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AUGUST 1999

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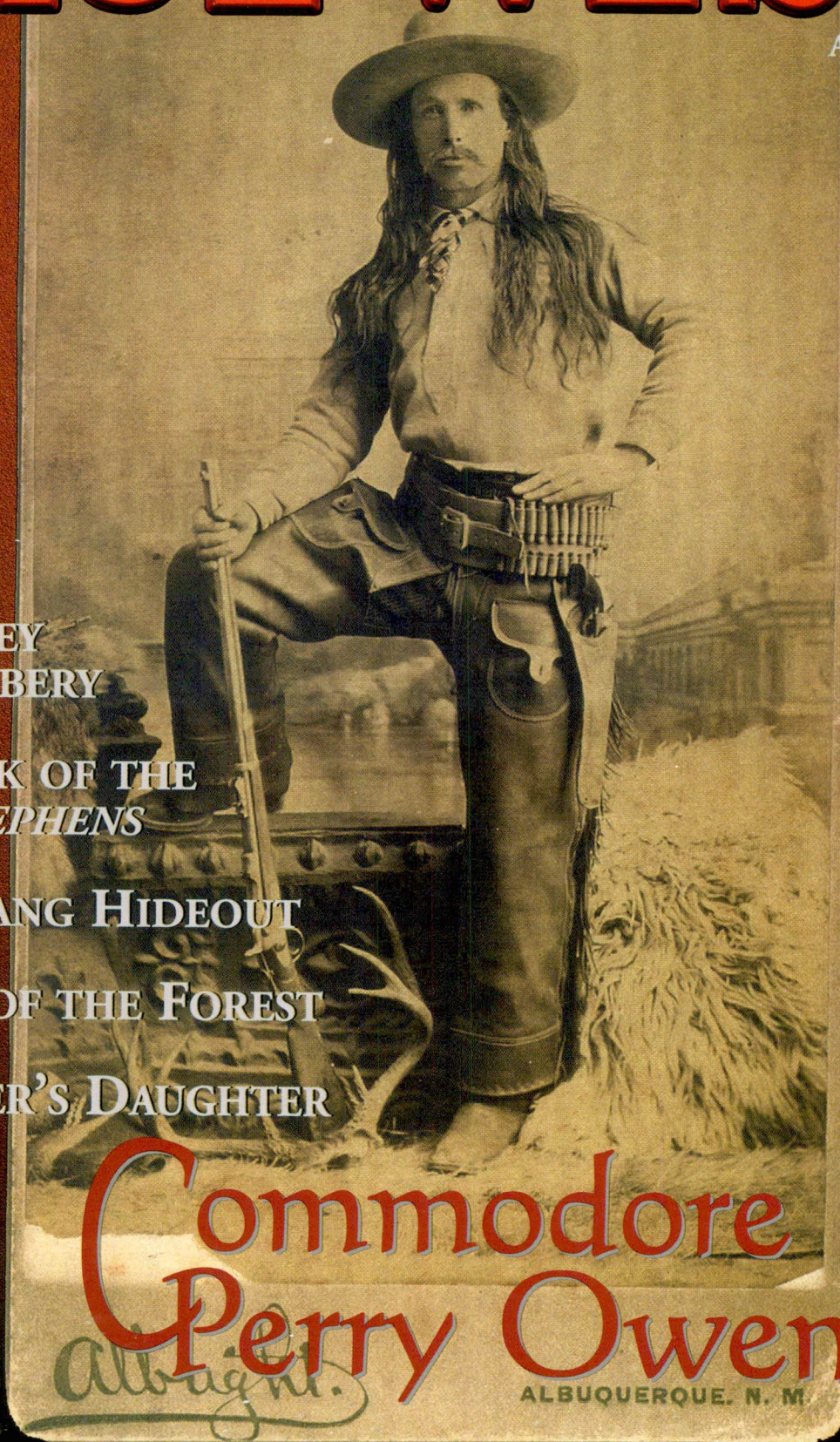
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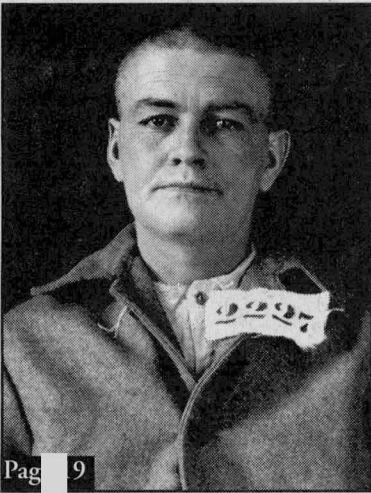
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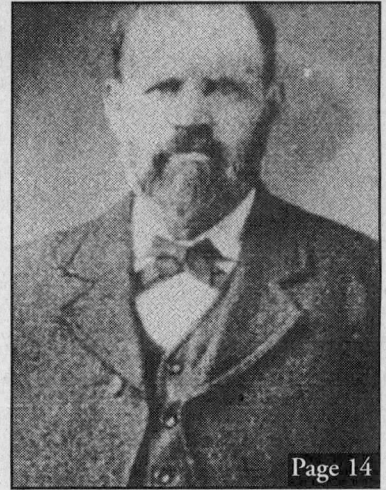
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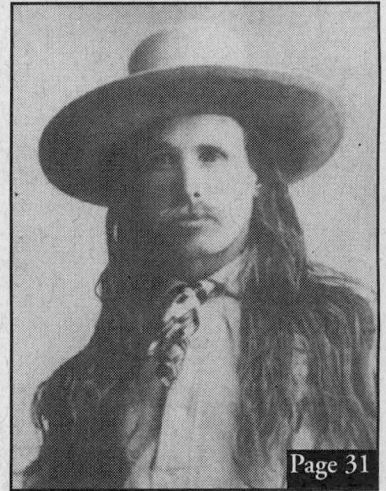
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## FROM THE EDITOR



Howdy, ya'll!  
Dealing with adversity is nothing new to westerners, we Oklahomans in particular. Historically, we've looked adverse situations in the mouth, rallied together, and responded with a collective kick in the teeth. Life on these plains has never been easy. The Dustbowl. Crop-destroying locusts and grasshoppers. Grass fires. Drought. Depression-era outlawry. Fluctuating oil booms. Domestic terrorism. To top it all off, we take the brunt of the nation's weather; fierce storms and tornadoes are as much a part of Oklahoma's makeup as red dirt and wild mulberries.

By now, you undoubtedly know of our most recent round of twisters. Like true family, many of our readers contacted us almost immediately to make sure we were alright. The outpouring of concerned phone calls and letters has been appreciated. On the evening of May 3, when an estimated fifty-two tornadoes touched down in the Sooner state before moving into Kansas, the closest twister passed twelve miles west of our home here in Stillwater. The kids tucked safely under the stairwell, my wife and I kept an eye on the latest reports and prepared for the worse. We were lucky that night; too many others were not.

The Oklahoma City metro area suffered devastating damage and the largest number of casualties, due mostly to the concentration of homes in the tornado's path and lack of adequate cover. Storm shelters and root cellars, a common sight in rural areas and most smaller communities, are virtually nonexistent in suburban settings, even in this, Tornado Alley. As one gigantic tornado ripped its way through Moore, Oklahoma, others were spawning in its wake. The small, historic community of Mulhall, our neighbor to the west, was, for lack of a better term, wiped completely off the map.

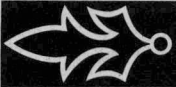
Almost immediately, and in true Oklahoma fashion, neighbor turned out to help neighbor. Within fifteen minutes of impact, doctors, nurses, firemen, military personnel, and sheriff's deputies were rushing to the scene. Anyone with a strong back and a sense of purpose roamed the crushed neighborhoods, pulling survivors from their homes and helping locate the missing. Pickup trucks and personal vehicles served as ambulances as everyone, young and old, friends and complete strangers, rushed the wounded to area hospitals. Within the hour, cars were lined up for miles with donations of water, blankets, flashlights, and offers of temporary shelter for the now-displaced families. Impromptu first aid tents were pitched, and lines formed to give much needed blood, even as debris was still falling from the sky.

Within days, dozens of semi-trucks were filled with donations from across the state. Looting, a common problem in other areas of the world in the wake of disaster, was minimal at best, and thought of as the highest crime imaginable. Now, weeks later, relief agencies are actually turning away further donations. Warehouses are overflowing with clothing, furniture, and the day-to-day items that will make life easier for those left with nothing but photographs and memories.

The missing have all been accounted for now, the number of dead stopped at forty-two, the number of injured in the hundreds, the number of homes destroyed in the thousands, the number of lives affected immeasurable.

The number who will continue in the spirit of Oklahoma, the spirit of survival at all cost, neighbor before self, rebuilding rather than moving on, and helping a friend in need, is limited only by total population.

*Marcus Huff*



# The Bravest Debate

Upon receiving the June 1999 issue of *True West* magazine, I read with much interest the response of Thom Hatch to my dispute with his article entitled "The Bravest Man the Sioux Ever Fought," *True West*, January 1999.

His dissection of my letter and retort thereto was not much more proof that Keogh was "the bravest man" than his article appearing in your fine magazine some five months earlier. He made seven points in defense of his "facts" and three in response to the "discrepancies" I noted in his article. None of these points, to say the least, are very enlightening of the subject.

He first stated that the location of Keogh's body on the battlefield matched that where the "bravest

man" made his stand. It could have easily been Captain Thomas French, Company M, Seventh Cavalry, whom many historians believe was the "bravest man." The Indians did not attach names such as Weir Point, Sharpshooter Ridge, or Last Stand Hill to the segmented battlefield locations. Red Horse could have been at any of these sites.

Hatch responded that the actions of the "bravest man" described by Red Horse and others are consistent with the actions of those he attributes to Keogh in his article. Does Hatch honestly believe that because he credited Keogh with these actions in his article that the reader is to accept them as fact without question? If I were to pen an article portraying Wild Bill Hickok as the

killer of Yellow Hand at Warbonnet Creek on July 17, 1876, using known historical data and actions, would that make my article the definitive narrative and remove William Cody as the person who actually performed the deed? Of course not!

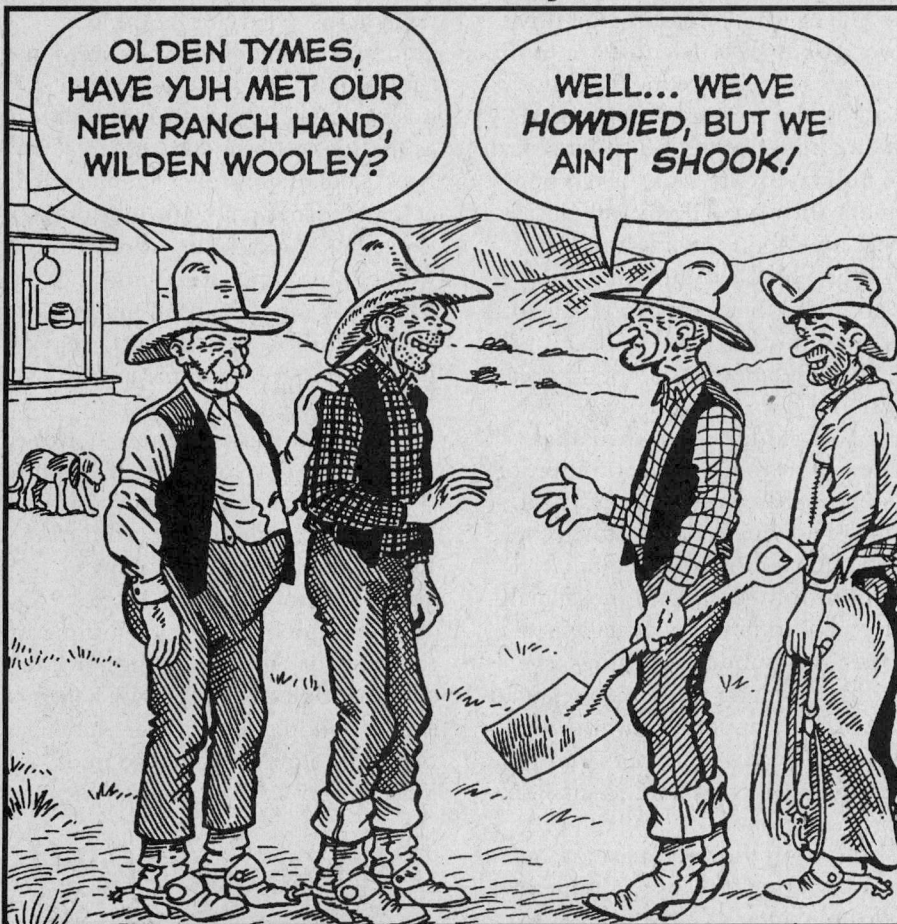
Point five and six do nothing to prove that Keogh was the officer in question. "Wounds suffered by both Comanche and Keogh show that the captain was mounted on that particular horse when shot in the knee." Is that statement proof that Keogh was the "bravest man"? No, it simply proves that Keogh was mounted on Comanche when hit by a bullet.

In Hatch's response to the discrepancies in his article which I pointed out in my previous letter, he states a noted historian "theorizes" that dust could have clung to the feet of the horse in question that was described as having four white feet. This would give the illusion that Comanche, if he was the horse in question, would appear to have four white feet and actually be the animal described by Red Horse as being ridden by the "bravest man." The amount of dust that was surely raised by the commotion could have undoubtedly covered the entire bodies of both man and horse. It seems rather strange that only the feet of one horse would seem to be white due to a dust covering.

Mr. Hatch adds that a "theory" of his own is that Keogh, being shot from the back of Comanche, "pulled himself or was helped aboard another horse" in an attempt to regain control of his troops. Being under heavy enemy fire and having been shot from one horse, Keogh, I doubt, would have exposed himself once again in this manner. Wounded and bleeding he most likely would have sought cover

## SADDLE PALS

By Graham Ward



with his unhorsed soldiers. The actions portrayed by the "bravest man" in Red Horse's account of the incident clearly illustrate an active, vibrant man, not one who was severely wounded.

Hatch adds that in my previous letter to the editor that my mention of a Santee Indian killing the officer was somehow questioning the tribe of the slayer. Of course I know a Santee was a Sioux. The Santees were a band of the Sioux Nation just as were the Minniconjou, the Hunkpapa, the Lakota, the Brulé, and others. My point in that statement was to clarify that if a Santee warrior, or an other member of any tribe, killed the officer and took his horse, as related by Red Horse, it could not have been Keogh. His horse was not stolen. Comanche was found on the battlefield, wounded but alive. But then I imagine Hatch could "theorize" that the horse Keogh theoretically mounted after being shot from Comanche was the horse the Santee Sioux warrior had taken after killing the officer.

Hatch adds that he shortened Red Horse's quote for pure dramatics. I would imagine that if one were to write an article declaring what one believes to be true and wishes to portray as historical fact, one would shorten an oft-used quote, omitting segments of that quote that would directly oppose one's own statements in the article. Dramatics? Maybe. I would be more prone to wonder if the omissions were something akin to failing to reports all the facts and details in fear of devaluating one's own declarations.

Finally, Hatch declares that interpreters taking testimony from Red Horse and others had a "habit at times of asking leading questions, wilfully changing testimony to fit their own agenda, or simply misunderstanding the intentions of their subject." He adds that this "was particularly true following the Little Bighorn battle when Indians, for fear of reprisal, offered information, whether or not true." Based upon this we could "theorize" that Red Horse and others were led by inter-

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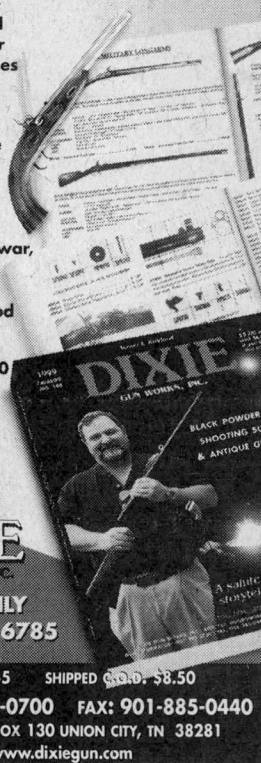
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preters to make statements concerning an exceptionally brave officer on the battlefield, to pacify and please their questioners. Then could we assume that Red Horse's statement, or any statement made by an Indian via an interpreter, was in fact fabrication and there was no "bravest man"?

I agree with Hatch that history is a blend of fact, legend, and myth. There were no video cameras at the site of the Little Bighorn battlefield to record the incident for posterity. Therefore, we are forced to use the information available to us through testimony of many different persons involved; both white and Indian. But, when attempting to record history, one should not place conjecture and theory before historical data. Researchers have too long omitted damning evidence and proof in opposition to their assertions in order to sell a book, an article, or a documentary.

The perfect "blend of fact, legend, and myth" would be to take all references, in tact, into considera-

tion, eliminate those confirmed by recorded and proven history to be false or inflammatory, research with zeal the remains and come to an educated conclusion.—*Bob Sullivan, Denver, Colorado.*

#### Dallas Stoudenmire

Just a note to say how much I enjoyed the June issue of *True West*. I was reading the article on the San Augustine Ranch and noticed a name similar to mine, maybe a relative. On page 47, El Paso Marshal Dallas Stoudenmire is mentioned. The spelling is very close to the way I spell my last name.

Where can I get more information on this person? I have always been drawn to the Old West; maybe there is a connection.—*Connie Staudenmayer, via the Internet.*

**Editor's Note:** Dallas Stoudenmire was born to Lewis and Elizabeth Stoudenmire in Aberfoil, Macon County, Alabama, December 11, 1845.

After serving with both the

Confederate army and the Texas Rangers, Stoudenmire began his career as a lawman in Socorro, New Mexico, in 1880. Stoudenmire was appointed city marshal of El Paso, Texas, in April 1881.

After a long-standing feud with brothers Frank, Jim, and Doc Manning, Marshal Stoudenmire was shot and killed by the latter two on September 18, 1882, in El Paso.

The most complete, and reliable, biography of Dallas Stoudenmire remains *Dallas Stoudenmire: El Paso Marshal*, by Leon Metz. Originally published in 1969, the book is available in paperback from the University of Oklahoma Press.



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# DALTON GANG HIDEOUT & MEADE COUNTY MUSEUM

By Johnny D. Boggs



Author's Photo

John N. Whipple built this small house for his wife, Eva Dalton, in 1887. The home is now part of The Dalton Gang Hideout Museum.

On October 25, 1887, John N. Whipple married Eva Dalton, and the newlyweds moved into a small frame house on a pretty hill-top south of Meade, Kansas. Whipple, owner of Whipples Headquarters, the Buffalo Store, was a successful merchant in Meade. Dalton, who had moved to the southwestern Kansas town from Coffeyville a year earlier, made and sold women's hats.

Naturally, Eva's brothers would often visit Meade. Unfortunately for the Whipples, her brothers were Bob, Emmett, and Gratton Dalton, so an escape tunnel was dug from the house to the barn in case the visiting outlaw gang needed to leave in a hurry, or secretly. Stolen horses and train robberies, blamed on the

Dalton gang, would haunt the Whipples. Citizens questioned if Eva was involved in her brothers' crimes. In 1892, the Whipples abandoned their home.

Today, the Dalton gang hideout has been restored to its 1887 appearance. Artifacts, documents, and other displays in the house and barn loft offer insight into life on the Kansas plains as well as the life of an outlaw gang. The ninety-five-foot-long tunnel has been widened and reconstructed. The Daltons had to crawl through the tunnel, but today's visitors can walk through it.

The hideout, located four blocks south of U.S. Highway 54 in Meade, also houses a souvenir shop as well as a park for picnics and a playground.

A worthwhile side trip is the

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A general store replica is among the Museum in Meade, Kansas.

Meade County Historical Museum, one block east of the stoplight on Highway 54.

The museum houses displays on Plains Indians, early settlers, the town builders, railroaders, and a circa 1906 bank. Fragments of the Lone Tree are also on exhibit. On August 24, 1874, Cheyenne Indians attacked and killed a six-man government survey party. The men were buried on Crooked Creek by a lone cottonwood tree, that stood for sixty-four more years.

Replicas in the museum include a sod house, general store, blacksmith shop, and schoolhouse. Other exhibits chronicle droughts, blizzards, and the Dust Bowl, while a one-room schoolhouse, windmill, and frontier farm equipment are on display a block east and a half-block south of the museum.



Author's Photo

displays at the Meade County Historical

Admission to The Dalton Gang Hideout is \$2 for persons seven years and older. There is no charge for the Meade County museum, but donations are accepted. Both are open daily year-round, but hours vary on the season so it's best to call first. The hideout and museum are closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, and the hideout is also closed Easter.

For information on the hideout, write: The Dalton Gang Hideout, PO Box 515, Meade, Kansas 67864. Call (316) 873-2731 or (800) 354-2743. For information on the Meade County museum, write: Meade County Historical Society, Box 893, Meade, Kansas 67864-0893. Call (316) 873-2359.



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MILLIS



# COMMODORE

It was a wet stormy night in St. Johns, Arizona, on December 27, 1885. Darkness came early and Apache County Deputy Treasurer Francisco Baca was soon in the warmth of his bed. He had not been retired long when five masked gunmen were in his room rummaging through his clothes. They soon found what they were after, the keys to the courthouse vault.

Baca was ordered out of bed and at gunpoint forced barefoot through the cold slush and mud to the courthouse. Once inside Baca was ordered to open the outer combination lock on the vault. Inside the bandits found over \$11,000 in cash, \$2,000 of that being in gold and silver.

After the robbers departed, Baca alarmed the town. At first light a posse led by Deputy Sheriff Tom Hubble made a circumspect search for the outlaws but the storm had evidently erased all signs of their escape route. Baca, however, identified four of the men as Lee Renfro, brothers Ike and Phin Clanton, and the Clantons' brother-in-law, Ebin Stanley. Soon they and Buck Henderson of St. Johns were in custody as suspects.

When it came time for a hearing on the matter, Baca refused to accuse the men he had earlier positively identified as the robbers.

Whether he had remorse at a false accusation or if he had been intimidated into changing his testimony cannot be known for sure. But with no other suspects, Baca himself had to take the rap. He was charged with embezzlement and served time. All those he had earlier identified went free, and the money from the robbery was never recovered.

Rustling activities by the Clantons and others continued to plague local ranchers. The robbery of the county treasury, whether actually done by the Clantons or as an inside job by county officials, brought dissatisfaction with the government and law enforcement to a head. A group of citizens began to look for a man to run for sheriff, a man who was brave enough to stand up to the desperadoes running rampant in the area. They found their candidate in Commóadore Perry Owens.

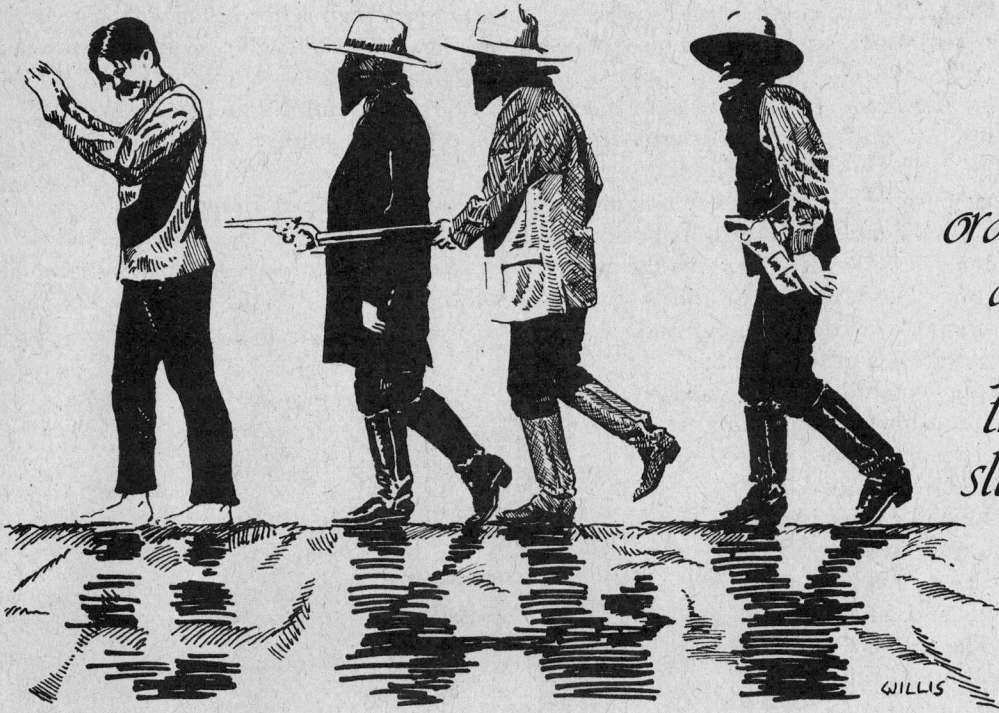


Author's Collection

*Ike Clanton*

# & THE CLANTONS

BY LARRY WILLIS



*Baca was ordered out of bed and at gunpoint forced barefoot through the cold slush and mud to the courthouse.*

Owens drifted into Apache County in 1881. He had worked as a guard for the stage line at Navajo Springs. He was considered fearless and handy with a gun. Will Barnes, a rancher in the area at the time said, "Owens was an expert shot with either rifle or six-shooter. He often carried two six-shooters, one on each hip, and could draw with wonderful speed, either right or left handed as conditions made necessary. It was quite a common trick on the range for someone to toss up a tomato can which Commodore would hit before it struck the ground. He would then with pistol shots keep it rolling along until it was too badly torn up to roll."

