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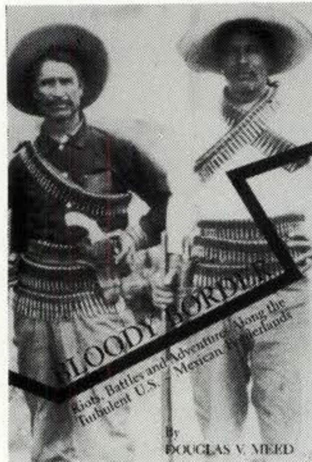

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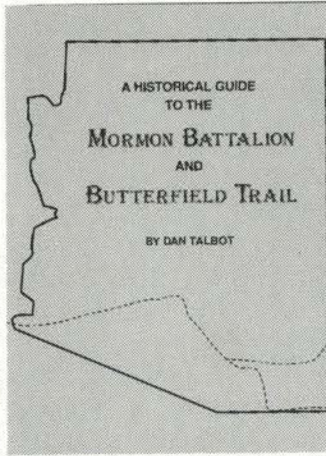

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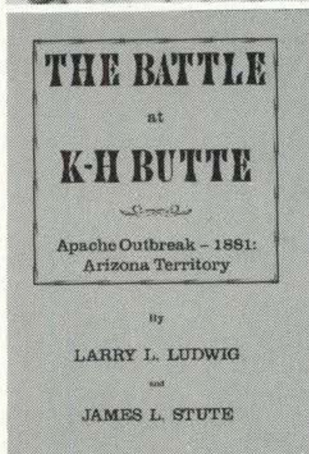

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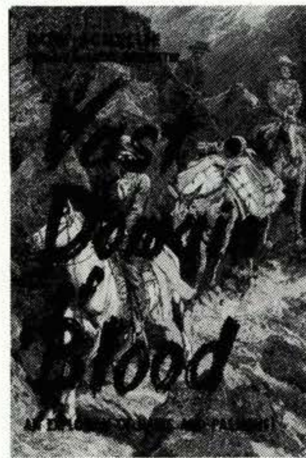

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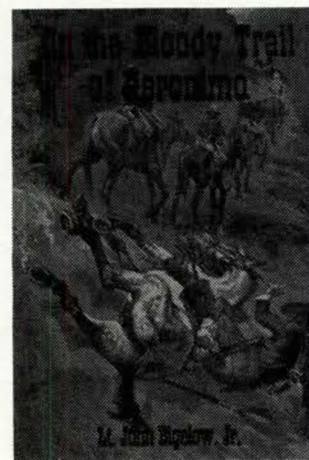

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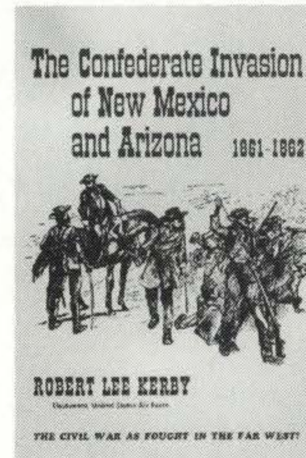

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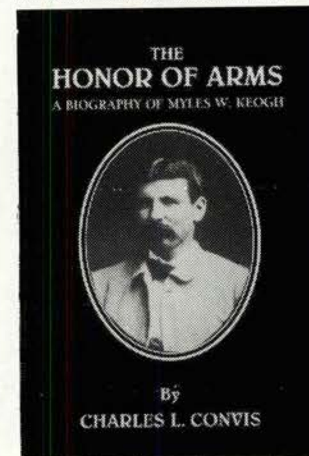

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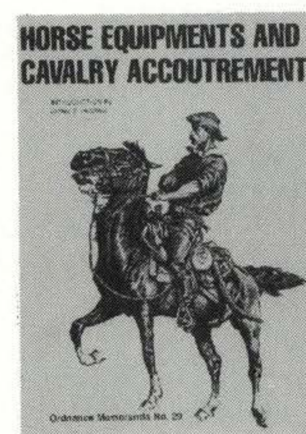

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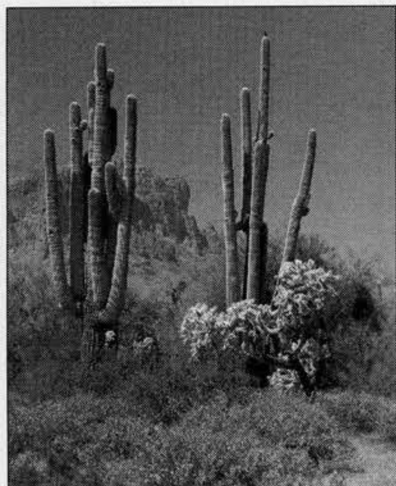

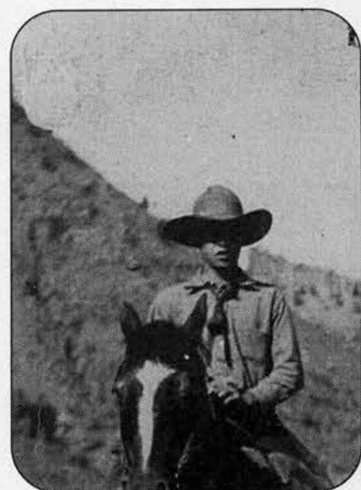

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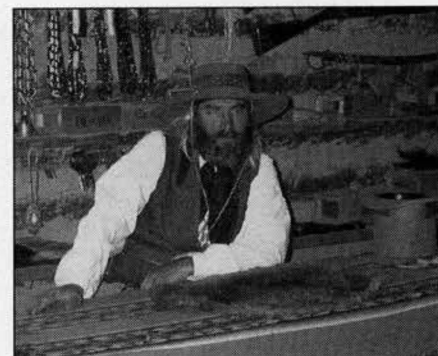

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FROM THE EDITOR

Howdy, folks!

I wouldn't want you all to get the wrong impression, so I'll start off my fulminations in this issue with the disclaimer that I don't ordinarily read the *Wall Street Journal.* But a copy of it did happen to float across my desk this past week on account of the person who floated it thought I'd likely be interested in one of the articles contained therein.

I was. It seems that the folks who own private land here in the West have started closing roads that run through their property to public lands—wilderness areas, forests, lakes, and such like. In the process they have turned what used to be a half-hour drive to your favorite fishing hole into a twelve-hour horseback ride and have stretched what was once a ninety-minute hike to that prime campsite into a three-days' trek. In some cases, the first feller has even shut the next one out from his own property, which happens to lie just over the hill or around the bend.

Time was, and not so very long ago, that chaining off a road to either public or private land would have been considered downright uncivilized. In the West's earliest beginnings, of course, cattlemen did essentially the same thing by controlling water rights, then by erecting barbed wire fences. Farmers likewise fenced their crops. Through it all, plenty of often violent troubles resulted. But once things settled down and ownership of the land was fairly well established, Westerners began a long tradition of allowing open access to roads through private property to public lands.

In exchange, the people who were allowed that access respected the rights of the property owner. They drove or hiked or rode horseback through the property, minding their own business and stopping only to open and *close* gates. They didn't litter, vandalize, steal, or use bad language to women and children. It was the code of the West.

Now all that is changed. Wealthy capitalists from the coasts have discovered the Rocky Mountain West and are buying it up, blocking it off, turning it into their own private refuge from the havoc they have wrought in the cities. Long-time ranchers have responded by shutting down roads through their property as well. And you can't hardly blame any of them, because if they don't, their land is vandalized and littered and their possesions are stolen. The whole issue will only be resolved after countless cases slog their way through the legal quagmire that has become America.

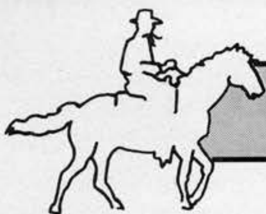
In the meantime, you can imagine the emotions the controversy has stirred. The newcomers are mad at the vandals; the old-timers are mad at the newcomers; and the average person who just wants to do a little fishing or camping on land that theoretically belongs to him or her as a taxpayer is mad at everybody. Chains have been cut, threats have been made, shots have been fired—the usual Wild West stuff that breaks out whenever we get riled about the one thing that everyone who lives in the West takes seriously—the land.

I'm just the lowly editor of a western history magazine, and I don't pretend to have a solution to the problem. But I do have an observation. To my mind, much the same conflict began some five hundred years ago, when a whole lot of people from another continent arrived here, introduced the concept of property rights, and started fencing off or otherwise denying the natives access to what had until then been tribal lands.

When those interlopers realized that the vast and limitless spaces of the new world were not so vast and limitless after all, they tried to save what was left of them through a system of national and state parks, forests, rangelands, grasslands, wilderness areas, etc. All of those millions of acres have become, in effect, America's tribal lands. Now, once again, a bunch of outsiders are showing up, changing the rules that we natives have lived by for as long as we can remember, and denying us access to the mountains and forests and lakes and streams where we have traditionally hunted and fished and played and communed with Mother Earth.

And now that we're the Indians, we don't like it.

John Joerschke



Wild Bill, Tall Bull, and Tall Tales

R. Joshua Sherman's delightful essay, "The Bugler—Unsung Hero!" (*True West*, November 1993),ends with an anecdote about a bugler who, in the heat of combat, temporarily forgot the "charge." That incident occurred (as Sherman says) in 1869, when Major Eugene Carr led the Fifth Cavalry and other troops against the Cheyenne chief, Tall Bull.

Buffalo Bill Cody, then a guide for the Fifth Cavalry, later embellished that story in his 1879 autobiography. According to Cody, when the bugler "forgot the notes," Carr's quartermaster, Lieutenant Edward Hayes, seized the bugle "and sounded the charge himself in clear and distinct notes."

This is probably one of Cody's tall stories, but true or false, the yarn has a point—which Cody does not reveal. Edward Mortimer Hayes (1842–1912) had enlisted in 1855 as a twelve-year-old "bugle boy." (Perhaps "drummer boy" would be more accurate.) Those Fifth Cavalrymen who read Cody's book in 1879 must have enjoyed his version of the delayed bugle call. Some of them may even have known whether or not it was true.—*Robert D. Pepper, Palo Alto, California.*

Editor's Note: Glad you enjoyed Mr. Sherman's article! Like the bugler who "disremembered" the charge, we "disremembered" to include Mr. Sherman's byline with the article, though it was in the table of contents. Our apologies to him for the oversight, and our thanks to him for an interesting article on an overlooked aspect of the Indian Wars cavalry.

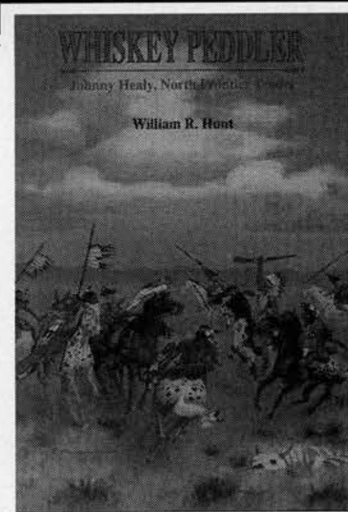
The Lost Tribe

The caption with the photo that accompanied Kathleen Brown's article, "Massacre Site Is Overlooked," on the Sand Creek Massacre ("Western Roundup," *True West*,

Whiskey Peddler

Johnny Healy, North Frontier Trader

William R. Hunt



Though volumes of raw material about Johnny Healy's years in Montana, Idaho, and Alberta in the mid-nineteenth century have accumulated in historical societies and library archives, his story has never been fully told until now. As a miner, sheriff, whiskey peddler, and buffalo robe trader, Johnny was among those who displaced the Indians and destroyed their way of life. Nevertheless, this "Merchant Prince" helped usher a new civilization into the West, before the challenge of new adventures drew him to Alaska in 1885, where the enterprising trader supplied the needs of Yukon-bound miners. Quick to win and quick to lose, Healy eventually ended up financially destitute but among the richest of all men in frontier experiences.

His story is told here in rich, vivid detail by historian Bill Hunt, who spent years researching and writing about this consummate frontiersman so that we might understand something of his life and times.

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November 1993) states incorrectly that more than one hundred Cheyennes and Apaches were killed there. The Indians present were Cheyennes under Black Kettle and some Arapahoes led by Chief Left Hand. No Apaches were present at the Sand Creek Massacre.—*Ted Mains, Cottonwood, Arizona.*

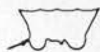
Editor's Note: Thanks, pard, for the correction. Our brains said "Arapahoes," but our fingers typed "Apaches." And it was a good thing for the Apaches that they weren't there.

Cherokee Strip Memories

I do wish you could give the 1893 Cherokee Strip land run greater coverage. My father, W.C. Green was born that year. His father died in the land run, and his mother died that same year.

Around 1900, father's grandmother and an aunt took him and his older brother to the Strip country, probably from Yell County, Arkansas. They stayed in a three- or four-story stone hotel in Fort Smith, Arkansas, before crossing the Arkansas River into Oklahoma Territory.

Somewhere in Oklahoma Territory Dad's grandmother ran a large tent boarding house, serving meals. After a year or so, they returned to Arkansas. Father told me stories of the trip, but not as much as I would like to have known.—*Rex Green, Pampa, Texas.*



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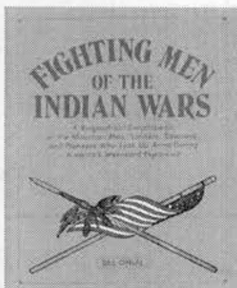

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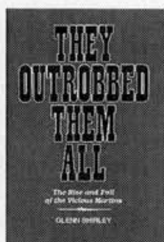

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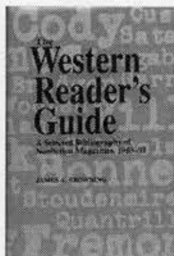

The Western Reader's Guide: A Selected Bibliography of Nonfiction Magazines, 1953-91. *By James A. Browning.* Based on a complete set of thirty western history magazines published between 1953 and 1991, including *True West*, *Old West*, and *Frontier Times*, this easy-to-use reference book lists more than 7,000 articles in which any given Westerner plays a prominent part. Entries are arranged biographically in standard bibliographical form. First ed., 42 photos, 6 x 9, 344 pages.

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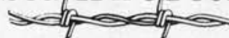

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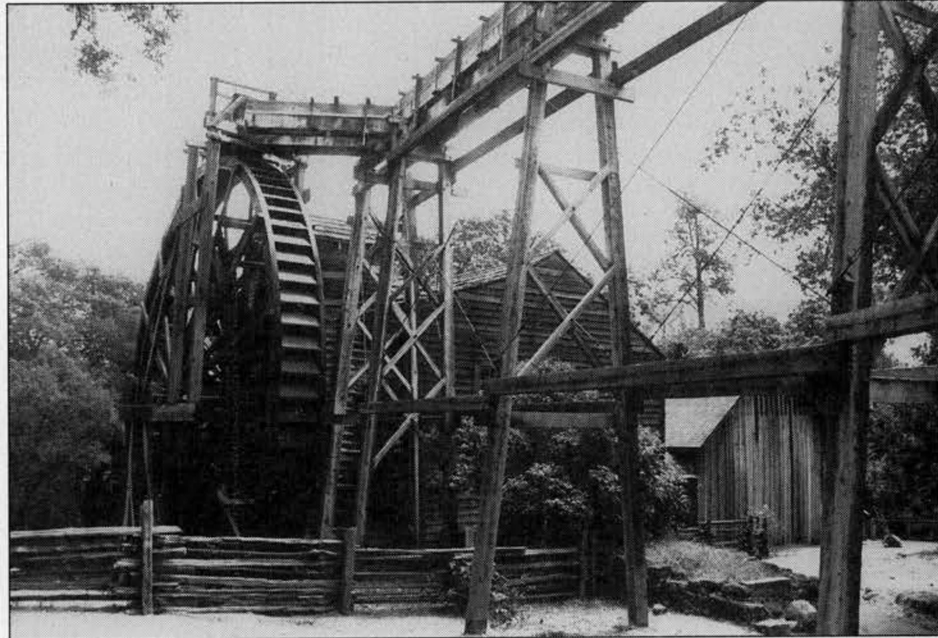
Big Wheel Keeps on Turnin'

By KATY BUDGE



Author's Photo

The thirty-six-foot waterwheel, redwood flumes, and granary of the Bale Grist Mill. The flumes carried water over the wheel, which propelled milling machinery inside.

To most people, the words "Napa Valley" uncork images of grapevines, vineyards, and wine, but before the region became known for its viticulture, it served as the breadbasket of northern California. The Bale Grist Mill, one of the oldest structures in Napa Valley, still stands as a reminder of that early chapter in the region's agriculture.

Little is known about how or why Dr. Edward T. Bale, an English physician and surgeon, went to the Napa Valley, but evidence indicates he arrived soon after surviving an 1837 shipwreck off the coast of Monterey. At that point in California's history, no one yet knew how much gold lay in the hills and the Mexican flag still flew over the state.

General Mariano Vallejo appointed Bale surgeon-in-chief of the Mexican army; his relationship with Vallejo proved quite fruitful for Bale. Stories of Bale's temper and penchant for alcohol have survived him, but Bale nonetheless managed to remain in Vallejo's good graces. In early 1841, Bale converted to Catholicism and married Vallejo's niece, Maria Ignacia Soberanes. That qualified him to become a full Mexican citizen, which he did in March 1841. That June, General Vallejo helped secure Bale a 17,692-acre land grant between what is now Calistoga and St. Helena.

Over the next few years, Bale paid scant attention to his land, and even gave away small parcels of it in payment for goods and services. However, in the mid-1840s wheat

was becoming an important California crop and Bale decided to build a grist mill on his property, even though three other mills already existed in the immediate area. Bale envisioned a mill that would be newer, bigger, and use more efficient mechanization.

Mill construction began between 1843 and 1845, and was completed in late 1846 or early 1847. The result was the largest wooden overshot mill in the United States, a distinction it still holds. "Overshot" refers to the method of propulsion; in this case, redwood flumes diverted creek water up and over the far edge of the wheel. The falling water turned the huge wooden wheel and the milling apparatus inside, which consisted of wooden cogs and imported French grinding stones.

The mill met many needs of the Napa Valley community, not all of them related to grain. Mills often served as the social focal point of a community, and Bale's Grist Mill was no exception. The mill hosted parties, dances, and other gatherings, and evidence even suggests that in 1846, members of the Bear Flag Party met there just before they captured Sonoma in the Bear Flag Revolt.

In 1848, gold fever hit California, and as the mill struggled to keep up with the increased demand for flour that the Gold Rush created, Bale himself headed for the foothills in search of the Mother Lode. Like so many other hopefuls, Bale never found the big strike and soon returned to his Napa Valley rancho where he died October 9, 1849, at the age of thirty-eight.

After Bale's death, management of the mill and the remaining land fell to his widow, Maria. In 1850 she contracted with a man named Leonard Lillie to upgrade the mill. He replaced the twenty-foot wheel with a thirty-six-foot wheel, and installed a bolting and threshing machine and a conveyor system. The improvements helped keep the mill somewhat viable until Maria sold it in 1860.

During the next decade, the mill fell into decline. A drought from 1863 to 1865 affected not only the creek which powered the mill, but also the valley's grain production. Although subsequent owners installed a steam engine and then a water turbine, the mill ultimately

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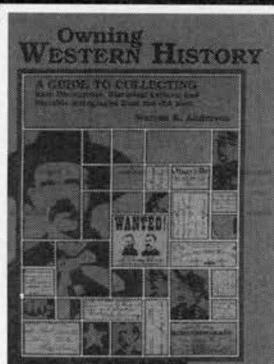

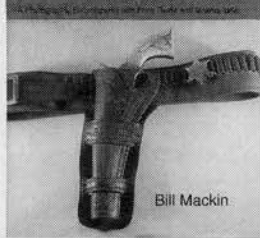

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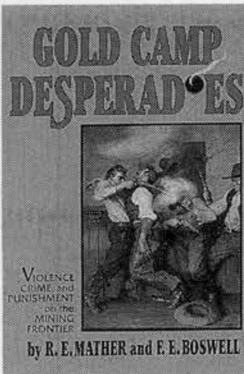

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could not compete with bigger, more efficient mills that built in the area. The Bale Grist Mill ceased commercial operation about 1905.

Fortunately for history, the Reverend Theodore Lyman bought the mill and significant acreage around it in 1871. Although the mill was no longer a commercial success, Lyman, and his family after his death in 1921, wanted to preserve it. The family deeded the land to the local Native Sons of the Golden West organization, but the financial strain of preservation was too great and they passed the property on to Napa County. However, the county also lacked the resources, or at least the interest, to maintain the mill.

The mill might have gone the way of many old buildings were it not for the efforts of the Napa County Historical Society, which persuaded the county to take a more active role in repairing and preserving the mill. In 1972, the Bale Grist Mill was added to the National Register of Historic Places; in 1974 it was bequeathed to the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Now fully restored and operational, the mill functions as an accurate and intriguing reminder of early California industry. Visitors can tour the mill, watch milling demonstrations, and purchase various types of flour ground at the mill. To watch the milling process, look for the "Milling Today" placard on the entrance sign, or call (707) 963-2236 to arrange a demonstration.

The 1,916-acre Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park is about three miles north of St. Helena on Highway 29, and is open every day from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Picnic areas are available. Admission is two dollars, or free with a camping receipt from the adjacent Bothe-Napa State Park.

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 four 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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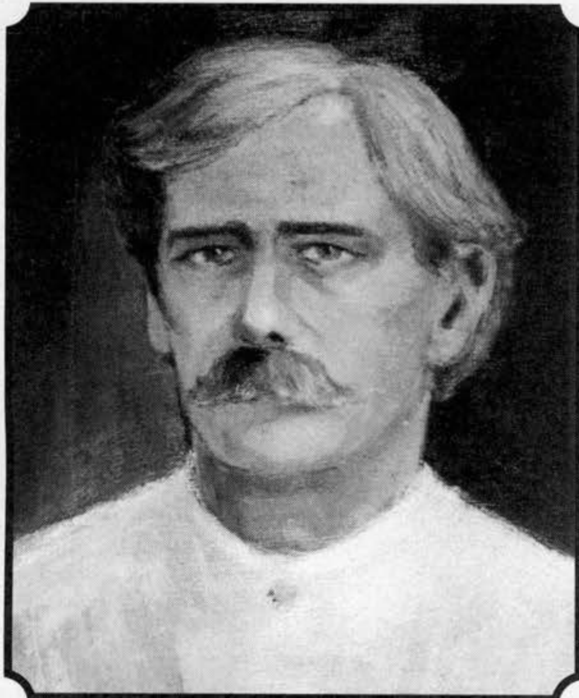

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Josephine Sarah Marcus Earp
San Diego, California. Late 1880's

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"....Lute....this is the last son of a bitchin' time your big brother is going to stick his neck out and bail your ass out of trouble. You're going to slope the hell out and never come back. Hear me?"

Under-Sheriff Harry Woods *to Luther King, just before King's escape from the Tombstone Jail on March 18, 1881*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"He (Sheriff John H. Behan) had an elephantine ego, like all of his kind, in need of conquests to keep it inflated, although they try to keep their needs a secret. Among Johnny's stable were Harry Jones' wife, Kitty, which might have got him killed, and his partner (John) Dunbar's wife, Bert, a nice warm-hearted person. Good old John Dunbar didn't have the faintest inkling of what was going on, or even he might have loaded Johnny with buckshot."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Now I watched him (Wyatt Earp) mount a big bay horse and lead the cavalcade of lawmen down the street, a double barreled shotgun at the ready in his hand. Behan followed driving the wagon, with the prisoner, (Johnny Behind-The-Deuce), accompanied by several guards also in the wagon, among them Virgil Earp."

Ted Ten Eyck, *about the events in Tombstone during the evening of January 14, 1881*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Then someone shot. A pistol....We stopped in our tracks and waited for somebody to yell over and tell us what was going on, if they got him, but it was quiet as hell. Then I heard another shot, this time a heavy rifle. After awhile Wyatt gave the whistle he used as his personal signal out in the country....Then he yelled, 'Come on in!'. I knew then they had got that dirty son of a bitch."

Doc Holliday, *on the killing of John P. Ringo, Hotel Windsor, Denver, Colorado in the year 1885*

"I knew things would come to a head in Tombstone sooner or later. Finally Ike Clanton spilled the beans about how his gang planned to rub me out and the Earps, so I thought I'd tell him we already rubbed out his Old Man. That got him plenty hot."

Doc Holliday, *about his argument with Ike Clanton at the Alhambra Saloon late evening of October 25, 1881*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Ike (Clanton) got his Old Man killed, you know....And I reckon I got Ike killed indirectly....That reminds me of something that we hushed up while we worked on the case. (J. D. Kinnear Stage holdup, March 15, 1881)....(Bob) Paul knew there were eight robbers that jumped the stage, and the papers reported that, then let it drop. When we caught Luther King, he mentioned three others: Harry Head, Billy Leonard, and Jim Crane. There was a good reason he didn't mention the others. He was scared to death of them. They were Curly Bill, Ike Clanton, Pete Spence and Frank Stilwell."

