

TEXAS' 150th ANNIVERSARY

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**Fifteen Years
to a Republic**

**The Alamo:
Church of Destiny**

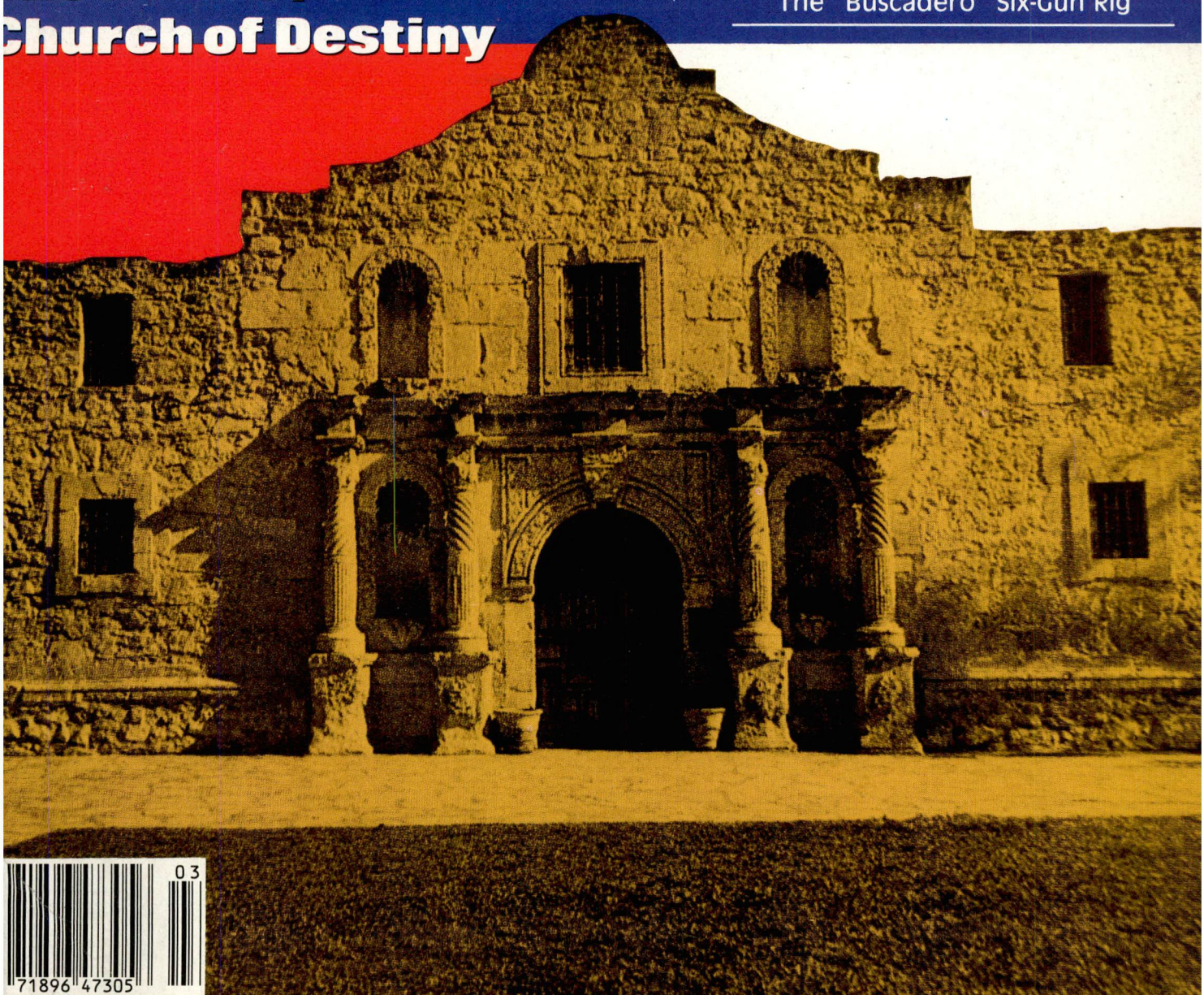
also in this issue:

Gambler, Gunfighter John Bull

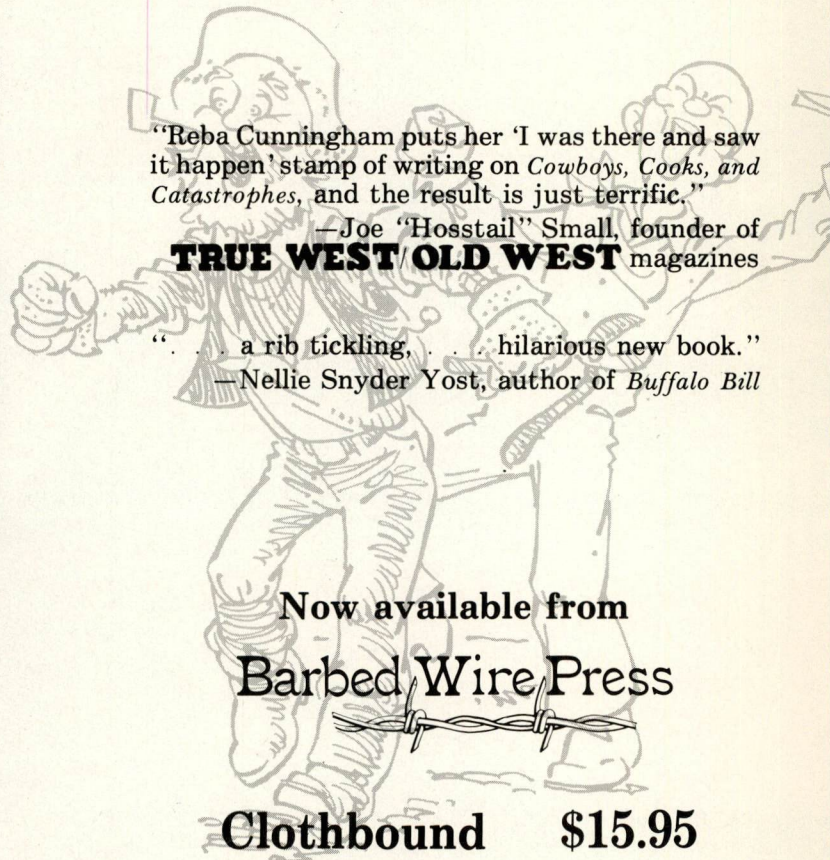
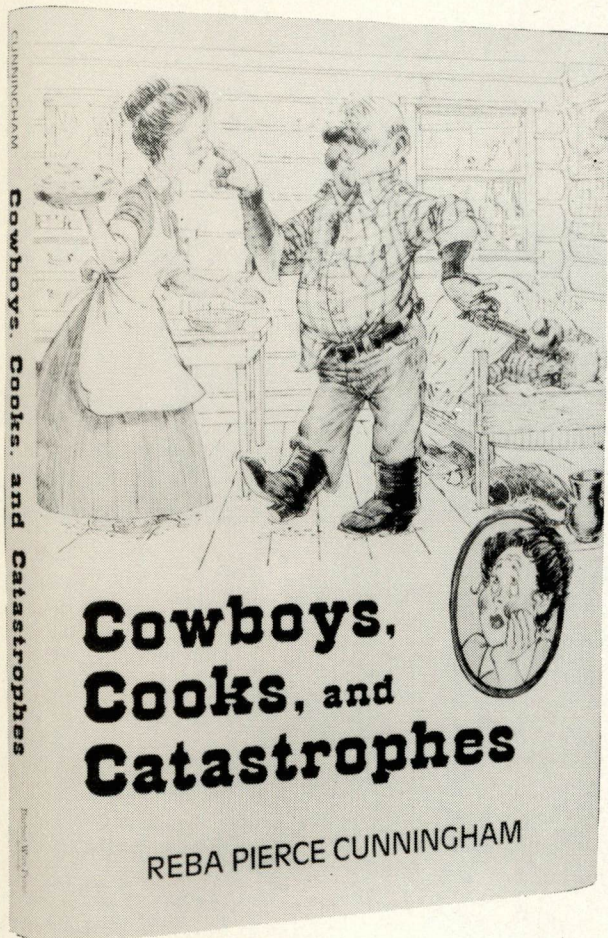
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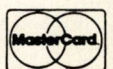
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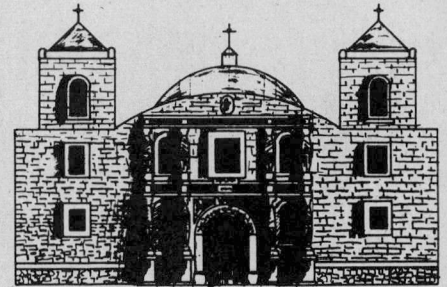
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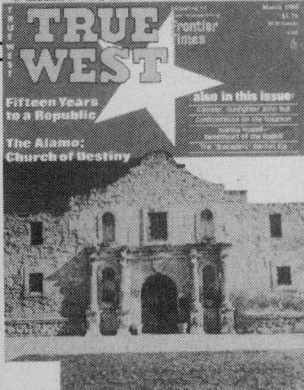
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TEXAS' 150th ANNIVERSARY



OUR COVER

Since the birth of Texas 150 years ago, its state flag and the Alamo have become two of the West's most widely recognized symbols of freedom.

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True West

TRUE WEST

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From the Editor

Texans have always taken a lot of good-natured ribbing, both from non-Texans and from themselves. Last fall, for instance, the evening news ran a story about the on-going struggle between Texans and Coloradans, two species of animals that seem to be natural enemies. According to the news story, warriors from those two great western states annually arm themselves with ripe tomatoes for a fight to the finish in the Colorado wilderness.

I suspect the battle takes place in Colorado because Texans invade the state's hunting grounds and ski slopes every year, whereas no self-respecting Coloradan would travel all the way to the Lone Star State for such foolishness. At any rate, being struck by the lethal fruit always proves fatal, and the stalwart combatants fight to the last survivor. The Texans gave their best, including cries of "Long live Texas," rebel yells, and suicide missions reminiscent of their approach to downhill skiing—all of the behavior patterns that have so endeared them to other westerners over the years. One heroic Texan fell in front of the camera, his chest splattered red. Immediately he was surrounded by exultant Coloradans shouting, "You're dead! You're dead!" As I watched the carnage an uneasiness crept over me, and I gradually realized I was cheering for the Texans.

The worst that could happen had happened. I had learned to like Texans. Born in Colorado and raised in Wyoming, I had grown up with an inbred bewilderment with those hootin', hollerin' folks from the Southwest. After all, Wyomingites and Coloradans have a lot of local pride themselves. Over the years their mutual affection has given birth to such expressions of brotherly love as "Live in Wyoming, fish in Wyoming; live in Colorado, fish in Colorado." The same generosity and understanding resulted in the two state's widely-publicized native bumper stickers and belt buckles, the display of which demonstrates one's superiority over non-natives. Yet if there is one thing Wyomingites and Coloradans agree on, it is that a Texan's true calling in life is as the target of a ripe, red tomato.

But there I was, shouting at my

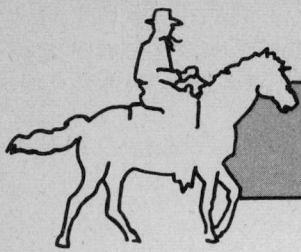
television set for the hapless Texan to get back up and back into the action. To heck with the rules, I wanted vengeance! What had brought about my change of heart? TRUE WEST.

Our association with Texas goes back a long, long time. TRUE WEST was founded in Texas by Joe "Hosstail" Small in 1953. Before that *Hunter's Frontier Times*, now part of the Western Publications stable of magazines, was published for many years in Bandera, Texas. So it's impossible to be around here very long without starting to really appreciate the history and people of Texas. Every day I read about the state's accomplishments over the past 150 years. Every day I come in contact with a remarkable group of Texans, both native and adopted. At the top of the list is old "Hosstail" himself. Next, of course, come the readers from Texas, who are among TRUE WEST's most loyal friends. Add to that list artists Chuck DeHaan and Bud McCaulley, historian John Carroll, writer Mike Blakely, contributor Leon Metz, and our own "Reel Cowboys" columnist, Bill O'Neal. I'm sure you all can think of plenty of other Texans who have contributed equally to TRUE WEST's success over the years.

This issue we celebrate the Texas Sesquicentennial with three stories on Texas, by Texans. Field Roebuck, Robert Dyer, and Paula Mitchell Marks have put together our lead articles on the politics, places, and people of Texas. Roebuck's "Fifteen Years to a Republic," a detailed two-part look at the often-overlooked events leading up to the Texas Revolution, will be concluded next month in observance of the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836.

Those Texans writing about Texas have helped to make this issue of TRUE WEST one of my personal favorites. I hope it will be one of yours, too, and I know you'll join me in wishing the Lone Star State a very happy, successful Sesquicentennial year.

John Joerschke



Truly Western

Letters from our readers

We Want REAL Cowboys

Great balls of fire, I have been hornswoggled, insulted, taken advantage of, and just plain robbed! By all that is holy, you have been eating grass with the cows and got into the loco weed. You blew it—made a movie magazine out of TRUE WEST.

All I have to do to be as loco as you, is read the TRUE WEST Special Issue, which I don't intend to do.

I don't need a movie magazine.—**Frank A. Vickery, Glendora, CA.**

I have enjoyed my subscription to TRUE WEST for a long, long time—until you started putting the drugstore cowboys in it. You used to have a good old-time magazine, but when you have to start using actors' names and stories, I'm through.

If I want television actors, I'll buy that kind of a book. In my estimation it is a mistake on your part to fill up the magazine with that kind of reading. Some of those fellows don't know the front end from the back end of a horse. I am interested in pioneers and pioneering. When I pay for true-life stories of the real past, that's what I want to read.

I guess I'll have to look elsewhere. Thank you for the pleasant reading I have had in the past. I am not subscribing as long as you have those kind of stories.—**Emma Knievel, Butte, MT.**

I am not a writer; I don't intend to instruct a subject I know nothing about.

However, I question the movie magazine issue. *Cowboys, Cooks, and Catastrophes* was interspersed in several issues, not too bad, but one whole issue directed at the movies—tsk, tsk.—**George Makler, Gulfport, MS.**

Congratulations, you finally put out an issue of TRUE WEST with not one story worth reading. I'm referring to the Special Issue, whole number 212. That's

the right number, anyway, the boiling point! If you want to put out another Hollywood magazine, that's fine, but don't call it TRUE WEST. One more shot like that and I quit.—**Joseph L. Ward, Brownsville, CA.**

I think the biggest disappointment in my life was when the TRUE WEST Special Issue was delivered to my mailbox. I have read TRUE WEST for thirty years, but when you have an issue of nothing but old movies, please, don't send it to me. I am seventy-five years old and have seen all those old movies when I was a boy. They were not too interesting to me then, and now are even less so. I read the magazine for your historical articles, so please, no more old movies.—**R.W. Bledsoe, Alamo, TX.**

We Like REEL Cowboys Too

The TRUE WEST Special Issue of Glenn Shirley's "Reel Western Heroes" was just great! Would you please let me know if I can purchase additional copies?—**Frank Russo, Methuen, MA.**

I've been reading TRUE WEST for many years and have always enjoyed the great stories of our history. I especially like to read about the silent movie stars. Those stories bring back many memories of years gone by. The TRUE WEST Special Issue was delightful reading. There were so many great western movie stars. It is very difficult to pick the best—but I always did lean toward Buck Jones as my favorite.—**John Wuckert, Portland, OR.**

Thank you for Reel Western Heroes, in the TRUE WEST Special Issue. I am always dismayed whenever I read articles about silent western stars, only to find Fred Thomson's name omitted. On the rare occasion when it is mentioned, it is invariably spelled with a "p" be-

tween the "m" and the "s."

I am still a fan of Thomson's, and since I am a silent movie buff, I frame my walls with silent stars. A Thomson picture was unavailable, so I photographed some pictures from a magazine with a closeup lens. Not too bad. . .

Kalton C. Lahue's book, *Winners of the West*, states that Cecil B. DeMille selected Jack Hoxie for the Buffalo Bill role in *The Last Frontier*.

Nobody seems to remember another favorite of mine—Fred Humes.—**Harry Schultz, Homeland, CA.**

I just received the TRUE WEST Special Issue and enjoyed reading the stories. Harry Carey and Tom Tyler are real favorites of mine.—**Thomas McGeeney, Long Beach, CA.**

Your special issue on western movie heroes is outstanding. I wish there were more issues like it. One addition concerning the superb article on Harry Carey is that the last performance he gave was in Walt Disney's masterpiece, *So Dear to My Heart*.—**John Abeloe, Sunnyvale, CA.**

A Faithful Reader

I have been a faithful reader of TRUE WEST for the last six years. I first came upon it in a store in Arizona while my husband and I were on our way home from visiting our son in Chanute, Kansas. Before subscribing, I purchased TRUE WEST from a local supermarket. Now I don't have to worry about finding it; I know it'll be in my mailbox every month.

When I am finished reading an issue, I pass it on to my mother, and her friend who is ninety years young. He gets a real boost from reading TRUE WEST.

After everyone has read the magazine I put it away. I'll never throw an issue out.

I can only find one tiny flaw in your
True West

magazine—it should be twice as big!—
Natalie M. Parks, Riverside, CA.

In Gratitude

There is not a magazine I enjoy more than TRUE WEST. It covers the "real thing" of what has happened in the last hundred years. What people today call excitement and pleasure seems so empty and useless. We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to those pioneers of covered-wagon days who risked everything and suffered much to open up the West, and you are helping us to remember.

I'm an old-age pensioner who saw the prairie just past the turn-of-the-century.

Keep 'em coming.—Lloyd Silvester,
Sarnia, Ontario, Canada.

Volunteer's Voice Puzzles Reader

To put it bluntly, either Andrew McMains' story was somehow embellished over the years, or his grandson,

Brian W. McMains, is confused about it. McMains' letter in TRUE WEST (Special Issue, 1985), simply does not fit the documented record of the 19th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry. I really do not wish to impugn either man, for McMains presented what he recalls about his grandfather in an upright manner; it just does not work historically.

Andrew McMains, being in Company G and serving (along with Company C) as General Sheridan's escort, went by rail to Fort Hays and escorted Sheridan across the plains to Camp Supply.

McMains' grandfather's statement, "... he could not quite make up his mind which was worse, being a volunteer under Custer or spending twenty-three days riding, marching on foot, and going hungry in a Kansas blizzard with the men in the other ten companies," implies his grandfather would have taken part in Colonel Crawford's snow-bound "starvation march" had he not chosen to go with Custer. General Sheridan and his men took an alternate route from Crawford and his ten companies, so Andrew McMains, serving under Sheridan, would have been elsewhere.

When Andrew McMains stepped for-

ward to volunteer, it could only have been for the follow-up campaign of December 7, 1868, at which time the Washita battlefield was examined by Sheridan, Custer, and combined elements of the 7th U.S. and 19th Kansas Cavalries. Andrew implies that he saw men of the 7th Cavalry commit a massacre upon the Indians. That could only be possible if he was there to observe it, and the 7th fought alone at Washita.

The battlefield no doubt was a horrible thing to view, with dead humans and horses strewn about and decomposing while being eaten by wolves and buzzards. War disgusts all caring men and I am sure it deeply affected a young red-headed lad as well. But one would think that the discovery at this time of the arrow-riddled and mutilated remains of Major Elliott and his detachment of eighteen 7th cavalymen might have angered Andrew somewhat more than what happened to the enemy.

I know a little about this period in history and have tried to check my facts very carefully. I have used *Kansas Historical Collections*, 1908; Stan Hoig's *Battle of the Washita*, 1976; the statements of 19th Kansas members,



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Colonel Samuel Crawford, Commander; Sergeant James Hadley, Company A; Private David Spotts, Company L (author of *Campaigning With Custer*, 1927); and Private Theodore Bayless, Company B, whose unpublished manuscript is in my possession.

In closing I wish to ask a question. If the Washita Battle were truly a massacre rather than merely a victory by surprise attack, why then were fifty-three Indian captives returned to Fort Dodge and released?—**Jack Steed, Sacramento, CA.**

Land Baron

In "Massacre at Manco Burro Pass," by Charles F. Ansell, December '85 TRUE WEST, the statement is made that Lucien Maxwell was the largest individual landowner in the history of America. How much land did he own?

Your magazines are the best! Keep it up.—**Clarence E. Cook, Saratoga, AR.**

Editor's response: According to *Readers Encyclopedia of the American West*, edited by Howard R. Lamar, Maxwell owned "roughly 97,000 acres."

Response to Comment

In response to Vernon Kelch's letter to the editor in December '85 TRUE WEST concerning "Old Trooper," the

cover art for August *Frontier Times*, I extend my thanks to Mr. Kelch for his comments regarding the "Old Trooper." He's obviously correct in noting the officers' bars on the subject. However, the title was not chosen lightly nor with any disrespect, but is merely intended as a generic term. Perhaps a good example would be a rather famous general who claimed "old soldiers never die, etc.," when referring to himself in his retirement statement. But thanks again, Mr. Kelch, it's observations like yours that keep us on our toes.—**Bud McCaulley, Amarillo, TX.**

Strange Combination? Not Really...

I used to write some for Joe "Hosstail" Austell Small and did right well during the short time that he published *Wanderlust*, since that is somewhat my profession.

I subscribe to TRUE WEST while I am overseas and then have them sent to me when a year's worth has stacked up. Somehow, in the last batch, I got several issues from the year 1970 right along with the 1985 issues, thus making a comparison easy.

The 1970 issue was much thicker, unfortunately, for the more the merrier, but articles now seem just as interesting on the whole. The old ones were set up so all articles were continued in the

back, a system I especially dislike. I'm glad you don't do that anymore. There was no "Reel Cowboy" section in the old issues, and I did appreciate that! However, there were a great many "lost gold mine" articles which I always find a great bore. Glad they are fewer.

Actually, I have my family send me four magazines to keep me reading-happy; *Psychology Today*, *Natural Science*, *Smithsonian*, and TRUE WEST. Strange combination? Maybe, but each one carries an interest of mine, and each one is able to do what I demand of a regular subscription. That is to bring me articles of special interest and make those of less interest so interesting that I read them anyway.

Keep it up. My life would be incomplete without my foursome; just three of them wouldn't keep the right balance.—**Jack Down, Manila, The Phillipines.**



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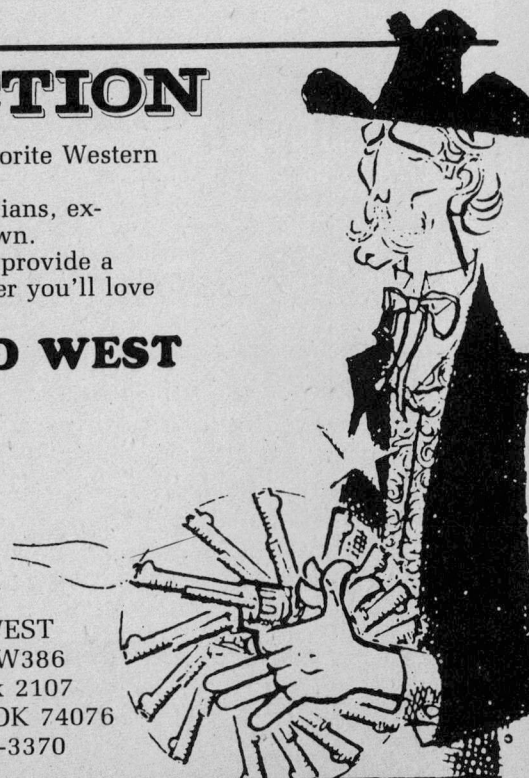
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Western Roundup

Places to go and things to see in the West

Custer Battlefield Preservation



The Custer Battlefield Preservation Committee is offering for sale two commemorative prints to aid in their fund-raising campaign, right, "Two Trails to Destiny" by Jack Hines, and left, "With Their Backs to the Wall" by Ralph Heinz. Interested parties should contact the Preservation Committee in Hardin, Montana, for information regarding the purchase of these prints.

While the Battle of the Little Big Horn is the most well-known historical event in the Western United States, the national park commemorating that event comprises only 732 acres of publicly owned land. But, almost 9,000 acres of land were involved in the battle and that land looks today much as it did in 1876. The disturbing news is that many of those other 9,000 acres are now for sale, and development threatens the Custer Battlefield, just as it threatens many other historical parks across the country.

An organization has been formed to collect tax-deductible contributions for the purpose of purchasing some of the historically-significant land around Custer Battlefield National Monument, to be incorporated into the national park holdings. Custer Battlefield Preservation Committee, Inc., Box 7, Hardin, MT 56034, is conducting an international fund-raising campaign for these

tax-deductible gifts, and will welcome contributions in any amount.

Dullenty Named to NOLA Hall of Fame

The National Association for Outlaw and Lawman History board of directors at Reno, Nevada, added Jim Dullenty, editor of TRUE WEST/Frontier Times and OLD WEST magazines from 1982-1984, to the NOLA Hall of Fame, the highest honor the organization can bestow on an individual. Congratulations, Jim!

C.M. Russell Art Museum

Until 1953 when the first C.M. Russell Museum was founded to house the Trigg family's Russell art collection, the only facility in Great Falls, Montana,

publicly displaying Russell's works was Russell's own 1903 vintage log cabin studio, which had been opened to the public in 1930.

Although the Trigg collection is the founding nucleus of the museum's permanent Russell collection, many other pieces have been acquired, including numerous well known masterpieces and a collection of artifacts, personal letters, and cards. Also on view in the museum are works by O.C. Seltzer, J.H. Sharp, E.E. Heika, I. Crouse, and others.

In 1969 the Great Falls Advertising Federation held their first C.M. Russell Auction of Original Western Art, with the C.M. Russell Museum its sole benefactor.

In time, with additional purchases and donations, it became apparent the Russell collection was outgrowing the museum. Construction on a new addition began in June 1984 and was completed in October 1985. The new addi-

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tion features two substantial exhibit galleries, a multipurpose gallery and meeting room, a large sales shop and an archival library for research. A very important part of the construction was providing access to all public areas of the museum to handicapped persons.

On March 20, as part of the eighteenth annual C.M. Russell Auction of Original Western Art, to be held in the Heritage Inn, Great Falls, Montana, on March 20-22, 1986, the museum will host a "Gala Opening" for the attending artists, exhibitors, special guests, and auction ticketholders. Art to be sold during the auction will be on display during the reception and those in attendance will have the opportunity to vote for their choice of best painting and best sculpture. A jury panel consisting of Montana artist Clyde Aspevig, Montana art dealer Dick Duffy, and Mrs. Fred (Ginger) Renner, of Paradise Valley, Arizona, will secretly select the over-all "Best of Show." The winner will receive \$1,000 at the chuckwagon brunch on March 21.

For more information contact: Great Falls Advertising Federation, P.O. Box 619, Great Falls, Montana 59403, or call (406)761-6453.

Winchester Club of America

The recently formed Winchester Club of America is seeking new members. The purposes of the organization are: to establish a permanent, general non-profit corporation for those interested in the collection, possession, and use of arms and their accessories by responsible persons; to promote a friendship and camaraderie among those interested in the study of Winchester-made firearms; to establish regular meetings where club business may be transacted, members may display arms and accessories and exchange such arms and accessories in accordance with local and national laws, and members may assist each other in locating and acquiring arms and accessories of the type which interests them most; to make a united stand in opposing legislation that may be injurious to the collection, possession, and use of arms by responsible persons; to establish, uphold, and promote the highest of ethical standards and/or activities in the club; and to raise money through organizational functions for the Winchester Museum in Cody, Wyoming.

Members receive free *The Winchester Repeater*, published semi-annually by the Winchester Club of America. The club invites members to submit articles for

publication as well as ideas, suggestions, and commentary.

For information regarding membership contact The Winchester Club of America, 1705 N. Woodlawn Ave., St. Louis, MO 63124

Fort Robinson

Fort Robinson, located three miles west of Crawford, Nebraska, in the Pine Ridge near the Black Hills, was in use



The Fort Robinson Museum Post Headquarters is open to visitors year-round. Nearly fifty other structures open during

as a U.S. cavalry post from 1874 through 1948. The Fort Robinson parade ground was the site of the death of the Sioux Chief Crazy Horse on September 5, 1877. The post headquarters houses a museum which is open to the public year round. The museum hours are: April 1 through November 15, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sundays; November 16 through March 31, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

During tourist season, April 1 through November 15, the public is invited to tour nearly fifty structures remaining at Fort Robinson, including the adobe officers' quarters, the blacksmith, harness repair, and wheelwright shops, the veterinary hospital, the 1905 post headquarters, and the adjutant's office, which was built in 1874.

Frontier Times Museum

Hunter's Bandera *New Era* Newspaper was published by J. Marvin Hunter

True West

from 1921 to 1924. In 1923 Hunter founded *Frontier Times*, a magazine devoted to the history, border tragedy, and pioneer achievement of the American West. He authored many books on pioneer peoples and their times.

From the sale of his books and from donations from hundreds of friends throughout Bandera County and the surrounding area, he was able to finance the construction of the unique Frontier Times Museum. The native stone build-



tourist season offer a look at a real Nebraska plains U.S. cavalry post.

ing, located at the corner of 13th and Pecan streets in Bandera, Texas, was constructed in 1933. It was later enlarged to its present size as the collection grew.

Hunter died in 1957, and in 1960 the museum was sold to the late F.B. Doane. He restored and remodeled the building and added the Gallery of Western Art. The Doane Foundation operated the museum until 1972 when they decided it to the citizens of Bandera County, Texas, to be operated by a local Board of Directors.



Western Roundup is a report on places to go and things to see associated with the history of the Old West. Submissions are welcome. Information on scheduled events should be submitted at least six months prior to the event. Items on historic places are also welcome. Send information including photos to: Western Roundup, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076.

