

WHO'S BRAVER THAN JOHN WAYNE? (see page 22)

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Roy Rogers never went up against them; even **John Wayne** wouldn't stand up against Yates the way Gene did!

32 A RACE TO END ALL RACES

Francis Aubry's historic ride on the Santa Fe Trail has yet to be beaten, so today's endurance riders gear up for the big race honoring him in September.

—Ron Soodalter

38 SAVING AMERICA'S FIRST TRUE HORSE

Columbus first brought Spanish Mustangs to the Americas in 1493, and a courageous few are doing all they can to keep the breed from becoming extinct.

—John Christopher Fine

46 NOT JUST HORSIN' AROUND

Before Sam Bass earned his fame as a bandit, he owned a race-winning mare in a Texas town that is becoming a top flight horse industry today.

—Mark Boardman

56 WHO KILLED COL. FOUNTAIN?

A father and son, murdered, in one of the greatest Old West cold cases, and this first-time author thinks he knows who did it.

—Mark Boardman

58 THE BAD MAN FROM BODIE

Back in the late 1800s, everyone

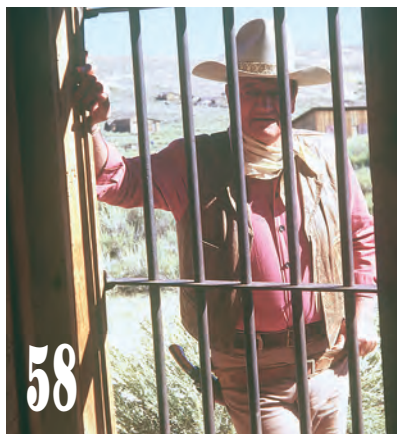
knew who this boomtown bad man was—but did he really exist?

—Michael H. Piatt

70 RENEGADE ROADS

Following 19th-century Ute trails of agencies from Pueblo, Colorado, to Price, Utah.

—Candy Moulton



78 VOTE LONGMIRE FOR SHERIFF

A former cop writes about a sheriff who is so popular, folks in Buffalo, Wyoming, actually voted him in to be their sheriff.

—Candy Moulton

80 JERKWATER TOWNS

How did the early railroaders fuel steam engines in the Old West?

—Bob Boze Bell

91 WHAT'S IT LIKE TO LIVE THERE?

Winnemucca, Nevada, is Basque sheepherders country, with a bit of Wild Bunch lore thrown in, and it serves up history everywhere in its restaurants to its museums.

—The Editors



38



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8 TO THE POINT

Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell discusses amazing long distance feats undertaken by the horse.

10 SHOOTING BACK

Letters to the Editor.

12 WESTERN ROUNDUP

A calendar of Western events. This issue spotlights the Third Annual Wild Western Festival in Phoenix, Arizona.

14 PRESERVATION

The hits and misses, and the ongoing projects of preservation efforts throughout the West.

16 SHOOTING FROM THE HIP

The reel Hopalong Cassidy—William Boyd—would probably call these Colt six-guns “Hoppy’s Favorite.”

18 COLLECTING THE WEST

What does Billy Bob Thornton’s *Alamo* vest have over Audrey Hepburn’s iconic dress from *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*?

20 OLD WEST SAVIORS

Allan Affeldt has the vision that convinces city officials to save historic buildings like Harvey House hotels.

22 WESTERNS

Who’s braver than John Wayne? We’ll give you a hint: This Singing Cowboy would have turned 100 this September.

49 READERS SERVICE INDEX

54 TRAIL RIDER

NEW: *Equitrekking* star Darley Newman rides with the posse in New Mexico’s Billy the Kid Country.

64 CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

The only Texas Rangers outfit to ever surrender—and it’s all because of one man’s claim to San Elizario’s salt lakes.

76 ROAD TRIP

Remembering the September 11 massacre that so many easily forgot.

81 WESTERN BOOK REVIEWS

94 ASK THE MARSHALL

True West’s answer man: Did settlers really hang a dead man’s gun and holster on the cross marking his grave?

96 LAST STAND

Frank History by Phil Frank and “In Search of the Real Honkytonk Sue.”



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The Amazing Endurance of the Horse

They just keep going, and going and going....

One of our readers, Paul Boord, wanted to know about the “endurance of the horse.” He noted that in movies, horses seem to run forever and was curious just how far they can run, flat out. The short answer is, about two-and-a-half miles at a dead run, but you will be surprised at some of the long distance feats claimed in this issue:

“Once in Arizona I rode [a Spanish Mustang] belonging to Chief Ascension Rios of the Papagoes, at a very rapid gallop for twenty-four miles, during the middle of the day, through the desert sand. The thermometer stood as high as you please in the shade, and the hot sun on the white sand made the heat something frightful; and personally I am not noted for any of the physical characteristics which distinguish a fairy. At the end of the journey I was confirmed in the suspicion that he was a most magnificent piece of horse-flesh for a ride like that, and I never expect to see another horse which can make the trip and take it so lightly to heart. He stood there like a rock, and was as good as at starting, having sweat only a normal amount. The best test of a horse is, not what he can do, but how easily he can do it.” —Frederic Remington, “Spanish Horse of Northern Mexico,” *The Century* magazine, January 1889.

For more long distance feats, read about Francis X. Aubry (p. 32), which is part of our “Endurance of the Horse” package that runs from p. 30-55.



Endurance of the Horse #2: I created two different versions of artwork for our lead feature story. Here's the second; see the final pick on p. 30-31.

■ We want to thank Susan Catt for her help with our Spanish Mustang feature (p. 38). She graciously gave of her time on the phone (often at the end of a lunge line) and via e-mail to identify and correct our captions and information. She is an Arizona breeder of authentic Spanish Mustangs on her Bear Paw Ranch in Queen Creek, Arizona. The folks at the Spanish Mustang Registry were also extremely helpful, especially Secretary Carol Dildine. And, of course, the author John Christopher Fine, who did a wonderful job tackling a very sensitive topic.

■ Also, a big thank you and plug for our friend and writer Steve Shaw, who, along with his wife Marcie, created the *True West* Art Gallery at this year's End of Trail at

Founder's Ranch, New Mexico. My art show there was a roaring success (Steve also brought in legendary Hugh O'Brian, the star of 1950's *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*, to co-host the gallery with me). Steve

has written a rip-roarin' novel, *Beyond the Rio Grande*, which intertwines honor, true friendship and the camaraderie of a special breed of men—the Texas Rangers (buy your copy from Amazon).

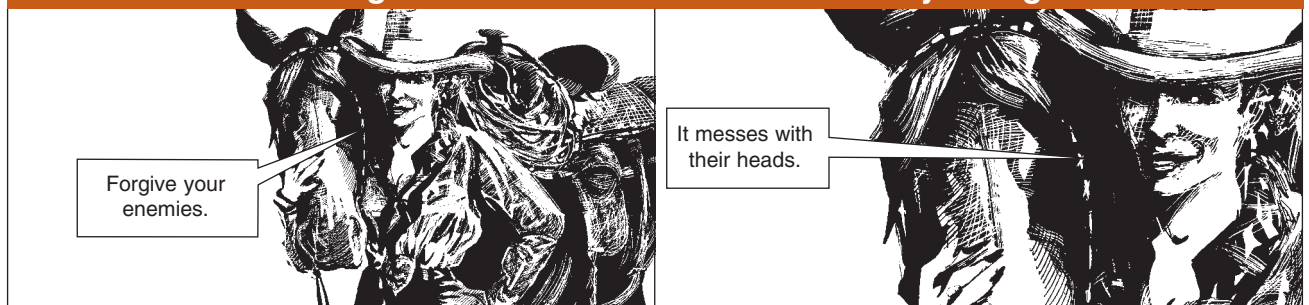


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True West readers speak their piece.

True Monster Moments

I especially enjoyed “Tombstone’s Flying Monster” [June 2007]. I’d like to see more stories of crypto-zoological creatures and bizarre happenings in the Old West. What’s even more amazing and attention-grabbing than the flying monster is the monstrous cover-up. Imagine, a photograph of the creature nailed to the wall and those witnesses in the picture being doctored and inserted. Not only that, but the deception is noticeable more than a half century later. It sounds as if the deception was created by present-day Washington, D.C.-inspired spin doctors.

Floyd Mizzles
Tyler, Texas



The Epitaph played you, so stop the fakery!

I really liked the article by Jana Bommersbach about the flying monster likely concocted by a *Tombstone Epitaph* reporter. I have heard of the Thunderbird before. To some people, it rates right up there with Bigfoot and the Loch Ness Monster. Of course, there is no proof that those creatures ever existed, but there is one great truth here; they make for very good stories.

Larry Dye
Fenton, Illinois

Falls, Seraphim Falls

Yes, *Seraphim Falls* has Old West genes, but Henry Cabot Beck [July 2007] ignored the deeper emotional scarring of two Civil War veterans who fought on opposite sides; and he passed over the anti-



First to the sausage wins!

Tom Cruse?

In the August 2007 issue, Lt. Thomas Cruse allegedly appears in an 1880 El Paso picture with a bunch of Apache scouts. In the July 2007 issue of *The Tombstone Epitaph*, the same picture appears and the caption reads: “Lt. Charles Gatewood.” Which caption is correct?

Ross Taylor
West Jordan, Utah

Editor’s Note: Lieutenant Charles Gatewood is definitely the man in the center of the photo (see circle). We never said he wasn’t in the photo; he also wasn’t relevant to the Classic Gunfights article that photo appeared in. Tom Cruse was mentioned in that story. He was also identified as being in the photograph according to our archival copy. Unfortunately, we couldn’t locate him precisely, so we stated that he is allegedly in the picture. The caption also identifies Gatewood, Chief of Scouts Sam Bowman, who is probably the soldier above Gatewood, and a doctor, who is likely the other Anglo face in the crowd on the far left. We were also informed that Cruse appears in the photo from the Time/Life series (above), but we can’t definitively locate him there either.



Certainly a picture of Lt. Charles Gatewood, but the identity of some of the others is not so clear.

— COURTESY TIME/LIFE —

violence/anti-war suggestions hiding in the film, especially in its “last- minute surrealistic flourishes,” which he criticized as stuffed “through an existential sausage grinder.”

Beck says that *Seraphim Falls* “winds up at the end as little more than fleeing and nothingness.” I like to think it is a regenerative effort; an example of new Westerns that might offer the public more to think about than the reviewer’s chase clichés and Elmer and Bugs Bunny. I vote for surrealistic flourishes and existential sausage.

Janet Graebner
Conifer, Colorado

Preserving the Best

Kudos to your “Preserving the West” article in the July 2007 issue. This is good information that many people may not know. Alas, Tombstone is almost unpreserved today, as commercialization and development have take over!

Stace Webb
Wenatchee, Washington

Spaghetti and Cheese

A couple of days ago, I received the new issue [August 2007] and highly enjoyed the whole thing, as usual. But I particularly enjoyed Henry Cabot Beck’s piece on Spaghetti Westerns. I was happy to see him mention other Spaghetti Westerns apart from the Leone classics.

Many people do not realize that the Leone films were really a very small part of the Italian Western movement. It is estimated that between the years of 1964 and 1974, nearly 600 European Westerns were made! Obviously, with that many entries in the genre, you’ll find some major clunkers. But some incredibly brilliant films are also sprinkled throughout that list.

I did notice a minor error. The upcoming Western film with Italian DNA, *Hired Guns*, will, indeed, be produced (in part) by Sergio Donati. The scriptwriter is not Donati but



Thank goodness I can wash out this cigar taste with a nice pinot grigio.

True West Forum

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Andrew McKenzie, who will also direct. Since I am creating the musical score for this film, I was tickled to death to see it mentioned in my favorite magazine.