Wyatt Earp, *reminiscing in the California desert in the year 1910*

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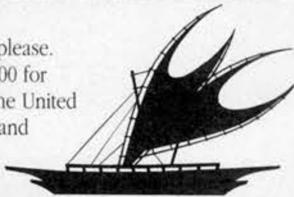

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A Few Words About Doc

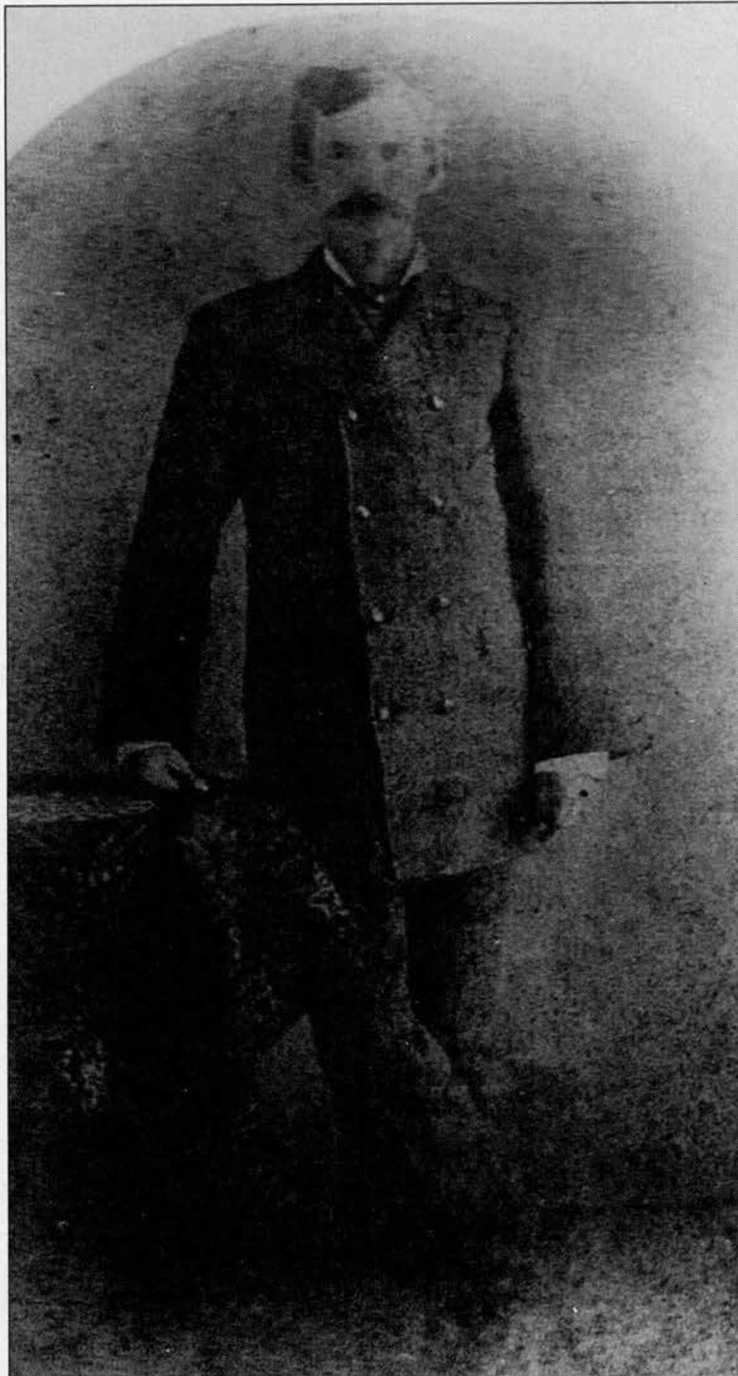
By CHUCK PARSONS

When someone mentions gunfighters, John H. "Doc" Holliday's name is always near the top of the list. Tim Dye, Stafford, Kansas, wants to know some of the accurate books about Doc's life.

Two readily available biographies of the gunfighter-dentist exist; neither are satisfactory, in my opinion. John Myers Myers' book *Doc Holliday*, published in 1955, was the first full-length biography of Doc. It reads well but contains many errors. In his *Burs Under the Saddle*, Ramon F. Adams devotes three full pages to errors in *Doc Holliday*. In 1957, Pat Jahns produced *The Frontier World of Doc Holliday*, about which Adams wrote, "Perhaps the best biography...thus far" suggesting that he hoped for a better one.

An important but too brief biography, *An Illustrated Life of Doc Holliday* by Glenn Boyer, appeared in 1966. It is less than seventy pages, and the author did not intend it to be a complete biography. The work is now quite scarce.

In 1973, Albert S. Pendleton, Jr., and Susan McKey Thomas published *In Search of the Hollidays* which devotes space not only to Doc but also to his family. The soft-cover, 102-page work is also rare. It contains two photos of Doc which had not been seen outside the Holliday family archives. We can hope that someone will take on the task of writing a complete biography of Holliday.



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John H. "Doc" Holliday in a photo believed taken in Prescott, Arizona Territory.

Garrett Kin?

Family members in the Old West often followed the same pursuits, whether legal or illegal. The Jameses, Youngers, Daltons, Mastersons, and Earps are just a few examples. O.J. Williams, Ruidoso, New Mexico, wants to know if the famed lawman Pat Garrett of New Mexico was related to Buck Garrett, sheriff of Carter County, Oklahoma.

To my knowledge, the lawmen were not related. If that is not correct, our readers will no doubt let me know. A great deal of literature exists on Pat Garrett, but little has been written about Buck Garrett, other than an article by Louise Riotte in the February 1970 issue of *True West*.

The Kid's Women

In the August 1988 issue of *True West* I answered a question about Celsa Gutierrez, one of Billy the Kid's girlfriends. I wrote that Celsa was the sister of Pat Garrett's wife, Apolinaria Gutierrez. However, I have since received new information from historian Frederick Nolan,

author of *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History*, correcting my earlier statement.

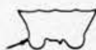
Celsa was born about 1856, the daughter of farm laborer Jose D. Gutierrez and his wife, Feliciana. Celsa had one other sibling, a sister named Apolinaria who was a year younger than Celsa. However, this Apolinaria Gutierrez and the one that Pat Garrett married were two different women.

By 1880, Celsa and her husband, Sabal Gutierrez, were living at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, with Feliciana; Celsa's son, Candido; and a woman named Dolores G., who was possibly Sabal's mother or Celsa's grandmother. Old-timers at Fort Sumner generally believed that Celsa also bore a child that Billy the Kid had fathered.

The Kid had gone to the Fort Sumner home of Pete Maxwell to visit another girlfriend, Pete's sister Pablita, when Garrett killed him there July 14, 1881. Many people accept that Pablita was pregnant with the Kid's child at the time. Pablita subsequently married Jose Jaramillo, who took the child, born six months after the marriage, as his own.

Celsa's husband was one of six men on the coroner's jury that studied the Kid's death. Perhaps either Pete Maxwell or Sabal Gutierrez informed Garrett of the Kid's whereabouts, not because they wanted to see justice done, but because Billy had given his attentions to one man's sister and the other man's wife!

I thank Mr. Nolan for helping clarify the situation. The background of Pat Garrett's wife, Apolinaria Gutierrez, however, is still a mystery.



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WYATT EARP
Legendary American

PART VI: THE WICHITA LAWMAN

By GLENN G. BOYER

I have found no reliable documentary evidence regarding Wyatt Earp between the time he was reported in James Cromwell's April 1871 complaint about misappropriating $20.00 the year before, and his later appearance as a witness on his brother Jim's pension application on September 4, 1874, in Wichita, Kansas. It can not even be proven beyond doubt that the Wyatt S. Earp who stole the horse in the Indian Nations is our man, though I'd bet on it. In any case, his family, though unaware of a horse stealing rap, did not think his whereabouts were any more a mystery than those of his parents or other family members during those years. Virgil was farming in Iowa near Uncle Renz and the rest were all in Kansas on farms. During this period, Wyatt met his second wife (common law), Celia Ann Blaylock, and she lived with him until he left Tombstone in 1882.

By 1873 Wyatt had his belly full of farming for good, left Celia with his parents in Rice County, and beat it down the Arkansas river to Wichita to look for work. His brother Jimmy was already there.

One of Jim's most revealing recollections was, "In Wichita we learned everything we needed to know about running a tough town." The Earps would get better at it in Dodge, and perfect it in Tombstone.

The record on what Wyatt Earp actually did in Wichita is far from complete. Trustworthy reports of incidents are scarce. Among books, the least reliable about Wyatt is Stuart Lake's *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal,* purportedly his biography. John H. Flood, Jr., Wyatt's amanuensis in his autobiography, wins the loving cup for vagueness. Moreover, Flood tried to pump up Wyatt's exploits as Lake did, but far less successfully. Flood isn't even entertaining.

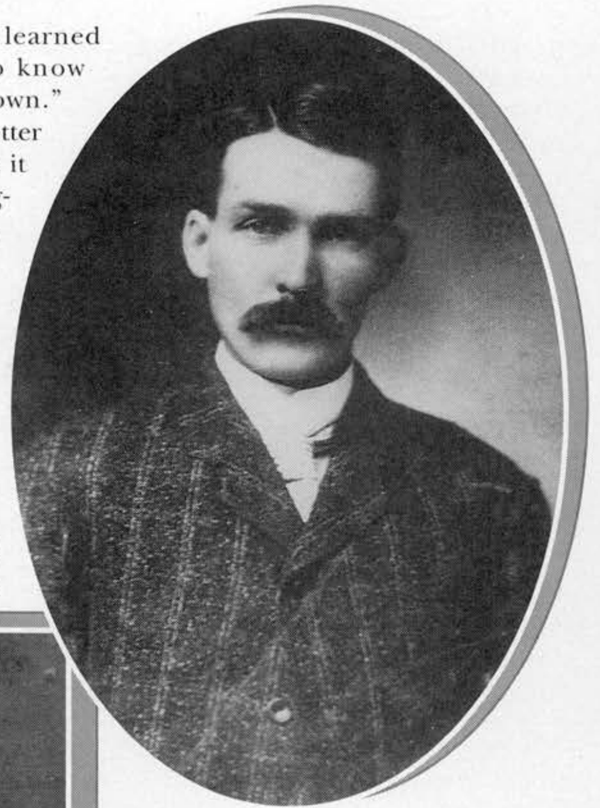
The local newspapers are reliable, as far as they go. Their record is incomplete, though, not only because many are missing, but for other understandable reasons. Frontier editors learned to cultivate myopia, avoiding stories that would get them strung up for driving business away from the community. Except when supported by rival factions (as in Tombstone), editors seldom felt free to criticize important people. Nor were they apt to dwell on the prevalence of stray bullets by the peck, since that tended to shy pilgrims down the "bypass." The media's failure to report an event is not conclusive evidence that it did not occur.

Certain old-timers are more reliable sources on Wichita. One such old-timer was Wyatt's brother, James Cooksey Earp. He was there. He was the example who made all of his younger brothers into professional gamblers. Rather comically, Jim was

never a very good gambler himself. His nephews Bill Miller and George Edwards both recalled how Uncle Jim, then pushing eighty, tried to deal from the bottom of the deck and fumbled the cards in "a little friendly family game" using matches for poker chips. Bill said, "We'd go out of the room to laugh so it wouldn't hurt his feelings. Beside he had a short fuse and might've taken a six-shooter to us."

One of Jim's most revealing recollections, and one not suspect since it actually carried a negative connotation, was, "In Wichita we learned everything we needed to know about running a tough town." The Earp boys would get better at it in Dodge, and perfect it in Tombstone. Equally significant, Jim recalled, "Wyatt was always dragging me out for target practice. I got enough target practice in the war. So did the son of a bitch that shot me."

A second old-timer was newsman Dave Leahy,



Right: Warren Earp as he looked in later years. *Below:* Celia Ann Blaylock "Mattie" Earp as she looked when Wyatt first met her in 1872.

Both: Author's Photo

who left the premier record of Wichita's broad picture and good insights into Wyatt Earp personally from those who knew him intimately. From Leahy's recollections, regardless of official records, one has to believe Wyatt's statement that he was put on the police force by Marshal Bill Smith, relatively soon after his arrival in Wichita in May 1874. Quite possibly Wyatt was first on the "private" police force, supported by subscriptions from selected sources. Many of them were also bouncers in the saloons, known as special police, and also belonged to "the shotgun brigade"—a group of citizens who came a-runnin' with shotguns to back up the regular police when JP Ed Jewett sounded the alarm on an iron triangle with a railroad spike. A similar semi-official system operated later in Tombstone.

In Leahy a reader senses the exuberant Wichita, in rompers, learning to walk, then run, and occasionally tripping and skinning its nose. It was a great place for a roughneck addicted to excitement to become seasoned as a tough cop. In Wichita, Wyatt could outdo his father's record as a marshal a decade earlier

in another rowdy border village, and do it in a bailiwick more addicted to homicide. Wichita also was a great place for Wyatt to feed his addiction to bare knuckle affairs. Bat Masterson later recalled that Wyatt was good at that, but Jim Earp said it all: "In his prime Wyatt was greased lightning. I saw a couple of fights where guys swung at him and only hit thin air. And he had a punch like a mule, with those long arms. Virge and I used to call him the Earp Ape."

Wyatt's own account of his time in Wichita is brief. He arrives there as a "plainsman," with no satisfactory explanation of how he became one. That is not surprising in view of Flood's priggishness and considering the horse-stealing, peculation as a constable, and heaven knows what else that Wyatt had to cover up. It would be tempting to say that Flood is not worth reading, except that his work was obviously the scaffolding on which writer Stuart Lake balanced precariously while erecting the towering Earp Myth. That was the main reason I printed the Flood manuscript in 1981; it was historically significant as an entity, simply by virtue of its existence as well as being a rare curiosity that collectors eagerly sought for half a century. Most of the ninety-nine copies I had printed sold to collectors, so it is a hard reference to find in libraries.

IN ANY CASE, the most believable incident in Flood's account of Wyatt's Wichita years is that upon meeting Wyatt with a view toward putting him on the police force, the mayor exclaimed, "By God, Earp, you're all right; I wish I had your build." The event is so ludicrous that it simply had to have occurred.

Beyond that, Flood has Wyatt joining the police force, determined that "right makes might" and determined not to compromise with wrongdoing.

Flood's Wichita is clearly recognizable, all dressed up, in Lake's *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*. Like Flood, *Frontier Marshal* is eminently worth reading solely as the seed of a myth. (Strange no academic historian seems to have noticed that Lake showed us how myths are made: one fibs! Only as much as necessary, of course.) What Wyatt Earp was really like is not found in either Flood's or Lake's fairy tales, or in anything previously written about him except the two books based on family recollections: *Suppressed Murder of Wyatt Earp* (long out of print) and *I Married Wyatt Earp*, (University of Arizona Press). The former covers the genesis of the Earp Myth (and tangentially, Wyatt's secret second wife) and the latter the memoir of Wyatt's wife of almost a half century.

Estelle Miller told me her mother once said, "All your uncles—especially Wyatt—would rather fight than eat. They must have got it from Pa."

IN FLOOD, we find Wyatt on his first day in Wichita, taking over a fist fight in which Doc Black, the bully who owns the hotel where Wyatt is staying, is beating up a youth. (Lake repeats the story and improves on it.) Wyatt pounds hell out of Black and gets arrested by Marshal Bill Smith. Lacking a town jail, Smith incarcerates Wyatt, under guard, in a shack. Texas cowboys somehow learn he's there, and mistaking him for someone who killed a friend, they assault the jail. The guard flees and Wyatt stands them off with bluff, sending them to ask noted Texas gunman, Ben Thompson, if he wants them to knock Wyatt off. (This sounds like "boiler plate" pulp magazine malarkey, and is.)

The cowboys dutifully follow the script and leave. In the aftermath, rather than being fined or jailed for assault, Wyatt is hired as a policeman. "Black," as will develop, was not the name of a bully, but may have come to Wyatt from a dim recollection and served Flood's need to show that Wyatt was a bare knuckle scrapper. He might have stepped into any fist fight, though, just for fun. Estelle Miller told me her mother once said, "All your uncles—especially Wyatt—would rather fight than eat. They must have got it from Pa."

Next, in Flood, Wyatt arrests cattle king Shanghai Pierce. Wyatt recalled Pierce as Cad Pearse in Flood and later elevated him to "cattle king" at Lake's prompting by letter. A mob of Pierce's adherents riot around Wichita's main street till Wyatt subdues them with a double-barrel shotgun. Incidents vaguely resembling this one actually did occur in Wichita.

Newspaper accounts of a few incidents involving the Earps have survived. They were collected in a series of articles titled "Why the West Was Wild" in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly*. The authors, Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell, are anti-Earp, traceable, as most such attitudes have been, to their failure to trap the right skunk. For instance, they attribute the story of Wyatt's allegedly arresting Ben Thompson in Ellsworth, Kansas, in 1873, to "Wyatt Earp's own statement recorded by a 'biographer over 50 years after the event.'" It had not occurred to them that when Earp was allegedly talking, Lake was simply putting words in his mouth.

MILLER AND SNELL reprint the portion of the Kansas special census of 1875 that unequivocally shows Jim Earp's wife, Bessie, as a prostitute. Sally Earp is also reported in Bessie's house. "Sally" might have been Celia, (Mattie) Earp, Wyatt's common-law wife, whose name was pronounced Sealy by the family. This woman appears on police records as Sally, as well. It tells us a lot about the times and the kind of men we are concerned with here, certainly at least Jim Earp. Of course pimps required their women to work as whores, without emotional complications, but another dissuading factor should have been the prevalence of venereal diseases and the lack of adequate treatments for them.

Supporting a family in those days was tough.

From other newspaper reports in *Why the West Was Wild* one discovers:

•An October 29, 1874, article that mentioned Wyatt as an "officer," the earliest newspaper reference to such service. He and fellow officer Behrens followed a party that stole a wagon and made the thieves "dough over," (i.e. pay for it), as the article reports.

•Wyatt arrested a horse thief named Compton (Wichita *Weekly Beacon*, May 12, 1875). Earlier, the May 6 *Beacon* reported that both officers Earp and Behrens made the arrest. The second article had details.

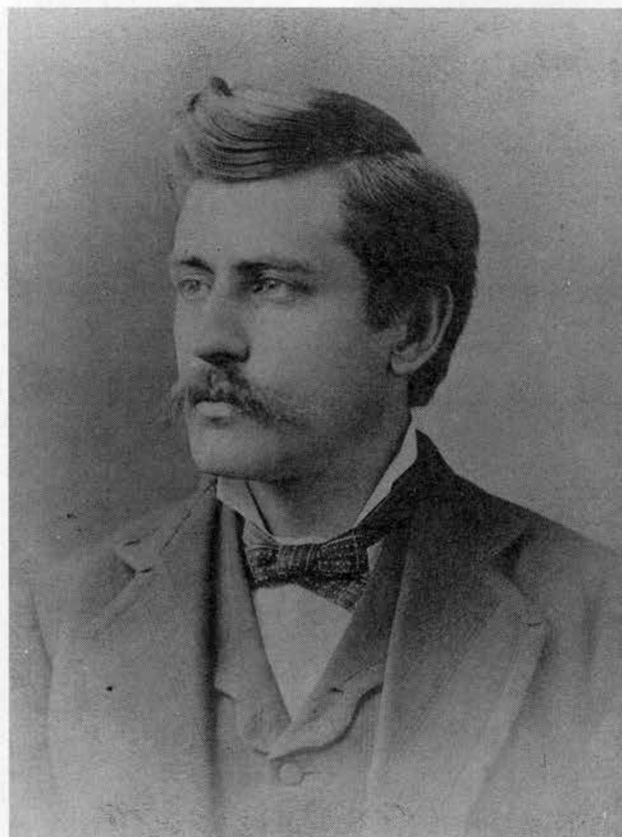
•The *Beacon*, December 15, 1875, relates that Wyatt ran in a drunk to the "cooler" and found $500.00 on him, which was later returned to him. The paper brags that he would have got his roll back in very few other communities.

•January 12, 1876, we read of the incident in which Wyatt's pistol dropped from his holster and fell on the hammer, accidentally discharging the pistol and almost perforating its owner. Miller and Snell crow about this, as others have, in relation to Lake's pious remarks, attributed to Wyatt, about "professionals" always keeping a Colt with the hammer down on an empty chamber to avert just such accidents. The Lake-Earp correspondence shows that Wyatt actually told Lake to leave any mention of this embarrassing incident out of the book. More importantly, this was probably the incident that taught Wyatt to carry a Colt on an empty chamber, regardless of his later advice in the matter, if any. Lake may have made the mythical Wyatt Earp a household word, but he was the unassuming man's worst enemy.

•April 15, 1876. Earp is canned from the police force for kicking hell out of former marshal, Bill Smith, who was running for marshal against Wyatt's friend, Marshal Mike Meagher. The report in the *Beacon* that day concludes: "It is but justice to Erp [sic] to say he made an excellent officer, and hitherto his conduct has been unexceptionable."

Jim Earp rang down the curtain on that period in the Earps' saga with: "Wichita finally got a little hot for us."

•The *Beacon* of May 24, 1876, reported that Wyatt had moved on to Dodge City and had been put on the police force there. Regardless of the skimpy record that has survived on Wyatt in Wichita, Dodge City did not hire amateurs as cops. Jim Earp did not accompany Wyatt there, instead heading south to Fort Worth.



Author's Photo

Morgan Earp probably in 1879.

Other details in the Wichita articles are not reported here due to space limitations. It is enough to say that Wyatt survived as a cop in a hell of a tough place, where some got eaten up in the job. It is not possible to learn much from newspapers about Wyatt in Wichita. Still, debunkers have leaned heavily on the fact that his exploits as recorded by Lake were not clearly reported in the contemporary press.

Nonetheless, Stuart Lake deserves credit for developing and preserving a source more extensive and reliable than the newspapers. Unfortunately, as Lake recognized, he could not use it in its essentially matter-of-fact form if he expected to sell the result. He postponed an almost completed, but pedestrian effort, from January 1929 when Wyatt's death cut him loose to soar, until October 1931, when the revised marvel, *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*, was unleashed on the world. Lake produced this sparkling gem, literally over the dead body of its namesake, and the mighty protests of the firebreathing widow. She even visited the publisher and put on a crying scene, whereupon Lake alleged she was mentally incompetent due to a brain tumor, a bald-faced lie. There was no love lost between Lake and Josie, especially when Flood, who detested Lake, egged her on. The best she could do, however, was to get the title altered from *Wyatt Earp, Gunfighter.*

Dave Leahy, an old Wichita newsman, was Lake's principal source of information on the town. From him, one learns beyond a doubt that Wichita in the early days was one hell of a tough town to keep the lid on. Wyatt Earp learned there how to do that and gained supreme self-confidence, just as a champion boxer does in the ring. It made him the undaunted man who became a myth as a result.

Dave Leahy clearly recognized Lake's work for what it was, not a biography but a fiction intended to make a lot of money from movie adaptation. It did that. The movie spinoffs, and eventual television show, were all profitable, and the book went into edition after edition

Author's Photo

Louisa Houston Earp(?)—as she looked when Morgan Earp first met her.

for years. Leahy came to Lake's attention through an old Wichita resident, who asked Leahy, then living in Wichita, to do some research for Lake. The result follows (spelling and punctuation as in the original):

Wichita, Kansas, Nov. 11-28
"Hon. John Madden
Tulsa Oklahoma

My dear Judge—

I received your note, enclosing one from Stuart Lake of San Diego a few days ago whilst my head was reeling under the staggering majority the American people gave the Hoover and Curtis electors.

As I understood it he not only wanted some corroboration of the already well known record of Wyatt Earp in Wichita but also a bit of the atmosphere of this city during his official career here.

The atmosphere was quite opaque in 1874 on account of the clouds of grasshoppers that fairly obscured the sun when they were flying hither to eat up everything they could get their mandibles on. You remember that atmosphere much better than I do and you are better qualified to describe it to him.

As to the personalities and habits of the time in Wichita I will say that Edward Doheney the multi-millionaire of California was washing dishes for his board in an old Texas Hotel near Horse Thief corner on West Douglas avenue. Billy the Kid, notorious New Mexico outlaw was a boy living with his mother, Mrs. Antrim, half a block north of the Court house, the late U.S. Senator James Hemmingway of Indiana was hauling buffalo bones from what is now Harper County to Wichita, and no less a person than the late Champ Clark—who should have been president instead of Wilson—was sleeping in a couch in Dr. Fabrique's office and working hard in the night time on a graduating essay for the numbskull son of a certain rich man and for which he received enough money to pay his fare back to Missouri—leaving here as the most famous barrister that ever aspired to legal fame in Wichita.

We had many other distinguished and interesting characters at the time but it would require more patience than I have to enumerate them. Mr. Charles Hatton was a rising lawyer and prosecutor at the time and as he is now a resident of San Diego I think if Mr. Lake would have a talk with him he could learn a lot of the things he desires to know from him.

