papst's death, the jury severely chastised Mary's daughter, Annie, and in a not-so-subtle fashion, accused her of causing her mother's death. Annie apparently supported both her parents, working at the Casino Theatre, a popular hurdy-gurdy hall. The jury implied that Mary, having discovered Annie's occupation, became so ashamed that she ended her own life.²¹

Married women presented yet another story. They allegedly sought no more than the "fulfilling role of wife and mother." Having someone to care for them and a recognized useful purpose, the jury puzzled over these women's deaths. The legal and social explanation followed the only obvious course; the suicide victim must have been sick, had female trouble, been temporarily insane. Surely no one would make such a choice when her life was so attuned to the socially accepted positions. If a woman had taken to drink or drugs, her suicide was associated with the addiction. The jurors did not question that her habits may have been the symptoms of some deeper trouble. Witnesses repeatedly testified about abuse, both physical and mental, but to no avail. Although testimony strongly supported the

belief that violence against women was alive and well among Butte's population, the legal and social system refused to acknowledge the problem.

Continued failure to address the elements of violent behavior did not go completely unnoticed in Butte. In 1902, the jury in Mary Knaff's suicide commented on the lack of legal avenues to punish her husband, John, even the Butte Miner noted the exception: "In direct contrast to the majority of verdicts returned by the coroner's juries in this city..."²² began the story on her death. This brief outrage at the inequity of the system did not seem to have a lasting effect. Despite general public dissatisfaction and journalistic criticism, Butte society believed that if women were not happy with their lot, it was surely due to some inability on their part, not society's.

The legal and judicial systems continued to judge each suicide as it occurred and based their findings more on the woman's reputation than on the circumstances that surrounded her death. If her reputation was questionable, suicide seemed acceptable. The better the reputation, the greater the questions and expertise. Many "supposed" suicides do not appear here, because the professional opinion obtained ruled accidental death.²³

If a woman's family had the means and the desire, opinions readily changed to escape scandal and censure.

Although this is a difficult assumption to research, having a suicide in one's family undoubtedly undermined a family's claim to status. Reputation, then, was a vital part of who one was and where one stood in the Butte hierarchy.

The problems, therefore, that led women to end their lives was not addressed by the legal system. Butte was content to consider suicides isolated events. Those in positions of power were able to protect their names and their families, while the cost of a few women's lives from the service community, again, remained an easy price to pay. Placing blame upon the victim released Butte's social and legal communities from responsibility. The prosperous mining continued and the flexibility of law and order strove to successfully accommodate the diverse cultures of the population.

NOTES-CHAPTER III

¹Twenty-one women, or roughly 29% can be classified as prostitutes, twelve, or 16%, were wives of miners. The remaining thirty-nine were involved in varieties of employment. Several occupations were listed as boardinghouse keepers or servants. A few were married to skilled workers - carpenters, teamsters, butchers, a few bureaucrats, clerks and, finally, a jeweler.

²Of the cases where age was known, thirteen women under the age of twenty-three appear as suicide victims, roughly 25%. The highest concentration was found in the age group from twenty-three to twenty-eight - ten suicides, or 19.6%. See Appendix, Table 1.

³Inquest No. 3930, Office of Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner May 29, 1906.

⁴Fifty-eight or 80.5% used some form of drug or chemical to end their life. This included opiates, alcohol, carbolic acid and strychnine.

⁵Eleven or 15.2% chose to kill themselves with firearms.

⁶See Appendix, Table 2.

⁷Butte Miner August 20, 1905, p. 5.

⁸Ibid. Inquest No. 3849, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana.

⁹Inquest No. 1592, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner November 26, 1896.

¹⁰Inquest No. 3155; Butte Miner May 29, 1902.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Inquest No. 7653, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard March 17, 1914.

13Inquest No. 2478, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Daily Inter Mountain September 26, 1899.

14Inquest No. 1603, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner December 18, 1896.

15Newspaper reports of suicide were quite opinionated and the reporters went to great lengths to theorize on why a woman chose to kill herself. Perhaps this response was due to fascination with the underworld or possibly to use these ladies as examples for social control. The articles were often explicit on how the death occurred, where it took place and who witnessed and/or discovered the body.