Owens won the race for sheriff in November 1886. That same month Lee Renfro shot and killed Isaac Ellinger at the Clanton's Cienega Maria Ranch. Ellinger had a ranch near the Clantons and suspected them of being involved in an attempt to take over his property. On November 6 he confronted Renfro and harsh words were exchanged. Renfro pulled a gun and shot Ellinger through his chest, mounted his horse and rode off. No one present tried to stop him. The new sheriff had his work cut out for him with such men on the loose.

A story related by some old-timers tells of a time shortly after Owens took office as sheriff. He decided to ride over to Springerville and check things out. Word that the new sheriff was on the way preceded him. When he rode into town, the Clantons and their cronies were gathered in front of Becker's Mercantile to get a look at the new lawman. When they caught sight of Owens' long locks they began to laugh and poke fun, calling him a sissy. Owens paid little attention to the taunting. He dismounted his horse, walked over to a pile of rubble, and picked up a short board and a charred stick. He propped the board up on its edge against some rocks and with the stick, drew two small circles on it. Owens stood up and counted off thirty paces from the board, then spun on his heel, drew his guns and fired into the circles on the board. Then he holstered his guns and walked silently past his taunters and into the store. Slowly the street emptied of outlaws.

This story has a spurious ring to it. Stories that are definitely spurious are those that some writers have relayed that have Owens directly involved with the death of Ike Clanton.

In April 1887 a group of cattlemen formed the Apache County Stock Growers Association. Secretly they hired Jonas Brighton as a detective to help put an end to rustling in the area. One of their main targets was the Clanton gang. Two of the officers of the stock growers association, Will Barnes and Henry Smith, urged Sheriff Owens to hire Brighton as a deputy to make his actions legal. Owens willingly complied.

Owens was going to send Deputy Jeff Milton and Brighton after the Clantons, but before he could, Milton quit as his deputy to take a job as a border guard. Albert Miller replaced Milton, and a posse under his leadership went after the outlaws.

The posse caught up with Phin Clanton south of Springerville where they took him into custody. He was deposited in Owens' jail at St. Johns to await trial.

Brighton and Miller were again dispatched after the rest of the Clanton gang. Meanwhile, Sheriff Owens headed to the western part of the county to arrest another notorious outlaw, John Payne, referred to in the newspapers as a "bad man from Bitter Creek."

Late in the day on May 31, Deputy

Miller and Brighton arrived at the ranch of James "Peg Leg" Wilson on Eagle Creek and decided to spend the night.

Early the next morning, the men had just sat down for breakfast when they heard a horse approaching. Brighton went to the door to see who it was.

Ike Clanton had unwittingly ridden right into the camp of his pursuers.

Not realizing who Brighton was, Clanton greeted him and began to converse. Deputy Miller stepped to Brighton's side in the door. Clanton recognized Miller and realized his mistake. As he spurred his horse away from the house, Clanton drew his rifle from its scabbard and resting it across his left arm, took aim at the deputies. Brighton ordered him to throw up his hands. When

Clanton didn't comply, Brighton fired his rifle twice. The first shot stuck Clanton in the left side of his chest and the second passed through Clanton's saddle and grazed his leg. Clanton fell from his horse. When the men reached him he was dead. Wilson's neighbors were summoned for identification purposes, and Clanton was then buried on the spot.

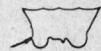
In reporting the story, the Holbrook newspaper described him as the "...poor, deluded, witty, smart and most unscrupulous Ike Clanton."

Not long after Ike Clanton's demise Brighton and Miller were said to have caught up with Lee Renfro. He also attempted to flee but was shot by Brighton. As Renfro lay dying he asked Brighton if he shot him for money. Brighton told

him, "No, I shot you because you resisted arrest."

Phin Clanton was sentenced to ten years in the territorial prison at Yuma for grand larceny. He would serve less than two years, receiving a pardon from Governor Meyer Zulick in 1889 when a witness against him recanted his testimony. Ebin Stanley was given the choice of standing trial or leaving the territory. He chose to leave Arizona.

Commodore Perry Owens was not directly involved with the death of Ike Clanton as some writers have claimed. But it was the illegal activities of the Clantons and others that brought about the election of Owens as sheriff and made him instrumental in the final demise of the Clanton gang in Arizona.



*Clanton drew his rifle from its scabbard and resting it across his left arm, took aim at the deputies.*



# GATHERING THEM

## THE KINSLEY, KANSAS, TRAIN

BY ROGER MYERS • ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD IGNARSKI



# IN!! ROBBERY

**B**at Masterson, sheriff of Ford County, Kansas, and his three-man posse, John Joshua Webb, "Prairie Dog Dave" Morrow, and Kinch Riley, headed their buggy southwest from Dodge City on a cold, snowy Tuesday, January 29, 1878. A gang of six disguised men had attempted to rob the westbound Pueblo Express at nearby Kinsley and had a two-day head start. Bat may have had an idea who was responsible for the attempted robbery. "Dirty Dave" Rudabaugh was riding with Mike Roarke and several other hard cases.

Dave Rudabaugh was one of the most notorious outlaws in the Old West. Born July 14, 1854, probably in Fulton County, Illinois, Rudabaugh had come to Kansas from Iowa in 1870 with his mother, two sisters, and one brother, settling in Greenwood County. Leaving home in his teens, he was at various times a cowboy, bartender, and teamster.

His life of crime would begin in 1873 with rustling a few head of cattle and horses in Arkansas and Texas. It is said that other members of the gang included "Mysterious" Dave Mather and Milton J. Yarberry. Back in Kansas by 1875, Rudabaugh would try his hand at train robbery within three years.

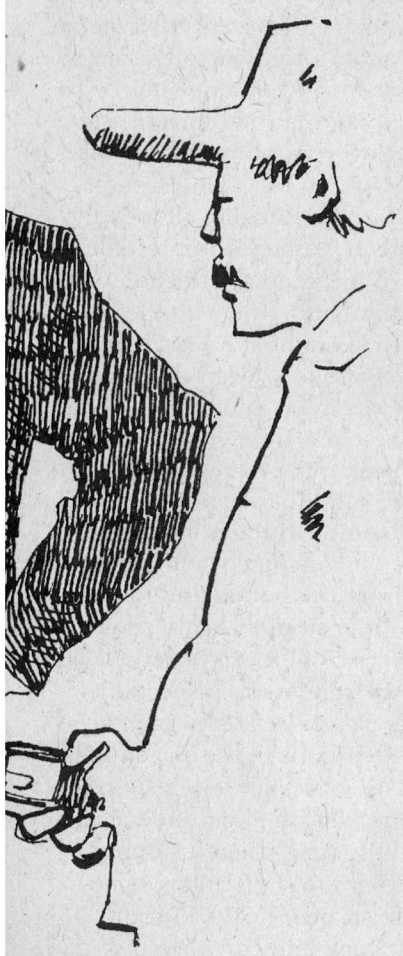
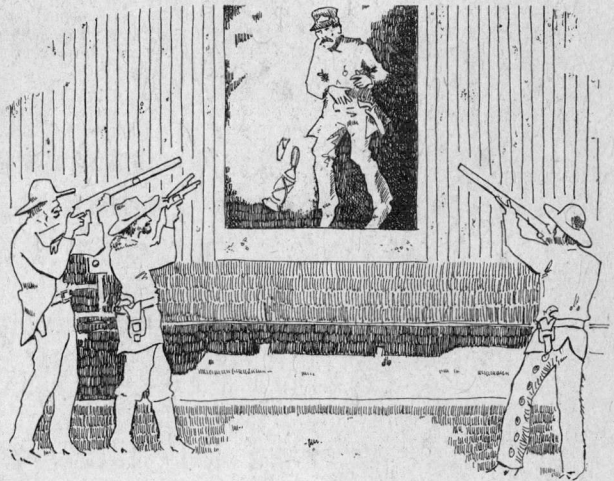
Bat Masterson had not yet risen to the level of western legend. In fact, the twenty-four-year-old had just assumed the office of Ford County sheriff fifteen days earlier. The hunt and capture of the Kinsley train robbers would give the young sheriff the chance to "rise toward glory," an opportunity he was quick to grasp.

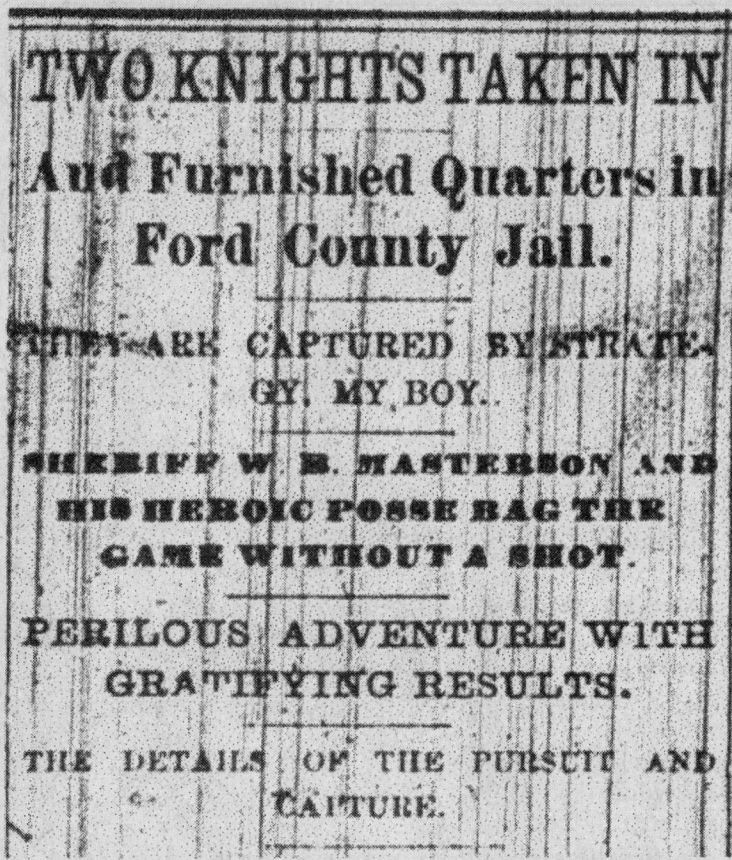
The six robbers had camped at Wolf Creek in present northwest Oklahoma two weeks prior to the robbery. Mike Roarke suggested they rob the eastbound train at Kinsley. Besides Rudabaugh and Roarke, the gang consisted of Edgar West, Thomas Gott, Dan Dement, and J.D. Green. An earlier attempt to rob a train at Dodge City, thirty-seven miles west of Kinsley, on New Year's Day, had failed because a severe snowstorm had blown in.

A plan being devised, the men set out on January 22, 1878. A four-day trip took them to a point ten miles south of Kinsley where they had supper, blackened their faces with wet gunpowder, and rested for four hours before moving into town under the cover of darkness.

Once in Kinsley they moved to a house about one and one half miles west of town. From there they continued one half mile farther west as a severe snowstorm raged. At that point they tethered their horses to a railroad trestle. Further west was the water tank used by the steam engines. The plan was to rob the eastbound train as it stopped to take on water. The gang took their places and waited, but the eastbound train chugged on by, not stopping for water.

Rudabaugh and the gang hadn't come all this way for nothing, so an alternate plan was contrived. The plan was for West and Dement to get on the engine of the westbound Pueblo Express when the train stopped in Kinsley, while Roarke, Rudabaugh, and Green would accost the express car. The sig-





Author's Collection

The Dodge City *Times* of February 2, 1878, reported Sheriff Bat Masterson's capture of two of the Kinsley robbers.

nal to start the train moving west was to be two pistol shots. They would rob the train as it headed west and get off near the horses tethered two miles away. After making sure everyone knew his job, the gang walked the two miles east to the Kinsley depot, leaving Gott to watch the horses.

Upon reaching the depot in Kinsley, Roarke, and Rudabaugh went inside and pulled their guns on young Andy Kinkade, the night man. Green and West stayed outside on lookout. Roarke, Dement, and Rudabaugh went around behind the railing and told Kinkade to give them all the money. Kinkade replied that all the money had been sent out on the eastbound train—the very one that had eluded them earlier. To prove his point Kinkade pulled out a drawer to show them it was empty. Roarke told Kinkade to open the safe “damned quick,” but

Kinkade replied that a man named Gardner had the key over at the hotel. He added that they were welcome to go ask Gardner for it if they wished. In fact, there was two thousand dollars in the safe, but young Kinkade did not falter.

Suddenly, Kinkade attempted to draw a small derringer but Roarke saw the move and disarmed him, handing the pistol to Rudabaugh. Kinkade was marched outside at gunpoint just as a man named Blanchard came to the depot to meet the train. Kinkade yelled to Blanchard to “go back, these men have all got pistols.” As the Pueblo Express pulled in, Kinkade made a dash for freedom, jumping in front of the cowcatcher on the engine of the westbound train. A shot was fired after him, but fortunately missed its intended target.

Henry A. Brown, the express messenger on the train, needed to

unload a heavy box at the depot. When the whistle signaled the approach to Kinsley, Brown opened the doors to the express car. This action played into the hands of the would-be robbers, or so they thought. As luck would have it, the train overshot the platform by about two car lengths. Before the train could back up, the locomotive was boarded by West and Dement.

Not being adjacent to the platform, no one was able to enter the express car “as the height from the ground to the car door was so great.” Through the open car door, Roarke ordered Brown to “give up or I’ll shoot.” Brown threw down his lantern and book, grabbed his six-shooter and fired. His first shot missed Green by about three inches. Roarke, and Green, fired six or seven shots into the express car. No one was hit and no one entered the express car, thanks to Brown and the lucky break of missing the platform.

Meanwhile, Rudabaugh took the conductor hostage and fired four shots in the general direction of Mr. Blanchard and others on the platform to keep them back. Upon hearing about a dozen shots rather than the agreed upon signal of just two, West and Dement abandoned their post in the locomotive. Rudabaugh, Roarke, and Green also abandoned the train at this point. The engineer then pulled away from the station and to safety.

The train stopped again about two miles from town for several minutes while it was inspected. Seeing all was well, crew members fired their guns in the air in jubilation, which initially led to speculation that the gang had tried again to rob the train when it stopped.

Hearing the shots and commotion, townsmen headed for the depot, commandeered a hand car, and set off in pursuit of the train, not knowing the robbers had abandoned the attempt. All five of the robbers were now afoot and headed toward Gott, who was still holding the horses. Mounting up, they headed south toward the Arkansas River. Seeing them ride away, the

"posse" fired several shots at the fleeing gang. The outlaws followed the river west for twelve miles before they crossed it and headed south.

A few hours later another posse from Kinsley set out in pursuit, but the Kinsley men returned empty handed after a search covering 115 miles. An appeal for help was sent to Fort County Sheriff Bat Masterson.

The gang kept heading in a south-westerly direction, finally separating when they reached Bluff Creek. Rudabaugh and West headed toward the camp on the Beaver, the other four aiming for the same destination via another route.

After heading south on Tuesday, the posse from Ford County was forced to camp, because of a snow-storm, on the barren prairie twenty-seven miles southwest of Dodge City on Crooked Creek. They had to also lay over the next day due to continued snow, but on Thursday they moved on to the point where Crooked Creek empties into the Cimarron River at Lovell's cattle camp. Here the sheriff decided to lay in ambush.

About five the next evening, four men approached Lovell's, two of the men being Dave Rudabaugh and Edgar West. While nearing the camp, the four discovered Masterson's buggy and horses and recognized them from a stable in Dodge. Rudabaugh and West immediately became suspicious but were convinced by their companions, who worked for Lovell, to take refuge from the storm. Still fearful, Rudabaugh and West hesitated until J.J. Webb, with his six-gun concealed, went out to meet the riders. He convinced them that he was on his way to Dodge City on business. They all entered the dugout where Bat and the rest of the posse were hidden. Bat jumped up with pistols drawn and commanded the outlaws to "throw up your hands."

West complied at once, "but Rudabaugh reached for his revolver; the click of Webb's gun at close quarters changed his mind however, and both surrendered and

**GATHERING THEM IN!!**

**Two More of the Train Robbers Captured!!**

**THEY COME INTO DODGE CITY TO GET 'INFORMATION.'**

**Sheriff Masterson, Under Sheriff Bassett and Marshal Masterson**  
**Kindly Take Them in.**

**THEY ARE ARRESTED AFTER A SHORT CHASE.**

Tom Gottaliss Dugan, and Green, two of the gang who attempted the robbery of the train at Kinsley some weeks ago, were arrested at about nine o'clock last night, on the bottom just on the outskirts south-west of Dodge City, by Sheriff Masterson, Under Sheriff Bassett, and City Marshal Ed. Masterson.

Author's Collection

The Dodge City *Times* of March 16, 1878, reported the progress of Sheriff Bat Masterson's hunt for the remaining Kinsley holdup men.

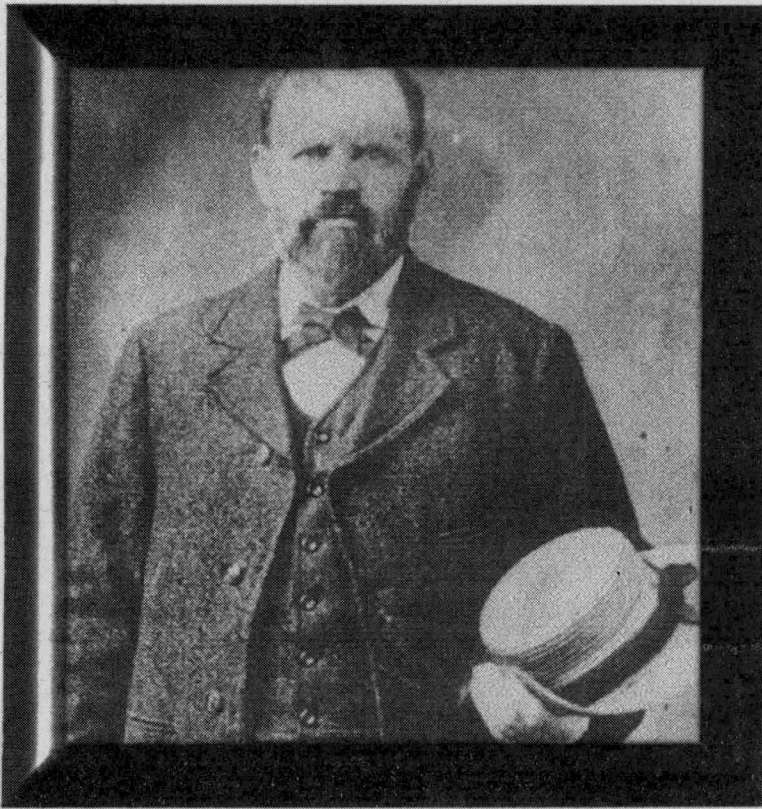
were disarmed. Each carried a rifle and two revolvers," according to the *Ford County Globe*.

The sheriff's posse and the prisoners arrived back in Dodge City the next day, where Rudabaugh and West were placed in the calaboose. The following day, just before the prisoners were transported to Kinsley, William Tilghman was arrested for complicity in the holdup. Rudabaugh, West, and Tilghman were put on a special train bound for Kinsley where they were arraigned upon arrival. All three were held in lieu of \$4,000 bail, returned to Dodge, and put in jail. Ten days later, Bill Tilghman was absolved of any involvement in the affair. He would later become one of the outstanding lawmen in western history and famous as one of Oklahoma's Three Guardsmen.

A few days later, Masterson got word that more of the robbers

could be found on the Llano Estacado in the Texas panhandle. He started out with Charley Bassett, J.J. Webb, John Clark, and H. Lovell, on February 10, returning empty-handed twelve days later after a search covering "between five and six hundred miles." Three weeks later, two of the suspects would walk right into Bat's hands.

Tom Gott and J.D. Green, along with Mike Roarke and one Lafeu, had come to Dodge seeking information on the status of the investigation and manhunt. Officer Nat Haywood reported to Masterson that he had seen Gott at one of the south-side dance halls during his rounds. Masterson immediately called on Charley Bassett and his brother, City Marshal Ed Masterson to assist him in the capture. Spying Gott and Green, the officers raced in pursuit of the fleeing suspects. According to the Dodge City *Times*



Author's Collection

Prairie Dog Dave Morrow joined Bat Masterson's posse to track the Kinsley robbery suspects.

of March 15, "The clear moonlight night afforded an easy chase, and the officers soon pounced upon their victims and which proved to be a desired catch. The robbers showed some resistance, but one of them found his revolver entangled in his clothing." No sign of Roarke and Lafeu was found. Ed Masterson took Gott and Green to Kinsley, where they pleaded not guilty and were moved to Emporia, Kansas, for safekeeping.

The trial for the four began on June 19, 1878, in Kinsley. Three of the suspects pleaded not guilty. Rudabaugh escaped any punishment by turning state's evidence and having his confession read in court. In it he told of his part in the escapade and named his accomplices as Edgar West, J.D. Green, Thomas Gott, Mike Roarke, and Dan Dement. West, Green, and Gott changed their plea to guilty and were sentenced to five years hard labor in the state penitentiary at Leavenworth.

Rudabaugh stayed in Kansas for a

while but headed for New Mexico in 1879 where he would later join up with Billy the Kid. He was later convicted of the murder of a Las Vegas, New Mexico, jailer, Lino Valdez, and sentenced to hang. Rudabaugh would escape before the sentence could be carried out. He may have gone to Arizona and teamed up with the cowboy element around Tombstone. (Wyatt Earp later claimed that Rudabaugh was among those who ambushed him and his posse at Iron Springs in Arizona.) He eventually wound up in Parral, Mexico, where he was beheaded by locals who had had enough of his foolishness.

Mike Roarke was arrested south of Ellsworth, Kansas, in October 1878 and placed in jail in Junction City, Kansas. Roarke was given ten years for his part in the train holdup, the heavier sentence assessed for being the leader of the gang. Dan Dement was killed in a gun battle at the time of the arrest.

On February 14, 1879, Thomas Gott applied to Kansas Governor

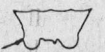
John P. St. John for a pardon. In a letter to Sheriff Masterson dated June 25, 1879, the governor informed Bat that he had turned down the request.

Bat Masterson would go on to become one of the most famous figures in the West: confederate to Wyatt Earp, lawman, successful professional gambler, and prizefight promoter. He quit the West in 1902, moving to New York City where he became a newspaper columnist. He died at his desk at the age of sixty-seven on October 25, 1921.

Kinch Riley would die on September 16, 1879, from dropsy. The September 20 edition of the Dodge City *Times* reported, "The deceased was about 35 years of age, and spent about fifteen years on the frontier in various capacities. He was in the memorable Adobe Walls fight with Indians in 1873, and had been wounded and bruised in a number of personal encounters. He has undergone many severe trials and exposures, and made many narrow escapes."

