

50 Ways to Die: Homicides, Accidents, Suicides, Infanticides and Acts of Mother Nature

Jerry L. West



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50 Ways to Die: Homicides, Accidents, Suicides, Infanticides and Acts of Mother Nature Jerry L. West 50 Ways To Die is a compendium of death and sometimes violent crimes occurring in the county, and the social trends that surround them. West's research centered on records of Coroner's Inquest and microfilm of the newspaper, Yorkville Enquirer, both of which are archived at the History Center in York. The inquests records had not been studied until West began his research which coincided with members of the staff and volunteers were indexing. A great deal of appreciation is extended to Archivist Nancy Sanbet, her staff and the several volunteers who assisted. And a special thank you to Miles Gardner who gave the idea for this book by his Murder and Mayhem in Old Kershaw. This book gives accounts of murders, suicides, accidental deaths and gruesome infanticides, ending in 1929. West has randomly extracted more than twenty murders, some of which are still retold in local kitchens and living rooms. The list includes the 1929 chilling murder of Faye Wilson King by her husband, Rafe. This murder brought national publicity to the small western York County town of Sharon. Also included is the 1922 murder of playing children by a man angry over water in Clover, and the brutal murder of Johnny Lee Good in 1888. People of York County have murdered over women, food, liquor, money, slander and unpaid bills and they did it with planks, bare hands, guns, knives and even ironing boards. Sometimes these occurred on the spur of the moment with overheated blood and sometimes with cold calculation. While most crimes were white on white or black on black, the subject of race has been excluded expect in cases where mentioning it was for clarification. One thing is clear in many of these cases, justice came to some, and the times were certainly not safe for minorities, the poor, and children.

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