A Beer for the Mrs.:  
Women and Alcohol in Butte, Montana. 1908-1918
Women have always used alcohol. From 1908 to 1918 in Butte, Montana, women from all classes drank alcohol, despite city ordinances and social rules against such behavior. A culture of alcohol use, ethnic customs and social conditions all contributed to women's alcohol use in Butte. This paper will examine the use and abuse of alcohol by women in Butte, Montana, during the decade prior to Montana's ratification of Prohibition.

The paper will focus on three aspects of women's drinking. First, Butte residents created and encouraged a culture of alcohol use and abuse—the authorities rarely even punished excessive alcohol consumption. The examination will also include attitudes toward women drinkers in Butte, and how these attitudes fit in with similar ideas of the time period. Finally, the paper will examine Butte women's use of alcohol, both public and private. The analysis of this information will show that women's use of alcohol reflected the city of Butte's economic, social, and cultural uniqueness as well as society's association of drinking with low morals—especially in women.

Historical research on women's drinking during this time period is scarce. Historians have frequently overlooked women's alcohol use. Perhaps this is a result of the lack of primary source material on the subject. Women drinkers have been, in fact, nearly invisible.¹ Almost no evidence exists of women's drinking; often, historians must simply infer information about women's use of alcohol from the lifestyle of the time period. Louis Bahin and the writers from the Works Projects Administration focus more on the male aspect of Butte, perhaps because their works are older. These authors center

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their discussion mainly on men's lifestyles in Butte, although they reveal Butte's hard-drinking culture.²

David Emmons and Janet Finn acknowledge that some women in Butte drank, while not really focusing on that aspect of Butte's history. Emmons makes the connection between the use of alcohol and saloons among the Irish in Butte and the roots of this use in the Irish shebeen.³ Only a few historians really discuss women and alcohol, most of them within the past ten years. These include Madelon Powers, Catherine Gilbert Murdock, Mary Murphy, and Hasia Diner. Powers' article focuses on women's public drinking, while Murdock centers her argument on the women's use of alcohol in the home.⁴ As shown by these historians, women used and abused alcohol before Prohibition and the Roaring 20's. Catherine Gilbert Murdock and Mary Murphy in particular discuss the fact that women did not make their drinking as public as men did because of societal constraints such as the belief in women's moral superiority. Women who drank publicly often were penalized for their actions; therefore they often chose to use alcohol in their homes instead.⁵

Historians have given some attention to the problem of alcoholism in the greater immigrant Irish community, and among Irish women in particular. Alcoholism was problematic for Irish men as well as Irish women. Historian Hasia Diner points out that

⁵ Murdock, Domesticating Drink, chap. 2-3; Mary Murphy, Mining Cultures: Men, Women, and Leisure in Butte, 1914-41 (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1997), chap. 2-3.
studies of the late nineteenth century show that, in number of deaths and arrests due to alcohol, "Irish men led all men and Irish women led all women." Since the Irish at one time constituted about 20 percent of Butte's population, the traditions and problems of this group had a significant impact on Butte culture. The problems of the Irish are also the problems of Butte. If Irish women had problems with alcohol, then Butte women--the Irish ones at least--could not have escaped the same problem.

Irish women in Butte were not alone in their use and abuse of alcohol. Drinking alcohol was part of Butte's culture. The reasons for this cultural aspect include Butte's male-dominated population, the prevalence of alcohol in everyday life, the many nationalities that brought customs involving alcohol with them when they came to Butte, and the harsh social conditions. This culture of accepted alcohol use influenced women's use of alcohol.

Butte was without question a male-dominated, hard drinking town. This left women as the minority gender in Butte at the turn of the century. Butte's dominant gender matched the dominant occupation; the Butte mines attracted single men from all areas of the world. Historian Louis J. Bahin explains: "Butte at the turn of the century existed primarily as a male-dominated, working class society." According to one source, men outnumbered women in Butte 1:1.5 in 1900 and 1:1.3 in 1910. Many of these primarily young, single men lived in boarding houses in the same areas of town as flophouses, brothels, and, of course, saloons to complement their hard work in the mines.