Prairie Dog Dave Morrow, after several years as a part-time lawman in and around Dodge, retired to the Kansas State Soldiers Home at Fort Dodge where he died on October 18, 1893, at the age of fifty-six.

J.J. Webb would become involved in the fight between the Santa Fe and Denver & Rio Grande railroads for control of the right of way through the Grand Canyon of the Arkansas at Cañon City, Colorado. In 1880, Webb was made a policeman of Las Vegas, New Mexico, where in that capacity he shot and killed a man, a crime for which he was tried and sentenced to die. Dave Rudabaugh would help Webb in an unsuccessful escape attempt, in the process killing Lino Valdez. Later, Webb would successfully escape along with Rudabaugh and three other men. Very little is known about Webb's wanderings after the escape, but it is known that he died in Winslow, Arkansas, of smallpox on April 12, 1882.



# The Mysterious Shooting of Matt Burts

By Harold L. Edwards



New Mexico State Archives: Corrections Dept. Records, Neg #2227

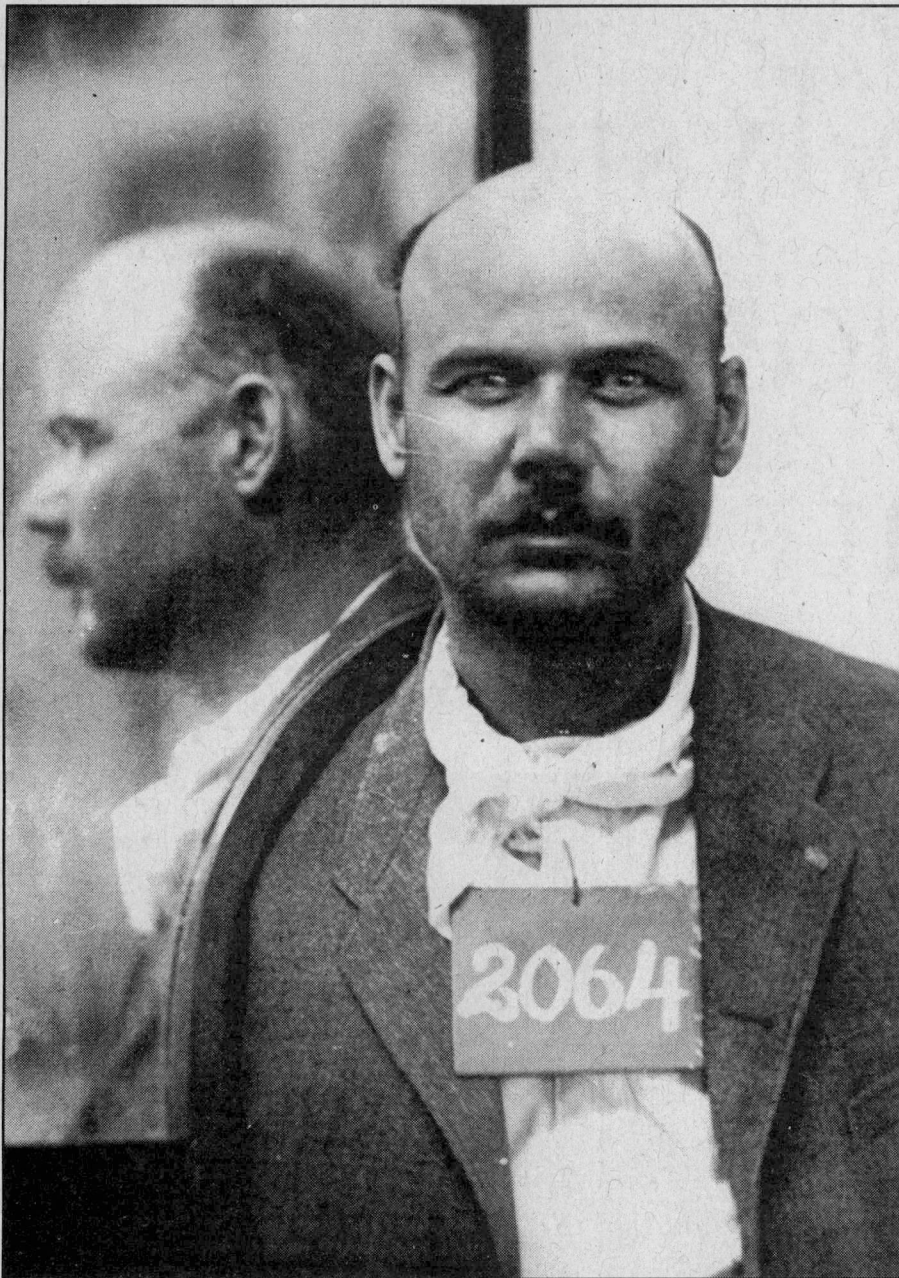
Matt Burts on his entry into the New Mexico State Penitentiary on November 25, 1907.

In 1897, Matt Burts rode into Cochise County, Arizona, from New Mexico and secured work on cattle ranches in the Sulphur Springs Valley, where he quickly earned a reputation as a tough but competent cowhand. He also became acquainted with Burt Alvord and Billy Stiles, the constable of Willcox and his deputy. His friendship with Constable Alvord

and his deputy involved Burts in a train robbery that resulted in his serving a term in Yuma prison. After his release from the penitentiary Burts followed a path of violence and confrontational behavior that culminated in his death some three decades later when he was killed during a mysterious gunfight in California.

There was nothing in Burts' begin-

nings to portend his troubled future and violent end. He was born in Hamilton County, Texas, in 1870 to Henry and Elizabeth Burts. He was the fifth-born child in the family, preceded by James, Nancy, Thomas, and George. His parents were of southern stock: his father born in Louisiana and his mother in Arkansas. At the time of Matt's arrival, his father was a cattle raiser.



Yuma Prison State Park

Willcox, Arizona, Constable Burt Alvord was the mastermind behind the Cochise Station train robbery. He served a prison term for his part in the holdup.

It is not known when or why the family migrated into New Mexico, where Matt learned the ways of the cattle ranges and became an excellent cowboy. He also learned to use intoxicating liquors liberally, and he became proficient in the use of firearms. His activities beyond working as a cowboy in New Mexico are not known, and the reason for his leaving New Mexico for Arizona is not clear.

✓ In 1899, Constable Alvord and Deputy Stiles planned to hold up a Southern Pacific train in Cochise

County, and they hoped their positions as law enforcement officers would shield them from suspicion. However, they needed assistance in accomplishing the robbery and they enlisted Burts and William Downing, two part-time deputies under Alvord. In September, their plan was completed and set in motion.

On the night of September 9, 1899, the westbound train made a scheduled stop at Cochise Station, about twenty miles southwest of Willcox. Matt Burts and Billy Stiles,

with pistols drawn and handkerchiefs pulled up over the lower part of their faces, climbed into the locomotive cab and confronted the engineer and fireman. The bandits ordered the train moved to a place about one and one-half miles down the tracks. When this was accomplished, the cars behind the express car were disconnected and left behind. The locomotive and the express car were taken about a mile farther to a spot selected by the bandits.

After the train was stopped the second time, the bandits ordered Express Messenger Charles Adair to open the express car door. Adair complied with the demand, and the bandits entered the express car and blew the safe open with dynamite. After taking an undisclosed amount of money from the safe, the bandits simply walked north from the railroad tracks and disappeared into the dark. When out of sight of the train crew, the bandits mounted horses that were either held for them by a third party or left there for them by William Downing.

As the bandits rode from the robbery scene, the locomotive engineer backed his part of the train to the disconnected cars and reconnected them. He then moved the train back to Willcox, where he reported the robbery to Constable Alvord, other officers, and to Southern Pacific company officials. Alvord notified Cochise County Sheriff Scott White in Tombstone of the robbery and then organized a posse to pursue the bandits.

While all of this went on, the bandits slipped into town and, according to their plan, left the robbery loot in the Alvord home. Afterwards, Burts and Stiles went to the business district and joined the posses searching for the outlaws. The bandits' horses' tracks were found at the robbery scene by officers and trailed into Willcox, where they were lost. The bandits were not identified, and the Cochise robbery went unsolved, although Wells, Fargo's ace detective, John Thacker, continued to work on the case. During this time, Burts quietly left

the area.

The loot from one train robbery didn't satisfy Alvord and Stiles, whose appetites were whetted by the success of their first robbery. They gathered another crew to help with their second holdup, and on the night of February 15, 1900, they attempted to rob a train while it was stopped at the Fairbank depot, about forty miles southwest of Willcox. However, Jeff Milton, a noted frontier lawman and gunfighter, was the express messenger at the moment, and when several bandits tried to enter the express car he opened fire on the outlaws with his shotgun. Milton mortally wounded one of the bandits; however, he was also seriously wounded during the ensuing gunfight. Nonetheless, Milton drove the bandits away and saved the money shipments.

The bandits were quickly identified and arrested, including Alvord and Stiles. Stiles quickly turned evidence for the prosecution, and implicated Alvord, Burts, and Downing in the Cochise Station robbery. Eventually, all but two of those involved in the holdups were convicted and sent to Yuma prison.

Matt Burts was located in Evanston, Wyoming, and on March 28, 1900, he was arrested by Cochise County Deputy Sheriff Bert Grover and returned to Arizona. On December 6, 1900, Matt Burts, the first of the four defendants to stand trial as a result of the Cochise Station robbery, appeared before the district court and pleaded guilty to a charge of assault to commit robbery. He was sentenced to serve five years in the prison at Yuma. He entered the institution on December 14, 1900, as prisoner #1716. However, Burts didn't serve his complete sentence because Arizona Governor Nathan Murphy pardoned him on April 18, 1901.

After his release from prison, Burts returned to Cochise County and became employed as a cowboy on Bob Warren's ranch near Willcox. During June 1901, while gathering cattle for shipment, Warren rode past Burts, who unex-



Yuma Prison State Park

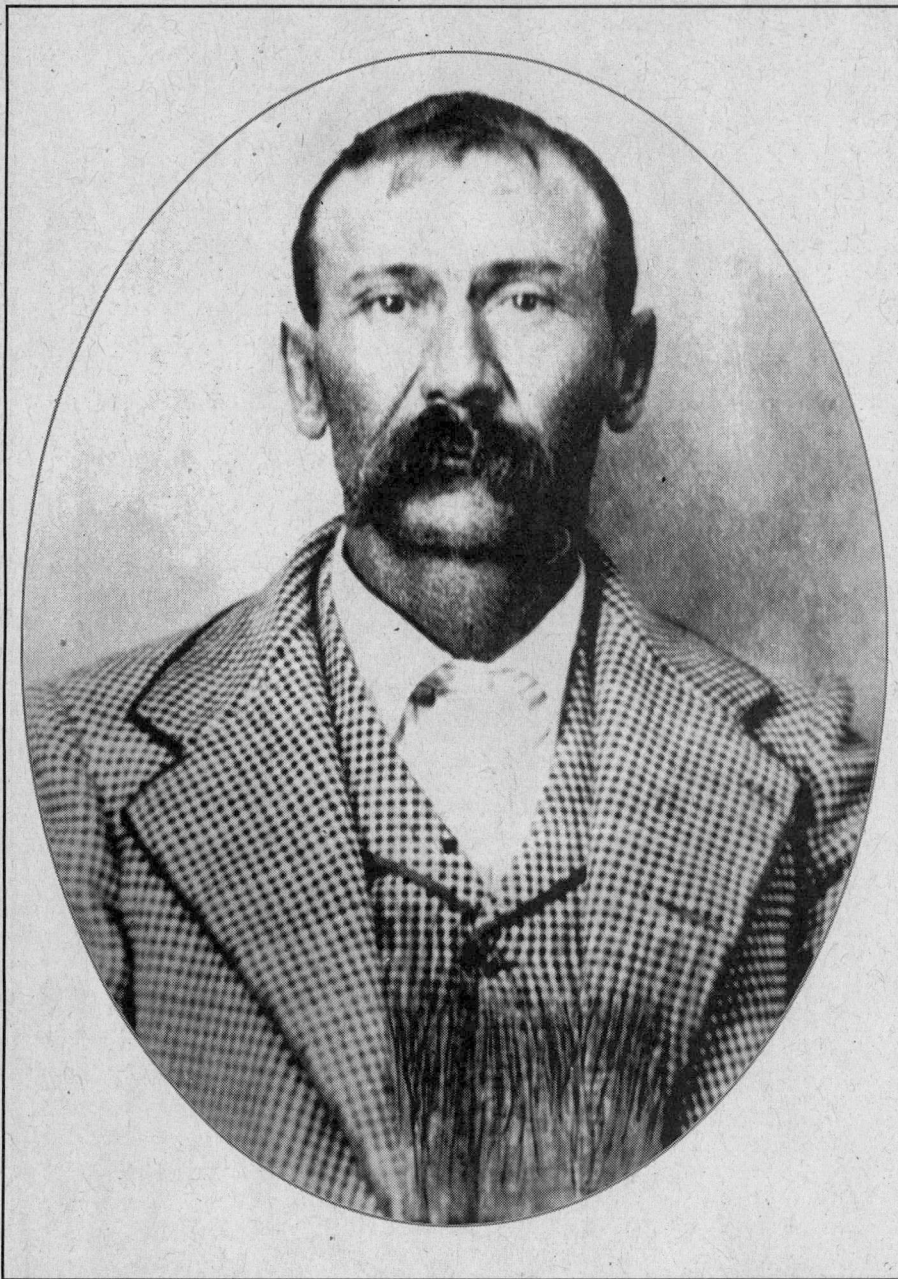
Billy Stiles held up the Southern Pacific train at Cochise Station with Matt Burts but avoided a prison term by turning state's evidence.

pectedly called Warren some vile names. Burts accused Warren of making false and disparaging remarks about some of Burts' friends. Burts went on to say he had no use for Warren and challenged his employer to a fist fight because neither man was armed.

Warren tried to reason with Burts and avoid trouble, but Burts continued to pressure Warren for a fight. Finally, Warren accepted Burts' offer to fight, and both men dismounted from their horses. After taking off their gloves and spurs,

Warren and Burts faced off and in the ensuing brawl Warren handed Burts a sound thrashing. Burts said he had enough of fighting and that he and Warren should be friends. Warren agreed with Burts and the two men shook hands. Burts and Warren, and perhaps others of the crew, rode to the nearby Johnson ranch house, probably for rest and refreshment. While in the house, Burts, unseen by the others, stole a loaded pistol and concealed it on his person.

While en route back to the cattle



Yuma Prison State Park

William Downing participated in the Cochise Station robbery, was convicted, and served time behind bars for the crime.

herd, Burts renewed his quarrel with Warren. The argument became heated, and Burts drew the revolver and threatened Warren. Without warning, Burts fired a shot at the cattleman. The shot struck Warren in his left arm but didn't knock the man from his horse. Warren challenged Burts to kill him, claiming that he was unarmed and helpless and an easy victim. Burts, apparently moved by Warren's defiance and courage, helped the wounded man from his horse and laid him on the ground. Burts used the wounded

man's saddle to pillow his head, and he led Warren's horse to a position to shade the injured cattleman. Burts rode to the Johnson house and reported the shooting. He asked that Warren not be taken to Willcox for one hour in order to give Burts a head start in his escape.

As Burts rode away, ranch hands took Warren to Willcox; however, his wound was serious and he was transported to the hospital in Tombstone for treatment. Warren ultimately recovered from his wound, and he filed a charge

against Burts of assault with the intent to commit murder. The Cochise County District Court issued a warrant for Burt's arrest, but the fugitive could not be located and the document was held in the sheriff's files.

Burts was believed by some to be in Montana; however, he had disappeared and for the next six years his whereabouts and activities remain unknown. As "Joe Wilson," Burts finally surfaced in Luna County, New Mexico, on June 4, 1907, when he shot-up the town of Deming. He was arrested and charged with drawing and flourishing a deadly weapon and drawing and discharging a weapon. He was released on bail pending his appearance in court during the November 1907, term. On November 20, the grand jury found a true bill and on November 22, Burts, whose true name was now known, pleaded guilty to the charges in the district court. Judge Frank Parker sentenced him to six months and one day in the territorial prison in Santa Fe.

Burts entered the prison on November 25, 1907, as prisoner #2227. At the time, he was thirty seven years of age and in good health, weighed 170 pounds, stood 5' 11" tall, and had light-colored hair and brown eyes. He was single and had supported himself since the age of fourteen. His parents were deceased, and he gave the name of his brother, Tom Burts, as his nearest relative. Burts was a model prisoner and he was released on expiration of his sentence on May 8, 1908.

While Burts was in prison, Luna County Sheriff Don Johnson asked all the surrounding county sheriffs, including those in Arizona, if Burts was wanted for criminal offenses in their areas. Cochise County Sheriff Don White responded that he wanted Burts on assault with the intent to commit murder, for the shooting of Bob Warren in 1901. As a result of this warrant, Arizona requested New Mexico to hold Burts for extradition to Cochise County for trial. However, Burts returned to Arizona voluntarily and pleaded not guilty to

the charge.

Several witnesses were ready to testify against Burts in his approaching trial, and to avoid the trial a plea bargain was arranged, whereby Burts would plea to assault with a deadly weapon without the provision of intent to commit murder. Burts pleaded guilty to the amended charge and was sentenced to one year and one day in the prison at Yuma. He entered the prison on May 29, 1908, as inmate #2814.

Once again, Burts was a model prisoner and with time off for good behavior he was released on March 28, 1909. After his release from prison, Burts returned to the cattle ranges of southern Arizona where he was employed as a cowboy and stock detective.

For the next ten years, Burts was employed at various times by the Arivaca Cattle Company, the Empire Cattle Company, and the La Osa Company. According to the *Tucson Citizen* of November 11, 1925, Burts was ostensibly hired by these companies as a cowhand, but his fighting abilities made him much more valuable to them in stopping cattle thieves that preyed relentlessly on the companies' herds.

According to this same article, at an unstated time in Pima County, Arizona, Burts and another Arivaca Company cowboy named Martin came upon some rustlers in the act of stealing cattle on or near the Mexican border. The rustlers chose to fight, and Burts and his companion took cover behind some boulders. Somehow, word of Burts' troubles was passed to the ranch headquarters, and cowboys were sent to help the besieged men. Also, the local military was advised of the trouble on the border. It was about eight hours before the cowboys and American troops arrived to relieve the besieged. At the moment of their rescue, Burts and Martin were covered with cuts and contusions caused by flying rock chips knocked loose from their barricades by the rustler's bullets; otherwise, they were uninjured. It was believed several rustlers were killed during the fight, but, apparently, the outlaws

carried their dead away when they fled.

After firmly establishing himself as a cowboy and stock detective who was handy with a gun, Burts took employment in 1919 with the Rock Springs Cattle Company in San Bernardino County, California. He was posted by the company as a guard at Government Holes, a water well in the desert about forty miles northwest of Needles. The company owned the well and needed a guard to reside on site to keep other cattlemen from using the water because there was no other range water nearby. Also, the owners needed a tough gunhand to curb the cattle rustling in the immediate area. It was a tough assignment for a tough man, and Matt Burts proved to be the man for the job.

Burts did an excellent job for his employers, but in 1923 he resigned from the position to range his own cattle in the area. He also prospected for minerals and was believed by local law enforcement officers to have manufactured bootleg liquor. He retained a room in the home of Mrs. L.A. Ridell, a seventy-two-year-old lady who resided in Lanfair with her sixteen-year-old grandson, C.H. Fulton. Ridell later recalled that Burts lived in her home about one year and that he was a fine man who respected women and called her "mother."

In November 1925, C.H. Fulton secured a job with the Gold Valley Mine, which was located about twenty-five miles southwest of Lanfair. He was to report for work on the morning of November 9, 1925, but he needed transportation to the mine on the evening of November 8. Mrs. Ridell drove her grandson to the mine in her Model T Ford. Burts went with them so Mrs. Ridell wouldn't have to make the return trip to Lanfair across the desert alone. En route to the mine, they would pass the cabin and watering corral at Government Holes, about seventeen miles southwest of Lanfair. Fulton drove the car, and when they arrived at Government Holes they stopped to fill the radiator.

Burts opened the corral gate, and Fulton drove the car into the yard. The cabin was occupied by the guard, J.W. Robinson, who had been hired by the cattle company some six months earlier. According to later newspaper reports, Robinson was hired because he was a man who "wouldn't run." Several of the previous guards at the well had been chased away by someone who had fired shots into the cabin. Shots had also been fired while Robinson was in the cabin, but he wasn't intimidated so easily.

As Burts walked up to the cabin, Fulton saw Robinson framed in the cabin doorway and asked, "May I get some water?" Robinson answered, "Why sure." Fulton walked to the well with a canteen, Burts entered the cabin, and Mrs. Ridell waited in the car. Suddenly, a number of shots were fired in the cabin, then silence.

Hearing the shots, Mrs. Ridell ran into the cabin and found Robinson lying on the bed and Burts sitting on the floor with his back against the wall. Both men were wounded. Robinson was conscious, and Mrs. Ridell asked him if Burts was dead. Robinson answered, "Get the hell out of here, and take that damned kid with you or I will kill you both." Robinson then added, "Go to that house over there and tell them there are two dead men here." Robinson didn't indicate any particular house, but since he was armed and hostile Mrs. Ridell didn't tarry and she and her grandson drove on to the Gold Valley Mine. At the mine, they deposited Fulton's belongings and got enough gasoline for the return trip to Lanfair. After they arrived in Lanfair, Mrs. Ridell and Fulton reported the shootings to Edward Farmer, who notified the county sheriff's office in San Bernardino.

Resident Deputy Sheriff Jack Brown of Ivanpah was contacted by his superiors and ordered to the scene to investigate. He was the first to arrive, and he found two dead men there as he had expected. At first, however, he thought a third party had killed both men and was

at large. He identified one body as that of Matt Burts, whom he knew. He didn't know who the other dead man was, although he had heard there was a guard at the well named Robinson. By telephone, he reported his findings and theory of what had happened to Sheriff Walter Shay, who was in San Bernardino.

Sheriff Shay dispatched Deputy Sheriff Jesus Amarias to assist Deputy Sheriff Brown in the investigation. On his way to Government Holes to meet Brown, Amarias picked up Deputy Sheriff James Lucas at Daggett, a railstop some sixty miles northeast of San Bernardino. Sheriff Shay advised the San Bernardino *Evening Telegraph* of the shootings, and on November 9, 1925, the newspaper reported the incident stating Burts was a "cattle puncher, bootlegger and two-gun man." The newspaper editor speculated on the motive for the shootings and dismissed robbery as the cause. He felt the murders could have been over a woman or a "cattle feud," perhaps meaning a dispute over the well water. At this point, however, little was actually known about the double killings and the curious waited anxiously for the investigation to proceed.

Initially, Deputy Jack Brown was certain R.H. Holiman had killed both Robinson and Burts because Holiman had a running feud with the Rock Springs Cattle Company over the water well at Government Holes. Holiman was suspected by officers of shooting at the cabin to intimidate the guards but no proof surfaced against him. Holiman seemed to have a particular grudge against Burts, who had arrested him in 1923 for stealing a Rock Springs Company calf. Holiman stood trial on the charge, during which it was revealed Holiman's troubles with the cattle company went back two decades. In 1923, Holiman engaged in a gunfight at the Holes with the guard, Pat Woods. Holiman's gun jammed, and he broke off the fight before anyone was killed or wounded. During his 1923 trial, Holiman openly stated Burts had been imported from Arizona specifically

to kill him. Also, Burts' reputation as a gunman was such that Holiman's attorney asked that Burts be searched for a weapon before he testify. Burts was searched, but no weapon was found. Holiman was released after the jury failed to arrive at a verdict. Deputy Jack Brown felt Holiman committed the murders out of revenge, but in short order he realized there was no third party involved and that Burts and Robinson had killed each other.