Chris Casey
Sierra Vista, Arizona

Apache Spirits

Wonderful *Classic Gunfights* [August 2007] covering the Battle of Big Dry Wash. I too have Dr. Palmer's battle maps, which I got from a ranger-historian a few years ago when he took me to the soldier's side, south of Big Dry Fork. A few weeks ago, I visited the Apache side, north of the fork. It seems much spookier to me than the soldier's side, and I highly recommend it.

W. Cary Eberly
West Chester, Pennsylvania

Country Muzak

Johnny D. Boggs is always a good read. I really do agree with him on his August 2007 article, "That Ain't Country (Let Alone Western)." Country music

died a long time ago when you no longer could distinguish what they were saying or who was singing. We love Western music. But if we don't own the CD, we don't hear it. Country music today sounds like a group of 4-H boys trying to castrate a pig. (That gives away my age.) Stay on the road Johnny.

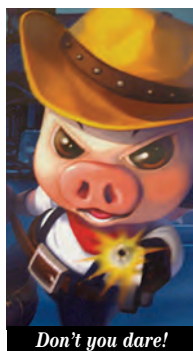
Ed Henderson
Wichita Falls, Texas

We Welcome Your Comments

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—Joe Small, True West founder

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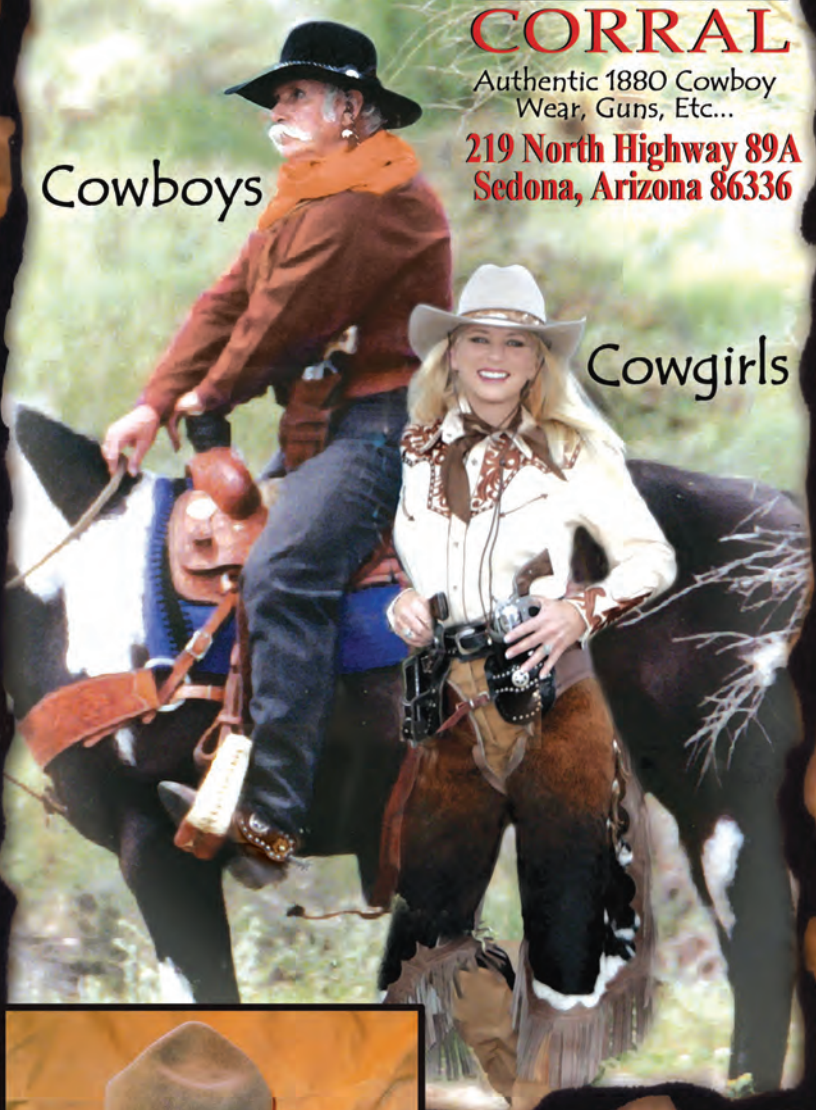


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Now through Sept. 28...Deadwood, SD, **Wild Bill Hickok—The Man, the Myth & the Media:** Letters, photographs and other personal effects from the Hickok family will be on exhibit at various locations in historic Deadwood. 800-999-1876 • Deadwood.org

Now through Jan. 13, 2008...Los Angeles, CA, **Gene Autry and the 20th-Century West:** Celebrate Autry's 100th birthday by visiting this exhibit that examines the singing cowboy's achievements in entertainment and business. 323-667-2000 • AutryNationalCenter.org

AUGUST

3-5...Albuquerque, NM, **Great Southwestern Antique Show:** More than 200 dealers sell Old West, Indian and cowboy collectibles. 505-255-4054 • CowboysAndIndiansNM.com

11...Saratoga, WY, **Historical Trek:** Sign up for this year's trek; past journeys include the Overland Trail's Platte River Crossing, gold mining camps and historic ranches. 307-326-5511 • saratoga-museum.com

12-13...Santa Fe, NM, **Fourth Annual Auction in Santa Fe:** Manitou Galleries auctions off fine Western art and cowboy and Indian collectibles. 307-635-0019 • AuctionInSantaFe.com

17-19...St. Joseph, MO, **Trails West:** Northwest Missouri's largest art festival offers folk and fine arts, and features concerts by rising Country stars Taylor Swift and Craig Morgan. 800-216-7080 • TrailsWest.org

23-25...Kanab, UT, **Ninth Annual Western Legends Roundup & Film Festival:** This year's celebrity guests include Kim Darby (*True Grit*), Clint Walker (*Cheyenne*) and Peter Ford, who is accepting an award on behalf of his actor father Glenn. 800-SEE-KANE • KaneUtah.com

25...Fillmore, CA, **For a Few Dollars Less:** Enjoy a family-style dinner and murder mystery aboard a great train of the silver screen. 805-524-0330 • fwry.com

26-Oct. 14...Ruidoso, NM, **Western Artists of America Sale & Exhibition:** Featured artists include Arturo Chavez, Susan Kliewer, Rick McCollum, Bill Mittag and Sherry B. Stuart. 505-378-4142 • HubbardMuseum.org

29-Sept. 3...Trinidad, CO, **97th Annual Trinidad Rodeo & County Fair:** Features bareback wild horse races, saddle bronc riding, steer wrestling and bull riding. 719-846-9843 • HistoricTrinidad.com

31-Sept. 2...Cheyenne, WY, **Cheyenne Cowboy Heart of the West Festival:** Features a pioneer roundtable, storytellers, historic downtown tour and chuckwagon dinner and concert. 307-638-3311 • CheyenneCowboy.com

31-Sept. 2...Bandera, TX, **Celebrate Bandera 2007:** Enjoy Cowboy Mounted Shooters, a Buffalo Soldiers camp, Indian powwow, cattle drive and a concert by Asleep at the Wheel. 830-796-4447 • CelebrateBandera.com

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1...Wickenburg, AZ, **19th Annual Fiesta de Septiembre:** Celebrate the town's Hispanic heritage by enjoying mariachi music, folklorico dancers and historical photo exhibits. 800-942-5242 • WickenburgChamber.com

2...Gunnison, CO, **Western Heritage Festival:** Tour old mining sites, the Pioneer Museum and the Aberdeen Quarry. 970-641-1501

8-9...Ridgway, CO, **True Grit Days:** Honor John Wayne's 100th at the film location for *True Grit* and visit with Kim Darby, Angie Dickinson and Johnny Crawford. 800-220-4959 • RidgwayColorado.com

14-15...Seguin, TX, **Roundup Cowboy Gathering:** Hosted by Red Steagall, this music festival features Mike Blakely and Jill Jones, and horse races, trail rides and chuckwagon food. 830-401-7375 • RoundupCowboyGathering.com

14-16...Sioux Falls, SD, **Spirit of the West:** Features Adam Winrich, a *Guinness World Records* holder for whip cracking, fast draw competitions, and a fandango dance top it off.

SEPTEMBER 28-30

Phoenix, Arizona

Third Annual Wild Western Festival

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623-444-7121 • WildWesternFestival.com



D.R. Buck Montgomery, a former Hollywood stuntman, created this festival for Western movie aficionados.

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605-334-9202 • SpiritOfTheWestFestival.com

18-22...Cody, WY, **Cody High Style:** Features furniture, fashion and design, from past masters to today's artisans. 307-587-4771 • www.BBHC.org

22...Fort Worth, TX, **Extreme Mustang Makeover:** Competing for \$25,000, trainers will undertake obstacles commonly found while trail riding; the competing mustangs will be available for adoption. 512-355-3225 • MustangHeritageFoundation.org

22...Gunnison, CO, **Cowboy Poetry and Music Evening:** Cowboy poets and musicians share their stories of the Old and New West. 970-943-2016

22-23...Dewey, OK, **Tom Mix Festival:** Celebrate one of the first movie cowboys in the town where Mix served as marshal before hitting it big on the silent screen. 918-534-1555

28-29...Hot Springs, SD, **Badger Clark Poetry & Music Gathering:** Cowboy poets compete rodeo style; concerts by Circle B Cowboys, Juni Fisher, Jean Prescott & Yvonne Hollenbeck. 800-325-6991

28-29...Chester, AR, **Second Annual Mount Royal Scenic Trail Ride:** Join Royal Wade Kimes on this ride in the beautiful Ozark Mountains of northwestern Arkansas. 877-686-RIDE • MountRoyalTrailRide.com

30...Ruidoso Downs, NM, **Billy the Kid/Lincoln County War Symposium:** Field trips and presentations by members of the Lincoln County Historical Society and the Hubbard Museum of the American West. 505-312-4074

29-Dec. 2...Oklahoma City, OK, **Traditional Cowboy Arts Association:** Exhibits the best in saddlemaking, silversmithing, rawhide braiding and bit and spur making. 405-478-2250 • NationalCowboyMuseum.org

OCTOBER

13-14...Guthrie, OK, **The American Farmers and Ranchers Old-Time Centennial Express:** Enjoy Wild West show acts that present the history of Oklahoma during territorial and statehood days. 800-299-1889 • guthrieok.com

13-20...Billings, MT, **Nile Stock Show & Rodeo:** A PBR stock show and horse extravaganza that is one of the last opportunities for cowboys to qualify for the NFR finals in Vegas. 406-256-2495 • TheNile.org

13-Jan 6...Oklahoma City, OK, **Samuel Colt—Arms, Art & Invention:** Exhibits Samuel Colt's personal collection of firearms found in his office upon his death in 1862. 405-478-2250 • NationalCowboyMuseum.org

18-21...El Reno, OK, **Centennial at Fort Reno:** "Tombstone Tales" are re-enacted for spirits interred at the post between 1874 and 1947. 405-262-3987 • FortReno.org

25-27...Lander, WY, **Heart of the West Festival:** In the bronze city, known for its bronze works adorning its streets, enjoy a Western art show featuring bronzes and paintings. 800-433-0662 • LanderChamber.org



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To help encourage participation in preservation projects throughout the West, we will be sharing the hits and misses, as well as ongoing projects that readers can participate in. If you have any projects we should know about, please e-mail: editor@twmag.com

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Original negatives of James-Younger Gang members Bill Stiles and Clell Miller.