As to the habits of the people I will say that most of them drank whiskey but were otherwise good. Indeed the drinking habit was so common that when a snake appeared in the court room one day during the trial of the case the presiding judge by great presence of mind deemed it prudent to say to the jurors, Gentlemen, do not be disturbed it is only a real snake.

The town at that time—1874—had something like 1,200 inhabitants, many of them transient cowboys, gamblers, horse thieves and land seekers. The permanent inhabitants were a sturdy people with ambitious intentions. The buildings were mostly shack and business places were of that old fashioned type with disproportionate front elevations and wooden awnings. Benches were in front of every store, well cut up by knives of whittling loafers. The most conspicuous of those buildings were the Eagle Hall built by a man who forgot to supply it with chimneys and the famous old Keno house diagonally across the intersection of Main and Douglas and exactly the spot where The First National bank stands ten stories high at the present time. It was built by Henry Schweiter and Jimmy Cairns who were early contracting carpenters. The first barrel of McBriar whiskey that ever came to Wichita came to Pryor's saloon in this building and it had a sad story. Jim Earp—brother of Wyatt and said to be a very nice fellow—was barkeeper in this saloon. He tapped the barrel early in the morning after being up all night with a gang of money spenders. While drawing the whiskey for the demands of the day he fell asleep in the chair in which he was sitting and when he woke up all of that great liquid treasure was running all over the floor. It was a day of mourning not only for Pryor—who, by the way, was brother to old chief of police Bob Pryor whom you well know—but to the entire drinking community who had been advised of the arrival of that renowned brand. But from the activities of the previous night Jim Earp had a drawer full of money and his boss forgave him for his negligence.

KENO WAS the great game of the time and even to this day the leading corner of the town is known to old timers more as Keno corner than the First National Bank corner. I could relate a hundred stories of this famous old gambling house but I am not in the mood just now on account of a cold which has obstructed the flow of my thoughts.

Now as to Jimmy Cairns my old and well beloved friend of pioneer days. I have often talked with him about Wyatt Earp. Jimmy by experience, association and even by marriage—for his wife and the mother

of his two fine girls was the sister of Bat Masterson—knows more than any man I can call to mind about the wild days of Wichita but like many a brave old timer he is not a talker. It was the policy of Jim Hope['s] City Administration to have its peace officers teamed, that is to have two of them always together, something after the manner of the Italian police. During all of Wyatt Earp's career here Jimmy Cairns was his partner in service. They were together not only at work but at rest for they slept and roomed, together. [This raises the question, "Where was Celia, Wyatt's wife?"] Jimmy has told me all about his connection with Earp and their joint adventures with the rough elements of those rough days. He was with Wyatt in two big fights especially when the Texans wanted to capture the town. The story of those two fights would almost fill a book and, obviously, cannot be related in a letter. Jimmy Cairns in his quiet way had told me often that Wyatt Earp was the most dependable pal he ever had during his long career as a border police officer and that he was a clean fellow through and through. And I want to say to you that he was the bravest man himself whom I have ever known intimately, with the possible exception of Charlie Siringo who died two or three weeks ago at Hollywood where he was connected in some way with Bill Hart the movie hero. That same Charlie Siringo was in Wichita often in the early seventies and was I believe in charge of one of the big herds Shanghai Pierce—whom Mr. Lake mentions—-brought to Wichita over the famous Chisholm trail. I knew Shanghai very well—for I drank with him once or twice. He was not a bad man. He might have fallen into the habit of putting his own brand on other peoples cattle but otherwise he was a jolly old Connecticut Yankee transmogrified into a Texan.

Doc Black was not the town bully in Wyatt Earp's day. His only belligerent record so far as I know or ever heard of was to keep trespassers off his "made land" at the east end of the old Douglas Ave. toll bridge, his weapon being only a pitchfork. As a matter of fact Mrs. Black was the bully of Doc's family. I know a very remarkable story about Doc and how his heart was eaten by a Negro after his death on the supposition that it was calf's liver but it has no relation to the biography of Wyatt Earp.

So far as I know there is no official record here of the appointment of Wyatt Earp as a deputy city marshal. Bill Smith, the marshal, was desperately in need of a man who had nerve enough to wear a star—for it was a dangerous occupation in those days. He saw Wyatt Earp, a stranger in the street one day and sizing him up as a man who might be fit he asked him if he would care to take the position, Wyatt agreed and Bill told Mayor Hope that he would put him to work. The mayor offered some objection on account of Wyatt's size for he had an idea that small men would be harder to hit with a bullet than big ones. But notwithstanding this curious objection Bill Smith teamed Wyatt up with Jimmy Cairns and put him to work.

"Jimmy Cairns in his quiet way had told me often that Wyatt Earp was the most dependable pal he ever had during his long career as a border police officer..."

The Triangle [JP Ed Jewett's triangle, known as the police alarm in most writings] rang only once during the time he was here; for he and Jimmy Cairns made the Texas wild ones quite tame. The story of the Triangle is an interesting one but entirely too long to go into here. It was operated by Ed Jewett whom you knew quite well and who was the early day police judge.

John I have given up writing altogether. I am getting too old and moreover I do not like to write wild west stuff. The Texas gangs were bluffers and cowards and there is no glamor in their blackguardism for me. I would rather write of the "Good Men of the Old West" than of the "Bad Men of the Old West" for, after all, they were the men who made this country.

I am feeling neither good nor bad but something in between and it tires me terribly to do much of anything. But for you I am always eager to do a service and only regret that I cannot do it better on this occasion. It is not always easy to understand what another person wants unless it is put in definite form and if Mr. Lake asks anything farther I will do my level best to answer him if the points he may need are put in shape to be answered without temptation to wander.

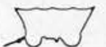
I have placed all my pictures of the old days in the University museum of which I am president. I am inclined to think that if Mr. Lake would write to some young newspaper man here—Kent Eubank of the Wichita Eagle for instance—he may be able to dig up some photographs for him.

With love and sincerity
David D. Leahy
1135 N. St. Francis Avenue
Wichita, Kansas"

From this we may conclude that Wyatt Earp did more than he claimed for himself in Flood and, perhaps, not so much less than Lake claimed for him. It is impossible to solve the riddle of when he went on the police force, and not pertinent unless to allege he was a liar.

Wyatt's recollection was no more faulty than that of others such as Cairns, who signed a petition of good character about him, along with several others only seven years later, in 1881. All of the signatories recollected at that time that Wyatt was a policeman in Wichita in 1874, '75, and part of '76. In addition to the signatories' recollections, some records probably still survived at that time but have since been misplaced or lost, for the city clerk appears to have prepared the document. It is certain that the October 29, 1874, article in the *Beacon*, relates how "officers" Wyatt Earp and John Behrens went after a stolen wagon and brought back payment for it.

Moreover, those who attempt to discredit Earp do so largely because they have discovered Lake's fictional dramatics and blamed them on Wyatt. In Wichita, Wyatt Earp was a damned good peace officer in a damned tough town.



Next Month: Dodge City Hokey Pokey

Who Robbed the Great Northern Express?

By WAYNE KINDRED

The crew and passengers of the westbound Great Northern train Number 3 were a carefree group as they prepared to leave Malta, Montana, at 2:00 P.M., July 3, 1901. Forty-five minutes later, eight miles west of Malta, they were recovering from the shock of a daring train robbery in which bandits took $40,000 in unsigned Bank of Montana notes. In the ninety-two years since the robbery, many writers have confused the event with erroneous information. A careful examination of contemporary documents, however, reveals the truth of the robbery.

Western Publications

The baggage and express car dynamited during the Wagner train robbery.

Charles Kelly, in *The Outlaw Trail,* gives what many consider the standard version of events. According to Kelly, Harvey Logan ("Kid Curry") and Harry Longabaugh (the "Sundance Kid") boarded the train at Malta. Logan stopped the train near a bridge, and Longabaugh jumped to the ground and ordered the passengers to stay inside. The express cars were uncoupled and pulled across the bridge where Butch Cassidy took charge. He blew the safe while Camilla Hanks waited nearby with the horses. Other writers have followed Kelly's version, adding their errors to his errors, involving people who were not involved, and confusing rather than explaining what actually happened.

TO CLEAR UP the confusion and identify the robbers, it is necessary to accurately describe the robbery. The best description is in the testimony of fireman Mike O'Neal and express messenger C.H. Smith at the November 1902 trial of outlaw Harvey Logan in Knoxville, Tennessee. (Tennessee authorities had arrested Logan in December 1901 after he shot and wounded two Knoxville officers trying to arrest him for fighting; he subsequently stood trial for forging and passing stolen bank notes.) Contemporary newspaper accounts help clarify events that did not involve O'Neal or Smith.

O'Neal's and Smith's testimonies give a clear understanding of how

the train robbers worked and who they were. As train No. 3 pulled away from Malta, a conductor was routinely going about his work when he saw a burly, red-faced man step aboard the blind baggage. Thinking he was only a hobo, the conductor ordered him off the train. When the man failed to respond, the conductor reached for the bell cord; the free rider pulled a pistol and warned the man not to stop the train. Frightened, the conductor scurried through the coaches searching for Valley County Sheriff W.S. Griffith, a passenger on the train, while the pistol wielding hobo headed for the engine.

In his testimony, O'Neal said that after the train left Malta, a man climbed over the tender of the engine with a six-shooter in each hand. He told O'Neal and the engineer that he was going to rob the train and ordered them to stop "at a certain point....When we got to this point there were two more men come from under a bridge with rifles and dynamite." O'Neal said one of the men crossed in front of the engine and kept guard on the north side of the train. The other man went through the engine.

O'Neal said the man who had ordered them to stop "got out on the gang way between the engine and tender and shot his six shooter back over the train." He finally guarded the south side of the train.

The third man, the one who went through the engine, ordered the trainmen off the north side. When asked if Harvey Logan was the man who had gone through the engine, O'Neal answered affirmatively.

After they were ordered off the engine, Logan marched O'Neal and the engineer to the mail car, and mail clerk James Martin was taken off the train. The two men standing guard continued to fire occasional shots down the side of the train as Logan escorted the trainmen to the baggage car.

Express messenger Smith told what happened after the train stopped. He said he and a baggageman were in a baggage car checking items when they realized the train was being robbed. "The engineer...rapped on the door. Logan was standing right behind him at that time. He told us to jump out—he said 'Boys we won't hurt you.'" Logan ordered the baggageman to go back into the first coach car and move its passengers into the second coach, thus leaving an empty coach car between the express car and the passengers to protect them when Logan blew the safe. According to Smith, Logan told the baggageman to have the passengers "keep their heads in at the window, that they didn't want to shoot anybody. Then one of them had the dynamite and the dynamite was handed to me."

Smith said he and Logan went into the express car, and the outlaw asked him to open the local safe. "I told him there was nothing in the safe at that time," Smith said, "and he said open it up anyway.

"Then he commenced taking his dynamite from a sack and laid it on top of the safe...and he made the remark to me... 'Don't you make a crooked move, Bill,' and I said, 'No I don't think I would make a crack out of myself when looking down into a Winchester.' At the time he took his dynamite out of his sack, and when it got to sputtering I said, 'Bill, I would like to get out [of] here,' and he said 'You wait a minute and I will get out of here with you,' and when it was ready we both went out." They exited to the north side of the train.

Smith confirmed two other robbers were involved, one guarding the crew and another standing between the engine and the mail car. He also said he had no doubt that the defendant, Logan, was one of the men.

After the first explosion, Logan told O'Neal, "You come on down with me and take that sack along." Logan entered the car and found the safe unopened. While O'Neal stood outside the door, Logan placed another charge on the safe and hurriedly exited. Logan and O'Neal withdrew to where the trainmen were being guarded and another explosion rocked the express car.

After waiting for the smoke to clear, Logan and O'Neal returned to the express car to find the safe

Courtesy of the Author

TRAIN HELD UP BY THREE ROBBERS

West-Bound Great Northern Express Stopped Near Wagner, the Express Car Wrecked and a Large Sum of Money Secured.

DYNAMITE WAS USED BY THE BANDITS

They Demolish the Express Car, Break Open the Safe, Secure Its Contents and Leisurely Ride Away to the Bad Lands.

A headline from the July 4, 1901, *Great Falls Daily Tribune* indicating three robbers held up the Great Northern Express.

Both: Author's Photo

Left: A prison mug shot of Camilla Hanks, who boarded the Great Northern Express at Malta, Montana, and guarded the south side of the train. *Right:* Harvey Logan and girlfriend Annie Rodgers. Logan blew the safe of the Great Northern Express.

still intact. O'Neal again waited outside while Logan worked in the car. When he came out, they retreated a safe distance and heard another explosion.

When he entered the car for the fourth time, Logan found the door ripped off the safe and ordered O'Neal to join him. "He threw what stuff was in the sack out...and told me to hold [the sack]....He started to tearing the broken pieces of the safe off so he could get to the stuff in there." O'Neal said Logan did not get all the contents of the safe, but did take many packages. "He picked up one package and made a remark about it—something like $30,000 or $40,000, some remark about that...and dropped it into the sack."

While Logan emptied the safe, the man guarding the north side of the train and the trainmen moved near the express car. Smith described a conversation he had with Logan as the robbers prepared to leave. "I had come down to the car and could see in," Smith said. "I noticed he wrecked my box....A Box I carry my personal stuff in. The top was blown off and the end blown off." When Smith told Logan the box was his, the outlaw replied, "That is too bad."

Logan then ordered the trainmen toward the rear. "I said, 'Bill, you had better give me something as a memento of this holdup—give me one of those guns,'" said Smith, "and he shot it and handed it to me to remember him." When asked what became of the robbers, Smith said, "I seen nothing of them after that at all."

O'Neal clearly shows that Logan was not the man who boarded the train at Malta and climbed over the tender. Instead, he positively identifies him as one of the two men who came from under the bridge. Both O'Neal and Smith identify Logan as the man who blew the safe.

IF LOGAN WAS not the man who boarded the train at Malta, who was the man who guarded the south side of the train? His identity is no real mystery. In fact, he was the first robber identified. The *Great Falls Daily Tribune* named him as a suspect on July 4, one day after the robbery. The newspaper said that an officer of Valley County identified "the large, red-faced man" as "Jones, who was sent to the penitentiary several years ago for train robbery on the Northern Pacific."

On July 9, the *Daily Tribune* gave more information linking the suspect with the robbery. The newspaper said, "It is now believed that one of the Great Northern train robbers, and the one who stopped the train by climbing over the tender...is a man by the name of Johnston, who was recently released from the penitentiary after serving a term of 10 years for manslaughter. He was loafing for two days prior to the robbery, around Shade J. Denson's saloon, at Malta, and Mr. Denson saw him board the 'blind baggage' Wednesday morning and noticed that he drew a gun on a trainman who tried to put him off."

Finally, on July 12, the *Daily Tribune* announced the suspect had been identified as, "Chas. Jones, alias Chas. Blackman, who was recently released from Deer Lodge, where he was confined a short term for highway robbery. Jones was the man who got on the train at Malta and stopped it near Wagner."

Whichever alias he used, the reports undoubtedly describe Camilla Hanks. Hanks, with two accomplices, robbed a Northern Pacific train near Grey Cliff, Montana, in 1893. He was later captured, convicted, and sentenced to ten years at the penitentiary at Deer Lodge. He served eight years and was released April 30, 1901. So, while writers have said repeatedly that Logan was the man who boarded the train at Malta, lawmen knew within days of the robbery that it was Camilla Hanks, alias Charlie Jones.

Who was the man guarding the

Author's Photo

A sketch of Ben Kilpatrick, who guarded trainmen during the train robbery.

north side of the train? Evidence points to Ben Kilpatrick. Witnesses described the man as six-feet tall and about 195 pounds. Kilpatrick fit that description. He was later arrested in St. Louis, Missouri, with almost $8,000 of the stolen bills in his possession, and both O'Neal and Smith went to St. Louis and positively identified him as one of the robbers.

With the three robbers identified and actual events established, we can now clear up what did not happen. First, the express cars were not separated from the coaches and pulled across the bridge. At Logan's trial, attorney John C. Houk asked Smith that question, and Smith clearly stated that no cars were uncoupled.

Evidence also suggests that Harry Longabaugh was not a passenger on the train. No one reported seeing a man jump to the ground and order everyone to keep inside, or run through the coaches waving his pistol and firing a few shots, as one writer has suggested. That Logan sent the baggage man to warn the passengers to move back and stay inside is proof enough that Longabaugh was not on the train. Further, Edward M. Kirby, in *The Rise and Fall Of The Sundance Kid*, offers tangible evidence that Longabaugh was in South America at the time of the robbery.

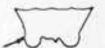
Finally, was Butch Cassidy one of the robbers? The *Daily Tribune* mentioned Cassidy only once in its robbery coverage and not as a serious suspect. Though some reports place him in Montana about the time of the robbery, evidence proves he was neither the leader of the gang nor the man who blew the safe. Cassidy may have helped plan the robbery. He may have joined Logan, Kilpatrick, and Hanks sometime after the robbery, but to say he took part in the actual robbery is pure fiction.

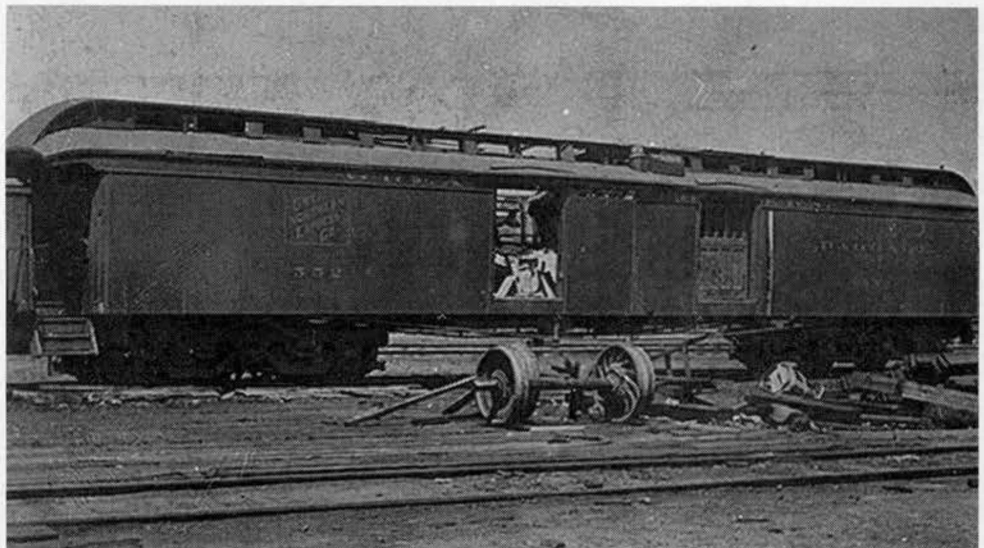
THE FACT IS, only three men, not four, five, or six, held up the train. The train's crew saw only three men. Neither the trial testimony nor the *Daily Tribune* indicated more than three men were involved. Several passengers saw the robbers slowly ride away and described three men, one riding a buckskin, one riding a bay, and one riding a gray. George Zimmerman, a local rancher, saw the robbers twenty miles south of the robbery scene. He reported seeing three men who rode a wide circle around him, then dropped a shot under his horse when he tried to approach them.

Furthermore, authorities directly linked only three men to the Bank of Montana bills taken in the robbery. The Knoxville police recovered almost $10,000 of the stolen bills when they arrested Harvey Logan. Lawmen recovered another $7,945 from Ben Kilpatrick in St. Louis, and Laura Bullion, his traveling companion, told police that Kilpatrick had about $14,000 of the money at one time.

Camilla Hanks tried to pass one of the stolen bills in Nashville, Tennessee, in October 1901. When police tried to arrest him, he led them on a daring buggy chase through the streets of Nashville. At one point, when it seemed they would overtake him, he began throwing money into the air. Though Hanks escaped, the police recovered $1,280 more of the stolen bills.

The riddle of Montana's most famous train robbery has held the interest of writers, historians, and western history lovers for more than ninety years. Many have written about it, talked about it, and distorted it until the unanswered questions seem too complex, too tangled, for simple answers to unravel. But the evidence—the facts separated from fiction—provide only one answer. Harvey Logan, Ben Kilpatrick, and Camilla Hanks robbed the Great Northern Express.





Western Publications

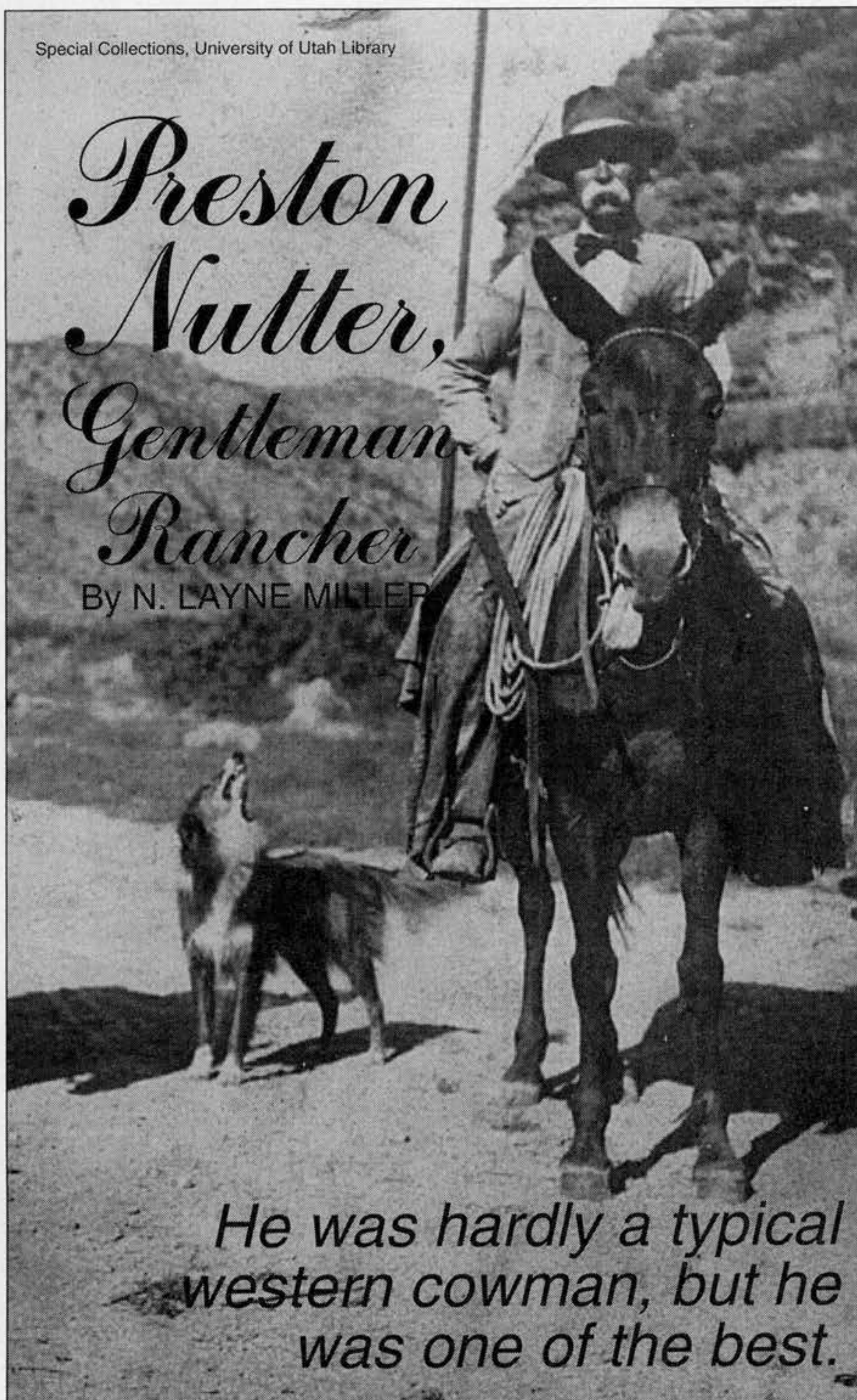
Exterior of the dynamited Great Northern Railroad car.

Preston Nutter was one of the wealthiest and most powerful ranchers in the West, but he was not the stereotypical gun-toting cattle baron, riding roughshod over anyone standing between him and a dollar—instead he was a gentleman rancher. While Nutter could certainly be tight-fisted with money, he differed from the rancher's image in other ways: he refused to wear uncomfortable cowboy boots; he would rather ride a mule than a horse; and he used his gun more for hunting than for settling disputes—if he had a quarrel with a neighbor or another rancher, he simply took him to court.

Nutter was orphaned early, and at age nine he went to live with relatives. That arrangement did not suit him so he ran away and became a cabin boy on the Mississippi River. At age thirteen he headed west to seek his fortune in the mining business.

In 1873 Nutter and an associate were prospecting for gold in Idaho when news of a rich strike in Colorado spread like wildfire through the gold camps. They decided to try their hand in Colorado's San Juan District and joined nineteen other people in Provo, Utah, to prepare for the trip through the mountains.

