

Extract from "Tin Mosques and Ghantowns: a history of Afghan Cameldrivers in Australia" by Christine Stevens, published by Paul Fitzsimons, Alice Springs, NT, 1989.

"The case of Annie Dost: a Puchtunwali murder", pages 232 to 235 (includes portrait of Annie, p.235)

With Dost Mohammed [sic] now buried, his wife Annie, against advice from her family, left Australia with her children for Karachi. She claimed she wanted to collect her eldest son, Mustapha [sic], who was then living at the Dost family 'castle'. But she also wanted to claim the inheritance of her husband's share of the family estate (or at least what she hoped and naively understood it to be). Her brothers wanted her to carry a gun as protection and the Australian authorities tried to dissuade her. However, the headstrong and intrepid woman refused protection and advice, and ensconced herself and her children at the family 'castle' near Karachi for eighteen months while she tried to legally battle for Dost's estate. She was, by all appearances, welcomed. Her children were dressed like royalty and given private tutors and bodyguards. Yet as the legal proceedings dragged she felt uneasy and thought that a conspiracy was gathering against her. Finally, tired of the pursuit and general unease, she made secret plans to leave for Australia. She told her children of these just before the departure dates, asking them to keep it a secret until departure time. But Mustapha, the eldest, told some trusted servants and the word leaked out. Two 'Australian Afghans' who had worked for Dost Mohammed, and who had returned to India, Lal Mahomet and Karda Bux, decided now was the time to strike....

The murderers were caught, easily identified as one had a finger missing, and Annie's young daughter [Lillian] had recognised them. They were tried and hanged in Karachi. The children were shipped back to Australia and placed in orphanages in Perth. Their only relatives, the Graubner [sic] family, refused to have anything to do with these foreign-looking children.

On several occasions a man, Raham Shara, was sent from the Dost family in India to collect the children from the orphanages and take them back to the 'castle', but neither the wary authorities nor the terrified children would comply. The eldest son, Mustapha, had stayed in India when the others were shipped to Australia and [his brother] Ameer always suspected him of conspiracy in the murder. At one time he [Mustapha] too paid a visit to Perth orphanages, attempting to persuade the other children to return, but with no success. Dost Mohammed's [sic] wealthy estate was passed to Mustapha [sic] and the links were severed with the Australian side of the family (page 234).