

Scientific article

DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2026-1-59-75

For citation

Krivosheeva, Yulia A., (2026). "I'll Make a 'Good Picture' at Home": Attempted Murders of Spouses in Yaroslavl Province. Second Half of the 19th – Early 20th Century, Herald of an Archivist, no. 1, pp. 59-75. DOI 10.28995/2073-0101-2026-1-59-75

Krivosheeva, Yulia A., P. G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University, Yaroslavl, Russia

"I'll make a 'good painting' at home": Attempted murders of married couples in the Yaroslavl Province. Second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries

Abstract

This article, based on materials from the State Archives of the Yaroslavl Region (SAYaR) and the Rybinsk Branch Archives (RBF SAYaR), examines the specifics of criminal prosecution of attempted spousal murder cases in Yaroslavl province. This topic is relevant due to the pressing need to preserve the traditional family and the unresolved problem of domestic violence. The study utilized general scientific and historical research methods (historical-genetic and historical-comparative), as well as methods used in studying the history of everyday life. The specific nature of the cases under study necessitated the use of a gender approach, allowing for the examination of the differences in the conduct of judicial proceedings between men and women. Attempted spousal murder in the provinces is rarely the subject of independent research and is more often explored in the context of broader studies on the everyday family life of various segments of the population and marital conflicts. Working with unpublished archival materials allowed us to examine specific court cases and unique family situations, using these as examples to identify the challenges of law enforcement and the attitudes of the state and the regional judicial system toward criminals of different genders. The author examines the reasons that motivated spouses to attempt on the life of their husband or wife, noting their similarities. The stages of legal proceedings in the early 1860s and throughout the remaining period following the transformation of the judicial system, as well as their goals and main content, are summarized. The length of legal proceedings in male and female cases is analyzed, and the factors that delayed the process are noted. The main part of the work is devoted to examining the circumstances of the cases, the charges brought and the punishments actually received by criminals, opportunities to evade justice, and the courts' handling of "slander." A source study analysis of Yaroslavl materials from various court proceedings revealed a relatively adequate attitude toward female criminals on the part of judicial institutions at various levels, as well as court attempts to acquit not only men but also women on reasonable grounds, although, in essence, no one was protected from violence at the hands of their significant other. Studying this problem from a historical perspective will be useful for understanding the causes of violence in modern Russian families and developing more effective strategies for preventing domestic violence.

Keywords

Marital conflicts, family life, attempted murder, family, spouses, Yaroslavl Province, historical sources.

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About authors

Krivosheeva Yulia A., P. G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University, Faculty of History, Department of Advertising and Public Relations, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Yaroslavl, Russia, +7-4852-30-54-52, y.krivosheeva@uniyar.ac.ru

Grant information

The article was prepared with the financial support of the Russian Science Foundation (project No. 22-78-10103), <https://www.rscf.ru/project/22-78-10103/>

The article was received in the editorial office on 19.12.2024, recommended for publication on 20.09.2025.

You can read completely article in the russian historic-archival magazine “The Herald of an Archivist”. Read more about terms of subscription [here](#) .

Полностью материал публикуется в российском историко-архивоведческом журнале ВЕСТНИК АРХИВИСТА. Ознакомьтесь с условиями подписки [здесь](#) .