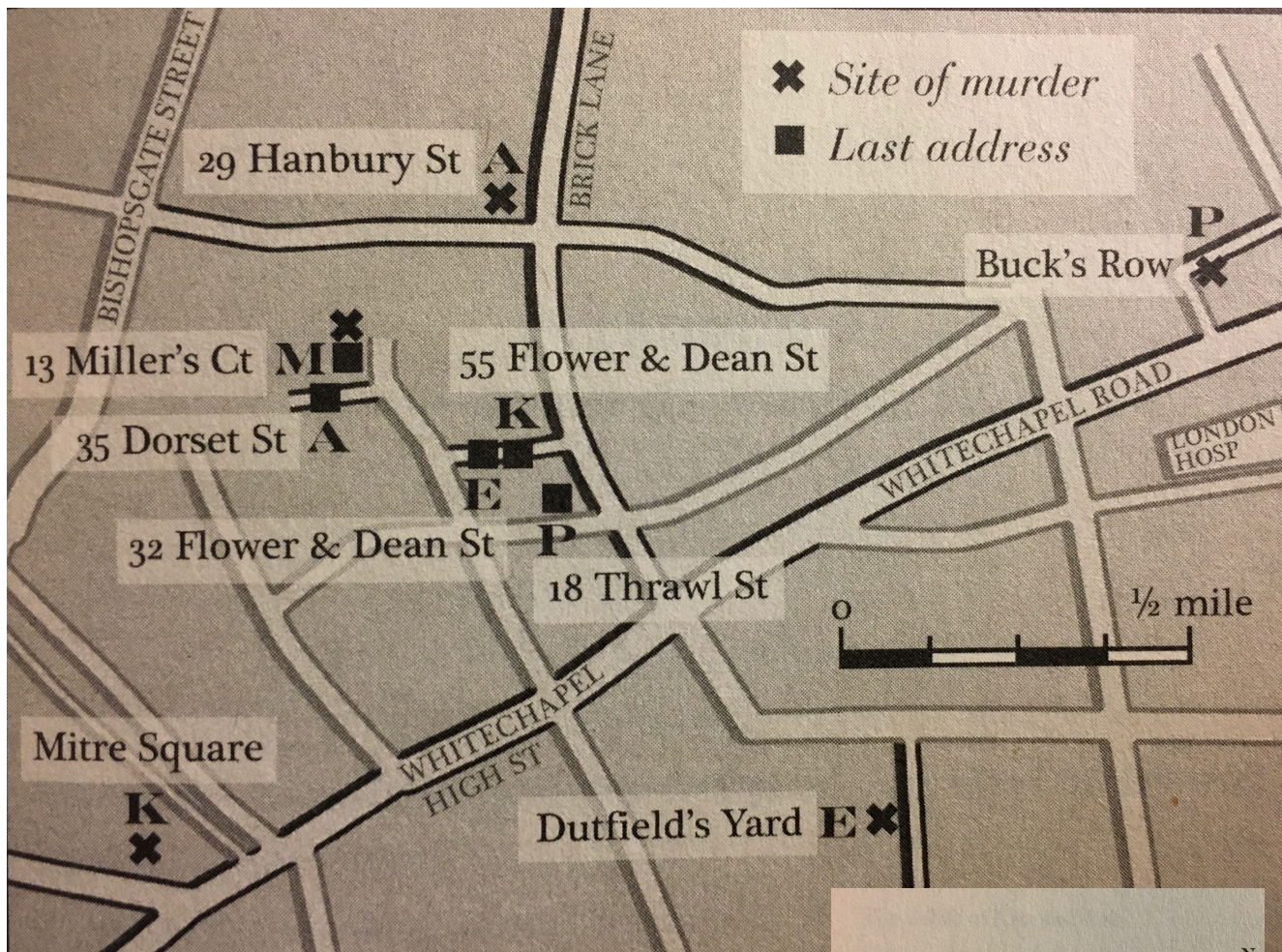


## What happened in London in 1888?

Use the documents below to explain what happened.

### Map of murders attributed to Jack the Ripper, Whitechapel, London



Source: Hallie Rubenhold, *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019), x-xi.