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7 Bahin, "Prohibition in Montana," 77; Emmons, The Butte Irish, 71; Murphy, Mining Cultures, 44.
8 Bahin, "Prohibition in Montana," 77.
9 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 10.
People in Butte came by alcohol quite easily. Butte was known throughout the state and elsewhere for its large number of saloons and the amount of drinking that took place in them. As David Emmons notes, "the city's almost three hundred saloons, far more than any other city in the state, were open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week." Men had justification to drink. In her discussion of drinking in Butte, Mary Murphy lists the poor living conditions, intense underground labor, and unappealing social settings available to most miners as reasons why "men sought the warmth, lights, and company of saloons ...." The fact that 300 saloons existed and were thus accepted shows that many people drank alcohol in them. Drinking was without doubt a popular past time in Butte.

Butte's ethnic diversity also contributed to drinking. Butte was one of the most ethnically diverse towns in the state of Montana, and probably in the United States. Workers came from Europe, Asia, and the Eastern United States to make their fortunes in Butte's copper mines. At one time, about fifty different nationalities lived and worked in Butte. These groups included the Irish—the largest ethnic group—Chinese, Swedish, Finnish, Italian, Cornish, Welsh, English, African-American, and Serbian peoples. Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religions were all represented.

These diverse nationalities brought a number of customs and lifestyles—some of them involving the consumption of alcohol—with them when they came to Butte. The Germans were known both for their bakeries and for their beer brewing abilities. The

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10 Emmons, The Butte Irish, 71.
11 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 49-50.
12 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 212.
13 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 12-14.
14 Jean McGrath, ed., Butte's Heritage Cookbook (Butte, Mont.: Butte-Silver Bow Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 129-130, 121-23, 153-54.
15 Ibid., 53-4.
Finns had their own collection of boarding houses, saunas, and twelve saloons in Butte's Finntown. The Italians made their own wine and a brandy called grappa. The Serbian people drank a plum brandy, called slivovitz, from their native land on Christmas. These customs involved women as well as men.

Irish men and women also brought a tradition of drinking with them when they came to Butte. The Irish owned about one-third of Butte's saloons by 1916. Part of the reason for this, writes David Emmons, is because of the multitude of purposes of saloons, or shebeens, as they were called in Ireland. The saloon was a place for men to relax as well as an important meeting place of the community. According to Madelon Powers' study of cities such as Worceester, Massachusetts, in the nineteenth century, both women and men used the shebeen as one way to gather as a community. For the Irish, drinking alcohol held an important role in solidifying the community, and it involved both men and women. This practice made its way to Butte, Montana as well.

Butte people also looked for any excuse to celebrate, which led many to drink alcohol during the festivities. One observer noted, "Ever since the arrival of the first settler the copper camp has been willing and anxious to stage a celebration on a moment's notice." Such celebrations inevitably included the drinking of alcohol. To the Irish, even a funeral was a reason to drink. As one Irish Butte resident put it, "The funerals were something else... After the funeral, they'd all go out to about the Five Mile. And they'd have a picnic... And... most of the men were pretty good drinkers. Well, you

16 Ibid., 30-1.
17 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 48.
18 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 247.
19 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 46-48.
20 Emmons, Butte Irish, 42.
weren't Irish unless you were a good drinker." Another observer notes, "They used to whip their horses coming back to see who could get to Cody's tavern the fastest." Butte women participated in and observed alcohol use on a grand scale. All of these factors contributed to a culture of alcohol use in Butte, including its women.

Butte was a difficult and dangerous place to live. As women dealt with Butte's harsh social conditions, some turned to alcohol. Poor housing, disease, widowhood, and prostitution existed on a large scale. In her discussion of the women of Butte, Janet Finn describes Butte women's situation: "They spoke not only of the mine dust that sucked the life from their men, but also of more subtle forms of wasting. Many recalled the consumption of worry as they struggled to hold body and soul together." Butte's environment left women with few options economically. The lure of the bottle helped some of these women escape their troubles, if only for a little while.