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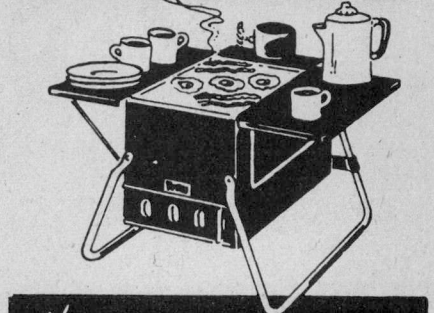
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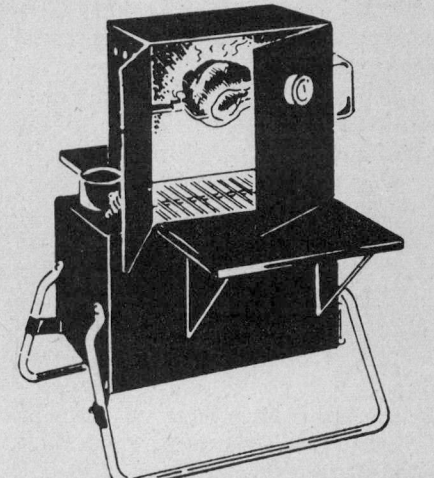
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Answer Man

Problematic Postcard

By CHUCK PARSONS

This postcard was among the recent flea market purchases made by Lyle Loban, Box 96, Yale, South Dakota 57386. Loban is hoping that either I or a reader can help him identify the town.

The flag at the right shows forty-eight stars, so we can be sure the picture was taken after Arizona was admitted to the Union in February 1912. Judging from the automobiles, I would say it was made in the late 'teens. The flags and bunting indicate the parade may have marked the Fourth of July.

The store on the immediate right has a sign beginning, "Burling..." which may have been the beginning of the town's name. If so, it is possibly Burlingame, California, or Burlington, Iowa. There are several other Burlingtons, one in Massachusetts, and one in Vermont, but the picture somehow has a western flavor.

Western Wear. Other than his boots, the most important item in a cowboy's wardrobe was his hat. Louis T. Noto, 230 Division Street, Amsterdam, New York 12010 is "curious about the origin of the cowboy hat."

The cowboy hat generally had a flat brim, 3½ to 5½ inches wide, and a tall crown, 5 to 8 inches high. The band around the crown was a decorative piece. Thongs, or "bonnet strings," were used to hold it on the head during wind or storm. Variations in the height and crease of the crown and the roll of the brim could indicate what part of the country a cowboy was from. Generally, the brim became wider and the crown higher the further south the wearer. Northern cowboys preferred narrower brims and flatter crowns.

The first cowboy hats were home-made. In the 1860s New Jersey hat-maker John B. Stetson went west for his health. Realizing the need for a special-



A postcard photograph showing a downtown parade poses an intriguing question which may never be satisfactorily answered.

ized hat for wear on the range, he returned east and opened a one-man shop in Philadelphia in 1865. Soon the terms "Stetson" and "John B." were synonymous with western headgear. By 1906 Stetson's 3,500 employees were turning out two million hats a year.

Man of Many Names. "What was Max Brand's real name? I see in some of his old books he went by Evan Evans and Frederick Forest. Did he die in the early 1930s? How many books did he write?" Those questions are from Mike Horstman, Star Route, Box 154, Hodgen, Oklahoma 74939.

Max Brand was the pen name of Frederick Schiller Faust, who was born in 1892. He died in Italy in 1944 of wounds sustained in an Allied offensive he was covering as a war correspondent. Faust wrote under at least nineteen different pen names including Frederick Forest along with the best-known Max Brand.

Faust created Dr. Kildare and had some poetry published in *The Village Street* in 1922. Perhaps his best-known western is *Destry Rides Again* (1930).

Younger's Elders. "What were Cole, Jim, and Bob Younger's parents' full names?" Larry D. Cole, P.O. Box 77, Haines, Oregon 97833 writes, "We've never seen the maiden name of Mrs. Younger or the first name of Pa Younger."

The Younger boys' father, Henry Washington Younger, was born in Crab Orchard, Kentucky, and moved to Jackson County, Missouri, as a young man. In 1830 he married Miss Bursheba Fristoe of Independence, Missouri. They had fourteen children, eight girls and six boys. Three died in infancy.

Richard, the firstborn son died in 1860 at the age of twenty-three. Thomas Coleman, "Cole," was born January 15, 1844, and died March 21, 1916. James Henry was born on January 15, 1848,

True West

ard

and committed suicide October 18, 1902. Killed in a gunbattle with detectives on March 17, 1874, John was the only one to die in action. He and Jim faced Louis J. Lull and Edwin B. Daniels in that fateful fight. Robert Edwin Younger was born October 29, 1856, and died of tuberculosis September 16, 1889.

Indian Territory Detective. Many figures from the Old West led fascinating lives but never became widely known in history. One such individual was William D. Fossett, about whom Marty Faulkner, P.O. Box 2179, Apache Junction, Arizona 85217-2179 inquired. A resident of Kingfisher, Indian Territory, Fossett was a detective on the Rock Island Railroad. He was appointed chief deputy in November 1897.

His major claim to fame was that he was in the posse that caught up with "Little Dick" West, a one-time member of Bill Doolin's notorious gang of train robbers. On April 8, 1893, Fossett, along with lawmen Frank Rinehart, Bill Tilghman, Ben Miller, Heck Thomas, and his son Albert Thomas, caught up with West. Winchester bullets and shotgun shells were fired, but the coroner's report credited Fossett with West's killing.

I am still researching several other individuals named by Faulkner: J.B. Jones of Bartlesville, Indian Territory, D.N. Willits of Guthrie, and N.H. Rowden of Pawnee County.



If you have a question, send it to Chuck Parsons, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Please keep questions brief. Sign your full name and address, including zip code. Names and addresses will be published if question is used. Space limitations may not permit us to use all questions.

March 1986

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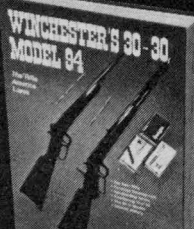
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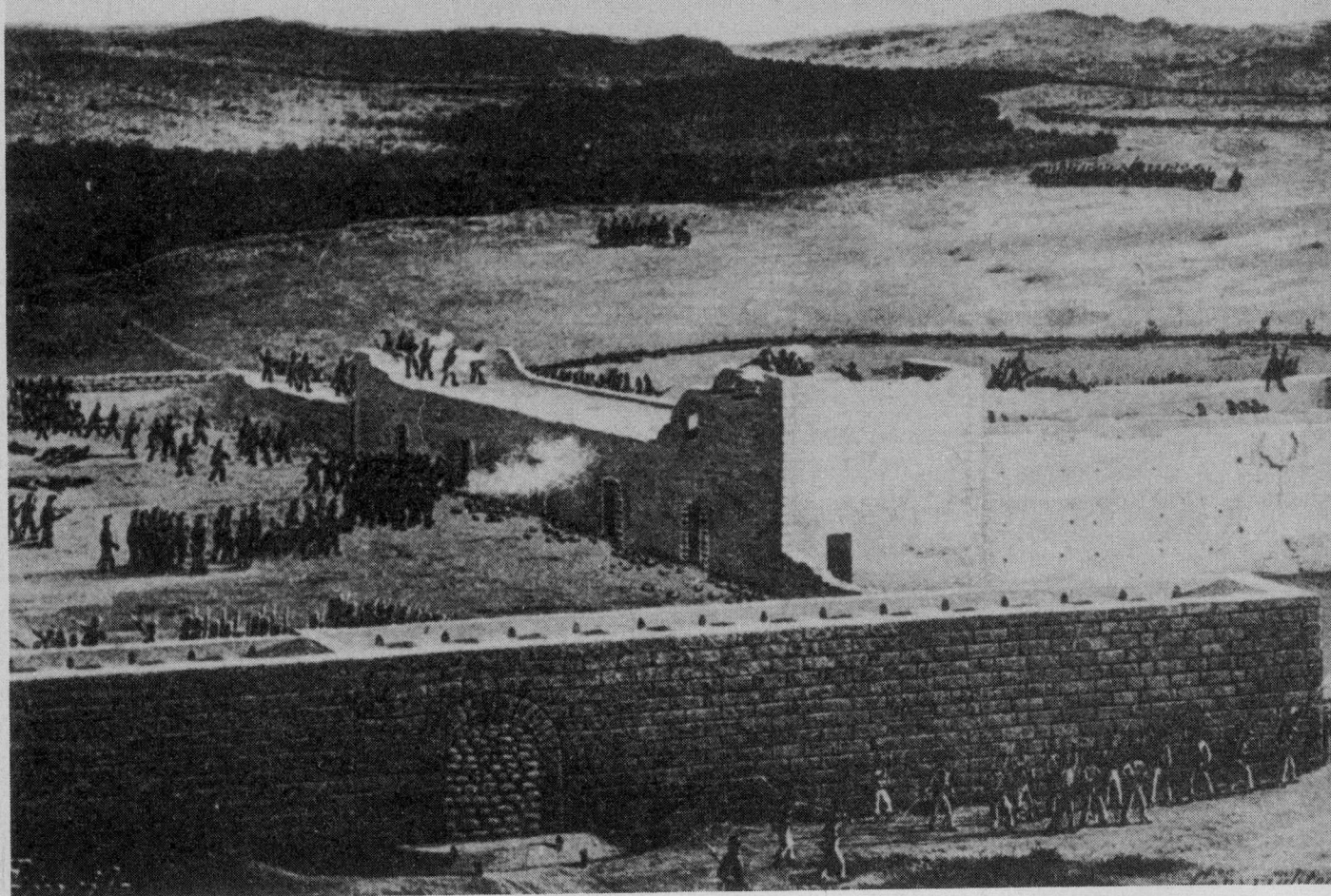
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Fifteen Years to a Republic

By FIELD ROEBUCK



The rumble of guns from the slaughter at the Alamo still echoed through the Texas hills when President-General Antonio López de Santa Anna made his final tactical blunder. Taking a *siesta* on the banks of the San Jacinto River, the army of the self-styled Napoleon of Mexico was set upon by General Sam Houston's Texans. In only eighteen minutes the Mexican army was decimated, Santa Anna was captured, and Texas was an independent republic.

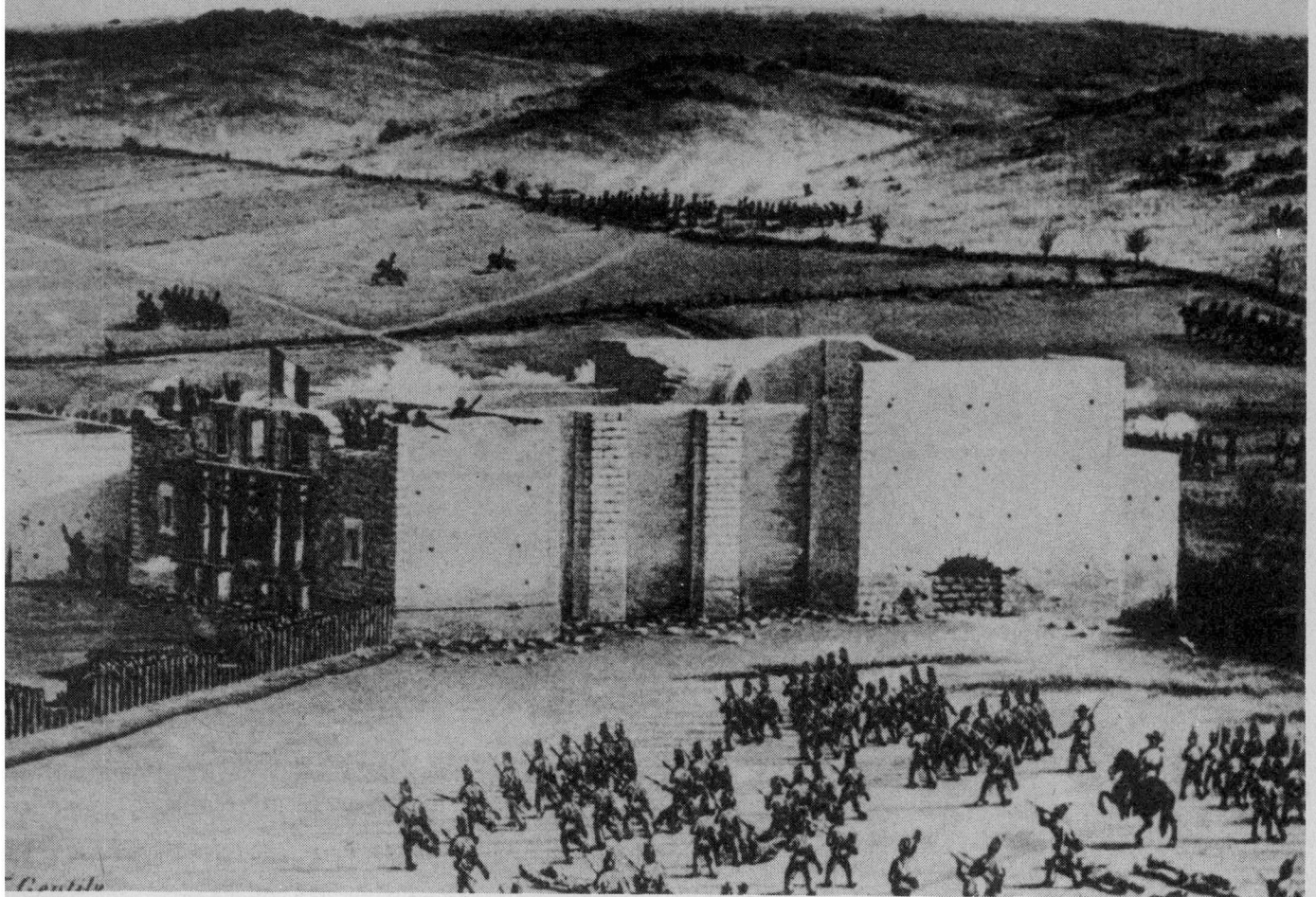
In 1986 Texas is celebrating its Sesquicentennial. Every Texan can relate the famous battles: the Alamo, Goliad, San Jacinto. And most Americans know the

heroes of the Texas War for Independence: Fannin, Houston, Crockett, Bowie, Travis. But those battles and men were only part of an epic drama which transformed Texas from a remote, unpopulated province into an independent republic in only fifteen years.

It began, oddly enough, in the United States with the Panic of 1819. The economy was in ruin. Banks and businesses failed, and many frontier families, unable to make scheduled payments on their land, were homeless. Congress reduced land prices from \$2.00 to \$1.50 an acre but, to prevent speculation, re-

True West

Part One: The Smoldering Embers



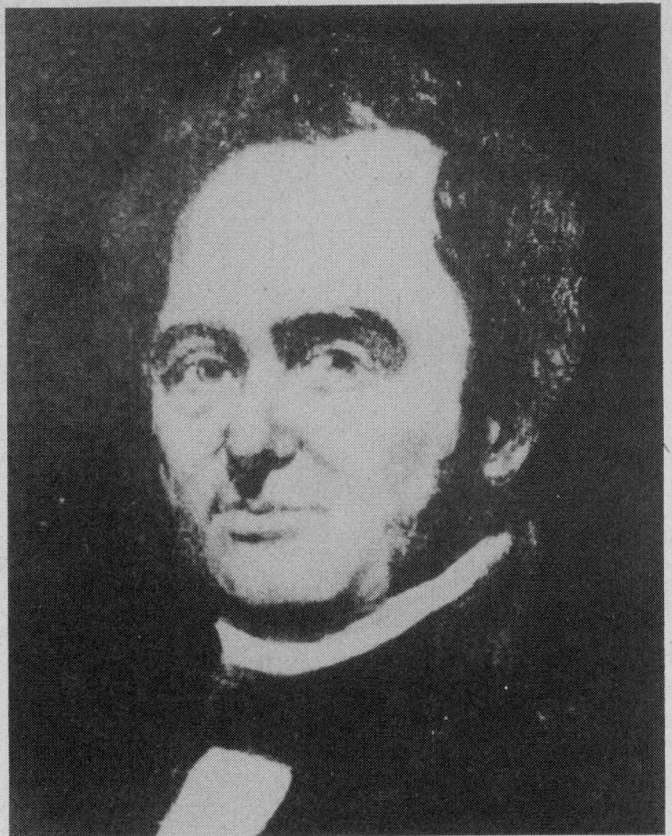
quired the total amount be paid immediately. Since few people had that much cash, immigration to the frontier ceased, and potential settlers began looking elsewhere for opportunity.

Texas was a wild and vacant land, with only a few settlers near the Sabine River in the east and along the San Antonio River to the west. They were constantly harassed by Indians. The only permanent settlements were small Spanish garrisons and Franciscan missions at Nacogdoches near the Sabine River, at San Antonio de Bexar far to the west, and at La Bahía on the San Antonio River south of Bexar.

March 1986

Bankrupted by the Panic of 1819, Moses Austin traveled to Bexar in late 1820 and obtained permission from the Spanish authorities to establish a colony of 300 families in Texas. Elated, he returned to Missouri. But the exhausting journey had taken its toll. He sickened and died just when Mexico won its independence from Spain.

Honoring his father's last wish, young Stephen Fuller Austin obtained confirmation of the grant from the new Mexican government. It seemed Mexico had decided that if the United States could prosper with Anglo frontiersmen, so could Texas.



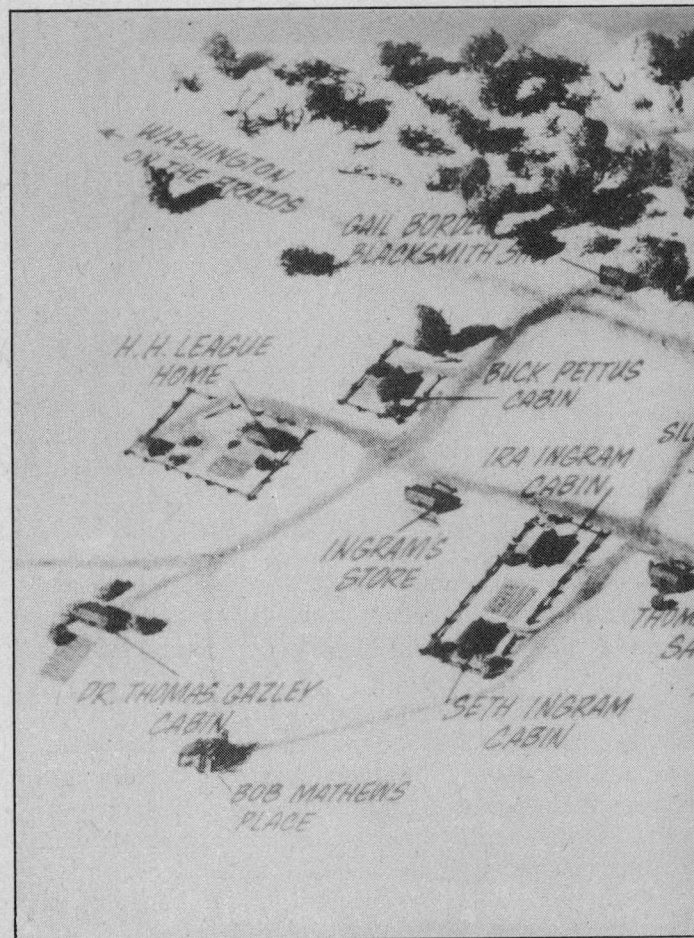
Courtesy of the University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio
Moses Austin (right) died before he could fulfill his dream of colonizing Texas. But his son, Stephen F. Austin (left) made the colony a reality, honoring his father's last wish.

Courtesy of the Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas

Word of Austin's colony and its free land spread like wildfire. Almost overwhelmed by the response, Austin left Natchitoches, Louisiana, in December 1821 with the first group of twenty-two colonists, joining some who were already waiting for him along the Brazos River. He wrote later, "I bade an everlasting farewell to my native country, and adopted this, and in so doing I determined to fulfill rigidly all the duties and obligations of a Mexican citizen."

In an independent Mexico the political pot continued to boil. Tiring of imperial excesses, the old revolutionary generals reassembled their armies and forced Emperor Agustín I into exile. Antonio López de Santa Anna, one of the Emperor's former supporters, an ambitious, opportunistic, and ruthless twenty-nine-year-old general, conspired with the civil authorities to call for the reconvening of congress in December of 1822. The imperial troops quickly joined the revolt, and the course for a federal republic was set.

The new National Congress drafted the Mexican Constitution of 1824, based on provisions and principles of the beloved Spanish Constitution of 1812 and incorporating ideas and provisions from the constitutions of France and the United States. It guaranteed rights of self-government to individual states and was admired by the settlers moving into Texas. Their only complaints were that it contained no provisions for trial by jury or bail and required adherence to the Roman Catholic religion. The Constitution created the State of Coahuila and Texas, with its capital in Saltillo,



and a government for the Department of Bexar at San Antonio.

The National Colonization Law of 1824 adopted many of the provisions of Austin's grant and exempted colonists from tariff duties until 1830. It provided that each immigrant family would receive one *labor*, about 177 acres of tillable land, and one *sitio*, 4,428 acres of grazing land.

THE 297 SETTLERS in Austin's original colony were a varied lot. They came to seek new opportunities, to escape creditors or the law, or just on a whim. A few were rich, but most were poor farmers and frontiersmen. All suffered through Indian depredations and severe droughts. At times their only food was venison and wild honey. They often went without bread, hoarding the meager corn supply for seed. Until cotton crops could be planted, harvested, and ginned, animal skins were used for clothing and for cover during the freezing winter nights. But they prospered, and by 1827 San Felipe de Austin, the capital, had some 200 residents, two stores, a hotel, a saloon, and a public hall.

The National Colonization Law of 1824 gave states the right to define colonization policy, subject to federal veto. Foreigners were not to be permitted to settle within ten leagues of the coast or within twen-

ty leagues of the national boundary; the National Congress reserved the authority to stop immigration from any particular nation at any time; and no individual was to hold title to more than 49,000 acres. These restrictions arose from Mexico's long-standing fear of Anglo colonists and of her land-hungry neighbor to the north.

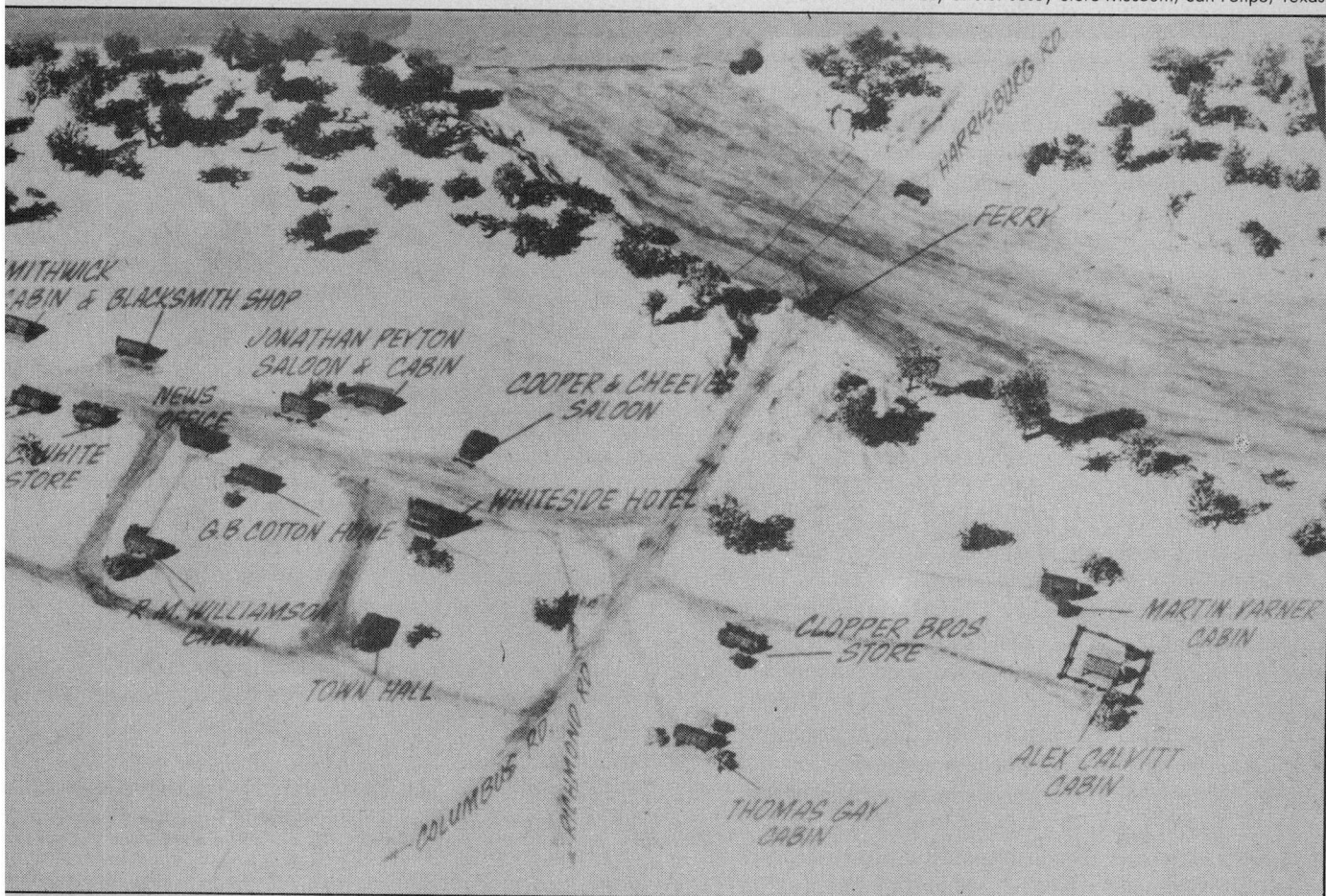
On March 24, 1825, the legislature of the State of Coahuila and Texas passed a law allowing *empresarios*, or land promoters, to settle specified numbers of colonists in designated areas within a contract period of six years. Within the next six weeks contracts were signed for the importation of 2,400 families into Texas.

Almost immediately, problems arose. In 1826 Haden Edwards, with a grant around Nacogdoches, got into trouble with previous settlers in the area, antagonized the Mexican authorities, and proclaimed the Republic of Fredonia. His rebellion quashed by militia from Austin's colony, Edwards fled to Louisiana. A garrison of troops under Colonel José de las Piedras was stationed at Nacogdoches to prevent further uprisings.

After the middle of 1828, most colonists simply moved into Texas and squatted on whatever vacant land struck their fancy. Further, unscrupulous land companies took advantage of the system, "selling" parcels of up to 20,000 acres of Texas land to gullible easterners. When the new landowners arrived, they

San Felipe de Austin, shown circa 1830, was the first site chosen for colonization by Stephen F. Austin. The town was situated along the Brazos River, and served as the capital of all the first Anglo-American settlements.

Courtesy of J.J. Josey Store Museum, San Felipe, Texas.



From 1829 until his death by suicide on July 3, 1832, José Manuel Rafael Simeón de Mier y Terán served as commandant general of the eastern division of the Provincias Internas, including Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, and Texas.

found land was free to qualified immigrants and their purchased "titles" were not recognized by the Mexican authorities. Many of them returned home, but many stayed. Soon, many illegal aliens were living precariously in Texas at the whim of the local authorities and political winds.

Concerned by the influx of Anglo settlers, President Guadalupe Victoria appointed a commission headed by General Manuel Simeón de Mier y Terán to conduct a political, scientific, and military study of Texas. Mier y Terán also was to investigate the defenses of Texas against potential enemies, both internal and external, and to study the terrain through which the Sabine border would finally run.

This intelligent, able revolutionary hero was a graduate of the College of Mines in Mexico City and was well-equipped for his assignment. However, he suffered from what was probably tuberculosis and was not a well man. Therefore, he rode in a carriage during his trip, accompanied by a Swiss botanist, a mineralogist, three army officers, and sixteen mounted dragoons. His train included two heavy wagons loaded with books, scientific instruments, tents, and supplies.

The commission arrived in Texas in the summer of 1828. Mier y Terán's first stop was at San Antonio de Bexar, where he was introduced to Texas by the political officer, Ramón Músquiz. Anglos were streaming into Texas, many to Austin's colony and to Green DeWitt's colony south of Bexar. Others were settling in the border and coastal areas reserved by the government. Building homes, clearing land, and planting crops, perhaps 20,000 were already in Texas.

BY CONTRAST, the only appreciable numbers of Mexican colonists were at Bexar, Nacogdoches, and Goliad. According to Músquiz, the 1,500 or so Mexicans at Bexar seemed to have "no interests other than dancing" and apparently considered work a form of punishment.

Mier y Terán proceeded to the Guadalupe River and DeWitt's capital of Gonzales. Escorted to San Felipe de Austin, he conferred with Austin for two weeks. He was not much impressed with the food at San Felipe and could find only ten Mexicans in residence. He was convinced that Austin was a loyal Mexican; he was not so sure about the other colonists.

When Mier y Terán went on toward Nacogdoches, settlers were everywhere, clearing land and building cabins. The country swarmed with illegal immigrants. At Nacogdoches he was slightly reassured by a neat row of painted, Mexican adobe houses. But there were not enough of them.

Mier y Terán established his base camp at Nacogdoches and made a thorough inspection of



Courtesy of the University of Texas
Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio.

eastern Texas. His concern grew, finally becoming so great that he urgently cautioned the government in Mexico City not to await his final report before acting. Without immediate action, "Texas could throw this whole nation into revolution."

Under the Mexican system each settlement was administered by elected officials consisting of an *alcalde*, a combination mayor and justice of the peace, and an *ayuntamiento*, or board of commissioners. There was no trial by jury and no bail. The *alcalde* was the sole judge, with no right of appeal, for minor crimes. His decision on more serious crimes could be appealed to one of the three legislative chambers at the state capital of Saltillo. Any crime for which the punishment was severe—execution or a long prison sentence—was automatically appealed to two of the three chambers. Appeals could take from three to eight months under the best of conditions. But Saltillo was over 700 miles away, and the road was treacherous and infested with bandits and hostile Indians. If the mail did not get through, a prisoner might languish in jail or under house arrest for years.