During the early morning hours of November 9, 1925, San Bernardino County Deputy Coroner Emmett Waters left San Bernardino for the murder scene to take charge of the victims' remains. He took two caskets with him. Later in the day, he held an inquest into the deaths, and the coroner's jury consisted of the foreman, Z. Farmer, Edward Farmer, Frank D. Murphy, Charles A. Gayle, and Frank Davis. By this time, both bodies had been identified. Testimony was taken from Deputy Brown, Mrs. Ridell, and Fulton. Brown testified as to the positions of the bodies when he found them, Robinson on the bed and Burts on the floor. He also described the nature of the wounds in both bodies and that it appeared they had killed each other. He could offer no motives for the shootings.

Fulton related events leading up to the shootings. He testified he had filled his canteen at the well and put the water in the car's radiator. He was at the well again filling his canteen when the shots in the cabin erupted. Mrs. Ridell's testimony confirmed that of her grandson, but she differed by saying the shooting in the cabin began immediately after Burts entered. She told of seeing Robinson lying on the bed and Burts on the cabin floor. She mentioned Robinson ordering her from the cabin.

Burts had been shot twice in the body cavity near his naval, and one bullet had glance off of his left cheekbone. His death had been instant. The coroner's jury found Burts' cause of death: "gunshot wounds in the abdomen inflicted by Bill Robinson with homicidal

intent." Robinson had died minutes after being shot. The coroner's jury found his cause of death: "by a bullet fired by Matt Burts which hit his front side by the left ribs, penetrated his body and exited his back about sixteen inches from his left shoulder blade. Death was inflicted by Matt Burts with homicidal intent."

The coroner's jury found no motives for the killings; however, the sheriff's office continued to investigate the murders because Sheriff Shay felt somehow Mrs. Ridell and her grandson were accessories to the killings. On November 11, 1925, Deputy Jack Brown arrested Mrs. Ridell and Fulton and lodged them in the San Bernardino County jail. Curiously, the prisoners had not been interviewed by officers since they testified in the coroner's inquest or before they were allowed interviews by newspaper reporters. Both prisoners restated to newspaper reporters what they had testified during the coroner's inquest. Mrs. Ridell, however, went on to say she blamed the shootings on "cow country gossip."

She said a rumor had floated about the area that indicated Robinson had said he was going to kill Burts. The latter, according to Mrs. Ridell, didn't know Robinson and had seen him only once prior to their pistol duel. On that occasion, Mrs. Ridell and Burts were riding on the range in her car when they met Robinson, who gave them a cordial greeting and rode on. At this point, Burts said, "There goes the fellow they say is going to kill me." Burts added, laughingly, that he didn't believe Robinson had ever said any such thing and it was all gossip.

Sheriff Shay informed newspaper reporters he was anxious to learn why Burts and Robinson, apparently unknown to each other and with absolutely no motive for shooting each other, met and blazed away with six-shooters at the sight of each other. Also, the lawman wondered why Mrs. Ridell and Fulton didn't report the shootings until after they returned to Lanfair when there was

## TWO GUNMEN CLASH IN DESERT FEUD, BOTH DEAD AFTER 'SHOOTING IT OUT'

### Agree Upon Reduction in Automobile Tax

#### HOUSE PARES DEEPLY INTO SURPLUS SUM

Have Only \$100,000,000 Left With Which to Grant Pleas for Relief

#### MAY HAVE TO PASS LIMIT

More of Tentative Rates in New Schedule Given Out Until Decision

By Associated Press  
WASHINGTON, Nov. 9.—The House today voted to reduce the automobile tax from 10 to 8 percent, and to reduce the tax on trucks from 15 to 12 percent. The vote was 275 to 137.

#### American Fliers Leave Moroccan Front With Alibi

By Associated Press  
ORAN, Morocco, Nov. 9.—American aviators who have been reported to have operated against the rebellious Spanish troops in Morocco, departing on their return to the United States, have been given an alibi. It is stated that the aviators were not in Morocco at the time of the operations reported to have taken place.

#### NATION'S AIR POLICIES ARE AGAIN TARGET

Mitchell's Counsel Blasts Away at Big Session of Court Martial

#### BACKS UP HIS OPINIONS OTHERS VENTURING CLOSE

Believes Attacks on Pacific and Shenandoah Flights Were Well Founded

By Associated Press  
WASHINGTON, Nov. 9.—An other member of the cabinet today attacked the aviation policies announced by the late Gen. Mitchell, president of the court martial, in a speech before the House.

#### RUM ROW HAS 14 CRAFT AS HOLIDAY NEAR

New Tactics Are Adopted to Meet Keen Opposition From Coast Guard

#### ARMY TRANSPORT LOADED WITH EXPLOSIVES FIRED UPON FOR RUM VESSEL

By Associated Press  
PORTLAND, Me.—Naval Coast Guard boats today reported five times in a row that they had fired upon a rum runner vessel in the Bay of Fundy.

#### Anti-Saloon League Finds 'People Have Right to Ask Enforcement of Liquor Law'

Deportation of Aliens, Use of Naval Ships Among Major Proposals Put Forth

By Associated Press  
PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 9.—The executive committee of the Anti-Saloon League today issued a statement in which it urged the enforcement of the liquor law.

#### WOMAN MAY BE INVOLVED

Another Dramatic Chapter of Coast History in Virginia With Land

By SAM S. GALT  
Matt Burts and Bill Roberts, founders and two-gun men of Government Station, met face to face Sunday night.

#### 'MAN WHO DID NOT RUN' AND 'FOE AIM TRUE'

One Found Sitting Against Wall, Legs Crossed, as Other Fell on Bed

By SAM S. GALT  
Matt Burts and Bill Roberts, founders and two-gun men of Government Station, met face to face Sunday night.

#### SAYS ALBANI NOT OF MEDICAL VALUE

Albani's Value as a Member of the Alvord Gang in Arizona He Was Described as "the last two-gun man" who died with his boots on as a result of an Old West-style shoot-out, a holdover from an earlier era.

The mysterious November 8, 1925, gunfight between Matt Burts and J.W. Robinson made headline news two days later in the *San Bernardino Daily Sun*.

opportunity for them to report the incident earlier. He also questioned why Mrs. Ridell and her grandson differed as to the exact time the shootings occurred. Later, Deputy Jack Brown and Deputy District Attorney C.O. Thompson questioned the prisoners, but they made no comments about the interviews to newspaper reporters. In any event, the prisoners were not released.

On November 12, Matt Burts' brother, Thomas Burts, who had been notified of Matt's death, arrived in San Bernardino County from Tucson to settle Matt's estate and to claim his brother's body, which was held in the mortuary at Needles. Thomas Burts also hoped to establish the motive for his brother's death. He interviewed Mrs. Ridell and others but failed to find the reason for the shootings. He informed the press that Matt's estate would not cover the expenses of his burial. Thomas Burts had planned to have Matt's remains transported to Tucson for burial; after funeral

services Matt Burts' body was interred in the Needles cemetery. Apparently, Robinson's widow, who resided in Los Angeles, claimed Robinson's remains for burial in that area. Walter B. Greening, president of the Rock Springs Cattle Company, informed newspaper reporters the company would arrange Robinson's funeral service. By November 18, Mrs. Ridell and her grandson were still being held in the 'San Bernardino' County jail. There were no charges filed against them, and Attorney Fred Wilson, who represented them, informed the press that if his clients were not released from jail immediately he would file a petition for writ of habeas corpus as they were held in custody illegally. Mrs. Ridell and Fulton were questioned once more by Deputy Sheriff Brown and Deputy District Attorney Thompson, but nothing new was learned from them and they were released from jail. No charges were filed against them.

Although several theories and

speculations were advanced why the gunmen shot it out, the true reason or reasons for the pistol duel never became public knowledge, and the motive for the shootings remained an unsolved mystery. Matt Burts, however, received widespread notoriety from his violent death. Newspapers reported his colorful past, back to the days when he was a member of the Alvord gang in Arizona. He was described as "the last two-gun man" who died with his boots on as a result of an Old West-style shoot-out, a holdover from an earlier era. Undoubtedly Matt Burts was an anachronism, whose life and times was best described by the inscription on his grave marker:

MATT BURTS  
1870-1925  
FAMOUS GUNMAN  
A PLACE, A TIME, A SPIRIT  
THAT NEVER WAS BEFORE,  
NOR  
EVER WILL BE AGAIN

# THE BATTLE OF POO

By Shirley Gilfert • Illustrated by Al Martin Napoletano



# STAKED PLAINS CANYON

Even before the cannons stopped booming at Appomattox, buffalo guns were booming on the western prairies. Ten years later, much of the southern herd was decimated and the feud between the buffalo hunters and the Indians was of long standing. In their quest for the woolly hides, the buffalo hunters had almost exterminated the livelihood of the Indians. The situation came to a climax in 1877 when the Comanches and some Kansas buffalo hunters fought it out in the Texas panhandle in a canyon on the Staked Plains. It was an undeclared war without sanction by the military, and although the buffalo hunters felt lucky to escape with their lives, it meant the end of Comanche war parties.

In the summer of 1876 about the only place where the buffalo remained in large enough numbers to make hunting them profitable was the Texas panhandle. A trader from Dodge City, Kansas, named Charlie Rath had established a trading post on a tributary of the Brazos called Double Mountain Creek. It was here the buffalo hunters made their headquarters.

A Comanche reservation lay to the east. Rations were slow in coming from the government that winter, and the Indians had been forced to kill some of their horses to keep from starving. They were becoming more and more angry, and one cold December night a group of 170 braves and their families, led by their renowned chief, Tu-ukuma, or Black Horse, quietly slipped off the reservation and headed for the Staked Plains. They established a winter camp in Thompson's Canyon, an ideal location with plenty of game and far enough from the camps of the buffalo hunters so that no one suspected they were anywhere near. Two troops of cavalry had pursued them until the soldiers ran into a heavy snowstorm. The cavalry turned back to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, warning buffalo hunters along the way that the Comanches were somewhere in the vicinity.



No one knew just where the Indians were camping, so three of the buffalo hunters decided to scout out their camp. Three days later, they returned, reporting that they had found Black Horse's party hiding in the Thompson Canyon region, at least twelve miles from the nearest buffalo hunter's camp. They suggested the Comanches were probably just tired of reservation rations and wanted to get a little fresh meat.

Nevertheless, rumors persisted that lone Indians had been spied "skulking around," and the nervous hunters, recalling the recent events at the Little Bighorn, were wary enough that they began to move their camps closer together and to post guards at night.

The buffalo were drifting southward, and Johnny Cook moved his camp along. One night as he was hobbling his horses in a broad, grassy ravine, a bullet whizzed past him just as he had finished the last horse and was picking up his gun. The heavy boom of a buffalo gun answered the crack of the rifle from on a high hill nearby, and a hunter called out, "Injun shootin' at you, Cook!"

One night Pat Garrett came tearing through the camps on a horse that had been ridden almost to death, warning hunters that they had better get moving and head toward Rath's trading post, for the Comanches were sure to attack. Several hunters had dealt with the Indians before and agreed that Pat was right.

The hide men began the trek towards Rath's, but then they ran into a fine herd of buffalo. They couldn't resist the opportunity to get a few more hides.

On February 22, 1877, Cherokee Louie Keyes came into Cook's camp to warn him. Comanche scouts had made a swift foray into Billy Devin's camp, which was closest to the Comanche camp in Thompson Canyon. They had destroyed the camp, although the buffalo men had escaped. Another camp where two Englishmen had been hunting, had been burnt out; there was no

sign of those men anywhere.

The next day exhausted buffalo hunters kept streaming into the trading post on Double Mountain Creek all day long, some 300 of them in all. They began to check for hunters who hadn't come in. Where was Marshall Seole? His camp was very near to Billy Devines' and that had been destroyed. Someone should warn him.

A party was organized and early the next morning they headed out, barely stopping until they had traveled a good forty-five miles. As they prepared camp for the night, they saw a white man limping toward their campfire. Exhausted, he dropped down by the fire, and told them what had happened to his boss, Marshall Seole.

Two days before, he and Seole's other skinner had started out with the hide wagon to follow Seole's kill when they heard shooting. Fifty mounted Indians were circling a buffalo wallow on the prairie, coming in closer with every round. In the center, they could hear Seole's big buffalo gun booming. Finally the Indians came together in a tight little knot and the buffalo gun was silent.

The skinner quickly turned their wagon and dashed back towards camp, but the Comanches had spotted them and were in hot pursuit. When the hunters saw they couldn't outrun them, they headed their team toward a deep ravine and ran their horses over the edge, jumping to safety and hiding in the brush, where they managed to evade the Indians. When it was dark, one of them headed toward the camp of the Englishmen, not knowing it had been burnt out; the other struck out on the fresh trail of these hunters.

When a messenger got back to Rath's with the news that Seole was dead, the buffalo hunters wanted confirmation. Eighteen men set out and located the mutilated body of Marshall Seole, two strips of his scalp removed, and his buffalo gun missing.

Seole had been well liked by all the buffalo men. He was articulate, well educated, and considerate in

his dealings with everyone. When the men returned with Seole's body, the buffalo hunters gathered at the trading post, milling around, grumbling that those Comanches deserved the same thing Custer got.

The young bartender suddenly jumped up on top of a salt barrel. He was called Limpy Jim, because a bullet in his thigh, a souvenir from earlier battles, had affected his stride but not his courage. His real name was Jim Smith, or so he claimed. He shouted above the din, "Men, what those Comanches need is a lesson!"

Limpy wasn't referring to calling in troops. Had it been proposed, the men would have declared the idea ridiculous. The majority of the buffalo hunters had been in the Civil War and were experienced with military tactics. They were convinced this was not a job for the army, it was something they could handle themselves. The only dissenter was a man named Tom Lumpkins, who said he would have nothing to do with killing Indians.

Forty-five men were chosen from among those volunteering to go after the Indians. A veteran of the Indian Wars, Big Hank Campbell, was appointed commander of the expedition, with Limpy Jim and Joe Freed as his lieutenants.

They started out the next morning and just as they were leaving, "Old Man" Godey's outfit came limping in with four more wounded, victims of another foray by the Comanches. This brought a new wave of enthusiasm to the expedition. The company rode out amidst much cheering and hat-waving.

Thirty mounted hunters and fifteen more on foot to guard the wagons carrying their supplies left Rath's supply camp that morning. They carried 250 rounds of ammunition for every man, plus powder, bar lead, primer, and reloading outfits. Shorty Woodson, a former druggist, was in charge of the medical supplies, and their guide was an English-speaking Mexican called Jose, who had scouted for General Ranald Mackenzie. Ben Jackson served as quartermaster and issued

the grain for the horses. A fellow called Powder Face Hudson kept a roster of guards, who were to be rotated regularly.

Most of the men had fought with either the Union or Confederate armies during the war and were accustomed to military regulations. They all had had continuous practice with the Sharps buffalo gun and most of them had developed an uncanny judge of distance and accuracy.

It took several days before they reached the escarpments of the Staked Plains. Once there, they had great difficulty in getting their wagons to the top, but by passing along the base until they reached a narrow, winding incline, they then doubled their teams and slowly snaked the wagons to the top.

On the upper level they found a dim trail, obviously made by the Comanches. Gleefully, they started following it and spent that whole day tracking. At mid-afternoon the next day, Jose, who had been riding on ahead with Cook and Louie Keyes, spotted the Comanche camp. He hurried back to warn the hunters. Hiding their wagons in a gorge, the buffalo hunters boldly made camp for the night within two or three miles of the Indian village.

In the darkness that night, they laid their plans for attacking the Indian camp. The wagons were to be left behind. Hank Campbell divided the men into three groups, and issued simple orders. He would command half the mounted men, Limpy Jim the other half. Joe Freed would be in charge of the unmounted men, and Old Man Godey, Jim Cook, and Jose would serve as scouts. Limpy Jim's men were to charge through the village at dawn and run off the Indians' horses. They were confident they could exterminate the entire village, even though they knew they would be outnumbered.

Darkness came and the three scouts, their horses' hoofs muffled with grain sacks, started up the canyon. They determined the trail by lighting a match under a blanket from time to time. It was near

morning before they located the camp and rode back to get the rest of the hunters.

Shortly after sunup the next morning, the three divisions made up of fifteen men each, stopped at the head of Pocket Canyon. Campbell arranged the two mounted platoons about 200 yards apart and put the "foot soldiers" in between them. Now they were ready.

"All right" shouted Campbell.

Limpy Jim echoed with, "Go for 'em, boys!"

Louie Keys, a Cherokee half-blood, began his Indian war chant and John Cook, Joe Jackson, and a man known as Squirrel-eye, all Confederate war veterans, gave out the Rebel yell as they charged in.

The Comanche tipis came into view and the Indians could be seen running to a low hill and shooting

**Joe Jackson tumbled from his saddle and Bill Devin and Cook leapt from their horses to drag him to safety. Devin fell with a groan as a bullet shattered his arm. The wounded Jackson shouted for them to lie down or they would all die.**

at a distance of 200 yards. It was sure death to continue in the face of their fire, so Hank Campbell ordered the men to "Fall back into the canyon!"

Before they could obey, Joe Jackson tumbled from his saddle and Bill Devin and Cook leapt from their horses to drag him to safety. Devin fell with a groan as a bullet shattered his arm. The wounded Jackson shouted for them to lie down or they would all die. Meanwhile, Grimes crept up to help, and the four men, three of them bleeding, hunkered down to wait for what seemed like sure death.

Hank Campbell's men had made it into the draw. They were watching the fight in front of them, unaware that 100 Comanche warriors were creeping up the gorge behind them. The wounded men lying out

in the open saw stealthy movement behind Campbell's troops and began to shoot. When the hunters swung around with rifles blazing, the Comanches rapidly retreated, dragging six wounded warriors with them.

Now Crook, Devin, and Grimes had an opportunity to reach shelter. They crawled down from their exposed position, dragging the seriously wounded Jackson with them. High on a hill Seole's stolen buffalo gun roared loudly above the bark of the Winchester rifles.

The Comanches, now mounted, rode wide circles around the white men. The hunters sought advantageous places, part of them facing around to protect their rear. The Indians flashed across one draw after another, whooping as the hunters' rifles blazed. Some of the

horses went down. One warrior, whose horse was shot out from under him, headed for the safety of a ravine. When he had about thirty more feet to go, the heavy slugs of a buffalo gun ripped the sod all around him. He dived to the ground, and the hunters turned their attention elsewhere.

Hank Campbell and Limpy Jim held a quick conference. They realized they had to get out of the draw and try to rescue the foot soldiers under Joe Freed's command. Hank issued orders for Smith to take the horses and wounded men down a side ravine to a nearby watering hole, while the rest of the men climbed out of the ravine and fired at the camp until Joe's men could get away.

As the men crawled up on the crest of the draw, they were about 400 yards from the Indian camp.

They could see a big herd of horses off to the left and a tall pole with a red banner flying from it, obviously some sort of Indian signal. To the right, high on a bluff, a warrior was flashing messages with a mirror to

Mescalero Apaches.

The Indians ceased fire. Black smoke began to billow down the draw. The Indians had set the grass on fire. Behind the smoke rode a young warrior on a white horse,

hole and the wounded were calling for water. Ben Jackson, a brother of the seriously wounded Joe Jackson, crept out toward the span and returned with his riding boots filled with water. Shorty Woodson did his

**The Comanches, now mounted, rode wide circles around the white men. The hunters sought advantageous places, part of them facing around to protect their rear.**



his comrades below. Suddenly a fusillade of bullets hummed over their own heads.

"Let the camp alone," Campbell shouted. "Comb the grass this side of it."

The crest was swept from end to end with about 300 rounds of bullets. Then the hunters turned their attention back to the camp, this time choosing individual targets to shoot at. By now, Freed had succeeded in getting his men out of danger.

Jose, the Mexican guide, had been wounded in the shoulder. Nevertheless, he wore a big grin on his face, as he remarked to his comrades that they had chosen a hornet's nest to fight. No truer words could have been spoken, for instead of the 100 Comanches they expected, there were nearly 300, and they had just been joined by a large band of

wearing a magnificent war bonnet. He rode directly in front of them, drawing the fire of a half dozen of the buffalo hunters. First the horse fell, then the young brave.

From the other direction, warriors appeared, waving their lances and uttering the Comanche war cry. They halted just out of range of the buffalo hunter's guns, evidently trying to draw attention to themselves while a different group attacked from another direction. The hunters weren't fooled, however.

Behind the smoke of the upper draw came a rush of Comanche warriors. The smoke screened them at first, but when they broke through the roar of the buffalo guns was immediate. Many warriors went down, and the others retreated.

Down in the gully where the wounded were, they had made it to about fifty yards from the watering

best to bind up the wounds of the injured men. Then he supplied them with a big swig of whiskey.

Soon all the men became aware that the Indians were no longer firing at them. The scouts advanced cautiously and discovered that the entire Comanche camp had pulled out.

No attempt was made to follow them. The hunters figured they were lucky to escape with their lives and they were anxious to get their wounded back to the trading post. Jackson, the most seriously wounded, had been hit in the groin by the buffalo gun stolen from the murdered Seole. He died shortly after reaching camp, the only white fatality of the Battle of Pocket Canyon.



# COMMODORE PERRY OWENS

By Larry Willis

**July 29, 1852**—Commodore Perry Owens is born in the hill country of eastern Tennessee. He is named for Oliver Hazard Perry, the naval hero of the War of 1812. While Commodore is still quite young, his father moves the family to Indiana.

**1868**—Commodore Owens leaves home at age sixteen. Possibly to get away from an abusive father, he drifts through the western states and territories for the next thirteen years. He works as a cowboy, bronco buster, and wrangler. During his travels, he hunts buffalo to supply meat for railroad construction crews.

**July 1873**—Owens, now twenty-one, is working at the Hillary Rogers Ranch in northeast Indian Territory. Here he works as a wrangler and occasionally serves as a range detective. He also enjoys hunting with William Grant Rogers, the ranch owner's son.

**Late 1870s**—According to Blevins family tradition, Owens, while working as a cowboy in Texas, meets Andrew Arnold Blevins and the two engage in horse theft together. The two part ways after a falling out over a "loose woman."

**1880**—Owens returns to working with cattle near White Oaks, New Mexico.

**1881**—Owens drifts into Arizona, settling in Apache County. He works for several large cattle companies, including the Ziegler Brothers Ranch and the Billings Land and Cattle Company.

**June 24, 1882**—A group of cowboys ride into St. Johns, Arizona, and disrupt a Mexican fiesta to San Juan. A gunfight breaks out and the Mexicans take several cowboys into custody. According to Dane Coolidge, Commodore Perry Owens breaks things up and frees the cowboys.

**1883**—Owens files a homestead claim eighteen miles south of Navajo Springs, Arizona, and begins raising horses.

**September 1883**—Owens is arrested for shooting and

killing the son of a Navajo chief named Din-ahjin-ne-begay. Federal authorities in Albuquerque, New Mexico, first examine the case but it is decided Owens should be tried by territorial authorities. He is sent back to Holbrook, Arizona, to stand trial for the murder.

**October 3, 1883**—Owens pleads innocent in the court of F.M. Zuck. Bessie Hauck, wife of friend James D. Hauck, testifies that Owens was at the Haucks' house all day when the Indian boy was killed. Owens is subsequently acquitted.

**1885**—A family by the name of Blevins moves to Arizona from Llano County Texas. With them is Andrew Blevins, now going by the alias of Andy Cooper.

**December 27, 1885**—The Apache County treasury is robbed of \$11,000 in cash, which is never recovered. This stirs discontent among the people with county officials and some begin looking for a new sheriff.

**October 1886**—Owens rides with Lew Lynch to bring in Pat Maher for shooting J.G. Berry near Immigrant Springs, Arizona. Later the same month, Owens is selected to run for sheriff on the Law and Order ticket.

**November 1886**—Owens is elected sheriff of Apache County, beating out Lorenzo Hubble, the former sheriff.

**January 1887**—Owens takes office. He appoints Joe T. McKinney as his undersheriff. At McKinney's suggestion, Owens sends for Jeff Milton in New Mexico to also be a deputy. Milton doesn't get along with Owens and soon leaves for another job.