James-Younger Gang Returns to Northfield

Back in the 1940s, visitors to the men's room of a Phillips 66 gas station in Northfield, Minnesota, were greeted by an unusual sight—photos of the **James-Younger Gang** after the members' failed raid on the town bank in 1876. The photos included postmortem shots of Clell Miller, Charlie Pitts and Bill Stiles, as well as images of the badly wounded Younger boys, Cole, Jim and Bob. The collection, gathered in one frame, also featured photos of Northfield, one of murdered bank worker Joseph Lee Heywood and one of the Madelia posse that captured the Youngers.

These photos weren't cheap knockoffs; they were made from original negatives acquired by the gas station owner from the son of the photographer, probably in exchange for auto service (and you thought \$3.00 a gallon was a high price!). The owner's wife, not thrilled with the photos of dead men, relegated them to the bathroom.

The collection was passed down to the station owner's son, **Benjamin Nystuen**, who moved to Colorado after graduating from St. Olaf College in Northfield. He kept them in a box for some 50 years. Most folks didn't know that the negatives still existed.

They will now. In May, Nystuen donated the collection to the **Northfield Historical Society**, where they'll become a key part of the permanent exhibit on the bank raid.

Luckily, you won't have to go into the bathroom to see them. 507-663-9268 • northfieldhistory.org

Cleaning Up a Western Town

This isn't about some Old West marshal bringing law 'n' order to the frontier but something just as impressive.

In May, some 300 tourism professionals traveled to **Virginia City, Nevada**. The task: maintenance and preservation of some of the town's historic sites. One group rebuilt steps to **Piper's Opera House** that had not been there in more than a century. Another group restored tracks and an original caboose at the **Virginia & Truckee Railroad**. Some repainted the sidewalks along the main street, while others cleaned the brush and grass from local cemeteries.

The nonprofit **Tourism Cares** organized the event. This is the fifth year the group has selected a town for cleanup, and the first time it has gone west of the Mississippi. Participants volunteer for the projects, and they pay all of their own expenses.

Tourism Cares provides grants to tourism preservation projects, mostly in the U.S. but a few overseas. It also offers scholarships to students preparing for careers in the hospitality and tourism industries—some of the funds allow students to participate in volunteer projects like the one in Virginia City. 781-821-5990 • tourismcares.org

An Alaskan Gold Mine

George Rapuzzi was born in **Skagway, Alaska**, back in 1899, at the height of the **Klondike Gold Rush**. He found his fortune away from streams and mines—in tourism. As did his pal **Martin Itjen**. The two also collected items from the area. Actually, calling it a collection is a bit like calling Mount Everest a hill. They picked up a 1906 streetcar, native carvings, art, documents, photos—approximately 450,000 items. They also bought five historic buildings, including the saloon owned by legendary conman **Soapy Smith**.

In the 1980s, Rapuzzi's niece inherited the collection, which she sold this April to the **Rasmuson Foundation**, an organization that awards about \$20 million per year to "help improve the quality of life in Alaska." The foundation paid \$1 million for the collection; even Soapy would consider that a bargain.

But Rasmuson isn't keeping it; it will distribute the collection among the **City of Skagway**, the **Alaska Natural History Association** and the **National Park Service**.



Before the group releases the items, it will create a comprehensive inventory.

The remarkable foresight of Rapuzzi and Itjen, combined with the civic-mindedness of Rapuzzi's niece and the Rasmuson Foundation, have preserved a gold mine of Skagway's history. Maybe that will lead a new rush toward preservation. 907-297-2700 • rasmuson.org

Saved for Now

 Sometimes it pays to dig through paperwork. The historic **James and Jessie West Mansion** in **Pasadena, Texas**, is safe for the next five years. Built by an oil and lumber tycoon in 1930 as the centerpiece of his 30,000-acre spread, the mansion is currently owned by pro-basketball great **Hakeem Olajuwon**. He is selling his prime commercial land, just outside Houston, and preservationists feared the worst. But a local resident tipped off the **Greater Houston Preservation Alliance** about a 1992 amendment to the land deed that put a 20-year moratorium on demolishing the building. The mansion is now on the list of **Texas' Most Endangered Historic Places**. Since Pasadena has no land-use regulations, just about anything could happen in 2012. 713-216-5000 • ghpa.org

Raise Funds for Drovers

 Back in 1867, **Texas rancher O.W. Wheeler** was the first cattleman to drive stock up the Chisholm Trail to Kansas. The **National Drover's Hall of Fame** is re-creating the event with its **Great American Cattle Drive**, September 27-30, in **Ellsworth**. All event proceeds go toward the renovation of Ellsworth's 120-year-old insurance building, two doors south of **Drover's Mercantile**. When it's finished, the facility will be the home of the National Drover's Hall of Fame, including a museum and a library dedicated to the history of the cattle drive era, from the 1860s-1880s. Total price tag: \$5.3 million. 785-472-4670 • nationaldrovers.com



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"Hoppy's Favorite" Six-Guns

Roy and Dale's charity raffles off a gun rig inspired by Hopalong Cassidy.

Although created as a fictional cowboy hero, Hopalong Cassidy—as portrayed by actor William Boyd—has become as real to millions of Western fans as if he had actually ridden out of the pages of true history.

Together, "Hoppy" and Boyd made their own Western history, and in the process became one iconic figure for generations. From the time of Boyd's initial portrayal in 1935's *Hop-A-Long Cassidy* as the character created by Clarence E. Mulford in his 1906 epic *Bar 20*, the die was cast. For the rest of his life, Boyd played Hopalong Cassidy and devoted much of his free time to his young fans. Fans loved him then as kids and revere his memory more than half a century later.

This legendary celluloid range rider inspired an exquisite brace of Colt Single Action Army (SAA) revolvers and gunleather outfit that will be raffled off at the end of this year in a charity to benefit abused children founded by Western celebrity icons Roy Rogers and Dale Evans. The "Silver Screen Legend X" Western rig continues the tradition of the first nine six-gun sets that have raised more than \$800,000 for the abused children who reside at the Cooper Home, a project of the Happy Trails Children's Foundation, in Apple Valley, California.



This rig is an exact duplicate of William Boyd's first gun rig, as shown in the 1930s photo above. Several artisans replicated it: Jim Lockwood, Jr. of Prescott, Arizona's Legends in Leather made the rig featuring 1930s carving patterns; Conrad Anderson of Kingston, Idaho's Rocktree Ranch Enterprises engraved the silver decor buckles; and Ron Love of Prescott made the dummy cartridges.

— HOPPY PHOTO TRUE WEST ARCHIVES / OTHER IMAGES
COURTESY GLV PHOTOGRAPHY —

Colt's Manufacturing Company's President and CEO General William Keys and other good folks at Colt have saddled up once again to help this worthy foundation by donating two 1873 Colt SAA Model P revolvers. These Peacemakers—destined to be a family heirloom—are fully documented by Colt, which contributes to their value as a collectible. Each Colt was hand engraved in the style of Hoppy's six-guns and fitted with hand-carved, genuine pre-ban elephant ivory stocks with the silver Colt medallions.

The handsome clones fit perfectly with the faithful reproduction of Hopalong Cassidy's original double gun rig, incorporating all of the unusual features



of his first outfit—which, incidentally, went through a number of transformations throughout its decades of use by Boyd. Beautifully handcrafted by Jim Lockwood, Jr. of Prescott, Arizona's Legends in Leather, the gunleather rig features the original 1930s carving patterns. The white calf-laced rig is decorated with the proper sterling silver spots, hearts and stars, along with a carefully re-created copy of Hoppy's gold and sterling silver hand-engraved 1½-inch ranger buckle set. The set is housed in a hand carved wood case from Prescott woodcarver Ben Hansen.

The collectible is valued at \$35,000.

The tax-deductible tickets are \$10 each or 11 for \$100. The drawing will be held on December 17, 2007, and tickets can be purchased from Happy Trails Children's Foundation by visiting happytrails.org or calling 760-240-3330.

Far from the rough, vulgar character created by Mulford, Boyd's Hoppy drank, not liquor, but milk. To promote his shows, Boyd visited dairy farms across the nation, convincing the owners to let him endorse their milk. That label, stamped "Hoppy's Favorite," would certainly fit this Peacemaker gun rig set.



Colt's Manufacturing Co. donated two 5½-inch barreled, 1873 Colt Single Action Army Model P revolvers, which were engraved in the pattern of Hoppy's six-guns and fully tuned by Conrad Anderson. David Warther Carvings of Sugarcreek, Ohio, donated the ivory stocks, which were hand carved by Bob Leskovec of Precision Pro Grips in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania.



PEACEMAKER SPECIALIST

Need original or newly-made replacement parts for your Colt Single Action Army revolver, or are you looking to have your SAA fine tuned? If so, you'd do well to contact Eddie Janis, of Peacemaker Specialists, a firm devoted to restoration, refinishing, supplying parts and performing accuracy enhancement and action work of the 1873 Colt SAA. Besides an extensive line of original Colt parts, the company has its own line of manufactured parts for the do-it-yourself gunsmith. The firm offers a lifetime guarantee for any gun work it performs. Visit peacemakerspecialists.com or call 805-238-9100 for more information.



Uberti...History Up Close and Personal

On September 7th, 1876 when Frank and Jesse James rode into Northfield, Minnesota, Jesse packed a Smith & Wesson, but Frank put his faith in a brand new revolver from Remington, the Model 1875 Single Action.

Unfortunately for the James Gang, several of the local citizens were armed with the new lever-action rifle from Winchester – the Model 1873. The James Gang was shot to pieces and the guns used in the “Great Northfield Minnesota Raid” were forever etched in history.

Whether you prefer the original 1858 New Army black powder revolver, Frank’s 1875 Outlaw or the Northfield citizens’ 1873 Rifle – when you pick up an Uberti you’re holding history in your hands.



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Audrey Hepburn vs. Billy Bob Thornton

What's a higher price to pay, Tiffany's or telling the truth?

Billy Bob Thornton's got a costume that frankly beats out pretty much most of what passes for collectible in the Hollywood memorabilia category so far this year.



Sure, when Audrey Hepburn's iconic black Givenchy dress from 1961's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* hammered in at \$800,000 last year, many movie collectors, after the first initial gasp, of course, probably surveyed their costume collectibles to see if they had any worthy of garnering a Tiffany price.

To give you a clue as to how monumental this sale was, Audrey's dress even beat out Dorothy's ruby red slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* (\$600,000), but not Marilyn Monroe's "Happy Birthday Mr. President" dress (\$1.15 million) both sold by Christie's in the past. (But then again, Marilyn's dress wasn't from a movie, so does it really count?)

Thornton's Davy Crockett vest from 2004's *Alamo* didn't get a Tiffany price, nor come anywhere close to it. If anything, the bid it received at the Cody Old West auction held this June 21-22 more resembles the value of the Cracker Jacks ring that Paul had engraved for Hepburn's character.

What's cool about the vest is that it isn't a "real phony, baby." The vest is not some



Audrey Hepburn's iconic dress may have gotten many collectors' attention last December when it hammered in at Tiffany's in London for \$800,000, but Billy Bob Thornton's vest has its own special charm, as the designer took special pains to match it to one Crockett actually wore; \$900.

designer's cuckoo idea of what someone who is most known for his coonskin cap would have considered fashionable when he set foot on the battlefield that fateful day in 1836. Costume Designer Daniel Orlandi actually replicated all of Crockett's clothing, right down to the embroidered buckskin vest, which sold for \$900. You can see the



original vest on display at the real Alamo in San Antonio, Texas.

Sometimes Hollywood does get it right. And that, my friends, is worth more than anything at Tiffany's—or at least it should be.



UPCOMING AUCTIONS

September 8-10

Collector's Firearms Auction

Rock Island Auction

rockislandauction.com (Moline, IL)

September 15

American Indian & Western Art

Cowan's Auctions

cowanauctions.com (Cincinnati, OH)

September 23

American Indian & Ethnographic Art

Skinner

skinnerinc.com (Boston, MA)

ROY'S FIRST FRINGE SHIRT

It's hard to imagine Roy Rogers without a fringe shirt, but it was this original 1947 shirt designed by Marge Riley that set him apart from all the other cowboy movie stars.