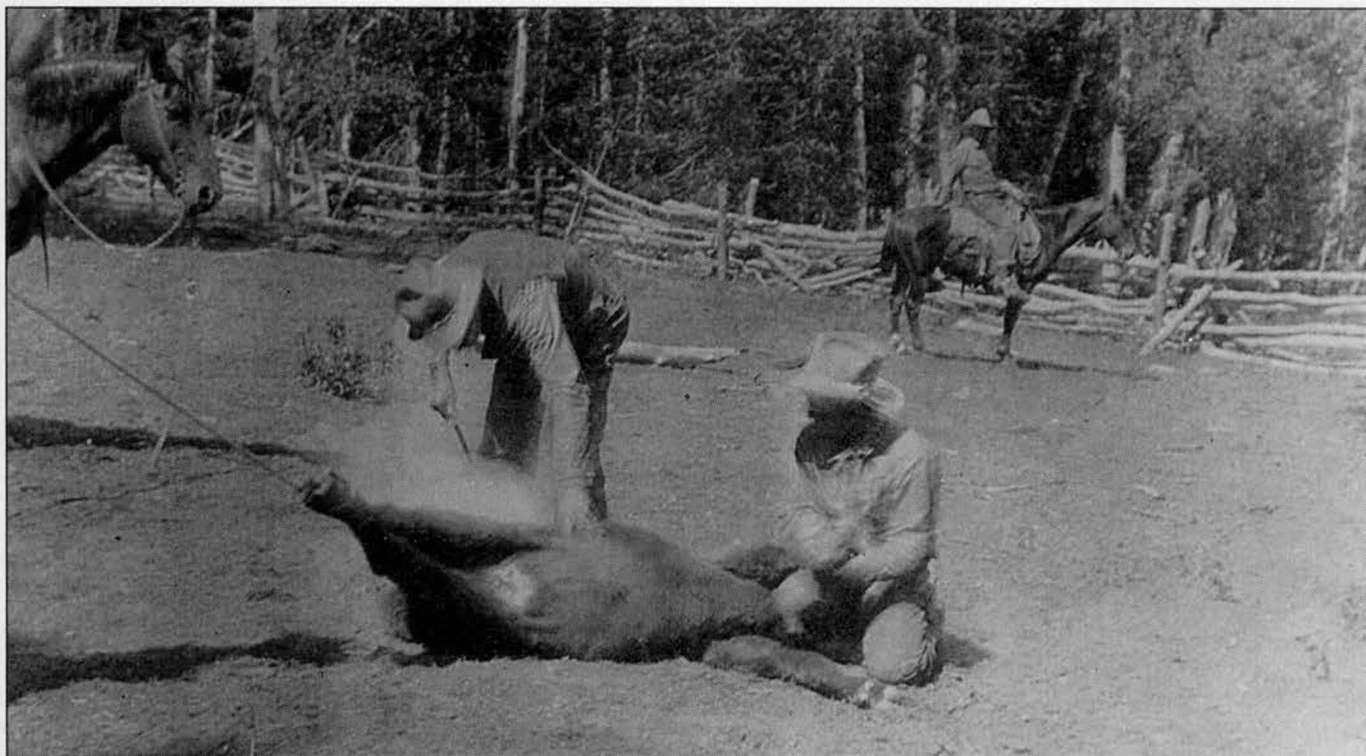
On the trip Nutter met the notorious Alferd Packer, who was later convicted of cannibalism. Even though winter was fast approaching, Packer, who claimed to be familiar with the area, convinced the group to continue, with him as their guide. Packer led the fateful expedition until it reached the winter camp of Chief Ouray and his Ute Indians near present-day Montrose, Colorado. Because of the horrendous conditions they had faced up to that point and Packer's poor knowledge of the area, the group realized they had been lost almost since leaving Provo.



Preston Nutter on one of his famous mules, with his dog Coallie.

OURAY ADVISED the party not to continue, but rather to sit out the winter with the Utes in the low-lying areas of Colorado. He predicted dire consequences for anyone trying to cross the San Juan region during the winter. Seeing his leadership questioned, Packer told the group that Ouray was only after their gold and money. He convinced five members of the party to continue, but Nutter and the others remained with Chief Ouray.

Early the next spring Nutter arrived at the Los Pinos Agency in Colorado Territory at about the same time as Packer. Nutter recognized Packer, who looked fat and well fed and had plenty of money. Packer's accounts of the journey were so varied and unbelievable that Nutter soon recognized them as untrue. Nutter took credit for getting Packer to retrace his steps



Special Collections, University of Utah Library

Cowboys brand a calf at the Nutter Ranch.

through the San Juan region. Packer led Nutter on a wild goose chase; not until the winter snows had melted did Nutter find the remains of the five men whom Packer had eaten.

When Packer was eventually brought to trial, Nutter was the prosecution's chief witness. By the time he testified in court, Nutter had already served one term in the Colorado state legislature and established a successful freighting business.

Nutter realized there was more money in hauling ore than in prospecting for it, but to get into the freighting business he had to purchase ox teams, horses, wagons, and mules. To obtain the mules he traveled to San Diego, where he purchased unbroken, untrained stock. During the trip back to Colorado, each man rode a different mule every day, so when they arrived at their destination they were ready for the wagons. That was Nutter's introduction to the animals that soon became his trademark.

In 1883 Nutter gave up his seat in the legislature and sought to enter the cattle business. He had been buying cattle for years and had built a small herd, but decided to enter ranching full time when he realized cross-country railroads would make his freighting business obsolete.

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Nutter turned his attention to the country he had seen while making his way to Colorado—Utah, especially the area around Thompson Spring and north to Hill Creek. The ground was fertile, few people lived there, and a new railroad was under construction at Thompson.

Nutter's first acquisition was a parcel of land near Thompson Spring described as "ten by thirty miles," and he transferred his cattle to the property. He soon had the opportunity to purchase all the cattle of the Cleveland Cattle Company, which had been experimenting with Hereford cows and bulls, but wanted to get another type. Nutter eventually signed a "mutual exchange" agreement with them which gave him 1,000 head of cattle.

Nutter then took on two partners, giving him the cash to enlarge his business. In 1889 he was able to buy out the partners. About the same time he signed an agreement to supply troops at Fort Duchesne in northeastern Utah with beef and also began shipping cattle to the East.

About 1893 Nutter again took two partners and signed a lease with the United States government to graze his cattle in Utah's Strawberry Valley. He then sent word to the major cattle companies in the West that he was ready to stock his range and indicated he would need 5,000 head of cattle to accomplish the

task. He purchased herds ranging in size from twenty-five to nine hundred head.

Nutter then began to look for some prime winter range. He eventually chose the Arizona Strip, the narrow strip of land north of the Grand Canyon and south of the Utah state line. Several Mormon ranchers from St. George, Utah, had been using the strip, but without valid government grazing permits.

When Nutter decided to move into the area, he faced stiff opposition from locals, including Anthony Ivins, an apostle in the Mormon Church and owner and manager of the Mohave Cattle Company. Nutter slowly acquired title to much of the land, but more importantly, he developed some of the springs and acquired title to others. Soon the locals discovered Nutter controlled the strip by controlling the water. A war could have raged for years if Nutter had not gone to battle in the courts and brought in Texas cowboys to protect the springs. In the spring of 1896 he bought out his competition.

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Nutter's handling of matters on the strip forced him to get rid of his partners, who complained he was too soft on the locals there. But he enjoyed a good fight only in court and did not use even that avenue unless he knew he was right. He also knew what it meant to be a good neighbor. Realizing most his neighbors were Mormon, he did everything he could to get along with them, short of joining the church.

When his lease on the Strawberry Valley ran out, Nutter again sought new ground, a place with natural winter and summer range. When his attention turned to Nine-Mile Canyon in Utah, Nutter owned 25,000 head of cattle and immediately began building a road up Cottonwood Canyon to gain access to the Tavaputs Plateau. He also found excellent grazing land available in Range Valley overlooking Range Creek in Emery County, where the creek joins the Green River. He lacked one thing, though, a headquarters for the operation. That became available in early 1902.

On February 22, 1902, Nutter purchased the Brock place in Nine-Mile Canyon and made it his permanent home. Pete Francis had been leasing the property and had been managing

Special Collections, University of Utah Library

Preston Nutter's daughters, Catherine and Virginia, feed a "bummer" lamb, one that was raised by hand.

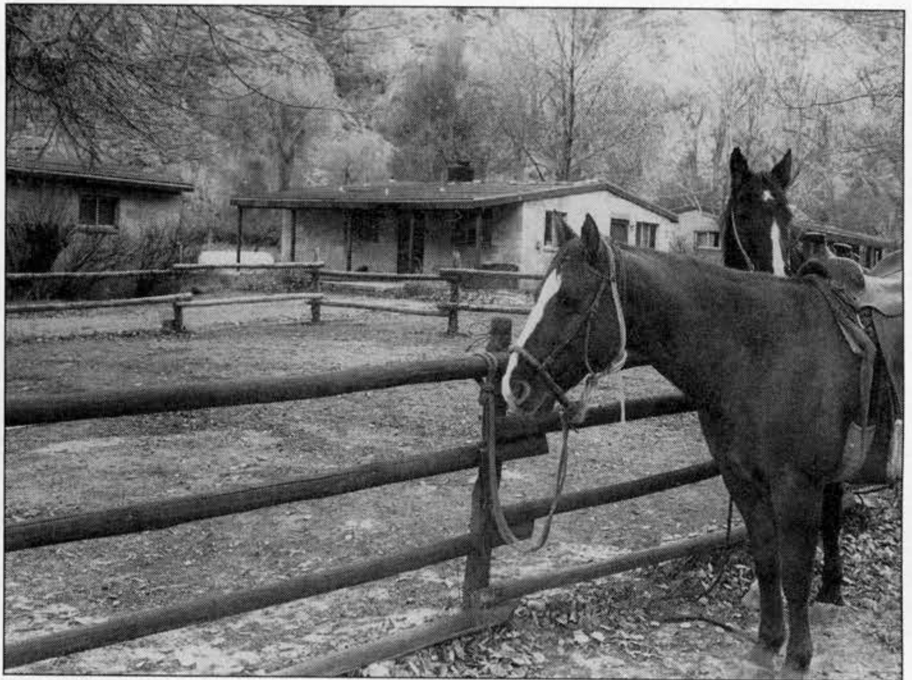
the hotel and saloon. Francis was called to the saloon one evening to break up a fight and was shot and killed. His wife decided to sell the property to Nutter. He paid the grieving widow $4,916 for the property and improvements including twenty-five gallons of whiskey, twenty-five gallons of alcohol, a barrel of soda, and numerous wagons and horses.

Nutter remained a bachelor until the age of fifty-eight. In 1905 he met Katherine Fenton, a young, attractive telegraph station operator from Colorado Springs, Colorado. She had put her name in the lottery when the Uintah Basin was opened to homesteaders in 1905. She drew a winning number and on one of her visits to the basin she met Nutter.

Two differing stories describe their meeting. The first says Katherine was on a stage with a new driver who missed his stage stop and did not realize his mistake until he reached Nutter's place. The other, an oral history from a man who went to work at the ranch the year Nutter and Katherine met, says Katherine and a girlfriend were in a rented buggy when a wheel came off near the ranch. She inquired if they could spend the night there and was told no women had ever stayed at the ranch and never would. She persisted and when Nutter saw her, he changed his mind. The two stranded females spent the night in Nutter's bed while he slept elsewhere.

Over the next three years Katherine kept her job and made the required number of visits to her homestead. She presumably stopped by the ranch to visit Nutter, because in 1908, when she was thirty years old, they were married. Katherine said the only reason he agreed to a honeymoon was that she agreed to combine it with a cattle buying trip to the East.

Katherine had auburn hair and pretty blue eyes and was a "perfect 34"—she refused to pay for alterations on any dress she purchased. She brought a woman's touch to the ranch, turning the bachelor's quarters into a home with such purchases as a new stove, curtains, numerous fruit trees, and shrubs.



Author's Photo

The Nutter ranch as it appears today.

She must not have excelled at cooking, though, because Nutter almost immediately sent her to cooking school. The Nutters had two daughters, Catherine and Virginia.

Katherine did not like life in the isolated canyon the first few years. Her letters contain phrases such as, "like to buy a nice home for the girls and give them the best," or "We've been so unsettled these many years I just want to get settled for once and all."

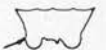
NUTTER'S LETTERS to Katherine show he loved her deeply. He used phrases such as "all my love Preston," and "lovingly Preston," but he always referred to her as Katherine in everyday conversation. She called him "my daddy," "daddy mine," or "daddy darling."

In his old age Nutter's hair turned pure white and his blue-grey eyes developed cataracts. He remained stubbornly independent, though, and had the cataracts surgically removed during a trip back east; he did not tell Katherine of the operation until he returned home.

The extent of Nutter's holdings will never be completely known. Freight bills show him shipping as many as 7,500 cattle at one time. A *Salt Lake Tribune* article from 1937 estimated the Arizona Strip was home to more than 20,000 head of Nutter cattle, and his family reports that he turned down a million-dollar offer for the ranch during the Depression.

Nutter fell off a horse late in life and never fully recovered from his injuries; he died Tuesday, January 28, 1936. That evening's *Tribune* described him as "one of the last links between the old west and the new." The newspaper continued, saying he was "over six feet tall, white-haired, grey-eyed, straight as a lodge pole pine and physically hard as the saddle he rode. From the Masonic Temple, Wednesday afternoon will be buried Utah's last great cattle king—Preston Nutter."

Katherine Fenton Nutter died in 1965. Howard Price, Virginia Nutter's husband, operated the ranch even after his wife's death. In 1980 he sold it to a Dallas-based oil company that wanted access to the huge tar-sand and oil-shale deposits on the Tavaputs Plateau. The company attempted to operate the ranch for several years but soon realized they were better oilmen than ranchers.



William R. Abercrombie

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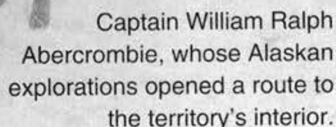


Captain William Ralph Abercrombie, whose Alaskan explorations opened a route to the territory's interior.

By JOAN RAWLINS BIGGAR

High above Alaska's Prince William Sound, Captain William Ralph Abercrombie of the Second United States Infantry slogged through the alpine tundra of Thompson Pass, his road survey crew behind him. Rain dripped from his battered hat and fog hid Keystone Canyon below. Abercrombie's expedition of 1899 had just pushed the new Trans-Alaska Military Wagon Road through the canyon and into the pass. Still ahead lay the Copper River country and the Klondike goldfields.

Abercrombie's road-building expedition was, in fact, his third venture into Alaska's interior. It was the culmination of his efforts to find an overland route to the region. His first expedition, in 1884, ended in disappointment; his second, in 1898, brought success.

In 1883, Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka had proved the Chilkoot Pass could be a viable route for American miners and traders journeying into the Yukon Valley. However, more than four hundred miles of the trail ran through Canada, and developers interested in Alaska realized that an all-American route to the interior would someday be vitally important.

On May 21, 1884, twenty-seven-year-old Second Lieutenant Abercrombie received orders to command an expedition continuing Schwatka's explorations. No one knew much about Alaska's interior, but as white miners and traders filtered into the country, the possibility of conflict with Indians increased. Thus Abercrombie had

der for Alaska

orders to discover all he could about the land and its inhabitants.

On June 1 Abercrombie left Portland, Oregon, with four assistants. The party stopped at Sitka, where Abercrombie hired a Russian-Indian pilot to guide them up the Copper River. On the morning of June 16 they arrived at Nuchek, an old Russian trading station on Hinchenbrook Island in Prince William Sound. Their pilot said Russian traders called the area the Copper River Country.

Abercrombie expected their steamer to take them up the Copper River (south and east of present-day Cordova), where the party would disembark and proceed on foot through the mountains to the interior; however, the plans soon changed. The agent at the station said they were about sixty miles from the mouth of the Copper River, but neither he nor the guide knew just where the river lay. So, wrote Abercrombie, the party stood on the beach with about one hundred natives, "watching the steamer head south to civilization...and the situation was not pleasant." It became even worse when they could find only an old Russian boat and a native *bidarra* (sealskin covered canoe) for transportation.

Expedition members had rowed for two days when the clear water of the sound turned milky gray. The Indian guides "seemed much excited, until finally our Russian ship's boat, which drew probably 18 inches of water, grounded, notwithstanding the fact that we were some two or three miles from land." Stranded on the mud flats at the mouth of the Copper River, they had to wait for flood tide to enter the river itself.

The party camped that evening at the village of Alaganik. The Indians told them that the dangerous river they wanted to ascend had swallowed up early Russian explorers. However, after much persuasion, some of them agreed to help, and the party continued upriver.

Abercrombie stopped to climb a mountainside. He discovered that below him the delta stretched thirty miles across a maze of small streams and sandbars for as far as he could see. Where he had hoped to travel seventy to eighty miles upstream in a steamer drawing eighteen feet of water, only light draft canoes could proceed to the head of the delta, ninety miles inland, where the Copper River Valley began.

The explorers and their Indian guides worked their way upstream, cordelling the boats where the current ran too fast for rowing. When brush on the banks prohibited walking, they waded in the river, plunging into deep holes which the icy water hid. At times they wrestled the boats over sandbars and drift banks.

Then the explorers faced a new hazard—floating ice. Climbing a mountain, Abercrombie saw a high wall of ice running into the mountains as far as he could see. To the north and almost adjoining that wall, another glacier fronted the river. Icebergs fell from the Miles and Childs glaciers and careened toward the explorers. The powerful current washed the riverbank from under the face of the glaciers, and chunks of ice, some 300 or 400 feet high, crashed into the river with a thunder that people could hear and feel twenty miles away.

The ice crushed one of the small native canoes; its owner drowned. Rain fell steadily and at times ice choked the river. Abercrombie wrote, "On the night of July 21st...large bergs came sailing majestically down-stream, passing and repassing each other as the water forced them from one side of the river to the other. On many of them were large bowlders that looked not unlike passengers. These would occasionally tilt in striking a sand-bar so as to throw the bowlders into the river. Then, again, two large bergs would come together with a shock that would make the ground tremble. This, taken together with the roar of the water, had a tendency to make us a little timid in the handling of our boat."

The men suffered from biting

> *The men suffered from biting insects, nettle stings, cold rain, and wind; immersion in the glacial waters also caused painful, swollen joints. As they had not had room to bring tents, at night the men kept warm by heating flat stones, rolling them in their wet blankets, and hugging both blanket and stone.*

Both Photos: National Archives

A pack train on the Trans-Alaska Military Road in Keystone Canyon, June 19, 1899. Traces of this road are still visible across the canyon from Richardson Highway.

Captain Abercrombie (right) and foreman Holland (center) on a bridge over a

insects, nettle stings, cold rain, and wind; immersion in the glacial waters also caused painful, swollen joints. As they had not had room to bring tents, at night the men kept warm by heating flat stones, rolling them in their wet blankets, and hugging both blanket and stone.

The explorers cut a trail to Miles Glacier, intending to carry their canoes across the ice to bypass a stretch of dangerous water. But after twelve hard miles, they discovered the glacier had so many crevasses they had to return.

Between ice discharges, the men crossed to the other side of the river and hauled their boats eight miles upstream to a seething three-mile whirlpool later known as the "Abercrombie Rapids." There, after three months and ninety miles of hard, dangerous work, the weary Abercrombie finally conceded that as a route of travel from the coast to the interior, the Copper River was worthless.

On September 1, the explorers shot past the face of Miles Glacier and down to Alaganik, the village at the mouth of the river. They passed in two days what had taken them all summer to cover going upstream.

After barely surviving a storm on Prince William Sound, the party returned to Hinchenbrook Island September 10. There Abercrombie learned of a man seventy miles distant who might give him information on a different route into the Copper River Valley. The route, he learned, began at Port Valdez, at the head of Valdez Arm.

The next day Abercrombie and four natives set out across the Sound in a canoe. He found the man, a Russian exile named Plutoniff, who told him that before 1868, the Copper River Indians had come to Port Valdez through a now-forgotten mountain pass to trade their furs. In 1868, smallpox swept away the entire village of coastal natives at Port Valdez. After that, the interior Indians came down the Copper River on the ice to trade.

Abercrombie persuaded the old Russian to send his sons with him to the head of the inlet. On either side, glacier covered mountains thrust up from the sea. Behind them rose other high ranges. Rounding a sharp turn, the explorers saw ahead of them the portage they sought—a high glacier between two mountains.

After they had made a dangerous crossing on the rotting snow of Valdez Glacier, Abercrombie's guides pointed out the direction the Indians had used in returning to the Copper River Country. With that meager information, the party returned to its base, Vancouver Barracks on the Columbia River. Abercrombie was disappointed that he failed to pioneer an all-American route into Alaska's interior, but his careful, detailed records of the expedition helped make the territory known to the rest of the country.

Early the next spring another explorer, Lieutenant Henry Allen, successfully led a party up the frozen Copper River. During the 1,500-mile journey, one of the greatest North American explorations, they charted three major river systems, the Copper, the Tanana, and the Yukon.

After that, little else was done to establish an interior Alaskan route until the Klondike gold rush of the late 1890s. For twenty years a boundary dispute between Alaska and Canada had simmered; it heated up again with the prospect of gold. To reach the goldfields, most prospec-

stream from Corbin Glacier, July 6, 1899. The kneeling man's identity is not known.

tors started from Haines Mission or Dyea at the head of the Lynn Canal, and passed through territory that Canada claimed, even though they had to pay a burdensome duty on everything in their outfits. Both countries wanted the disputed area should the gold discoveries live up to their promise. To protect its interests, the United States ordered troops to occupy the territory.

Entrepreneurs flooded the market with guide books showing imaginary "All-American" routes to the Yukon. As a result, thousands headed for Port Valdez in search of the promised routes. They were "a terrifyingly incompetent mass of humanity," according to now-Captain Abercrombie. He had to rescue many of them in the winter of 1898–99.

In 1898, the United States Senate directed Secretary of War Russell Alexander Algar to explore all possible routes of travel from the Gulf of Alaska through to the Yukon River and locate the long-sought All-American route. To provide transportation for three proposed expeditions, the War Department imported more than 500 reindeer from Norway, plus sleds and equipment, and 113 Lapland caretakers.

Abercrombie was to organize one of the expeditions. When he arrived at Haines Mission in April 1898, he found that the reindeer, because of their long ocean passage, the cross-continental journey, and the lack of proper food, were unfit for use. Pushing on to Valdez, Abercrombie at once organized small parties to carry out such explorations in Prince William Sound and the nearby mountain passes as could be made without the use of pack animals.

Abercrombie found about 4,000 gold seekers near Valdez and scattered over the Valdez Glacier. Most had only small hand-sleds on which they hoped to transport their goods to the interior; most of them never reached the goldfields.

Abercrombie commented, "Their failure was due to their advanced age, the average being 47 years, and lack of knowledge of mining. Ninety-five percent had failed in business ventures many times, and joined the gold rush in the hope that they might be one of the lucky men to strike it rich."