Low wages often would not allow the men and women to live in adequate housing. As Mary Murphy put it, "Butte's working-class neighborhoods were vigorous, fascinating districts, but they were also overcrowded, unsanitary, and noisy." Poor working people, drug addicts, and criminals living in shack-like dwellings comprised a part of town known as the Cabbage Patch. This area was also the scene of poor sanitation and had more than its share of disorder.

Male deaths from accidents and disease and subsequent widowhood also contributed to women's drinking. Mining was a dangerous occupation. Many men died

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23 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 29.
25 Goldberg interview.
26 Finn, Tracing the Veins, 182.
27 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 15.
28 Ibid., 13.
in mining accidents. In January of 1915, for instance, sixteen men died at the Granite Mountain Mine when a load of dynamite went off. Twenty-one miners at the Pennsylvania Mine were killed when a fire broke out in the mine's shaft in February of 1916. Disease also took its toll. Miners inhaled dust from the mines into their lungs when they worked. A disease called silicosis, or "miner's consumption," killed many miners in Butte. The town was a dangerous place for men to work, and many women became widows as a result. The impact of widowhood on the community is suggested by the statistics for the overwhelming Irish population. In 1910, there were 434 young Irish widows living in Butte, with a total of 1,117 children living at home.

Butte's women had few ways to make an income. Making money was essential to widows. Ann Pentilla, a Butte resident, recalled:

If there was a mine accident--if the man was killed--it was sure hard on the woman because she had to go out and scrub floors. . . . There was one woman, she had twenty children. Her husband died when the children were very young. She was a midwife. She used to rustle ties and she had a cow and she baked bread. She used to take in washing, and then the children would deliver the washing. That's how she raised her children.

Aili Goldberg, another Butte resident, knew first-hand about single-woman's work; her father died, leaving her mother to raise Aili and her two older brothers. To gain enough income for her family, Goldberg's mother took up work in some of Butte's famous boarding houses. "[She worked] seven days a week--there was no six days; five days, we're talking now--and no eight hours. You worked until you were through."

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29 Ibid., 118.
30 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 293.
31 Finn, Tracing the Veins, 30.
32 Emmons, Butte Irish, 71.
33 Calkins, Looking Back, 58.
remembered Goldberg.\textsuperscript{34} An endless world of hard work and just getting by awaited a Butte widow.

Butte's prostitution trade reveals even more about the harsh conditions in the city. One of Butte women's few economic opportunities was in the sex trade. In addition to the saloons, the streets from Galena to Silver and Main to Arizona (an area of 6 to 8 city blocks) constituted the red-light district, complete with brothels, parlor houses, and prostitutes.\textsuperscript{35} A life as a prostitute was certainly not easy. A poor, single woman's situation could easily have led her to desperation and a job in the lucrative and thriving trade. Prostitutes also tended to drink more openly and publicly than other women. Mary Murphy explains that many prostitutes were "transient, worn, often addicted to alcohol and other drugs... tragic, exploited women."\textsuperscript{36} (Please see maps of red-light district on next page.)

Concern about drinking--especially women's drinking--existed in Butte. Women who drank publicly were treated in accordance with the moral standards for women of the time period. Society clung to ideals of true womanhood and of womanly purity.\textsuperscript{37} Butte was no exception. "Butte had inherited the dichotomous ideology... that viewed woman as either 'good' or 'bad'," writes Mary Murphy.\textsuperscript{38} Residents viewed Butte personality Mary MacLane, a drinking, gambling, sexually-free woman, not only as outrageous, but also as a "dangerous influence."\textsuperscript{39} Women were supposed to be the "guardians of virtue."\textsuperscript{40} This prohibited improper behavior for women such as sexual immorality and

\textsuperscript{34} Aili Goldberg, interview by Mary Murphy, Butte, 29 February 1980.
\textsuperscript{35} Calkins, \textit{Looking Back}, 54.
\textsuperscript{36} Murphy, \textit{Mining Cultures}, 79.
\textsuperscript{37} Murdock, \textit{Domesticating Drink}, 44, 46.
\textsuperscript{38} Murphy, \textit{Mining Cultures}, 77.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 85.
public alcohol consumption. Women in Butte, as elsewhere, sometimes broke these rules of society.