16Inquest No. 3021, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Inter Mountain News June 5, 1901.

17Inquest No. 3673, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner May 22, 1904.

18Murphy, Chap. 1.

19Inquest No. 5077, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard 7 December 7, 1907.

20Inquest No. 6051, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Anaconda Standard July 20, 1908.

21Inquest No. 1549, Office of the Clerk of the Court, Silver Bow County, Butte, Montana; Butte Miner August 13, 1896.

22Butte Miner May 29, 1902.

23While studying the inquest files, I came across several cases that, ostensibly, were assumed suicides. It seems that if more than one doctor was called to testify and the woman came from a family with a strong reputation as good citizens, then the death was ruled accidental. I did not keep a record of these rulings, as their significance was not apparent at that point of the study.

WE FIND THE ACCUSED...

Carving out an existence in the ever changing city of Butte was a challenge for the people who settled. Successes and failures in all aspects of life melded with the economic structure and depended upon mining prosperity. For the miners, their wives and families and the women in the service community, the separation of work and domesticity was, for the most part, incompatible. The twenty-four hour operation necessary to copper mining altered any "normal" familial schedule. In the entertainment world, bars and brothels were open all hours to cater to the miners as they ended their shifts. Nevertheless, both the whole world and the half world depended on one another to insure continued economic growth. The two spheres depended on one another to insure continued economic growth. The problems and stresses generated from restricted, competitive employment spilled over into the private sector. Women in Butte were not immune to the often violent nature of the actions miners displayed while seeking refuge from their bleak economic position.

Butte's livelihood added to the frustration as its citizens clung to their Victorian beliefs, even when those

ideas failed the test of reality. A workable set of new values to fit the multitude of needs did not exist. When a wife's behavior fell outside the boundaries of traditional roles, the community interpreted the action individually, weighing its purpose. If the overall result served to benefit the community, the practice was allowed to continue. This did not mean society condoned the activity on the whole, but that it was willing to ignore misconduct by certain segments of the population in return for economic stability.

The murders and suicides of the service class women that appear in the public record were part of the sacrifice the community was willing to make in return for prosperity. Like the trees, shrubs, and grasses that gave way to the mines, a small loss among the population of women seemed a fair price. The release of pent up frustrations, through violence in the home, enabled the miner to keep high productivity levels in the mines. Thus violence against women was, to a certain degree, allowed to continue. As a result, the assaults that spilled into the public eye benefited Butte economically, legally, and socially.

Abuse of women that reached the public was usually extreme; namely, such as those resulting in death. When compared to the general population, the number is small and affected only a portion of society.¹ Service women did not

have an identity separate from the mining economy. They provided a valuable service but were not a strong voice nor easily recognized. Because the women belonged to many different ethnic groups and associated with the miners according to the men's needs, the loss of one of their members through violence did not affect the productivity of the economic system. An angry miner acting boisterously, or exerting his desire to control within the confines of his home, in fact, probably strengthened the economy.

Releasing job-related stress after hours did not interfere with miners' productivity. The occasional death of a woman due to a man's outrage was of no consequence to Butte's financial concerns. That apathy extended to the legal system, whose real power lay in the hands of mining entrepreneurs.²

Reflecting not only the priorities of the copper giants but traditional societal values, the judicial branch's broad approach to violence against women supported the belief that it was a private, family matter. Strict, consistent punishments for abusing females did not materialize. While outrage was greatest when abuse was directed at a woman living in Victorian tradition, the local judicial system still hesitated in handing down strong sentences. Men were chastised for mistreating their wives, but for the most part, the private acts among family members remained

sacred.³ Family histories of continued mental and physical assaults by the male evoked social disdain but did not necessarily move the courts to harsh sentences as examples for the community. Peer pressure and cultural beliefs were expected to keep men from using outlandish behavior within the home. Prostitutes, falling outside social control, rarely received public sympathy and were basically expected to accept the consequences of their life-style. They remained outside the legal system; the of the legal system saw such violence as unfortunate but certainly not unexpected.