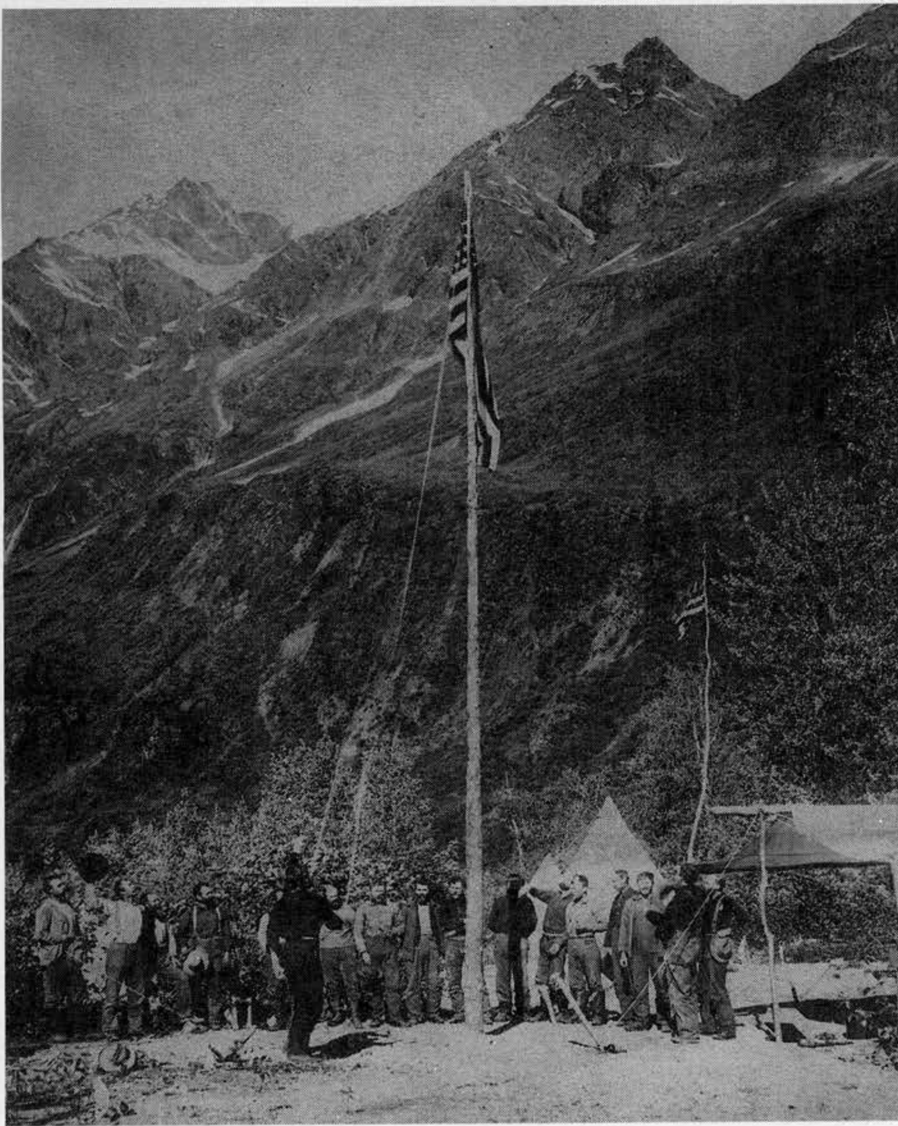
Abercrombie caught a ride back to Seattle on a steamer which had

National Archives

Workers unload supplies for Abercrombie's 1899 expedition. At least one woman is pictured; several women are known to have accompanied their prospector menfolk across the Valdez Glacier.

realized he was in trouble. A boulder toppled his horse and Abercrombie clung to the animal's mane as it washed downstream in the thirty-five-degree water. Abercrombie said, "The horse lodged against a large rock with his feet uppermost, with my body pinned under him. I...grabbed the animal by the tail...the horse scrambled up the bank and pulled me up with him. The water registered 35 degrees, so that when I reached the bank, I was unable to stand." His left side was black and blue and his left hand, which the horse had kicked, was swollen to twice its size.

Abercrombie realized that to bridge the stream and then cut fifty miles of trail would take the rest of the season. Accordingly, he retreated to his camp at the foot of Valdez Glacier with all four sections of his expedition. He had previously set men to work building small stone markers to follow over the thirty-mile-long, 5,000-foot-high glacier.



National Archives

Road builders raise the first United States flag on the Trans-Alaska Military Road, July 4, 1899. The photo shows the bench formation on the mountains which rise abruptly from the flat to about 5,500 feet.

just discharged another load of gold-seekers at Valdez. From Seattle he crossed the Cascade mountains and bought forty pack horses from the Yakima Indians.

During his absence, one of his small parties went up the narrow gorge which Abercrombie called Keystone Canyon. The men reported that the route crossed deep glacial streams, but it would reach the Copper River. Abercrombie realized it was the pass he had missed in 1884.

Because another of his small parties had reported the Valdez Glacier uncrossable with pack animals at that season of the year, he decided to take his entire force up the Lowe River, through the Keystone Canyon, and into the interior. Never one to send others where he would not first go himself, he took a packer and two horses up the Valdez Valley.

Near the canyon, Abercrombie crossed a number of rapid glacial streams, then arrived at the main stream. Constant rain the previous ten days had swollen it to a raging torrent. Prospectors camped nearby had been unable to cross, but, Abercrombie reported "as I had already forded a number of very ugly-looking streams, and as it was absolutely necessary to cross this one if I went in via Lowe River, I disregarded all advice in the matter and rode my horse into the stream."

In midstream he heard boulders washing along the river bottom and

ON AUGUST 5, 1898, the expedition set out in heavy fog and rain. The pack train proceeded over the glacier in sections of five horses, a man leading each horse. An extra man and extra rope were assigned to each section.

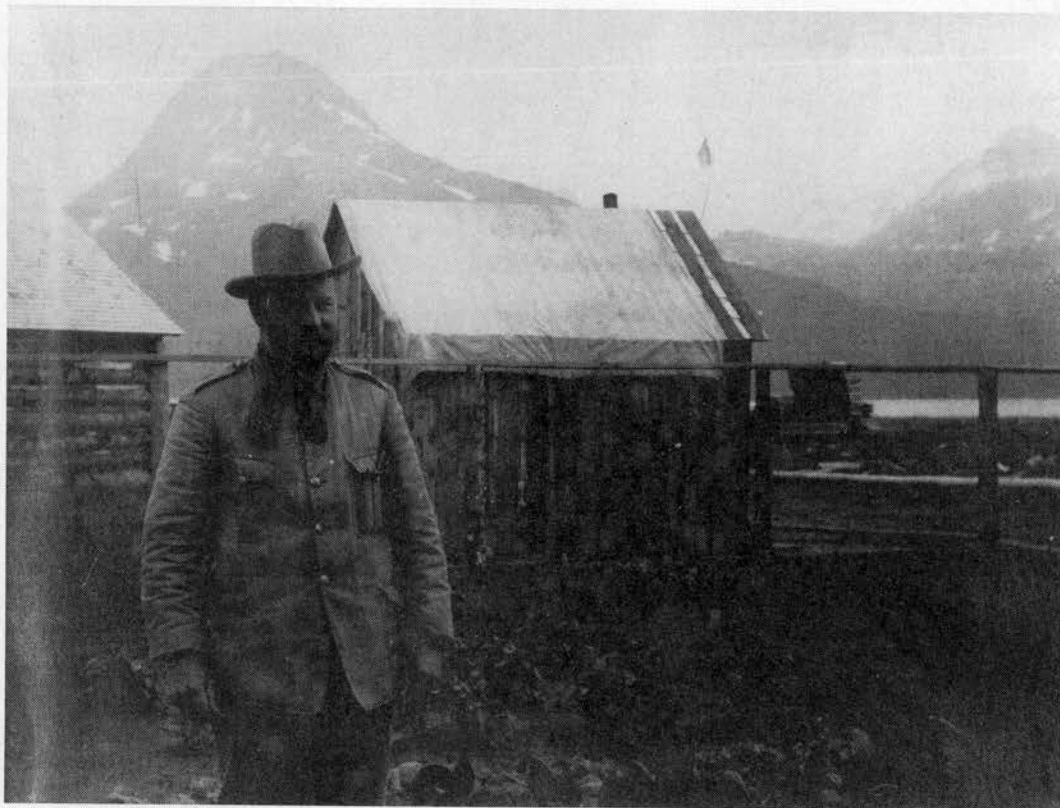
In its descent to the coast, the glacier fell in a series of six levels, or benches, fractured by crevasses up to 300 feet deep. During the winter, snow forms arches over such glacier crevasses. The arches, if not sun-weakened, can hold the weight of a horse. Despite the late season, Abercrombie hoped to take the pack train across the snow bridges, over the glacier, and into the Copper River Valley.

Their guide led the way from one monument to the next. Abercrombie followed, leading his own horse on which he had packed a five-gallon keg of whiskey.

The horses seemed to sense danger ahead. They trembled and pushed their noses against the backs of the men leading them. Frequently an animal broke through a snow arch and every man in the section helped pull it out.

At the top of the first bench, the men groped through thick fog. Melting ice had caused some of the markers to slide away. The expedition would stop while the guide went ahead to find the next monument, and when he called, the train moved forward again until they had gone twelve miles up the glacier.

Torrents of icy rain continued to fall. Night descended and, as they could see to go no farther, they stretched picket lines from one ice hummock to another and portioned grain out on the ice in front of the tethered pack animals. Then the men had their rations—a small tin cup of whiskey, some canned meat, hard-tack, and cheese.



National Archives

Captain Abercrombie at an experimental garden at Valdez, September 15, 1899. The garden produced beets, turnips, radishes, lettuce, potatoes, oats, and cabbages.

Sleep was out of the question; the men kept up a steady tramp all night long behind the picket line. Abercrombie said, "during my twenty-two years of service on the frontier I never experienced a more desolate and miserable night. Not only was the night black, but the rain was continuous. Occasionally the mighty glacier would crack as it settled in its passage to the valley below, with a vibration that would cause the men to stop in their tramp and the horses to nicker with apprehension, if not fear. Then would follow a deafening roar as some thousands of tons of ice was detached from one of the hundreds of glaciers that fringed the mountain sides...the echo would die out finally down the valley many thousands of feet below. Like all other nights, this one came to an end."

On the fourth bench the party made slow progress through knee-deep slush, not more than a quarter-mile per hour, as they worked in and out of a maze of crevasses. Fog-shrouded ice cliffs through which the wind shrieked and moaned composed the fifth bench. The expedition detoured over the snow slides on the right side of the pass. From the summit, the glacier fell about 1,100 feet in a mile. The men and animals on the trail far above in the fog looked to those below them like small birds in single file. By resting every five to ten yards, the weary men finally reached the top.

"The wind," wrote Abercrombie, "was blowing a hurricane through the pass into the interior, accompanied by gusts of sleet and snow, which, freezing as fast as they struck, coated men and beasts with an armor of ice....I halted to wait for the rest of the party, but soon found that if I did not keep moving I would freeze. My horse also suffered severely from the cold. The wind was terrific. In vain I tried to catch some landmark."

The men and horses drifted with the storm. Fortunately, the peaks funneled the wind through the middle of the pass. Had it blown from the left or right, the expedition would have wandered out onto the ice cap and been lost.

The expedition traveled five or six hours, while the storm made it impossible for the men to see each other. Finally they rounded a rocky cliff and Abercrombie said he "beheld the most beautiful sight I ever witnessed. The change was almost magical. Two yards after passing behind the shelter of this rocky cliff, there was a perfect haven of rest and sunshine, while out of the pass rushed the howling storm like the water out of the nozzle of a fire hose." Abercrombie continued, "I had now successfully crossed Valdez Glacier at a season of the year when it was universally conceded to be impassable for man, making the journey in twenty-nine consecutive hours of practically continuous work, without sleep, rest, or shelter."

After stopping a couple of days in a grassy meadow while the frostbitten, battered men and horses recuperated, the explorers pushed on past Klutena Lake and the Klutena River toward the Copper. Along the way they dodged showers of sparks and falling, flaming trees. Entire valleys seemed to be burning, the result of prospectors' carelessness

with campfires. Expedition members passed camps of many who complained they couldn't carry enough food into the mountains to prospect successfully. The prospectors blamed the "government outfit" for not building them a trail, and themselves for not bringing pack animals.

Arriving at the Copper River, Abercrombie's men split up to cover more territory. Those with Abercrombie eventually boated down the Copper to the Abercrombie Rapids, the spot where his 1884 expedition had ended. He found the two glaciers much smaller than fourteen years earlier. The river, though less violent, was still almost unnavigable.

THEY STOPPED once again at Alaganik, on the Copper River delta, then continued along the shores of Prince William Sound to Port Valdez. They arrived October 16, having covered more than 800 miles on foot, horseback, raft, and boat.

As they had started so late in the season, Abercrombie recommended that the expedition be continued the following year. With that possibility in mind, when they started over the glacier, he had left Quartermaster's Agent Charles Brown at work in Port Valdez building a winter cantonment. By October, returning miners had built a long stable, a storehouse, and a granary in payment for aid the army had given them.

Abercrombie departed for the states in December. The next spring he would command an expedition to open a road from Valdez to Copper Center, the first white settlement in the interior, and from there to Eagle City on the Yukon.

Meanwhile, many prospectors who had stayed in the Copper River valley during the previous summer's exodus fell sick with scurvy. They panicked and tried to cross the Valdez Glacier in mid-winter. Only one-third of them made it.

Abercrombie and his road builders arrived at Valdez on April 21, 1899. Abercrombie wrote, "One of the first men from whom I could get an intelligent account of the condition of things was quartermaster's agent Charles Brown, whose salutation to me was 'My God, Captain, it has been clear hell!'"

National Archives
Charles Brown, Abercrombie's quartermaster agent.

Brown had housed eighty to one hundred destitute prospectors, some of whom had gone mad in the terrible crossing, raving of a "glacier demon" which tried to throw men off the glacier. They lived fifteen to twenty men per twelve-by-fifteen-foot log cabin. At night they spread their blankets on the floor to sleep. Many were sick; others frostbitten. They had no way to bathe. Wet, unwashed clothes hung from ropes stretched across the cabin. The stench was enough to poison a man in good health, and was, said Abercrombie, "sure death to one in ill health."

Abercrombie measured out relief supplies and arranged transportation home for the destitute, helping more than 500 men. Some of them hired on to help build the new road.

That season the construction party cleared and built trails suitable for packhorses ninety-three miles into the interior. They built twenty-six bridges and constructed relay stations along the route.

Within the next few years the trail was extended to Eagle, with a branch to Fairbanks. The Trans-Alaska Military Road became a road suitable for wagons in summer and sleds in winter. When the road was rebuilt to automobile specifications, it became the present Richardson Highway.

Abercrombie claimed to have personally traveled over more territory than any other white man in central Alaska. He realized that vast mineral deposits would induce investment of millions of dollars in the development of the country, and he urged the establishment of agriculture in the rich valley soils. His observations added invaluable knowledge about Alaska.

Monuments to Abercrombie in Alaska are few, but the Richardson Highway, once called the Abercrombie Trail, remains a reminder of the young lieutenant who found an all-American overland route into the interior. In less than twenty years, and due largely to his own efforts, he witnessed the settlement of a wilderness.

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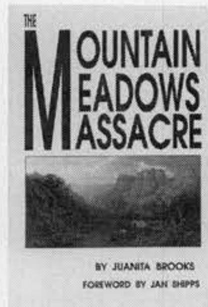

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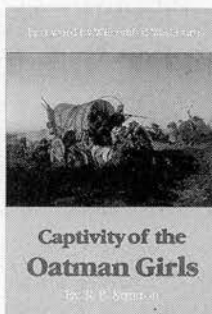

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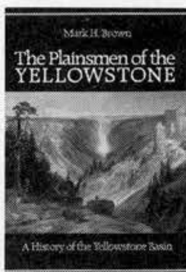

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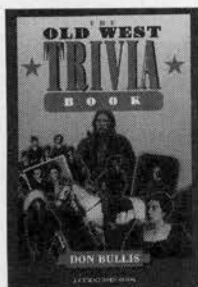

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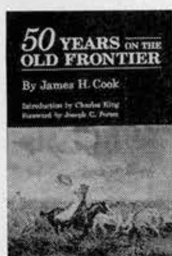

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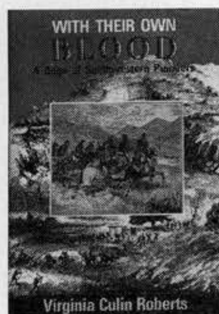

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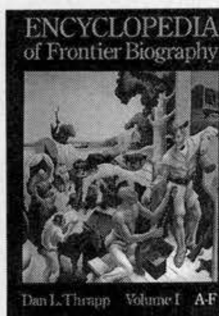

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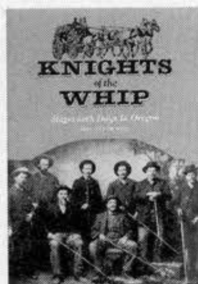

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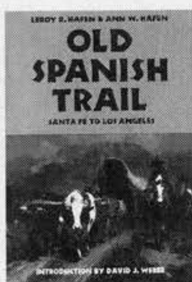

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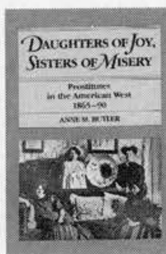

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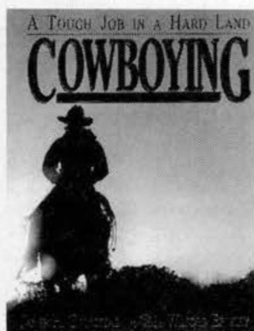

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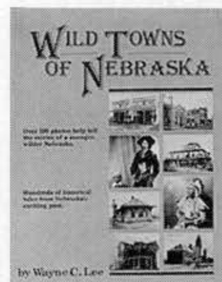

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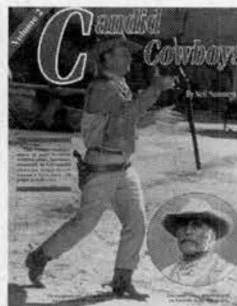

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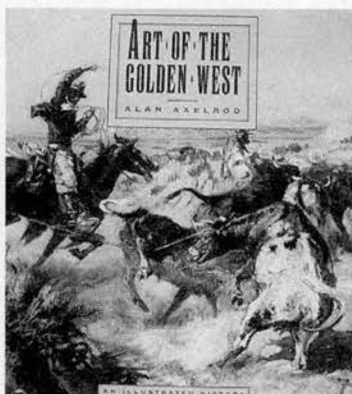

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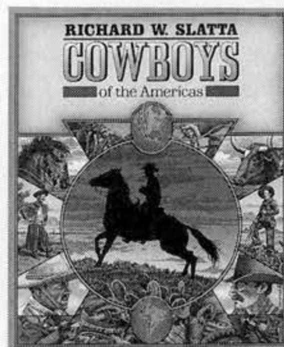

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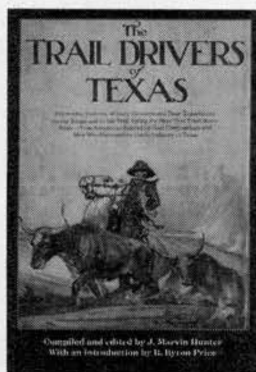

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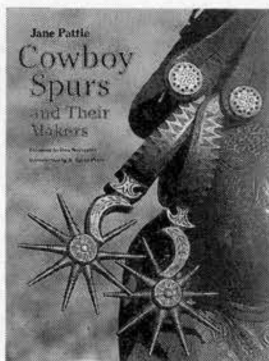

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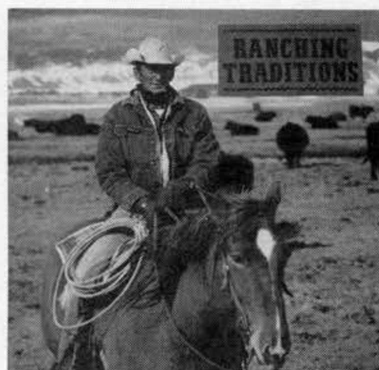

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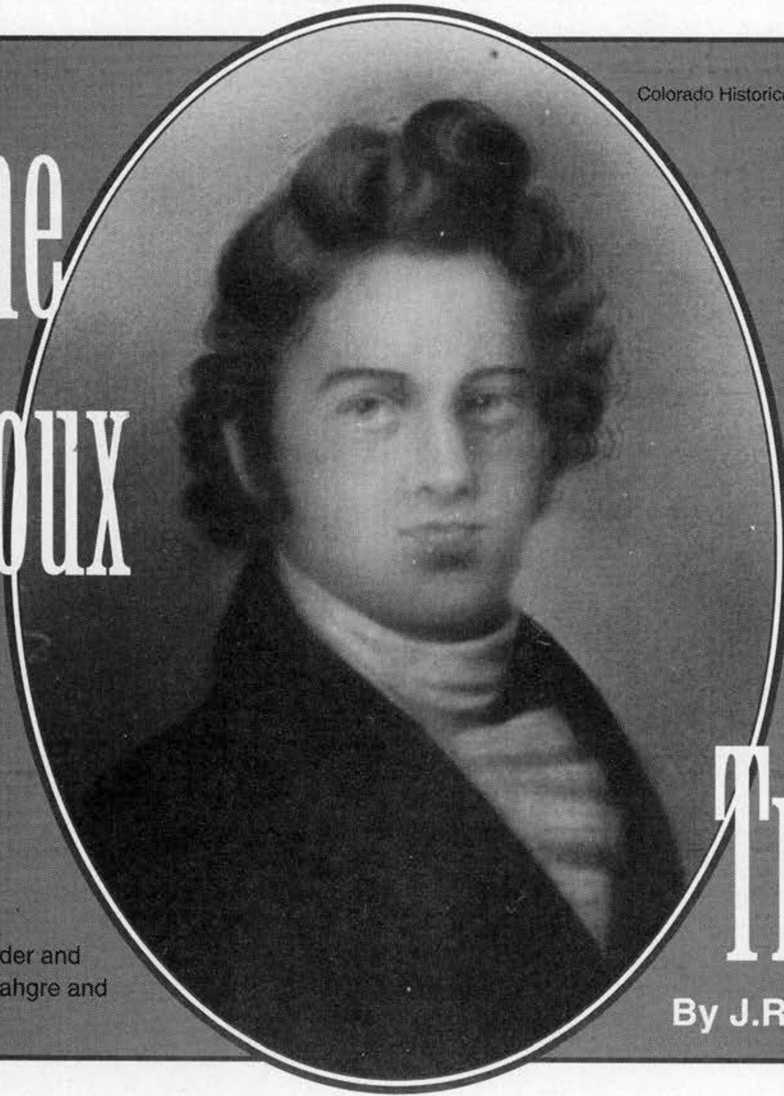
Antoine Robidoux Fur Trader



Colorado Historical Society

Antoine Robidoux, fur trader and founder of Forts Uncompahgre and Uinta.

By J.R. Kirkpatrick

Antoine Robidoux's future was certain from the time he was born. His family heritage was one of trapping and trading on the new American frontier, and he more than adequately carried on the tradition. During the height of the fur-trade era, he established two of the most important trade centers in the West.

In Santa Fe, Robidoux asked questions and listened. He talked to Mexican merchants, learning what imports sold best. Mountain men told him of untapped resources in the vast country to the north. Beaver streams were thick as cobwebs from the Gila River all the way to the Yellowstone, they said.

Robidoux's great-grandfather, a French émigré, settled near Quebec, Canada, in the seventeenth century and had a son, Joseph, who was born in Montreal in the early 1720s. Joseph married Marie Leblanc in 1749; she gave birth to Joseph Robidoux, II, a year later.

When Marie died in 1770, father and son drifted southwest to the shabby little town of St. Louis on the Mississippi River. There, after Joseph died in 1771, Joseph, II, began building the family fortune. Trapping and trading with Missouri Indians, his business flourished.

In 1782, Joseph, II, married Catherine Rollet. They had ten children—seven boys and three girls. Joseph, III, was born first, in August 1783; Marie Pelagie was born last, in 1802. Antoine, the sixth child, was born September 24, 1794. Before Joseph, II, died in 1809, his eldest son had taken over the business. Joseph, III, was a brilliant entrepreneur, and for the next twelve years, with all family members contributing, he multiplied the wealth.

When Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821 and lowered trade barriers with the United States, the Robidoux brothers looked to the southwest. Before 1821, only a few foolhardy mountain men had traded with Santa Fe and Taos in New Mexico, but soon Yankee merchants blazed a trail from Missouri markets to Mexico. A passport issued to Antoine Robidoux, dated February 29, 1824, granted him permission to travel across Indian territory to the Mexican border.

In Santa Fe, Antoine asked questions and listened. He talked to

Ray Frost, Cedaredge, Colorado

A French inscription in a canyon rock near the Colorado-Utah border. Translated it reads, "Antoine Robidoux passed here November 13, 1837, to establish a trading house on the River Green or Winte [probably Uinta]."

Mexican merchants, learning what imports sold best. Mountain men told him of untapped resources in the vast country to the north. Beaver streams were thick as cobwebs from the Gila River all the way to the Yellowstone, they said. The area, part of Mexico known as the Intermontane Corridor, spread from the main ridges of the Rocky Mountains to the West Coast ranges.

After reporting to Joseph, III, Antoine made a second trip to Santa Fe in 1825, that time with brothers Isadore and Michel accompanying him. The exact year Antoine left to explore the Corridor is unknown, but most historians set the date as 1827 or 1828. With Mexican laborers and trappers, he discovered an immense land of rivers and streams, mountains and valleys, much of it seen by only a few white men. He visited Ute encampments, befriending the Indians.

Antoine built a trading post near the confluence of the Uncompahgre and the Gunnison (variously called the Blue, Eagle Tail, or Grand) rivers. Only meager descriptions of the complex survive in letters or journals of visitors. The Reverend Marcus Whitman, on his perilous 1842–43 midwinter trek from the Northwest to Boston, observed that the log stockade was about one hundred feet square, with one or two small cabins enclosed. Records in New Mexico archives say the fort consisted of "a few log buildings enclosed in a quadrangle of pickets."

Upon advice from the Utes, Antoine built his fort where cottonwood trees were thick, grass was plentiful along the river bottom, and the climate was mild. For his Mexican laborers and trappers, he built cabins and provided garden space. Robidoux built the fort near north-south Indian and mountain man trails. For wide-ranging, footloose white trappers, the fort was a godsend—it saved days of travel to Taos, Santa Fe, or the United States. For Utes, who until then had little contact with white men, the fort offered a variety of goods to swap for furs. The post was named Fort Robidoux but more commonly called Fort Uncompahgre.