The amount of discussion, concern, and argument over alcohol is one indication that people frequently consumed alcohol to excess. As argument about Prohibition began to hit the state of Montana, church leaders, city council members, and medical professionals recognized the effects that alcohol had on the condition of the town. An advertisement in *The Butte Miner* in 1898 for the Keeley Institute on 228 S. Montana Street touted "the only institute in the state for the cure of liquor, morphine, opium, cocaine, cigarette, tobacco, and nervous diseases." Alcoholism, among other addictions, had already created a market for this private facility in Butte.

Butte's ordinances held up society's official standards involving women and alcohol. The ordinances prohibited Butte women from entering "any saloon or place where liquors, wines or beer are sold, or any room or apartment connected therewith, for the purpose of being supplied with wines, liquor or beer." In yet another ordinance, the law proclaimed that,

> every female person who shall, upon the public streets or in and about any public place or assembly, or in any saloon, bar room, club room or any public or general place of resort for men, or anywhere within the sight or hearing of women and children conduct or behave themselves in an improper, drunken, profane or obscene manner ... shall be deemed and is hereby declared to be a vagrant ..."}

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41 Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*, 51, 64-5.
42 *Butte Miner*, 16 November 1898: 6.
44 Ibid., 461-62.
shown by the fact that Butte-Silver Bow reversed the first vote for statewide Prohibition in 1916 with the largest anti-Prohibition vote in the whole state.\textsuperscript{49} Alcohol consumption was too much a part of Butte's daily life to vote out of existence.

Despite the ordinances and the concerns imposed on residents, substantial evidence exists that Butte women occasionally broke the rules of public intoxication. The authorities sometimes looked the other way when women used alcohol publicly. One of the most striking pieces of evidence of the commonplace public consumption of alcohol in Butte, and public consumption among women, comes forth in a document called the Drunk Record. Drinking was so prevalent in Butte that authorities recorded all arrests of drunk people separately from other types of arrests. Although this hand-written document is at times difficult to read and incomplete, it shows that Butte women sometimes drank to excess. According to this record, middle-class women as well as prostitutes drank alcohol in public.\textsuperscript{50}

The Drunk Records used in this paper span the years from 1909 to 1918. For the purposes of this paper, 291 women's arrests were tabulated and analyzed from the Drunk Record, including name, date, arresting officer, place of arrest, plea, ruling, and fine or punishment. Women's names from an additional seventy-two arrests were also tabulated, but the other information from these arrests was not tabulated. In cases where the gender of the arrested person was unclear, the arrest was not included in the tabulation.

\textsuperscript{49} Murphy, Mining Cultures, 44.
\textsuperscript{50} The Drunk Record now found at the Butte-Silver Bow Archives in Butte, Montana, was a document handled through Butte's Police Court, but was kept separate from all other types of arrests. The records used in this paper include the Drunk Record for the City of Butte, January 2 1909-July 30, 1910, hereafter referred to as DR #1; the Drunk Record for the City of Butte, October 24, 1912-August 31, 1914, hereafter referred to as DR #2; the Drunk Record for the City of Butte, November 12, 1914-August 17, 1916, hereafter referred to as DR #3; and the Drunk Record for the City of Butte, August 18, 1916-November 4, 1918, hereafter referred to as DR #4.
Although, due to time constraints, the entire collection of the *Drunk Record* was not examined, a recognizable pattern of alcohol use and its consequences emerges.\(^51\)