Sold with a *Movies Magazine* and a #137 *Dell Roy Rogers Comics* that showed Roy wearing the fringe shirt; \$6,000.





BEFORE *JUNIOR* BONNER

Adapted from William Faulkner's final novel, 1969's *The Reivers* features Steve McQueen as the laid-back farm hand Boon Hoggenbeck. (By the way, Boon is the reiver, who is a cheat, a liar, a womanizer—basically the kind of guy you don't want setting an example to impressionable young kids.) The vest he wore in the film hammered in at \$1,400.



CRAZY FOR PATSY

Jessica Lange portrayed Patsy Cline, the first female solo artist inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, in 1985's *Sweet Dreams*. The costume Lange wore during her character's performance of "Walking After Midnight" on the Arthur Godfrey Show sold for \$1,900. Designed by Ann Roth, the costume is an accurate replica of the types of outfits worn by the Country superstar (see photo of Patsy above).



THE FEMALE ELVIS

The very sexy Ann-Margret hires John Wayne and company to recover the gold that her deceased husband was accused of stealing in 1973's *The Train Robbers*. Her buckskin color cotton weave shirt and russet color pants from the film both bear Western Costume labels; \$900.



CUSTER'S BATTLE FLAG

"I have been making a flag for Autie to take on his last campaign. It really is beautiful, like the old one, only larger—red and blue silk, with white crossed sabres on both sides, and edged with a heavy white cord," Libbie Custer wrote her parents on April 2, 1865.

That cord is the single most important feature of Custer's fourth personal guidon that sold at Heritage Auction Galleries for \$750,000 on June 24. Libbie's name, which she embroidered on the swallowtail ends of the bars, was shot away during a battle that year. The cord remains, and the provenance is strong: it links all the way back to Lt. Col. Charles Custer, a grandson of Nevin, George's brother.

Back in 1995, when Bonhams & Butterfields held an Important Custer Memorabilia sale, this Civil War battle flag sold for \$150,000. What an encouraging markup—five times over—for today's Custer and Civil War collectors.



Harvey House Hero

Allan Affeldt saves not just one, but two hotels.

Somewhere, Fred Harvey, a visionary from the 19th century, is smiling down on Allan Affeldt, a dreamer in the 21st century.

Fred Harvey was a plain working man who became the "quintessential American entrepreneur." He helped "civilize" the Southwestern United States with his string of Harvey Houses—15 hotels and 47 lunch and dining rooms along the Santa Fe line by his death in 1901. Harvey Co. continued to build hotels and restaurants until a Hawaii hotel chain bought it in 1968.

In Winslow, Arizona, Harvey built a traditional hacienda named La Posada, designed by the legendary Mary Colter. In Needles, California, he created El Garces, a neo-classical railroad station that was one of the last great Santa Fe-Harvey hotels. Both would eventually be abandoned and abused.

Allan Affeldt just didn't think that was right, but he wasn't looking to save anything when he came to Winslow, Arizona, in 1994. "I just came to look," he says. "La Posada had been put on the endangered list of the National Trust for

Historic Places, and it was on the disposal list of the Santa Fe Railroad."

Allan and his wife Tina Mion saw that La Posada was beautiful and could be beautiful again, and they found a whole town thinking the same thing. Two local women had been working tirelessly to save what they could: Janice Griffith of the Old Trails Museum and Marie LaMar of the Winslow Historical Society led the way. Griffith got La Posada registered as a historic site, and the two women marshaled the community to becoming "Gardening Angels" to tend and water the hotel's gardens to keep them from dying.

The big stumbling block, of course, was money. It would take millions to restore the hotel, and after it was restored, what would you do with it?

At the time, Allan was heading a think tank in California for architectural professionals, teaching them responsible development. Like Harvey, he didn't have a personal fortune, but what he lacked in funds, he made up for in determination. And, like Harvey, Affeldt had a plan. La Posada should become what it once was; it should again be a hotel, with a fine restaurant and why not add a Western museum?

The City of Winslow was so impressed with his plan, it gave him negotiating power with the Santa Fe Railroad, handed over ownership of the hotel and awarded him rights to a state grant toward restoration.

Allan Affeldt gives a tour of El Garces in Needles, California, after the groundbreaking ceremony. Allan stands in the northern arcade, where a fountain once flowed. The fountain will be rebuilt as part of the restoration, and the arcade will be enclosed in glass as a train viewing area and four-star restaurant.

— COURTESY DAN LUTZICK —



Allan Affeldt

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"With old buildings, it's not what it costs to buy the place, but what it costs to restore it," Allan says. "But La Posada is one of the most important buildings of 20th-century American architecture."

His first rule of historic preservation is this: "It doesn't do enough to restore—you have to think about making it useful. There has to be a revenue stream, or else it becomes a drain. So it's not enough to be a historian or an architect, you also have to have business sense." He happily reports La Posada is such a successful hotel again, its occupancy rate is 95 percent. (And, oh yes, Allan is now the mayor of Winslow.)

He's applying the same lesson to his newest project, El Garces in Needles. This hotel was built in 1908—a building originally 500 feet long with 16-foot-high ceilings that is a "forest of columns" and is considered the "most important neo-classical train station remaining in California." It operated as a hotel until 1949 and has been abandoned since 1988.

Earlier this year, Needles City officials expressed their delight as they helped Allan break ground on the rehabilitation of El Garces. "I'm going to do the same thing I did with La Posada," he tells us. "It will be a hotel, restaurant, visitor center and museum." He hopes to reopen it in December 2008, which would mark its Centennial Year.

His second rule of restoration is "you have to tell great stories—you have to be engaging." He notes that "people hunger for more information," so historic sites should include old photos as well as video tours and walking tours. His third rule is "pay attention to beauty—not every building is worth saving."

He acknowledges that not everybody can pull together the dollars it takes to embark on one of these mega-expensive projects. "But you never know where the resources will come from and when you'll get that combination of preservation passion and business sense. That doesn't mean you can't start. Even if all you can do is mothball it to keep it from destruction—that's an important step."



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Braver than John Wayne?

No one could take the fight out of Gene Autry.

Who was Gene Autry? It's a fair question. In his time, Gene Autry was many things to many people, but it's fair to say that Autry was a man who, by dint of will and some modest musical talent, rose from his hardscrabble origins to transform the popular culture of the 20th century.

He influenced or changed everything he touched, and he had a hand in every area of popular entertainment except literature and theatre, unless comic books and rodeos count (and they do). Autry was the original king of all media.

He was textbook Horatio Alger, but multiplied by a factor of 50. He wasn't the greatest singer, he couldn't act much and he had to be taught how to handle a horse by stunt men and wranglers. But he knew how to pick good songs and perform them ("Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," "You Are My Sunshine"), learned to act well enough to play the same character, Gene Autry, for more than 20 years, and he had an innate instinct for marketing and promotion, which jibed nicely with his love of touring and performing. Autry is the only show business personality with five stars, representing five categories of activity, on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Audiences loved him. It didn't matter that he wasn't rugged, tall or tough. They liked his music and his modesty. As a Western hero, Autry personified decency, fair play, hard work and clean living.

When he wasn't touring, broadcasting or turning out seven movies a year, he was battling studio executives tooth and nail and



Gene Autry was loved by fans everywhere, from the U.S. to Dublin, Ireland, where he sang in 1939 during a live BBC broadcast in front of 750,000 people (above). A few days later, his British tour was cut short because Nazi Germany was about to invade Poland and start WWII. (Right) A 1936 press book promoting Autry's tour.

— ALL AUTRY IMAGES COURTESY MRS. GENE AUTRY / AUTRY NATIONAL CENTER —



carving a multi million-dollar empire. Gene Autry was a one-in-a-million everyman.

Holly George-Warren is the author of *Public Cowboy No. 1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry* (left), a book that opens the door wide on the phenomenon and the man, Orvon Gene Autry, who would have turned 100 on September 29 (Autry died in 1998). She is also the author of *Honky-Tonk Heroes and Hillbilly Angels: The Pioneers of Country and Western Music* and *Cowboy: How Hollywood Invented the Wild West*.

I spoke to Holly while she was visiting Los Angeles to participate in the opening of the Gene Autry Centennial Exhibition at the Autry National Center, a show that runs through January 13, 2008.

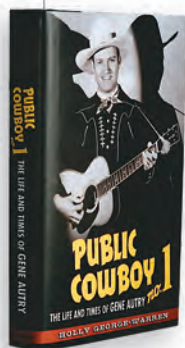
TW: I would imagine that a lot of interesting people with close connections to Autry have been coming forward to talk to you at the opening.

HGW: Oh yeah. It's so crazy. I've just finished three days of book signings and even though I worked on the book for 10 years, people I was desperately trying to find have just now come out of the woodwork. Frankie Marvin was Gene's best buddy going back to 1928 and worked with him his entire life. He also really helped Gene make it in New York. Frankie's daughter came to meet me Wednesday night. It was amazing. So now I'm getting all these people's phone numbers for whatever, whenever, you know, to add more material sometime down the road.

What kind of access did you have to Autry's personal material?

It was so incredible. I had total complete access to everything—all his personal papers, files, contracts, everything. And then they put me in touch with everyone they had contact information for. The great thing was [no one asked] for editorial approval or anything. This was about as good as it gets.

But here's the really amazing part: Gene, back in the early '70s, bought all the negatives to all his Republic pictures, and, unbelievably, with all the film stuff they





Gene wrote his buddy Snuff Garrett, a Hollywood record producer, that this Colt was “used in many of my films, and saw me through many fight scenes.” The .45 caliber Colt single action with Bisley barrel sold with this vintage Autry movie poster for a \$3,000 bid at this year’s Cody Old West Auction (see p. 18).

— COURTESY CODY OLD WEST AUCTION —

That is the damn truth—editing yourself is the hardest part. My contract was to turn in a manuscript of 100,000 words and 20 photos, and the book I turned in was 150,000 words and 120 photos. [Laughs]

Not only that, I had to completely bone up on the history of the recording industry, radio—Gene was way out in front of every advance in entertainment in the 20th century.

It was so much fun doing all the research—I could have just kept researching till the cows came home—but writing the damn thing was a nightmare. I could not eat, could not sleep; I lost 15 pounds.

How did you decide on your focus?

In the beginning, I wanted to cover his whole life, but then I realized there was no way I could do him justice.

The book was signed up by the music department at Oxford Press, and music is really my main background. Even his own memoir never really touched very much on that. So I really decided to go into a great deal of depth on his musical evolution.

I also wanted to detail his family history and include as much background as I could dig up because that had never really been covered or published anywhere.

I especially wanted to show that Gene was a true Westerner, and he did have the whole Western expansion/frontier spirit as part of his family background. Like most of the cowboy heroes, he really did come from that legitimate background. Ironically, Gene wanted to escape all that. He wanted to be a crooner, and he just wanted to have a better life.

Like Elvis, who wanted to sing Pop to escape his past but introduced a lot of kids to Blues and Hillbilly.

Yeah, Gene did slick up the sound. But I didn’t really feel that Gene was ever given his due for the huge contributions he made to Country-Western music. He was responsible for popularizing the sound all over the country and for elevating its stature. Up to then, they’d been marketing Country music as Hillbilly, hayseed hick-type stuff. Gene came along and segued from the Jimmie Rodgers Hillbilly songs into doing the grander Americana Western songs, the cowboy songs, with their dramatic lyrics and their fantastical element. He took that music to Hollywood and his movies, and then toured it all over the country through his popularity.