#### Killings Generally Attributed to Jack the Ripper

Source: <https://www.casebook.org/victims>

Mary Ann Nichols, 1 August 1888

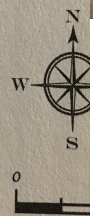
Annie Chapman, 8 September 1888

Elisabeth Stride, 30 September 1888

Catherine Eddowes, 30 September 1888

Mary Jane Kelly, 9 November 1888

**P** Polly Nichols  
**A** Annie Chapman  
**E** Elisabeth Stride  
**K** Catherine "Kate" Eddowes  
**M** Mary Jane Kelly



**Edward Walker** deposed: I live at 15, Maidwell-street, Albany-road, Camberwell, and have no occupation. I was a smith when I was at work, but I am not now. I have seen the body in the mortuary, and to the best of my belief it is my daughter; but I have not seen her for three years. I recognise her by her general appearance and by a little mark she has had on her forehead since she was a child. She also had either one or two teeth out, the same as the woman I have just seen. My daughter's name was Mary Ann Nicholls, and she had been married twenty-two years. Her husband's name is William Nicholls, and he is alive. He is a machinist. They have been living apart about seven or eight years. I last heard of her before Easter. She was forty-two years of age.

The Coroner: How did you see her?

Witness: She wrote to me.

The Coroner: Is this letter in her handwriting?

Witness: Yes, that is her writing. The letter, which was dated April 17, 1888, was read by the Coroner, and referred to a place which the deceased had gone to at Wandsworth.

The Coroner: When did you last see her alive?

Witness: Two years ago last June.

The Coroner: Was she then in a good situation?

Witness: I don't know. I was not on speaking terms with her. She had been living with me three or four years previously, but thought she could better herself, so I let her go.

Transcript of official coroner's inquest into the death of Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols, 1 September 1888

Source: *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 3 September 1888

THE results of the investigation into women's work in East London which follow will be seen to bear especially on the condition of the women. The special account of the industries, which precedes the general view of home work and factory work, cannot claim to be in any sense an account of the trade but rather of the work done and the wages received by women in East London employed in the trade. The information has been obtained from women working at their own homes, from factory girls and from employers.

... the women whom I have found working at really starvation wages—sack makers and carpet slipper makers—were women who had either to support themselves or to fall back upon charity or the workhouse. Many widows who find it difficult to obtain work, owing to infirmity it may be, take shirts to finish at 3*d* or 2*d* per dozen, although they can only finish a dozen and a half a day. They nearly always complain that other married women take them at that price because they need only work for pocket-money. But I have never yet come across a married woman in the working classes with such an eagerness for pocket-money that she would work for it at the rate of ½*d*\* or 1*d* an hour. Whenever I have found women who said they worked at very low rates they have been working for their living and for that of their children; their husbands have always been men disabled or out of work. But while many married women are independent enough to give up work which is not remunerative, the majority have little power to change from one branch of a trade to another, still less from one trade to another.

\* *d* = penny

Clara Collet, "Women's Work," in Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People*, vol. 1 (London, 1889), 450-451.



# POLICE THE ILLUSTRATED NEWS

LAW COURTS AND WEEKLY RECORD.

No. 1,288.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1888.

Price One Penny.



Front page of *The Illustrated Police News*, 20 October 1888



Another most horrible murder was perpetrated in Whitechapel yesterday morning. At an early hour, as a police-constable was on his beat in an obscure thoroughfare, he came upon the body of a woman, with her throat cut from ear to ear. On the arrival of a doctor she was removed to the mortuary, where an examination revealed the fact that there were many other shocking wounds upon her person. Though lifeless she was not quite cold, showing that the crime had not been long committed. Late in the day she was identified as a woman named Nicholls, who had led a loose and miserable life, and had at one time been an inmate of the Lambeth Workhouse. So far the police have no clue to the murderer.

*The Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1888

**MR. MONTAGU** (MP for Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any Report or complaint has been received at the Home Office or by the Police Authorities respecting an area in Whitechapel intersected by Flower and Dean Street; whether the police have reported as to the existence of crime and vice in that locality; and if he will allow that Report to be made public; and whether any effort has been made by the owner or by the police to remedy the evils complained of?

**MR. MATTHEWS:** Yes, Sir; in December last the vicar of St. Jude's brought under my notice the evil state of the district referred to. The Commissioner of Police, whom I consulted on the subject, reported in substance that vice of the lowest type finds a refuge in parts of Whitechapel. The police do all in their power to keep violence and vice within bounds, but their duties are confined to the streets; in fact, extra constables are continuously on duty there on special beats. It is only by bringing influence to bear on the landlords that a better class of dwellings can be provided, and so, gradually, a better class of tenants secured. I regret to say that I am informed by the Commissioner that no substantial efforts have been made by the owners of the property in this neighbourhood to effect improvements, the neighbourhood being in much the same condition as it has been for some years. The lease of some of the property is running out, and it is to be hoped that at the expiration changes will be effected and improvements made.