For an arrest record to make it to the *Drunk Record*, the accused had to violate Ordinance 62, an ordinance pertaining to "offenses against good order and morals," of the Butte Civil Code.\(^52\) A statement at the bottom of each day’s entries reads, "the above named defendant . . . did violate Section 3 of Ordinance 62, of said City . . . ."\(^53\) Section 3 states: "Every person . . . who shall be found drunk or in a state of gross intoxication in any street, alley or other public place . . . or in that condition annoying and frightening passers-by on streets or sidewalks, or sleeping in that condition in any public place" shall be arrested and fined.\(^54\)

That a code dealing with "offenses against good order and morals" existed, and that such an offense was directly associated with drunkenness, shows again that even the people of Butte were concerned about excessive drinking and its connection with immorality. The association between low morals and drinking corresponded to a nationwide view in the first part of the twentieth century. Even in the medical profession, the discussion over "whether the excess user [of alcohol] was a moral failure or a diseased individual" took center stage during the end of the nineteenth century.\(^55\) Because women were supposed to be morally superior to men, women drinkers were especially looked down upon. As Catherine Gilbert Murdock puts it, society "expected women to be 'angels'," so women had an especially difficult time as drinkers and tried to conceal their

\(^{51}\) *DR #1* and *DR #2* were fully examined. *DR #3* was examined up to page 155 of 300. *DR #4* was examined up to page 201 of 400.

\(^{52}\) Carroll, *Revised Ordinances*, 454.

\(^{53}\) *DR #1*, *DR #2*, *DR #3*, *DR #4*.

\(^{54}\) Carroll, *Revised Ordinances*, 455.

alcoholism.\textsuperscript{56} Anonymity was important to women labeled as middle- or upper-class who chose to ignore the societal constraints on drinking and other "improper" behaviors.\textsuperscript{57}

This prevailing attitude may help explain the number of anonymous women listed in the \textit{Drunk Record}. A startling quantity appear as Jennie Doe or some variation of that alias. This happened far more frequently for women than men. Either the women themselves or the authorities protected the names of women arrested for public intoxication. Of 363 arrests of women drinkers, authorities documented 133, or more than one-third, as Jennie, Nellie, Annie, Victoria, Mary, Mrs., Jane, Kate, or Sallie Doe. Other variations of this may include Jennie Roe, for whom seven arrests were recorded, or Jennie Jones, who tallied twenty-four arrests. One whole section of the \textit{Drunk Record}, from July 14 to October 17, 1913, lists almost all Jennie Does or other aliases.\textsuperscript{58} That women refused to give their names so often suggests that women feared negative societal repercussions for their drinking.

Some names did include a title such as "Mrs." or "Miss," with a real name attached. 106 of the 363 women examined, or nearly one-third of the total, had a title. This suggests that women of reputable, or at least respectable, name were caught drinking excessively in public. However, even these women remain somewhat anonymous, because either the first name was left off—as, for example, "Mrs. Burns" or the name was not listed in the city directory, as in the case of "Mrs. J. Rue."\textsuperscript{59} Attempts to trace such women through city directories to see where they lived and who they were proved futile because the directory listed only working men and women. Common last names also

\textsuperscript{56} Murdock, \textit{Domesticating Drink}, 44, 49, 52.
\textsuperscript{57} Murphy, \textit{Mining Cultures}, 73.
\textsuperscript{58} \textit{DR} #2.
\textsuperscript{59} \textit{DR} #1, 7 April 1909 and 10 April 1909.
were impossible to trace because more than one person with the same name would be listed. For instance, there were two nearly identical entries for "Mary Brown" in the city directory. Men's names, unless they were anonymous John Does, were listed with a first and last name and without a title, such as "John Peterson," which would make them much more identifiable to the people of Butte. Most women simply did not want to be identified.