Mier y Terán knew the situation could only lead to trouble. The colonists complained about religious intolerance, the political disorganization of the frontier, and the lack of Mexican troops to help curtail the increasing Indian raids. The Mexicans complained about the Anglos' superior attitude and better education. The Anglos deplored having to travel 300 leagues to lodge a complaint against an ignorant local *alcalde* or



Courtesy of the University of Texas
Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio.

Antonio López de Santa Anna Pérez de Lebrón rose from humble beginnings to become president and dictator over Mexico. He was first elected president of Mexico in 1833, but by 1845 his excesses had caused the pendulum of power to swing against him and he was exiled to Havana, Cuba.

to settle some simple grievance. Mier y Terán wrote that the Mexicans set themselves against the foreigners, depriving them of voting rights and excluding them from political office. The situation was a tinder box.

The short-lived Freedomian Rebellion, followed by the report from General Mier y Terán, marked the turning point in Mexico's policy in Texas. Mexico took steps to slow American immigration. In September 1829, after sending congress home and assuming dictatorial powers, President Vicente Guerrero abolished slavery in all of Mexico, primarily to discourage Anglo colonization of Texas. When word of the decree reached Bexar, Ramón Músqiz petitioned that it not be applied in Texas. Slaves were the only work force a settler had for improving the vast parcels of land and securing title to them. The prohibition of slavery would destroy the economy, and there was a good chance the colonists might revolt.

By the time the petition reached Mexico City Guerrero had already rescinded his decree at the urging of Mier y Terán, who had returned from his inspection trip. Officially, the colonists were never notified of the decree, but word leaked out. The colonists' indignation was not entirely abated when the decree was withdrawn. Emphasizing anew the remoteness of Mexico City and Saltillo, the episode convinced the colonists their interests were not safe. More importantly, Guerrero's action had trod on the Constitution of 1824's guarantee of a state's right to govern itself.

March 1986

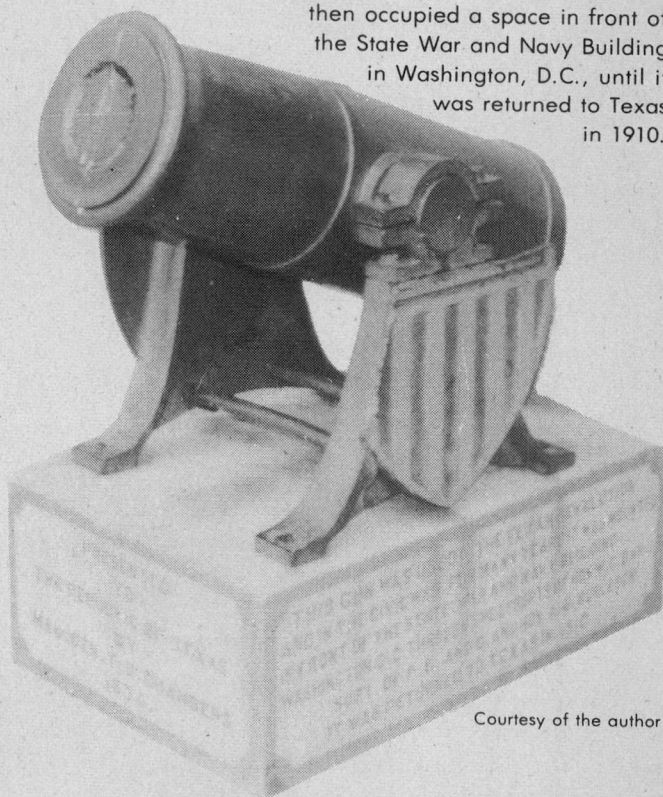
Despite the misgivings, free land continued to lure both legitimate colonists and illegal immigrants. With more settlers spread more widely through the *empresario* grants and surrounding lands, attacks by Indians and outlaws increased, and the few Mexican army troops were hard pressed to provide even a small measure of security. More local militia units were formed as the settlers provided more and more for their own defense and mounted punitive expeditions against the marauders.

In the summer of 1826, the village of Gonzales had been attacked and destroyed by Indians. The residents moved south to the Lavaca River near the coast. But in the winter of 1827, they were ordered to leave this prohibited zone and return to Gonzales. Once resettled, they petitioned Ramón Músqiz at Bexar for a body of troops for protection.

When fifteen Mexican soldiers were sent to protect the village of Gonzales, they were confronted by a large war party of Comanches and beat a hasty retreat back to San Antonio. In their stead, Músqiz sent to Gonzales a six-pound cannon. It was only one small episode, typical of many occurring throughout the province. But it had greater consequences than most—it was that one small canon and a Mexican attempt to retrieve it which finally sparked the Texas Revolution in 1835.



The cannon below was used in the Texas Revolution and the Civil War, then occupied a space in front of the State War and Navy Building in Washington, D.C., until it was returned to Texas in 1910.

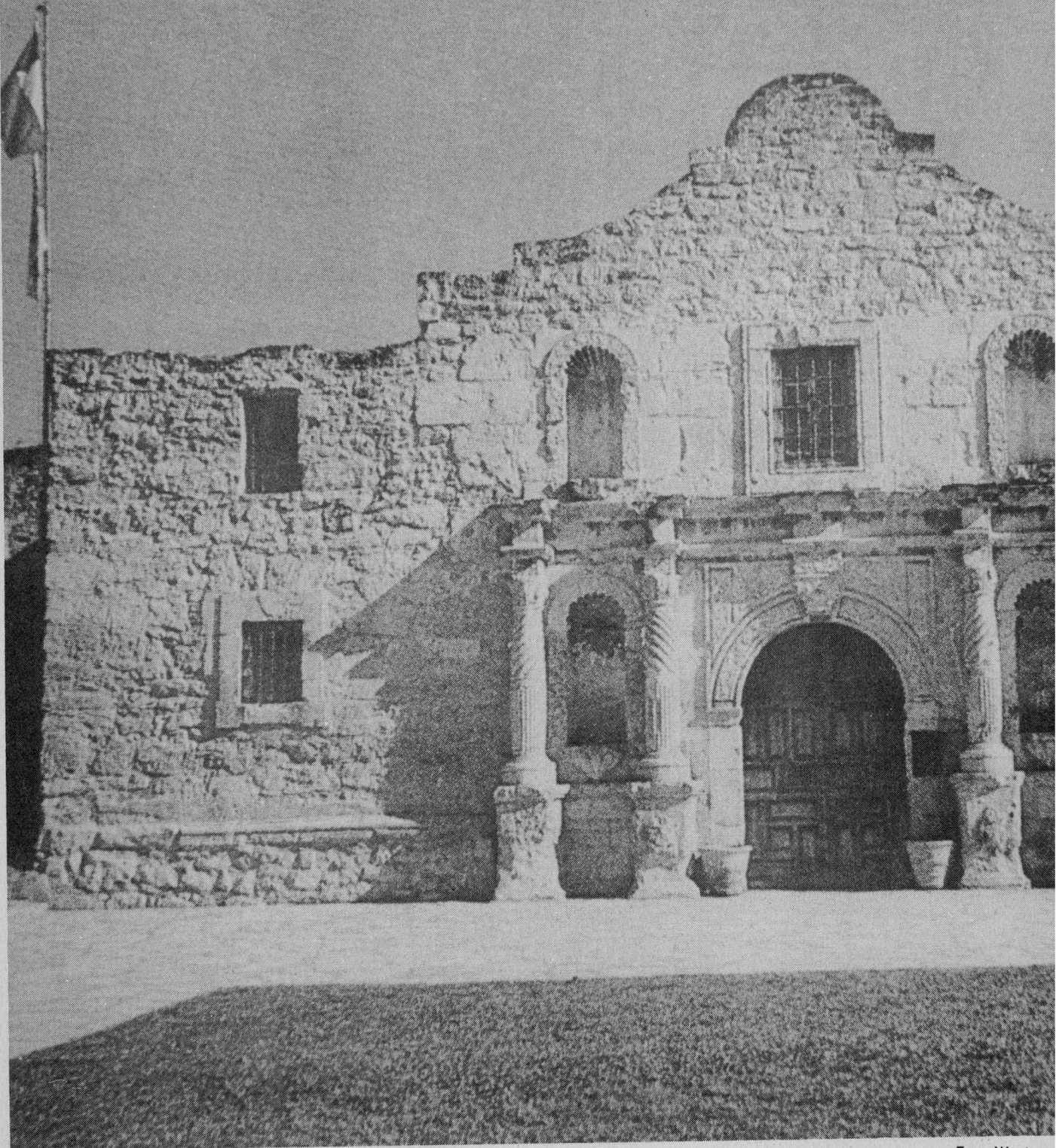


Courtesy of the author

Next Month: The Tinder Box Ignites

CHURCH OF D

Courtesy of the author



ESTINY

By ROBERT DYER

Illustrations by the Author

Founded in 1718 by Fray Antonio de Olivares for the purpose of bringing Christianity to the Indians of the region, the San Antonio de Valero mission was named in honor of Saint Anthony de Padua and the Duke of Valero. The mission had already seen much violence prior to the seige of 1836.



The graceful arched parapet of the Alamo is well known throughout the world. Almost everyone knows the proud saga of the 187 men who sacrificed their lives in a bold struggle against overwhelming odds to assure Texas' liberty from Mexico. But few of the millions who hold the Alamo in awe realize that the tiny church in the center of modern downtown San Antonio began in 1744 as part of a large Spanish mission complex and was originally intended to have twin bell towers atop its second story. Caught up in the dramatic, emotional story of the 1836 siege, most people lose sight of the fact that some of the church building and the entire attached fortress compound were reduced to rubble during the Texas Revolution in 1835 to 1836. And as for the graceful parapet atop the building so well known as the shrine of Texas liberty? It was added to the church's remains, along with two of the second story windows by the U.S. Army in about 1850—fourteen years after the famous battle.

The old plaza and grounds are well preserved, defined, and maintained today, but the focal point for visitors is the church building, which, along with the well and a portion of the front, west wall, are the only remaining original structures from the siege of 1836.

MISSION SAN Antonio de Valero was founded by Spaniards in 1718 as the first of five mission complexes along the San Antonio River. A joint enterprise of the Roman Catholic Church and the Spanish crown, the mission of destiny was placed on the east side of the river and named for the Franciscan, Saint Anthony of Padua. "De Valero" means "the valiant" in Spanish, and proved to be so true!

Construction of the first stone church began in 1728, after the complex was moved to a commanding bluff overlooking the river—the present day Alamo Plaza. The structure was designed by Padre José Gonzales, but due to the lack of a master builder, it was unsound and collapsed shortly after its completion in 1738. Undaunted, the Spanish padres began another church on the same site in 1744.

The new mission was designed and built according

The Alamo as it appears today.

to medieval architectural principles. Massive walls and buttresses were required to support the heavy stonework. The design also provided protection from hostile Indians. The sturdy construction and the excellent strategic location on the bluff above the river prompted speculation that the mission could withstand a siege better than any of the forts in the area.

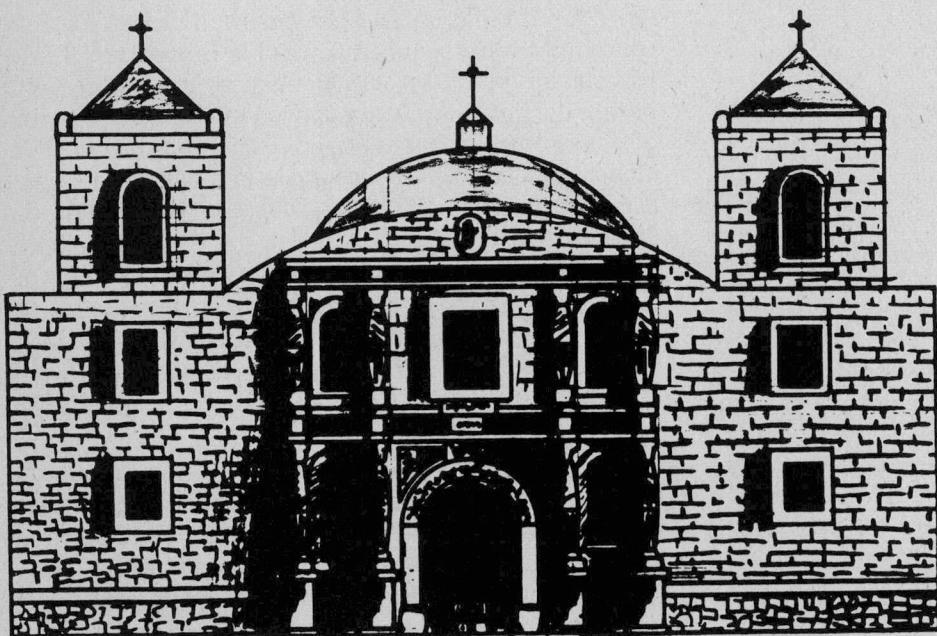
The first floor of the famous facade apparently was completed in 1758, for that date is engraved on the keystone of the west entry. The second floor, parapet, roof, and bell towers were never to be completed as planned. Having researched the building's design for years, Austin architect Eugene George found what may be the reason for the church's not being finished. In the Bexar County archives, George found records of an eighteenth century court case that identified a defendant as the stonemason of Mission San Antonio de Valero. Apparently the stonemason was involved in a rather tempestuous affair with a soldier's wife, and the soldier had "accidentally died" while hunting with the stonemason. The court could not prove positively that the stonemason killed the soldier, but they were sufficiently convinced of his guilt to banish him. His absence perhaps prevented the mission's completion.

ed there identified the location as "El Alamo." Meaning "cottonwood," the name undoubtedly came from the profusion of cottonwood trees growing around the old mission and along the banks of the San Antonio River.

By 1835, the flames of war were being kindled as Anglo settlers and their Mexican neighbors grew unhappy with Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna's dictatorship. Santa Anna sent his brother-in-law, General Martín Perfecto de Cós, to reinforce the cavalry unit already quartered at the Alamo.

CÓS ARRIVED in San Antonio in the fall of 1835 and immediately began to convert the mission from a military barracks into a full-blown fortress. Ironically, he had prepared the mission for the heroes that were still to come.

On October 12, Cós received a message that the presidio at Goliad had fallen to the Texian rebels, and he prepared the Alamo to withstand a siege. On December 5, 1835, a force of three hundred Texans led by Ben Milam and Francis Johnson attacked the small town of San Antonio. The battle raged for four days



Drawing based on the design of Spanish missions still in existence today in Texas, Mexico, and California, of what the Alamo might have looked like, if it had been completed as a mission church. It would have had twin bell towers and a central dome, along with the completed facade on the front.

San Antonio de Valero was closed as a mission in 1793. Its lands, livestock, and stores were split up among the thirty-nine people who lived there. The Catholic Church retained ownership of the church building, and the Spanish government held the enclosed plaza and the majority of the attached stone and adobe buildings.

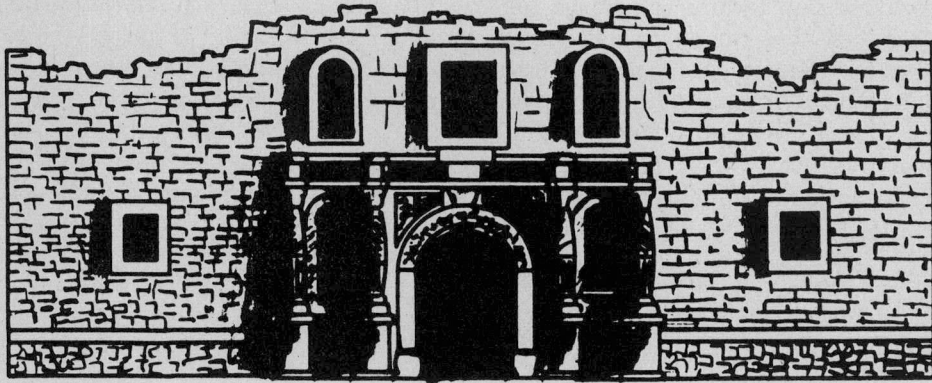
In 1793, a Mexican cavalry unit, Volante de San Carlos de Parras, was assigned to Mission San Antonio de Valero. The mission's strategic location could not be overlooked, and it became a barracks. The name of the cavalry unit's new post appeared in military records as "Pueblo Del Alamo," and a baptism record-

before the Mexicans were finally forced out of the village and across the river to the Alamo fortress. On December 9, Cós raised a white flag above the unbreached walls. The Texans triumphantly sent General Cós and his decommissioned army packing back to Santa Anna.

The commander of the Texas Army, Sam Houston, ordered the Alamo abandoned and destroyed, despite its obvious importance. Houston often made decisions that seemed ridiculous to his contemporaries. But in his typical fashion, he never explained his reasons. Houston sent Colonel James Bowie and thirty men with demolition instructions to Lieutenant Colonel

James Neill, the present commander of the Texan garrison at San Antonio. Neill rebelled, claiming that he could not abandon the Alamo without mule or horse teams to move the twenty-one artillery pieces captured from Cós. Bowie relented, probably feeling some difficulty in destroying the fortress since he himself had participated in Milam and Johnson's siege and seizure of the Alamo.

Neill left on furlough on February 14, and command of the Alamo was transferred to Bowie and the newly arrived Colonel William Barrett Travis. Then Bowie fell ill, and Travis took full command, determined to hold the old mission-fortress until reinforcements arrived.



The Alamo was in ruins after the siege of 1836, and up until 1850, when the U.S. Army took possession of the building to use as a warehouse.

The stage was set for the famous siege of February 24 through March 6, 1836. Fewer than two hundred men, women, and children were barricaded inside the Alamo to fight off a much, much larger force. The Alamo's defenders' voices were silenced forever, early the morning of March 6, 1836. The bodies of the bold defenders were piled in a heap and unceremoniously cremated.

SANTA ANNA had foolishly sacrificed almost 1,600 of his men in frontal assaults. While proving that he could crush the pitifully small band of heroes, he inadvertently gave Sam Houston thirteen days to maneuver out of his path, thus allowing the Texas Army to escape.

After Santa Anna was defeated and captured at San Jacinto, he sent orders to Mexican General Juan Andrade on May 22, commanding him to demolish the remainder of the Alamo fortress. Doctor Joseph Barnard, one of the few spared from the slaughter at Goliad on March 27, observed Andrade's command in San Antonio and wrote, "The general has received orders to destroy the Alamo and proceed to join the main army at Goliad. The troops have hitherto been busy as bees in fortifying the Alamo. They are now busy as bees, tearing down the walls."

On May 24, Barnard reported that the Mexicans had set fire to the wooden platform inside the church as they left the ruins behind: "The Alamo was completely dismantled, all single walls were leveled." The church's four corners were a wreck and its interior was charred and littered with debris, but its ornate stone

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frontispiece survived the incident amazingly intact.

The Roman Catholic Church considered itself to have lost the war along with the mistake-prone Santa Anna, and it retreated south with the deflated general in 1836. The ruins stood abandoned for some thirteen years and became a shrine in the minds of all who heard of its defenders' sacrifice.

In 1840, French Catholics took over the area and John M. Odin was appointed Vice-Prefect Apostolic to the new Republic of Texas. One of Odin's first acts was to petition the Texas congress for the title to religious properties previously held by the Roman Catholic Church. Texas Republic President David G.

Burnet signed a law dated January 13, 1841, confirming that these properties belonged to the new French Catholics. Five days later, he granted use of the Church of the Alamo to the Catholic Church.

Early in 1847, the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps moved into the Alamo buildings and established a supply depot to support forts from the Red River to the Rio Grande. They paid the Catholic Church rent for the property. While the city of San Antonio and the church argued over ownership of and rent for the Alamo, the Army methodically set about cleaning up the plaza and repairing the church and some of the old buildings.

On May 18, 1850, San Antonio quartermaster Major E.B. Babbitt wrote that his craftsmen had covered the church and made it a serviceable public building. They built an economical and efficient gabled roof of triangular wooden trusses running the length of the nave and presbytery. They also added the now famous parapet to cover the exposed roof trusses. They built a wooden second story floor and added the two second story windows. Oddly, the upper right hand window—as one stands facing the front of the church—is not centered above the original lower window as is the left. The designer of the familiar parapet is not known. Major Babbitt likely influenced the design, but was probably influenced by the Spanish mission in Alta, California. Some historians even hold that a local architect, John M. Fries, a Bavarian immigrant, inspired the graceful stonework. The truth will probably never be known.

In 1861, Confederate troops took over the Alamo

buildings. That same year, two young boys hiding to smoke cigarettes inadvertently set fire to the church. In the conflagration, the roof and part of the stone parapet were damaged. The roof was rebuilt and the damaged stones replaced to restore the shape of the facade.

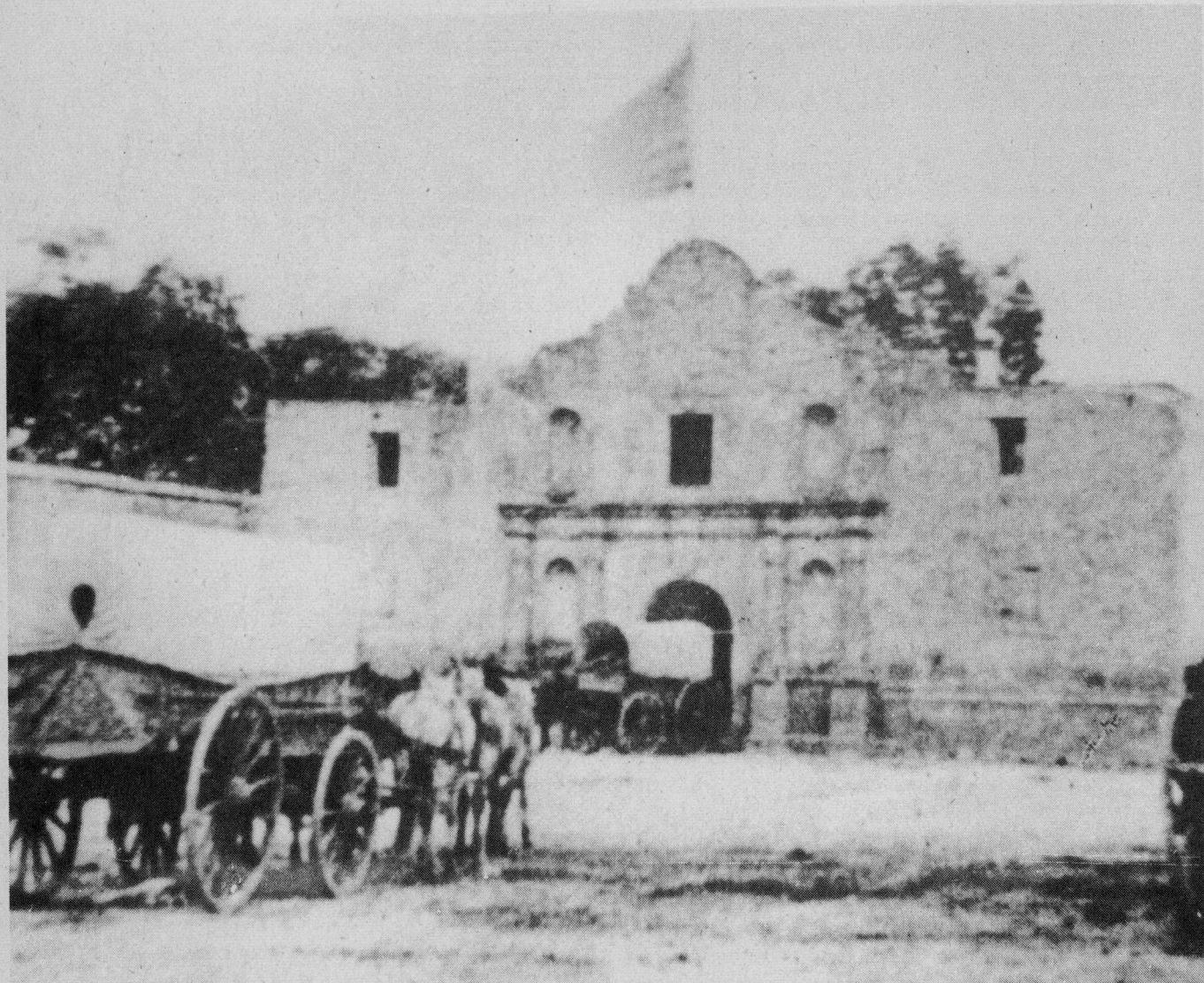
FOLLOWING THE Civil War, yet another military force—the Union Army—occupied the Alamo. The Catholic Church continued to receive rent from the occupants of the old mission-fortress.

In 1871, the Catholics finally sold parts of the plaza to the city of San Antonio for park and commercial trading space. In 1877 the U.S. Army constructed its own new quartermaster buildings north of the city and had moved the majority of its stores to the new location at Fort Sam Houston. The Catholics sold the Alamo's old mission convent buildings on the north side of the church to a merchant named Honore Grenet for \$19,000 and gave him a ninety-nine year lease on the church, revocable only if purchased by the city or state. Grenet built a false veneer with a castle-like ap-

pearance around the stone convent, and he prospered from the attraction of the famous Alamo church adjacent.

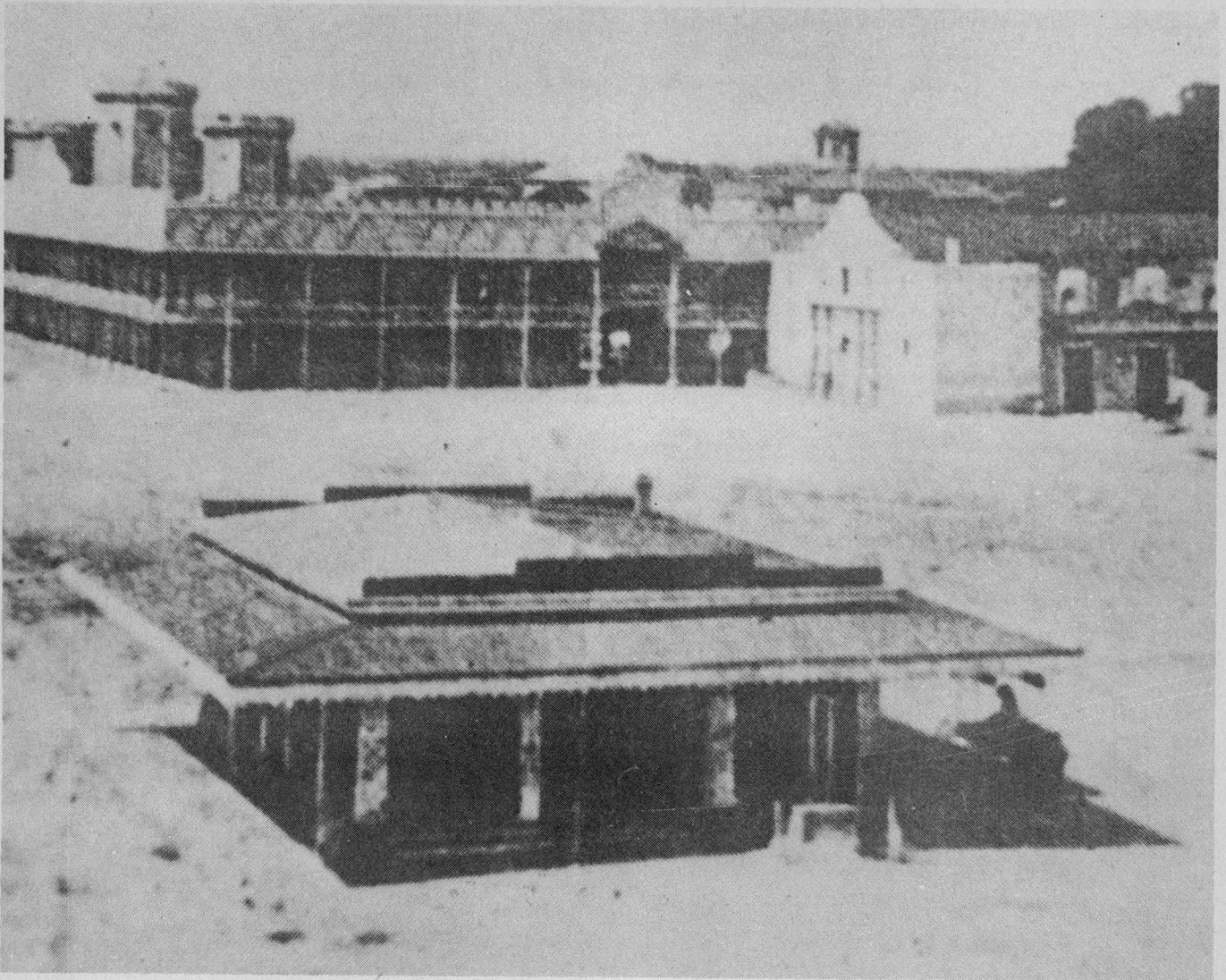
In 1883, the State of Texas bought the Alamo church, which was then surrounded by commercial property, and the adjacent plaza for \$20,000 from the Catholic Church. At last it was a public shrine, to be maintained by the state, and the wooden second floor was removed. The old plaza was paved with mesquite blocks in 1889. Meanwhile, the "Grenet Building" (the old convent) was heavily criticized for detracting from the Alamo's status as a shrine. Under great pressure, the convent was finally offered for sale in 1903. With her inheritance, Clara Driscoll, a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, underwrote the purchase for \$65,000, and in 1905, the Texas State Legislature provided another \$55,000 to purchase the convent property. The Alamo buildings were then placed under the full control of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, where they remain today.

In 1912, the wooden castle facade was removed from the old convent and a new controversy developed over



Courtesy of the San Antonio Museum Association

The U.S. Army began the restoration of the Alamo to use as a warehouse to store supplies.



Courtesy of the San Antonio Museum Association

The convent building's castle-like facade was built by a local merchant. It was removed in 1912.

the authenticity of some of the second floor remains. Because they wanted to remove the upper story, Governor Oscar Colquitt removed the Daughters of the Republic of Texas as custodians of the Alamo. Colquitt insisted that the second story was original Spanish materials. Everyone seems to have missed the point that the church parapet, itself the most important visual feature of the Alamo, was not authentic.