Considering the murders and suicides of women as social problems enabled Butte's community to present these incidents as examples to restrict women's behaviors and to enforce the role of women as subservient and encourage obedience. The tragic deaths that resulted when women fell from grace made strong impressions. The solution, as seen by Butte society, was for women to adhere to traditional roles. Newspaper stories sent strong messages to the public about where, in their opinion, the women strayed from the proper course.⁴ The underlying message was directed at women: it was their responsibility to civilize and curb undesirable behaviors.

Social and legal response turned from prosecuting the assailant to judging the victims. If women disobeyed social

norms, Butte citizens concluded that death could only be expected. When the system seemed to fail and traditional roles did not succeed, the courts faulted women with not living up to expectations. Time and again they blamed the female for her fate.

This attitude allowed the pride in Butte's heritage as a successful mining city with a rich diversity of residents, forgiving nature, and room for everyone to continue. By regarding family and domestic issues as private affairs, the legal and judicial systems were able to avoid drawing attention to any inequities.

The activities the miners chose to engage in during their free hours remained, for the most part, open to their own desires. Socially unacceptable behaviors were allowed to exist as long as they remained contained within the loose, physical boundaries dictated by the residents.⁵ Men were able to give in to temptation upon occasion without jeopardizing their social position; and women of reputable backgrounds were spared some of the less desirable behaviors by the clearly defined role expectations. Continuing to respect male authority within the family maintained traditional patterns and allowed miners to have some control over their lives.

This duality of acceptable behaviors functioned neatly. Proper Victorian women knew their life stations and the

tragic deaths of those who failed to live within those bounds were there as a reminder. Men were able to fill any of their unmet needs for sexual companionship and comradeship without jeopardizing the women in their own class. In addition, the pride gained in working hard, but playing even harder, provided the macho image necessary to reinforce the miners' fragile self-esteem. Thus, to some extent, the miners' frustration caused by dependence on the whims of the copper industry was relieved.

Those in control of Butte's destiny profited from this cultural dichotomy. Upper-class women and men, whether they be successful merchants, company bosses, or their wives, were able to ignore the problems and needs of the less fortunate. Refusing to acknowledge the less desirable affairs of the working class by discouraging strict legal judgments was an effective means to keep the workers and their families stratified and satisfied. What society was not willing to see was effectively ignored by those in control. Defining violent behaviors affecting women as private, isolated incidents within the working class and the population that catered to its needs became an efficient way to regulate social positions and reputation. Social control, therefore, operated through the legal system.

The numerous ethnic communities contributed to the lack of set standards.⁶ Although a common bond existed through

the mining industry and each cultural segment held similar views of proper roles for men and women, each ethnic group had different methods of dealing with domestic problems. The community, as a whole, had no universal laws to limit domestic violence which served to further isolate service-class women to their individual groups. As a result, fulfilling the roles of wife and mother, civilizer and purist was even more difficult when done in the confines of small ethnic neighborhoods. Life did not deal equally with women who were forced to chose or go beyond the strict definitions of cult of true womanhood beliefs.

Life for the working-class woman did not have the cushions and protections afforded many of their middle- and upper-class sisters. The working-class woman experienced the exhaustion and frustrations of her man; she rose at two in the morning to greet him, to pack his lunch, and send him out the door. She experienced the hunger and the cold when he could not find work; she bore the brunt of her man's anger and sorrow when, in frustration, he struck out at those close to him.

Soiled doves, fallen ladies, members of the half-world, whatever one chooses to label the women who did not have the luck to fit with proper social position and reputation, were not immune to the cult of true womanhood. They, too, were daughters of the nineteenth century, and many paid in sorrow

and destitution for their failure to fit the model. Although changes in women's opportunities developed, women on the bottom were the last to benefit.

The failure of Butte's cultural and legal systems to confront the problems of its working-class women possibly exhibited both Montana's and western views. Long-held traditions did not change overnight, and many of the Victorian attitudes and prescriptions about gender lingered into the twentieth century. Women are and were not deemed equal to their male counterparts and were, accordingly, expected to take subservient roles. The reluctance to label women's murders and suicides in early twentieth century Butte as something more than the result of their own misbegotten steps should not come as a surprise. Butte's response was not unusual for the time and probably reflected the most practical and speedy course.