Still other names on the Drunk Record had no title but a first and last name, such as Ruby Stafford, Hannah Hill, and Dottie Smith. Such entries are the most identifiable of any of the women in the Record. First and last names, excluding Jennie Does or those with only a title, number 138 out of 363, or approximately one-third of those arrested. These women did not gain the respect of having a title on the front of their names, perhaps because they were prostitutes. The place of arrest for a majority of these women was either "Red Light" or one of the streets from the red-light district. Sometimes the name alone indicates the occupation, as in the case of "French Marie."Prostitutes often had such nicknames like "Austrian Annie," "Jew Jess," or "Mexican Maria." Even if many of these names were aliases, Butte people recognized these women as personalities of the city.

The place of arrest listed on the Drunk Record is one of the most interesting pieces of information in the document. The place of arrest indicates to what socio-economic class the woman belonged. Arrests of drunk women took place most often on South Main, South Wyoming, and South Arizona Streets, although other arrests are

60 R. L. Polk Directory for City of Butte, 1909, Butte-Silver Bow Archives, Butte, Montana.
61 DR #1, 20 May, 1909.
62 DR #4, 25 November 1916.
63 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 178.
scattered all over town. East Park and East Mercury Streets also were common sites for arrests. With the exception of East Park, all of these streets were in the red-light district; in fact, another place of arrest was listed simply as “Red Light.”

When one matches the women who were arrested in red-light locations, it is evident that as many as one-half of these women were prostitutes. "Red Light" entries with first and last name but no title numbered seventeen out of eighteen. On the individual streets of the red-light district, a total of 106 women were arrested; forty-six of those, or 43 percent, were listed with a first and last name but no title. One-third of women listed in the *Drunk Record* with a first and last name but no title were arrested in the red-light district. Women such as Hannah Hill, Bessie Taylor, and Jennie Shea were arrested in the red-light district.  

Several of the prostitutes made it into the *Drunk Record* more than once, however, which suggests the difficult lifestyle led by a call girl. The Record lists Nancy Hanks at least fifteen times. The place of arrest listed is sometimes Red Light. She was arrested on the following dates: October 19 and December 7, 1909; February 10 and July 14, 1910; October 29, 1912; January 17 and March 5, 1913; December 14, 1914; and February 6 and May 4, 1915. An additional five appearances of her name were tabulated. Police arrested Bertha Bates eight times and Kittie Claire seven times between 1913 and 1916. Some entries raise more questions than they answer, as in the case of Mrs. John Wester, whose arrest also happened in Red Light. Was this woman a married prostitute? Or was she simply a married, working-class woman who drank publicly?

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64 *DR #1, DR #2, DR #3, and DR #4.*
65 *DR #1, DR #2, DR #3, and DR #4.*
66 *DR #3, 20 July 1915.*
The variation in entries emphasizes the fact that the one must view the Drunk Record through the cultural lens of those who wrote the information down. Speculation exists on the extent to which a police officer or judge would want to "shield or expose" someone who was arrested.\(^67\) One must look no further than the men's arrests to discover that the authorities frequently made up names or improvised when necessary. For example, an entry on September 10, 1915 lists "John Doe Cripple" as the arrested.\(^68\) John Doe obviously was not the person's real name, and the Court Recorder added the "Cripple" at the end to provide some further means of identification, namely that the person had some deformity or physical incapacity. Such alteration of this official public record could also happen with women's names.

Not all arrests took place in the red-light district, which indicates that not all women arrested for drinking came from the population of prostitutes. Other entries list "South Butte," an area sometimes known as "the Flat," as a place of arrest. Nice middle-class homes with small yards--a luxury in Butte--occupied this area.\(^69\) The names of the women arrested in South Butte include Mrs. Murray, Mrs. McManus, and several Jennie Does. These arrests happened on Warren, Cobban, Grand and S. Gaylord Avenues, to name a few.\(^70\) Perhaps the Jennie Does did not want to give their names, because of the shame associated with ladies who stooped to such a level. Police also arrested women on the West Side of town, which gained the reputation as the upper- and middle-class part of town.\(^71\) Almost all of the people arrested on the West Side were Jennie Does.\(^72\) This

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\(^{67}\) Murdock, Domesticating Drink, 49.

\(^{68}\) DR #3, 10 September 1915.