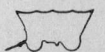
THE RESTORATION began, including Colquitt's plans to keep the second story intact. But when the governor was out of the state, the lieutenant governor allowed the City of San Antonio to demolish the upper story, and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas were promptly restored as custodians.

In 1920, a new vaulted roof was proposed to replace the wooden-framed, tin-covered roof installed by the U.S. Army. The new roof was intended to match as closely as possible the original design. The project's architect, Alfred Giles proposed to build the vaulted roof of reinforced concrete rather than try to duplicate Spanish stonemasonry techniques—a wise move, since the art virtually had been forgotten. The concrete was

tinted to match the original stonework, but the difference between the original and the new was very subtly made obvious in the belief that new generations of visitors always should be able to distinguish between the original structure and the additions.

In the 1930s, additional land was purchased around the church and old barracks, and the walls presently around the complex were built. The interior of the church floor was paved with flagstone which remains to this day, and lead roofing was poured to protect and seal the concrete-vaulted roof. In 1960, architect Harvey Smith designed new doors that resembled the originals in the church's west entry.

The Alamo has seen the flags of six governments. It stood then, stands now, and will stand forever as the ultimate symbol of courageous sacrifice. Those who walk the compound of Mission San Antonio de Valero will always feel that barbed question tugging at their souls—"Could I have stood with such valor as those who faced their greatest test so many years ago?"



The Legend of Britt Johnson

By PAULA MITCHELL MARKS

In the spring of 1856 a wagon rattled into Fort Belknap on the Texas frontier carrying a tall, muscular slave named Britton Johnson. Britt was in his early thirties, a copper-colored man with a thick neck, broad shoulders, scarred skin, and massive hands. He was destined to live only fifteen more years before meeting a brutal death, but in those fifteen years his exploits would earn the respect and admiration of settlers all along the Indian-plagued Texas frontier, making "Nigger Britt," as he was known, a legend in his own time.

Britt had migrated west with the Allen Johnson family from a plantation in Tennessee to a ferry-boat operation in Arkansas and on to the banks of the Brazos in Texas. According to Johnson family tradition, Britt was given his freedom on reaching the Lone

Star State. Various records from the time dispute that, showing that he was still listed as a slave after reaching the frontier. But whether or not Britt ever legally gained his freedom, he moved about as a free man. By some accounts, he eventually managed to own a ranch, horses, and cattle.

After reaching Fort Belknap, Britt continued to work for the growing Johnson family, now settled on a nearby ranch. He also became an orderly at the fort and quickly gained renown for his sharpshooting. Britt was an agile runner, too. One day a Captain Webb became incensed when Captain Hamm's horse beat his in a race. Immediately he challenged Hamm to another wager—a running contest between two men of their choice. "Does the man have to be white?" asked Hamm. Webb grumbled that he could be any color—

According to Walter Robinson, who as a young boy listened to Britt's account of his search, Britt made his way to the Comanche camp where his family were held captive and convinced the Indians to accept him into the camp and restore his family to him.

Courtesy of the Barker Texas History Center



Britt cut the throat of his horse in order to use the animal as a breastwork and instructed his two companions to do the same. Cureton and Crawford followed suit, but died quickly. Britt was left alone, loading their guns as well as his own during lulls in the action. He fought on, despite the hopeless odds.

his man would beat him. Hamm promised Britt a twenty-dollar gold piece if he could outrun Webb's contestant, and Britt won easily.

But Britt's greatest reputation in those early years was gained as an Indian tracker and fighter. As the Texas line of settlement pushed onto the edge of the Llano Estacado, or High Plains, pioneer communities suffered continuing Indian raids. When Britt arrived on the frontier, some of the relatively peaceful southern Comanches, the Penteka, lived on a reservation not far from Belknap. Britt got to know the tribe's leaders and picked up some of their language. But the reservation attempt fell apart in 1858, and many of Britt's former Indian neighbors joined the fierce Comanches and Kiowas from Indian Territory in stealing livestock and terrorizing settlers.

In 1859, Britt saved Parker Johnson, one of Allen's children. When five Indians swept down upon Parker and stole his horses, Britt rode into the fray and took Parker safely home. Then, riding Allen's favorite horse, Cut Short, Britt trailed the Indians six miles, unloaded a fusillade from his long-barreled shotgun and pistols, and recovered the animals.

THE MOST DRAMATIC chapter of Britt's life began with an Indian attack which he missed altogether, the famous Elm Creek, or Young County, Raid of 1864. As the Civil War progressed, the Indians had begun taking advantage of the fact that the settlements and forts were even more poorly protected than they had been before the war. Their raids became bolder and more bloody. On October 13, 1864, Comanche chief Little Buffalo led seven hundred warriors to the point where the Brazos River meets Elm Creek, ten miles north of Fort Belknap, and began a spree of murder and looting. The raiders killed eleven settlers, virtually destroyed eleven homesteads, and carried off seven women and children.

Among the captives were two of Britt's children and his pregnant wife Mary, age twenty-four. Some accounts of the raid say many men from the area, including Britt, were out on the range looking for stock. Others say he was away at the mill or in nearby Parker County getting supplies for the Johnson family. But Britt was also working for a Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, and it was at the Fitzpatrick place that his family was captured. After killing a man and his son who were out searching for stray oxen, the Indians made the Fitzpatrick home their first target. Elizabeth

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Courtesy of the Barker Texas History Center
A just-rescued Mexican boy, captured during the same time period as Britt's family, shows the extreme hardship even child captives had to suffer.

Fitzpatrick's twenty-one-year-old daughter, Susan Durgin, ran outside with a gun when the attackers converged upon the property, but they quickly cut her down, stripping and scalping her. They then killed Britt's seven-year-old son, Jim. Some accounts say Jim was killed because he tried to run, while others report that two Indians quarreled over which one had captured him and settled it by ending his life.

That left two women, Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mary, and five children: Mrs. Fitzpatrick's twelve-year-old son, Joe Carter; Susan Durgin's two little girls, three-year-old Lottie and baby Millie; and Mary's and Britt's remaining children, five-year-old Jube, and Cherry, who was under four. They were all thrown on horses

Comanche chief Milky Way, or Asa-
Havey, was credited with helping
recover Britt's family.



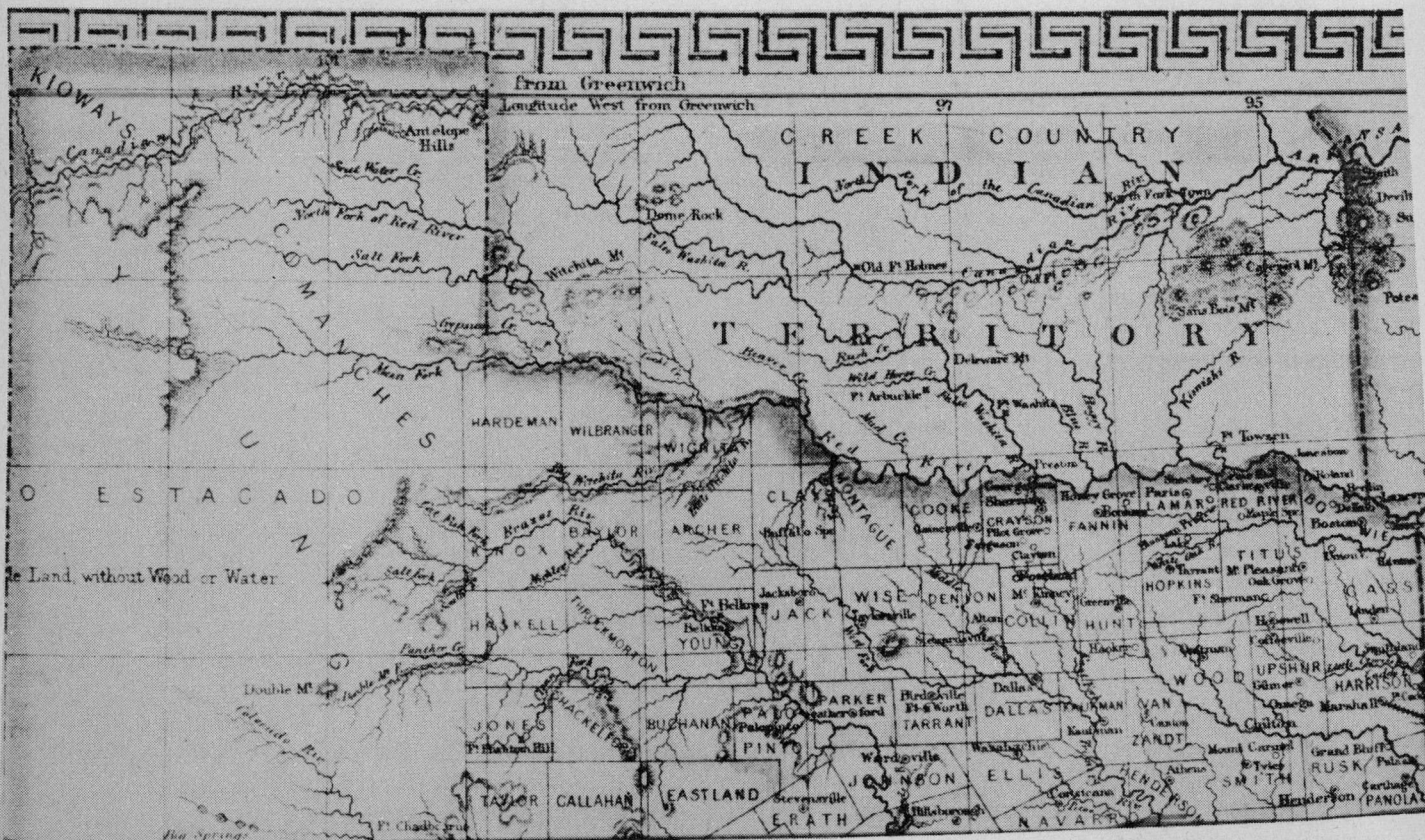
Courtesy of the National Archives

and held as the murdering and pillaging continued. Then the Indians headed northwest into the vast plains with their captives.

When Britt returned, Jim had already been buried by sympathetic settlers. The only good news that the grieving father and husband received was that his daughter by an earlier marriage, seventeen-year-old Sallie, had survived the attack at the nearby George Bragg ranch, where a wounded Confederate soldier named Thornton Hamby, home on leave, had led an effective resistance.

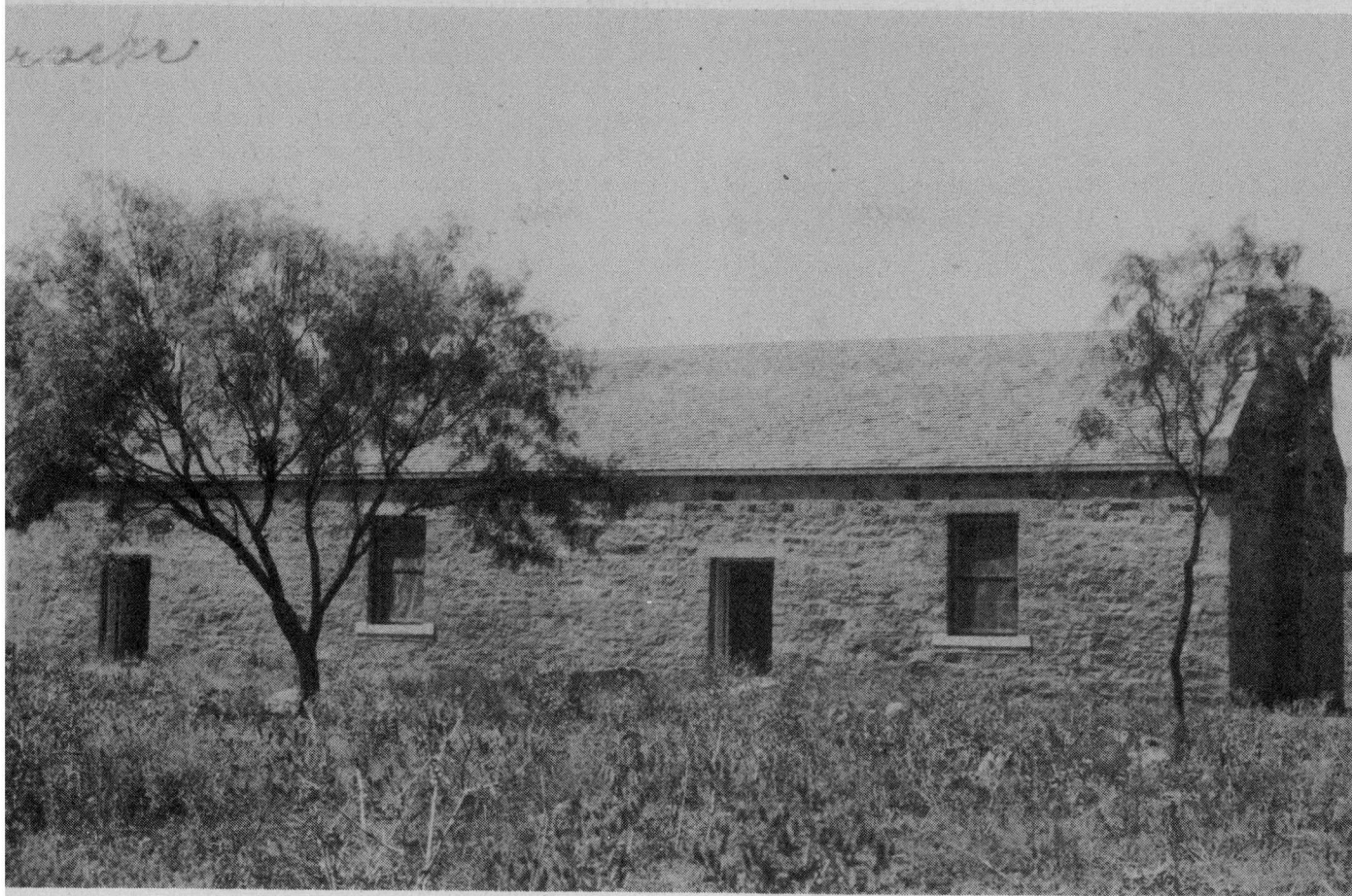
Britt immediately began planning a rescue of the captives. Through the winter of 1864-65, he sent inquiries into Indian Territory and determined that his wife and children and the other captives were with roving bands in the Texas Panhandle. As soon as spring arrived, he saddled up a fine black horse loaned him by Allen Johnson, loaded a pack horse with supplies and "geegaws" for the Indians—hand mirrors, beads, brass jewelry—and headed northwest.

The stories of most legendary figures move into the realm of myth at some point, and Britt's does with his departure. There are many different versions of what happened next. The most colorful comes from Walter



Courtesy of the Barker Texas History Center

An 1864 map of the northwestern Texas settlements shows the close proximity of the white settlements to Indian lands.



Courtesy of the Barker Texas History Center

Britt served as an orderly in the barracks at Fort Belknap after arriving on the Texas frontier.

Robinson, who as a young boy at Fort Belknap listened to the stories that Britt himself told. According to Robinson, Britt had no luck locating his family on the spring trip and returned to try again in the fall. On the second trip, Robinson relates, Britt concocted a fantastic costume with feathers and rode into a Mescalero Apache camp claiming to be a great chief who had just received money and goods in exchange for captives in Austin. Did the Apaches have any captives that he could buy and take back to Austin to sell?

THE APACHES said no, but they directed Britt to a Comanche camp a few days' travel northwest. When Britt approached the Comanche camp, he was quickly recognized by a former reservation Indian, so he had to alter his tactics. He complained that he was sick of the white man's society and eager to join his wife and children and share the Comanches' life. Britt convinced the Indians, who were impressed with his marksmanship. His wife and children were restored to him, along with the new baby boy Mary had borne in captivity. Continuing to live among the Comanches through the next summer, they finally escaped when the Indians broke up into hunting parties. Britt took his wife and children and one of the captured Durgin girls back to the settlements.

Another version also credits Britt with the release

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of Elizabeth Fitzpatrick. Mrs. Fitzpatrick had not only seen her daughter murdered in the yard of their home, but on the journey with the Indians she had been forced to watch the Indians burn her son Joe alive because he was too ill to keep up. Now she was enslaved and pregnant in a Comanche camp. A wealthy woman, she promised Britt when he met her in the camp that she would pay to have all the captives delivered. When Britt went home, then, he arranged for her ransom.

A recent history of the Belknap area convincingly refutes the view that Britt actually rescued Mrs. Fitzpatrick or his family, but most versions of Britt's story agree that he made repeated trips into Indian lands in the Panhandle and what is now Oklahoma, visited forts and Indian agents, lived with the Comanches for months, and recovered his family. He also earned the gratitude of settlers along the frontier by bringing back news of stolen horses after each trip, and by performing the much more valuable service of returning other captives he found. He delivered two children to their family in Montague County and was credited with returning other captives to Young County.

The most balanced account of Britt's travels in search of his family seems to be that he did live among the Comanches, while trying to convince the Kiowas to turn over his family. He was helped by General J.



Courtesy of the Barker Texas History Center

Top: Britt's destination on his fateful freighting expedition was Fort Griffin. The fort, located approximately thirty-seven miles north of Fort Belknap, was abandoned in May 1881. Below: The Mexican Quitan, one of Britt's murderers, had been captured by the Kiowas, then joined them on their raids.

Courtesy of the Fort Sill Army Field Artillery Museum



W. Throckmorton and Comanche chief Milky Way, or Asa-Havey, who had known Britt back in the reservation days of the southern Comanches. In fact, according to some versions, the Comanches helped Britt to the point of providing an escort for him and his family from the Kiowa camp.

However they were delivered, all of the captives except Mrs. Fitzpatrick's murdered son Joe and little Millie Durgin were returned. The Indian-ravaged Elm Creek area had been deserted by the settlers, and Britt moved his family further east to Parker County. There he was engaged as a freighter, teamster, and skinner hauling flour and grain, along with some bones and buffalo hides, from Veal's Station in Parker County to Fort Griffin.

On January 12, 1871, Britt and two other black men, Dennis Cureton and Paint Crawford, were hauling flour in a bois d'arc wagon and camped for the night ten miles east of old Fort Belknap, near Britt's old home ground. Britt had brought along his pet dog. A party of twenty-five Kiowas, including Quitan, a blood-thirsty Mexican captive-turned-warrior, surprised them.

WHILE TALES of Britt's rescue trips vary, the accounts of his last stand are remarkably similar. Rapidly assessing the situation, Britt cut the throat of his horse in order to use the animal as a breastwork and instructed his two companions to do the same. Cureton and Crawford followed suit, but died quickly. Britt was left alone, loading their guns as well as his own during lulls in the action. He fought on, despite the hopeless odds, until the Indians cut him down, his body ringed by 173 cartridge shells. The attackers rode off with three scalps, then threw the kinky hair away in disgust.

A detail was sent from Fort Richardson to bury Britt and his companions at nearby Salt Creek. The soldiers found it a most unpleasant duty. While Cureton and Crawford were scalped but otherwise relatively unmarked, Britt was, by one account, "literally cut to pieces." Other accounts reveal that he was disemboweled, with his pet dog stuffed savagely into the cavity. The Indians were either taking revenge for the injuries he had inflicted on them in his last battle or for his past duplicity in claiming to have forsaken white society.

Ironically, Britt died only a year before the federal government finally began making the Texas frontier safe for settlement. Three years after his death, settlers were able to begin moving with confidence back into the area where Britt and his son had both met their deaths. As the Indian threat receded, however, Britt was not forgotten. The pioneers who had survived the "terrible times" remembered him with admiration, for he had lived with such daring and integrity that even in those race-conscious times they drew "no color line in their respect for him."



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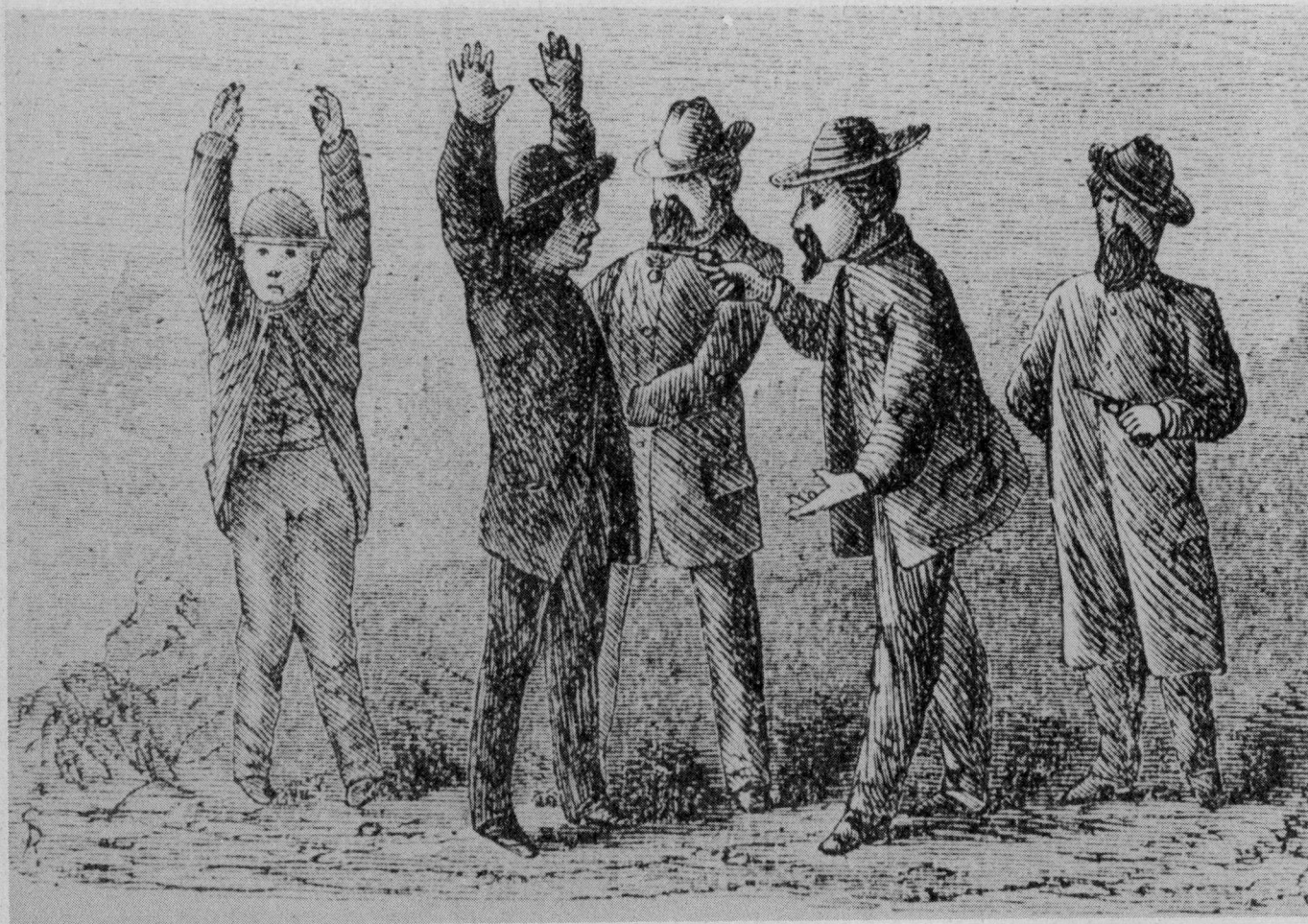
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John Bull Gunman, Gambler: a Frontier Odyssey

By ROBERT K. DeARMENT



In an illustration from Twain's *Roughing It*, Mark Twain and his agent are shown being held up as a practical joke by John Bull and confederates.

The surgeon put his scalpel to the wrinkled neck of the little old man on the table. He made an incision, probed deeply, and felt a hard object lodged against the windpipe. The old man's breathing became labored as the forceps explored the wound. With a worried glance at his patient, the doctor bent to his task. Finally he withdrew the instrument and a chunk of lead clattered on the medical tray. The surgeon quickly closed the wound and, holding up the leaden slug, fingered a sharp projection extending from one side. "that point," he said, "was puncturing the trachea."

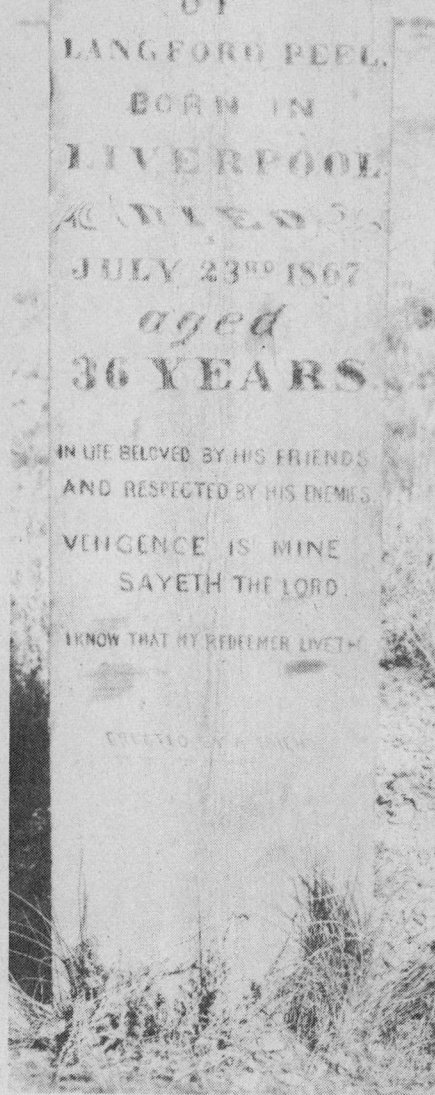
John Edwin Bull, fully conscious, fastened his dark eyes on the bullet he had carried in his neck for twenty-three years and croaked, "Damn Fiskey Barnett!"

THE DOCTOR who removed that old bullet from John Bull's neck at Excelsior Springs, Missouri, in the fall of 1921 probably never knew that the little white-haired, one-armed man who walked into his office complaining of a breathing difficulty had been one of the most widely known characters on the western frontier. As a professional gambler and gunman of demonstrated lethal prowess, John Bull for four decades was a familiar figure in boom towns from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean. The slug in his neck was a relic of his last six-gun encounter, the one with Fiskey Barnett at Spokane in 1898 when Bull was sixty-two years old.

John Edwin Bull was born in England in 1836. It is not known when he came to the United States, but by the age of twenty-six he was one of the adventurers on hand at the Salmon River gold rush of 1862. Small and dark, with a full beard and piercing black eyes, he would in time become one of the cleverest and most successful card sharps in the West. Oddly enough, however, he first came to notice as a law enforcer of sorts.

In August 1862 three well-mounted strangers, each trailing another fine horse, appeared in the little mining camp of Gold Creek in Montana Territory. A few days later John Bull and a man named Fox rode into camp and announced that they were on the trail of thieves who had stolen six valuable horses in Elk City, Idaho. Learning that

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Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
Langford Peel, a noted gambler, gunman, and one-time partner of John Bull, was killed by Bull at Helena, Montana.

newcomers matching the description of the horse thieves had opened a monte game in camp, Bull set out to arrest them. C.W. Spillman, described in a miner's journal as a "rather quiet, reserved, pleasant young man," was taken without resistance and held prisoner by other miners while Bull and Fox went after the other culprits. They found William Arnett and B.F. Jermagin dealing monte in a tent saloon. Brandishing a shotgun, Bull ordered the pair to throw up their hands. Jermagin complied, but Arnett reached for the six-shooter on his lap. Bull killed him in-

stantly with a buckshot blast.

When Arnett was prepared for burial the following day, the monte cards in his left hand and the pistol in his right were locked so tightly in his dead fingers that they could not be removed. He was lowered into the grave clutching the tools of his trade, well-prepared to carry on in the next world.

At a trial before a miners' court, Jermagin was able to convince the jury that he had joined the other two on the trail and that his only crime was one of bad association. He was freed and banished from the camp. Spillman offered no defense and was sentenced to hang. Stoic to the end, he went to his death and was buried beside Arnett. Following that execution, Montana's first, the camp on Gold Creek was dubbed "Hangtown" and was so designated on maps for many years.

The incident might have established John Bull as a lawman and manhunter, but he was destined to achieve notoriety in the shadowy world of the professional gambler. History next finds him at Virginia City, Nevada. There, in 1866, his name was first linked with Langford Peel, who was to have a profound effect upon Bull's career.

Langford "Farmer" Peel, another Englishman by birth, had been well-known in the frontier sporting world for almost a decade. After service in the U.S. Army during and after the Mexican War, Peel turned to professional gambling in 1856. Tall and slender, broad of shoulder, with a full blond beard and icy blue eyes, he commanded attention when he walked in a room. He could be kind and gentle, but was a terror when aroused.