And he hired a lot of top regional Country bands for his films and tours.

More of Gene’s brilliant marketing instincts, because all those bands had huge local followings—it guaranteed regional audiences would come to see the movies, but it also gave those groups national exposure.

Your book also talks about Autry’s political influence.

It was mind boggling when I discovered, for instance, Gene’s Lyndon B. Johnson connection and how [Gene] was a behind-the-scenes guy with all these presidents, not to mention congressmen, the Speaker of the House and all that stuff. It was just amazing to me. And I had to include all of that too! [Laughs]

How did he manage to move in those circles?

It was through his incredible charismatic, gregarious nature that he was able to get in with everybody, from politicians to businessmen, merchandisers, whatever, who would then get caught up in the whole Gene Autry celebrity atmosphere.

You know, this book really started 10 years ago when I wrote a piece for *The New York Times* about Gene. I interviewed him when he was 89 and even then, at that age, I was so blown away by his charisma. He had this aura about him that was just magical and attractive—I was swept up by it, just in the hour or two I spent with him in his office.

That’s always been something of a mystery, why Autry was so popular when he was so unlike the other cowboy heroes.

Gene Autry with Frankie Marvin as “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” in 1949.



gave him, they also handed him all the files they had there that related to him, through all the years!

Yet your book makes it clear that Autry and the studio heads were constantly locking horns. They handed him all their paperwork?

All the way back to his original 1934 contract with Mascot Films [Autry’s first important film work, *The Phantom Empire*, was produced at Mascot]. There were contracts from 1936, ’37, ’38, through post-WWII. Inner office memos—stuff he never saw, would never have seen; telegrams, notes, letters. I saw this stuff, and I started shaking.

My favorite parts of the Autry story were the vicious contract and money fights with studio executives Nat Levine and Herbert J. Yates, and how cool Autry was throughout.

The one question I would have asked Gene, if I’d known then what I know now, “how did you feel when you read through all that vicious correspondence? All that stuff that was passing inside the organization about you, and the stuff they were doing when they were trying to replace you with Roy Rogers?”

Yates really did threaten to break the guy, and Gene had to have some kind of amazing courage and self confidence to go up against the guy. Roy Rogers never went up against them; even John Wayne wouldn’t stand up against Yates the way Gene did!

When you consider how well-documented Autry’s life was, it seems your hardest job was figuring what to leave out.

He was kind of like the Garth Brooks of his day, really. But it's interesting because he was a sex symbol. He did have this huge female following, especially when he was younger, in the '30s. For the first time, he wasn't the cowboy as paradigm of brute strength with the big strong jaw, and the big tough 6'3" guy—he was small in stature, had very soft features, soft jaw line, blue eyes, fair skin. I think he originated that other kind of sex symbol that led to Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby—a softie, a musician, and that led to Elvis, too, with his pink suit and eyeshadow. [Laughs]

So I think that was another kind of subtle change in the culture, that people didn't even realize came in with Gene Autry.

Something that came to me while reading your book is how much work Autry did, day in and day out.

The guy had road fever. He loved to be on the road, he loved entertaining people, he was a total sociable showman—he just loved being in front of an audience, and he would have kept going if he could have kept his audiences, but he lost them to Rock 'n' Roll.

He worked so hard, it was unbelievable. Even when he was in his 40s, doing movies, TV shows, radio shows, recordings, rodeos and his Western variety shows. And this was all pre-fax, pre-e-mail, pre-cell phone—he was juggling all these activities, not to mention all his business dealings.

Autry seems so much more interesting off screen than on.

He lived every minute to the fullest. I don't think he got or needed much sleep. And that he wasn't exactly a Boy Scout made him even more interesting. He was the Rock star of his day. He had gals throwing themselves at him. What was he gonna do? He'd say, "okay honey," just like all the other Blues men and Jazz guys and Hillbilly guys. It's life on the road! [Laughs]

The music business is legendary for exploiting local talents like Autry and leaving them penniless. How did Autry get his business savvy?

Partly I think it was because he was not afraid to take risks and he had this

incredible intuition with people. He definitely got burned a few times, and he didn't have great success with every venture. But the majority of the things he did, he brought in and trusted the right people who had vision and the acumen to pull it off. And he had a head for figures, and knew the value of a dollar. And he had such a hard life as a child—he came through desperate times.

I think he had such personal charm and intuition about people, and all these people he met became such huge powerful influences to help him make it.

And I think because he was a very loyal person, and he expected loyalty, he was able to foster these really long-term relationships and so it proved very beneficial; because he had these steady strong relationships with people who were really gifted and through them, he was able to branch out and find other people for other facets of his enterprises, and they would turn out to be good too.

What surprised you the most in the end?

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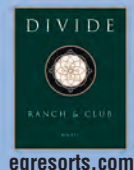
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How hugely influential he was on our culture in ways you don't even realize, how hard he was working, how he cross promoted himself in ways that is now so much more commonplace. That synergy: read the book, see the movie; and the radio show would promote the movies; the sheet music would bump the music; the movies would be named after a hit song—the way all of his different mediums intersected, so he'd get complete saturation of the culture. He did that before anybody else.

Does Gene Autry still walk the Melody Ranch at night?

It's funny—people were saying to me, "if Gene could see *Deadwood* and see what they're using the Melody Ranch for, he'd turn over in his grave." And I'd say, "no he wouldn't! So long as he was able to rent it out and make money, he would have been fine."

You know, when the Melody Ranch did burn [down] in the '60s, he just left it the way it was, turned around and rented it to the TV show *Combat*. [Laughs]



GENE AUTRY AND JOHNNY WESTERN

Johnny Western is best known for penning the theme song, "The Ballad of Paladin" for the CBS Western *Have Gun, Will Travel*. "I knocked out the song in 20 minutes and it changed my life." Gene Autry was indirectly responsible for that career changing event!

Johnny Western first met his idol Gene Autry on young Johnny's radio show in Minnesota when Autry played a local gig. "Mr. Autry told me if I ever came to Hollywood he would try and help me out." Western later did end up in California and was playing guitar at a private party with Roy Rogers and the Sons of the Pioneers. "I didn't know it, but Gene Autry was in the audience."

Two weeks later, Autry needed a guitar picker and Western was offered the gig. On one tour, they played to three million people in 14 days.

In 1957, a retiring Gene Autry hooked Western up with acting lessons. He appeared in Western movies and TV shows including *Gunsmoke* and *Have Gun, Will Travel*. A part on that show led to Johnny Western writing "The Ballad of Paladin."

Jim West is a freelance writer and radio broadcaster in Phoenix, Arizona. He is on the advisory board of the Arizona Music & Entertainment Hall of Fame.



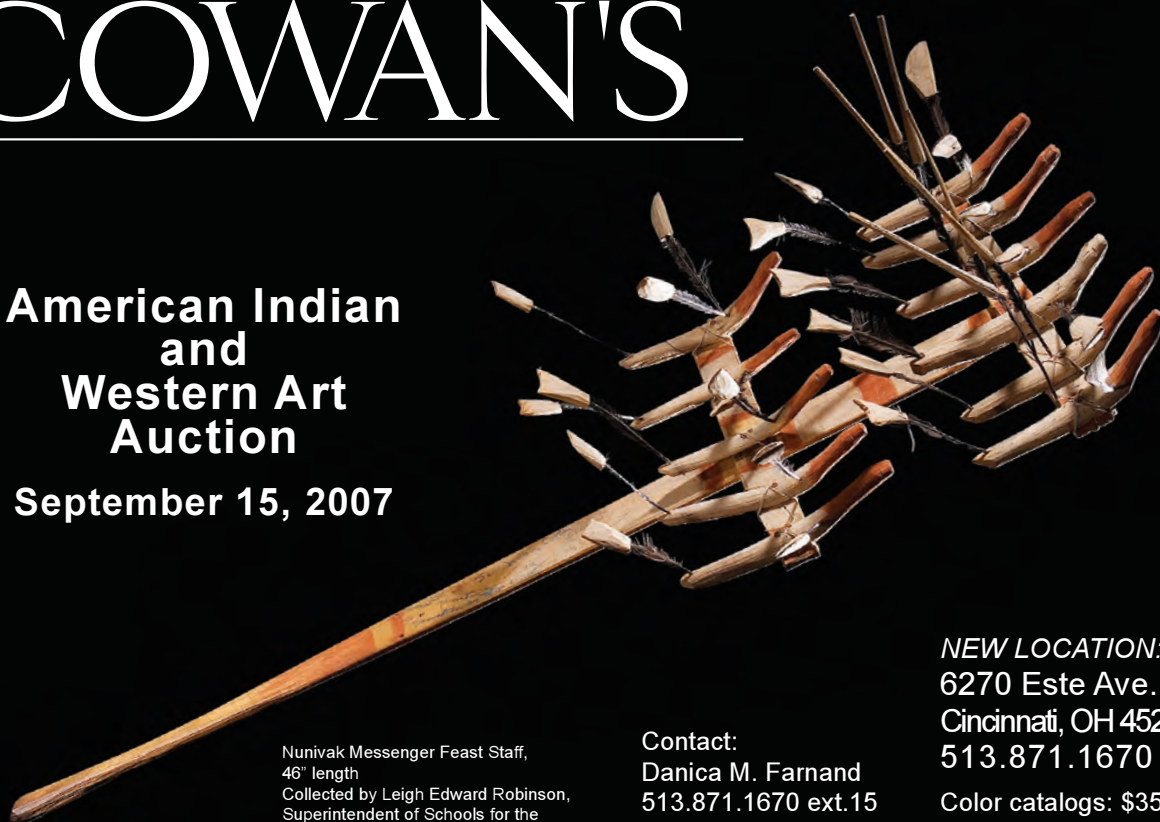
Gene Autry with Johnny Western in Phoenix in 1968 when Autry was named Arizona's Man of the Year.

— COURTESY JOHNNY WESTERN —

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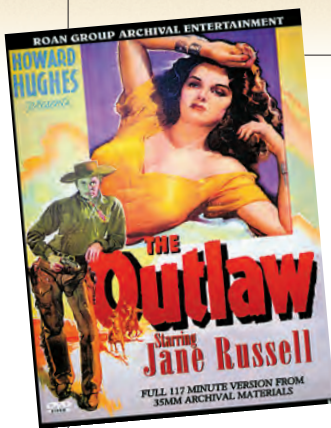


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DVDs

THE OUTLAW

(Roan Group; \$7.95) Film historians like to talk about the great lost movies, films that were mutilated or mishandled. They talk about changing scripts, reshot endings and rotten marketing—archetypal Hollywood mythology.

Howard Hughes' *The Outlaw*, which opened in 1943 and again in 1946, was an infamous misfire. It was also a textbook example of how egos and ineptitude can utterly ruin a potentially great film and still make a tremendous profit.

Even today the movie is mostly famous for the debut and display of the 19-year-old Jane Russell's considerable bust, but *The Outlaw* is a good deal more interesting than that, and it's not because of Russell's cleavage, but it is because of the sex.

What's strangest about *The Outlaw* is that the buxom Rio (Russell) is not the object of desire in the picture—in fact, she barely registers at all. Actually, an entirely different sort of triangle is at play here, and it's between the older Doc Holliday (Walter Huston), the brash young gunslinger Billy the Kid (Jack Buettel) and the paunchy and freakishly jealous Pat Garrett (Thomas Mitchell). The movie teaches us that Hell hath no fury like a sidekick scorned.

It turns out Garrett and the legendary Holliday used to run together before Garrett put on the Lincoln County sheriff's badge. When Holliday shows up in town one afternoon, Garrett is so thrilled to see his old pal, he's practically licking his chops.