Debate in the House of Commons, 3 July 1890



“SIR,

The wild beast who is running loose in Whitechapel is apparently a student of psychology. By the ordinary perusal of a newspaper he has become aware that he has only to persevere in his horrible atrocities, and as soon as they have ceased to be sensational by reason of their novelty they will be thought of small consequence. These frightful murders are no isolated events. They are part and parcel of a constant and ever-increasing series of cruelties perpetrated on women, and regarded so lightly by the public, and treated so leniently by judges that it must be a source of genuine surprise to a man when he finds that by chance he is going to be hanged for murdering a woman, or to be sent to a long term of penal servitude for the attempted murder of a woman.”

Florence Fenwick Miller, letter to the editor of the *Daily News*, 2 October 1888

“The crowd who assembled in the streets began to assume a very threatening attitude towards the Hebrew population of the District. It was repeatedly asserted that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a bloody crime as that of Hansbury Street, and that it must have been done by a JEW.”

*The East London Observer*, 15 October 1888, describing the scene outside the International Working Men’s Educational Club in the East End of London after the body of Catharine Eddowes was found.



“Sketch of Supposed Murderer. The Man Seen Haunting House of Mr. Lusk,” *The Illustrated Police News*, September 1888.







“The wretch must have seized the deceased, perhaps with Judas-like approaches. He seized her by the chin. He pressed her throat, and while thus preventing the slightest cry, he at the same time produced insensibility and suffocation. There is no evidence of any struggle. The deceased was then lowered to the ground, and laid on her back; and although in doing so she may have fallen slightly against the fence, this movement was probably effected with care. Her throat was then cut in two places and savage determination, and the injuries to the abdomen commenced. All was done with cool impudence and reckless daring; but, perhaps, nothing is more noticeable than the emptying of her pockets, and the arrangement of their contents with business-like precision in order near her feet.

The body has not been dissected, but the injuries must have been made by someone who had considerable anatomical skill and knowledge. There were no meaningless cuts. The organ [upper pelvis area of the womb above the vagina] have been taken by one who knew where to find it, what difficulties he would have had to contend against, and how he should use his knife so as to abstract the organ without injury to it. No unskilled person could have known where to find it or have recognised it when it was found.”

Coroner Wynne Baxter, at the inquest into the murder of Mary Ann Nichols, 26 September 1888.  
Quoted in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 September 1888.

“How terrified and unbalanced we all were by the murders. It seemed to be round the corner, although it all happened in the East End, and we were in the West. But even so, I was afraid to go out after dark, if only to post a letter. Just as dusk came on, we used to hear down our quiet and ultrarespectable Edith Road the cries of newspaper boys in tones made as alarming as they could: ‘Another ‘orrible murder ... Whitechapel! Disgustin’ details ... Murder!’”

Mary Hughes, a professional woman who lived in the West End of London in 1888, in her memoir, *A London Family, 1870-1900* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 362.

**Mr. HOWELL** asked the Home Secretary whether his attention had been called to the remarks of a metropolitan magistrate, Mr. Montagu Williams, at Worship-street Police-court, on Monday last - namely, "That the whole crime of the district is due to registered lodging-houses... which are made the homes of the men who perpetrate robberies," and of the words of the policemen, whom he quotes, who said, "They were the resorts of notorious characters;" and whether he would cause an inquiry to be instituted into the common lodging-houses of the metropolis, with a view to further legislation and inspection.

**Mr. MATTHEWS (Home Secretary).** - I have not yet been able to ascertain whether the learned magistrate made use of the words quoted, but I am informed by the police authorities that they know of no case in which a constable told a magistrate that common lodging-houses were the resort of notorious characters. In the opinion of the police it cannot be said that crime is due to common lodging-houses. There is no doubt that a certain number of the criminal class do live in common lodging-houses; but the owners of those houses are ready, as a rule, to assist the police with information, and the inmates are under police supervision to a greater extent than they would be if they were driven to live elsewhere. I have been for some time in communication with the Local Government Board and the police on the question whether the registration of common lodging-houses can be improved.

Debate in the House of Commons, 22 November 1888