\(^{69}\) Murphy, Mining Cultures, 15.

\(^{70}\) DR #1, DR #2, DR #3, and DR #4.

\(^{71}\) Murphy, Mining Cultures, 12.

\(^{72}\) DR #1, DR #2, DR #3, and DR #4.
implies that as arrests moved up the social ladder to the higher classes, anxiety among the women and officials to shield the woman’s identification increased. It also indicates that respectable, working-class women as well as upper-class women were arrested for drinking too much alcohol in Butte.

Authorities sometimes looked the other way when it came to alcohol use and abuse. The number of women whose charges were dismissed is another rather startling piece of evidence that women did not drink publicly as men, and it also provides curious testimony to the treatment of women by the various police judges, before whom accused women presented their cases. In 291 cases of arrests, the majority—266—had their charges dismissed. Twenty-three served a jail sentence, while fifty paid a five- or ten-dollar fine. Nancy Hanks, with fifteen arrests to her credit, paid only two fines. The judge dismissed all of her other arrest charges.73 This evidence suggests that police frequently did not punish women’s public drinking.

The high dismissal rate also signified Butte’s culture of drink. The police judges also frequently dismissed men's arrests. It was rare, especially under the judgeship of T.J. Booher, for anyone—male or female—to have gone to jail or paid a fine.74 A. J. McGowan, police judge in the first of the bound Drunk Records, and P. J. Whitty, of the last volume, seemed harsher, but still frequently dismissed the cases of women.75 The authorities allowed drinking to take place because it played an important role in Butte culture. Judge Charles Warren, who became police court judge in 1880 and 1906, quipped: "A hard-working miner is entitled to one rip-roaring drunk a month."76 This

73 DR #1, DR #2, DR #3, and DR#4.
74 DR #2 and DR #3.
75 DR #1 and DR #4.
76 Works Projects Administration, Copper Camp, 261.
attitude was common, and it helped the people defeat the 1916 vote for Prohibition, among other things. Alcohol and Butte simply went together; the authorities recognized the role alcohol played in Butte residents' lives and condoned this role in their lax treatment of public drunkenness.

As the *Drunk Record* shows, Butte's women used alcohol—often to excess. Many more men than women were arrested for drunkenness, but more men than women also lived in Butte. Men drank more publicly than women, and their use was more widely accepted than that of women. "Men constituted a significant majority of the drunkard population and were recognized more willingly by American society," according to historian Catherine Gilbert Murdock.77 This double standard does not hide the fact that women drank despite the legal rules and societal mores against it.

Alcohol presented a problem for some women. In some instances, the image of the town drunk—in female form—emerges from the historical record. Annie Rooney, for example, was listed at least four times in the *Drunk Record*. She was arrested on January 23rd and September 2nd of 1909, June 14th of 1910, and on the 22nd of November, 1912.78 In addition to this, she was well known among the people of Butte as "Little Annie Rooney," a member of the community of drug addicts, old prostitutes, and alcoholics in the Cabbage Patch, a low-income area of town.79 She was not the only woman to regularly drink in public, but most women drinkers did not become so well known, nor did they want to.

The *Drunk Record* tells only part of the story of women's alcohol use. Alcohol was the main feature at male-dominated saloons and bars, but it was used frequently

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77 Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*, 47.
78 DR #1 and DR #2.
in the home, both at formal and informal occasions.\textsuperscript{80} Men spent less time at home than they did at work and in the saloons. Men relaxed at the saloons after a hard day's work.\textsuperscript{81} Meanwhile, although women were prohibited from entering saloons with the purpose of buying beer or liquor, this did not stop some of them from buying beer to take home.\textsuperscript{82} In fact, women were much more likely to purchase and drink alcohol in this way than to drink in public.\textsuperscript{83} Butte women participated in the growler trade, as it was called. A Butte Irish resident remembered:

\begin{quote}
there was quite a few of them up there, old girls, really liked their liquor. . . They'd go in the back door of the saloon because they didn't want anyone to see them. . . You could get a big bucket of beer for a quarter. So the women would send the kids to the back door of the saloon, and they'd rap on the back door.\textsuperscript{84}
\end{quote}