Doc is glad to see his buddy, but he's also keeping one eye peeled for his prized strawberry roan that someone stole. Who should turn up in town with the horse than William Bonney a.k.a. Billy the Kid, all low key and lanky. A few words and a little pawing make Billy and Doc an instant item—they do the same kind of stalking dance that the older Humphrey Bogart and young Lauren Bacall did in *To Have and Have Not* (1944).

Make of it what you will, but keep an open mind, and remember that both *The Outlaw* and *To Have and Have Not* were developed by the same director and writer, Howard Hawks and Jules Furthman (more on that below).

Meantime, Rio appears for the first time, wanting to put some holes in Billy because her brother died when he drew on the Kid. Rio shoots at Billy in the dark, they tussle on the stable floor, have a brief conversation in the hay and then do some more tussling. "Hold still lady, or you won't have much dress left," we hear Billy say in the dark. She holds still. Rape? Maybe. Sex? Without question.

The next morning, he and Doc pick up where they left off. Garrett is so apoplectic, he plugs Billy. Doc and the Kid take it on the lam; the barely conscious Billy winds up in the care of Rio and her tia Guadalupe (a great bit of work by actress Mimi Aguglia), and Garrett leaves to deal with the posse.

Turns out Billy needs a lot of looking after, and when Billy's chills aren't helped by Rio's heated stones, it's only natural that she remove her clothes and climb in bed with him. Long fade.

Weeks later, Doc returns and quickly figures out that another mule is kickin' in his stall. After a little huffing and puffing, Doc and Billy go back to arguing about the horse and swapping meaningful glances. All's fair in love and horse trading, and Rio goes from being company to a crowd.

This is peculiar stuff, to be sure, but one gets a sense of how original this movie might have been had it not been run over twice or three times by Hughes' ego.

Hawks was originally hired to develop and direct *The Outlaw*, which would have made it his first Western (*Red River* was filmed several years later). He brought in writer Furthman who he had worked with twice before and would again collaborate with on *To Have And Have Not* and *Rio Bravo* (1959).

But Hawks was not a filmmaker to tolerate interference. After two weeks of Hughes squatting over the production like a fussy hen, Hawks threw up his hands

and walked, leaving Hughes in the director's seat.

We can mourn the departure of Hawks because he loved to work magic with new actresses, and there is no magic to be found anywhere near Rio. Poor Jane Russell was only there to heave and pout and flounce about in this all-boy peacock parade. Some close-ups of Russell's face are so atrocious, she ought to have sued.

The irony is that *The Outlaw* and *Duel In the Sun*, another feverish dust-luster, were the two most financially successful Westerns of the 1940s. In *The Outlaw's* case, that success was entirely due to Russell's chest and Hughes' marketing of her chest. If audiences noticed the film's campy style, they never made a point of it, but the movie was a real case of bait-and-switch hit.

The picture ultimately bellyflops because Hughes was an awful director and an even worse editor. Victor Young's score with its atrocious comedy cues would have made more sense in a cheap cartoon or a *Three Stooges* short.

Which means this is not an easy film to recommend to the casual viewer because it just isn't very good. Yet considering the movie's place in history, the various personalities involved and the absolutely bizarre sexual undercurrents in the story, it is an amazing piece of work.

The 117-minute version on this disc seems to be as good, or as long, as it gets. It's a pretty clean print, though far from perfect, and it could use a few extras.

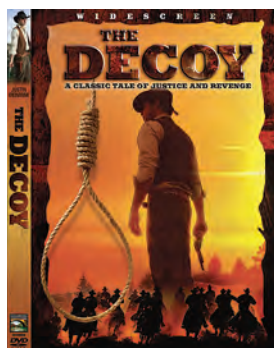
THE DECOY

(Echo Bridge Home Entertainment; \$19.99) Martin (Kevin Market), a mute blacksmith living in a small Arizona town, is framed for the murder of a retiring banker and his wife, who were his surrogate parents. The murdered couple's son-in-law, John (Justin Kreinbrink), is a deputy who is given orders to bring the prisoner to Tucson for the usual quick trial and the usual hanging.

The Decoy is a low budget film, shot in 17 days at Gammons Gulch and Old Tucson, Arizona, by actor/director Kreinbrink, and

it's a decent first effort. In fact, everything about it is decent—the acting, the dialogue, the camera work. Where it falters here and there is in the pacing because, at heart, the picture would have formed the basis of an above average hour-long *Gunsmoke* episode. That's not a bad thing, except the movie is stretched to more than 90 minutes.

What's particularly likeable are one or two neat plot twists. The action in the woods where John and Martin confront the bad guys is well paced and it shows where much of Kreinbrink's talent lies.



What doesn't work is the structure, or rather, the cohesion of the events and characters; this is writing and editing, I'm talking about. And, to be honest, the mild-mannered Martin was really getting on my nerves, I have to say. Maybe that's just me, but I can only take so much sheepish humility on any given day.

I'd hope that Kreinbrink's next shot at a Western is more ambitious and less sentimental, and a tad less pretty; I get the feeling he'd be good at something darker and considerably more detailed.

Movies In the Works

FORD AT FOX

The rumors are in the whispering stage, but it's possible that by the time you read this, **Fox Home Video** will have officially announced that it will be releasing a huge **John Ford** box set. **Ford at Fox** will consist of

25 features, many hitherto unseen, including a number of silents. *The New York Times* film writer **Dave Kehr** seems to have the bulk of the skinny, and he thinks the set will retail at \$299.98 and will include documentaries, essays and other goodies. When I asked, a Fox rep slipped me an encouraging note, "It exists ... but I'm not allowed to talk about it yet."

SUPERNATURAL SNIPE

Gallow Walker, a supernatural Western by **Intandem Films**, stars **Wesley Snipes** as a gunfighter who carries a curse from his ex-nun mom. Apparently Rellik (Snipes) does a fair amount of killing, and the curse stipulates that everyone he kills returns from the dead to get revenge. Hardly seems worth the effort, does it? Better perhaps to take up needlepoint. A different synopsis suggests his job is to eradicate some other undead cowpokes. I expect the truth is somewhere in between the two plots. Whatever the story, audiences can expect Snipes to dress cool and snarl a lot. The movie was shot in **Namibia, Africa**, and has been wrapped a while, so look for it early next year. gallowwalker.com

COWBOYS & ALIENS

What makes the graphic novel and comic series **Cowboys & Aliens** particularly good is the way it unites Apaches and cowboys to fight a supertech society that feels about humans pretty much the same way the palefaces felt about the redskins. It's clearly a revelation for at least some of the cowpokes to get a glimmer of their own pomposity. What's even better is how they learn to wrangle the alien tech without knowing how it works—shoot this, throw that, explode that, a crude approach to stealing the thunder and sending it back. This is good stuff. Apparently **Ron Howard** feels the same way since he and **Brian Grazer** have



announced plans to turn the series into a movie, though Howard is unlikely to direct it. **Dreamworks, Universal, Platinum Studios** and other big guns are jumping on the story and bringing in writers **Hawk Ostby** and **Mark Fergus** who made a pretty big impression with *Children of Men*, and will likely make another with the upcoming *Iron Man* starring **Robert Downey, Jr.** Visit drunkduck.com/CowboysAndAliens to read the *Cowboys & Aliens* graphic novel online.



YouTube THE WEST

COWGIRLS

The cowgirl is eternal, a unique presence, twirling her lasso, riding like the wind, braiding a quirt or ironing her skirt, fearless, armed and ready to act. The cowgirl could take it and dish it out. Many pay homage to cowgirls in the movies, on video, in print and on the Internet, and wantedcowgirls.com is a great place to connect. Especially since the website links to many **YouTube cowgirl video clips** (under Streaming Video), including **Rosemary Clooney** and **Gail Davis**—who, incidentally, was Gene Autry's "wife away from home" on the road—singing medleys on 1958's *Perry Como Show*, and **Jessica Alba's** risqué cowgirl dance from 2005's *Sin City*.

While you're at YouTube, it's worth searching for *Blaze Glory*, a truly weird 10-minute short that apparently ran on the *Glen Campbell Goodtime Hour* in 1969. The short is shot in stop-motion increments and spoofs Western clichés harmlessly, but it's fairly ingenious and you can't envy the actors the work they must have put into it.

MASHED UP AMERICA

MK 12 is a design, filmmaking and F/X collective based in **Kansas City, Missouri**, that appears to be serious about mashing mediums and messages into something both familiar and completely fantastic. Their hour-long feature, *MK12: The History of America*, tells the animated story of a battle in **Las Vegas** between **Astronauts** and the cowboys who knocked out their satellite when they shot their six-guns at the sky. The short will be seen at the **Montreal Film Festival** and will probably end up somewhere accessible in the near future. In the meantime, trailers, as well as a few bootleg clips, can be viewed on YouTube.

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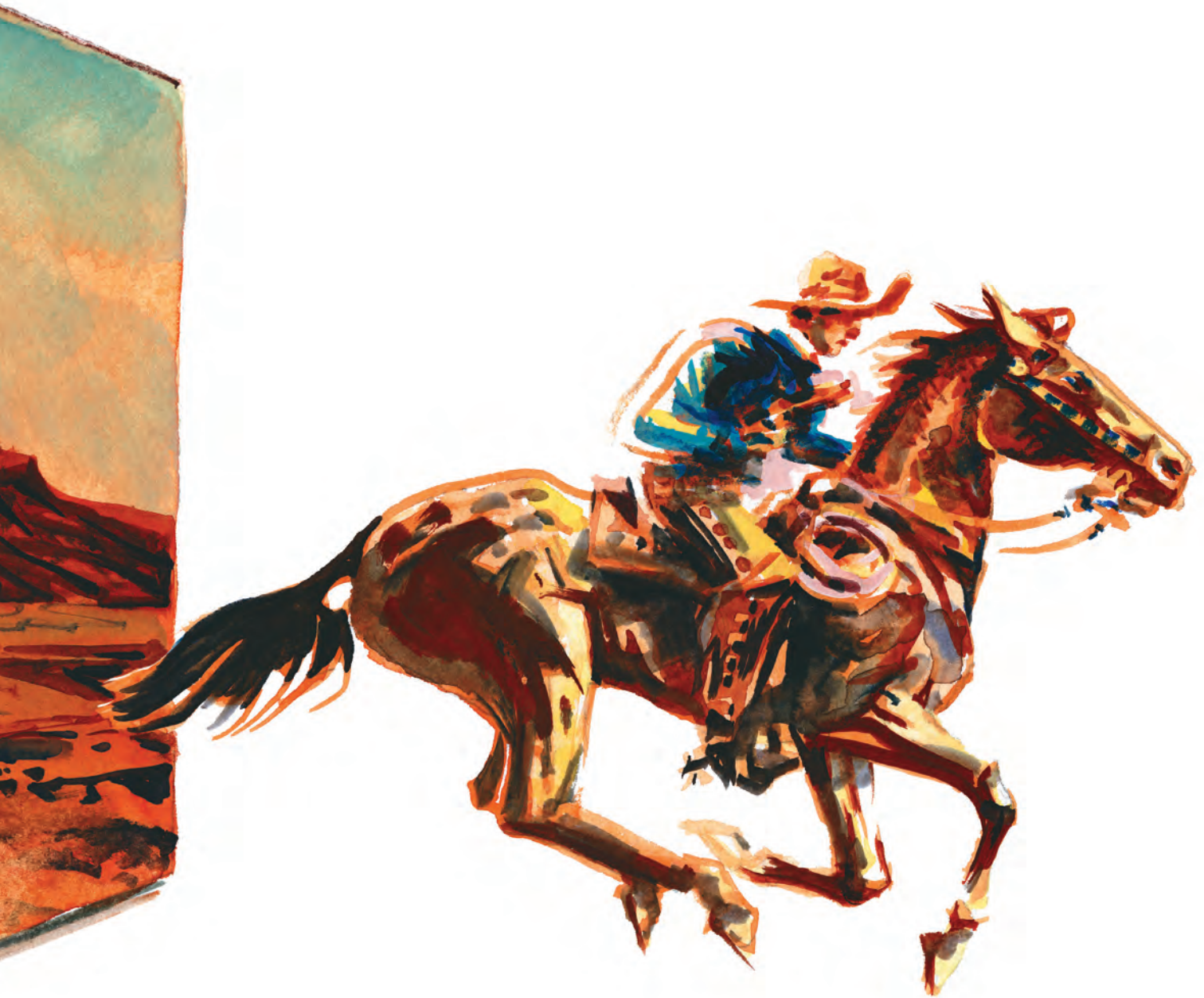
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ENDURANCE OF THE HORSE





“One thing is certain: of all the monuments which the Spanish has left to glorify his reign in America there will be none more worthy than his horse.”