Not all domestic problems remained private affairs and divorce was an option, some men and women, although not all, chose in an attempt to rectify past mistakes. Divorce grounds, however, were a vital element in early twentieth century divorce, and proof, to some degree, needed to be presented. By 1895, lengthy court procedure gave way to shorter forms of documentation. The judge considered statements by friends, family, and neighbors, along with those of physicians and policemen, and excessive mental

cruelty was accepted as reason for the dissolution of a marriage, but what was interpreted as excessive depended on the judge and the opinions of the legal system. In 1885, the Montana Supreme Court had ruled in Albert vs. Albert: "It is extremely cruel for a husband to beat or whip his wife even once."⁷ This provided a broad interpretation, favoring the rights of women to seek relief from physical abuse. In 1907, however, the court had misgivings about the statute and the earlier ruling. The judicial system, worried about the grievousness of abuse, essentially reversed itself in Ryan vs. Ryan. The 1907 court held the legislature to its word: "A husband may beat or otherwise maltreat his wife, and even do so in a brutal manner, without giving rise to an action for divorce, provided only that his mistreatment does not produce grievous bodily injury and be repeated, or if it occurs but once, that it does not produce bodily injury dangerous to life."⁸ With this reversal, the court effectively turned the issue of violence against women back to the legislature. What was essentially kept from the public eye remained a private manner between a husband and his wife. As long as the man was able to keep his abuse within the limits, he would go unpunished.

A short seven years later, Montana provided a boost to women's status by granting them the right to vote. Women's

emancipation granted recognition of their interest in the political process. This move has been interpreted by many as a victory in women's fight to broaden their roles or as an attempt to maintain the status quo. By the end of 1914, ten of the eleven western states had passed women's suffrage.⁹ The West is often portrayed as having been friendly to women's effort to change their status with documentation of greater career freedoms and increased educational opportunities.¹⁰

Did the practices of this community reflect the feelings and opinions of society on the whole, or were they isolated actions only in Butte? Without a duplication of a similar study, it is impossible to say that all western communities, or even most western communities, adopted similar solutions. Each town grew and prospered for different reasons and survived based on its independent abilities. Helena, Montana, for example, also started as a mining town, but went on to diversify in quite another manner. The women who lived in Helena did not necessarily lead life-styles like their sisters in Butte, ninety miles away. The majority of Helena's women were middle class and, while they, too, experienced the difficulties of adhering to traditional roles, the community offered to them different opportunities and produced different results. 11

Thus it would seem, in Montana, public, male structures conveyed two messages. Greater rights for women would be supported when women were perceived as furthering the economic advancement of the state. In addition, emancipation added a touch of stability and civility to Montana's reputation in the eyes of fellow states. When the state stood to benefit from the support, it was willing to address women's demands.

This attitude did not extend to domestic and cultural beliefs in regard to family and traditional gender roles, however. Montanans were not willing to remove restrictions on women's behavior, and the legal systems succumbed to this pressure. This conflicting message was not without repercussions. From 1915 to 1919, Butte saw a steady rise in the number of husbands murdering their wives.¹² It would seem that women and men obviously reacted to the changes taking place in different manners. In the same period, the legal machinery still perceived women and their behavior as primarily the responsibility of the male authority figure in their life.

For an outsider, Montana's women would seem to be blessed with new freedoms: the vote, a successful campaign to pass prohibition, and the honor of placing one of their own in Congress. But when women opened up the Pandora's box of possibility in Montana, they discovered that mixed with

political power and achievement were some familiar, shop-worn inequities. Side by side with the suffrage victory existed the continued acceptance of private authoritarianism.

NOTES-CHAPTER IV

¹There were approximately 7,380 investigations conducted in Silver Bow County from 1895 to 1920. I have chosen one-hundred and three for this study. Male deaths, mining accidents, and murders make up the majority of Silver Bow County inquests. Using the population figures, it is likely that just under one-third of all inquests involved women. Actual abuse can only be a matter of speculation, but from the comments and accepted practices that appeared throughout Silver Bow County newspapers, it seems that violence was a part of life for most Butte women.