On July 26, 1828, Antoine and brother, Louis, two years Antoine's junior, became Mexican citizens with legal trading and trapping rights. Later that year, as "Don Antonio" Robidoux, Antoine married Carmel Benevedes, the adopted daughter of New Mexico Governor

Author's Photo

Fort Uncompahgre resident Ed Maddox, in period costume, skinning a beaver.

Manuel Armijo. The honeymoon could not have lasted long. Soon Antoine left and returned to his trading post.

Brothers Louis and Isadore operated another trading post in Santa Fe, while another was in Taos. With the major warehouses in St. Louis sending supplies, triangular trade boomed. Antoine had a monopoly with the Utes, while mountain men increasingly bartered at the fort. An October 30, 1830, manifest of goods ordered from Taos included several kinds of blankets, cotton and woolen robes, scarves, scissors, buttons, knives, and 1,000 brass tacks.

Indians traded beaver and other furs for those items, as well as common necessities and luxuries. They wanted rifles and powder, knives and metal for arrow points, iron kettles and wool blankets. Sugar was in great demand; a small amount could cost a novice bargainer a good beaver plew. At their wives' insistence, men dickered for mirrors, ribbons, and glass bead necklaces; they especially liked items colored blue like fragments of the sky.

The United States forbade the sale of liquor to Indians, and the Mexican government banned the sale of rifles, but Antoine had a way around the prohibitions. He bought rifles from the United States, and liquor from Mexico. The whiskey, called Taos Lightning, was potent, with such additives as gunpowder and tobacco.

Antoine's men had no easy journey to transport merchandise to the fort from either Santa Fe or Taos. They had to scale Mosca Pass, descend into the San Luis Valley, then turn north over Cochetopa Pass. From necessity, they improved the rough, rugged trails. Following the Gunnison River, but bypassing its treacherous Black Canyon, they arrived at the Uncompahgre River. Possibly as early as 1827 or 1828, Antoine used horse and mule carts to transport goods.

Indians traded beaver and other furs for blankets, robes, scissors, and buttons, as well as common necessities and luxuries. They wanted rifles and powder, knives and metal for arrow points, iron kettles and wool blankets. Sugar was in great demand; a small amount could cost a novice bargainer a good beaver plew.

The Robidoux brothers had a link with Louisiana pirate Jean Lafitte. After plundering British vessels, Lafitte would slip the booty past New Orleans custom officials, then sail upriver to St. Louis. A bill of sale (discovered in 1949) listed items sold to Joseph, III. Some of the goods may have found their way into Ute hands via Fort Uncompahgre.

Trade at the fort flourished enough that Antoine expanded his business. Near the confluence of the

Author's Photo

Debbie Maddox prepares a meal in the *cocina* (kitchen).

White Rocks and Uinta rivers, about twenty miles west of present-day Vernal, Utah, he built Fort Uinta, which mountain men called "Fort Winty." The post was larger and sturdier than Fort Uncompahgre, constructed with stone walls and a stouter stockade. Kit Carson reported seeing Robidoux and a party of twenty men trading at the site in 1833, although the fort was not built until later in the decade.

Visit Recreated Fort Uncompahgre

No one, archaeologist or amateur, has pinpointed the exact location of Antoine Robidoux's Fort Uncompahgre. Scant early records place it 320 "chains" (a chain is sixty-six feet) west-southwest of the junction of the Uncompahgre and Gunnison Rivers. That would place it within four miles of the present-day city of Delta, Colorado. Captain John Gunnison, surveying for a transcontinental railroad route, noted the fort in 1853. Jim Baker, mountain man and scout, camped by the ruins in 1857. A homesteader, J.D. Dillard, demolished the remains of the fort in 1894, and a flood in 1914–15 apparently washed away any remaining artifacts.

Using sparse descriptions of Fort Uncompahgre and knowledge of other posts of the era, Delta has recreated the fort along the banks of the Gunnison River. The fort has more buildings than the original, but all are authentic. Dan Deuter, a fur trade historian, Ed Maddox, a fourth-generation trapper, and his wife, Debbie, live at the post year-round, practicing the routine and duties of 150 years ago. All wear period clothing.

A ten-foot fence of lightweight, closely-spaced pickets interlaced with rawhide thongs, surrounds the fort. Unlike the burly log stockades of military posts, the pickets had a more utilitarian purpose. When a trapper or Indian became too rowdy (or inebriated) he was escorted outside the pickets to straighten up or sober up. The barrier, however, could not withstand a war party's attack, such as the one in 1844.

Opposite the compound's

Some time after the fort's construction, about a day's ride south, one of Antoine's hired men, a California Indian, made off with some of the Robidoux's best horses. Kit Carson, who had a small trading post about a day's ride south of Uinta, called on a Ute from a nearby camp, and together they followed the horse thief's trail. Although the Ute played out, Carson pursued the herd for one hundred miles, killed the thief, and returned the horses to Antoine's drovers.

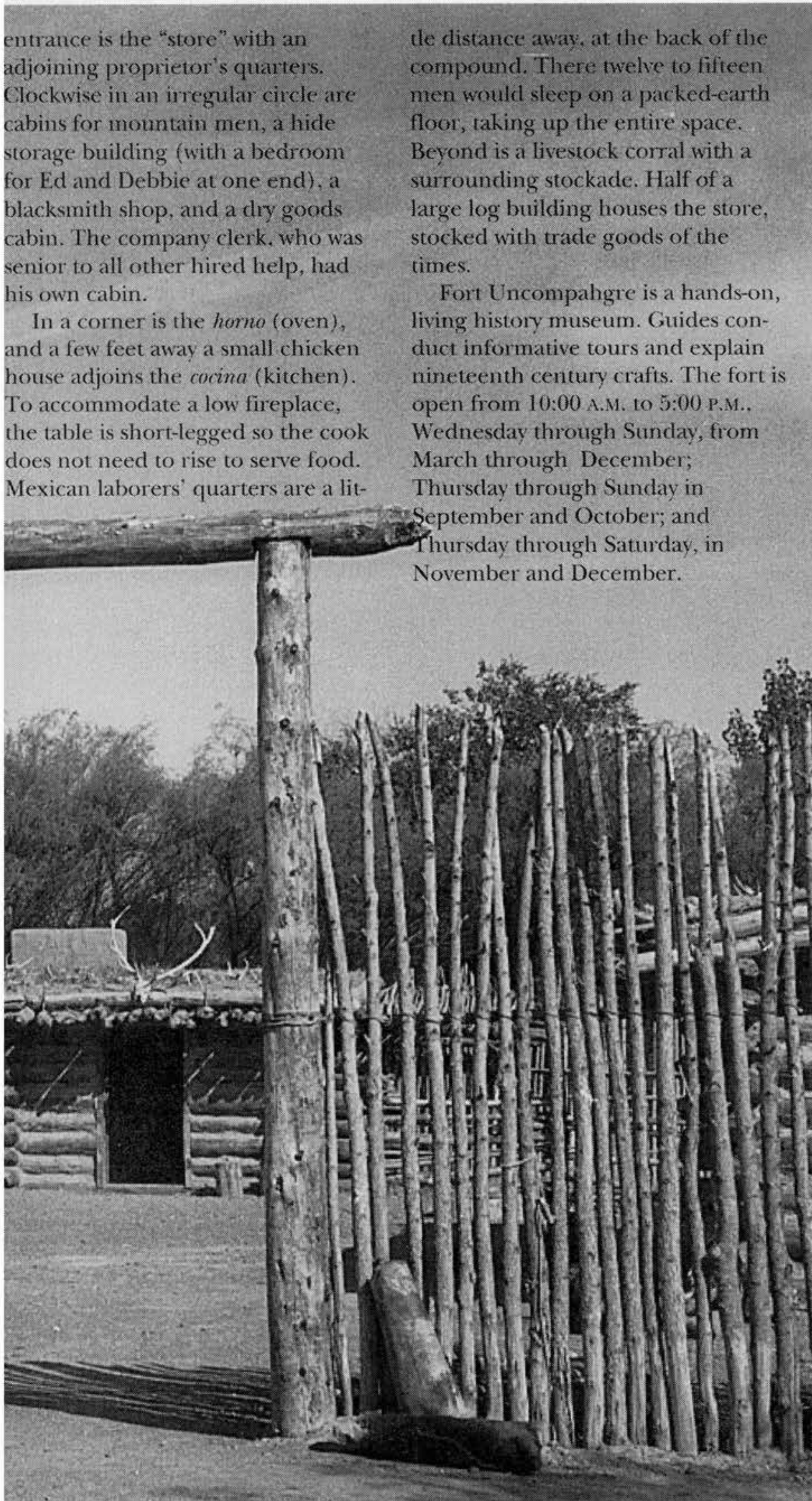
Business declined in the next few years, and Antoine experienced financial trouble. (While his brothers worked closely together, sharing profits, Antoine operated partly outside protection of the Robidoux umbrella). In Europe, beaver hats gave way to silk hats which were soon preferred by stylish gentlemen everywhere. Also, Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo increased the duty on goods from the United States, and Indians, some with too much Taos Lightning in their bellies, grew hostile over dishonest traders, kidnappings, and random killings.

Robidoux found himself owing money to a Simon Turley, a distiller of Taos Lightning. In 1840, Turley wrote to the American consul in Santa Fe for help collecting the debt. "I wold be glad if you wold Rite me what Chance you think thar is of gitting my money of Thopson and Robedou if it will be paid here or will I have to send to the united States plias Rite me a few lines to let me know what prospech thar are."

Later Robidoux also fell into debt with Charles Bent. When Bent contacted Governor Armijo seeking payment, the governor sided with Robidoux. But Bent would not back off. "I shall have my pay either by fair or foul means!" he said.

BENT GOT HIS pay. On October 11, 1842, Bent wrote the governor that, "On the seventh Mr. A. Robadoux gave me six hundred and fifty of Beaver to secure his debt to me, which he has the privilege of redeeming next July in St. Louis by paying up $1788.00 in either gold or silver."

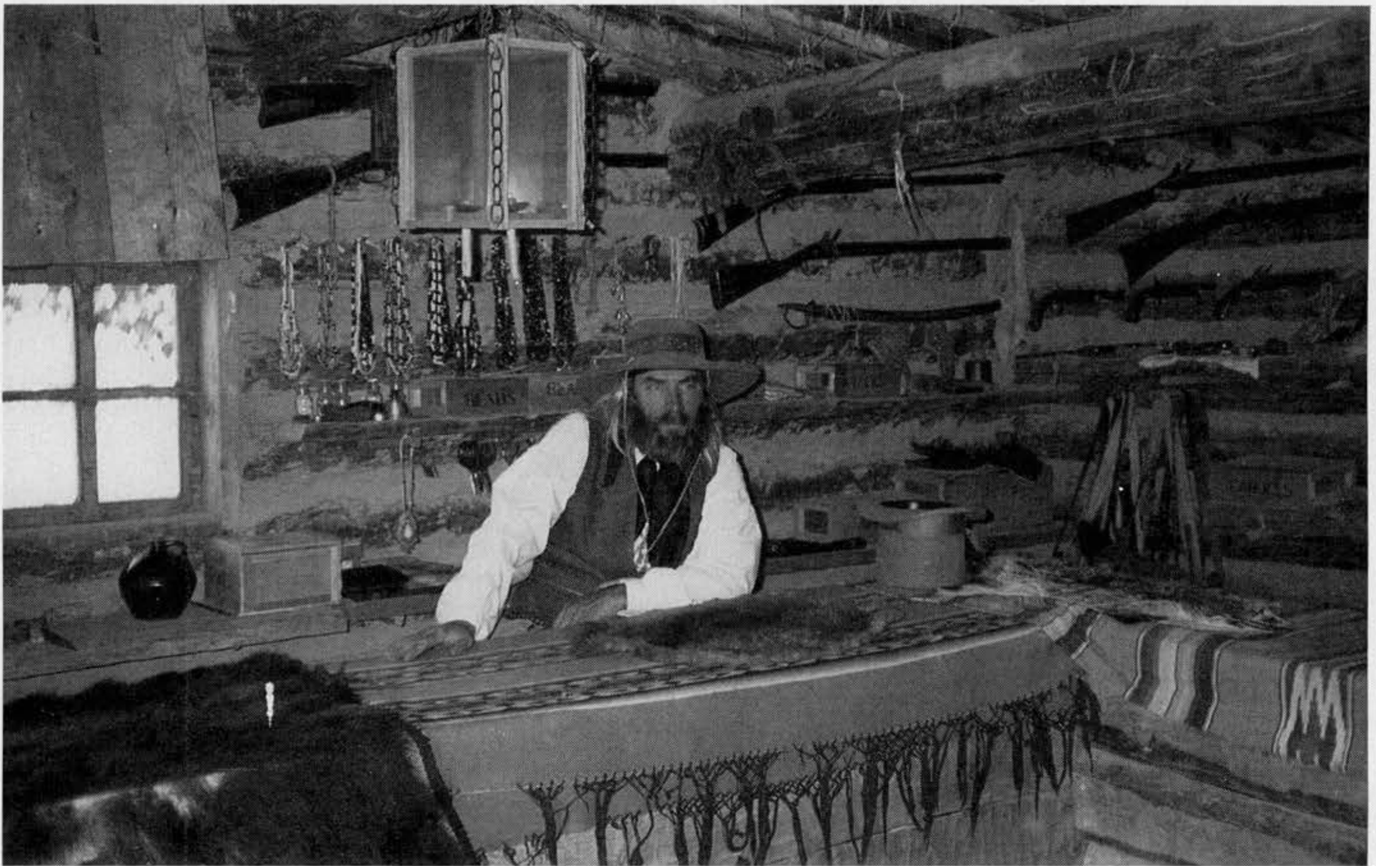
In December 1841 or January 1842, Antoine suffered the worst setback of his career. With drovers, he set out from St. Joseph, Missouri, with a large herd of horses and mules bound for Santa Fe. At Cottonwood Creek, near present-day Council Grove, Kansas, a blizzard



entrance is the "store" with an adjoining proprietor's quarters. Clockwise in an irregular circle are cabins for mountain men, a hide storage building (with a bedroom for Ed and Debbie at one end), a blacksmith shop, and a dry goods cabin. The company clerk, who was senior to all other hired help, had his own cabin.

In a corner is the *horno* (oven), and a few feet away a small chicken house adjoins the *cocina* (kitchen). To accommodate a low fireplace, the table is short-legged so the cook does not need to rise to serve food. Mexican laborers' quarters are a little distance away, at the back of the compound. There twelve to fifteen men would sleep on a packed-earth floor, taking up the entire space. Beyond is a livestock corral with a surrounding stockade. Half of a large log building houses the store, stocked with trade goods of the times.

Fort Uncompahgre is a hands-on, living history museum. Guides conduct informative tours and explain nineteenth century crafts. The fort is open from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Wednesday through Sunday, from March through December; Thursday through Sunday in September and October; and Thursday through Saturday, in November and December.



Author's Photo

Dan Deuter, proprietor, in the trade room.

engulfed them. Without shelter for either men or animals, two drovers and 400 head of stock froze to death in one night. A relief party that Antoine's brother, Joseph, III, sent out found few animals alive.

In 1842, sixty-five-year-old Methodist minister Joseph Williams passed through the two Robidoux forts on his way from Oregon to the United States. He did not describe the posts, but said much about the morals of the men inhabiting them. Of Fort Uinta, he wrote, "We had to wait here for Mr. Rubedeau about 18 days, till his company and horse drivers were ready to start with us to the United States. The delay was very disagreeable to me, on account of the wickedness of the people, and the debauchery of the men among the Indian women. They would buy and sell them to one another.... One morning I heard a terrible fuss, because two of the women had run away the night before. I tried several times to preach to them, but with little, if any effect.

"Mr. Rubedeau had collected several of the Indian squaws and young Indians to take to New Mexico, and kept some for his own use! The Spaniards would buy them for wives."

In December 1841 or January 1842, Antoine set out from St. Joseph, Missouri, with a large herd of horses and mules bound for Santa Fe. At Cottonwood Creek, a blizzard engulfed them. Without shelter for either men or animals, two drovers and 400 head of stock froze to death in one night.

At Fort Uncompahgre on Sunday, August 14, 1842, Williams preached to a company of French, Spanish, Indians, half-bloods, and Americans. "I felt the power of the word, and I believe some of the people felt it also," he said.

At Taos, after parting company with the disapproving Reverend Williams, Antoine's men loaded trade goods for Fort Uinta. Bypassing Fort Uncompahgre, they traveled a different route. New Englander Rufus B. Sage traveled with them on the return trip. Sage stayed at the fort for ten days and wrote sparse comments about the trading there. He noted, "Trade is conducted principally with trapping parties frequenting the Big Bear, Green, Grand, and the Colorado Rivers, with their numerous tributaries.

"Utahs and Snakes afford some of the largest and best finished skins I ever beheld....They may be purchased for 8 or 10 charges of ammunition, or 2 or 3 awls."

In 1844, Mexico was at war with the Navajos. Forces under a French

mercenary named Portelance failed to find the Navajo warriors they sought, but happened onto a party of Utes and slaughtered a number of them. A Ute delegation faced Armijo in the Governor's Palace at Santa Fe on September 7, demanding justice, but the confrontation led to more bloodshed. After heated arguments, Armijo slew a Ute chief. Seven other Indians and ten Mexicans were killed.

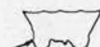
The Utes went on the warpath. Later that month, they attacked Fort Uncompahgre because Antoine Robidoux had hired Mexican workers and trappers. The Utes surprised the fort, as word of the September 7 killings had not reached the post. Utes killed all the occupants except two. One of them, an American, went to Fort Uinta to notify Antoine that the Utes had not destroyed his peltries. Even with his Mexican citizenship, the Utes considered Antoine an American; their war was with Mexico, not the United States.

Another man escaped on foot and made his way to Taos in fourteen days, spreading word of the attack. The Utes did not spare Fort Uinta, attacking it in October. One account blames the Ute assault on potent Taos Lightning, which made Indians sick, but whatever the reason, the Utes wanted vengeance for the Santa Fe slayings, and overran the fort. After massacring male employees, they carried off the women. Later that year, they burned the fort. Just as he was absent from Fort Uncompahgre when the Utes attacked, Antoine was not at Fort Uinta when they raided it.

Antoine Robidoux gave up. Fort Uinta was in ashes, no market remained for beaver pelts, his debts were multiplying, and he was beginning to feel his age. He abandoned Fort Uncompahgre and moved to St. Joseph in 1844 or 1845. He had seen the Intermontane Corridor for the last time.

Antoine was not one to stay home, however. In 1846, during the Mexican War, he joined General Stephen Watts Kearny's Army of the West as an interpreter. He suffered a severe lance wound at the Battle of San Pasqual, California, in December 1846, and he never fully recovered.

After his discharge from the army in 1847, Antoine, Carmel, and their adopted daughter lived in California until about 1854. After a year in New Mexico, they finally settled in St. Joseph. Antoine had hoped to return to New Mexico with Carmel in the spring of 1857, but by then he was bedridden. Blind, and suffering dropsy, he lingered under Carmel's care. Antoine Robidoux died August 29, 1860, twenty-six days short of his sixty-sixth birthday. Carmel outlived Antoine twenty-five years, and died in Durango, Colorado, one hundred miles—as the eagle flies—south of old Fort Uncompahgre.



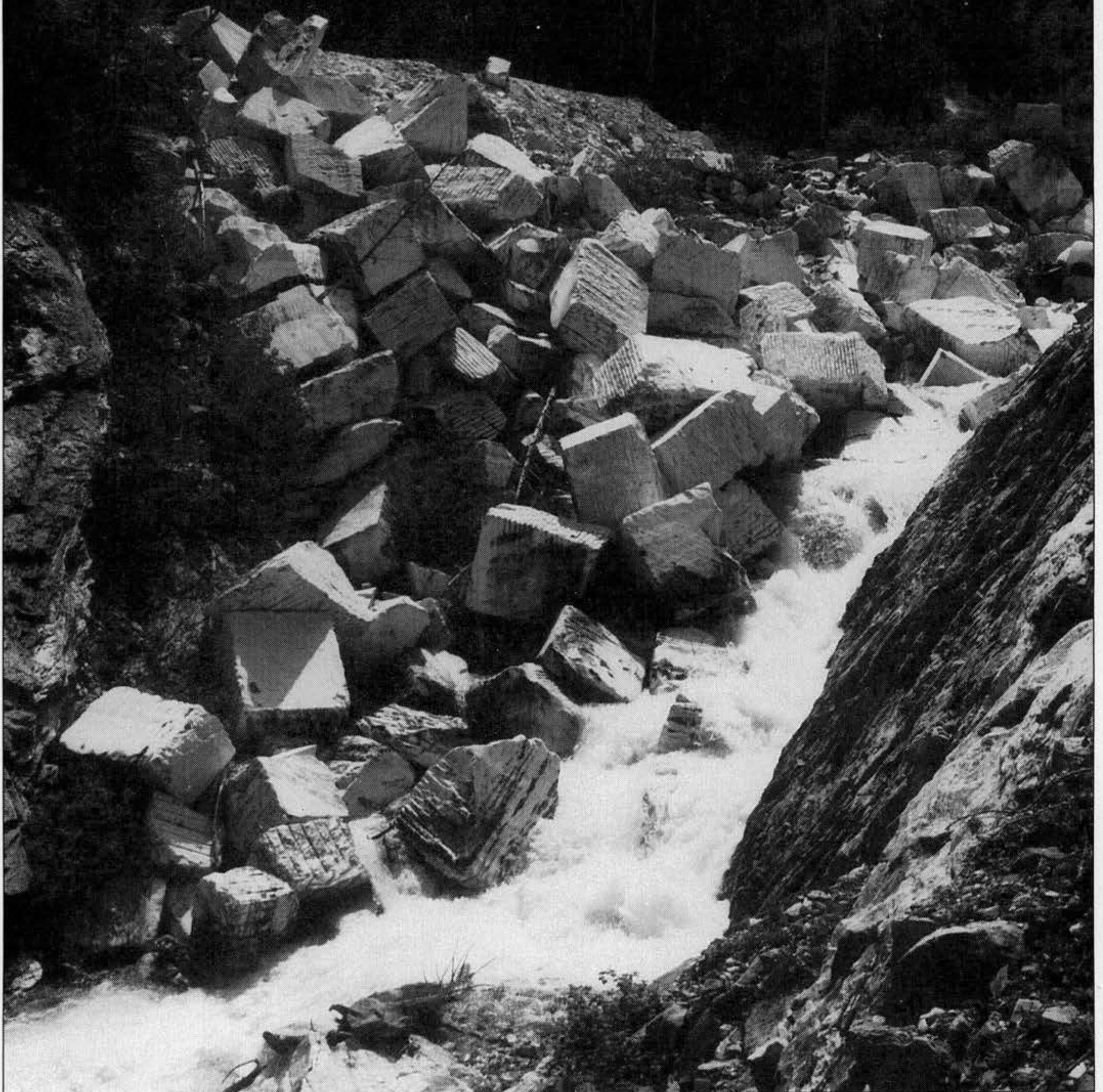
Author's Photo

A replica of a fur press at Fort Uncompahgre.

COLORADO'S

MARBLE MOUNTAIN

By STEVE VOYNICK



Author's Photo

In 1909, Marble was booming. Hidden high in western Colorado's Elk Mountains forty miles southwest of Glenwood Springs, the town of Marble had four schools, three hotels, three newspapers, six general stores, electric power, a thirty-telephone system, a railroad, and 2,000 people. Town lots, worthless just four years earlier, sold for $250 each.