—Frederic Sackrider Remington, "Spanish Horse of Northern Mexico," *The Century* magazine, January 1889



By Ron Soodalter

A Race to End All Races

The true exploits of horseman Francis Aubry.

Come listen, all you greenhorns, and I'll tell you a tale

Of little Francis Aubry who rode the Santa Fe Trail,

Upon his yellow mustang, fair Dolly was her name,

800 miles in just five days, no man could match his fame.

The red dust of the Arabian Desert might have settled and cleared after Hidalgo's epic cinematic ride in the well-done 2004 movie, but it's nothing compared to the dust kicked up by critics of Frank T. Hopkins' self-proclaimed heroics.

It would appear that his claims to have successfully ridden over 500 races, to have belonged to Buffalo Bill Cody's Congress of Rough Riders, to have been half-Sioux, to have, in fact, played even the slightest role in the settlement of the West may be just so much . . . well, horse-pucky. It's almost enough to destroy our faith in heroes. Almost.

It seems there really was a man—modest, soft-spoken—whose exploits on horseback are the stuff of legend, but are absolutely, unquestionably true. He raced against the clock, and when he rode, he was known from Missouri to California. His full name was Francois Xavier Aubry—Francis, or F.X., to the Americans—but standing only 5'2" tall and weighing a mere 100 pounds, he was known as "Little Aubry." And he was the greatest speed and distance rider in the history of the West.

No Man Could Match His Fame

A young French Canadian, Aubry saw a fortune to be made in the Santa Fe trade. He left Quebec and the family farm at 18, and in 1843 made his way to St. Louis. After working as a clerk for three years, he bought a load of goods on credit and joined a party of traders, paying them to haul his freight. Leaving Missouri in early May, they arrived in Santa Fe nearly two months later. The war with Mexico had started while they were en route, and the old town was in the hands of Americans who craved goods from the "U. States." Aubry and

his fellow traders provided a wide variety of items; one trader, two years later, printed a list of his wares that filled columns in the *Santa Fe Republican*: knives, dirks, pistols, guns, rifles; Madeira wine, muslins and mackerel; hammers, hatchets, and silk hose; candles, cravats, and cotton thread; and, of course, all manner of liquors. Aubry proved to be a shrewd businessman; after selling his goods, he returned to St. Louis, where he paid off his debt and kept a hefty profit besides.

The following year, not satisfied with paying others to carry his inventory, young Aubry raised thousands of dollars, bought wagons and supplies, and formed his own caravan to Santa Fe. He offered to carry the mail from Missouri to New Mexico at a time when there was no organized system for mail delivery to the West. Aubry was filling a deep need; homesick Americans in New Mexico were starved for news from the states and for word from home. Still, the trip took over two months, with one man killed and scalped. By the time Aubry arrived, welcome though he was, the news was old.

Restless after selling his goods, Aubry immediately left Santa Fe for Independence, with dozens of wagons and a company of Missouri volunteers. Again, he carried the mail. When they were over halfway to Missouri, Aubry broke from the train and



— ALL PHOTOS BY HENRY HAMLIN —

AMERICA'S FIRST TRUE HORSE

The Spanish mustang is tough and well bred for an endurance race, yet America's first true horse may not endure much longer. If not for a few stalwart advocates, it's likely that none of the Indian ponies would have made it to this century. Turn to p. 38 for the full story.

raced ahead alone, arriving in Independence on August 31, having traveled 300 miles in only four days.

Within weeks, Little Aubry loaded another caravan—out of season, since the Santa Fe trains had always stopped by September—and started for New Mexico. Again, he left the train at a gallop, taking the mail and three men along, and raced toward Santa Fe. This time, they were chased by Indians, but they made it in safely, ahead of the trade wagons. His daring rides through dangerous country were news, and Aubry was written up in the *Daily Missouri Republican* and the *Santa Fe Republican*. Everyone waited to see what the brave rider would do next.

Aubry was a restless man by nature, and he'd been bitten by the speed bug. Late in December 1847, he once again collected the mail and then stated his intention to ride muleback to Independence in 18 days, in an attempt to break the existing 24½-day speed record. He took five men with him, but he and his crew soon ran into serious trouble. Mexican bandits stole 10 of their mules, and Aubry's party rode three more to death. They were beset by Indians, and they were stuck for 10 hours in a blizzard. All five of his companions, overcome by exhaustion, quit, leaving Aubry to finish the trek alone. Despite setbacks, he made the 800-mile ride in 14 days.

The *Missouri Daily Republican* trumpeted Aubry's success, stating, "Such a rate of travel is unprecedented in Prairie life, and speak[s] much in favor of Mr. A's indisputable courage and perseverance." The feat amounted to considerably more than just riding fast over wild country, the article went on; in the previous year alone, 47 men had



Aubry's bloody ride from Santa Fe to Independence set a record that has yet to be broken.

— ILLUSTRATED BY GARY ZABOLY —

GARY
ZABOLY
2007



A Race to End All Races

been killed on the Santa Fe Trail, and 330 wagons and 6,500 head of stock either destroyed or stolen.

Only four years had passed since Aubry arrived in St. Louis from Quebec, and he was already a legend across the frontier. By now, Aubry's pattern was fixed: Deliver goods and mail by caravan to Santa Fe, and race back to Independence. After escorting another of his trains to New Mexico, he prepared to ride for Missouri, seeking a 10-day record. This time, he rode alone. Along the way, he was taken by Comanches, who stole his food and the mail. Aubry escaped and raced on, riding three horses and two mules to death. Finally afoot, he walked 40 miles to Fort Mann, where he obtained a fresh mount and rode into Independence—his time, an incredible eight days, 10 hours!

Setting an Unbreakable Record

Every time Aubry set a record that couldn't be broken, he broke it. And this was to be no exception. According to legend, he took a bet of \$1,000—a vast sum, worth around \$50,000 in today's currency—that he could make the 800-mile ride to Independence in six days.

Aubry set about making his preparations as never before. Instead of relying on a single string of horses, he arranged to have hostlers stationed with mustangs at strategic points along the trail. In the dim light of early morning on September 12, 1848, Aubry bade goodbye to a handful of well-wishers in the Plaza, vaulted into the saddle and galloped out of Santa Fe. He first changed mounts in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and rode through the night into the second day. He found remounts at San Miguel and at Rio Gallina, and he galloped on, sometimes with only the horse beneath him, other times riding his mustang and driving one or two in front, "California style." He tied himself on, ate as he rode and caught occasional brief naps in the saddle.

The relay stations were about 100 miles apart, and at one stop, he reined in long enough to bolt a cup of hot coffee and saddle his favorite horse, a Spanish mustang—he called her his "yellow mare"—named Dolly. He left camp at a gallop, pushing Dolly hard through a cold Autumn rain, but she bore up well.

As he sped past a westbound wagon train, he was observed by frontiersman, bullwhacker and entrepreneur Alexander Majors, who later wrote, "I met [Aubry] when he was making his famous ride, at a point on the Santa Fe Road called Rabbit Ear. He passed my train at a full gallop without asking a single question as to the danger of Indians ahead of him."

Finally, Aubry rode into the camp where fresh mounts were to be waiting. He found the hostler recently killed and scalped, and the horses gone. Dolly had covered 100 miles, and now she would have to cover 100 more. This she did, in a record 26 hours, averaging around eight miles per hour. Aubry finally found a remount with a westering wagon train; he left his amazing yellow mare in the care of the wagon master, to be returned to Santa Fe.

Aubry rode on, through 24 hours of pouring rain and thick mud, crossing swollen streams, killing six horses and riding six more down. At one point, he found himself afoot, and, hiding his saddle, he walked over 20 miles to his next mount.

On the night of September 17, 1848, Little Aubry—nearly motionless aboard a played-out horse—stopped in front of Independence's Merchants Hotel. With cries of, "Aubry's here!" men dashed out to stare, to whisper their astonishment and to help him out of his saddle. When they cut the ropes holding him on, they found the saddle covered in blood.

Helped into the hotel, Aubry croaked an order for ham, eggs and coffee, and when he had finished eating, he finally slept. The black-haired little Frenchman with the trim goatee had ridden the 800 miles from Santa Fe to Independence in five days, 15 hours. He had won his bet, and he had set a record that would never be broken.

When he was awake and coherent, Aubry wrote a brief synopsis of his

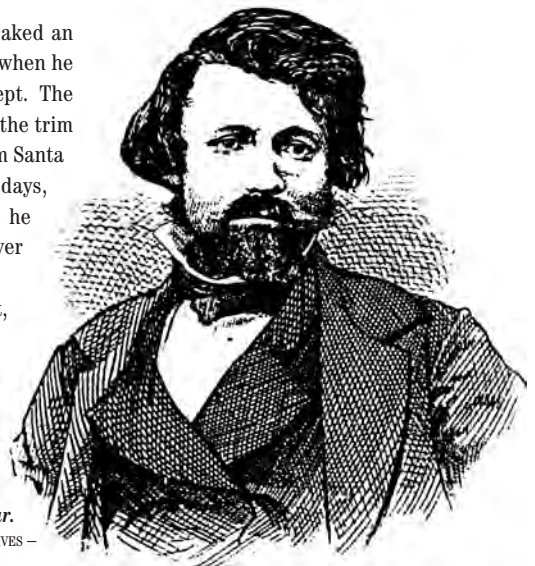
ride. It ends, simply, "made 200 miles on my yellow mare in 26 hours."

An Unlikely Death

A few years later, feeling that the Santa Fe Trail had become too civilized, Aubry turned his attention farther west. In 1852, he mounted Dolly and led 10 wagonloads of goods, along with 3,500 sheep and 100 mules, to the California goldfields. The following year, while driving 14,000 sheep along the California route, he and his herders were attacked by Indians. Aubry's August 3 entry in his journal reads, "Indians shooting arrows around us all day wounded some of our mules and my famous mare, Dolly, who so often rescued me from danger by her speed and capacity of endurance." Aubry also writes that he himself had received eight wounds, "five of which cause me much suffering."

With most of their food gone, the party of men was reduced to eating their horses. Dolly had succumbed to her wounds, and on August 16, Aubry wrote, "I have the misfortune to know that the flesh we are eating is that of my inestimable mare Dolly who so often saved me from death at the hands of Indians."

Little Aubry didn't long survive his yellow mare. The following year, he rode to California in search of a central transcontinental railroad route from St. Louis



Francis X. Aubry is best remembered for his trailblazing journey from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Independence, Missouri. His race will be re-enacted this year.

— TRUE WEST ARCHIVES —



Race Your Mustangs: Competitive Trail Riding is offered by the American Endurance Ride Conference (aerc.org • 866-271-AERC) and North American Trail Ride Conference (natrc.org • 303-688-1677).