At Salt Lake City in 1858 his temper exploded when faro dealer Oliver Rucker refused his bet. Peel hurled a chair at Rucker, who ran from the room into a store next door. Peel stalked relentlessly behind, and the two gamblers opened fire on each other with pistols. Both were hit and fell to the floor but continued firing until their weapons were empty. Bleeding from three bullet wounds, Peel crawled to his adversary and plunged a Bowie knife into his heart. When Peel's wounds were diagnosed as fatal, he said, "I've got a wife in Leavenworth City. Write and tell

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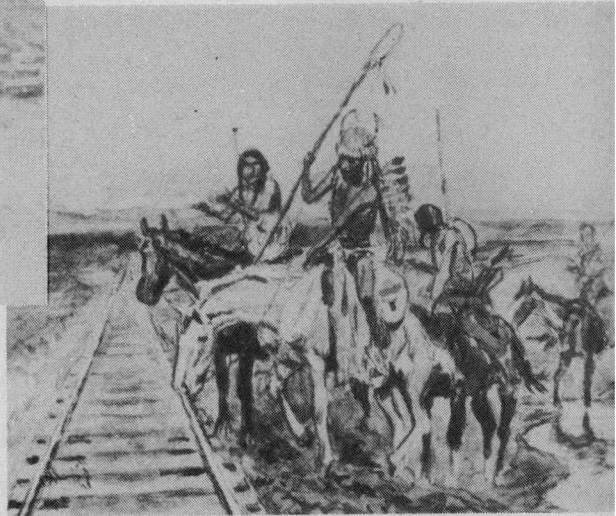
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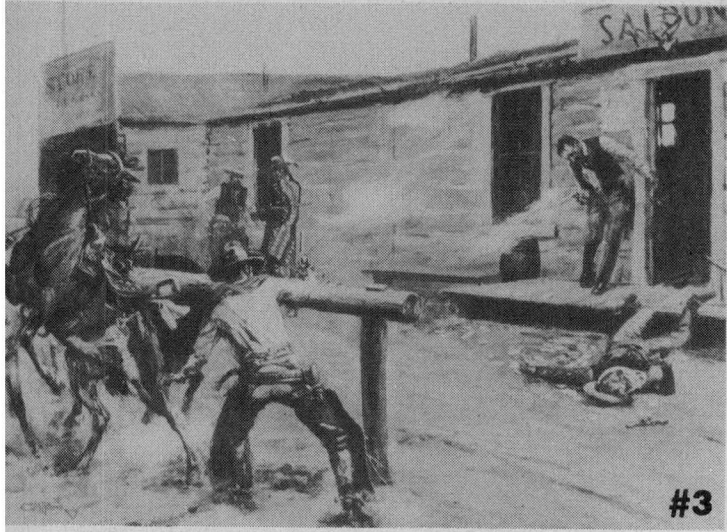


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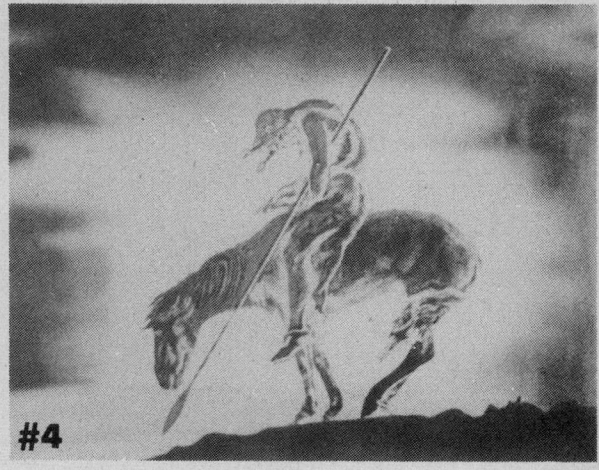


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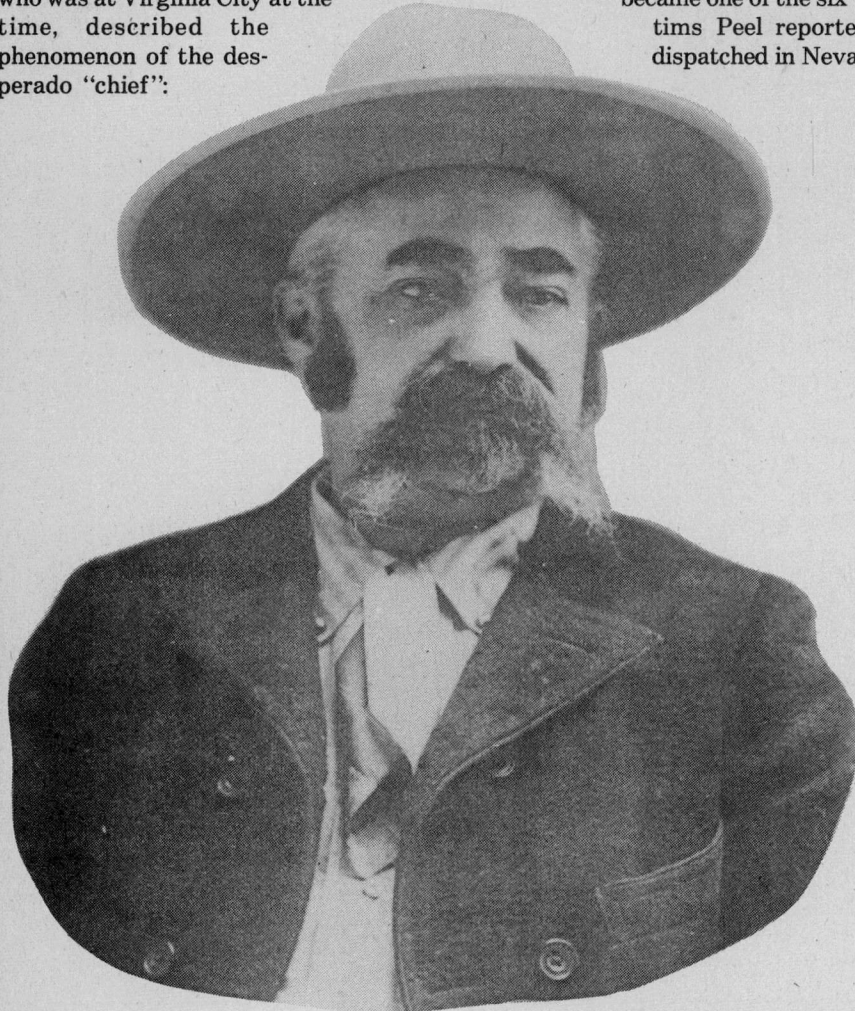
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her I fit to the last minute; aye, and I fit to the last minute."

Rucker died but Langford Peel recovered and eventually made his way to California, where he spent several years before joining the rush to Virginia City, Nevada. Already a frontier celebrity, Peel declared himself "chief" of the Comstock sporting crowd. Mark Twain, who was at Virginia City at the time, described the phenomenon of the desperado "chief":



Courtesy of the Montana Historical Society
John Xavier "X" Beidler thought Peel too much of a "rattler" ever to be killed.

In a new mining district . . . a person is not respected until he has 'killed his man.' That was the very expression used. If an unknown individual arrived, they did not inquire if he was capable, honest, industrious, but—had he killed his man? . . . It was tedious work struggling up to a position of influence with bloodless hands, but when a man came with the blood of half a dozen men on his soul, his worth was recognized at once and his acquaintance sought. In Nevada, for a time, the lawyer, the editor, the banker, the chief desperado, the chief gambler, and

the saloon-keeper, occupied the same level of society, and it was the highest.

According to Twain, Langford Peel was one of those accorded that high level of respect. Another was El Dorado Johnny Dennis, who rashly challenged Peel's claim to the title of "chief" and

became one of the six victims Peel reportedly dispatched in Nevada.

Bull was well-known to Mark Twain also, primarily because of a practical joke. Twain, a notorious practical jokester himself, was the butt of a prank by a party of men led by John Bull one cold night in November 1866. The writer had lectured at Gold Hill. He and his agent were walking back over the Divide to Virginia City when they were accosted by six masked and heavily armed men who demanded Twain's money or his life. The leader of the robber band, described by Twain as a "small, spry" fellow was in fact John Bull. Calling his cohorts by the names of Civil War generals Beauregard, Sheridan, and Jackson, he took from Twain

about \$125 in coin and a valuable gold watch. Two days later as Twain was preparing to leave Virginia City, the bogus highwayman presented him with the loot taken from him that night, together with the masks they had worn. Alfred Doten, chronicler of Virginia City, noted in his journal, "Mark . . . couldn't see the joke much, however—& talked to the boys quite profanely till the Stage drove off—Rather heavy on Mark." Doten added that the pranksters were only evening up the score for some of Twain's earlier tricks. Relating the incident later, Twain admitted that it had cured him of his penchant for pranks. "Since then," he said, "I play no practical jokes on people and generally lose my temper when one is played upon me."

LANGFORD PEEL and John Bull teamed as gambling partners at Virginia City and Belmont. In early 1867 they transferred their operation to Salt Lake City, where they had a dispute but patched up their differences and headed north for booming Helena, Montana. On the night of July 22, 1867, Peel and Bull were seated in a game at the Greer Brothers' Exchange Saloon when one of them made a remark that rekindled the smoldering discord. Suddenly the two partners were on their feet and shouting insults. Peel slapped Bull's face and reached for his gun. Bull protested that he was unarmed but that he would get a gun and return. Peel told him to come back fighting.

Bull went to his rooms and prepared to fight. He wrote letters to his family and friends and directions for disposition of his property in the event of his death. He then oiled and loaded his six-shooter and headed back. Peel had watched the door for some time in anticipation of Bull's return. Finally deciding that the little gambler lacked the sand to take on the great Farmer Peel, he strolled down to Chase's gambling hall, three doors away, to meet his paramour, faro-dealer, Belle Neil. When the couple stepped from the garish light of the gambling hall into Main Street, Belle was holding Peel's right arm. Suddenly John Bull was there, his gun roaring. Peel staggered back as a bullet struck him. He clawed for the weapon in his hip pocket, but the terrified Belle clung to his gun arm. Bull fired again and Peel went down. According to one witness, Bull then stood directly over the fallen man and pumped a bullet into his head.

Word of the renowned gunman's death quickly spread throughout the

town. John Xavier "X" Beidler, celebrated early-day Montana lawman, was on hand and found the news hard to believe. "Peel was such a rattler," recalled Beidler, "that I didn't think he would be killed." Beidler arrested Bull and placed him in the county jail. Bull had some anxious moments, later that night when a large crowd of Peel supporters converged on the jail, but the mob was held off by Beidler's deputies. His trial for murder resulted in a hung jury and he was released.

BULL NEXT appeared in Cheyenne, Wyoming, then experiencing its wildest period as the terminus of the westward-building Union Pacific Railroad. Encamped there were the "Hell-On-Wheels" sporting gentry who had followed the railroad construction all the way from Omaha. The frontier honky-tonk regulars—the saloonmen, con men, madams, whores, pimps, footpads, pickpockets, and strongarm holdup artists—were gathered to prey on the railroad construction crews and the legitimate businessmen servicing them. Into that milieu John Bull strode like a conquering hero. Everyone had heard of his slaying of Langford Peel, and everywhere he went men wanted to shake his hand, women wanted to embrace him, and suckers fought to lose their cash at his three card monte game.

In the Spring of 1868 the Union Pacific pushed on. Bull followed Hell-On-Wheels as it leapfrogged across Wyoming to the historic linkup with the Central Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah. Somewhere he acquired a wife, whom he took to Chicago and set up in a boarding house at 771 West Van Buren Street. She bore him two children. To the other boarders Mrs. Bull explained that her husband was seen so infrequently because he was a "traveling man." It is believed that the woman died a few years later and that Bull placed his children in foster homes.

"Traveling man" Bull certainly was. By train, riverboat, stagecoach, and horseback he criss-crossed the Northwest for many years, extracting greenbacks from greenhorns. He would periodically settle in a lively town with a large transient population. But in time the local authorities inevitably wearied of his victims' complaints and he would be requested to move on.

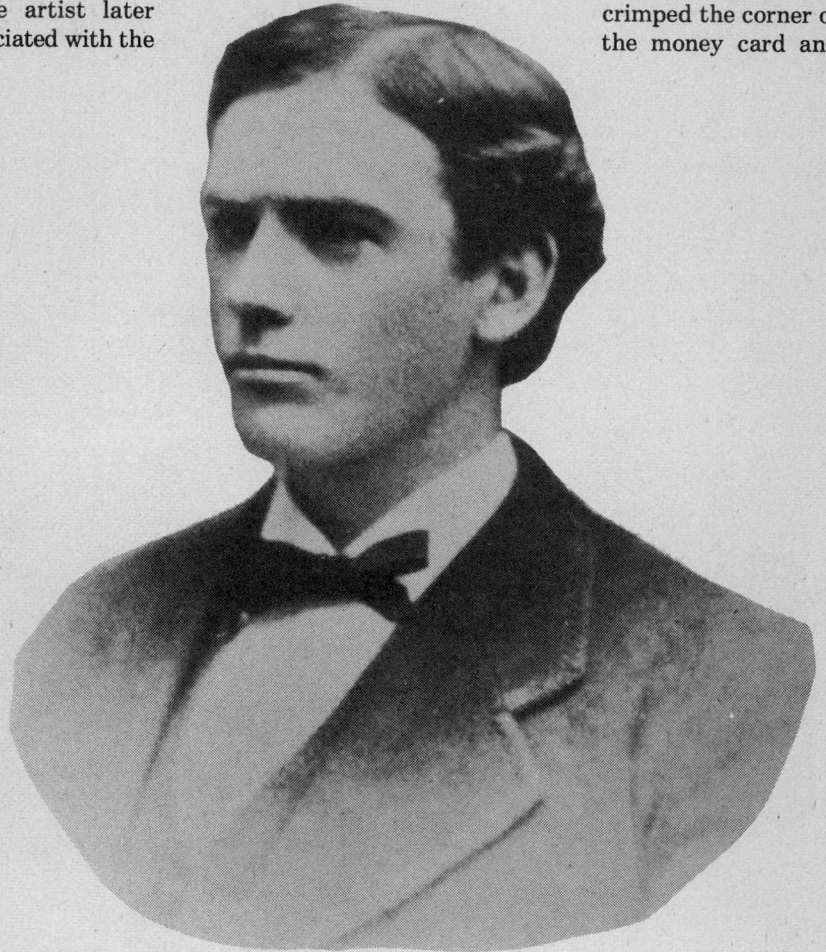
Omaha was his base of operations for several years in the early seventies. Bull told an interviewer ten years later that he had engaged in the "transfer" business at Omaha. Of course, the only "transfers" he arranged were those of

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cash from the pockets of the unwary into his own. During those years Omaha harbored a plethora of sure-thing gambling men including George Devol, grizzled veteran of many seasons on the steamboats of the Mississippi River; Canada Bill Jones, recognized by the fraternity as the cleverest three-card monte sharp of them all; Charles "Doc" Baggs, talented skin-game artist later associated with the

not be picked out. But the seemingly simple game was turned into a complete swindle called the "Rube Act" when the dealer pretended to be a clumsy country bumpkin. A prosperous appearing accomplice would set up a "mark," or victim, by winning several bets with ease. The confederate would then confide his secret to the mark. He had, he

whispered, surreptitiously crimped the corner of the money card and



Courtesy of the author
Young Dr. Henry Hoyt witnessed John Bull's six-gun in action, but the victim was just a prairie-dog.

infamous "Soapy" Smith at Denver; and Ben Marks, pioneer in the development of "big Con" games in which well-heeled suckers were separated from thick bank-rolls by so-called "Big Store" operations.

John Bull teamed with those and other crooked gamblers to fleece the unwary in Omaha and on the trains running out of the city. His game was three-card monte. When honestly played, it gave a two-to-one advantage to the dealer, who would show the face of a card and, after several quick passes with his hands, throw it out on a table with two other cards and offer to bet even money that the designated card could

could pick it out every time. When the mark hurried to get his bankroll down on this apparent sure thing, the simpleton dealer removed the crimp and turned the corner of another card.

In 1872 John Bull was a central figure in a wild affair billed as a fight for the heavyweight championship of America. English-born Tom Allen claimed the title but was challenged by Ben Hogan, as colorful a personality as ever entered a prizering. Christened Benediel Hagan at Wurtemberg, Germany, where he was born in 1844, Hogan changed his name when he came to America as a boy. During his eventful career he was a pirate, a bounty jumper, a blockade

runner, an accused murderer, a spy for both sides during the Civil War, a vaudeville performer, an oil magnate, a proprietor of opera houses and gambling halls, a professional pugilist, a temperance lecturer and a missionary to the downtrodden. John Bull, a prominent backer of Hogan's heavyweight title quest, helped arrange a match with Allen at a secluded spot nine miles from Omaha for a stake of

with the stabbing of Samuel Atwood, a railroad employee. The two gamblers had confronted Atwood outside the Crystal Saloon about midnight on July 12 and accused him of warning train passengers of their sharper tricks. "You gave me away in Lincoln, and I'll pay you for it now," Mehaffy said, striking Atwood in the face. There was a tussle, and someone ran a knife into Atwood's abdomen. He broke

that he had six shots and he would use them all before he would be taken. The room emptied quickly and John Bull sat down in a chair and went to sleep! Later he was approached by a friend acting as a police emissary and agreed to give himself up.

Sam Atwood lay near death for several days as his fellow railroad workers fumed. Once again John Bull's life was imperiled by mob action. "Last evening the employees of the Union Pacific shops held a meeting for the purpose of forming a vigilance committee," reported the *Bee* of July 16. "There were several hundred men present. From a reliable party who was at the meeting we learn that in case young Atwood dies, they intend to have summary vengeance upon the men who are now confined in jail, and who are supposed to have stabbed him. Atwood's death was expected last night, and had he died, the vigilance committee . . . would have proceeded to the jail, and attempted to take Bull and Mehaffy out, to have punished them as they thought best."

ATWOOD RECOVERED. At a hearing on July 28 he was unable to identify his assailant. The following day Bull was released. Shortly thereafter he and Mehaffy were arrested again on a complaint filed by Captain J.J. McNeligh of the Western Detective Agency, charging them with bilking a man in a crooked card game. Also named as parties to the scheme were Doc Baggs and Ben Marks. Due to lack of evidence all were cleared except Mehaffy, who later escaped and fled town.

Depredations by the train gamblers operating out of Omaha steadily worsened. By the mid-1870s rail officials were receiving hundreds of complaints from swindled passengers. George Devol added the last straw. He and a partner were working suckers on the Cheyenne to Omaha run. "One evening I picked up a man on the sleeper and beat him out of \$1200," Devol recalled sadly. "That game settled our hash, for he proved to be one of the directors of the road."

The officials cracked down and John Bull moved on to greener and safer fields. When Deadwood boomed in 1876, Bull was there. Returning from a trip east in May 1877, he chanced to be on the Bismarck to Deadwood stage with Dr. Henry Hoyt, a young physician going west for the first time. In his reminiscences, Hoyt describes firsthand the three-card monte gyp practiced on the other passengers by Bull and an expert partner. Hoyt also witnessed an ex-

True West



Courtesy of the Denver Public Library

Jim Moon and John Bull were partners in a Denver saloon.

\$2,000 and a \$10,000 side bet. In the third round Hogan, who was taking a pretty good beating, suddenly doubled up, clutching his groin. Instantly Bull leaped into the ring and claimed victory for Hogan on a foul. Referee Tad Ryan refused to allow the foul claim and announced that Allen had retained his title. He ordered all bets off and returned the money-stakes to the principals. The decision pleased no one and pandemonium ensued as fights broke out among the five hundred spectators. Several were injured and one man was killed.

In July 1873 Bull and one of his skin-game confederates, George Mehaffy, were arrested in Omaha and charged

away and ran, but soon collapsed in the street.

City Marshal Gilbert Rustin and five other officers began a search for the gamblers. Mehaffy was quickly apprehended, but it was 4:30 in the morning before Bull was found in Jack Sullivan's saloon. Marshal Rustin posted his men at the exits and entered the building. Bull pulled a pistol and refused to be arrested. Said the *Omaha Daily Bee*: "Bull was known to be a desperate man when excited, and . . . Rustin thought it better to work the matter gently." He backed off and Bull went upstairs where a faro game was in progress. Waving his pistol, Bull declared

hibition of Bull's proficiency with a six-shooter.

We pulled into a prairie-dog town, the driver pulled up for a few minutes, and everybody jumped out. Prairie-dogs were in every direction, barking an invitation to try our marksmanship. Out came revolvers and several volleys were fired without result, as Mr. Prairie-Dog is wary and very hard to hit. Bull watched the scene for a time. Suddenly his hand flew to his hip; a big six-shooter of the dragoon type with a short barrel was drawn. The gun barked, and a dead dog was the result. He apparently took no aim at all.

By early 1879 Bull had settled in Denver. Over the next few years his name appeared frequently on the city's police blotters. Once he was arrested and fined \$12 for public drunkenness. On another occasion he made the mistake of tangling with one C.C. Joy, described by the *Rocky Mountain News* as a "very large, powerful man." The undersized gambler, with one hand on the butt of a revolver in his pocket, took a swing at Joy who dodged the blow, knocked Bull down with one punch, and was applying the shoe leather rather energetically to Bull's ribs when bystanders pulled him off. Both men were charged with disturbance of the peace and fined.

IN STILL another incident Bull was arrested and fined after a difficulty in Murphy's Exchange, known in the Denver tenderloin as "The Slaughterhouse" because of the many killings committed there. When a policeman attempted to arrest him, Bull struck the officer with his loaded walking stick and reinforcements had to be called before he was subdued.

In Denver Bull formed a partnership with yet another extraordinary gambling figure, John E. Wilcoxon, who early in his career took the name "Jim Moon." A native of Iowa and a Civil War veteran, Moon was a broad-shouldered, powerfully built man of great physical strength whose uncontrolled temper often got him in trouble. Discharged from the Union Army after nearly killing another soldier in a fistfight, he took up the life of a circuit gambler. Although not known as a gunman, wherever he went he was feared for his violent temper and great strength. In 1880 he was in Denver in partnership with John Bull in the operation of a combination restaurant, saloon, and gam-

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bling house called the Oyster Ocean.

On the night of October 14, 1880, Moon, Bull, Moon's wife Emma, and another woman with whom Bull was living were involved in a farcical affair at the Oyster Ocean. Two Denver policemen somehow provoked Moon. His notoriously low boiling point was quickly reached, and fists flew. Little John Bull entered the fray and the two women began throwing chinaware. The place was reduced to a shambles before the two officers beat an undignified retreat and called for reserves. When a flying squad arrived in a paddywagon, it was met at the doorway by Moon and Bull's leveled revolvers. Bloodshed was averted when the police withdrew and the partners turned themselves in for the ritual fines.

Less than a month later, the violence-prone Jim Moon killed a man named Sam Hall, crushing his skull with the barrel of a sixgun. He was freed on a plea of self-defense.

Moon's one admirable quality was unflinching raw courage. On October 31, 1880, drunken mobs stormed through the Chinese section of Denver, beating and terrorizing the inhabitants in a mindless demonstration against cheap Oriental labor. Moon, the only white man to defy the mob, stood in the doorway of a Chinese laundry with two six-shooters in his hands. He was reported to have saved sixteen Chinese by hiding them in the basement of the Arcade gambling hall.

It was in that same Arcade that Moon met his death seven months later. Gambler Clay Wilson was paying undue attention to Moon's wife. When Moon attacked him, Wilson drew and fired. With two bullets in his chest, Moon locked his powerful arms around the other man and almost managed to crush the life out of him. Wilson finally worked the muzzle of his pistol against his adversary's body and with two more shots closed out the career of big Jim Moon.

His partner gone, John Bull opened a new place of business in Denver, the Turf Exchange, described as a combination gambling hall and hotel. There, in January 1882, he was shot through the foot in an upstairs room by Jim Bush, a gambler under indictment for a murder in Leadville. Details of the altercation are lacking as Bull did not press charges, passing off the shooting as an accident. One Denver paper predicted that Bush would "die with his boots on," but Bull apparently let the matter drop. He may have been influenced by Bush's high-placed connections; Jim

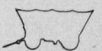
Bush was the brother of William H. Bush, proprietor of the city's finest hotel, the Windsor, and business agent and close confidant of silver king H.A.W. Tabor, the richest and most powerful man in Colorado.

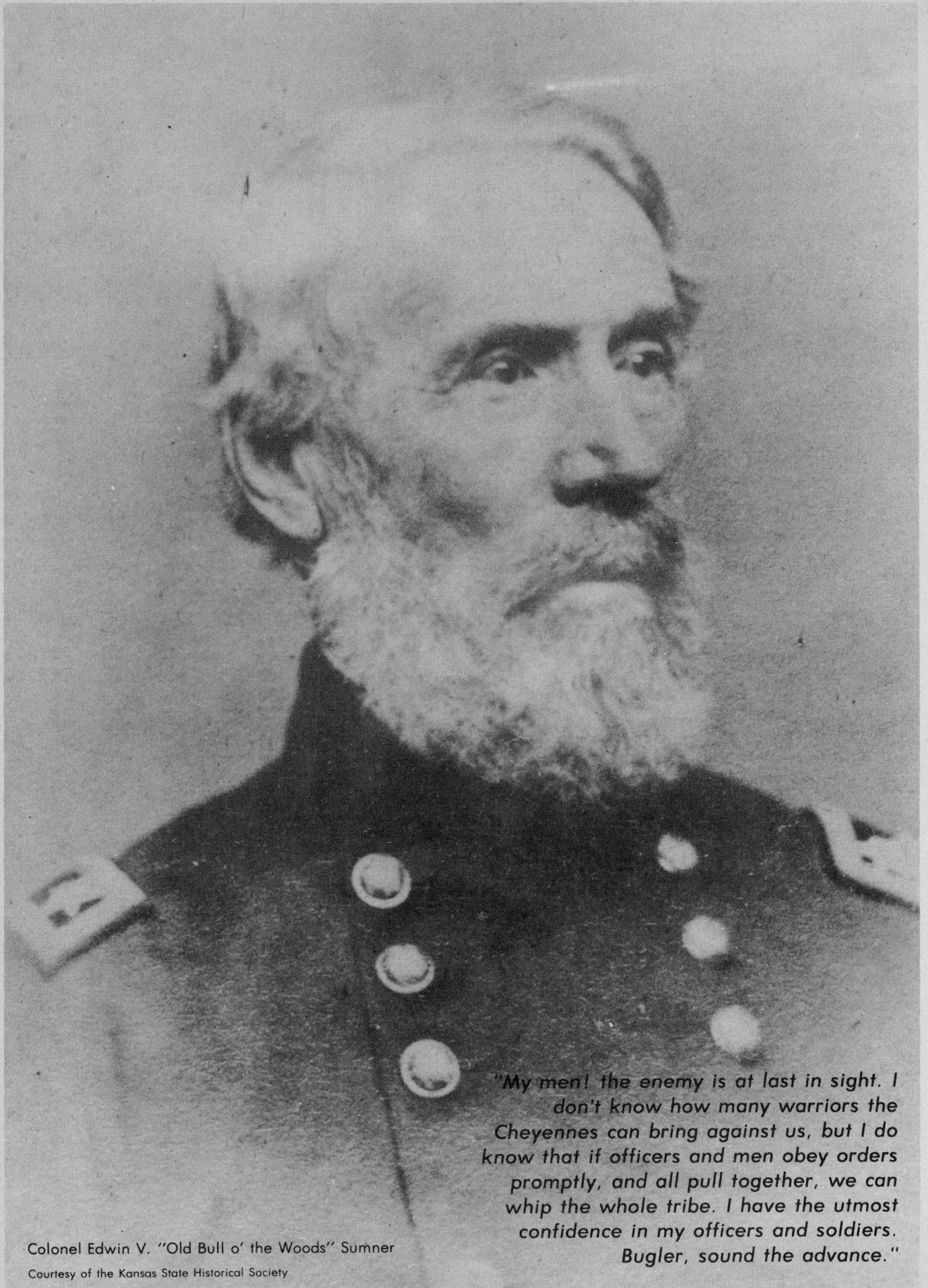
SOON AFTER, Bull left Colorado and resumed his travels. He worked his skin games on the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad from Minneapolis to Seattle for several years and was a familiar figure in gambling houses of towns all along the route.

One night in 1898 John Bull emerged from the People's Theater in Spokane, accompanied by the manager, Fiskey Barnett. Both men had been drinking and were laughing and joshing one another. Without warning Barnett suddenly jabbed the lighted end of his cigar into Bull's face. The fiery butt struck Bull squarely in the eye and he roared with pain. Clapping one hand to his eye, he reached for his gun with the other. Barnett dodged behind a woman who chanced to be in front of the theater and pulled his own pistol. Bull, half-blinded, opened up with his six-shooter and Barnett returned the fire. When both guns were empty and the smoke lifted, the woman lay on the sidewalk, one of Bull's bullets through her lung. Barnett clutched a bloody hand from which a finger had been neatly clipped by a bullet; he was otherwise unhurt. Bull lay prostrate, four bullets in his body. His left arm was shattered, and blood ran from wounds in his groin, chin, and neck.

The woman lingered on the verge of death for several weeks but eventually recovered. Bull's mangled arm was amputated at the shoulder and bullets were removed from his face and groin. Because of its critical location, the slug in his neck was left where it would remain for twenty-three years. Barnett, for his part in the bloody affair, lost a finger and a fine of ten dollars for firing a pistol within the city limits.

Bull's fine was waived as he was not expected to live. But live he did. Sixty-two years old at the time of the Spokane shooting, he was eighty-five when he had the bullet in his neck removed. The tough old cardsharp would live on for yet another eight years, before finally cashing in his chips at the age of ninety-three at Vancouver, British Columbia, September 9, 1929.





"My men! the enemy is at last in sight. I don't know how many warriors the Cheyennes can bring against us, but I do know that if officers and men obey orders promptly, and all pull together, we can whip the whole tribe. I have the utmost confidence in my officers and soldiers. Bugler, sound the advance."

Colonel Edwin V. "Old Bull o' the Woods" Sumner
Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society

A Cheyenne war leader with a trailer of flowing eagle feathers rode to the front of the Indian line. Peck describes him, "brandishing his lance, shouting to his warriors, and gesticulating wildly, evidently urging his men to stand their ground, when he saw symptoms of a panic among them." The troopers admired his superb horsemanship.

Classic Confrontation on the Solomon

His men said he'd fight a buzz saw. On the morning of July 29, 1857, Colonel Edwin V. "Old Bull o' the Woods" Sumner prepared to do just that. He led 300 troopers of the First Cavalry into battle against an estimated 300 to 1,000 Cheyenne warriors. In one of the few classic military confrontations between the U.S. Army and the Plains Indian warrior, two well-formed battle lines moved toward one another across the Solomon River Valley.

This was not a hit and run, surprise attack, so typical of prairie warfare. Instead, Sumner's men rode in straight line toward the advancing Indian force. Alerted by scouts, the warriors had waited in the open for the troopers to arrive. They were shaded, but not hidden, by a cottonwood grove beside the Solomon.

