Statutory Spirits

Ghostly Jurisprudence

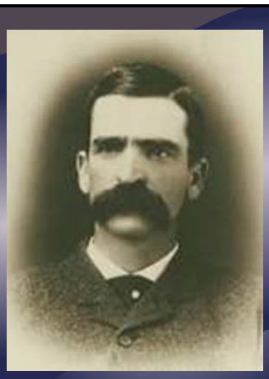
Ellen Baumler, PhD

The Fruit of the Hangman's Tree

Hanging of James Daniels, March 2, 1866

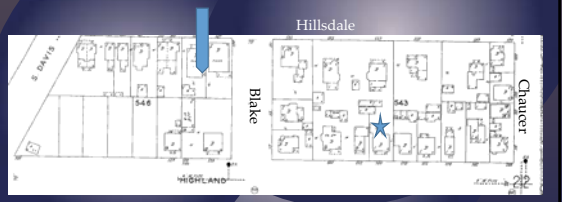
Hanging of Compton and Wilson, April 30, 1870

Helena panorama map, 1875



Seth Bullock, Sheriff of Lewis and Clark County 1873-1875

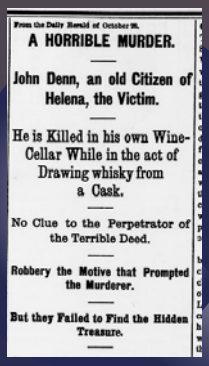
Lewis and Clark County Jail, c. 1875



Site of the Hangman's Tree (arrow) and site of the burial (star)

The Murder of John Denn

Helena 1870s



From the Daily Herald of October 30.

A HORRIBLE MURDER.

John Denn, an old Citizen of Helena, the Victim.

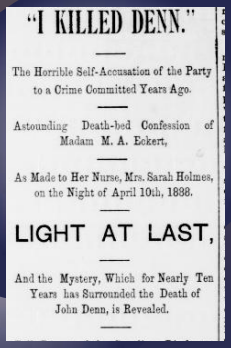
He is Killed in his own Wine-Cellar While in the act of Drawing whisky from a Cask.

No Clue to the Perpetrator of the Terrible Deed.

Robbery the Motive that Prompted the Murderer.

But they Failed to Find the Hidden Treasure.

Helena Weekly Herald, October 30, 1879



"I KILLED DENN."

The Horrible Self-Accusation of the Party to a Crime Committed Years Ago.

Astounding Death-bed Confession of Madam M. A. Eckert,

As Made to Her Nurse, Mrs. Sarah Holmes, on the Night of April 10th, 1888.

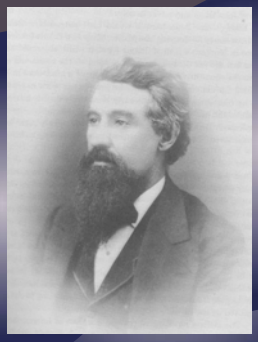
LIGHT AT LAST,

And the Mystery, Which for Nearly Ten Years has Surrounded the Death of John Denn, is Revealed.

Helena Daily Herald, May 7, 1888

Mary Ann Eckert's professional crest

Hanging of Compton and Wilson, April 30, 1870

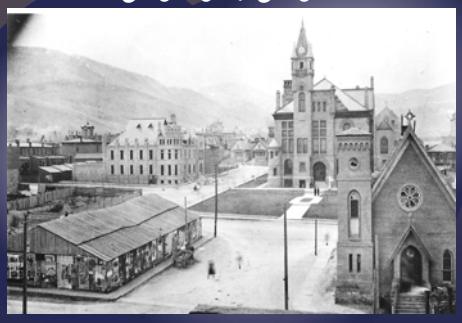


John H. Shober. Portrait by Mary Ann Eckert, n.d.

John Shober House, Lawrence and Warren

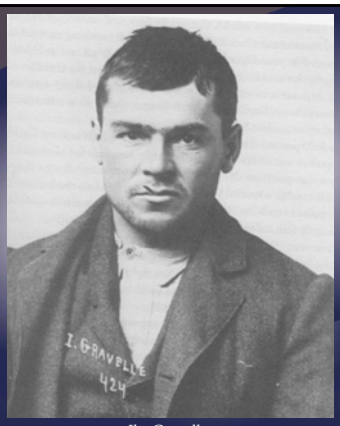
Former Federal Building, now Department of Commerce (center right), Helena

The Legacy of Lily Toole



Courthouse Square, ca. 1890

Toole House, Ewing and 5th



Ike Gravelle

Lily Toole

The Bishop of All Outdoors

Rev. Leonard Christler, 1922 press photo

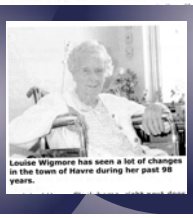
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Havre, MT

The Havre Daily News: 'Old 98' has seen many Havre changes

HAVRE DAILY NEWS

SERVING NORTH-CENTRAL MONTANA • FOUNDED 1918 • ONLINE EDITION

Wednesday, January 03, 2001



Louise Wigmore has seen a lot of changes in the town of Havre during her past 98 years.

