

## The Whores of Butte Montana- from the ISWFACE collection



At one time, Butte, Montana boasted the second largest red-light district in the United States. It was a wide open town and bars, brothels and miners were in plentiful supply because Butte was the Copper Capital of the US. To keep the miners happy, the brothels ran 24 hours a day, alongside the bars and other entertainment meant to extract money from the many transient workers who came to Butte in the early days.

Prostitution was not legal, but neither was booze during prohibition, but that didn't stop either from being readily available for anyone who was interested.

The last brothel to operate in town closed in 1982, when its madam, Ruby Garrett got robbed, and the IRS decided she had not disclosed all the money she had made running her establishment and sent her to prison for six months. The notoriety that the case brought to the town was such that an embarrassed sheriff decided not to renew Ruby's business license when Ruby got out of prison. The brothel that ran for almost 100 years was closed.

These photographs are believed to be some of the women who worked in the brothels- photos that were probably taken to give as souvenirs to favorite clients as a way to remember their favorite "*fille de joie*."