**March 1887**—Sheriff Owens arrests Jamie Stott for horse theft. Army Colonel Benjamin Grierson asks Sheriff Owens to help catch Andy Cooper, who recently stole a herd of horses from the Navajo reservation. Previously, Grierson had refused to help Owens capture some Indians that had killed three posse members in February. Owens threatens to bring a large posse onto the reservation and get the killers, so Grierson moves the suspects to New Mexico, calling Owens "a desperate determined and ignorant man."

COMMODORE  
PERRY OWENS



TRIDE

WEST

SDZENGEL



**March 1887**—Joe McKinney resigns as undersheriff in a dispute over who was responsible for the escape of some prisoners.

**April 1887**—At the urging of Will Barnes and some other cattlemen Owens hires J.V. Brighton as deputy. Brighton and Deputy Albert Miller are dispatched to capture Ike and Phin Clanton. On April 13 the posse catches Phin Clanton and deposits him in the St. Johns jail.

**June 1, 1887**—Ike Clanton rides up to the ranch house where Brighton and Miller had spent the night. Realizing his mistake, he attempts to flee, pulling his gun as he rides away. Brighton shoots Clanton in the side of his chest, killing him. Meanwhile, Owens is in another part of the county arresting John Payne, a man the newspaper called “a bad man from Bitter Creek” and “an especially notorious outlaw.” Five days after his arrest Payne is released on bail.

**August 9**—John Payne, Hamp Blevins, and some other cowboys shoot it out with Ed and Jim Tewksbury and others. Payne and Blevins are killed in what becomes the first real “battle” in the Pleasant Valley War.

**August 17**—Billy Graham is shot and killed. Before he dies, Graham claims it was Ed Tewksbury who shot him. Deputy James Hauck later claims he pulled the trigger on Graham in self defense, possibly to cover for Tewksbury.

**September 2**—Looking to avenge the death of his brother, Andy Cooper leads a band of men to the Tewksbury cabin and kills John Tewksbury and William Jacobs.

**September 4**—Two days after the killings Andy Cooper is at his family home in Holbrook. Owens arrives in town looking for Cooper on a horse theft warrant. When he confronts Cooper at his house Cooper refuses to go with him. As Cooper shuts the door Owens lets loose with a shot from his rifle, hitting Cooper. John Blevins fires wildly at Owens, missing him and hitting a horse. Owens

spins and shoots again, hitting John in the shoulder. As Owens backs away from the house he sees Cooper through the front window and shoots through the house at Cooper again. Another man, Mose Roberts, jumps from a side window and is immediately shot by Owens. Young Sam Blevins runs from the house with Cooper's gun and takes aim at Owens. Owens fires again, hitting Sam in the chest killing him. Owens calmly mounts his horse and leaves town. The followup inquests exonerate Owens of any wrongdoing in the case.

**December 1887**—Owens goes to Missouri in pursuit of Kid Swingle, wanted for horse theft and stage and train robbery. He catches up with him in Texas. En route to Arizona, Swingle escapes custody by jumping from the train.

**May 30, 1888**—The poet bandit Red McNeil robs the Schuster store in Holbrook. McNeil leaves a poem daring Owens to catch him. Owens doesn't.

**September 1888**—John Blevins, the lone survivor of the shoot-out on September 4, is sentenced to five years in prison. As Owens is escorting Blevins to prison, word of a pardon reaches them in Flagstaff and Owens releases his prisoner.

**January 1889**—Owens returns to civilian life after being refused a second term in the sheriff's election.

**March 25, 1895**—Owens is appointed sheriff of the newly formed Navajo County. He also receives a commission as deputy United States marshal from Marshal W.K. Meade. When his first term of office is up, Owens tries for a second, but is defeated by Frank Wattron, his old deputy.

**April 30, 1902**—Owens has been running a saloon/mercantile store in Seligman, Arizona. At the age of fifty, he marries twenty-three-year-old Elizabeth Barrett.

**May 28, 1919**—After suffering from Bright's disease, Owens dies of paresis of the brain.

## WHAT TO READ:

*Gunfight in Apache County, 1887.* By Will C. Barnes, edited by Neil B. Carmony.  
Trail to Yesterday Books

*A Little War of Our Own: The Pleasant Valley Feud Revisited.* By Don Dedra.  
Northland Press.

*The Life and Legend of Commodore Perry Owens: an Illustrated History* By Larry Willis.  
Coming soon.

## WHERE TO GO:

**Holbrook, Arizona.** The Navajo County Historical Society has a museum in the old courthouse, where Owens had an office. Many of the old town's buildings still stand, including the Blevins house.

**Flagstaff, Arizona.** Owens' grave is located in Citizens Cemetery, Tract J, Block A, Lot 13, Space 2.

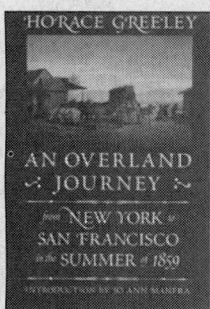


# BOOKMART



**710—THEY DIED WITH CUSTER: SOLDIERS' BONES FROM THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIGHORN.** By Douglas D. Scott, P. Willey, & Melissa A. Connor. The authors use historic sources, archeological evidence, and physical data to present new revelations about the men who rode and died with George Custer at the Little Bighorn. Through painstaking analyses of skeletal remains, the authors construct composite biographies of the soldiers, identifying ages, heights, states of health, and mode of death. A vast selection of illustrations, including photos, maps, drawings, and graphs, enhance the discussion. 419p. University of Oklahoma Press.

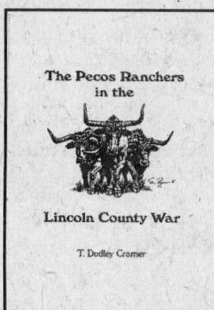
Cloth, \$29.95



**752—AN OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO IN THE SUMMER OF 1859.** By Horace Greeley. In the Spring of 1859, Greeley, the celebrated editor of the New York Tribune, set off to explore the projected central route for a transcontinental railroad. An inveterate reporter, Greeley commented on everything he saw, from prairie dogs to the wonders of Yosemite. His reports had an immeasurable impact on the reading public and its growing interest in the West. 397p. University of Nebraska Press.

NEW SELECTION

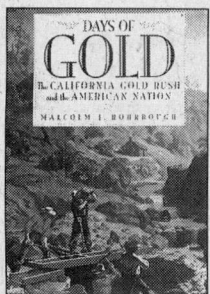
Paper, \$15.00



**706—THE PECOS RANCHERS IN THE LINCOLN COUNTY WAR.** By T. Dudley Cramer. Focusing on the Beckwith family, Cramer shares the story of the small ranchers from the Pecos Valley who played a prominent, often misinterpreted role in the Lincoln County War in New Mexico Territory. With rare exception these largely hard-working cattlemen and cowboys sided with the Murphy-Dolan-Riley partisans, believing strongly that the opposing forces of Tunstall-McSween and John Chisum were trying to oust them from the Pecos country. Cramer offers many rare, previously unpublished photos in this important history. 215p. Branding Iron Press.

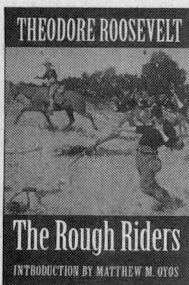
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**648—DAYS OF GOLD: THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH AND THE AMERICAN NATION.** By Malcolm J. Rohrbough. Described by the author as an "introduction" to the stampede for gold in California, this book provides far more than the usual historical introduction. Exhaustively researched and engagingly written, Rohrbough's *Days of Gold* explores the whys, whats, wherets, and wherefores of one of the most consequential sagas in American history and in the development of the American nation. "Rohrbough tell the story straight from the mouths (or pens) of those who lived it."—*Christian Science Monitor*. 373p. University of California Press.

Paper, \$16.95



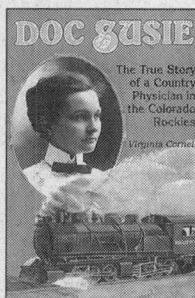
**730—THE ROUGH RIDERS.** By Theodore Roosevelt; introduction by Matthew M. Oyo. *The Rough Riders*, published the year after the Spanish-American War—or in Roosevelt's words, "the splendid little war"—is Roosevelt's account of the mustering of the regiment, many of the troopers of which came from the American West; the perils endured; and the horseback charge up Kettle Hill during the battle for San Juan Heights. This reprint gathers eleven important photographs from earlier editions of the work and also contains two new maps and an index. 320p. University of Nebraska Press.

Paper, \$12.95



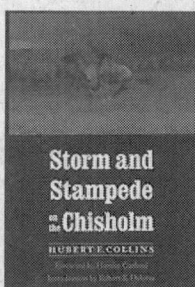
**532—SOILED DOVES: PROSTITUTION IN THE EARLY WEST.** By Anne Seagraves. *Soiled Doves* tells of the grey world of prostitution and the women who participated in the oldest profession. Colorful, if not socially acceptable, these women of easy virtue were a definite part of the early West. Illustrated with many rare photos, this book provides a touching insight into the lives of the ladies of the night. 173p. Wesanne Publications.

Paper, \$11.95



**588—DOC SUSIE: THE TRUE STORY OF A COUNTRY PHYSICIAN IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES.** By Virginia Cornell. Cornell offers the true story of Dr. Susan Anderson who arrived in frigid Fraser, Colorado, in 1907 a dying woman, but who recovered her health and then, known as Doc Susie, ventured forth on snowshoes, horseback, and train to save the lives of the inhabitants of the Rockies. So desperate were they for medical attention they didn't care that she was a mere woman. 237p. Manifest Publications.

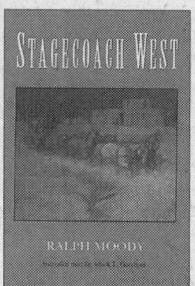
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**701—STORM AND STAMPEDE ON THE CHISHOLM.** By Hubert E. Collins. First published in 1928, Collins' autobiography chronicles the young ranch hand's life at the Red Fork Ranch on the banks of the Cimarron River in Indian Territory in the early 1880s. Learning much from rangy cowboys in residence and frontier characters passing through, Hubert enjoyed more adventure than he would ever know again. "Indeed irresistible"—*New York Times*. 332p. University of Nebraska Press.

NEW SELECTION

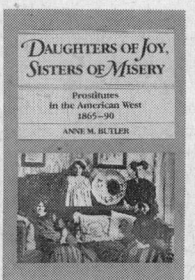
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**728—STAGECOACH WEST.** By Ralph Moody. First published in 1967, *Stagecoach West* is a comprehensive history of stagecoaching west of the Missouri. Starting with the evolution of overland passenger transportation, Moody moves on to paint a lively and informative picture of western stagecoaching, from its early short runs through its rise with the gold rush, its zenith by 1868, and beyond. Moody uses contemporary accounts, illustrations, maps, and photographs to flesh out his narrative. 359p. University of Nebraska Press.

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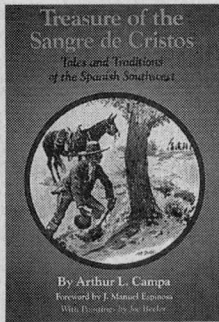


**001—DAUGHTERS OF JOY, SISTERS OF MISERY: PROSTITUTION IN THE AMERICAN WEST, 1865-90.** By Anne M. Butler. "Frail sisters," "fallen angels," "soiled doves"—whatever they were called, these women lived lives of nearly anonymous destitution. Butler's account of their lives bears scant resemblance to popular depictions in film and fiction. It reveals instead an existence on the brink of despair. 179p. University of Illinois Press.

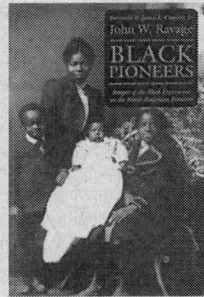
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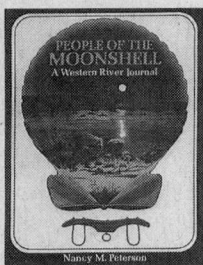
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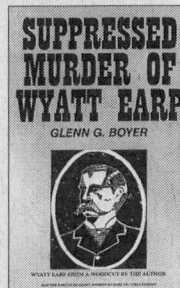
**516—TREASURE OF THE SANGRE DE CRISTOS: TALES AND TRADITIONS OF THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST.** By Arthur L. Campa; foreword by J. Manuel Espinosa. This collection includes stories of silver locked away in outlaw hoards, lost mines stacked with bars of gold, and fabulous Jesuit treasures buried when that order was expelled from New Spain. Not all of these folk treasures are of mineral wealth, however. There are also the legends of the Hermit of Las Vegas and of the lovelorn nun. 223p. University of Oklahoma Press. **Paper, \$13.95**



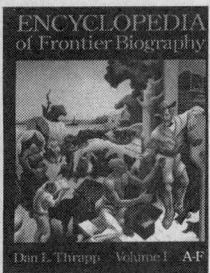
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**666—SUPPRESSED MURDER OF WYATT EARP.** By Glenn Boyer. Out of print for many years, this book by widely recognized Earp biographer Glenn Boyer aroused much controversy. The author relied heavily on family letters, interviews, and other first-hand accounts to complete this biographical study of the famed western personality. 135p. Historical Research Associates. **AUTOGRAPHED! Cloth, \$30.95**  
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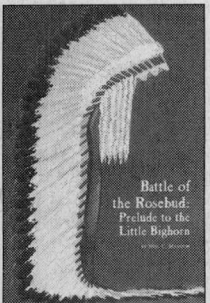
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**719—WESTERN TREASURE TALES.** By Choral Pepper. In an easy-flowing narrative, Pepper relates the fascinating stories of eight treasure sites in the West. The tales in this photo-rich collection include the Brazelton, the Blue Bucket, Treasure Mountain, Jarbridge, and others. 146p. University Press of Colorado. **NEW SELECTION! Paper, \$14.95**

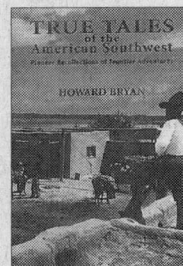


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 018—**Wild Towns of Nebraska.** By Lee. Well illustrated guide. 147p. Caxton Printers. **\$14.95p**  
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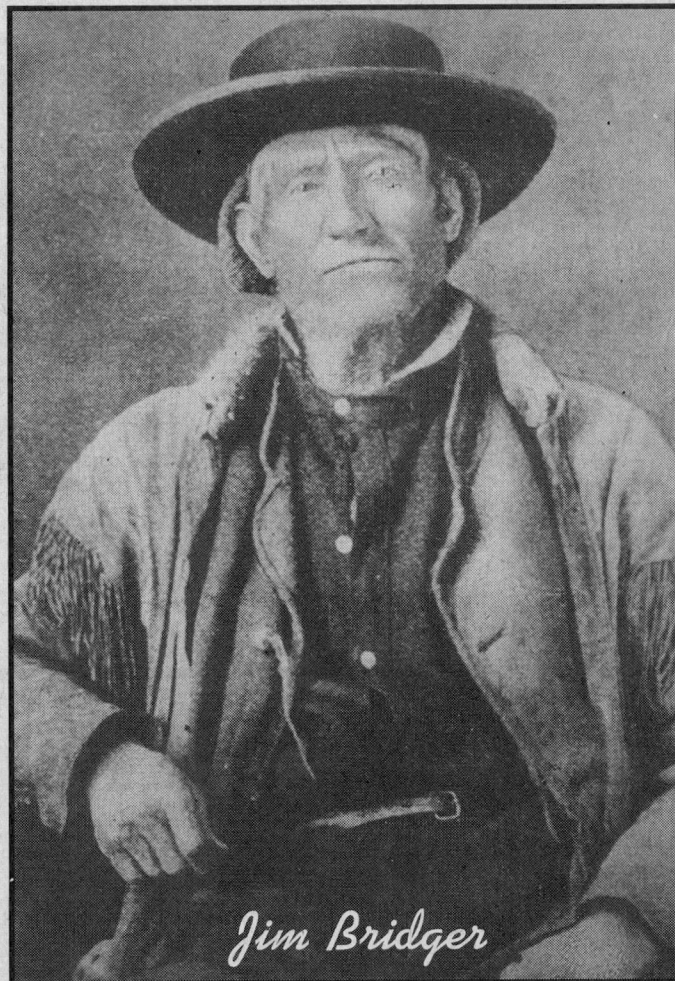
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# Daughter of a Legend

By Jean A. Mathisen

Western Publications' Archives



The old woman moved with a shuffled gait; the years and sorrows weighed heavily upon her back and she was tired, with no money and nowhere to go. She was a daughter of a legend among the mountain men—but legends are soon forgotten and do not fill one's empty plate at meal time. Most of her family was dead; bitterness could well have become part of her character, but she had been a survivor for over eighty years and would continue to be so. She was Virginia Rosalie Bridger Hahn, daughter of mountain man Jim Bridger.

Her mother had been a Ute Indian, Bridger's second wife, who died at Virginia's birth on Independence Day, 1849. The baby came squalling into a world of harsh times. Fort Bridger, as her father's crude trading post had been christened, consisted of a few log buildings with block houses he had recently built. The place did not impress many of the emigrants passing by in wagon trains headed for the promised gold of California or the promised peace of the Mormon settlements in Utah. Virginia would come to resemble her mother over the years—a stolid round-headed woman with intensely black hair and "not oppressed with

great lines of beauty."

Bridger, now without a wife to care for the tiny girl, improvised a pocket on his saddle to carry her in while he was checking traps near the post. Her mother's people felt the baby belonged with them and Virginia later related that they kept packing her off to their camps. Old Gabe, as Bridger was nicknamed, tired of tracking the baby down and finally fetched her from a tipi when he heard her crying out. Virginia said that when she was five years old Bridger decided to take her and her brother Felix to St. Louis to receive an education. Other sources state that Bridger actually took them to Missouri when Virginia was a year



Author's Photo

Jim Bridger's trading post, Fort Bridger State Historic Site.

old. Felix was placed in a Catholic school and Virginia, under the guardianship of Bridger's old friend, Robert Campbell, was put in a convent. Her older half-sister, Mary Ann, had likely died during captivity among the Cayuse Indians after the Whitman massacre of November 1847. Bridger family sources, however, claimed that Mary Ann was found alive and returned to her family to grow up. Other family tales also relate that Bridger's first wife was a Mormon woman who bore two sons by him. According to these sources, they divorced when Bridger would not convert to the Mormon way of life.

In Missouri, Jim purchased a farm near Thatcher, but did not remain long and soon returned to his old way of life back on the Blacks Fork. Bridger took a third wife, a

Shoshone Indian woman, who may have been a daughter of Chief Washakie of the Eastern Shoshones. By her he would have two more children. Bridger encountered difficulties with the recently arrived Mormon settlers in the Salt Lake Valley. They offered to buy out Bridger's trading post and when he refused, built Fort Supply a few miles distant to help outfit their wagon trains, thus bypassing Bridger's post and severely impacting his business. The church later claimed they did buy the post from his partner, Louis Vasquez, in 1855. Bridger was off guiding a hunting party, and Vasquez may have signed his partner's name to the paper (Bridger could not write). Bridger claimed he never saw the light of day on any money from the Mormons. In 1857, when the

United States Army marched on Utah during the so-called Mormon War, the Mormons instituted a policy of burning anything that might be of help to the soldiers. Fort Bridger was burned to the ground. The troops declared a military reservation at the site of the fort and took over the area until final abandonment in 1890. Years later, Jim Bridger's heirs received a \$6,000 settlement from the government for payment for the fort.

In 1864, Virginia was a lively fifteen-year-old young lady who married Captain Albert Waschman. Virginia later remembered, "I went with my husband on our honeymoon on a steamboat. He was ordered to go to Jefferson City with his battery, and from there we stayed a little while in St. Louis, and then he got orders to come back to

Jefferson City, to go in with the rest of the Company. They were stationed at Weisberg and Sedalia, and the war [Civil War] was going on awful then. It was dangerous and he said I had better go home. A government boat had to go up, and he said when the boat came down, for me to go back, so I went back to Kansas City on the steamboat....It was quite a while before the rebels came, but when they did, Dr. Vance said, 'Now ladies, I will have to press you into service as nurses.' I said, 'I am right here, ready, my husband might be out on that battlefield, and my brother, too.' Sure enough here come a message that Captain Waschman and brother got killed. Then the next message I got, he was all right....We helped the doctor there about two weeks. Both Southern and Union soldiers were brought in. It was a fearful sight....I am the only one left who waited on

those soldiers there."

She continued, "Once at Warrensburg, Missouri, all of the officer's wives were to fire cannons. They all backed out. The officers were ready to give orders to fire. There was eight pieces of artillery and they all backed out except me. They ordered the firing and I pulled the old string, 36 rounds I went.

"The rebels burned my father's house and all his belongings at Kansas City. Captain Waschman had Captain Harvey fix up papers and send them to Washington to have us paid for the loss, but that is the last we heard of it."

The Waschmans had one daughter, Mary C. Louise, born on June 30, 1875. She married Edward Jackson Lightle and had two daughters, Mary Louise and Helen Elizabeth. Mary Lightle died at the age of twenty-eight in 1903.

Captain Waschman was later placed in charge of Bridger's farm and is said to have spent most of the money and squandered the land. Jim Bridger died almost penniless in 1881. The last few years of his life, Virginia cared for him and spoke of how they would help him get on an old horse so he could ride out to the edge of his farm and gaze out towards the west—the blind, homesick, old man would not see the mountains again.

Captain Waschman died in 1883, and Virginia remained a widow for several years, until marrying Franz or Frank Hahn in 1892. She is also thought to have been married at least two or three other times—over the years she may have been married to a man by the name of Phillip Jackley, a man named Blevens, and a man named Martin. Generally, she went by the name of Virginia Bridger Hahn. She made

Jim Bridger's character played a large role in the film *The Covered Wagon*, but was portrayed as a hard-drinking "squaw man" with several Indian wives at one time.



her living at times as a dressmaker and by doing menial work. For a time she lived with her half-sister, Nellie Zane, a daughter by Bridger's last wife.

In 1922, Famous Players-Lasky motion picture corporation filmed the silent movie version of Emerson Hough's *The Covered Wagon* near Milford, Utah. Members of both the Shoshone and Arapaho tribes from the Wind River reservation in Wyoming provided prologues to the movie prior to showings at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, in New York City, London, England, and in France. Virginia was invited to the premiere of the film in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1923. Famous Players-Lasky thought it would be an excellent public relations move on their part, to have the old mountain man's daughter at the showing. Jim Bridger played a large role in the film, but was portrayed as a hard-drinking "squaw man" with several Indian wives at one time. (Bridger did have three Indian wives, but only one at a time, after the death of the prior wife.)

Virginia was horrified at seeing her father portrayed as a drunkard and womanizer in the film and soon filed a suit for one million dollars for defamation of character. The film company sent Tim McCoy, Wyoming's former adjutant general and friend of the Shoshones and Arapahos, to interview any remaining old timers who might have known Bridger and his actual character. McCoy traveled several hundred miles to interview William Schoolcraft of Van Buren County, Michigan, who remembered that Bridger could hold his own with liquor. He also interviewed J.D. Woodruff, pioneer of the Wind River and Big Horn basins in Wyoming. Woodruff had spent several periods in the hills with Bridger in the late 1860s and did not remember that Bridger drank at all. Liquor, however, was not readily available at the time either. McCoy found that what few old timers remained were reluctant to blemish the old trapper's reputa-



Author's Photo

Virginia Bridger Hahn's grave, Carter Cemetery, Fort Bridger State Historic Site.

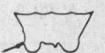
tion, as they had been just as wild in their younger days. Finally, rather than go to court and spend more funds on lawyers and a trial, the movie company settled a payment of \$5,000 to Virginia. The suit gave *The Covered Wagon* a great deal of publicity and the movie is not remembered as one of the first great Hollywood epics. One positive side to the story was that an agent who had long been looking for a V. Bridger, half-blood daughter of Jim Bridger, could now advise Virginia she had an allotment of land. She asked him to sell the land and received \$500.

In 1926, the community of Casper, Wyoming, invited her to spend her seventy-seventh birthday as an honored guest at their Fourth of July celebration. Virginia was pleased at the invitation and was interviewed by the local newspaper.