Major Sebastian Gunther, then a non-commissioned officer with the expedition, later recalled, "The line of Indians stretched nearly half a mile and appeared to be four or five deep. There were so many warriors in fact, that freedom of arm movement was restricted in the crowd."

HOSTILITIES between the Cheyenne and the United States had begun only the year before, when increasingly heavy emigrant traffic pushed the Indians to action. The Cheyennes, angered by the killing of eight to ten warriors in an attack on an Indian camp by a de-

March 1986

By LOUISE BOYD JAMES

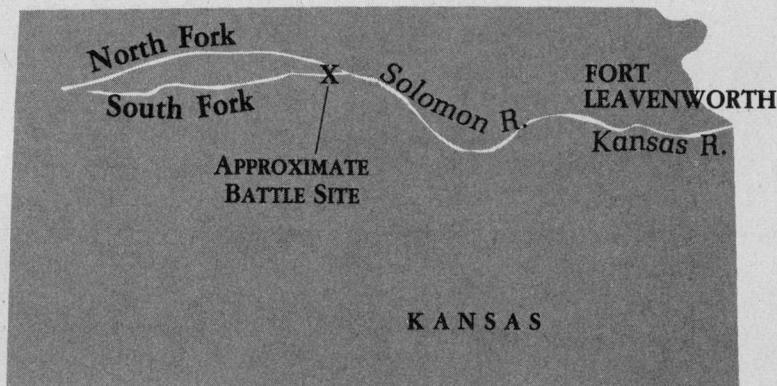
tachment of First Cavalry, spent the late summer of 1856 raiding. They made at least three strikes against wagon trains and civilians.

Newspapers claimed the Cheyennes had killed eighteen whites and carried off several women and children during the raids. Reportedly, the Indians intended similar depredations—especially the capture of white women—for the summer of 1857. They planned to avoid

Arkansas, he had first split his force to search the northern reaches of Cheyenne territory. Led by Major John Sedgwick, part of the expedition pushed as far west as the foothills of the Rockies without finding any Cheyennes.

Sumner and Sedgwick reunited on the South Platte on July 5. They turned south toward the Arkansas—and the Indians. Sumner left his baggage train behind, to give the troopers increased speed.

The Delaware chief, Fall Leaf, employed by Sedgwick as a scout, discovered a recently deserted Cheyenne camp on July 16. Following the fresh trail, he

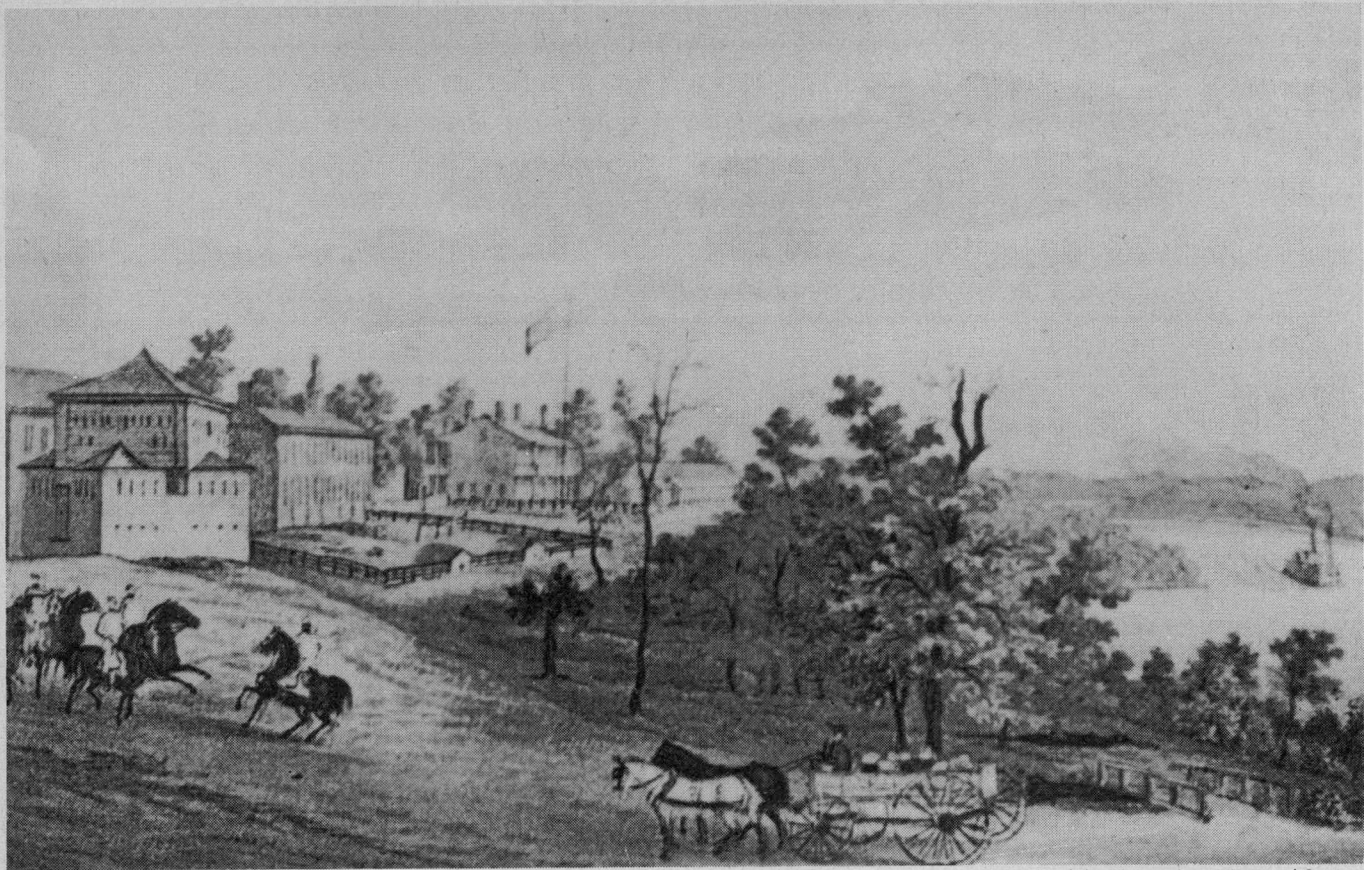


a direct confrontation with soldiers.

In late May 1857, Sumner was ordered from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, to find and punish the offending warriors. Knowing the Cheyenne ranged from the Platte River to the

led the expedition onward. On the morning of July 29, one of his warriors reported to Sumner that a small party of Indians was just ahead.

The Cheyenne scouts also hurried to warn a large village nearby of Sumner's



Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society

approach. Since it had taken Sumner so long to find them, the Cheyennes had had ample time to receive a special medicine and believed it would no longer be necessary to avoid a confrontation. According to the medicine men, White Bull and Dark, the medicine would make

Solomon River, where they waited for Sumner.

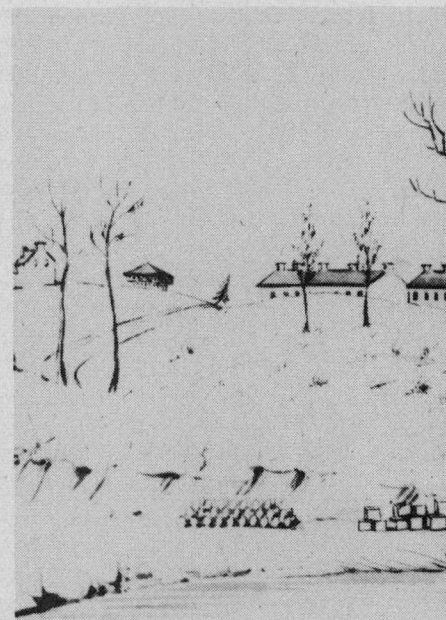
THE WARRIORS stripped to fighting bare, painted their faces, rested their horses, and rejoiced in their medicine. Had they known that Sumner,

According to the medicine men, White Bull and Dark, the medicine would make the white man's bullets fall harmlessly to the ground. By dipping his hands in a small lake near Smoky Hill, each warrior had gained the bullet stopping power.

the white man's bullets fall harmlessly to the ground. By dipping his hands in a small lake near Smoky Hill, each warrior had gained the bullet stopping power. Now by simply holding up his hand a warrior could render the guns harmless. With their new medicine, the Cheyennes were confident of victory, so the women and children did not strike camp and scatter. Instead, the warriors rode to the cottonwood grove on the

in his eagerness to make certain the warriors did not escape, had left his infantry struggling three to five miles behind and that his four field howitzers were halted a mile away, waiting for the infantry, the Cheyennes would have been even more jubilant. The divided force could be taken one element at a time.

As Sumner's men rode from the prairie into the Solomon Valley, they rounded a bluff and saw for the first



time the small cottonwood grove to the east. Private Robert Morris Peck later recalled, "About these trees we could see a dense mass of moving animals that at first looked like a distant herd of buffalo. But we were told by our guides that we were more than two days' march west of the buffalo range. Several of the officers halted long enough to take a look through their field glasses."

The word came, "They are Indians, all

True West

right, and a swarm of them, but no sign of lodges; they seem to have halted about those trees, and are now mounting and moving this way."

The white-haired, ramrod-straight colonel chose that moment to instruct his command: "My men! the enemy is at last in sight. I don't know how many warriors the Cheyennes can bring against us, but I do know that if officers and men obey orders promptly, and all pull together, we can whip the whole tribe. I have the utmost confidence in my officers and soldiers. Bugler, sound the advance."

Sumner's men formed a battle line and rode at a walk toward the advancing Indians. Trooper Gunther recalled that less than a furlong separated the lines before Sumner ordered his men at a "Trot!" Still no weapons had been drawn.

As the two sides came within rifle range, Fall Leaf rode to the front, stopping his horse about halfway between

Sumner's own scout.

When less than 300 feet separated the lines, the Cheyennes, with a much larger force, began moving to outflank Sumner on both the left and right. Private Peck

which a large body of troops charged Indians with the saber."

Had it not been for White Bull's and Dark's medicine, the saber charge might have had a different effect on the

"The line of Indians stretched nearly half a mile and appeared to be four or five deep. There were so many warriors in fact, that freedom of arm movement was restricted in the crowd."

later speculated that Sumner's next order was designed to "offset the disparity of number by a bold dash that would create a panic in the enemy's ranks."

Cheyennes. But the instant they spotted 300 flashing blades, their column slowed from a trot to a walk. The war yells quieted almost to silence. Their medicine worked against rifle balls—not hardened steel.

A Cheyenne war leader with a trailer of flowing eagle feathers rode to the front of the Indian line. Peck describes him, "brandishing his lance, shouting to his warriors, and gesticulating wildly, evidently urging his men to stand their ground, when he saw symptoms of a panic among them." The troopers admired his superb horsemanship.

Fort Leavenworth is shown left, during busy summer months prior to 1854, and below, during the winter of 1849 sketched as seen from across the river.

Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society



the two lines. He raised his rifle and fired toward the Cheyennes. Sumner turned to Lieutenant David Stanley, who rode beside him, and said, "Bear witness, Lieutenant Stanley, that an Indian fired the first shot." The order may have been given in defense against any future criticism that he did not give the Indians a chance to pow-wow first. Of course, the statement skirted the fact that the Indian firing the first shot was

March 1986

"Sling carbine! Draw saber!" came the command.

The order surprised the cavalry, many of whom must have doubted Sumner's decision. Peck adds, "I then thought [the saber charge] was a serious mistake in the colonel."

Indian historian George Bird Grinnell later noted the unusual nature of the order. "This charge was made with saber, perhaps the only occasion on

ABOUT THAT time, "Old Bull" issued the command, "Charge!"

That broke the Cheyennes' resolve. They fired one or two volleys of arrows and fled, Sumner's men in pursuit. Had not the Solomon's bottom been quicksand, most of the warriors would have escaped unharmed. But according to Private Peck, the Cheyennes' horses became bogged in the quicksand. In most cases the hapless riders were rescued by their comrades, but the double load allowed the jaded cavalry horses to overtake several Cheyenne. After a seven-mile chase from the scene of the first contact, the recall sounded and the men regrouped at the Solomon to count their and the enemy's losses.

Two soldiers were killed and eight were wounded. One officer, Lieutenant Jeb Stuart, later of Civil War fame, was also wounded. Reporting nine Indians killed and one captured, Sumner speculated, "there must have been a great number wounded." Some estimates of Cheyenne losses ran as high as thirty, but according to Grinnell, the Cheyenne claimed only four dead. They were Coyote Ear, Yellow Shirt, Carries the

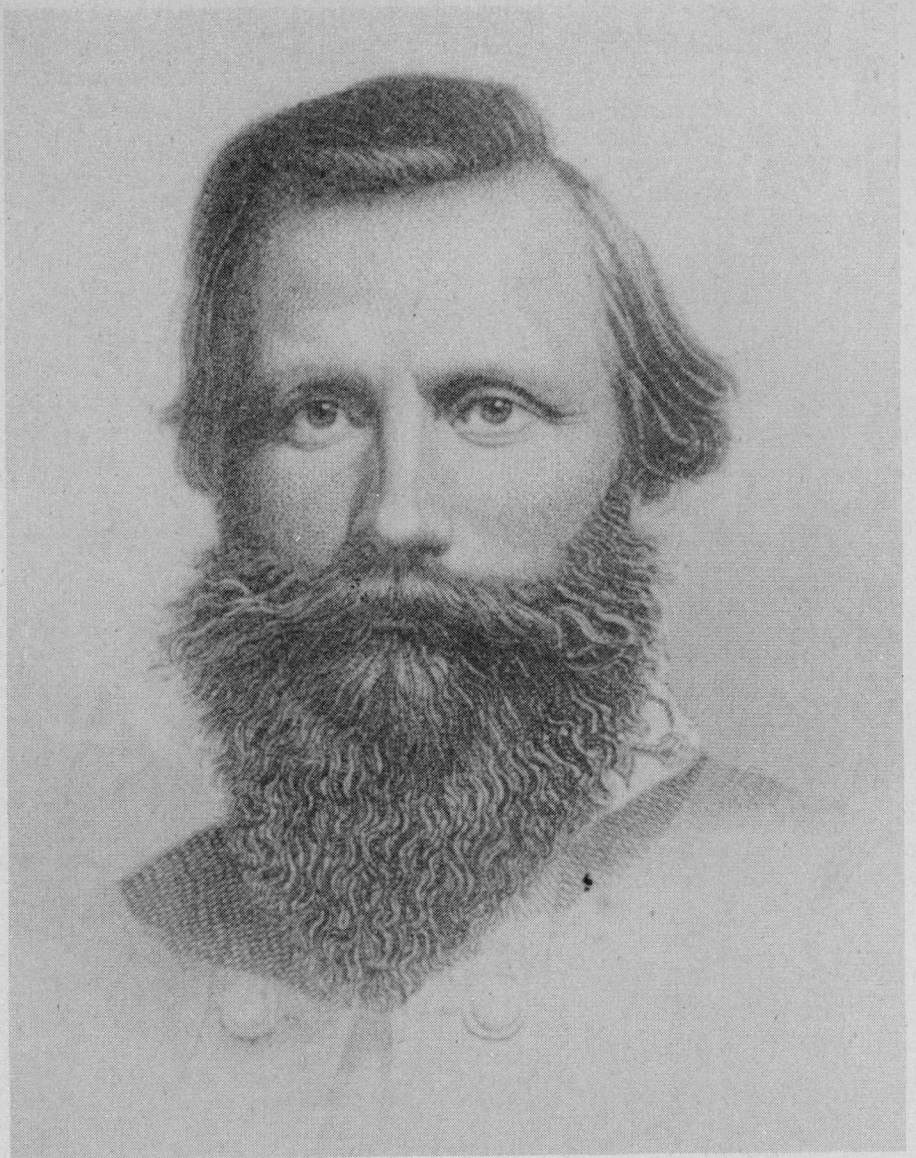
Otter, and Black Bear.

Two days later, Sumner's force discovered the deserted Indian camp within fifteen miles of the battle site. He found 171 tipis along with several thousand pounds of dried meat and most of the rest of the Cheyennes' supplies. The camp was torched, a harsh loss for the Cheyennes.

Sumner was later criticized for not following the Cheyennes to their village on the day of the battle. Had he done so, a great many more Indians would have been "punished." Others criticized him for his choice of the saber, since the carbines or pistols might have inflicted greater damage.

After the confrontation on the Solomon, the Cheyennes reverted to their original plan of avoiding the military. Sumner followed them about forty miles, but by then they had split into so many small bands that it was impossible to continue the search. Sumner had to content himself with returning to Bent's Fort and confiscating the annuities waiting there for the Cheyennes. One source states that he dumped many of those supplies in the river. He and his men soon received orders to give up the chase and were sent to Utah.

"OLD BULL" Sumner's willingness to take on the Cheyenne buzz saw thus became a footnote in history, and the Solomon River fight ended as only a minor conflict despite its beginnings as a classical battle. Was it luck that made Sumner call for the saber charge? Apparently he never said. Mountain men Jim Bridger, Elbridge Gerry, and possibly John Simpson Smith, also rode with Sumner at least part of the time as guides and interpreters. Perhaps one of them or Fall Leaf had heard of White Bull's and Dark's medicine and told Sumner. Had the saber charge not been



Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society
J.E.B. Stuart, of Civil War fame, was a lieutenant at the time of the Solomon River Valley confrontation. He was wounded during the skirmish.

Several interesting footnotes arose from the battle. In the summer of 1857, the first reports of gold strikes along

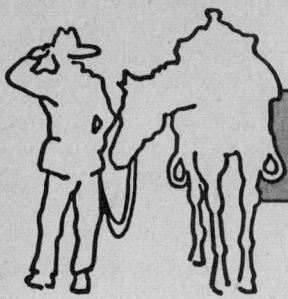
a group of miners who reportedly made the initial strike. Two of Sedgwick's men quickly deserted, and an injured miner, who had remained with the troopers, was asked to change his story of the gold strike, so as to not tempt any more men.

Fall Leaf also acquired gold nuggets along the South Platte, which he later displayed in Kansas, contributing to the gold rush. Thus, regardless of the outcome of the Solomon River fight, the Cheyennes' fate had been determined. They would not be allowed to keep their historic lands. Increased conflicts with the United States troopers were assured, but never again would the opposing sides ride into battle as two disciplined lines of soldiers in classic military formation.

...the instant they spotted 300 flashing blades, their column slowed from a trot to a walk. The war yells quieted almost to silence. Their medicine worked against rifle balls—not hardened steel... About that time, "Old Bull" issued the command, "Charge!"

ordered, however, it is possible the troopers might have been surrounded and destroyed.

Cherry Creek, Colorado, began to circulate. Sedgwick's probe to the foothills of the Rockies resulted in his meeting



Trails Grown Dim

Western genealogy

Jeff Milton, Lawman

I am seeking any information on old-time lawman Jeff Milton and his friend George Scarbrough. Photocopies of pictures would be greatly appreciated also.—**Bill Robinson, 907 Magnolia, Corning, AR 72422.**

Brake

I need information on a family by the name of Brake. My father's name was Jake Brake, my grandfather's was Charles Brake (Charlie). They came from around Little Rock, Arkansas. If you have any information please send it to me because it is a very small family.—**Patsy Boozer, 98203 South Bank Rd., Sp.-31, Brookings, OR 97415.**

Boozer Clan

I'm seeking information on the Boozer clan. The father's name was James Auther Boozer. His father was David Washington Boozer. James came from Missouri and David from Mississippi.

The family history is that the name Boozer came from four brothers from Europe. I would like any information anyone might have about the Boozer clan.—**C.H. Boozer, 98203 South Bank Rd., Sp.-31, Brookings, OR 97415.**

Woolf-Madden

I am seeking information on the Woolf family (my great-grandparents), and the Madden family (my great-grandmother's family). They were in the 1850 McMinn County, Tennessee, census. Nancy Madden was my grandmother. She was part Cherokee. Charles Woolf was Irish. The census lists the following people as being members of the Woolf family: George Smith, Martha Woolf, Franklin, William, Joseph, *March 1986*

Charles, Harriet, Henry, Mary, Henry Woolf, Nancy, and John. The members of the Madden family were listed as: James Madden, Matilda, John, Elizabeth J., Nancy, James, William Haywood, Edmund, Andrew, Sarah.—**Effie Woolf Skelton, Box 576, Ojai, CA 93023.**

Mayhall-Damon

I am seeking information about the Mayhall or Damon families, especially the family of Lorenzo Mayhall. All information about either will be appreciated. I will answer all letters I receive.—**Mildred R. James, 19 Maple Court, Olmsted Township, OH 44138.**

Apodaca

I am seeking information regarding the families of Tirso, Jose, and Leon Apodaca, brothers of Eusebio Apodaca, and sons of Lazaro and Josepha Apodaca, all from Chihuahua, Mexico. I will answer all letters.—**Lucia Apodaca Martin, 25 E. Atchison St., Fresno, CA 93706.**

Truman-Ross-Helloms-Light-Leight

I am seeking information on my grandmother's two brothers. Henry J. Truman was born in 1850, in Ohio, and died in Kentucky, in 1923. He married Eva Ross in 1878. A second marriage, to Nancy Helloms of South Carolina, took place in Texas, in 1898. They adopted a girl named Helen. Nancy died

in Texas.

William L. Truman was born in 1854, in Michigan, and died in Texas, in a drilling rig accident, in 1899. He married Mrs. Julia Light, Spaulding, Schuler, from Salina, Kansas, in 1833 and with her had one son, Ray. Julia had three brothers, Van, Doc, and Coe Light (Leight).

One of the brothers is supposed to have been with Custer at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. He had suffered a broken leg shortly before the battle from shoeing a horse.

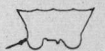
I would especially like to know when and where Eva Ross died.—**D. Truman Wilder, 2025 S. 112th St., Seattle, WA 98168.**

Shin-pock

I am seeking any information on the family name of Shin-pock. It is said to be an Indian name.—**Ezel Taylor Nobles, Rt. 1, Box 82A, Mangham, LA 71259.**

Wasson

I would like information on A. Wasson of Sherman, Texas, circa 1876-77. Of special interest is his occupation and general history. I own his Sharps rifle and would like some information on him to go with it.—**Bill Smith, Cartridges Unlimited, Rt. 1, Box 50, South Kent, CT 06785.**



Readers' letters for "Trails Grown Dim" are printed as soon as space permits, so please be patient. Please type or print your query and limit letters to 150 words or less. Photos are welcome. We can't run current "missing persons" notices or lengthy genealogical requests, but we do attempt to print all letters as soon as we can. Any reader having information concerning persons referred to above is asked to communicate directly with the letter writer; please do not write to us.

The Buscadero Six-Gun

By KONRAD F. SCHREIER, JR.

Photos Courtesy of the Author

In the make-believe world of the movies and television there are always compromises between historical accuracy and entertainment. There are, however, some things which go beyond the realm of compromises and never should appear on film. One is the Hollywood Buscadero six-gun rig.


The Buscadero outfit—a Mexican holster threaded through a slot in a huge, wide, sculptured cartridge belt—was *never* used in the real Wild West. Searching multitudes of old time Wild West photographs and illustrations will not turn up one. Nor will they be found in the old-time catalogs of outfitters who supplied cartridge belts and holsters. What *is* found in those sources are regular loop cartridge belts and holsters including the Mexican, which really was the most popular in the Wild West. But over the years, innumerable Buscadero rigs have appeared in countless western films.

Just where did the Buscadero rig come from? And why does it continue to be used in the movies and on television?

The name won't help: *Buscadero* is Spanish for "seeker" or "searcher." Early in Wild West days it often was used to refer to a lawman; later it signified anybody who was handy with six-guns. So *Buscadero* really is not a bad name for the rig, which is great for quick draw.

There is one pretty good explanation

True West



The late, great Western star Buck Jones in a "still" from the early 1930s, was a Western star who was a real Westerner. He shows his real opinion of the Buscadero six-gun rig with a suitcase hung on a revolver butt...

Buscadero Six-Gun Rig

of the Buscadero rig's origins: it may have been invented by a New York City costume house! When the movies were just getting started in and around New York City and the Western was among the earliest popular "flickers," the first great Western star was Gilbert M. "Broncho Billy" Anderson. Anderson's first appearance was in Edison Studio's 1903 pioneer western *The Great Train Robbery*. He played a bad guy getting shot and falling off his horse. By 1905 he was an established Western star, and by 1910 he had made several hundred short "one reel" Western flickers. From then until about 1920 he was a major Western star. Then he retired to roles behind the camera and became a successful producer of, among other things, Laurel and Hardy comedies.

The first photograph of anybody wearing a Buscadero rig is of Broncho Billy Anderson. Taken around 1905, it shows him in a "western" costume that can only be described as "fantastic" compared to what anybody in the Wild West ever wore. The outfit no doubt came from a costumer's readings of Western "dime novels," which were also produced in New York City.

Broncho Billy was just wearing the costume provided by his studio—including the Buscadero six-gun rig. Broncho Billy was from Arkansas, March 1986



William S. Farnum acted in many kinds of films, and was a popular actor of his day. Farnum, left, and one of his crew "on location" in the mid-1920s, was a true Westerner, and one of the few men who could ever handle the authentic pair of six-guns he is wearing.

almost "the West," and, in later movies made when he was a star and had something to say about his wardrobe, he wore authentic western six-gun rigs.

The next great Western star was William S. Hart. While he was born in New York State, Hart was raised in the Dakotas. He went into the movies from the legitimate New York stage, and into western movies about the time they began making them in Southern California around 1914. Other than in a couple of his early Westerns, Hart always wore authentic costumes including his six-gun rigs.

At the same time that Broncho Billy Anderson and Bill Hart were making very authentic Westerns, however, a bunch of small time movie producers began making them "on the cheap." In those films the actors were often rodeo, circus, and Wild West show performers who usually furnished their own costumes. The handy Buscadero six-gun rig had caught on with those live-performing "cowboys," one of whom did more to get it in the movies than anybody else. He was Tom Mix, the third great Hollywood Western star.

ALTHOUGH MIX was born in Pennsylvania, he moved "Out West" around 1900. He had been fascinated with the Wild West all his young life; once he got there he became a champion rodeo performer. He was expert at riding, roping, and shooting. By 1910 the photogenic Mix was making short movies, mostly Western comedies produced near New York. During the 1920s he was the top Western star in Hollywood.

Unlike Broncho Billy Anderson or Bill Hart, Tom Mix was a real old-time dude. He loved fancy duds, eastern or western, and he literally invented a lot of "western" clothes. He was the first person to wear several styles of "western" shirts, outlandish vests, fancy pants, and boots. He popularized the huge Stetson hat fully twice as big as any Westerner—including himself—ever wore off-camera. He tricked out his remarkable performing horse, Tony, in a saddle and bridle fit for any western holiday parade. And he always wore a Buscadero six-gun rig in his movies.

Anybody who doubts that Tom Mix made the Buscadero rig popular in movies should take a look at them and the still photos from them. Until about 1920 when Tom Mix became the biggest Western star, about ninety-five percent of the actors wore authentic western six-gun rigs. During the height of his popularity in the 1920s more and more actors in Westerns wore the Buscadero



The great Western star Ken Maynard, in a dressing room snap shot from the mid-1930s, is wearing a very fancy Buscadero six-gun rig. His whole rig is in the fancy "Tom Mix" mode. He was one of master leatherworker Ed Bohlin's best customers.

rig he wore. By the time of the sound Westerns of the 1930s things had swung around and about ninety percent of the Western actors wore the Hollywood Buscadero six-gun rig.

The Buscadero's popularity in the 1930s was also due in no small part to another man, a master Hollywood leather craftsman, Edward H. Bohlin. In the thirties everybody who was anybody in Western movies wore gear made by Ed Bohlin, and he made

beautiful Buscadero rigs for them because they were what movie outfits and audiences wanted. Don't think that Ed Bohlin didn't know what real old-time western six-gun rigs were like. He did, and he made them as well as anybody in the western outfitting business ever had. But he was a practical businessman, and when the Hollywood Western film outfits asked for Buscadero rigs, he made them.

Tom Mix and his film costumes made

another contribution to the Hollywood Western Buscadero six-gun rig—the holster tie-down. The picket string that ties a six-gun holster's tip to the wearer's leg is not found on genuine old-

time Western rigs. They don't have the hole in the tip to accommodate it. Old-time Westerners wore their six-gun rigs in a way that makes the tie-down useless. When riding they cinched the

pistol belt up so it rode high around their waists. When they were dismounted and figured they might need to handle their six-gun fast, they loosened the belt to "drop" the holster down on their leg, where it would be handy for a quick draw. On the other hand, a Buscadero rig's holster is always dropped low because that is the way it is designed to ride.



William S. Hart, center, and the actor on his left wore authentic Western six-gun rigs in one of his Westerns of about 1919.

A BUSCADERO rig is not the sort of outfit a practical horseman would choose to wear. It makes mounting, riding, and dismounting uncomfortable. Tied-down it's worse. Old-time Western actors say they wore the Buscadero rig literally sewed to their pants so it would stay in place during action scenes!

After World War II the costumes in many Westerns became more authentic, including proper old-time six-gun rigs. But the Hollywood Buscadero outfit was used in many television Westerns. In today's Westerns the costumes are usually authentic right down to the six-gun rigs.

But the theatrical Buscadero six-gun rig is still around. It has been used by every Western quick draw artist from the fantastic Ed McGivern of the 1930s up to now. It is very handy, and quick draw artists do not have to ride horses while wearing it. Also it long has been worn as a part of Western fancy parade outfits.



Broncho Billy Anderson, far right, wore one of his Buscadero six-gun rigs. The "still" from one of his early Westerns appeared in *Technical World Magazine* in 1915.