²Histories on Silver Bow County contain ample evidence of the corruption that took place between the judicial system and the mining companies. For example, District Judge Clancey was often accused of being "owned" by Augustus Heinze. The legal documents from the period hold thousands of cases on mining and mine litigation. With the economy dependent on this industry, it is not surprising that social and domestic issues often took the back seat in the courts.

³As Butte established itself as a mining city, and lost its "boom town" atmosphere, the legal system gained sophistication. Progressing through the years, the coroners began to concentrate more on the scientific facts surrounding a murder or suicide and less on the history that led up to the death. It is possible that the legal opinion moved away from determining why deaths occurred and concerned itself only with how. If this is so, then it would seem that authorities were choosing not to be a judge in domestic affairs but rather adhering to a conservative interpretation of their duty to investigate "cause of death."

⁴Headlines and files of newspaper articles clarify reporters' judgemental attitudes: "Crazed Husband Kills Wife Because of Fancified Wrongs" (Butte Miner August 4, 1906); "Fatally Adverse to Living Here" (Anaconda Standard March 17, 1914); "Wretched Life Ended" (Butte Miner October 19, 1899); "Woman of Good Family, Who Fell Through Liquor and Bad Companions" (Butte Miner June 14, 1903); "Another Unfortunate" (Butte Miner March 2, 1897); "Suicide at Last" (Butte Miner June 24, 1902); "Drove Her to Suicide; Didn't Get Along with Her Husband" (Butte Miner April 1, 1897.)

⁵By 1895, the red light district, consisting of saloons, brothels, gambling halls, etc. had been restricted to an area roughly located a few blocks southeast of Butte's

major intersection at Park Avenue and Main Streets. By 1916, the block, bordered on the west by the Main Street Alley, north by Galena, east by Arizona, and south by Mercury, was the clearly identified area for prostitution and other socially unacceptable behaviors. For an excellent discussion of this transformation, see Murphy, Chap II, pp. 33-36.

⁶With the numerous ethnic communities and the broad spectrum of cultural mores existing in Butte, people did not tend to identify each other in terms of economic position but more in relation to common heritage. Where a family chose to live or work often rested on these ethnic practices. Attraction and interaction among the groups was based on long-held traditions brought over from the "old country."

⁷Albert v. Albert, Territorial Supreme Court No. 427, 2nd Judicial District, Deer Lodge County, January 12, 1885.

⁸As quoted in Paula Petrik, "If She Be Content: The Development of Montana State Divorce Law, 1865-1907," Presented at the Western History Association, Sacramento, California, October 10, 1985.

⁹T.A. Larson, "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot," Montana: the Magazine of Western History 23 (January, 1973), p. 24.

¹⁰Numerous books and articles are available on the progress of western women. Two of perhaps the most influential are Julie Roy Jeffrey Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880 (New York: Hill-Wang) 1979 and Sandra L. Myers, Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915 (Albuquerque University of New Mexico Press) 1982.

¹¹Paula Petrik, No Step Backward: Women and Family on the Rocky Mountain Frontier; Helena, Montana 1865-1900 (forthcoming Montana Historical Society Press, 1986).

¹²Of the twelve murders investigated from 1915 to 1920, eight involved husbands or lovers jealous over the woman's outside interests. In speculation, this high percentage may have been attributed to increased awareness brought on by the suffrage movement, generating more signs of independence among the women and increased paranoia among the men. See Appendix, Table 3.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Age of Suicide Victims.

Age	Number of Suicides	Percentage
13 to 18	4	7.8
18 to 23	9	17.6
23 to 28	10	19.6
28 to 33	9	17.6
33 to 38	8	15.6
38 to 43	6	11.7
43 to 48	2	3.9
48 to 53	1	1.9
53 to 58	2	3.9

Table 2. Method of Suicide.

Cause of Death	Number	Percentage
Drugs	58	80.5
Shot	11	15.2
Drowning	1	1.3
Hanging	1	1.3
Unknown	1	1.3

Table 3. Breakdown of women murdered in five year increments.

Women Murdered	Number	Percentage
1895-1900	0	0
1901-1905	7	23.3
1906-1910	8	26.6
1911-1915	3	10
1916-1920	12	40

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