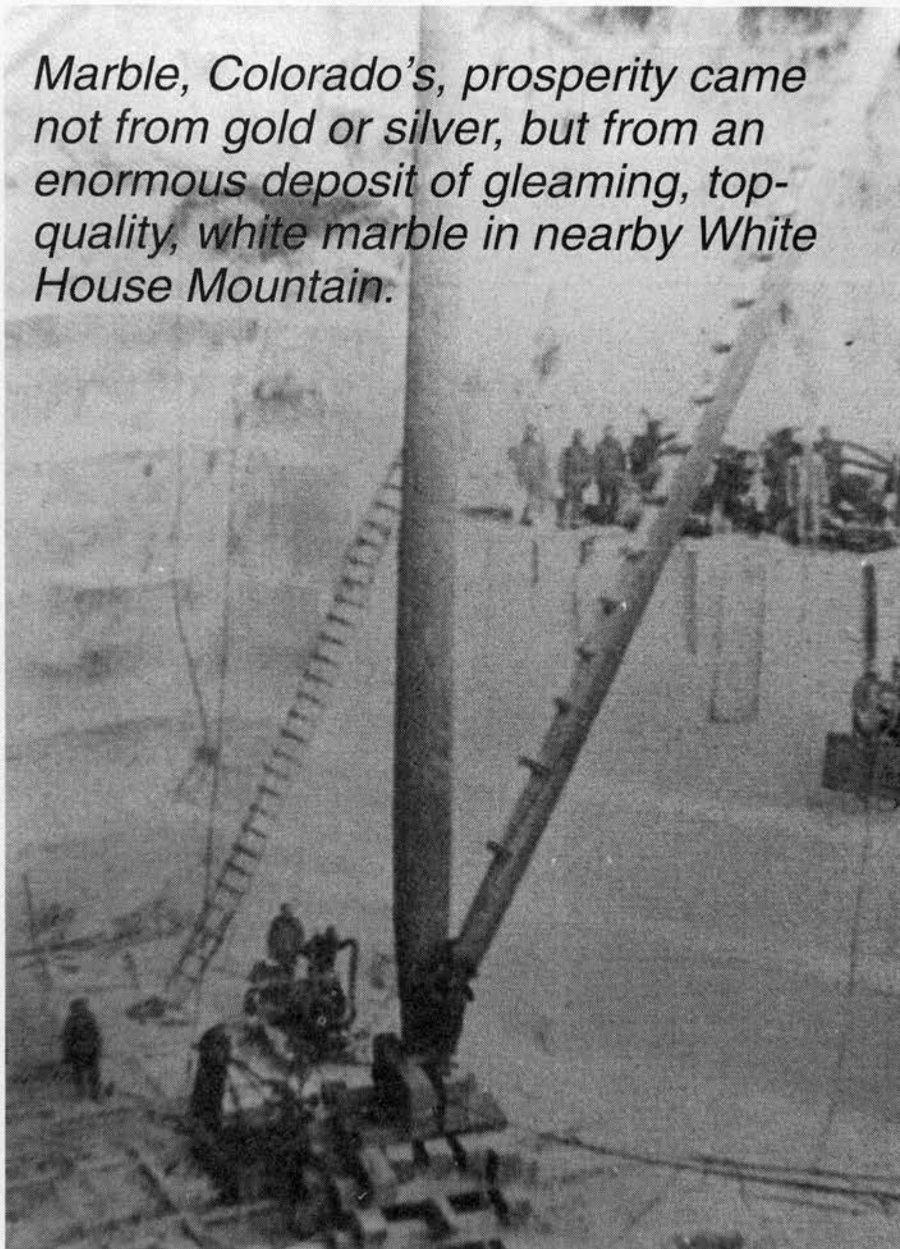
Five hundred men, speaking English, Italian, German and a pidgin mix of all three languages, shared a half-million dollar annual payroll working for "the company"—the Colorado-Yule Marble Company. Both the company and Marble seemed to have everything going for them: a backlog of contracts and a mountain full of the world's best marble.

The Marble Booster predicted Marble would become western Colorado's largest city. "The only way this town can fail to enjoy a good healthy growth," the editor wrote, "will be for the anarchists to take over the country, overthrow the seat of government and cause men to want marble as much as a starved dog wants an ice cream soda."

Marble was in many ways a typical mining boomtown, yet also unique. Marble's prosperity came not from gold or silver, but from one of the West's more unusual mineral treasures—an enormous deposit of gleaming, top-quality, white marble in nearby White House Mountain.

Marble thrived on mining, but a kind of mining unlike any other ever conducted in the West. Thirty-five years passed between discovery and boom, a time when promoters and miners alike learned that marble is used as a dimensional stone and, thus, unlike other mineral commodities, had to be sold *before* it could be mined. Also, heavy-handed American miners from Colorado's gold and silver camps weren't up to the job; Austrian and Italian quarrymen had to teach them the art of quarrying marble.

The Yule quarry dump today, with thousands of tons of white marble lining the banks of Yule Creek.



Author's Collection

A huge timber derrick that lifted marble blocks from the underground quarry to overhead portals.

Marble is a metamorphosed, or recrystallized, limestone. Limestone is any sedimentary rock containing at least half calcite (calcium carbonate) or dolomite (calcium magnesium carbonate). Fine marble, metamorphosed from pure limestone, is dense, evenly grained and takes a gleaming polish. Although the purest marble is snow-white, small amounts of minerals may color it pink, yellow, brown, blue, green, or black. Uneven distribution of minerals creates intricate and often attractive "marbled" patterns.

Man has mined marble for more than 2,000 years. Greeks and Romans used fine marble for architecture and sculpture, and quarries at Carrara, high in northern Italy's Alps, supplied marble for the Roman Empire. In the United States, Vermont, Georgia, and Tennessee quarries began producing fine marble in the mid-1840s. Carrara marble, however, remained the world's best—until the discovery of Colorado's Yule marble.

In August 1873, Sylvester Richardson, prospecting western

Colorado's upper Rock Creek (later Crystal River) country, noticed bits of snow-white rock in the bed of a rushing creek. He traced the float three miles upstream to its source—a light-colored, 200-foot-high bluff. Chipping away at the stained surface rock, Richardson recognized the unmistakable brilliant white glitter of fine marble.

The following year George Yule, later Gunnison County's first sheriff, "rediscovered" the bluff and gave his name to the nearby creek. Other prospectors soon displayed polished specimens of "Yule marble" in Denver.

But miners and investors looking for gold and silver quickly forgot about the Yule Creek marble. By 1880, local prospectors had found scattered veins of gold, silver, lead, zinc, and copper in the upper Crystal River country, and the camps of Schofield, Clarence, and Crystal enjoyed a brief and modest prosperity.

Although the flurry of hardrock metal mining made no fortunes, it did renew interest in the great bluff of Yule marble. In December 1881 the *Gunnison Daily Review* carried the optimistic comments of marble discoverer Sylvester Richardson. "It is my opinion that this field in time will be a direct means of employment of thousands," Richardson declared, "and the average citizen of Gunnison may yet dwell in a marble hall."

Meanwhile, local silver and lead miners had inadvertently determined the extent of the marble beds. Several miles from the Yule Creek bluffs, a miner reported "something peculiar" about the roof of his mine. The entire roof, he explained, was "composed of as fine a marble as you will find anywhere."

The first marble quarry opened in 1884, producing what Denver newspapers described as "the purest white, yellow and variegated marble." It lasted only a few months, but proved an important point: without prearranged contracts to sell the marble, the gleaming white rock was not worth mining.

Author's Collection

The Colorado-Yule mill's electric tramway with its steep tracks. Mill promoter Colonel Channing Frank Meek and several workmen died in accidents when tram car brakes failed.

The first contract hopes materialized in 1885, when Denver architects specified marble floors for the proposed state capitol building. As Colorado marble was the logical choice, upper Crystal River settlers prepared for a boom. Miners staked lode claims along Yule Creek and blasted loose huge pieces of marble. But for lack of transportation, most stayed right where they fell.

Development speculation soared again in 1890. Architects again insisted on Yule marble as they slowly finalized design for the new state capitol building. More importantly, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad announced it would consider building a spur line into the upper Crystal River country. More encouraging news came from the St. Louis Exposition, where international experts judged Yule marble to be on a par with that of Carrara, Italy.

Certain that marble contracts were imminent, miners at the confluence of Yule Creek and the Crystal River named their settlement Marble and applied for a United States post office. They got their post office, but little else.

In 1892, the newly founded

Denver-based Colorado Marble and Mining Company acquired marble claims and announced plans to construct its own railroad. The company managed only to quarry and finish several large marble blocks and columns, which it displayed at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition. Judged against the world's best, Yule marble won the blue ribbon.

In 1894, desperate for any publicity that might generate contracts, Marble's fifty citizens proposed to host the heavyweight championship fight between Gentleman Jim Corbett and challenger Charley Mitchell. Half seriously, Marble offered $75,000 plus expenses to both fighters, along with "a ten-ton marble monument to the man who got killed." The offer attracted national publicity, but not a single marble contract.

Marble's first break came in 1895, with the long awaited approval of the state capitol building marble contract. Miners began work immediately, blasting four portals high on the marble bluff. By autumn, however, deliveries fell far behind schedule due to the remoteness of the quarry, rugged terrain, and weather.

At an elevation of 9,000 feet, the Yule quarry faced long, severe winters with more than 300 inches of snow. The rough, three-mile-long road connecting the quarry and the mill at Marble had a steep, ten-percent grade and passed numerous avalanche chutes. Crews struggled to haul the big marble blocks down to the mill on heavy timber sleds, then freighted the finished pieces in wagons thirty miles to the railhead at Carbondale.

In two years, the Yule Creek quarries cut, finished, and shipped $100,000 worth of marble. Its purity amazed geologists; its beauty delighted architects. But the high cost of transportation had made quarrying only a break-even proposition.

Marble struggled for survival through the turn of the century, then received indirect help from an unexpected source. A devastating 1903 New Jersey fire demonstrated that intense heat would crumble granite walls and floors, while leaving marble intact. For fireproofing and safety reasons, national demand for marble in public and corporate buildings increased sharply. As prices soared, the Vermont, Tennessee, and Georgia quarries profited enormously.

Those record marble prices, along with the profit they represented, finally attracted the man who would make Marble boom—fifty-year-old Colonel Channing Frank Meek. While a boy in Iowa, Meek had worked as a marble cutter. In 1893, his interest in marble led him to inspect the Yule Creek deposits. Since then, Colonel Meek (the title was honorary) had built a successful career in investment and railroad development.

WHEN MEEK RETURNED in 1905, Marble's two Yule Creek quarries were shipping very little marble. Utilizing his New York City investment contacts, Meek did more for Marble in a single year than anyone else had in the previous thirty years. He organized and funded the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, spending $800,000 to acquire quarries, construct a modern mill at Marble, and lay track for the Crystal River & San Juan Railroad, a spur line linking Marble with the railhead at Carbondale.

On November 23, 1906, amid wild cheering, gunfire salutes and fluttering flags, the first Crystal River & San Juan Railroad locomotive steamed into Marble. Although a severe winter curtailed quarrying, Meek shipped samples of polished Yule marble all over the United States.

Meek's samples finally hit pay dirt in Cleveland, Ohio. Cuyahoga County awarded the Colorado-Yule Marble Company a half-million-dollar contract to provide finished stone for its new county courthouse. Out-of-work miners from a host of down-and-out Colorado mining camps flocked to Marble. The population soared to 700, with many new residents living temporarily in tents and shacks.

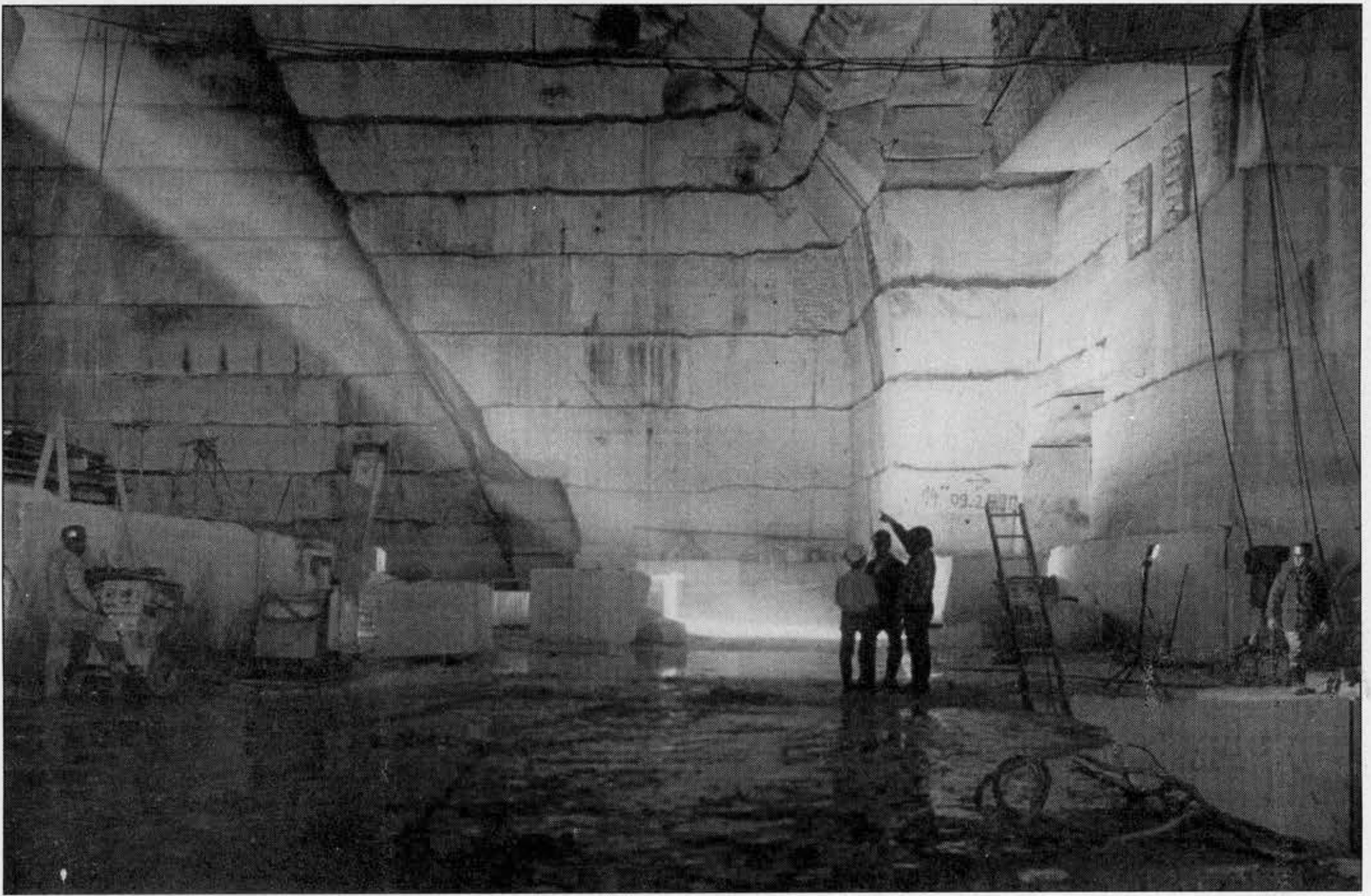
After Cleveland, the contracts rolled in. Meek replaced his nine horse-drawn quarry wagons with a powerful smoke-belching steam tractor mounting eight-foot-diameter steel wheels. The company electrified the town, then built fifty four-room cottages to house new workers. By 1908 eight lumber mills worked overtime to supply lumber for a growing city of 1,500 residents.

Many of the new arrivals were experienced Italian and Austrian quarrymen, who provided invaluable technical expertise. Their native languages and cultures made Marble a colorful "little Europe"; their ethnic allegiances would, in time, create serious violence.

When American hardrock miners first systematically worked the Yule quarries, they relied on conventional drilling and blasting, producing far more shattered waste rock than usable marble blocks. They began refining their methods by drilling more closely spaced patterns of smaller diameter holes, then loaded only the alternate holes with powder. That produced larger, more cleanly broken blocks and less waste. During winter, they simply flooded the drill holes with water and let them freeze overnight. Expansion evenly and inexpensively broke the marble into blocks of the desired shape.

By 1908 Colonel Meek had imported expert Italian quarrymasters and marble cutters who elevated quarrying at Yule Creek from heavy-handed "ore mining" to something of an industrial art. With electric and pneumatic channeling and sawing machines, the European quarrymen worked along right-angle benches, cutting and chiseling top and side channels into proposed blocks. Miners drilled only a tight row of bottom holes, then gently drove "feathers and plugs"—wooden and metal wedges—into the holes, cleanly breaking the base to separate the entire block.

The Yule quarry was actually an underground mine with four large access portals in the near-vertical face of the bluff. Quarrying lowered the internal floors, creating enor-



Author's Photo

The interior of the Yule quarry today. Quarrying done largely before 1916 created the cathedral-like room.

mous, 200-foot-high, cathedral-like workings. Derricks lifted the heavy marble blocks to the portals, where a three-inch-diameter cable aerial tramway conveyed them across Yule Creek. Finally, electric rail tram cars transported the blocks along the steep, three-mile-long, downhill trip to the mill at Marble.

The unusual lifting and tramming demands made Colorado-Yule an extremely dangerous operation, with derricks and cables strained to their limits. Nevertheless, in 1908 the company shipped the largest marble block ever quarried in the world—twenty-eight feet long and fifty-five tons.

By 1909, Colorado-Yule was backlogged with major contracts from such cities as Chicago, New York, Houston, New Orleans, Boston, and Los Angeles. Colorado-Yule employed 600 men and Marble's population peaked at 2,000.

Even Marble's most controversial "problem" did not slow its red-hot economy. Perhaps overreacting to its rowdy boomtown saloons, Marble had voted itself dry. Afterwards, bootlegging became even more profitable than quarrying and milling marble.

Due to the housing shortage, a haphazard community of shacks called "Quarry Town" sprang up near upper Yule Creek. Ten-foot-deep winter snow sometimes turned Quarry Town's main street into a tunnel, with side tunnels leading to individual shacks. Skiing was enormously popular—and practical—among the European quarrymen. Many skied the 1,000-foot vertical descent from Quarry Town to Marble, then rode the electric quarry tram back up the steep grade—probably Colorado's first "ski lift."

In 1911 Colorado-Yule expanded its mill to a length of 1,465 feet—nearly one-third of a mile. Rough-quarried marble blocks entered at one end to be rough cut into every conceivable shape, then surfaced and polished to a gleaming finish. One hundred and thirty men worked in the fully mechanized mill, using cutting wire with sand-slurry abrasives and diamond-studded cutting wheels. As one newspaper put it, the operation "cut through marble as if it were just butter."

Colorado-Yule's greatest challenge was maintaining operations through the dangerous winter months. In just five years avalanches claimed twenty lives, often disrupted electric tram operations, and seriously damaged the mill twice.

The electric tram was dangerous any time of year. Eventually, it even killed the man who built Marble. On August 12, 1912, Colonel Meek and four quarry employees, alongside thirty tons of marble, rode the tram down. When the air brakes failed, the tram accelerated out of control to an estimated sixty miles per hour. Fearing the tram would jump the track at the next curve, Meek ordered everyone to jump. The four quarrymen survived, but Meek died two days later of internal

injuries. Ironically, the tram did jump the track and overturn, but only after it had slowed. Meek would probably have lived had he remained aboard.

A month later the tram "ran wild" again. One passenger jumped and survived, but the motorman, brakeman, and two other passengers, perhaps remembering Meek's death, stayed aboard. At the mill, the tram overturned and all four were crushed beneath tumbling fifteen-ton blocks of marble.

Meek's death did not slow Marble's prosperity. In 1913, in open competition with quarries worldwide, the National Commission on the Fine Arts selected Colorado-Yule to quarry and mill the marble for the columns of the Lincoln Monument in Washington, DC.

The "Lincoln Contract" was a bonanza for Marble. The contract specified flawless sections for thirty-six fluted columns, each forty-six feet high and seven feet in diameter. Colorado-Yule's 1,000 workers now shared a $1.2 million annual payroll.

The outbreak of World War I in Europe in 1914, however, sparked serious ethnic problems in Marble and drained Colorado-Yule of its most skilled workers. Many Austrian quarrymen returned to Europe to fight with Germany. A year later Italy entered the war with the Allies, prompting an exodus of young Italians.

Politically-motivated street fights erupted between Italian and Austrian quarrymen; Americans often joined in for economic reasons, claiming loyalties should rest with Colorado-Yule, not foreign countries. The *Marble Booster* complained bitterly about the loss of skilled European workers, declaring, "If these people return here and apply for work they should be told to go back and make their living in the country they are so ready to fight for."

Nevertheless, Colorado-Yule fulfilled the Lincoln contract. By 1916 it had quarried, shaped, and finished 1,800 blocks of marble, many weighing thirty tons each. Six hundred railcar loads carried the marble to Washington.

After the Lincoln contract, however, Marble's boom quickly went bust. The United States' entry into World War I abruptly curtailed domestic construction and demand for marble. When buyers canceled lucrative marble contracts, Colorado-Yule, still carrying a heavy expansion debt, fell into receivership.

When operations ceased in 1917, Colorado-Yule had produced over one million cubic feet of marble worth $5.5 million—a higher dollar production figure than many better

Author's Photo

The marble foundations of the Colorado-Yule marble mill at Marble, Colorado. From 1911 to 1925, the mill was the largest in the world.

Author's Collection

A Sunday ski outing at Marble, Colorado, in 1909. Quarrymen and their families found skiing both fun and practical.

known gold and silver camps. By 1918 train service had ceased; the population had dropped to one hundred; and Marble seemed destined to join the long list of western ghost towns.

Reorganized as the Tennessee-Colorado Marble Company, the Yule quarry reopened in 1924. But Marble's brief revival ended when a disastrous fire destroyed the mill and stopped production once again.

In 1928, the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont, acquired the Yule quarry and won the most prestigious marble contract in United States history—providing the marble for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Yule was chosen for the quality and beauty of its marble, and for one more reason—no other quarry existed that could produce a solid block of flawless marble of the size required.

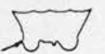
Marble's population recovered to 200 when a seventy-five-man crew worked for one year to quarry a one-hundred-ton block of statuary marble. Although the block represented another world record for size and weight, it was rejected because of barely perceptible smoke-colored veining. A second block was quarried and found to be perfect. Workers in Vermont finished the block, which was placed in Arlington National Cemetery in November 1932.

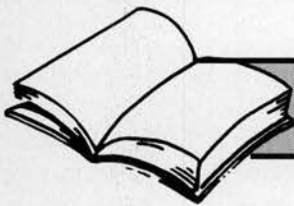
World War II ended hopes for further production when the War Production Board ruled marble nonessential to national defense. The final straw was a 1942 flash flood that washed out roads and accelerated the inevitable closing of the Yule quarry.

MARBLE BECAME a true ghost town as its permanent population dwindled to two in 1956. The great quarries, too, were ghosts—ruins where wind whispered through gaping portals and rusting cables dangled from old timber derricks. Especially haunting were the mill site and quarry dumps, where 80,000 tons of half-finished blocks and column sections of glittering, snow-white marble reminded infrequent visitors of ancient Grecian ruins.

The old ghosts came back to life in 1990, however, when the newly-formed Colorado-Yule Marble Company reopened the historic quarries, and reintroduced Yule marble to the world. With modern techniques, miners now quarry and ship about 1,500 twenty-ton blocks of snow white marble annually. Even the town of Marble is enjoying another modest boom; its population has risen to fifty, the highest in fifty years.

To reach Marble from Glenwood Springs on I-70, take Colorado 82 twelve miles south to Carbondale, then follow Colorado 133 twenty-five miles to Gunnison County Road 3. Take the paved county road six miles to Marble. Ruins include the marble foundations of the old Colorado-Yule marble mill, once the world's largest.

From Marble, a narrow, winding but well-graded road leads three miles up Yule Creek to the Yule quarry. Obey posted instructions carefully and be alert for equipment and descending, heavily loaded, marble trucks. Park only in the designated trailhead area. A marked, three-quarter-mile-long foot trail leads along Yule Creek to a large dump of snow-white marble and the quarry. The old portals are protectively fenced, but visitors can peer down into the quarry itself. A visit to Marble offers a chance to see a town that once boomed with a different kind of western mining. 



Woman in the West

Lady's Choice: Ethel Waxham's Journals and Letters, 1905-1910, edited by Barbara Love and Frances Love Froidevaux. (University of New Mexico Press, 1720 Lomas Boulevard Northeast, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-1591. $29.95 cloth bound.)

Ethel Waxham's story is decidedly out of step with current historical studies, says Charles E. Rankin in his introduction to this volume. She was upper middle-class, urbane, well-educated and Anglo—the mold from which Molly Wood in *The Virginian* was cast but hardly a role model for today's revisionists.

Still, Waxham's story is an important part of the history of western settlement and of women's history in this country. For the five years covered in this volume, she taught school—about the only choice for an unmarried woman of her class and education. But she taught in frontier Wyoming, among other places, and when she married—her only other choice—she married a Wyoming sheepman.

Her lack of choices did not make Waxham frail of heart or bedraggled. She thoroughly enjoyed Wyoming, from dances which lasted from sundown to sunup to winters so cold that ink froze in the school inkwells. She recorded her life with a careful eye for detail and a strong appreciation for the land: "The color of the white hills against the pale blue of the sky is most exquisite in the world. The cedars are gray with snow, the sage brush white clumps of crystal."

After one term in Wyoming, Waxham tried teaching jobs in Colorado and Wisconsin. During that time rancher John G. Love ardently courted her, mostly by correspondence. After their first meeting when she was newly in Wyoming, she wrote of Love, "His resonant Scotch burr sounded through the house before him....He had an indifference to clothes, so long as there were enough to keep him warm....His buffalo hide coat was permanent equipment." He must have been a far cry from the young men she had known in Massachusetts, or in her childhood in Chicago and Denver, but in 1910

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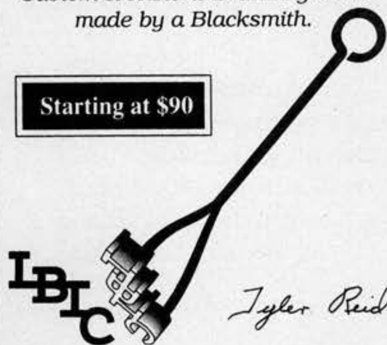

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Ethel Waxham married John Love and returned to Wyoming to live on a remote ranch.