March 1986

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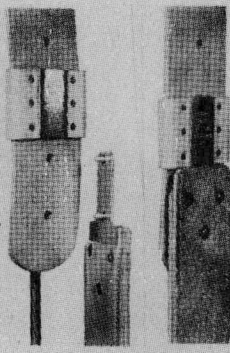
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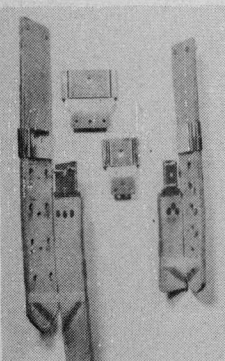


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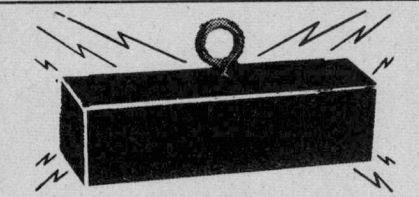
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Today the Buscadero six-gun rig is a part of fancy Western dress, and it probably should be. After all, it came from the Western movies and television which did so much to create the popular legend. It was, however, part of the theatrical costume invented for movies, and most of the Western actors who wore it knew it was.

The actors, though, should not be blamed for the Buscadero's popularity. Like the rest of their wardrobe, six-gun rigs were subject to the whims of fashions in movie and television costumes. If an actor did not wear it, he would not have been in style. And he would not have worked in the make-believe Wild West of movies and television.



A man billed as a "quick-draw shooter" in an article in the September 1910 issue of *Outer's Book* magazine, has a rig for the role. The tie-down on his holster is a strap which, it is possible, old-time Westerners did wear.

REEL COWBOYS

The Outlaw Josey Wales

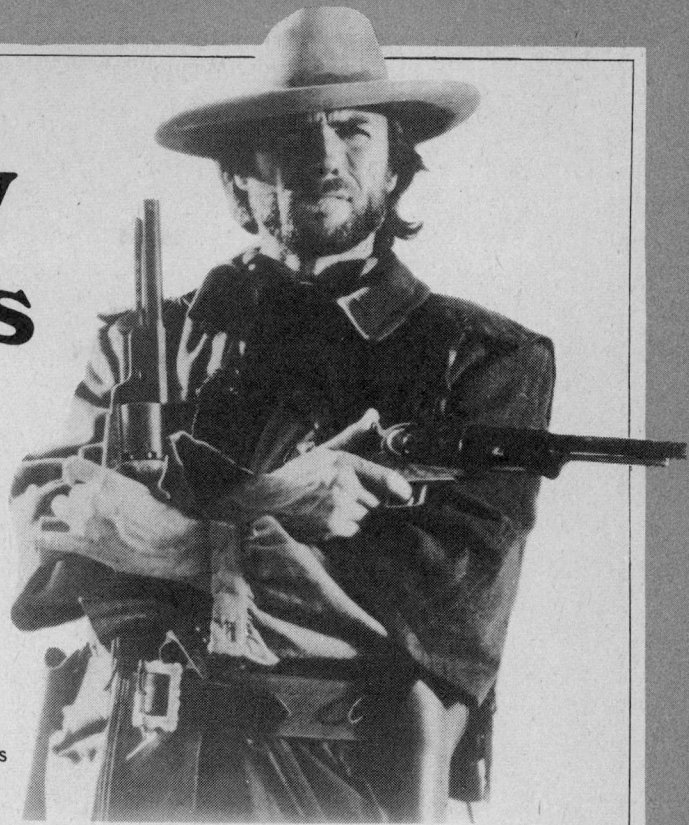
By BILL O'NEAL

Clint Eastwood first became known to Western fans as Rowdy Yates in the long-running television series, *Rawhide*. Tall, lean, and taciturn, he seemed to be a small screen Gary Cooper. His first appearance in a big screen Western was a small role in *The First Traveling Saleslady*, a 1956 comedy starring Ginger Rogers and Carol Channing. Small parts in two mediocre oaters followed: *Star in the Dust* (1956) and *Ambush at Cimarron Pass* (1958).

In 1966 Eastwood's career was transformed by *A Fistful of Dollars*. Filmed by Sergio Leone two years earlier, *Fistful* popularized "spaghetti Westerns." Smoking a cheroot, clad in a serape, squinting deadpan beneath a flat-crowned hat, Eastwood introduced a new type of Western "hero"—a fearless, emotionless killing machine. His gunfighting skills are so superior that there is no dramatic suspense. Regardless of how badly he is outnumbered by opposing gunmen, he really is in no danger because he invariably mows down all enemies. Indeed, spaghetti Westerns focused on murder. The movies had no characterizations, just a series of shootouts and slaughters and slow motion closeups of gunfighters reeling from bullet wounds.

Over the short run, spaghetti Westerns revitalized a fading genre, bringing new fans captivated by mindless sadism in a frontier setting. But spaghetti Westerns were populated with dirty, joyless, brutal men and women. There was no suggestion of the energy, optimism, humor, or sheer vitality of pioneers creating farms, ranches, and towns from a harsh but lovely wilderness. After a few years of audience fascination with those frontier bloodbaths, the Western became box office poison. The massive overexposure of television Westerns, combined with endless massacres on spaghetti oaters brought down a curtain of indifference on the celluloid West.

Clint Eastwood was armed to the teeth as *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.



Eastwood, who had co-starred in one of the best of the TV Westerns, headlined two more Sergio Leone Westerns: *For a Few Dollars More* (1967) and *The Good, The Bad And The Ugly* (1966). His next Westerns were *Hang 'Em High* (1968), *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970), *Joe Kidd* (1972), and *High Plains Drifter* (1973). The grim, strong character he developed in Westerns led to similar roles in contemporary films, and soon he reached superstar status as Dirty Harry Callahan, a San Francisco police officer just a couple of generations removed from the classic Western lawman of the movies.

In 1976 Eastwood turned once more to the Western. Although the genre's popularity had slipped badly, when Clint Eastwood directed and starred in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, it was hoped that Westerns might enjoy a revival.

The Outlaw Josey Wales is two hours and fifteen minutes long. It opens with Wales (Eastwood) farming his land in Missouri. A band of Yankee Redlegs raids the farm, burning it and murdering Wales' wife and son. Wales survives and enlists with Bloody Bill Anderson's Confederate guerrillas, intending to seek the Redlegs and wreak vengeance.

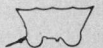
In some fine battle scenes, Wales proves himself a natural killer. Bearded and armed with huge cap and ball revolvers, Eastwood looks magnificent as a guerrilla and gunfighter. But his

skills as a shootist surpass belief; like his comic book spaghetti Western heroes, he is such an invincible gunman that there is no suspense when Wales pulls leather and swings into action. And like the spaghetti Westerns, *The Outlaw Josey Wales* becomes a succession of slow-moving episodes, with little character development.

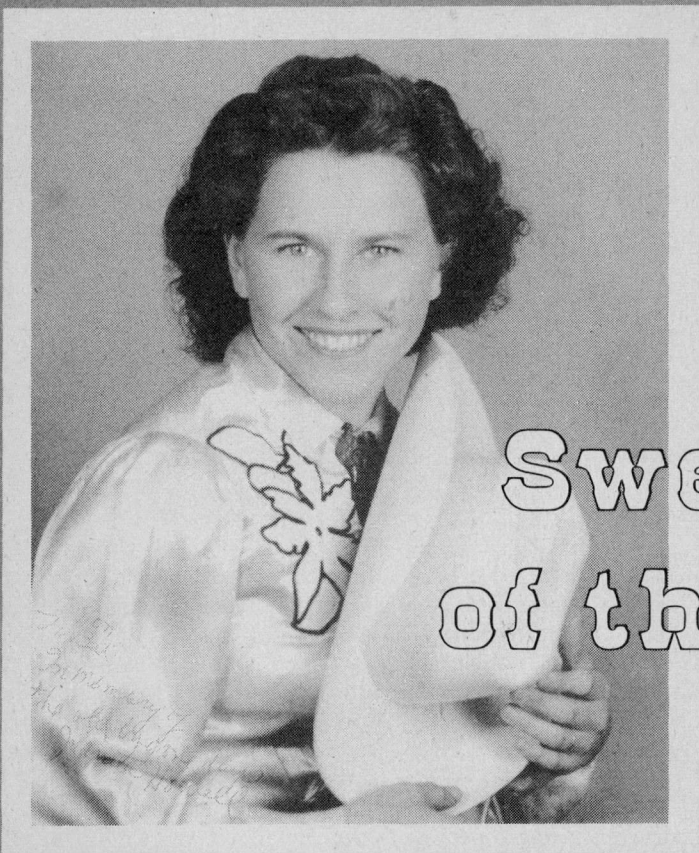
At the end of the Civil War, Wales refuses to surrender and becomes an outlaw. His continuing search for the Redlegs deteriorates into a murderous vendetta as he guns down soldiers, bounty hunters, and assorted villains. On his way to Texas, Wales unwillingly attracts a band of outcasts, leading them to a farm and a communal lifestyle and himself to a measure of peace.

Feminine interest is ineptly represented by pale, expressionless Sondra Locke, who delivers her usual lifeless performance. Royal Dano and John Russell look good in supporting roles, however, and Chief Dan George is superb as an old Indian who, like Wales, can proclaim, "I never surrendered."

The Outlaw Josey Wales is strikingly photographed but otherwise is too strongly reminiscent of the dreary spaghetti Westerns. The film did not reestablish Westerns, and within a few years the genre had virtually vanished from the screen.



Juanita Howell



Sweetheart of the Rodeo

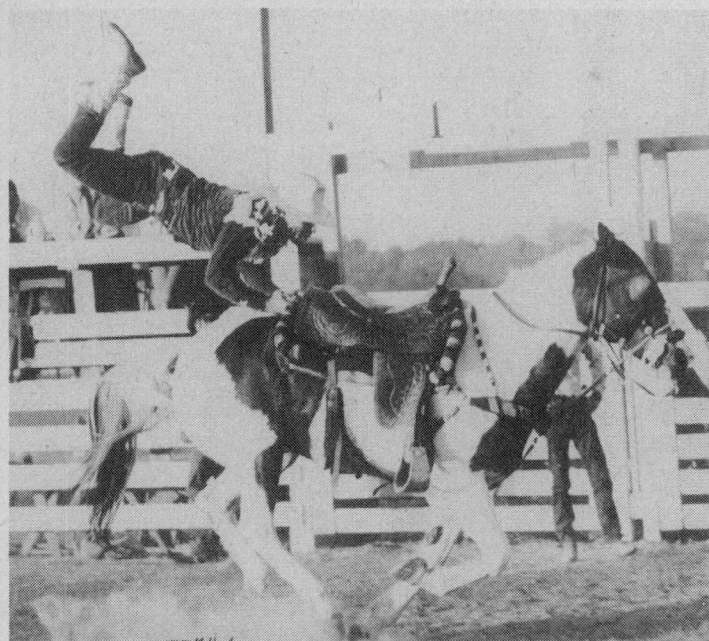
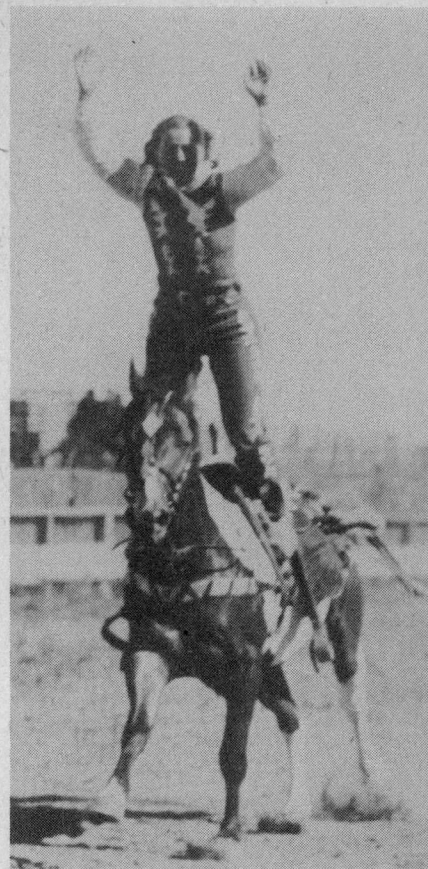
By DON BELL

During the Great Depression a young woman from Michigan went west to follow in the footsteps of her bronco-riding mother. Soon she was riding with the greats, and her blossoming romance with Chet Howell would lead to rodeo's perfect marriage.

On August 9, 1936, Juanita Hackett sat on her horse before a packed grandstand. To her right, also on horseback, sat her groom, Chet Howell. The best man and the maid of honor, Montie and Louise Montana, were mounted, too. Dressed in the finest western wear, all four were under contract to perform at the Centralia, Washington, Rodeo. But their wedding was the featured event that day, and for the next twenty years the happy couple would travel from coast to coast, riding in nearly every major rodeo in the United States, Mexico, and Canada.

Born in Sturgis, Michigan, in 1910, Juanita loved the silent Western films. Every Saturday she spent her dime for a show ticket. But even though her mother was a bronc rider with the old Jack King Wild West Show, Juanita did

Juanita demonstrates her prowess doing the "Hippodrome Stand."



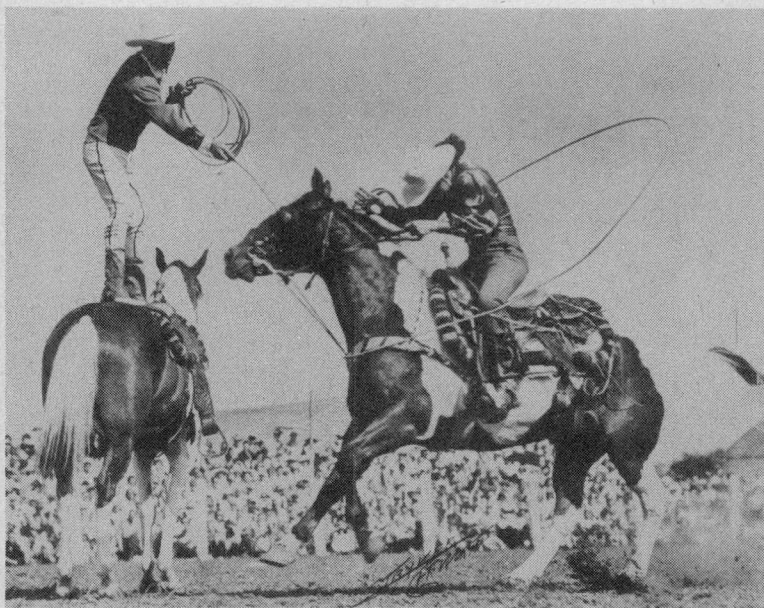
Chet Howell performs "High Cruppers" at a 1952 Florida rodeo.

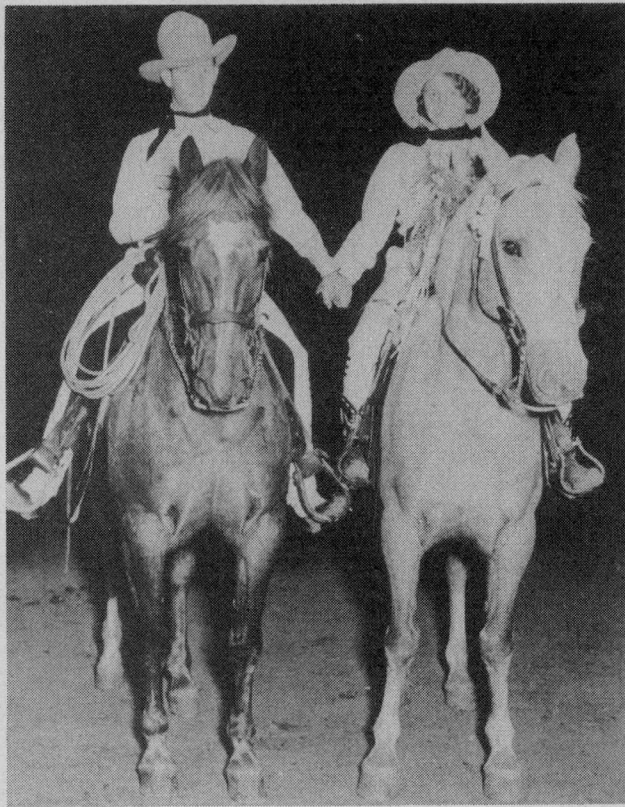
Chet and Juanita's "Trick and Fancy Horse Catching Act" was a favorite of rodeo fans.

not know yet that she would spend her life as a trick rider and fancy roper.

Juanita was not satisfied with her life in Sturgis, so she was looking for a way out as soon as she graduated from high school. Since she had always loved livestock, one day she said good-bye to her hometown, boarded a bus, and headed for Chicago, where her mother was performing.

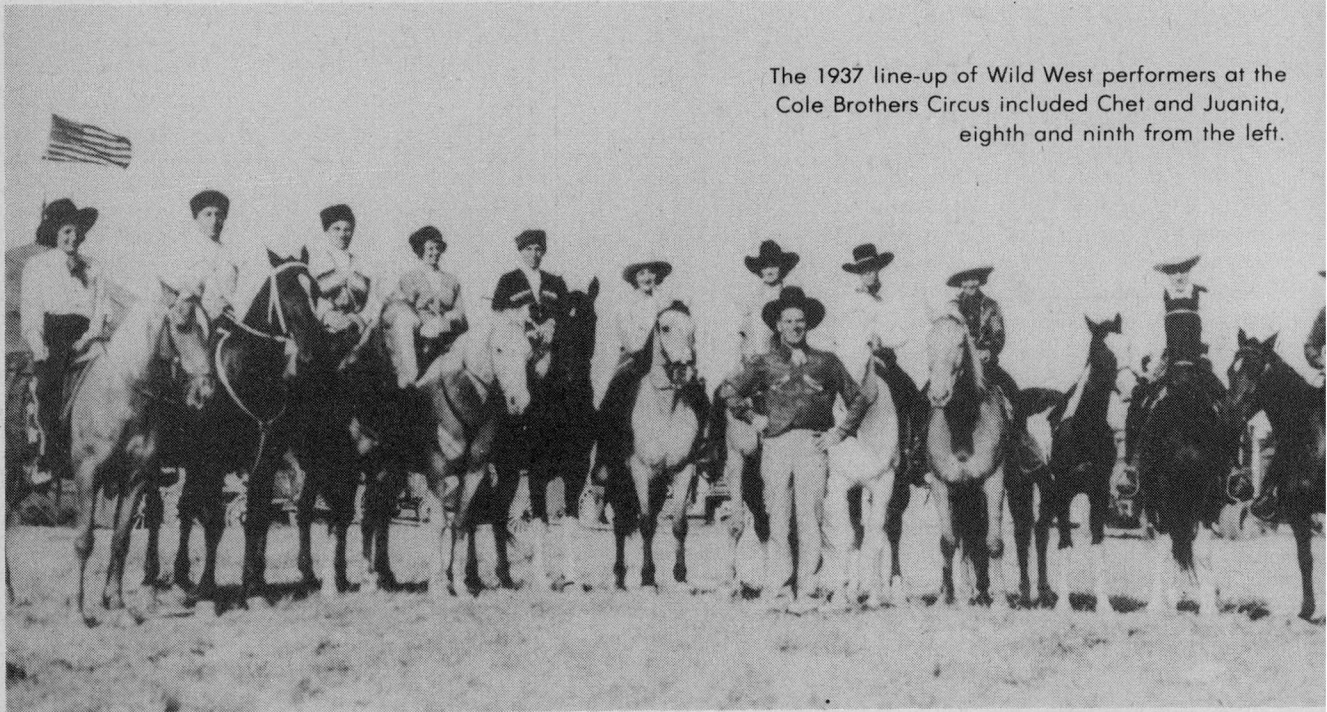
Soon Juanita's mother had introduced her to the rodeo and Wild West people. Juanita knew then and there that her life would be spent in entertainment. During those days of the Great Depression, jobs were hard to find, but Juanita hired on with King's Circus and Wild West Show in 1930. Her mother taught her the tricks of the trade and she soon felt like an employed show girl instead of excess baggage traveling from town





Chet and Juanita were wed during the night show of Centralia, Washington's, \$936 Fair and Rodeo.

Chet and Juanita show great teamwork as they perform the "Tandem Texas Skip."



The 1937 line-up of Wild West performers at the Cole Brothers Circus included Chet and Juanita, eighth and ninth from the left.

to town.

Juanita's first act in show business was with trained goats. With a cracking whip and sharp voice commands, she put the goats through their paces like a professional. When the show was in winter quarters, she and her mother sewed fancy matching wardrobes. Jack King, himself a great roper, had Juanita ride for his fancy horse catches. While breaking in, she also danced with the troupe's Indians and did odd jobs. She always wore a smile, for she was very happy with her new life.

At that time, Juanita was encouraged in her career by some of rodeo's greats. Alice and Marge Greenough were with the King Wild West then. Both retired after becoming world champions, and both are now in the Hall of Fame. Margie Greenough married Heavy Hansen. Their son, Chuck, became a great rodeo clown and bullfighter. The Greenoughs helped Juanita get accustomed to the life of travel. Tommy Crouper, a well-known trick and fancy rider with the King Circus tutored Juanita. She learned the basics from Tommy, but it takes years to become a top trick rider. She never gave up, though, and she eventually became a great performer.

Juanita's mother left the King Show to go to Hollywood and make pictures. Juanita went on to work as a professional in the Boston Gardens Rodeo in 1933, but she, too, finally went to California to be with her mother.

In Hollywood, Juanita hired out to Bill Boren, a contractor who supplied stock to many West Coast rodeos. Her first job was as a jockey riding in flat and relay races. She also joined in with the bull riders, and in 1934 she won a fine gold belt buckle for steer riding.

Some of the larger rodeos that Boren supplied stock for were Salinas, Livermore, and the big Tex Austin rodeo in Los Angeles. It was at the Tex Austin rodeo that Juanita met Chet Howell. Romance soon blossomed. Will Rogers, who was in Los Angeles during the rodeo, thought Chet and Juanita made a handsome pair, and he gave them his blessing. They were offered a lucrative contract to go with a rodeo to Japan. Chet went to the Far East with Frank and Bernice Dean, but Juanita stayed with her mother in the States.

Juanita kissed Chet good-bye and

went back to riding for Bill Boren. But their parting made them even closer. They wrote to each other while they were apart, and it was when Chet returned to the States in 1936 that they were married at the Centralia Rodeo. Juanita's mother had quit riding broncs and married again, so Chet and Juanita went under contract with the Al G. Barnes Circus and Wild West. Juanita recalls those days with fond memories of the great circus clown, Emmet Kelly, who always made her laugh.

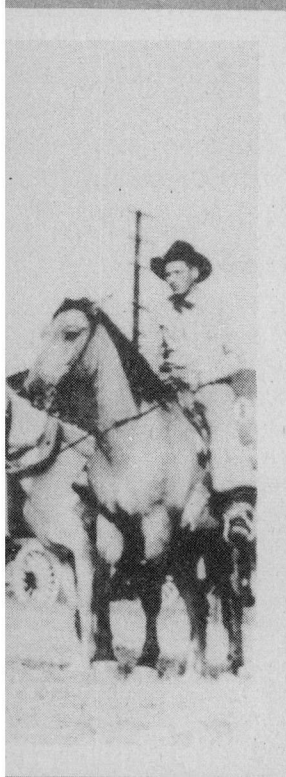
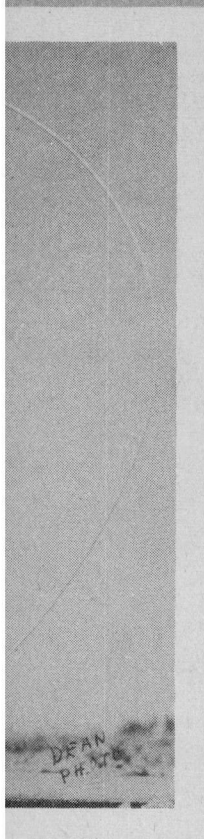
In 1938 the Howells took to the rodeo with a fancy wardrobe and a new matching car and horse trailer. They both had contracts that year to perform at Cheyenne Frontier Days, "The Daddy of 'em All." Juanita won second money in trick riding and Chet won a second in fancy horse catches with his maguey ropes.

AFTER PEARL HARBOR, the rationing of gasoline and tires cut down on travel. With money they had won in the rodeo, Chet and Juanita had bought a nice home and forty acres near Phoenix, where they settled in to see what would happen with the war. Chet and Juanita both ended up hiring out at the quartermaster depot in Ogden, Utah. Chet put aside his roping talents to spend his days working in the warehouse; Juanita ran a teletype machine in the office. She soon found herself on horseback, patrolling on guard duty at the depot. Chet was finally drafted and shipped to the South Pacific. But he took his maguey ropes along and practiced his tricks daily in the jungle.

When Chet was honorably discharged, he and Juanita both returned to the life they loved. They were well-known and in demand, so their act was widely booked.

The rodeo world was saddened on December 24, 1973, Juanita's birthday, when a heart attack took Chet Howell. With her home decorated for the holidays, Juanita was struck with grief. Chet will always be remembered by his many rodeo and soldier pals.

These days Juanita stays active in her home that was paid for with her and Chet's rodeo skills. She is now a nominee for induction into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame in Hereford, Texas.





Wild Garden Sass

By BARBARA BLACKBURN

A mess of dandelion greens on the table meant a spring tonic, a blood purifier, and a cure for heart trouble and rheumatism.

When it was springtime in the Rockies—or anywhere west of the Mississippi—it was time to gather wild edible plants. For the forager the list was endless: dandelion leaves, sheep sorrel, oxalis, miner's lettuce, and poke salad. Mountain men called those early greens "wild garden sass." Cultivated greens that appeared early in the spring were just "garden sass."

Poke salad was the most popular green, according to readers of TRUE WEST like Ardis Shelton, whose parents always looked for the plants of poke salad to come out in the spring. They were cooked in grease, usually with onions, just like the other "garden sass."

In the spring the cattail forager found

cattail hearts available in extensive patches in marshes. Bill Newton's great-grandmother liked them best fried with eggs and onions. When gathering cattails, she grasped the stem as far down as she could reach and pulled it free from the rhizome. She peeled off the two outer leaves to expose the heart. Then she continued to peel off the other outer leaves to obtain the rest of the cattail hearts. Cattail cooks could follow the favorite method of cooking "wild garden sass" with onions in pork fat.

Dandelion greens flavored with pork and onions meant more than good eating. A mess of dandelion greens on the table meant a spring tonic, a blood purifier, and a cure for heart trouble and rheumatism. When Carolyn Stewart's

mamma cooked her cornmeal, onion, and bean bread in the spring, she put in some dandelion greens. Besides the leaves of dandelions, the flowers were used for wine, and the roots for coffee.

So it was with poke. Besides the greens, the berries were sought. The poke berries went into pies, jellies, immature and poor quality wines (where they improved the color), and medicines; they were used to treat disorders ranging from rheumatism to ringworms. As a potherb served after thorough cooking, poke shoots have a mildly laxative quality which accounts for their traditional popularity as an old-fashioned spring tonic used to cleanse the body, revive the blood, and restore health and vigor. The purplish juice was once used

as ink and as a fabric dye. Pokeweed roots were prepared as a salve to treat itchy skin, inflammation, and a variety of other disorders.

The young poke shoots were par-boiled, which eliminated the toxins. A common folk belief held that cooking poke with lots of bacon drippings neutralized the "poison." Some cooks added a pinch of baking soda to the cooking water to intensify the color, but that removed some of the vitamin C and made them mushy.

Along with the healthful potherbs of early spring, molasses was another spring tonic. A mixture of sulphur and molasses was a must for every household. It purified the blood and revived the system after a winter's starchy diet. A little molasses and vinegar dressed certain greens or garden sass.

The best tonic was considered to be sassafras tea. It just wasn't spring without sassafras tea, made from the roots of the sassafras tree. As soon as the ground thawed the digging of sassafras root began so that everyone could enjoy a stimulating, aromatic drink. Both roots and barks were cleaned and put into the teapot to make the most popular of all wild teas. Boiled in water the tea became bright red. It provided the body with a good spring cleaning. The early pioneers always kept

a pot of sassafras roots simmering on the back of the stove. The dark concentrate was diluted with hot water to make a palatable drink, sometimes creamed and sweetened.

Leftover sassafras tea made jelly, using the same procedure for making mint jelly. Sassafras root sometimes flavored old-fashioned apple butter. The powdered sassafras leaf made a fine herbal seasoning and thickener for soups and stews.

Spring greens, cultivated and wild, are waiting to be picked!

Recipes

DORIS CURTIN'S OREGON GARDEN SASS

- 2 slices bacon or salt pork
- ½ cup chopped onions
- Tender center of young cattail stalks, cut in ½-inch pieces
- Gob of bear grease or butter
- Seasoning to taste

Brown a couple of slices of bacon or pork in an iron skillet; add the onions, and simmer until the onions are partially cooked. Add water to cover one or two inches.

Add cattails. Let cook slowly until tender. Thicken, if desired, with grated cattail root. Add fat or butter (if you can't catch a bear). Season.

DANDELION AND CORNMEAL FRITTERS

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 egg, beaten
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 3 tablespoons onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup dandelion greens, chopped
- Fat, oil, or lard

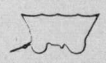
In a large bowl stir together cornmeal, flour, and soda. In a small bowl stir together the egg, buttermilk, onion, and chopped greens. Stir the liquid ingredients into the cornmeal mixture, just till the dry ingredients are moistened.

In a large skillet melt enough fat to fry the fritters. Fat should be ½-inch deep in skillet. Drop the batter by tablespoonsful into the hot fat, spreading it slightly to make a patty. Fry till golden, 2-3 minutes, turning once. Drain and serve.

SASSAFRAS APPLE BUTTER

- 6 pounds tart apples
- 5 cups apple cider or apple juice
- 1 cup sassafras concentrate
- 3 cups sugar or molasses
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves

Core and quarter apples; cook with cider in a sturdy saucepan till soft, about 30 minutes. Press through food mill. Boil gently, with sassafras concentrate, 30 minutes; stir often. (If you don't make your own, sassafras concentrate is available at many health food counters.) Stir in sugar and spices. Cook and stir over low heat till sugar dissolves. Boil gently, stirring often, till desired thickness, about 1 hour. Pour into hot jars; adjust lids. Process in boiling water bath 10 minutes. Makes 4 pints.