This practice of using a back or side door, or "ladies' entrance," was common.\textsuperscript{85} The growler trade included women of middle-class status, which demonstrates that not only prostitutes and destitute women, but working and well-to-do women, as well, drank alcohol. Historian Madelon Powers insists that "most female customers of ordinary saloons were either wage-earners or the wives and daughters of wage-earners," not prostitutes.\textsuperscript{86} This indicates the popularity of alcohol use and suggests that alcohol and sexual immorality were not connected as closely as people thought.

Even more subtle uses of alcohol by women in the home included medicines and recipes. Women's drinking has been frequently underestimated because of the exclusion of these categories. The Butte Heritage Cookbook, lists some of the recipes used by the
different nationalities in Butte. The Butte-Silver Bow Bi-centennial Commission compiled this book from the contributions of Butte residents whose families had been in Butte for generations. The cookbook was broken into sections by ethnicity, and historical background information was included at the beginning and throughout each section. The book essentially tells about food traditions that people brought with them to Butte and continued, and the people who had the traditions. For instance, the most famous traditional Butte food is the Cornish pasty, which can be found on page 14. An explanation of the pasty's significance to the Cornish miners precedes the actual recipe.

87 The Butte-Silver Bow Bi-centennial Commission compiled this book from the contributions of Butte residents whose families had been in Butte for generations. The cookbook was broken into sections by ethnicity, and historical background information was included at the beginning and throughout each section. The book essentially tells about food traditions that people brought with them to Butte and continued, and the people who had the traditions. For instance, the most famous traditional Butte food is the Cornish pasty, which can be found on page 14. An explanation of the pasty's significance to the Cornish miners precedes the actual recipe.

88 McGrath, Butte's Heritage Cookbook, 18, 26, 59, 97, 118, 215.

89 Murdock, Domesticating Drink, 54-9.

90 Ibid., 53.
other's company. On New Year's Eve, the Silver Bow Club in Butte, the city's finest drinking establishment, invited upper-crust women to their New Year's Ball. These women most likely had a chance to have an alcoholic drink; many no doubt took that opportunity. These instances show that some middle- and upper-class women drank publicly as well as in the privacy of their homes.

Still other evidence about cities similar to Butte suggests that much of women's public drinking went unrecorded and that many women found pleasure in social drinking, both in the home and in public. Madelon Powers's article "Women and Public Drinking, 1890-1920," discusses the ways in which women drank socially. Whether gathered around the kitchen table or at a private party, women enjoyed drinking alcohol, as much as, if not more than, men. Powers also touches on the higher frequency of social alcohol use among cities with high immigrant populations and large working-class neighborhoods, such as New York City; Homestead, Pennsylvania; and Worcester, Massachusetts. Powers's conclusion can easily apply to Butte, since Butte had an almost completely immigrant population and based its economy on one hard-labor industry—mining.

Women in Butte used alcohol in a variety of ways. The law enforcement condoned the use of alcohol at least among the men of Butte. Among women, alcohol use was encouraged by the traditions brought over by the many nationalities working in the mines. Alcohol had a part in Butte celebrations. It also provided, for some, a means

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91 Butte Miner, 7 February 1915: 14.
92 Murdock, Domesticating Drink, 52.
93 McGrath, Butte's Heritage Cookbook, 200.
94 Murphy, Mining Cultures, 51.
96 Ibid., 50, 52.
of escaping the hard life in this hard rock-mining town. Finally, women used alcohol in everyday activities in the home: in cooking, medicine and informal social gatherings.

Except for documents like the Drunk Record, women rarely left evidence of excessive drinking, and may even have tried to hide moderate drinking because of society's negative views of women who drank. Butte, however, was a town in which alcohol had many reasons to flourish, and women as well as men partook in public alcohol use and abuse.
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