Leonard Christler - "He was quite a character. Not especially handsome, but you would know who he was if you saw him on the street," said Wigmore. "We teenage girls followed his romance with Mrs. Carlton closely. We got a big kick out of that. You know Anna Christler, the wife was tall, stately and dressed in black. She was not all that attractive. She was a sad looking character."

813 Third Avenue, Havre

The Great Falls Leader

HAVRE WOMAN KILLS MINISTER AND TURNS GUN UPON HERSELF

COUNTRY DOES HONORS TODAY TO OLD TEDDY

TRAGEDY SENDS L. J. CHRISTLER AND MRS. CARLETON TO GRAVES

THE SLAIN RECTOR

Calls Minister Into Hall; Dead Rector's Wife Hears Shots and Finds Corpses

NO OTHER PERSON WAS IN VICINITY AT TIME OF HALL CRIME

LOCAL MAN KNEW DEAD RECTOR IN HIS HOME TOWN

Girl Clews Evidence Might Convict Woman

THE SEATTLE STAR

Havre Murder "Probe" Proves Travesty

Reputation of Dead Woman Blackened

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE

TRAGEDY AT HAVRE CALLED MURDER AND SUICIDE

MARGARET DAVENPRY CARLETON 1890—1922

Margaret Carleton's tombstone, Forestvale Cemetery, Helena

Mystery of the Metal Coffin

Photo courtesy of Craig Doolittle

Harvey Residence, Clancy

Photo courtesy of Craig Doolittle

Photo courtesy of Craig Doolittle

Harvey Residence, Clancy, Montana

Evelyn Harvey Eddy's Rosewood Piano

Red Cliff Estates, historic barn, center back

Robert Rath illustration, *Montana Chillers*

Secrets of the Montana Club

Montana Club, 1893

Montana Club fire, 1903

Anaconda Standard, May 17, 1903

"New" Montana Club, built in 1905

Remember Birdie Brown

THE AMERICAN ISSUE

U.S. IS VOTED DRY

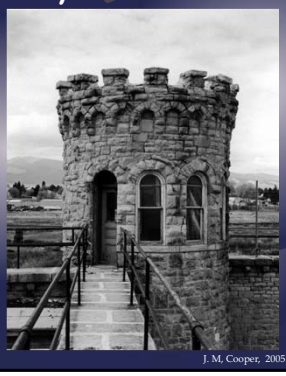
36th STATE RATIFIES DRY AMENDMENT JAN. 16

JANUARY 16, 1919, MOMENTOUS DAY IN WORLD'S HISTORY

Lewistown Cemetery, Fergus County

Birdie Brown's Homestead in Fergus County, GFT, August 7, 2011

Whispers in the Walls



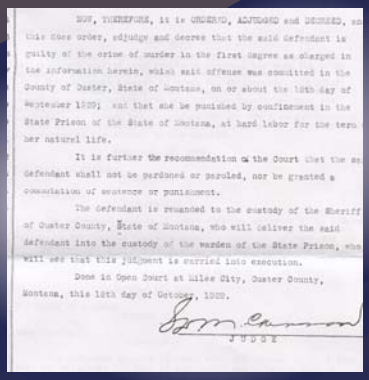
J. M. Cooper, 2005

1912 Cell Block, J. M. Cooper photograph

F.O.G. Investigation, Old Monana Prison Museum, 2008

Miles City Star, October 19, 1929

Lucy Cornforth, MHS-MSP



NOW, THEREFORE, it is ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED, as this Court order, adjudge and decree that the said defendant is guilty of the crime of murder in the first degree as charged in the information herein, which said offense was committed in the County of Custer, State of Montana, on or about the 18th day of September 1920; and that she be punished by confinement in the State Prison of the State of Montana, at hard labor for the term her natural life.

It is further the recommendation of the Court that the said defendant shall not be pardoned or paroled, nor be granted a commutation of sentence or punishment.

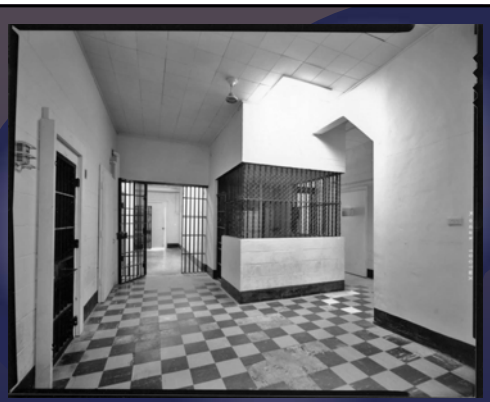
The defendant is remanded to the custody of the Sheriff of Custer County, State of Montana, who will deliver the said defendant into the custody of the warden of the State Prison, who will see that this judgment is carried into execution.

