



# Frontier Madam: The Life of Dell Burke, Lady of Lusk

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## **Frontier Madam: The Life of Dell Burke, Lady of Lusk** June Read

This is the first biography of Dell Burke, whose estate sale drew national attention when she died in 1981 at age 93. Painstakingly researched for over five years, June Willson Read's landmark history tells the story of a broken young woman who saw opportunities in the Alaskan gold rush, the copper mines in Montana and the oil fields in Wyoming. But it wasn't mining that made Burke's fortune – she focused on the entertainment needs of the lonely men who poured into the uncharted west to strike it rich. In 1919, the genteel and gracious Burke opened the Yellow Hotel brothel in Lusk, Wyoming, where she reigned for six decades, until 1978. Although condemned for her profession, she was beloved for her generosity and her devotion to the community. For example, during the Depression, Burke financed Lusk's water-power system and single-handedly saved the town from going bankrupt. Read interviewed locals, historians, and Burke descendents to present a fascinating story of a little-known entrepreneurial powerhouse.



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