By 1931, Virginia was approaching her eighty-second birthday with no home and no money. Minnie Brown of Thermopolis, Wyoming, a relative of Chief Washakie's, extended an invitation for Virginia to come and live with her. Minnie was not well thought of in Thermopolis—in 1915 she had shot and killed her husband under questionable circumstances, although she claimed it was self defense. The Hot

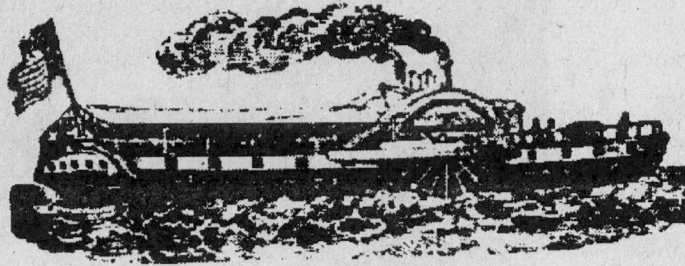
Springs County Pioneer Association honored Virginia at a reception in 1932 and some 150 people attended, including politicians and local dignitaries. Judge E.H. Fourt of the Ninth Judicial District gave a flowery keynote address and he and Virginia led the grand march at the following dance.

Her final year of life was a good one for the tough old woman. She did write some material on her father and hoped to write a book. A few months before her eighty-fourth birthday, Virginia Bridger Hahn passed away of pneumonia on March 7, 1933. Newspapers eulogized her as a pioneer of pioneers who had come home to her ancestral land. She only had a \$24 life insurance policy and friends had to take up a collection in order to see her properly buried at the Monument Hill Cemetery in Thermopolis. At the time a movement was afoot to acquire the site of old Fort Bridger as a state historic site. When the grounds were purchased a few years later, Virginia's remains were removed to the place of her birth and reburied at the Carter Cemetery at Fort Bridger. She had finally come home.



# DISASTER ON CADDO LAKE: THE BURNING OF THE *MITTIE STEPHENS*

By Johnny D. Boggs



**O**n a clear but chilly February afternoon in 1869, the “light draft passenger packet” *Mittie Stephens* began her routine run from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Jefferson, Texas. Originally scheduled to depart at 5 PM February 4, she apparently did not leave until twenty-four hours later, with scheduled stops at “Shreveport, Grand Bayou, Grand Ecore, St. Maurice, Cotile, Alexandria, Norman’s, Barbin’s, and all the way landings.”

For Captain Homer Kellogg, passengers and crew, this run would end in tragedy. A week later, 60 or more of the 109 passengers and crew would be dead, and Louisiana and Texas newspapers would be reporting “Another Terrible Disaster.” It was more than just “another” disaster, however. Most women aboard the steamboat died when the *Mittie Stephens* caught fire on Caddo Lake, Captain Kellogg vowed to “quit the river for good,” and the incident—“Louisiana’s worst peacetime river disaster”—would inspire poetry, myths, and treasure hunts for more than a century.

A 312-ton, three-boiler side-wheel-er built in Madison, Indiana, in

1863, the *Mittie Stephens* was 168.8 feet long, 29.8 feet wide, with a draw depth of 4.7 feet. Originally a troop transport, she was used from April 19 through July 25, 1864, during the Union Army’s Red River campaign. Later that year, she was sold to private enterprise, running first on the Missouri River and next on the New Orleans-Bayou Sarah route. After being rebuilt in 1865 to her current measurements, she was sold in March 1866 to Captain Maurice Langhorne to run the New Orleans-Red River route. By 1869, she was no longer considered new, by riverboat standards, but *The Daily Picayune* of New Orleans called her “a favorite in the Red River trade.”

The *Mittie Stephens* reached Shreveport, Louisiana, on Thursday, February 11, for a five-hour layover. The afternoon was warm as Captain Kellogg and clerk George Remer prepared to get under way. On the Commerce Street levee, passengers chatted with each other, friends and relatives. Twenty-nine-year-old Amelia Jordan Lyon, bound for Jefferson with her husband, T. Lytt Lyon, and her ten-year-old son Frank from a previous marriage, said goodbye to her mother.

Passenger J.W. Lively, who was

traveling the full voyage from New Orleans to Jefferson, and some friends left the steamboat when it arrived in Shreveport, and didn’t get back on board. In 1921, he told the Jefferson *Jimplecute*. “To this day we don’t know, can’t explain why we done it. But all at once we decided there to leave the *Mittie Stephens* when she touched the bank, we walked off and stood and watched the boat back out to turn for Jefferson whistling and blowing like a bad bull, head for the ‘Narried’ and the big lake that was her last.”

Lively was fortunate, as was First Clerk Cal F. Hayes. Shortly before sailing from New Orleans (some accounts say Shreveport), Hayes became sick and was replaced by Remer, a veteran clerk. Remer would have no such luck.

At 4 PM, Captain Kellogg gave the order to depart. On board were more than 100 passengers and crew, 274 bales of hay, eight to ten kegs of gunpowder, and \$100,000 in gold to pay Federal Reconstruction troops stationed in Jefferson.

As the sun set on Twelve Mile Bayou, torches were lit, and metal cages were filled with burning pine knots that glowed red. A short while later, the *Mittie Stephens* steamed into Soda Lake. At 10 PM, she

entered Caddo Lake (then also known as Ferry, or Fairy, Lake) through Willow Pass. From there, the *Mittie Stephens* would travel across the lake to Big Cypress Bayou and dock in Jefferson.

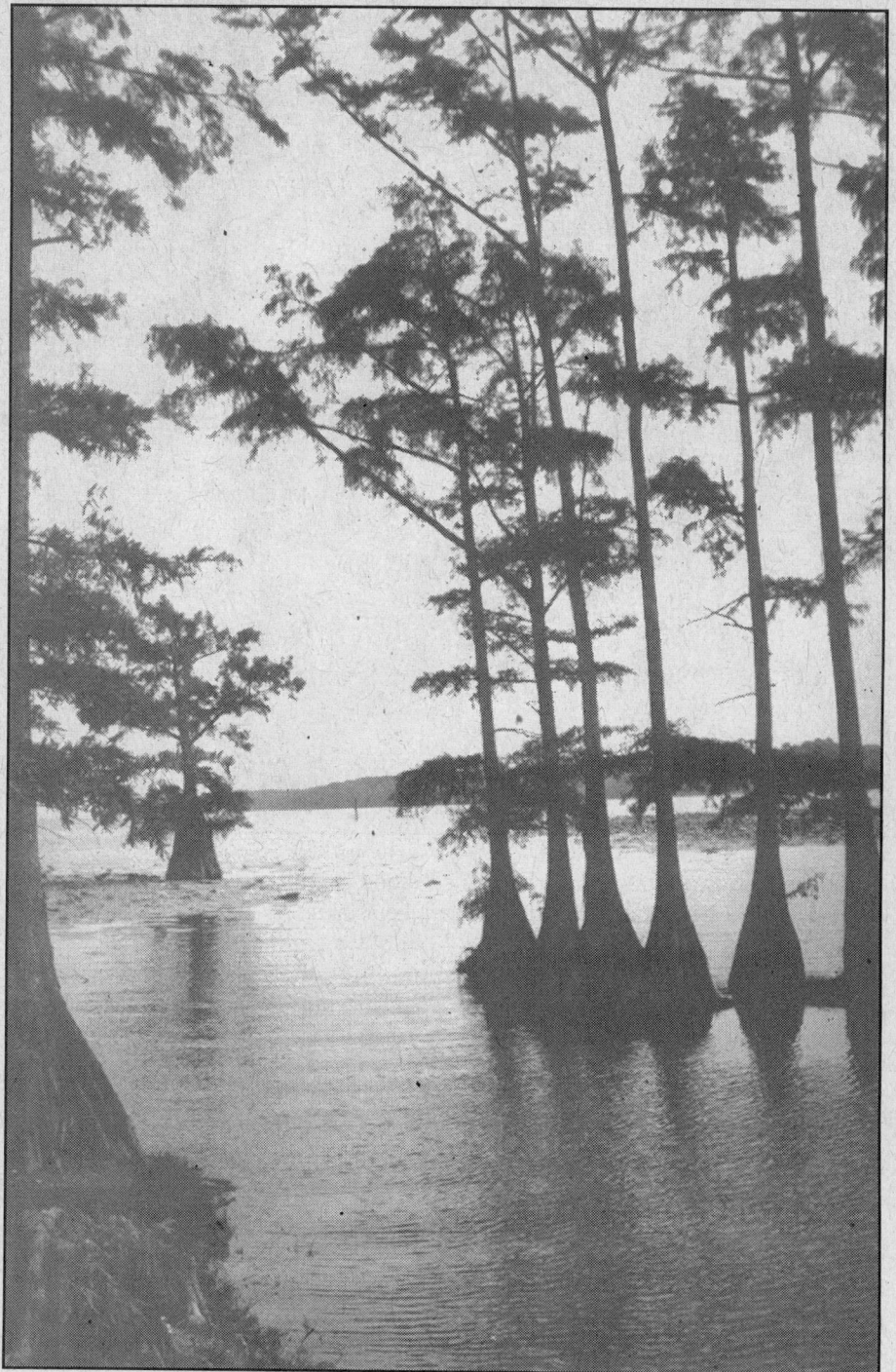
Cloaked in mist, bald cypress and Spanish moss, Caddo Lake straddles the Texas-Louisiana border. Indians said the lake was formed when "the earth trembled and had chills and fever in the night" as the Great Spirit, angry at a Caddo chief, lowered the land and covered it with floodwaters. Some scientists suggest the lake was indeed formed by the New Madrid earthquake of December 15, 1811. Others say the lake existed long before.

Since the early 1840s, the lake had helped connect Jefferson with the Mississippi-Red River trade. A logjam, known as the Red River Raft, thirty miles above Shreveport backed up the waters of Big Cypress and Caddo, allowing steamboat travel to Jefferson. The city became Texas' principal riverport until 1873, when United States engineers destroyed the raft and Caddo Lake's waters dropped dramatically, ending Jefferson's steamboat era.

At 11 PM, Captain Kellogg's vessel docked at Mooringsport, where James C. Christian boarded and retired to his cabin. Christian's grandson, ten-year-old Early Clayton Christian, was supposed to accompany him to Jefferson, but the boy had been sent home for a coat. By the time he returned, the ship had departed for Swanson's Landing, a port on the south shore of Caddo Lake and the starting point for the pre-Civil War Southern Pacific railroad.

The *Mittie Stephens* passed the steamboat *Dixie*, whose captain, Thornton Jacobs, had ordered her tied up for the night.

Traveling by night, especially in the eerie waters of Caddo Lake, had elements of danger but was not unheard of. Near Jeter's Place (or Landing), Louisiana, around midnight, two and one-half miles below Swanson's Landing, pilot William Swain and steersman Joe Lodwick were alone in the pilothouse when



Author's Photo

The fire aboard the *Mittie Stephens* broke out two and one-half miles below Swanson's Landing, Texas.

Lodwick smelled something burning. Lodwick then saw smoke rising from the tarps that covered the hay on the larboard (loading) side of the deck, apparently started from a spark from one of the fire baskets. Sounding the alarm, Lodwick and Swain turned the *Mittie Stephens* toward shore for an emergency landing. Twenty feet from shore, the bow hit bottom in three feet of

water, and the jarring impact sent flames skyward. Crew members immediately began fighting the conflagration, but fire spread rapidly, torching hay bales, fuel wood, and the wooden deck. Within five minutes, the *Mittie Stephens* became a tinderbox. The stern of the boat remained in deep water, and the paddlewheels continued turning in an effort to push the ship to shore.

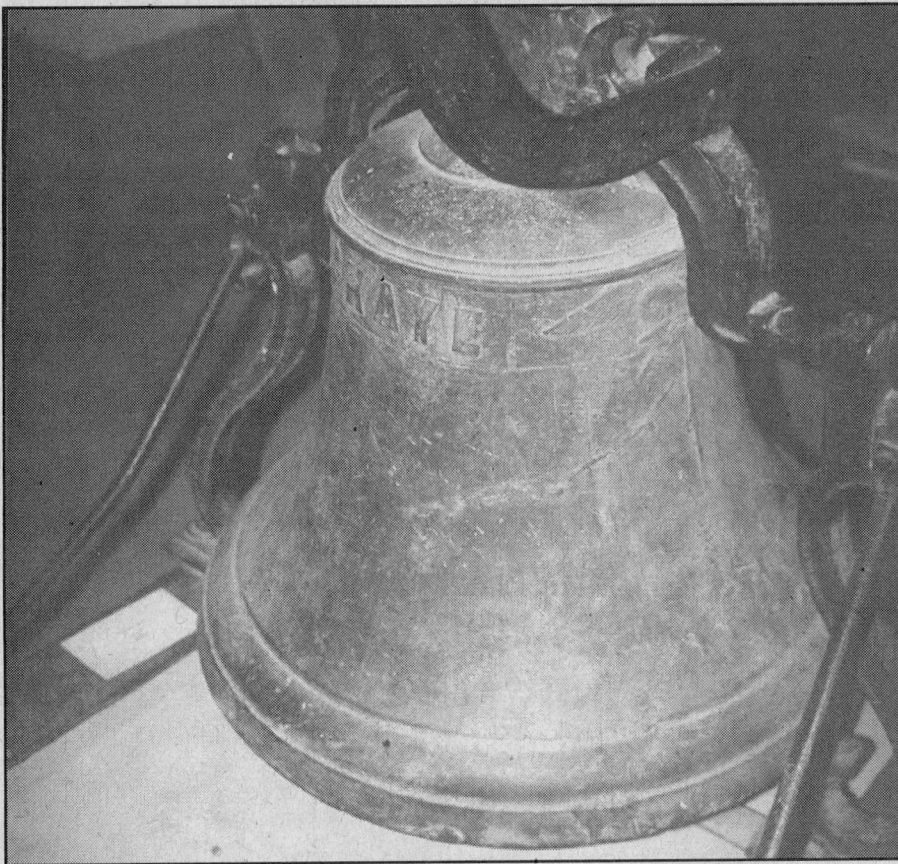


Photo by Permission of the Jefferson Historical Society Museum

The *Mittie Stephens*' 300-pound bell was salvaged after the fatal fire and first found a home at the Presbyterian Church in Vivian, Louisiana.

But the *Mittie Stephens* was a side-wheeler, less effective in low water than stern-wheel propulsion, and thus the vessel became a victim of her own design.

As passengers woke up to the fiery nightmare, they were driven back by out-of-control flames to the stern. Swain and Lodwick were soon cut off and forced to jump off the hurricane deck and swim to shore.

Remembering the gunpowder, the ship's carpenter, Phillip Hill, hurried into the hull and somehow managed to toss the kegs overboard.

Meanwhile, six miles away aboard the *Dixie*, Captain Jacobs saw the flames and realized what was happening. With his ship's boiler fires out, Jacobs ordered part of the crew to send a skiff to help the *Mittie Stephens* while the rest fired the boilers and tried to raise enough steam to send the *Dixie* to the rescue.

On the burning steamboat, the lifeboat was launched, but overcrowding caused its lowering mechanism to jam. When fire burned the

tow lines, the yawl splashed near a paddlewheel, was swamped and drowned most, if not all, of its passengers. Terror swept through the passengers who had to choose "between a fiery death and leaping into the chilly waters." Some leaped overboard only to be pulled into the churning paddlewheels and crushed to death. *The Home Advocate* of Jefferson reported that "others sank down in despair to be devoured by the flames." Many of those who dived overboard drowned, some blinded by the glare on the water, others unsure which way lay shore. Few knew how close they were to land or how shallow the lake was just a few yards away.

Recalled Lodwick: "The heart sickens at the thought of the scenes that ensued—men fighting madly for something to cling to and sinking in this death struggle to rise no more. Who may tell the acts of selfishness or deeds of heroism that were enacted in that half hour of mortal agony?"

One act of cowardice was reported in *The Home Advocate*. "One lady passenger begged her protector to throw her overboard. His heart failed him, and they remained together till enveloped by the flames, when he rushed from her and escaped." Furniture and anything that would float was tossed overboard as life preservers, but most women could not be coaxed to jump overboard.

Lodwick said, "... the women with a strange infatuation, clung to the burning boat and could not be induced to leap overboard, their only means of escape [sic]. Only four were saved, probably from their being on the lower deck." One survivor "saw the poor creatures as the flames swept over them, some with out-stretched arms and others meekly yielding to the inevitable death."

Amelia "Meal" Jordan Lyon was no exception. Seeing so many struggling in the water below, Amelia's husband led her and her son to the other side of the packet, but she refused to jump. "Probably here her fortitude forsook her as she shrunk from making the leap," *The Caddo Gazette* reported. "The delay was fatal, for she and her little boy swooned, suffocated with the smoke and flames, and fell." Heartbroken, T. Lytt Lyon stayed with them until, scorched by flames, he jumped or fell overboard and was later rescued by the *Dixie's* skiff "in an insensible condition."

By the time help arrived thirty minutes later, the *Mittie Stephens* was a wreck as the fire burned out. With forty-three survivors "in destitute condition," the *Dixie* steamed on to Jefferson and returned to the scene with grappling irons on Sunday to search for more bodies and, perhaps, survivors. Meanwhile, newspapers began reporting the news and eulogizing the dead.

"We are very much pained to see among the list of those lost our highly esteemed old friend, Capt. George R. Reemer [sic], who was first clerk," *The Daily Picayune* reported February 16. "He was well known, and much loved by all who

knew him or ever had any dealings with him, and in every sense an honorable and honest man."

*The Southwestern* praised Christian, one of the *Mittie Stephens*' last passengers, as "one of the oldest and most respected citizens of this parish." The newspaper went on to lament that "of the other persons lost we had no personal acquaintance, but how the eye dims and the cheek blanches as we glance over the long list. Here we find father, mother and three children in one place, four of the same name in another, two in another, &c., all of whom found their last resting place at the mid hour of night, by the light of the burning wreck. Great God, how inscrutable are thy ways!"

Drawing the most attention, however, was Amelia Lyon—"one death which comes so directly home to our heart," the *Gazette* said. "We had known and loved her from a little child—poor 'Meal.'"

What were initially believed to be the charred remains of Amelia and son Frank were brought to Shreveport by steamboat, and a large crowd attended the funeral. Late that month, however, strong winds whipped Caddo Lake, bringing ten bodies "in a good state of preservation and easily recognised [sic]" to the surface. The sternwheel packet *Era No. 10* discovered the grizzly sight less than a mile from the accident site. Three of the victims were identified as Colonel W.A. Broadwell, a prominent cotton buyer from New Orleans; a Mr. Ash; and, still wearing her wedding rings, Amelia Lyon. Broadwell's pocket watch had stopped at 2:25; Ash's, at 1:05.

The exact number of dead was never confirmed. Accounts range from a low of fifty-six to a high of seventy, but most cited sixty to sixty-two. Christian's body was never recovered. The \$100,000 payroll was reportedly transferred to the *Dixie*, but legend spread that some of the gold remained on board. Scavengers made off with what they could from the *Mittie Stephens*. One boiler was used in a cotton gin, and the ship's 300-pound bell, cast in

William Raye's foundry in Louisville, Kentucky, went to the Presbyterian church in Vivian, Louisiana, then to Harold H. Huckabay's Gilliam, Louisiana, plantation, and, in 1971, to the Jefferson (Texas) Historical Society Museum. Parts of the wreck could be seen until the early 1900s. Finally, the wreckage disappeared. In the early 1980s, attempts to locate the *Mittie Stephens* in Caddo Lake failed, but in 1993, the remains of the ill-fated vessel were found on dry land, once part of the lake.

Was anyone to blame for the disaster?

Captain Kellogg and his officers, *The Southwestern* said, "behaved with great coolness, and made every effort in their power to save the passengers." Kellogg escaped scrutiny, although *The Caddo Gazette* blamed the tragedy on "the passions of the American people for rapid transit, reckless of life and limb....And without wishing to cast unnecessary censure upon the captain of the *Mittie Stephens*, it is certainly true that this disaster was the American system worked out to its terrible accomplishment."

The disaster left scars, both physical and mental. Passenger William Frederick Cobb, returning from a visit to Tennessee, saw his left hand "burned to a crisp," and could never straighten his fingers. Nor would he ever travel by water to Tennessee.

Shortly after the disaster, Shreveport resident Julia Pleasants Creswell was moved to write this poem about the *Mittie Stephens*:

Oh! how gaily glided that fatal  
craft,

As she steamed from our busy  
wharf!

With her blue smoke-wreaths  
curling fair abaft,

Like the flow of a maiden's  
scarf.

With the dense crowd packed in  
the proud salon;

Wheeling off from our busy  
mart

While her booming engines beat  
like a tune

And the throb of a human  
heart.

Aye! we watched her speed up  
the swelling bend,  
Whence the royal Red flows  
down,  
Till the gas lamps flashed and  
seemed to lend  
Partial day to a smiling town.

But the steamer held on her  
lonely way  
To the heart of a drear lagoon,  
Where the midnight hung with  
its purple sway,  
But not with a friendly moon.

When some demon dark burst  
the doors of hell,  
Whence the sweeping flames  
shot forth,  
And the lurid glare of horror  
fell  
On the lake and slumbering  
earth.

Then the young and the gay,  
and the old and grave,  
Went down to a common death  
Went down in the red lake's  
chilly wave,  
Swept by the flames fierce  
breath!

For the angel face of the fairest  
flower  
That boomed on our river side  
There is bursting grief in the  
bridal bower  
And tears that may not be dried.

Alas! alas! from cot and from  
hall  
From along our winding shore  
We wait in vain for the glad foot-  
fall  
For feet that come no more.

And ever to me till my dying day  
On my shuddering dreams will  
break  
A blazing craft, as she ploughed  
her way  
Like a fiend through a lurid  
lake!



# Phantom of the Forest

**I**t was a worried Henry Bauer who asked neighboring ranchers to help search for his missing twin sons, John and William. The nineteen-year-old boys had gone bear hunting that Sunday morning in the heavily forested Satsop River Valley of western Washington. The boys did not return the evening of September 3, 1911, as planned. Both were experienced hunters and knew the area by heart. Fearing an accident, their parents organized a search of the sparsely settled area.

When no sign of the boys was found by Monday, Chehalis County Sheriff Edward Payette was notified at his courthouse headquarters in Montesano, about twenty miles to the south. He sent deputies Colin McKenzie and Carl Schwartz to take over the search using a bloodhound. By this time several persons reported hearing shots at about 3:00 PM on Sunday in the area where the boys were hunting. This gave rise to the fear that they had been mauled by a wounded bear.

At noon on Tuesday the deputies made a gruesome discovery. The twin's bodies were found in a shallow grave near the cabin recently used by their uncle, John Tornow. A wounded bear was found nearby and dispatched. The remains of a partly butchered beef were nearby. William had been shot once and John twice, their pockets turned out, their guns and valuables taken.



Western Publications' Archives

John Tornow, the "Phantom of the Forest."

**BY ALLEN P. BRISTOW**

The Bauer twins, John and William, shortly before they were reportedly murdered by John Tornow.



## AT NOON ON TUESDAY THE DEPUTIES MADE A GRUESOME DISCOVERY. THE TWIN'S BODIES WERE FOUND IN A SHALLOW GRAVE NEAR THE CABIN RECENTLY USED BY THEIR UNCLE, JOHN TORNOW.

John Tornow had apparently fled with only the belongings he could carry. A rancher with the posse identified the beef as his and signs indicated it had been led into the forest for slaughter. Slowly the deputies pieced these elements into an explanation of the tragedy. While Tornow was butchering the stolen beef a bear was attracted to the scent of the offal. By chance, the twins came upon the bear as it approached Tornow and the beef. Unaware of their uncle, they shot and wounded the bear. Tornow, unaware of the bear, thought he was being fired upon. He returned fire with his .30 caliber Winchester Model 1895 rifle.

Finding that he had killed the boys, Tornow hastily buried them and fled. This self-defense theory was conciliatory to Tornow. Although he was a demented recluse, his family was well respected and politically influential.

