1916 election – 592 words ~4:00

Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

Rose Morrow Rust was a Democratic candidate for the Montana legislature in 1916. Her campaign card boasted that she was "raised in Butte," but despite getting 1,678 votes in the primary election August 29, 31-year-old Mrs. Rust did not advance to the general election.

In the primary, apparently the top 12 vote-getters went on to the general election in November. At the head of the list on the ballots, it said "vote for twelve." There were at least three women in the Democratic field of 41 candidates in the primary, including Margaret Gillick and Emma Naughton in addition to Rose Rust. The Republican field of 14 included Joanna Grigg.

Unfortunately, even though she got nearly 1700 votes, Mrs. Rust came in 23rd in the field of 41. The top vote getter got about 3800 votes and the 12th highest got about 2100.

Elizabeth Ann Morrow, called Rose, was born June 4, 1885, at Basin, Montana Territory. Her parents, William and Elizabeth Morrow, were both Canadian-born and were married in Butte in 1880. William was a miner who owned the Boulder Chief and Comet mines north of Basin, and when he died in 1895, his widow moved into Butte so the children could attend school there.

Rose worked at a bakery and at the Chesapeake Café at 36 North Main, and in 1901 when she was 16 years old, she was named Butte’s “most beautiful girl” in a city-wide contest. In 1908 she married mail carrier Harry Rust, and they lived at 117 West Silver. Their year-old daughter Margaret died in 1913. In 1915 after Harry was promoted to chief clerk at the South Butte postal station on West Front, they moved to a house at 1124 Utah, just around the corner from the post office.

Within a year after her run for the state legislature in 1916, Rose was running a general store and grocery at 1134 Utah, just north of Front Street. She was part of Butte’s dramatic population explosion as copper mining became a vital part of the war effort, and her store was one of 201 groceries in Butte in 1918.

By the early 1920s the Rusts were gone from Butte, perhaps part of the post-war exodus that began Butte’s long population decline. The little store on Utah Street is still standing, as is the Rust home. The store was built about 1891 as a sausage factory and meat market, and the Rust home dates to the middle 1890s.

The general election of 1916 saw the first women elected to the Montana legislature, Maggie Smith Hathaway, a Democrat from Stevensville, and Emma Ingalls, a Republican from Kalispell. In that same election Montana chose the first woman in the nation elected to the U.S. Congress, Representative Jeanette Rankin. She defeated seven men in the Republican primary and prevailed over Democrat Harry Mitchell in the general election. Montana gave full voting rights to women in 1914, six years before the 19th amendment granted the vote to women nationally, making the 1916 election the first state-wide general election in which Montana women voted.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.

This program is a production of KBMF-LP, 102.5 in Butte, Montana, with financial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Friends of the Butte Archives, the Butte America Foundation, and donations from listeners like you. Original music by whoever it is. Thanks for listening.

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Rose Rust's home at 1124 Utah Avenue still stands.

 based on the election returns for the August 29, 1916 primary election, there were at least three women in the Democratic field of 41: Margaret Gillick, Emma Naughten, and Rose Rust. The Republican field of 14 included Joanna Grigg. All lost, either in the primary or the general election in November. Also, Jeanette Rankin beat out 7 men in the Republican primary and then as we know won the general election as well.

1918 Rose E. Rust, grocer 1134 Utah, N of Conoco at Utah and Front. West side of Utah.

Henry F Rust clerk at RE Rust groc. (1916 = distributor PO, r 18 E Copper)

This reminiscence (n.d.) by Elizabeth "Rose" Rust, daughter of William Morrow, describes her life in Basin and Butte, Montana, from 1885 to 1909. (SC 1415).

This collection contains a typescript reminiscence compiled by Elizabeth Ann (Rose) Morrow Rust's daughter, Harriette Dommes, from notes left by her mother. It describes Rose's family, life in Basin and Butte, work experience, etc., during the years 1888-1909.

William Morrow (1851-1895) and Elizabeth Miller (1852-1935), both born in Canada, were married in 1880 in Butte, Montana Territory. William Morrow owned and operated gold mining properties in the Basin area, including the Boulder Chief and Comet mines. The couple had five children: Margaret, Elizabeth (called Rose), William, John, and Richmond.

Elizabeth Ann (Rose) Morrow was born in Basin, Montana Territory, on June 4, 1885. During her childhood she spent time with her father at his mining properties. In 1889 she accompanied her father to Helena for the statehood celebration. When William Morrow died in 1895, the family moved to Butte so the older children could attend high school. Rose worked in a local bakery and at the Chesapeake Cafe. In 1901 she won a beauty contest as Butte's "most beautiful girl." In 1908 Rose married Harris Fenleson Rust, a Butte mail carrier.

Reminiscence compiled by daughter Harriette Dommes from her mother's notes.