The first volume of Waxham's papers covers only the five years between her arrival in Wyoming and her marriage to Love. Though Wyoming seems to dominate in the reader's mind, for most of this period Waxham was in Colorado, often at her family home in Denver.

The editors, Waxham's granddaughters, searched attics and archives for her papers—letters, journal entries, and even poetry. They carefully made their selections and interspersed them with text to give a complete, chronological picture. They plan a second volume covering her life in Wyoming.

Lady's Choice is important beyond its lively central figure and its detailed picture of life in the American West. It gives a clear picture of teachers who were determined, despite low pay, difficult superintendents, and balky students, to improve the world and find self-respect.

Waxham's papers also hint at the proprieties of courtship. "I shall be glad to be 'best friends' with you," she wrote to Love. "The social code...says...that since I cannot say 'yes' to you, I must say 'no,' and nothing between. It is harsh, that code."

Still, she kept her sense of humor, writing him just before the wedding, "I am worried for fear that you may not get here until the fourth of July, and I warn you that not even for you will I be married on the fourth. That is Independence Day."—*Judy Alter, Fort Worth, Texas.*

Gunnison Massacre

The Unsolicited Chronicler: An Account of the Gunnison Massacre, its Causes and Consequences, by Robert Kent Fielding. (Paradigm Publishers/Redwing Book Company, 44 Linden Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. $49.95 cloth bound.)

This is a disturbing book and one that is difficult to critique because the reviewer does not want to seem to be "Mormon bashing." The book is ostensibly a reexamination of the massacre of Captain John Gunnison on the Sevier River in 1853. Actually, it is a convincing indictment of Brigham Young for complicity in Gunnison's murder.

The book suggests in its subtitle a look at the causes and consequences of the massacre The causes were the persecution of the LDS Church in Missouri and Illinois; the murder of Mormon prophet Joseph Smith; and the continuing hostility of much of the United States toward the Saints. But another cause was the latter's desire for revenge for outrages committed against them. Consequences were the nearly-farcical Utah War and the bloody Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857.

Gunnison's actual killers were Pahvant Indians, just as those most guilty at Mountain Meadows were Piede Indians, abetted by John D. Lee and Mormon militia. But, by seemingly reading every line of the *Deseret News* and personal diaries and journals of the period, the author is convinced that the Indians acted with the tacit approval of Young, who "looked the other way." His guilt lies not just in his cover-up through misinformation and a conspiracy of silence, but in creating a psychological climate in his Zion that made such horrible incidents all but inevitable.

While there is no need to toss about such loaded terms as dictator and despot, the evidence is clear that the Utah theocracy was an authoritarian state. Like Lee, Indian Agent Dimick Huntington, who lulled Gunnison into an "unusual sense of security," simply could not operate without his leader's knowledge. Young *had* to know and, thus, was ultimately as culpable as his lieutenants and Indian allies.

The real villains of the piece are the siege mentality, amounting to hysteria and paranoia, which Young fostered, and his belief in blood atonement. That was a refinement of the Biblical "eye for an eye," but alas, in Utah any old eye would do. Thus the butchery of railroad route explorers and, later, of emigrant

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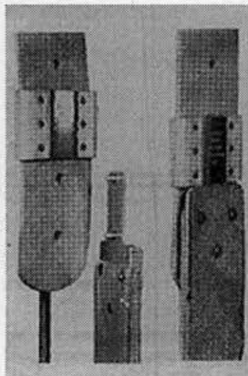

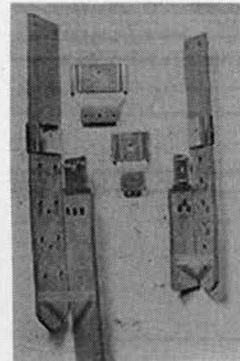

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men, women, and children. Neither group intended to harm the Saints; they became victims of an irrational fear and rage for vengeance.—*Richard H. Dillon, Mill Valley, California.*

The Last to Cross

Oregon Trail: Last of the Pioneers, by Rick Steber. (Bonanza Publishing, PO Box 204, Prineville, Oregon 97754. $24.95 cloth bound, $15.95 paper bound.)

Over the past year, interest in the Oregon Trail has undergone something of a renaissance. But as the sesquicentennial celebration of the first wagon trail draws to a close, the trail and its pioneers are vanishing. That's the basis of Rick Steber's book, a commemorative edition that includes reminiscences of nineteen covered wagon pioneers Steber interviewed over two decades.

The Oregon Trail's heyday was from 1848 to 1869, but *Last Of The Pioneers* covers 1889 to 1921, before "affordable automobiles and a national highway system made the wagon obsolete." Steber lets the pioneers, eleven women and eight men, speak for themselves. Some of the stories are captivating, some aren't, but all prove what historians often overlook—the story of the Oregon Trail, more than anything else, is a story of real people.

As Clifton Ross, who went across the trail in 1891, notes, "Whenever we came across the site of a grave—and we were always coming across graves—Mother would stop and rearrange the rocks, piling them up. And if there was any kind of marker, a cross or a board with a name, she would set it upright and pile the rocks to hold it that way.

"When Mother was done she would catch up to us. She never got too far behind. She was afraid of being left out there alone."

Last Of The Pioneers doesn't surpass any of the excellent Oregon Trail documentaries, but it is a worthy addition to the coffee table of a trail enthusiast or history buff.—*Johnny D. Boggs, Dallas, Texas.*

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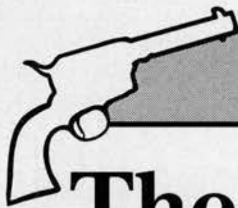

GREAT WESTERN GUNFIGHTS

The Gunfights of Billy the Kid

Arizona and New Mexico, 1877-1881

By BILL O'NEAL

According to legend, Billy the Kid killed twenty-one men, "one for every year of his life." Contemporary research has proved that mythic total to be wildly exaggerated, but the Kid's reputation as a fast-shooting gunman remains unaffected. Was the Kid a western fraud, or a gunfighter of the first rank?

By the time he was sixteen, the Kid had engaged in petty thievery and occasional horse rustling, and he had begun to carry a six-gun in his waistband. He demonstrated a deadly nature at the age of seventeen in Fort Grant, Arizona. A blacksmith, Francis P. "Windy" Cahill, bullied the slightly-built teenager. On Friday night, August 17, 1877, Cahill cuffed the Kid around and called him a pimp. When the Kid went for his gun Cahill grappled with him, but took a bullet in the stomach. Cahill died the next day and a coroner's jury declared that the Kid was guilty of "criminal and unjustifiable" murder. The Kid escaped custody and headed for New Mexico, where he gravitated to lawless Lincoln County.

The Kid fell in with Jesse Evans and The Boys, a gang of rustlers, and he regularly practiced marksmanship and gun-handling with a variety of revolvers. By December 1877, Dick Brewer, ranch foreman for the ambitious young Englishman, John Tunstall, had recruited the Kid as a cowboy and gunman. Tunstall was surrounding himself with hired guns in an effort to challenge the monopolistic mercantile business of Jimmy Dolan. When Tunstall was murdered almost before his eyes on February 18, 1878, the Kid swore vengeance—and fully exacted it during the war which followed.

Two weeks after Tunstall's death, a band of "Regulators," led by Brewer and including the Kid, chased down Frank Baker and William Morton, two of the chief murder suspects. A few days later, on March 9, 1878, Morton rode alongside Regulator William McCloskey, seized his gun and shot him out of the saddle. Morton and Baker then spurred away, but shots from the Regulators fatally wounded both prisoners. The Kid later claimed to have single-handedly killed both men, but at best he was merely one of several gunmen who inflicted wounds upon Morton and Baker.

The Kid then determined to kill Sheriff William Brady, leader of Tunstall's murderers. On April 1, 1878, the Kid led several confederates into Lincoln and set an ambush behind a low adobe wall overlooking the dusty main street. About midmorning, Brady walked by with Deputy George Hindman beside him and Billy Matthews, Jack Long, and George Peppin trailing behind. The gunmen suddenly rose up and opened fire, dropping Brady and Hindman with mortal wounds. Matthews was also hit but darted for cover with Long and Peppin. Matthews wounded the Kid in the thigh, but the young gunman led the bushwhackers to their mounts and galloped out of town.

Three days later the Kid was with a large party of Regulators who

The Kid innocently approached Grant and asked if he could examine the ivory-handled revolver in Grant's holster. While admiring the weapon, he noted that three cartridges in the cylinder had been fired. Before handing it back, he set the cylinder so that it would next fire on an empty chamber.

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encountered a heavily-armed member of the opposition, Buckshot Roberts, at Blazer's Mill. Roberts tried to shoot it out with the Regulators, taking a bullet in the stomach but wounding several of his adversaries. The Kid was almost hit and sought cover. When Roberts killed Dick Brewer with a rifle slug in the head, the Kid and the rest of the Regulators rode away, leaving Roberts to die of his wound.

On May 1 in Lincoln and May 14 in the countryside, the Kid was one of several gunmen who engaged in gunplay, with no casualties on either occasion. He was involved in a long-range rifle duel between Regulators and cowboys on July 3, and got in a running fight with fifteen or twenty opponents the next day. On July 13 the Kid and other Regulators killed deputy Jack Long's horse.

During the climactic battle of the Lincoln County War, July 15 through 19, the Kid and ten other gunmen fought from Alexander McSween's adobe store. On the final day of the fight, with McSween's structure slowly burning, the Kid and his companions steeled themselves to make a dash for freedom. When the break came, McSween was killed and five of the gunmen were slain or wounded, but the Kid miraculously darted unscathed through the hail of lead.

ONE OF THE BESIEGERS, nineteen-year-old Bob Beckwith, also was shot dead. The Kid frequently has been credited with Beckwith's death, but the darkness and confusion rendered it impossible to accurately determine his killer.

On January 10, 1880, during a boisterous evening in Bob Hargrove's Fort Sumner saloon, the Kid was tipped off that a hard-drinking braggart named Joe Grant intended to kill him. The Kid innocently approached Grant and asked if he could examine the ivory-handled revolver in Grant's holster. While admiring the weapon, he noted that three cartridges in the cylinder had been fired. Before handing it back, he set the cylinder so that it would next fire on an empty chamber. The precaution proved invaluable as a short time later Grant belligerently shouted at the Kid, drew the ivory-handled revolver, and pulled the trigger. The weapon merely clicked.

The Kid whipped out his six-gun and shot Grant in the head; according to one account, he pumped three slugs into Grant's chin so accurately "you could cover all of them with a half a dollar." The Kid delivered at least one head shot, and Grant dropped to the floor and died within moments.

On November 29, 1880, an eight-man posse intercepted the Kid and fellow desperado Billy Wilson in the mountainous countryside near White Oaks. During a running gun battle, the mounts of both fugitives were killed, but the Kid and Wilson

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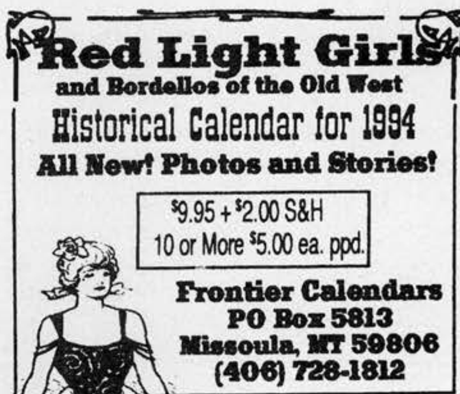

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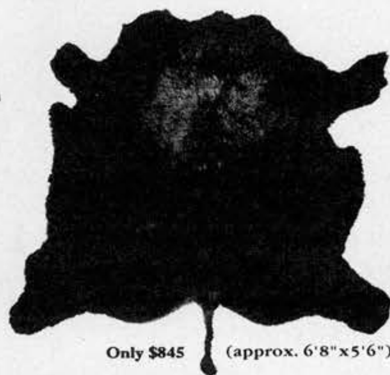

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disappeared on foot. They united with the notorious Dave Rudabaugh, and the next day the three hardcases boldly rode into White Oaks. Spotting Deputy Sheriff James Redman, they threw a wild shot at him, but quickly spurred out of town when angry citizens surged to the lawman's support.

Deputy Sheriff James Carlyle led a posse in pursuit, locating the troublemakers at dawn at the ranch house of Jim Greathouse. Greathouse offered himself as a hostage to the posse, and Carlyle entered the building to negotiate a surrender. Several hours later Carlyle tried to escape by jumping through a window. Firing erupted, and three slugs, either from the outlaws or possemen who may have mistaken him for a fleeing outlaw, killed Carlyle. Dismayed, the posse withdrew, and the Kid and his henchmen escaped under cover of darkness.

A FEW WEEKS LATER, on December 19, the Kid, Rudabaugh, Wilson, Tom O'Folliard, Charlie Bowdre, and Tom Pickett rode into Fort Sumner in search of food and recreation. However, Sheriff Pat Garrett and a posse awaited them, and when the lawmen called out a challenge the outlaws wheeled their mounts and bolted for safety. O'Folliard was fatally wounded, but the Kid and his other companions escaped. Four days later Garrett and his posse besieged the five surviving outlaws in a dilapidated rock house at Stinking Springs. Charlie Bowdre was killed at dawn and later in the day the Kid and his companions surrendered.

Sentenced to die on May 13, 1881, the Kid was incarcerated in the two-story courthouse in Lincoln to await hanging. Of his two guards, J.W. Bell was amiable and easygoing, but Bob Olinger often abused the Kid verbally. On the morning of April 28 Olinger threatened the Kid and shoved a shotgun into his face.

Late in the afternoon Olinger led the other prisoners across the street to eat at the Wortley Hotel while

Author's Collection

Billy the Kid—was he a great gunfighter, or was his reputation overblown?

Bell remained in the courthouse with the Kid. The Kid asked Bell to let him use the outhouse, and on the way back upstairs he slipped his small hands out of the cuffs. Then he produced a revolver; perhaps he wrestled Bell's gun away, perhaps a pistol had been stashed in the outhouse, or perhaps he seized a six-gun from the weapons closet. Bell tried to flee down the stairs, but the Kid triggered a round that tore through the deputy's upper body. Bell staggered outside and died in the arms of Godfrey Gauss, who then warned Olinger.

The Kid armed himself with Olinger's shotgun and hobbled to a

window just as Olinger rushed across the street. "Hello, Bob," said the Kid, punctuating the greeting with both barrels of the shotgun. Thirty-six buckshot hit Olinger in the head and neck, killing him instantly.

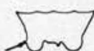
"You won't follow me any more with that gun," shouted the Kid as he tossed the weapon into the dust beside Olinger's body. The Kid then took a Winchester and a gun belt, tried unsuccessfully to remove his leg irons, traded words with a few bystanders, then rode leisurely out of town.

Garrett and two deputies encountered the Kid on Wednesday night, July 14, 1881, at Fort Sumner. The Kid had come in from a hideout to visit a longtime sweetheart, and at midnight he decided he was hungry. He jammed his revolver into his waistband, picked up a butcher knife, and padded in his stocking feet to Pete Maxwell's house to get a key to the meat house.

When he reached Maxwell's porch he saw the two deputies waiting outside while Garrett asked Maxwell about the Kid's whereabouts. The Kid asked "*¿Quién es? ¿Quién es?*" When there was no reply, Billy pulled his gun and entered Maxwell's dark bedroom. Seeing Garrett's dim form on the bed, the Kid repeated his question and began to back out the door.

But Garrett promptly triggered two shots at the Kid, then followed Maxwell out of the room. Garrett's second shot went wild, but his first slug had struck the Kid in the heart, knocking him onto his back and killing him instantly.

Within less than four years Billy the Kid was involved in at least eighteen shooting incidents. By the time he was shot dead at the age of twenty-one, Billy the Kid had killed at least four men and perhaps several others in his many gunfights. Very few western gunfighters, including many who enjoyed far longer lives, could match those totals. An aggressive, expert pistoleer, brimful of desperate courage, Billy the Kid lived up to every bit of his reputation.



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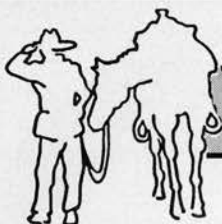

Trails Grown Dim

Swindler

I am looking for information about Joshua Swindler and his family. Joshua may have been born in 1859. He went to Oregon and had a place in Poe Valley near Klamath Falls.

Joshua married a woman named Julia or Emily Kootzer, who was possibly from Wisconsin or the Dakotas. I would appreciate any information on the Swindlers.—**Chuck Swindler, PO Box 97, McDermitt, Nevada 89421.**

Cabe

I am searching for the parents and descendants of John and Sarah Cabe. They moved from Tennessee to Washington County, Arkansas, about 1844. John, born in North Carolina in 1799, and Sarah, born in Georgia in 1802, lived in Franklin County, Arkansas, about 1860. Their children were Sarah, born in 1835; James, born in 1837; Thomas, born in 1838; John M., born in 1842; and Samuel, born in 1844.

I would also like information about other Washington County, Arkansas, Cabes. They are Jefferson Cabe and Martha; Thomas J. Cabe; William Cabe and Ruth; John S. Cabe and Louiza; Millie Ann Cabe Burrow and Solomon Burrow; and Nancy Delitha Cabe Fallin and Robert Redford Fallin. Millie Ann Cabe Burrow (1825–1875) is buried in the Rhea's Mill Cemetery, Cane Hill, Arkansas; Nancy Delitha Cabe Fallin (1826–1906) is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Fayetteville, Arkansas.—**Celia Cabe Graham, Route 1, Box 269, Meeker, Oklahoma 74855.**

Carroll

I am seeking information about my great-great-uncle, Brigadier General Henry Carroll. He entered the United States Army in 1859 as a private and died in Colorado

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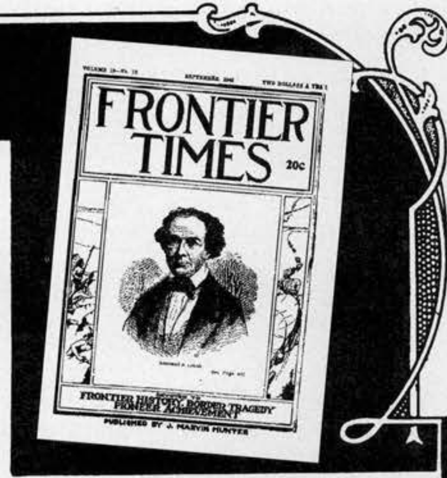

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Springs in 1904 as a brigadier general.

Carroll served with the black Ninth Cavalry from 1867 to 1885, the First Cavalry from 1885 to 1896, and the Sixth Cavalry from 1896 to 1899, including service in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Carroll retired from the Seventh Cavalry in 1899.—**John Bannon, 1831 Prairie, Emporia, Kansas 66801.**

Pressnall-Littler

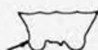
My great-great-great grandfather, John Pressnall, married Hannah Littler about 1802 in Randolph County North Carolina. Their children, all born in Randolph County, were Lydia, born, January 15, 1803; Martha, January 27, 1805; Rachel, December 31, 1806; Daniel, February 1, 1810; Mary, July 23, 1812; Elizabeth, April 8, 1815; Jeremiah, April 12, 1818; John M., January 24, 1821; Jehu, April 18, 1824; and Hannah, February 17, 1828.

I am seeking more information on the children and any grandchildren. I am also looking for information about John's and Hannah's parents.

Another John Pressnall lived in Randolph County, North Carolina, at the same time. He married Rebecca Cox in 1808. I would like to know how the two men were related. Various spellings of the last name have included Presnell, Presnel, Presnal, and Pressnalle.—**Bettina A. Spencer, 4110 Highway 8, Troy, Idaho 83871-9655.**

Varner

I am seeking information about my great-grandfather, Alford Thomas Varner, born September 4, 1846, in Mississippi. He married Ann Elizabeth Early in 1868. They moved to Red River County, Texas, in 1900. I need to find the dates and places of their deaths. They may be buried in Oklahoma.—**James Varner, PO Box 765, Princeton, Texas 75407-0765.**



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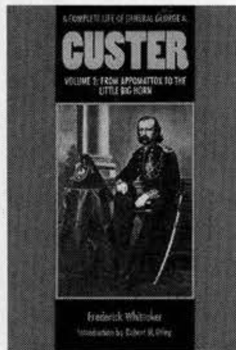

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Breaking Wil

Courtesy Harry O. Skold

Sam Lawyer's son, Walt Lawyer, with his string of saddle ponies at the Lakeview, Oregon, Round-up in 1926.

By DOROTHY SKOLD

Horse-and-buggy rigs became popular in western Nebraska in 1899, and as the market for harness horses increased, the demand for saddle horses fell. Always a businessman, Sam Lawyer, who owned a horse ranch near Gering, gave up dealing in saddle horses and began to break mustangs to the harness.

Sam also owned a busy livery stable in Gering and didn't have time to raise his own horses. Instead, he let everyone know that he was in the market for cheap, young horses. Sam's son, Walt, said his father mostly bought horses fresh off the range from the few cowboys who still made their living gathering up "wild horses."

"Of course they weren't what we know as wild horses today," Walt later explained. He said during the pioneer days Indians frequently ambushed wagon trains and chased off settlers' horses. Many of the horses survived and produced the so-called wild horses.

Walt said his dad turned such mustangs out on his ranch until he had enough to work with. Then his best horseman, Ding Beck, would gather up the horses, drive them into the livery stable corral, and, one at a time, break them to harness. Walt, about six years old at the time, said the corral gave him the most interesting education in his life and he spent his free time perched on the corral fence.

Most of the range horses needed some grooming, as their bushy tails and manes were often matted and full of burrs. Ding would rope a mustang by his front legs, throw him down, and hog-tie him so he couldn't get up. Ding would curry

Horses

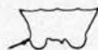
the mane and tail, feed and water the animal, and generally show the horse he meant it no harm. Then he would release the rope.

The horse learned to lead to the rope when Ding took him from the corral into the stable where a good feed awaited him. Then came the time to make the bronc a good harness horse.

Ding used what he called a "breaking cart," a wooden, two-wheeled cart with long shafts. The shafts hitched the horse far enough from the wagon so the animal couldn't kick the driver off the seat.

When Ding harnessed the horse to the cart, he used "kicking straps," which buckled over the horse's hips to the shafts on each side to keep the horse from kicking over the shafts. Walt said Ding would then fit the horse with a "running W," a sort of hobble on the mustang's front feet with a rope running through the bellyband of the breaking harness. "When a snuffy bronc decided that he'd had enough of this education business and tried to run away, Ding just pulled the rope on the 'running W' and jerked the horse's front feet out from under him," Walt said. "That sure wrote finish to the bronc's chance to bolt. The lesson was painful but it didn't take a smart horse long to realize it was less painful to obey the rules. At that point Ding pronounced him bridle wise."

Then Ding would take off the hobbles and switch the horse to a light wagon. With Walt riding beside him, Ding would drive the horse and buggy down Main Street, advertising to all that Sam Lawyer had another harness-broke horse for sale.



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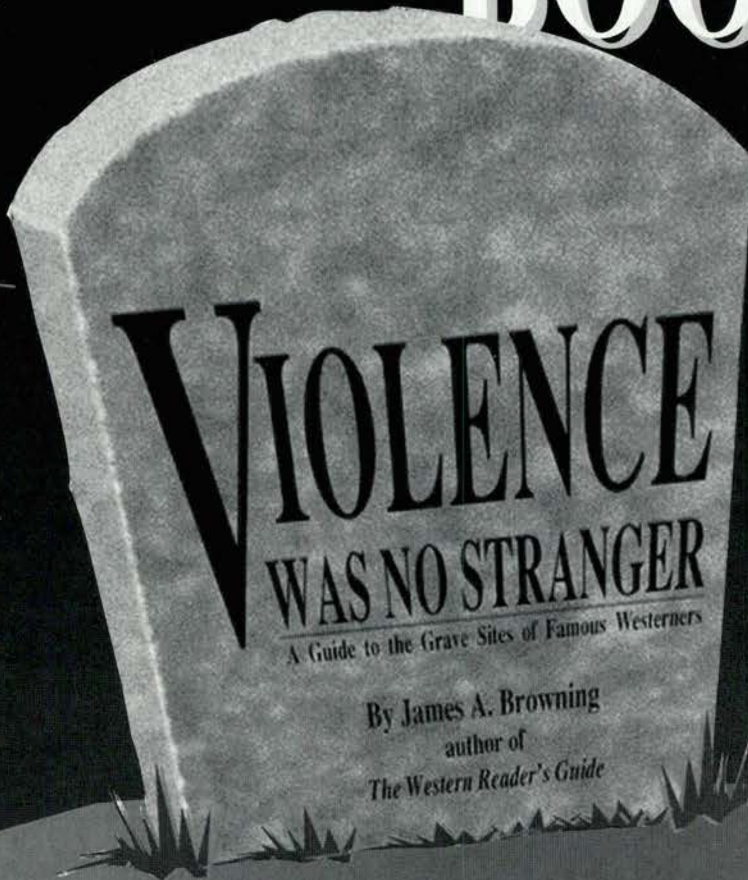

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