John Tornow was a six-foot, 240-pound, thirty-one-year-old hermit who had roamed the forests of the Upper Satsop for the past two years. The youngest son of Fred Tornow, an early Washington pioneer and rancher, he twice had been commit-

ted to an insane asylum in Portland, Oregon. After his last release Tornow disappeared into the forest and was seen only occasionally by his family, who furnished him with food and ammunition. Fred Tornow died shortly after his son was released from the asylum, but John refused to cooperate with the executor and the family's estate was placed in limbo.

Deputies McKenzie and Schwartz struck out after the fugitive, whose trail led toward the upper Wynooche River. Thus began a manhunt that was to span nineteen months, take the lives of four pursuers, and cost a sheriff his reelection.

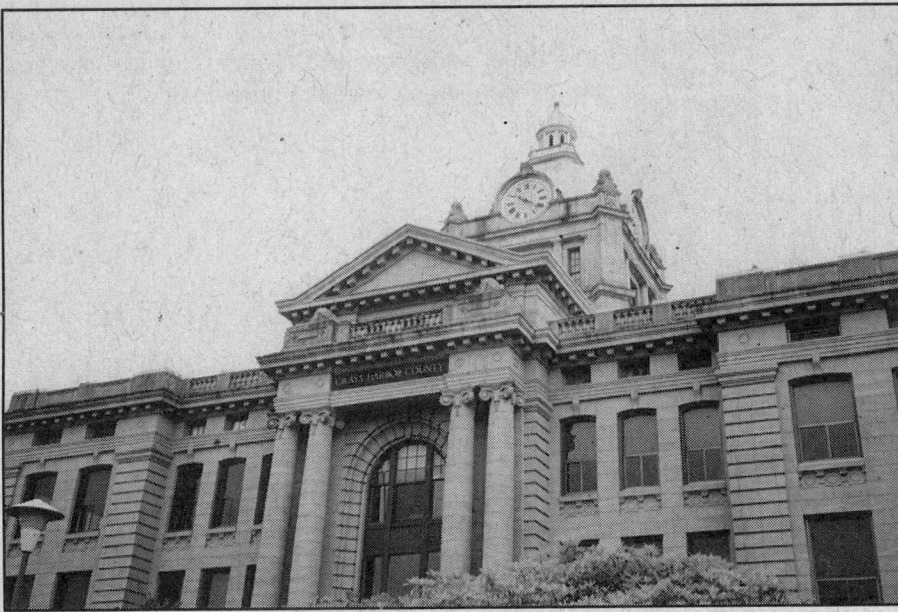
The rugged lower Olympic Peninsula, sparsely populated by ranchers, trappers, and loggers, provided a forest curtain behind which Tornow disappeared. Few logging roads led into this wilderness, and they were designed for wagons. Horses were impractical in the dense forest and pursuers were forced to proceed on foot whenever they left the roads.

Sheriff Ed Payette, working from his courthouse office in Montesano, reorganized his posses. Deputy McKenzie and some volunteers were

to continue the search near the headwaters of the Wynooche River. Deputy Schwartz's group concentrated on the forest area near Deckerville, an area where Tornow was recently seen. Payette also asked that Chehalis County post a reward for the apprehension of Tornow. The request was denied because too much was being spent on the manhunt and Tornow's guilt was questionable.

The search slowly wore down. Winter weather, the rugged forest, and lack of any trace of the fugitive discouraged the posses. Sheriff Payette finally pulled his men back to Montesano and the effort was suspended.

Then, in early March 1912, trappers claimed to have sighted Tornow. Deputies Colin McKinzie and Al Elmer set out for the upper Wynooche to meet trappers Getty and Blair at their camp. Once there they were taken to a fresh elk kill attributed to Tornow. They put their dogs on the scent and tried to raise Tornow's trail. When McKenzie and Elmer did not return to camp as expected, Blair sent word to Sheriff Payette. Deputies Carl Schwartz and A.L. Fitzgerald were sent to search



Author's Collection

Montezano courthouse and sheriff's office, headquarters for the Tornow manhunt.

for the missing deputies. Shock rocked the county on March 21 when news was received that the bodies of McKenzie and Elmer had been found in shallow graves. Both had been shot and were stripped of their possessions and weapons. Evidence indicated they had been ambushed as they approached Tornow's camp.

Sheriff Payette decided to personally take charge of the manhunt. He left for the upper Wynooche on March 28 with a posse consisting of volunteers from Aberdeen and Montezano. A county reward of \$4,000 was finally authorized and more was requested from Washington Governor M.E. Hay. The volunteers in the posse elected not to be deputized in order to be eligible for the reward.

This new posse was apprehensive because Tornow was known to be an excellent marksman and was now additionally armed with Deputy McKenzie's Marlin Model 94 .25/20 carbine and his pistol, as well as the shotgun and rifle taken from the Bauer twins. Sheriff Payette instructed the posse to shoot Tornow on sight.

Unfortunately, a late spring snow hid all traces of Tornow. Exhausted and footsore, the posse gave up the search. There was some hope the fugitive might succumb to frostbite

since the few tracks found showed his boots were tattered and his toes were exposed. The months wore on and there was no further sign of Tornow. Volunteers lost interest and deputies could only be occasionally spared for the search.

Other events changed the tempo of the manhunt. Sheriff Payette, unable to apprehend Tornow, and having lost two deputies in the attempt, came into public disfavor. This was worsened when Mrs. Henry Bauer, mother of the murdered twins, recalled incriminating information. Two prospectors had disappeared in 1910. Shortly thereafter Mrs. Bauer saw Tornow in possession of their clothing and a small bottle of gold. Rumors about others who might have disappeared in the forest became rampant. Trappers, prospectors, ranchers, and loggers were afraid to enter the forest. On top of this, Sheriff Payette was running for reelection.

Schelle Matthews, a blacksmith from nearby Elma and a former deputy sheriff, opposed Sheriff Payette in the election. He won by a landslide and took office on January 13, 1913. His sole campaign promise was to get Tornow.

On Matthews' first day in office he led a posse of political supporters on another search. It was their hope that Tornow's tracks could be

found in the fresh snowfall of the most recent storm. They had no more success than previous posses and returned to the Montezano courthouse, exhausted and chagrined. The populace felt just as unprotected as before the election. Trapping and logging had all but ceased in the area. Ranch families sent their children to live in town and no one moved in the forest except the occasional manhunters and the hunted.

Then, in April 1913, a timber surveyor brought information to Sheriff Matthews that Tornow might be using an old shack about eight miles from a Simpson Company logging camp. Matthews rushed Deputy Giles Quimby, his brother-in-law, with two trappers to establish a camp site in the vicinity of the cabin. The trappers, Louis Blair and Charles Lathrop, had served on previous posses. They declined to be deputized as their goal was the reward and county peace officers could not legally receive it.

Matthews then began to organize a larger posse and gather the provisions, equipment, and transportation required to support it. They expected to be two days behind Quimby's advance party as their progress was impeded by the heavy load. Muddy roads and bad weather slowed them even more.

The delay made the trappers impatient. Frustrated by waiting and possibly to prevent others from sharing in the reward, they convinced Deputy Quimby that all three should scout ahead and locate the cabin. Quimby was reluctant because Sheriff Matthews had ordered them to wait at the base camp until the larger posse arrived. Finally succumbing to pressure, Quimby left a note at the camp for Sheriff Matthews and the three set off to locate the cabin.

Many miles later they found the small lake that was reported to be near the cabin. The trail split and it was decided that the trappers would scout one branch while Quimby went up the other. Just as they were separating, John Tornow rose like a phantom from behind fallen timber

Deputy Giles Quimby following the gunfight with John Tornow.



## WHEN QUIMBY'S RIFLE WAS EMPTY HE FLED BACK DOWN THE TRAIL TO RELOAD, FEELING THAT HE HAD HIT TORNOW WITH AT LEAST ONE SHOT.

and opened fire on Blair and Lathrop. Tornow, using Deputy McKenzie's .25/20 Marlin carbine, was so close that he could almost touch them with the muzzle. Blair fell with a bullet in his head.

Lathrop fired wildly as he pitched backwards, mortally wounded.

Tornow then turned the carbine on Quimby, who had started up the other trail. Quimby returned fire as fast as he could lever rounds through his Winchester Model 94 rifle. Tornow was shielded behind a tree and only his head and shoulder were exposed as he fired. When Quimby's rifle was empty he fled back down the trail to reload, feeling that he had hit Tornow with at least one shot.

Not a sound could be heard in the forest. Quimby was sure his companions were dead. He was alone and pitted against an awesome killer. Should he return to resume the fight...or should he rush back to camp and guide the main posse to the scene...if they ever arrived?

Some say fear triumphed, others that common sense prevailed, but whatever the motivation, Quimby ran back toward the base camp. He arrived there three hours later, exhausted and in a state of shock.

When the main posse arrived one can only imagine the conversation between Sheriff Matthews and Deputy Quimby. The sheriff's own

brother-in-law had disobeyed instructions and two more men had perished. Taking a team of dogs to prevent ambush, the posse was led back to Tornow's cabin by the shamefaced Quimby.

They approached with great caution because although Quimby felt he had hit Tornow, they knew nothing can be more dangerous than a wounded lunatic. Sheriff Matthews, taking the lead behind the dogs, was the first to discover the bodies. Blair and Lathrop lay almost touching and Tornow was only a few feet away. He was crumpled behind the same tree he used for cover when shooting at Quimby. Tornow had been hit twice, a massive head wound and a shot through the shoulder. Apparently one of Quimby's .30 caliber bullets had penetrated the tree, expanded, and then struck Tornow's head. Tornow's Model 95 Winchester, for which he had no ammunition, McKenzie's pistol, and Marlin carbine lay at his side.

It took the posse two days to completely search the area for evidence and remove the bodies to the Simpson logging camp, where they were hauled to Montesano. Tornow's cabin held incriminating evidence including Deputy McKenzie's watch, Deputy Elmer's rifle, and shotgun shells taken from the Bauer twins. Sheriff Matthews felt Tornow had

buried caches of other stolen arms and property but none were found.

As posse members moved about the area they discovered how Tornow was alerted and able to set up the ambush. The small frogs in the lake ceased their croaking whenever anyone came along the trail.

John Tornow was clad in many layers of filthy clothing. It was decided not to strip his body for a thorough search until the autopsy. It was noted that he was wearing a pair of new boots that had been slit to fit his large feet. Loggers on the posse claimed the boots belonged to a Blakely Mills employee who had been missing for two months. Thus a lumberjack as well as two prospectors may also have been Tornow's victims.

When the bodies finally reached Montesano the incident had received wide publicity. Reporters from major newspapers swarmed around the autopsy, the sheriff's office, and Tornow's funeral. Charles Lathrop's body was shipped to Bristol, Vermont, where his family arranged a funeral. Louis Blair's remains were returned to his parents at Centralia, Washington. Although these men died in an attempt to capture John Tornow, they received little publicity and no portion of the reward, nor could their survivors share in it.

Giles Quimby proved to be an enigma. Not firm enough to convince Blair and Lathrop that they should not, against Sheriff Matthew's orders, leave camp to scout Tornow's cabin, he showed strong resolve during the ambush. Then, although he believed Tornow had been hit, he lacked the meddle to finish the fight.

Immediately after the incident, Quimby was cloaked in praise and sought out for interviews. He was even approached by a vaudeville company to act in a play based on Tornow's end. Negotiations on the reward money began, and although Quimby was ineligible for the county's \$4,000, he tried to claim the

state portion.

Then, when Tornow's family and their friends put on a strong showing at his funeral, Quimby began to worry. There was now some support, among those who had known the Tornow family since the 1880s, for the theory that poor demented John Tornow was only defending himself against those who he thought were trying to take him back to the insane asylum. There was even some comment that the killing of Tornow was wrong because he was insane, did not know right from wrong, and there was no proof that he killed the Bauer twins. Now the evil "Phantom of the Forest" was beginning to

assume a saintly image.

Quimby became concerned that he might be accused of murder in the future when Tornow's transgressions became obscured by legend. In a surprise announcement Deputy Quimby demanded to be tried for murder at once, so that his acquittal on justifiable grounds would be a bar to future prosecution. County Attorney A.E. Cross and Sheriff Matthews counseled against such a course, and the advice proved sound because no legal action was ever taken against Quimby who quickly faded into obscurity.

After the autopsy, John Tornow's body was prepared for burial. The filth was washed away, he was shaved and groomed by the undertaker and dressed in an expensive suit provided by his family. Although Tornow lived in poverty during his final years he was not a poor man. His worth was estimated as high as \$6,000, not including his share of the family real estate. No expense was spared at his funeral and burial which took place on April 20, 1913.

Tornow's body was viewed by nearly 1,500 persons and then it was taken by caravan to the family cemetery two miles north of their ranch on the Satsop River. He was buried next to his parents and the Bauer twins.

Public interest in the tragic tale resurfaced from time to time. In 1987 a ceremony was held in the Tornow cemetery and a new headstone was dedicated. Present were family descendants and local history buffs. Newspapers reported that speeches described John Tornow as an alleged murderer against whom no proof was ever found and who was gunned down; perhaps Quimby's premonition was right after all.

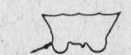
The new headstone was engraved:

JOHN TORNOW  
SEPT 4, 1880  
APRIL 16, 1913  
FROM LONER - TO OUTCAST  
TO FUGITIVE

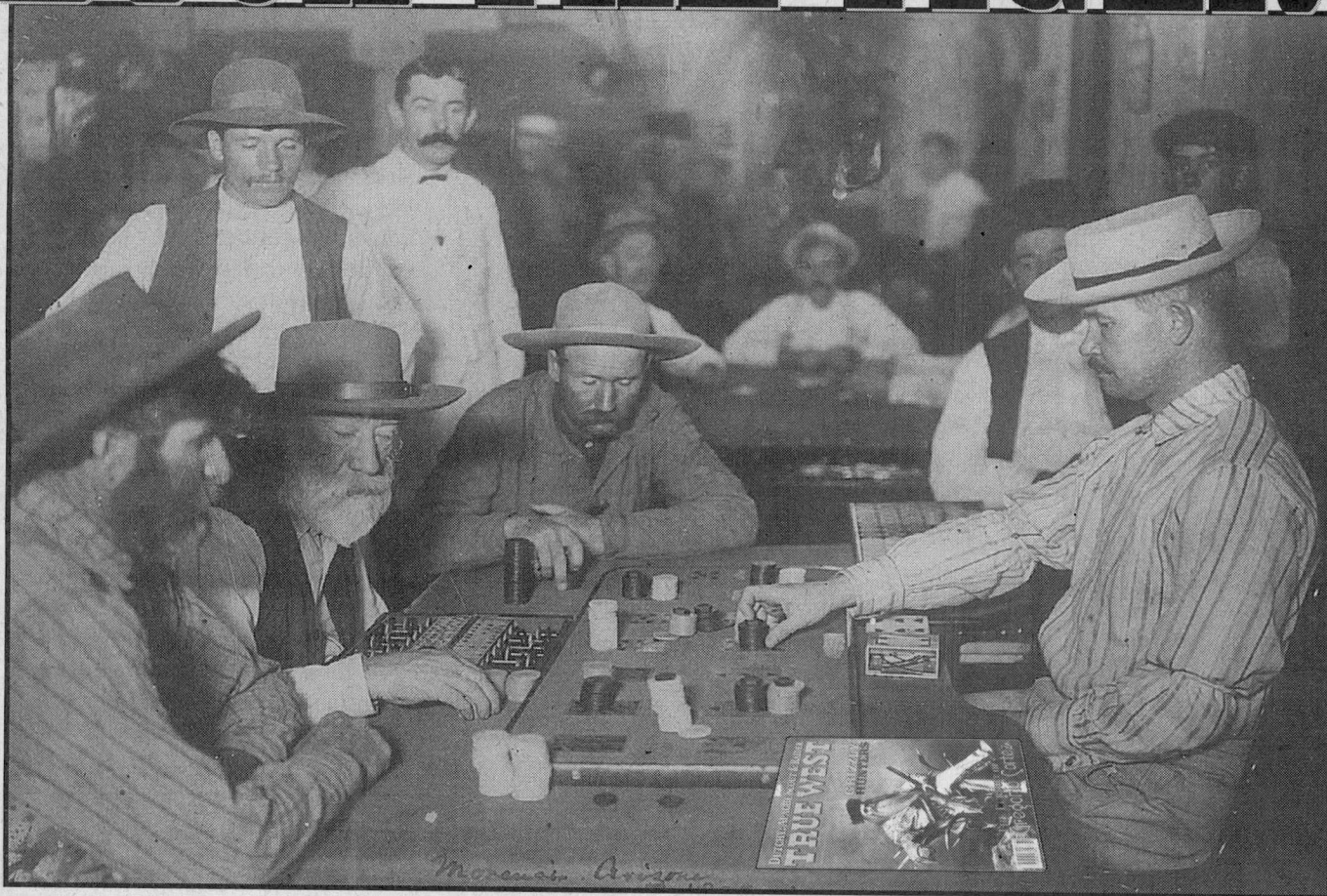


Author's Collection

John Tornow's body and his nearly new logger's boots, probably taken from one of his victims.



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# REVIEWS

## Crazy Horse

*Crazy Horse.* By Larry McMurtry. (Viking Press, Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014. Bibliography. 141 pages. \$19.95 Cloth.)

An epic struggle between two diametrically opposed cultures explodes across the majestic, unbroken beauty of the northern plains. The fate of a people hinges on the outcome, and amidst the whirlwind one warrior emerges from the carnage untouched. Guided by a dream his name becomes a rallying cry in battle, inspiring the Sioux to fight against overwhelming odds.

This is the image that remains of the Oglala War Chief Crazy Horse and has inspired the first in a series of short biographies published by Penguin Lives. Novelist Larry McMurtry puts his formidable literary talents to work in pursuit of the

elusive warrior and effectively lifts the shroud of mystery surrounding this solitary man of the Sioux. The early childhood years are well covered and McMurtry accurately depicts the customs and hierarchy prevalent in Sioux society during the mid-nineteenth century. The young Oglala was a loner and avoided participation in the rituals of youth such as the sun dance. This marked him as strange among his people, but as the author points out, the Sioux were tolerant and respected the need for individuality. The Gratten massacre in 1854 propelled the youth in search of a vision in which his prowess as a great warrior was foretold. The author ties the two events together in a logical, carefully constructed manner that shows much insight into Indian-military relations. The pure historian may find

McMurtry's approach to be rather simplistic, but his conclusions are sound and well-researched. This is evident in his account of a Sioux raid on the Araphoes, in which the youthful warrior killed two enemies and was honored by receiving the name of his father, Crazy Horse.

The powerful imagery of the Great Plains is captured by McMurtry in all its diversity and grandeur. It was in this setting that Crazy Horse experienced the rites of warfare, first against other tribes and then inevitably against the incursion of whites. This particular chapter would have been enhanced by the inclusion of maps in order to supplement the fine text. In 1866, Crazy Horse was instrumental in decoying Captain William Fetterman and his troops to their death near Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming. This fight was a classic

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***"We are Westerners, in the West, bringing the West to you."***

example of the tactics employed by Crazy Horse in battle and the author's representation of Fetterman's attitude toward the Plains Indians is right on the mark. McMurtry is able to sum up government Indian policy of the time in one illuminating sentence, "Unable to decide between peace and war, the government tried both at once." One of the strengths of the book is the author's firm handle on military politics and his ability to convey them in a condensed form. The events and people that helped shape Crazy Horse's life, such as his love for the married Black Buffalo Woman and death of his half brother, Little Hawk, are carefully considered. This results in giving Crazy Horse added dimension and contributes to our knowledge of the man behind the warrior.

In 1874, gold was discovered in the Black Hills, which set in motion an effort by the government to buy the land from the Sioux the following year. Crazy Horse was adamantly opposed to the deal, and the author offers an interesting comparison to the pragmatic Red Cloud, who favored the sale because he knew the whites would take it anyway. It is in this chapter that the continued resistance of Crazy Horse's band seems especially futile and the decision not to negotiate led directly to a military campaign against the hostiles in 1876. There is one particularly glaring mistake in dating the origin of Grant's order to the hostiles as 1871, when in reality it came in 1875. McMurtry provides an accurate and well balanced account of the Battle of the Rosebud between General George Crook's column and forces under the combined leadership of Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull. The author renders Crazy Horse in all his fighting glory, riding headlong into Crook's battle lines and effectively dispersing the troops. The bravery of Shoshoni and Crow scouts under Crook is also well depicted. This battle was a contributing factor in what was to occur eight days later at the place the Sioux called the Greasy Grass. On June 25, 1876, Lieutenant Colonel

George Custer and five companies of the Seventh Cavalry were destroyed by a force of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors at the Little Bighorn in Montana. The author is most astute in stating that no particular Indian participant determined the end result of the battle; rather it was determined by Custer's negligent actions coupled with the sheer number of warriors engaged. McMurtry's interpretation of this mythic battle is stripped of all its romance, and is well thought out.

The last days of Crazy Horse remain a storm of controversy and confusion. The author does a good

job in depicting the distrust and outright hatred Crazy Horse was subjected to by the military and especially by his own people, which culminated in his death. McMurtry covers the varied eyewitness accounts of the incident in a logical, coherent presentation. Larry McMurtry has written a remarkable portrait of the legendary Crazy Horse and has made an important contribution to a better understanding of the man and his life. The publishers are to be congratulated for making the story of Crazy Horse available to a wide readership.—

*Chris Roberts, Brooklyn, New York.*

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**California Vintner**

*Strong Wine: The Life and Legend of Agoston Haraszthy.* By Brian McGinty. (Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 94305-2235. Illustrations, footnotes, bibliography. 579 pages. \$65.00 Cloth, \$24.95 Paper.)

Although there are revisionists even in the small literary *cul de sac* that is wine history, writers who downgrade Haraszthy's importance to western agriculture, to most of us he remains the Father of California Winemaking.

True, the Franciscan padres brought grapevines to the coast as early as 1769, and individuals in Sonoma (General Vallejo) and Napa Valley (George Yount) grew grapes long before him. But it was Haraszthy who got viticulture started as a commercial success, an industry, a big business in California around 1857.

Haraszthy was (is?) a controversial figure, like Captain John Sutter. But, unlike the latter, this is the first

book-length study of him.

The author spent six years of research and writing, in both Europe and the United States. After perhaps a bit of a slow start for westerners, detailing his subject's European ancestry, McGinty's narrative becomes an interesting one. It is also illustrated and beautifully footnoted. And his bibliography is marvelous. Every entry bears a brief evaluative annotation.

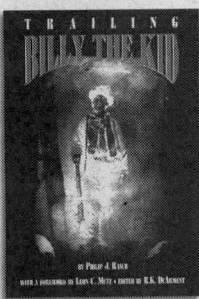
The author could have been the very worst person to finally write a biography of the viticultural pioneer. For, despite his Gaelic moniker, McGinty is actually his subject's great-great grandson! But, fortunately for us, he did not take up his pen to flatter or defend his ancestor, but to carefully sort out the real facts from the "Haraszthy Legend."

In a well-told story, McGinty traces Haraszthy from Hungary to his pioneering of Sauk City in Wisconsin; his overland journey to California in 1849 via the Santa Fe

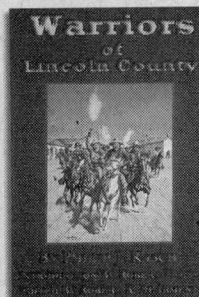
and Gila trails; his time in San Diego as sheriff and as an Indian fighter; his tenure in the state's legislative assembly; and his controversial career in San Francisco. In Wisconsin, San Diego, and San Francisco his vineyards failed. Not till he reached Sonoma did he find the right combination of soil, climate, and vines. Haraszthy's Buena Vista estate became the largest vineyard in the world. By his example, his leadership, he put California "on the map" as wine country. But the pioneer overextended himself, and debts and mortgages drove him to bankruptcy.