Done in Open Court at Miles City, Custer County, Montana, this 18th day of October, 1920.

JUDGE

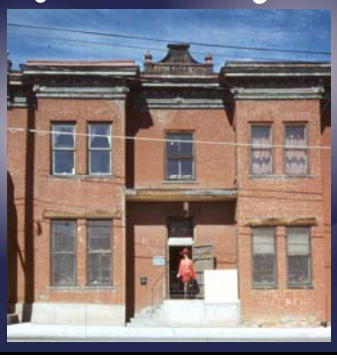
State of Montana vs. Lucy Cornforth, Criminal Case #1591

1908 Women's Prison, Deer Lodge. J. M Cooper Photograph



Women's Prison, J. M. Cooper photograph, 2007.

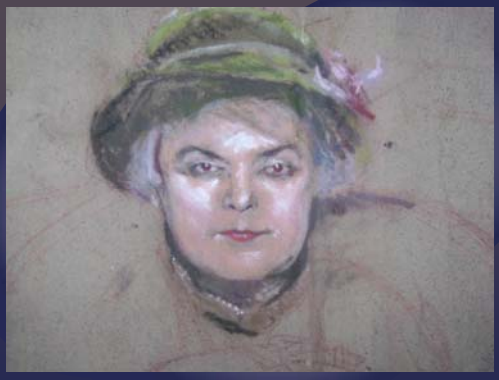
The Ghostly Madam at the Dumas Hotel



Suites at the Dumas Hotel

Ruby Garrett, last madam at the Dumas

Dumas Hotel basement



"Ghostly Madam" at the Dumas Hotel, Butte

Ghostly woman at the Dumas Hotel

Say "Two, please"

June Tarrant Is Killed in Elevator Mishap

Body Found Crushed Between Car And Sixth Floor

Helen June Tarrant, 17, elevator operator at the Power block was killed some time early Saturday night when her foot caught between a wall and the ascending elevator, which dragged her body nearly a floor upward, according to Police Chief Arthur Parsons who investigated the tragedy.

Parsons said the girl, who normally went off shift at 9 p. m., had not returned home Saturday night and that her mother, Mrs. Minnie Tarrant an employe of the Rialto here had searched for her. At 11 o'clock yesterday morning James Gibbs, an employe at the building found her body wedged between the wall and the elevator at the sixth floor.

Parsons said the girl, who normally went off shift at 9 p. m., had not returned home Saturday night and that her mother, Mrs. Minnie Tarrant an employe of the Rialto here had searched for her. At 11 o'clock yesterday morning James Gibbs, an employe at the building found her body wedged between the wall and the elevator at the sixth floor.

Parsons, who was assisted by Sheriff E. R. (Chub) Munger, Captain Earl Brown and Officer John Fred in investigating the accident, said he believed the girl's foot became caught as the car reached the fifth floor of the building, and that she was thrown forward. The moving elevator pinned her against the wall, then continued upward for nearly a floor.

Evidence that the girl probably was thrown against the wall was supported by the discovery of a pink hair ribbon in the elevator sump by Parsons.

Sheriff-Coroner Munger stated last night that an inquest would not be held as it was so apparently pure accident a hearing would not be necessary.

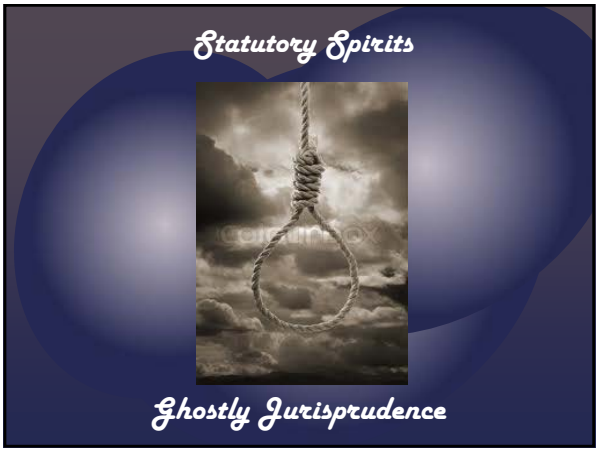
Helena IR, July 19, 1943

District Court Here Is Reversed by State Supreme Court

The Montana supreme court, in a three-to-two decision, today reversed the Lewis and Clark county district court in an action brought by Minnie Tarrant of Helena, administratrix for Helen June Tarrant, her daughter, against the Helena Building and Realty company.

Mrs. Tarrant sought $57,000 in damages from the company after her daughter was killed in an elevator accident in the Power block on July 17, 1943. The lower court ruled in favor of the realty company on Feb. 4, 1944. Associate Justice Hugh R. Adair wrote the majority opinion and both Chief Justice Howard A. Johnson and Associate Justice C. F. Morris wrote dissenting opinions.

Helena IR, September 29, 1944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