TRUE WEST Recipe for March

Bannock is a Scottish term for a substantial round cake or bread baked on a griddle. In America, pioneers made bannocks with cornmeal. Cowboys and trappers carried bannocks as staples. As a boy Paul E. Brunner, Box 833, Valier, Montana 59486, tended cattle in the mountains. He and his fellow cowhands made bannocks for breakfast and supper.

BANNOCKS

- 2 pound sack of flour
- 1 cup sweet milk or sour milk
- 2 tablespoons baking powder or 1 tablespoon baking soda
- ½ cup melted fat

Remove half the flour from the sack and set aside, leaving a hollow in the center of the remaining flour. Stir milk, leavening, and fat together, and slowly pour into the hollow of flour in sack. Slowly stir in the remaining flour until quite thick. Place the dough in a greased frying pan and cook on top of the stove until done on the bottom. Flip and bake on the other side.

Western Publications will pay \$5 for each original recipe published. Of special interest are old family recipes dating from the Old West period (1830-1910). Barbara Blackburn, Western Publications cookery specialist, will judge recipes according to interest, preparation ease, originality, and authenticity. Send to Barbara Blackburn, Western Publications, P.O. Box 2107, Stillwater, OK 74076. Recipe copies cannot be returned.



Brown's Park Scandals

THE BASSETT WOMEN. By Grace McClure. Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, Scott Quandrangle, Athens, OH 45701. 1985. \$25.00 hardbound; \$10.95 softcover.

Any history writer who can announce that one of her subjects was a eunuch and then describe how he became one has done her research. And Grace McClure has done just that. She spent many summers camped in and near Brown's Park, a remote valley straddling the borders of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, where she dug up everything she could on the pioneer Bassett family. The Bassett home gave refuge to a veritable who's who of western outlaws, among them Butch Cassidy, the Sundance Kid, Elzy Lay, Matt Warner, and many lesser rustlers. Too, the Bassetts were among the leaders in the cattle barons-versus-homesteaders wars. The Bassetts sided with the homesteaders.

McClure's book focuses on Ann Bassett, who became known as "Queen Ann"; her sister, Josie; and their domineering mother, Elizabeth. The only male to get much attention is Elizabeth's husband, Herb, who emerges as something of a Milquetoast.

What makes the book so delectable are the lovingly detailed scandals involving Brown's Park pioneers. J.S. Hoy, rancher and one of the Park's most famous residents, was the eunuch, probably castrated by a fellow student when he was living in Paris. McClure thinks this helps explain why Hoy was a constant complainer, a whiner who got worse as he got older.

McClure is at her best when dealing with the intimacies of the Bassett family. Occasionally when discussing the Wild Bunch, she goes astray. David Lant, who escaped from the Utah prison with Harry Tracy, was not an embezzler, as she says, but was sent to prison for robbing a dry goods store. And the "take" from the Montpelier, Idaho, bank robbery in 1896 was more like \$7,000 than the \$16,000 she reports.

The errors are few, though, and from

the opening sentence on, it is apparent the author did a tremendous amount of research, made difficult because people want to keep secret the kinds of things she discloses. Only a tenacious researcher who stays on the scene for months, as McClure did, and yet can look at events from the outside, as she was able to, can uncover that kind of information.

—Jim Dullenty
Ft. Benton, MT

Firsthand Recollections

THE LUCIA HOLMES DIARY, 1875-1876, THE HOO DOO WAR YEARS. By Lucia Holmes. The Mason County Historical Commission, Box 524, Mason, TX 76856. \$6.00 + \$1.50 postage and handling.

It is a rare event when a book providing first hand, unvarnished recollections of the frontier reaches print. Such a book is *The Lucia Holmes Diary, 1875-1876, The Hoo Doo War Years*. First brought to the attention of the public by C. L. Sonnichsen in *Ten Texas Feuds*, as the *Diary of Mrs. Henry M. Holmes*, the Lucia Holmes diary has at last been printed in its entirety by the Mason County Historical Commission.

Lucia Sheldon Holmes was born at Newport, Rhode Island, on February 20, 1840. In 1865 she married Henry M. Holmes, a lawyer and former Union soldier. The couple settled in Mason in 1874, the year before the violence of the bitter Mason County War swept central Texas. She died in Augusta, Maine, on November 26, 1918.

Mrs. Holmes's memoirs are historically significant. From February 1, 1875, through the end of 1876 she kept detailed entries revealing much about the frontier. Through her words readers can relive the horror of the Bacchus lynching in which three men were hurled into eternity. Mrs. Holmes also reveals new information on such men as Scott Cooley and John Ringo.

The diary, however, is far more than firsthand recollections of violence. Through Holmes's words one sees uncolored by time the day-to-day dealings of men and women. This is an exceptionally valuable book, amply supplemented by pages clarifying the identities of the people mentioned. It could well be one of the most important books ever published on Texas.

—Dave Johnson
Indianapolis, Indiana

Eminent Historian

TURNING POINTS IN EL PASO, TEXAS. By Leon C. Metz. Mangan Books, 6245 Snowheights Court, El Paso, TX 79912. \$19.95.

From 1983 through 1985, Leon Metz wrote a series of articles for *El Paso Magazine*, a publication of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce. The articles form the nucleus of his latest book, *Turning Points in El Paso, Texas*. Each of the fifteen brief chapters describes a crucial episode in the evolution of one of the Southwest's most historic communities.

The chapters are arranged as nearly as possible in chronological order. Three deal with one aspect or another of the Rio Grande, including an enlightening treatment of the long-lasting Chamizal controversy; two explore decisive events at Fort Bliss, the subject of a previous Metz book. Other topics include the initial Spanish presence, Civil War activities in the area, the Salt War, the county seat conflict, prostitution, and Anson Mills, the contentious but dynamic visionary who named and did much to build El Paso.

My favorite chapters included "Lonesome Whistle" ("El Paso as it presently exists would be impossible to imagine had it not been for the railroads" [p. 51]), "The Struggle for Law and Order" (featuring the lethal

(continued on page 63)

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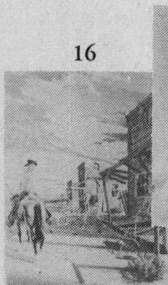
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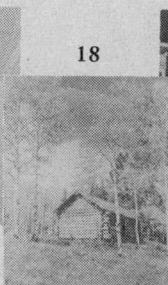
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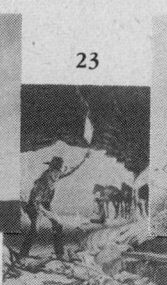
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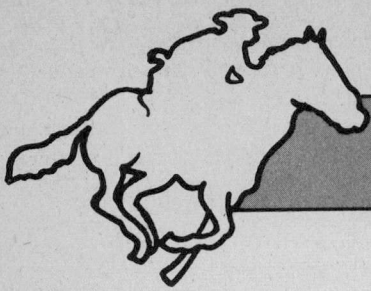
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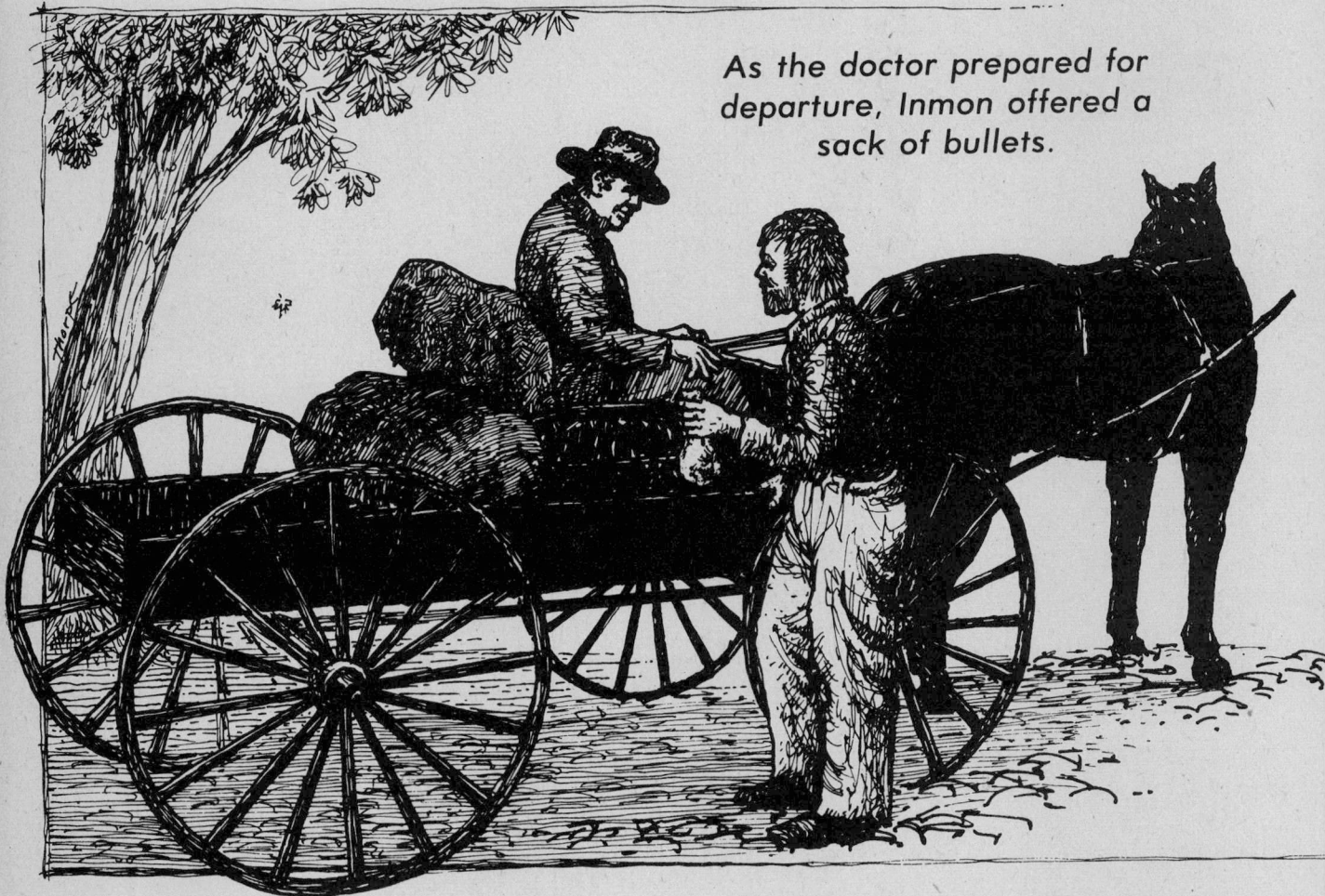
Wild Old Days

True adventures from a bygone era

Tobe Inmon's Silver Bullets

By W.C. JAMESON

Illustration by JIM THORPE



As the doctor prepared for departure, Inmon offered a sack of bullets.

Dr. Benjamin Martin was the only doctor in the little town of Dover, Arkansas, during the first decade of the twentieth century. Much of his time was spent traveling to outlying farms and settlements treating the infirm and delivering babies. Tobe Inmon banged on Martin's office door one day during the fall of 1908 and asked the doctor to follow him out to his Mocassin Creek homestead. Inmon wanted Martin to examine his youngest son, who had con-

tracted a severe fever. The doctor was packed and ready to leave in minutes. Inmon led the way astride a half-starved mule while Dr. Martin followed along in his carriage. Dr. Martin had never had any dealings with the Inmon family before and had known of them only by reputation.

As he drove his carriage the twelve miles to Mocassin Creek Valley, he reflected on what he knew of the poor family that had migrated to that remote

section of the southern Ozark Mountains. Inmon had been a resident of Kentucky, and like many of the hill people there during the last days of the nineteenth century, he was poor, uneducated, and used to scraping out a meager living from the land and subsisting on very little. In that environment several clans evolved and each became very protective of the parcels of land they dominated. Those attitudes led to feuds and violence and, often-

times, death.

Tobe Inmon grew a little corn on the thin soil of the Appalachian hillsides and raised a few hogs and chickens. He did not get along well with his neighbors and earned a reputation as a recluse, needing and wanting the company of no one. One day Inmon was accused of stealing a neighbor's livestock and, amid threats on his life, he packed his few belongings, loaded his wife and two sons into a wagon, and left Kentucky.

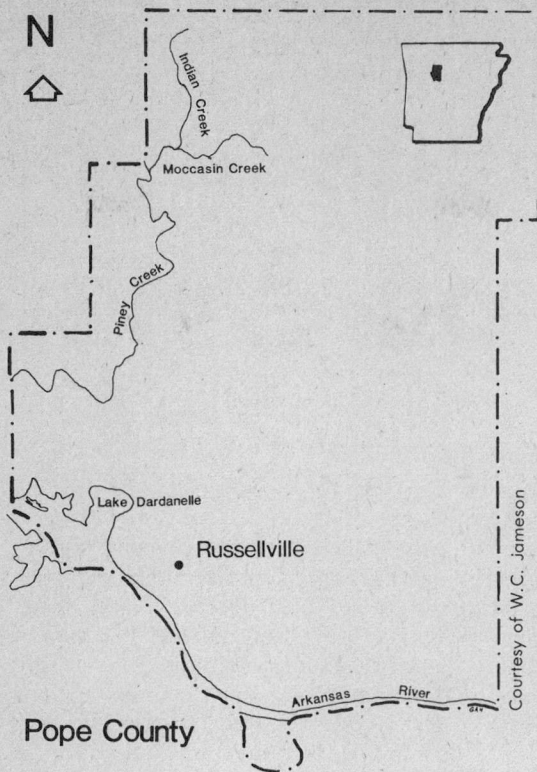
At that time, history records a significant westward migration of the poor and landless from the eastern states of Virginia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Many were lured by the promise of free and plentiful land in Texas and Arkansas. After weeks of traveling, the Inmon family arrived in Moccasin Creek Valley some twenty miles north of the Arkansas River in Pope County, Arkansas. The valley closely resembled the region they recently vacated. Feeling at home, they settled in. Tobe Inmon constructed a crude log cabin, built some pens for his stock, and began to farm the creek bottoms. His nearest neighbor was over a mile away.

Occasionally Inmon took some chickens or a hog into Dover, the nearest community of any size, and traded for flour, sugar, and coffee. The residents of Dover considered Inmon a curious figure. He rarely spoke. When he did, he was surly and hostile. His clothes were ragged and torn, and he was a dirty, wretched figure. He preferred to conduct his business with haste and leave town immediately, never lingering or seeking any social contact. On the few occasions he brought his family into town, they too were in a most sorry condition. Those who chanced by Inmon's place remarked on the squalor in which the family lived, claiming the accommodations were not much better than a hog pen.

Into that environment rode Dr. Martin. He, too, was appalled by the family's filthy living conditions.

Dr. Martin treated the young boy for two days until the fever finally broke and he was out of danger. As the doctor prepared his horse and carriage for departure, Inmon approached and offered to pay for his services with a small canvas sack of bullets. Dr. Martin was often paid for his work with items other than money. At the time, bullets were scarce, and most people were glad to get them when they could. Dr. Martin, an

March 1986



enthusiastic hunter and sportsman, accepted the payment gratefully. Inmon explained to the doctor that he had made the bullets himself from lead he extracted from "an old mine over the ridge and not too far from the cabin." Dr. Martin examined them, found them to be well made, and thanked Inmon.

On arriving at his home late that afternoon, the doctor placed the sack of bullets on a shelf in his study, intending to use them on his next deer hunt. Over the next few weeks, however, the surgeon was busier than ever treating the ill, and his autumn deer hunt had to be postponed. Time passed and he gradually forgot about the sack of Tobe Inmon's bullets lying on the shelf.

A full two years went by before Dr. Martin remembered the bullets. Then, readying himself for a deer hunt, he found the bullets and placed them on a desk in his study. That evening, while reading, the doctor absently picked up one of the shells and turned it over and over in his fingers. Presently he scratched at the tip of the shell and noticed a peculiar color to the metal. On a hunch, Dr. Martin postponed his deer hunt the following morning and made arrangements to visit Russellville, a larger settlement a few miles south of Dover. In Russellville, he had the bullets assayed. To his astonishment, they were almost pure silver.

On returning to Dover that afternoon, Dr. Martin prepared for a journey to the

Inmon homestead the next day. He planned to convince the poor farmer to show him where his so-called lead mine was located. But when he arrived at the Inmon cabin, it was deserted. The site had apparently been unoccupied for several months. From the nearest neighbor he learned that the Inmon family had packed up and left for an unknown destination in Texas the previous spring.

Dr. Martin climbed up the elongated hill just beyond the Inmon cabin and wandered through the woods inspecting every outcrop he encountered for any evidence of mining. He searched until darkness prevented him from continuing and he finally returned to Dover. The next morning, bright and early, he outfitted himself with camping gear and provisions to last several days, loaded it into the carriage, and returned to Moccasin Creek Valley. He set up camp in the old abandoned cabin and

spent the next two and one-half weeks combing the area in search of the lost mine. When he finally ran out of food, he returned to Dover only to make plans for an even more extended search for the silver.

Time and again Dr. Martin returned to the valley in search of Tobe Inmon's mine. Time and again he was disappointed. Weeks and months of searching turned into years, and over time Dr. Martin's patients found another doctor to treat them.

Eventually, Dr. Martin ran out of money. He had to sell his home and land to finance his continuing search for the elusive silver he believed was located in the hills just beyond the old cabin. Finally, broken and disheartened, the doctor moved to Russellville to stay with relatives. His health deteriorated rapidly and he died within months.

On learning of Tobe Inmon's silver bullets, several Dover residents picked up the search. During the years following Dr. Martin's death, many treasure hunters found ancient tools in Moccasin Creek Valley. The tools' Spanish origin gave rise to the belief that the early Spanish explorers in Arkansas had been actively mining the region. But aside from the old tools, nothing else could be found. Tobe Inmon's silver remains as elusive today as it was to Dr. Martin seventy-five years ago.



How Seascapes Came To Be on Arizona Currency

John Marshall's discovery of gold at John Sutter's mill in 1848, initiated a mass migration west. California soon became the most populous state in the nation. Iron rails were laid to connect the West with the rest of the country. The Treasury Department built a mint in San Francisco. And the desert region of what is now Arizona was to build a merchant fleet.

The steamboats of the Arizona navy hauled little gold, but the California strikes led prospectors to pursue other elements in the sands and mountains of Arizona. The cost of shipping mining supplies overland from California exceeded \$500 per ton—forty cents per pound! Captain George A. Johnson, a former Great Lakes seaman who had joined the rush to the gold fields, thought he had a solution. In 1852, his wood-burning, sixty-five-foot sidewheel-

By ED ROCHETTE

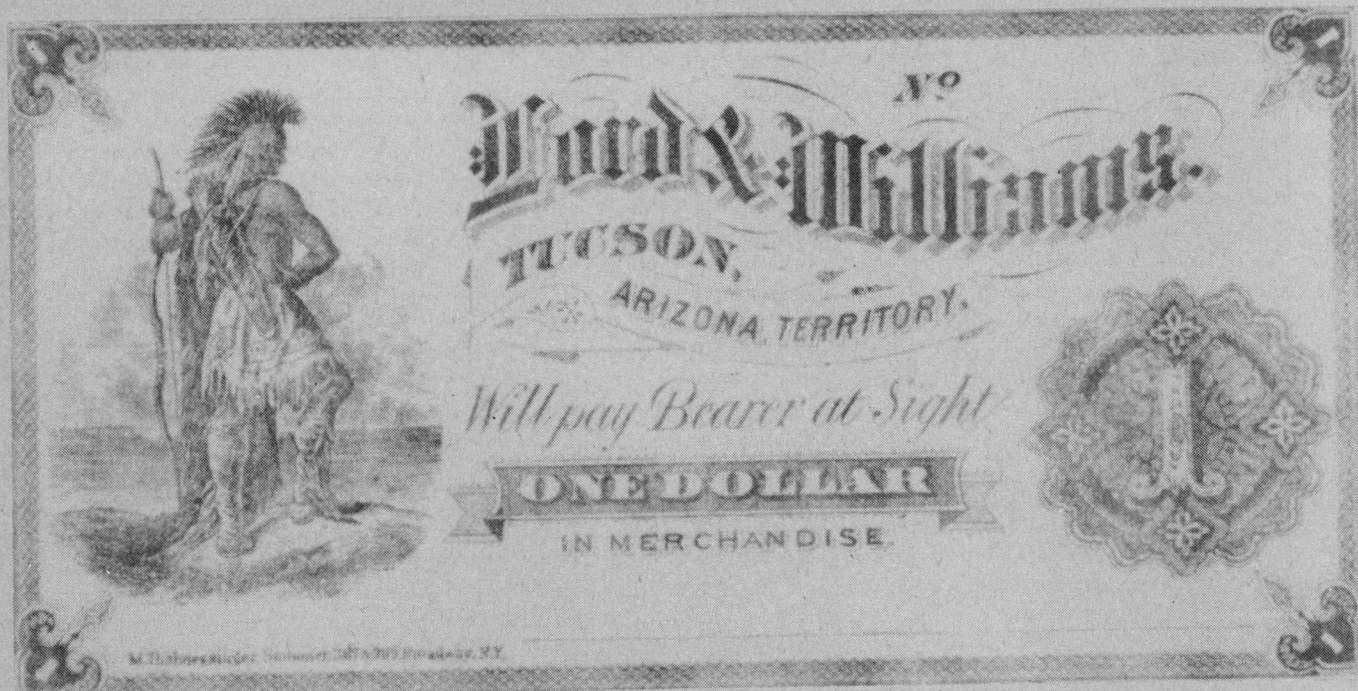
er, the "Uncle Sam," carried piecemeal over the desert and assembled on site, chugged its way upstream from the mouth of the Colorado to Fort Yuma. The trip took fourteen days. The return down river took fifteen hours.

For a year the sturdy little "Uncle Sam" plied the river trade, but the dry climate and hot summer sun took their toll and shrank the wooden boards above the waterline. When a desert sailor removed a bilge plug, hoping to let the water swell the planks watertight again, the rush of water prevented the plug's replacement and the "Uncle Sam" settled to the river's bottom.

A year later, Johnson was back on the Colorado with the "General Jessup." Measuring 104 feet, it carried fifty tons of cargo. Before the rails reached Yuma

in the 1870s, the Arizona merchant fleet had grown to become the territory's largest commercial enterprise.

But, this is not the story of the fire eating, smoke breathing paddlewheelers plying the river. It is the possible explanation of harbor scenes found on Arizona currencies. Most of southern Arizona became a part of the United States through the Gadsen Purchase of 1854, but, with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants, it commanded little attention. Arizona was thought of merely as Apache Country, a remote, wild western half of New Mexico Territory. It was forgotten until the South claimed it as part of the Confederacy in 1862, a claim that would have fewer than thirty days' validity. At Picacho Pass, a battle dubbed "the farthest west of the Civil War," the Union reclaimed Arizona. An Act of Congress established the Territory of Arizona in 1863 and Prescott



The fact that Tucson was far from the river ports of the Colorado did not deter the printers of private currency from including the scene of an Indian overlooking a harbor. They probably had heard the stories of the great Arizona merchant fleet.

BOOKS

(continued from page 58)

Dallas Stoudenmire, subject of another Metz book), and "The Battle of Juarez," in which Metz adroitly clarifies the maze of events and individuals involved in the dramatic actions of 1911. One wishes that he would write a book on this bloody episode.

Turning Points is illustrated with excellent photographs and maps. There is an index and a helpful discussion of sources for each chapter. Because each chapter relates a brief but self-contained episode, there is an inevitable repetition of facts from one chapter to another. The book thus is ideal for consumption in small doses, when reading time is limited. Indeed, *Turning Points* serves as a tantalizing introduction to the fascinating story of El Paso, a city with which the author clearly has conducted a long and deep love affair.

An eminent western historian, Metz is past president of the Western Writers of America and the author of six previous books. It is illuminating to learn which events he regards as major turning points in the crowded, colorful history of El Paso. Metz's work always is highly readable and reliable, and he turns a descriptive phrase deftly. For example, he writes that revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magón "had enough real and imagined grievances to warrant psychotherapy for a dozen unhappy zealots." *Turning Points* will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of western buffs, students of frontier history, and other admirers of Leon Metz.

—Bill O'Neal
Carthage, Texas

Frontier Photographer

EDWARD S. CURTIS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SHADOW CATCHER. By Barbara A. Davis. *Chronicle Books. One Hallidie Plaza, San Francisco, CA 94102. \$45.00.*

Most students of the American West and particularly of the American Indian are familiar with Edward S. Curtis and his monumental twenty-volume work, *The North American Indian*. But few appreciate the depth of the man as explored in this volume, and probably even fewer recognize Curtis for his photographic artistry which went far beyond the mere recording of ethnological studies.

Barbara Davis and Chronicle Books deserve the highest praise for producing

a book that is at once informative and handsome. From the heavy gloss dust jacket, with its dramatic photo of an aged Geronimo, to the duotone reproduction of Curtis' monochromatic works, this is simply a magnificent book, handsomely designed with high quality paper and excellent typography. A large book, 12"×19", it is the epitome of "coffee table art" in the best sense of the term.

The photographs are incomparable, with a dramatic sense of composition that would be envied by most contemporary photographers and must have been practically unknown in Curtis' day, when photography was still so new. Readers who know and appreciate Curtis' Indian studies may be less interested in the samples of his Hollywood work, but those, too, are striking, particularly the blue-toned silver prints and the delicately tinted photos of copper gravure plates. Also of interest are the examples of Curtis' dramatic and original studio portraiture. Over two hundred images are reproduced in this book, thirty percent of them never before published.

If the photographic reproductions are arresting, the 100-page biographical essay is spell-binding. Curtis was a complex, driven man whose life was so totally absorbed by his study that he alienated many in his constant search for financial underwriting and sacrificed his family life. But his project was supported by such influential people as Theodore Roosevelt and primarily underwritten by the financier J. Pierpont Morgan.

Davis presents an underappreciated Curtis, claiming the importance of his art has not yet been assessed. Certainly, his monumental study enjoyed only brief publicity and then sank into obscurity, to collect dust on the shelves of private collections and rare book libraries rather than reaching the general public for whom it was intended. This book may do much to correct that injustice and bring to light the awe-inspiring work of this unusual man. An appreciation of Curtis' imagery by photo historian Beaumont Newhall and an essay on the contemporary relevance of Curtis' research by Bill Holm, ethnologist and curator at the Thomas Burke Memorial Washington State Museum, complete an unusual and impressive book.

—Judy Alter
Fort Worth, Texas

became the capital in 1864.

By the time Arizona entered the Union, the days of private bank issues and obsolete currency had passed. New, government-issued paper money circulated—but not in towns like Tucson. Just as entrepreneurs built a merchant fleet to combat high traffic tariffs, others began issuing their own money to combat the shortage of government circulating medium.

Two such enterprisers were Dr. Charles H. Lord and W.W. Williams. They immigrated to Tucson at the end of the Civil War and in 1867 opened the Lord & Williams Company, suppliers to the needs of the growing community of Tucson, where the capital had been moved. Soon they expanded the business to offer limited banking services. Their company became a United States Depository for federal funds, and for good measure, served as the United States Post Office.

Although business prospered, it was handicapped by a shortage of currency, a handicap readily overcome by ordering scrip from the printing firm of Thalmessinger of New York City. The firm, unfamiliar with the area but cognizant of the publicity given the Arizona merchant fleet, selected a stock engraving of an Indian overlooking a harbor to decorate the five-cent, ten-cent, twenty-five-cent, fifty-cent, and one-dollar notes printed for Lord and Williams.

Business reversals caused the company to close its doors in 1881, with Lord heading for the Mexican border and Williams staying behind to face creditors. Williams made good and remained a respected member of the community. The notes of Lord and Williams eventually disappeared, and only one or two examples remain today. With their value to collectors and historians, they command even richer premiums than the stories of gold they recount.

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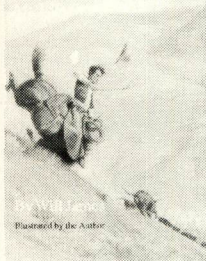


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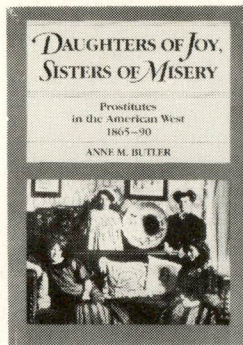
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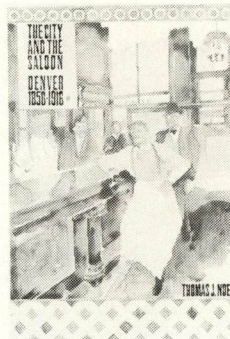
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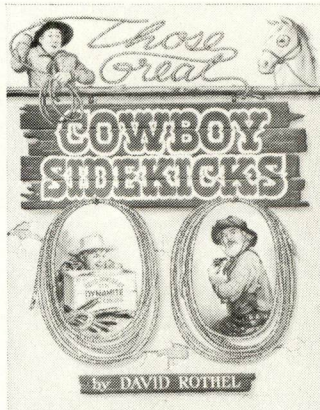
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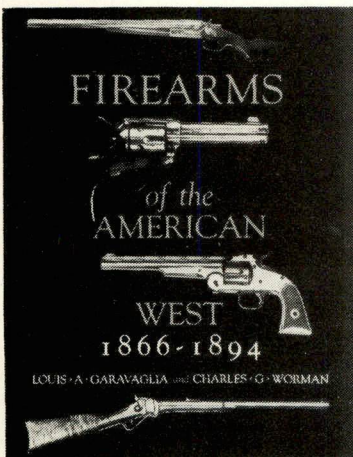
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