Aging and broke, but still vigorous, the entrepreneur bounced back with a sugar plantation, rum distillery, and sawmill in Nicaragua. But he suddenly disappeared in 1869, almost without a trace. His body was never found, but a tell-tale broken limb on a downed tree used as a footbridge across a stream, led to the conclusion that the colorful westerner had died a horrible

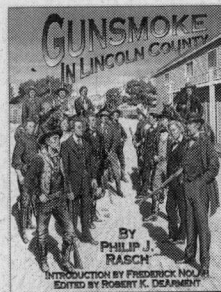
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death—whether drowned or not—eaten by alligators. And if he, somehow, made it to the river's mouth, to be devoured by the ocean's sharks.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

### Oregon Women

*More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Oregon Women.* By Cayle C. Shirley. (Falcon Publishing Co., Inc, PO Box 1718, Helena, Montana 59624. Photographs, bibliography, index. 140 pages. \$9.95 Paper.)

Western history buffs—most of them male—sometimes forget that history is not made by men alone. That's a point well made by author Gayle Shirley in her latest book, *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Oregon Women.*

Shirley's book explores the lives of ten little-known women whose talents and determination accelerated change and growth in the Oregon west. It also illustrates the fact that women have a long tradition of ignoring restrictions, even when to do so invites ridicule.

A chapter on Bethenia Owens-Adair provides a fine example. Here is a woman who had a burning desire to become a doctor, an occupation considered too grisly, too physically demanding for a female. Yet, she not only completes the necessary schooling, but also she proves such competency that even her male counterparts are forced to capitulate.

Another heroine from Shirley's book is Lola Greene Baldwin, who earned her fame through becoming the first policewoman in the country.

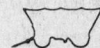
Ms. Baldwin believed in preventative measures and was a familiar figure on the streets of Portland, Oregon, where her prime focus was directed toward helping young women in distress. Lola had a man-sized job, considering the number of dancehalls and gin joints lining the city blocks. She viewed the challenges and never flinched, helping locate shelter and legitimate job opportunities for hundreds of girls.

These two great Oregon women, share the 140 pages of Shirley's

book with eight others. My favorite, I believe is Hazel Hall, a promising young poet, whose severe physical limitations could not imprison her spirit. (After completing the chapter, I immediately went to northwest Portland to visit the family home and the poetry garden that stands as a tribute to the tragic wordsmith.)

Gayle Shirley's book contains some nice historic photos, an index, and bibliography. It's a good jumping off spot for researchers who

might feel enticed to dig deeper into the backgrounds of one or two of these notable women, and a good gift for a mother to give a daughter. After all, pioneer women have too often been typecast as either school maams or prostitutes. *More Than Petticoats* does much to dispell that myth.—*Jan Holden, Vancouver, Washington.*



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### General Nelson A. Miles

This is a special topic for me as the request for information about General Nelson Miles comes from Jose M. Caldas, San Antonio, Texas. During recent weeks, we have had several discussions about family and the Old West. His interest in Miles comes naturally. I wish I could share his complete letter, but it is here in part:

"Reading, for the first time, various issues of *True West*, has brought pleasant memories of my childhood. In 1928-30, when I was 5-7 years old, my paternal grandfather, Don Juan Caldas-Sola, and I would sit on the ramparts of the road leading to the San Juan Gate, Puerto Rico, where I was born. While leisurely waiting for fish to take our bait, he would read to me similar western stories from *Blue Book* and *Argosy* magazines. He was very good at translating such sto-

ries simultaneously from English to Spanish.

"Now, my 'job' of reading these stories to the youngest of grandchildren is much easier for even my 6-year-old grandson, who was born in Texas, understands English thoroughly, and enjoys some of the selections I make of suitable stories from *True West*.

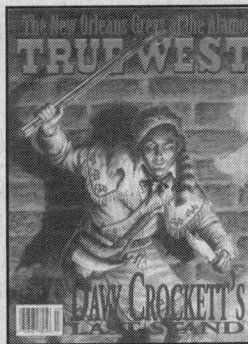
"Aside from thanking you for introducing me to *True West*, I have a question regarding the well known General Nelson Miles, famous for the action at Wounded Knee. I am very interested in finding a *factual and complete history of the life of this gentleman soldier*, for at one time he, and the troops under his command, touched the lives of my family.

"It is well known that Puerto Rico was a colony of Spain from the time it was discovered by Columbus until November 25, 1897, when, by Royal

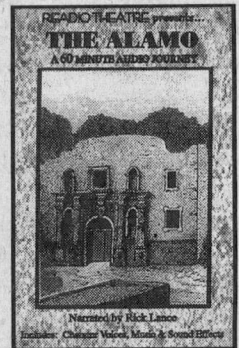
Decree, it was granted autonomy guaranteeing governing bodies elected by the local residents. Because the Spanish-American War was looming, as a result of the explosion of the boilers of the warship *Maine*, the cabinet did not meet until July 13, 1898. Municipal elections did not take place because of that war.

"Puerto Rico, an island depending on shipping for the movements of food and goods, was blockaded by the U.S. Navy, which, under Rear Admiral William T. Sampson, was bombarded in May. While the local populace debated whether the Greater Antilles, of which Puerto Rico was one, should be independent or become part of the USA, the U.S. Army had foreseen the need to establish defensive bases in Puerto Rico to protect the channel which became the Panama Canal.

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"While still on the high seas, General Miles decided to land at the southwest corner, Guanica Bay, which was heavily guarded. Miles landed on Guanica on July 25, 1898; he and the army was received three days later at Ponce as liberators.

"During that period there were several groups of men who would hide behind blackened faces and who took advantage of the chaos. These men, known as *tiznaos*, were nothing more than criminals.

"My paternal grandfather, Don Antonio Fillat-Bastidas, a retired Spanish soldier, worked as overseer on the Serralles sugar cane plantation in a small town east of Poncé. His wife, my grandmother, had given birth on August 2, 1889, to a baby girl named Angela, who became my mother. The day following the invasion my grandmother, who taught the children of the farm workers, was told by several of them that a group of local *tiznaos* planned to kill her, her husband and children. She informed her husband and in the dark of night they packed the children and essential possessions in a two-horse buggy and raced toward the invading U.S. Army camped in the outskirts of Ponce. It was there that General Miles gave them protection, shelter and food. Because of this personal connection with my family I am seeking information on General Miles."

There is a great deal of literature on Miles; in fact two books were written by him: *Personal Recollections and Observations of General Nelson A. Miles* (1896) and *Serving the Republic* (1911). A full length biography, *The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles*, by Virginia M. Johnson, was published in 1980 by The Arthur H. Clark Company.

For a brief summary of Miles' life one can do no better than read the seven-page entry in Bill O'Neal's *Fighting Men of the Indian Wars*, published by Barbed Wire Press (1991). Miles, born August 8, 1839, in Massachusetts, earned his first commission as a sergeant in the Civil War in 1861. During the war he was



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wounded four times, fighting in all the important engagements of the Army of the Potomac, and earning the Medal of Honor. By October 1865 he was a major general of volunteers. For the next fifteen years he was engaged against a variety of Indian tribes on the American plains. He fought Kiowas, Comanches, and Southern Cheyennes during the Red River War, then in the winter campaign of 1876-77 pursued the Sioux under Sitting Bull to the Canadian border.

In the 1880s he engaged the Apaches, and in September 1886, he accepted the surrender of Geronimo. After the Indian Wars were essentially over he found action again during the Spanish-American War. He did lead the operation against Puerto Rico, although it received very little notice by the press or the American public. It seems somehow appropriate that the old general, who had fought Confederates in the 1860s and Indians during the 1870s and 1880s, then leading his men against the Spanish in the late 1890s, died at Washington, D.C., while listening to the National Anthem at a Ringling Brothers Circus performance on May 25, 1925. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

## Forgotten Feud Victims

Wayne Purcella, Lovelady, Texas, has been a student of the Sutton-Taylor Feud for some time. He writes that in several of his sources he has come across the name of Mark Taylor, but has found nothing other than his name. Who was he?

Although there may have been a Mark Taylor in the family, I believe the Taylor in question was really Martin, or Mart Taylor, who was definitely a victim during the feud.

Martin Luther Taylor was born February 16, 1843, and died from lead poisoning November 23, 1869. He was the first-born son of Rufus and Elizabeth (Lowe) Taylor. Taylor and his father-in-law, W.B. "Dave" Morris, were both killed by Sutton sympathizers, probably for no "crime" other than because they were of the Taylor faction. The dou-

ble killing occurred in McMullen County, Texas.

Mr. Purcella has also found some sources name a Rube Taylor as the city marshal of Cuero, which was the unofficial "center" of the Sutton-Taylor Feud. He also has found no information about this individual.

Again, errors have caused wasted time. The city marshal of Cuero was Reuben Houston Brown, not Taylor, and he also was killed in the feud. Born on November 28, 1851, the son of Miriam and T. Josephine Brown, Reuben was shot to death on November 18, 1875, while he dealt cards in a Cuero saloon. No one was ever formally charged with his killing, but it was generally accepted the murderers were Bill Taylor, cousin Jim Taylor, A.R. Hendricks, and perhaps one or two others. Brown's was just another killing of the feud.

#### Working for Judge Parker?

Deborah K. Casto, Poca, West Virginia, has been trying to find information on deputy United States Marshal James Pettigrew, who worked out of Judge Isaac Parker's Fort Smith, Arkansas, federal court. She is attempting to find family information because she believes this man was her great-great grandfather.

I recently had the opportunity to examine the oaths of deputy marshals now preserved in the National Archives Branch at Fort Worth, Texas. This list, which is not 100 percent complete, did not contain the name of James Pettigrew.

However, in S.W. Harmon's classic *Hell on the Border: He Hanged Eighty-Eight Men*, the first serious study of Parker's court, Pettigrew is identified as a jailor for Judge Parker. In addition, after half-breed outlaw Jack Spaniard was arrested on March 25, 1888, for the murder of Deputy William Irwin, he was delivered to Fort Smith by Pettigrew.

Another outlaw who surrendered to Pettigrew was Tom Root, although it is not clear if Pettigrew arrested him or merely took him to jail. Serving as a jailor, Pettigrew would not have been required to take the oath of

deputy U.S. marshal.

#### A Harper's Ferry Weapon

Lendon L. Wright, Bailey, Colorado, purchased a weapon bearing the manufacturer's imprint of "Harpers Ferry 1812."

"The barrel of the gun has been shortened; I was told this was probably done to facilitate its use as a hunting weapon...by its owner. It is not in operating condition but is in good restorative condition." Any comments? Value?

I have found very little on this matter. Harper's Ferry is in north-eastern West Virginia, settled in 1733 by Peter Stephens. Robert Harper purchased it in 1747 and established a ferry across the Potomac, hence the name. Congress established an arsenal there in 1796.

When the Lewis and Clark expedition was obtaining supplies, Harper's Ferry provided rifles, rifle slings, powder horns, bullet molds, spare parts and tools, and over a hundred pounds of powder.

It became a principal milling, manufacturing, and transportation center and a major town in the area prior to the Civil War. It was made a household word by John Brown's raid in 1859. The object of course was that there was an arsenal there, and the gun now owned by Mr. Wright was at one time stored at Harper's Ferry arsenal.

During the Civil War there were nine major engagements fought there, and by war's end Harper's Ferry was in ruins. Further damage nearly wiped it out entirely by flooding. It was declared a national park in 1944 and today there are some 300 inhabitants.

I have no idea as to the value of a weapon with "Harper's Ferry 1812" stamped on it; a reputable antique gun dealer could undoubtedly provide that information.



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# The Magical Touring Sack of Flour

By Richard Bauman

The gold rush towns of California and Nevada commonly were treacherous places with desperate men greedily battling for mine claims and gold nuggets. But those rugged gold and silver hunters could sometimes be mighty generous, too.

That was certainly the case when Reuel Gridley brought his "Sanitation Sack of Flour" to town. The flag-trimmed, fifty-pound sack of flour drew money from pockets and purses the way nails spring to a magnet.

Yet the moneymaking sack of

flour, Gridley's self-appointed mission, and the funds his seemingly magical sack of flour raised for the care of wounded Civil War soldiers wouldn't have happened if it hadn't been for an obscure mayoral election in April of 1864.

The war between the states was raging in the South, and miners in California and Nevada wanted to share in the glory of battle. On the other hand, their patriotic fervor wasn't so all consuming that they would abandon their quest for overnight wealth to join the army.

Then, at 10 o'clock on the morning of April 20, 1864, the battlefields of the South were brought into the middle of the silver mines and goldfields of the West. And wealthy miners suddenly had a way to share in the Civil War.

A few weeks earlier Reuel Gridley, a local storekeeper in Clifton, Nevada, had made a bet with another resident, Dr. H.S. Herrick, on the outcome of the mayoralty race in the newly chartered town of Austin, Nevada. Being from Missouri, Gridley bet on the Democratic candidate, David E. "Uncle Dave" Buel—also from Missouri. Some suggested his sympathies lay with the Confederacy.

Whether he was pro-Confederacy or not, Buel was an imposing fellow according to the June 1864, *Harper's Magazine*. "Six-foot-four and large in proportion without a fault, save that of being always on the wrong side and with a frank, generous, offhand way about him, that was wonderfully attractive to the honest miners."

The other candidate was Charles Holbrook, a store owner in Austin. He was one of Austin's leading merchants, a Republican, and without question pro-Union.

The terms of the Gridley-Herrick bet were a bit bizarre. If Buel was

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elected, Herrick was to carry a fifty-pound sack of flour from Upper Austin to Clifton. Conversely, if Holbrook won the election, Gridley was committed to toting the sack of flour from Clifton to Upper Austin. Either way it was a one and a half-mile hike for the loser, with the burdening sack of flour.

In addition to the humiliation of carrying the sack of flour, the loser was to be accompanied by a brass band playing one of two tunes, either "Dixie" or "John Brown's Body." The former was to be played for Herrick, and the latter for Gridley's march. Lastly, the sack of flour was to be presented to the winning candidate.

Buel lost the election.

Thus, a strange little procession formed on the main street of Clifton, April 20, 1864. A sack of flour trimmed with bunting and Union flags, sat on a table. As the Austin Brass Band struck up "John Brown's Body," a popular union marching song, Gridley hoisted the sack of flour to his shoulder and grimly set off for Upper Austin.

By the time he got to the granite building that housed the saloon and hardware store belonging to the newly elected mayor, Charlie Holbrook, the population of both Clifton and Austin were cheering Gridley on.

Gridley marched up to the front door of Holbrook's store, and plopped the flour sack onto an up-ended dry goods box. He dusted off his shoulder, and said with a grin, "All right, Charlie, there's your flour."

"Much obliged, Reuel, but I don't have any need of fifty pounds of flour," replied a straight-faced Holbrook. The irony of it all set off a roar of laughter from the crowd.

For a moment Gridley stood there. Then he jerked the flour sack over his head and yelled, "All right, you've had your fun. Now let's see who'll do the most for the wounded soldiers. We'll put this flour up for auction. All proceeds go to the Sanitary Commission."

The United States Sanitary Commission, essentially an early ver-

sion of the Red Cross, cared for wounded Union soldiers. Supported entirely by public contributions, it even got sizable sums from southerners because the commission consistently harassed Washington officials, when it found southern prisoners being neglected.

Gridley slammed the sack of flour back onto the dry goods box and dug into his pocket. "My opening bid is \$200," he called. "Do I hear \$210?"

Not more than a few minutes later the sack of flour was sold to T.B. Wade, a milliner; for a bid of \$350. But Wade didn't want the flour, so he told Gridley to auction it again.

Gridley sold it again...and again...and again. Over and over that afternoon and next day, he auctioned the sack of flour. In two days he collected \$4,549.80 for the Sanitary Commission.

In just a few days, word of the fabulous, fundraising sack of flour spread through California and Nevada. Telegrams from miners and civic leaders all over the West poured into Gridley's store asking for a chance to bid on the sack of flour.

Gridley willingly shipped the sack off on a first-come, first-served basis, but without Gridley as auctioneer the sack of flour seemed to lose its magic.

Overcome with a strange compulsion, Gridley felt obliged to travel with the sack of flour. He left his store in the hands of his partners, flung the flour sack on to a west bound stagecoach and set out to "sell" his sack of flour.

Paying his own expenses, he first took the sack to Silver City, Gold Hill, and Virginia City, Nevada, where he sold and resold it for more than \$13,000. He then took the famous sack of flour to California and raised a few thousand dollars. After a Nevada newspaper called Californians stingy for their low bids, Gridley took it to Sacramento where he raised over \$10,000. In San Francisco, \$15,000 was raised for the Sanitary fund.

A local reporter who hailed from Hannibal, Missouri, wrote about

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Photographic evidence provides new insight on the fight between Billy the Kid's Regulators and Buckshot Roberts.

**Kit Carson Takes a Wife.** *By George U. Hubbard.* Kit Carson challenges a mountain of a mountain man for the hand of an Indian maiden.

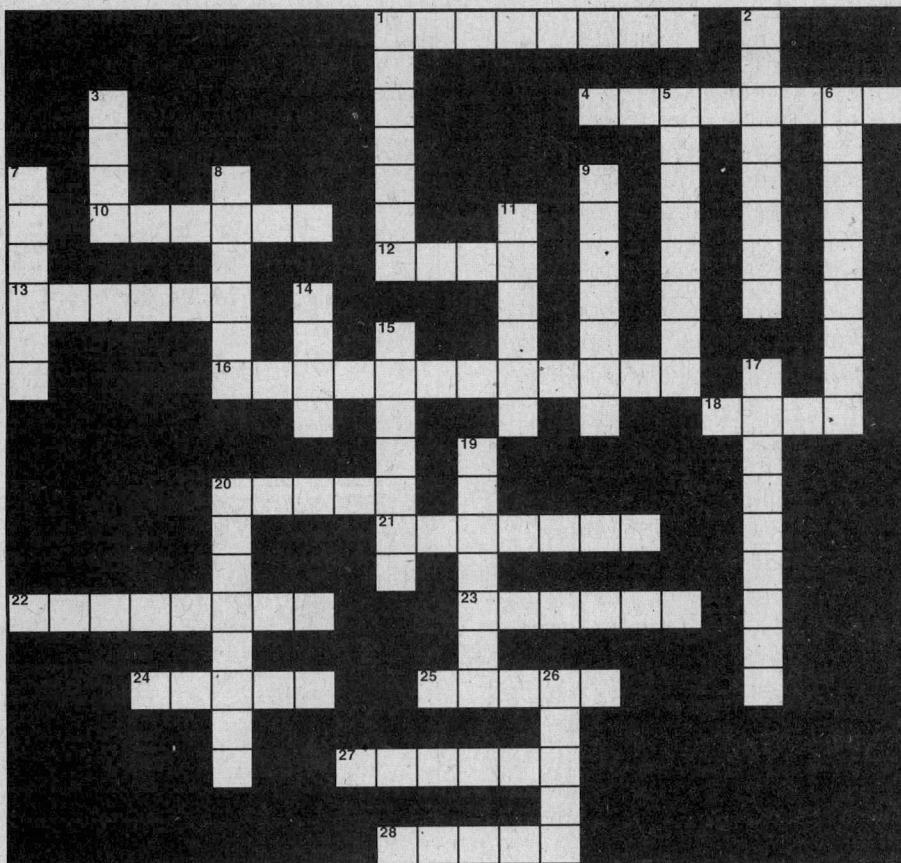
**The California Adventures of Victoria & Albert.** *By William Secrest.* The first elephants to visit California since the Pleistocene Age delight Gold Rush era audiences.

**The Real West: An Interview with Michael Wallis.** *By Al Ritter.* Author Michael Wallis sits down with *Old West* to discuss his new book, the 101 Ranch, and history in general.

**Old West Gunsmith: The Scholfield Revolver.** *By Randy Smith.* The evolution of Smith & Wesson's finest pistol.



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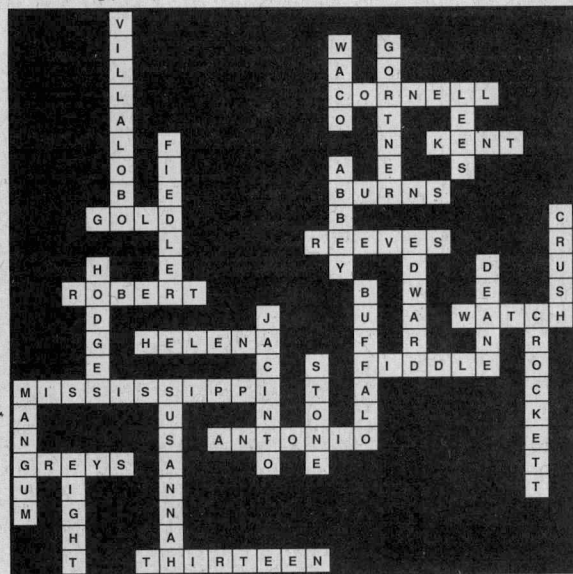


**ACROSS**

- 1. Shot Ike Clanton
- 4. Author of *Crazy Horse*
- 10. Willcox, Arizona, constable
- 12. Current home of Gridley's flour bag
- 13. Deputy Jeff \_\_\_\_\_
- 16. *Saddle Pals'* new ranch hand
- 18. Double Mountain Creek trader
- 20. Center of Sutton-Taylor feud
- 21. Toted a sack of flour
- 22. Killed Matt Burts
- 23. \_\_\_\_\_ Canyon
- 24. Apache County sheriff
- 25. Commodore \_\_\_\_\_ Owens
- 27. *Dixie* captain
- 28. Limpy Jim \_\_\_\_\_

**DOWN**

- 1. Portrayed in *The Covered Wagon*
- 2. Bridger's daughter
- 3. Apache County deputy treasurer
- 5. Apache County undersheriff
- 6. "Dirty Dave"
- 7. Killed John Tornow
- 8. Phantom of the Forest
- 9. Erased by recent tornado
- 11. Prairie Dog Dave
- 14. National Association for Outlaw & Lawman History, Inc.
- 17. Ford County sheriff
- 19. Eva Dalton's husband
- 20. *Mittie Stephens* poetess
- 22. Author of *Trailing Billy the Kid*



**Solution to last month's puzzle.**



Gridley's exploits, but he got some of his facts wrong and reported Gridley himself had been running for mayor of Austin. On the other hand, Mark Twain sometimes had an easy way with facts.

Wherever Gridley carried his sack of flour, an avalanche of money poured out of the pockets of men and purses of women who wanted to somehow share in the war between the states.

The patriotic fever generated by the sack of flour wasn't confined to the West. In December 1864, Gridley, took his flag-trimmed flour sack to the eastern United States, by way of the Isthmus of Panama. He and his famous sack of flour were honored again and again by sophisticated easterners who seemed to have fists full of money to give him.

When the Civil War ended, Reuel Gridley and his sack of flour had raised more than \$275,000 for the Sanitary Commission. And he did it all in less than a year.

Gridley returned to Austin, Nevada, in late 1865. The prosperous grocery store he left behind was on the verge of failure. He closed the store in early 1866, and moved to Stockton, California. The store he opened there also failed. Paradise, California, was his next and last home.

On November 24, 1870, Reuel Gridley died. He is buried in the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery in Stockton, California. Over his grave stands a towering granite statue depicting Gridley with his sack of flour on his shoulder. The inscription reads, "Reuel Colt Gridley, The Soldier's Friend." A tribute to the man who single-handedly did more to help Civil War soldiers than any other one person.

What became of his remarkable fifty-pound sack of flour? It survived its travels throughout the U.S. without rupturing or spilling any of its cherished contents. It now rests in The Nevada Historical Society building, in Reno, Nevada.



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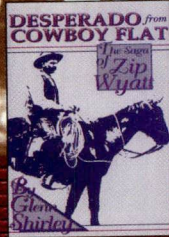
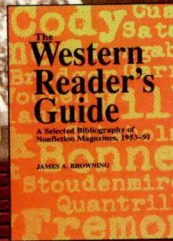
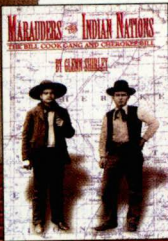
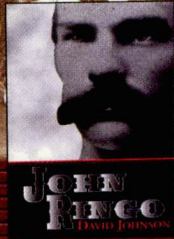
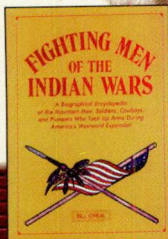
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