

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, MURDER AND A RECOMMENDATION OF MERCY

NAME INC ALIASES:

Sarah Fogo

NATIVE PLACE:

England

RELIGION:

Presbyterian

OFFENCE:

Murder

SENTENCE:

To be hanged

Although it was not common, a woman was tried for murder and sentenced to be hanged in Dunedin Prison.

Sarah Muir Fogo was charged with murder that on Saturday September 29 1900, she stabbed her husband of 30 years, Thomas Telfour Fogo, to death.

Thomas Fogo was a heavy drinker and there were frequent rows when he arrived home to his Frederick Street house drunk. Evidence was given that Mr Fogo presented a different personality to the outside world than he did at home. His children described him as being generous with money, but often sullen and morose and prone to hitting family members, especially his wife and daughter.

At her trial Sarah pleaded self-defence, claiming that she herself would have been killed if she hadn't stabbed her

husband. However the jury returned a "guilty" verdict, with a strong recommendation of mercy. The judge agreed with the recommendation and stated he would intimate that agreement to the advisor of the Crown. He then donned the black cap and sentenced Sarah to the mandatory penalty of being hanged by the neck until she was dead. On December 15 1900 advice was received that the sentence was commuted to one of life imprisonment.

Mrs Fogo was released on special remission on November 24 1910. She died at her residence in Castle Street, Dunedin on April 28 1911. She is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery in the same grave as her husband.



MR AND MRS THOMAS FOGO,
The principals in the tragedy reported elsewhere in this issue.