The first question you want to ask Rob Phillips is: Are you crazy?

"Yes," he says. Good. Glad we got that cleared up.

Phillips must be out of his mind. He's executive director of the Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race Endurance Ride—a 12-day event scheduled to start in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on September 3 and end, 800 miles later, at Independence, Missouri, on September 15.

Crazy? Folks asked Francis Xavier Aubry that same question, of course, back in 1848. Aubry wagered \$1,000 that he could ride from Santa Fe to Independence in six days. He covered the distance in five days, 15 hours (give or take an hour).

A RACE FROM SANTA FE TO INDEPENDENCE?

That's not horsing around.

That bit of Western history gave Jim Gray this crazy notion: Put on an endurance race along the Santa Fe Trail. Gray helps run the Drover's Mercantile in Ellsworth, Kansas, is founder of the C.O.W.B.O.Y. (Cockeyed Old West Band of Yahoos) Society and has been instrumental in preserving Ellsworth's history. Gray pitched this idea to buddy Rob Phillips in Lawrence, Kansas. Rob said: Impossible. But a day later, Rob called back, saying, "Let's do it."

"What got my interest was that it was big enough," says Phillips, who has run a hotel, B&B and put on parades and cowboy gatherings. "We'd done little cowboy gatherings and this and that, that would attract 500 people, a thousand people. Communities have problems with small events. The sponsors just don't get the exposure, but with an event that's over 800 miles..."

Early in 2006, Phillips and his team started meeting with state and community officials to pitch their plan, and—surprise—weren't laughed out of the offices. Before long, they not only had a website (sfthorserace.com) but sponsors (like Chevrolet), partners (like Kansas' "Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race" lottery ticket) and a cable network making coverage plans (RFD-TV).

Eventually, Gray had to bow out when the job became too time consuming. But Phillips was off and running. And making changes.

"If you took a picture of our vision early on and

took it now," Phillips says, "the only things common are there are still horses in both pictures and it's close to the Santa Fe Trail."

The original concept was an 800-mile race with one rider and 10 horses per team. That was crazy and impossible, and sanctioning from the American Endurance Ride Conference required tweaking. Now the plan is for 10 separate events—basically ten 50-mile events—with rest days at the halfway point in Dodge City and an overall winner determined by total time. Phillips expects about 100 riders to compete in the inaugural event.

In addition, Pony Express riders will carry mail on mustangs in an effort to draw attention to the Santa Fe Trail and its communities as well as the Bureau of Land Management's Wild Horse and Burro program. Various cities will also host race villages (open to the public from noon to 8 p.m. with vendors, food and entertainment).

Not bad for a guy who helped produce the first endurance race (a warmup event in Dodge City in May) he ever attended. Of course, Phillips points out, "We still have to pull it off."

Are Phillips and the Great Santa Fe Trail Horse Race preserving history?

"I don't know if we're preserving history," he says. "I think we're bringing attention to it."



Johnny D. Boggs has often been asked, "Are you crazy?"—but never because he wanted to ride hundreds of miles on a horse.





A Race to End All Races

to the West Coast. Upon returning to Santa Fe, he stopped for a drink at the Mercure Brothers' store on the Plaza. There he encountered Richard H. Weightman, former editor of a defunct local newspaper. Weightman was a sometime military man, blustery and quick to anger. As a youth, he had been expelled from the U.S. Military Academy for slashing a classmate's face with a Bowie knife. As he and Aubry sat, drinking their wine, an argument ensued. In some versions, it was over the best route for the railroad; in others, a slight to Aubry published in Weightman's newspaper. Almost at once, Weightman drove his knife into Aubry's stomach, killing him almost instantly. He was 29 years old.

Weightman was arrested and tried for murder. So popular was Aubry with the citizens of Santa Fe that a guard had to be placed outside his killer's cell for his protection. Ultimately, Weightman was acquitted when his attorney argued that Aubry's death came under the unwritten law of the duel; the defendant had claimed that Aubry was drawing a pistol when stabbed.

Shortly before the fatal encounter, a new steamboat was built and christened

the *F.X. Aubry*. Between the smokestacks was bolted the wooden figure of a small man astride a yellow mustang. The boat would be the fastest on the Missouri.

Alexander Majors, who had witnessed that brief moment in Aubry's legendary ride, later wrote, "This ride, in my opinion . . . was the most remarkable ever made by any man. The entire distance was made without stopping to rest. . . . At the time he made this ride, in much of the territory he passed through he was liable to meet hostile Indians, so that his adventure was daring in more ways than one. In the first place, the man who attempted to ride 800 miles in the time he did took his life in his hands. There is perhaps not one man in a million who could have lived to finish such a journey."

Just six years later, Majors, with his partners, William H. Russell and William B. Waddell, launched an enterprise for the fast cross-country delivery of the mail. They officially called it the Central Overland and Pike's Peak Express Company, but no one could handle such a mouthful, and the company was simply called the Pony Express. The ad the partners placed seeking carriers read, in part, "WANTED: Young, skinny, wiry fellows. . . . Must be expert riders. Willing to risk death daily."

As Alexander Majors would have been the first to acknowledge, they were describing F.X. Aubry. In the words of one historian, "Americans love a race and they love a winner, and they loved that man on the horse."



Ron Soodalter's *Hanging Captain Gordon: The Life and Trial of an American Slave Trader* is published by Atria Books.

THE OLDEST HUNDRED-MILER

Modern-day horses just aren't as resilient as the legendary horses that crossed the plains as the West was being settled. No way could they cover 100 miles in a single day.

Wendell Robie, a 59-year-old lumberman and the president of a savings and loan in Auburn, California, set out on his Arabian stallion with a few of his buddies to put that myth to rest. They covered it in 22 hours and 45 minutes. That was in August 1955. Ever since, a race has been held annually, going from those first five riders to 20 to 250 riders today.

Popularly known as the Tevis Cup Ride, the one-day, 100-mile endurance race in the Sierra Nevada Mountains follows a trail from Lake Tahoe to Auburn. The Tevis Cup is awarded to whomever completes the ride in the shortest time; it is named after Lloyd Tevis, a 19th-century president of Wells and Fargo Company.

Sanctioned by the American Endurance Ride Conference, the race has inspired other races to take place worldwide. It was even a demonstration sport at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Books have even latched onto the Tevis Cup, whether it be in popular fiction like Billie Bierer's *The Last Race*, or the first complete history of the race like Marnye Langer's *The Tevis Cup: To Finish Is To Win*.

Robie passed away in 1984. His race still champions the ride itself—a pure bastion for the "in it to win it" enthusiast. Riders may not be competing for big purses like the \$500,000 purse that winners will take home from next year's 100-mile World Endurance Championship endurance race in Malaysia; riders race in the Tevis for the bragging rights.

To compete in the oldest hundred-miler race that inspired others to spread the sport around the world, now that's something special.

—Lucky Bonner



Riding "California style"—riding a mustang while driving two others in front—just like Aubry did on his record-breaking trek.

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Rating the Down by Nancy Dunlap Cawdrey ©



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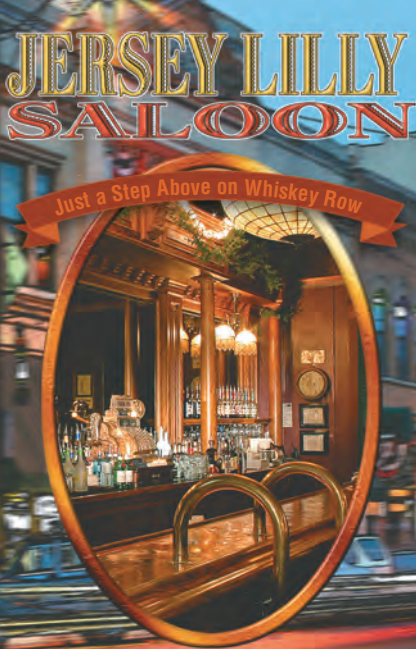


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By John Christopher Fine

Saving America's First True Horse

Spanish Mustangs, on the brink of extinction, are slowly making a comeback.



Frederic Remington's The Sentinel is a good representation of the Spanish influence in the working Spanish Mustang. Physical traits dominant in the Spanish Mustang are well depicted here: the convex profile (contrasts the straight forehead and nose of most breeds), prominent shoulder points, short round cannon bones (supporting bones of the legs), well rounded croup (highest point of hindquarters to the top of the tail) and stifle joints (analogous to the human knee) set well under the horse.

— ALL IMAGES TRUE WEST ARCHIVES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED —

Don Juan kept his little band of mares in the pine forest at the edge of a pond. He was alert but unconcerned. Life was good for the stallion. Plenty of prairie grass flourished and once a day, the feed truck spread grain on the ground so the band would get fat.

That's all the herd of 23 Spanish Mustangs had to do, graze and look pretty, romp and run on the 11,000-acre Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary.

Susan Watt came up with the idea to create a

herd of Spanish Mustangs separate from the 500 wild horses that run free in the sanctuary. As the program development director at the sanctuary, Susan wants to preserve a bloodline that can be traced back to original horses brought to the New World by Spanish conquistadors.

Columbus' Gift to the New World

Christopher Columbus introduced horses to the island of Hispaniola on his second voyage of

discovery in 1493. Until that day, only vestiges of Eohippus, the earliest-known horse that was the size of a tiny dog (about eight inches tall at the shoulders), remained as geological fossil records.

Columbus was at first angered that his demand for Andalusian horses was not honored and instead, small, Iberian Sorraia were boarded for the long voyage across the ocean. Yet the Andalusians probably would not have survived, while the hardy Sorraia horses flourished in the new colonies.

Horses aided in conquering the Aztecs, subduing the Incas and enslaving the Mayas. Without them, the conquest would not have been possible.

"Imagine a handful of men on horseback. The Aztec legend foretold that a light skinned man with a beard, riding such an animal, would rejoin his people. It was their god Quetzalcoatl, the god of day, returned as the Aztec calendar predicted. Cortez was one lucky dude. He just happened by on that very week when the return of their god in man-form had been predicted," Vic Benilous says.

Vic is an ocean explorer. He discovered the lost treasure of Hernando Cortez in the Atlantic Ocean on a shipwreck lost in a fire at sea.

The historic record documents Cortez's landing on the coast of Mexico at a place he named Veracruz in 1519, with 16 horses. The conquerors astounded the natives with their vast strength in numbers and even more so with the apparition of Spanish steeds. These gods on horseback received offerings of pure worked gold and exquisite silver.

The European lust for gold eventually could only be surpassed by the Indian lust for their horses.

By 1519, the Spanish colonists not only bred Sorraia or Marismeno stock but also had horses of

North African Barbs when they interbred with Andalusian and Arab stock.

A long time had passed since the Moors, who invaded Spain in AD 711, were driven out of Iberia. During Moorish occupation, they exported many Sorraia horses, indigenous to the southern Iberian peninsula, across the sea to North Africa. Andalusians cost 10 times what Sorraias cost and would not endure the privations and hard work demanded of them in the tropical colonies.

During the continual trade over the years, horses that had been exported to North Africa were bred by the Moors and Berbers with Arabian horses and horses of the Barbary Coast. These horses were then exported across the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain and Portugal. This breeding yielded reliable mounts of great endurance.

Of this stock, inevitably, Cortez was furnished his horses from Cuba when he set sail for Mexico. The adventurer took brown, bay, black and grays, according to Spanish records. These were durable horses that could survive the long sea voyage across the gulf to Veracruz.

In time, many different breeds of people ventured to the New World. A variety of horses accompanied them into the Americas. Work horses, Nordic horses, European stock as Dutch settlers came to New Amsterdam, English to Plymouth Rock, French to Arcadia. Eventually their bloods mixed during Western expansion.

Yet it seems that little bands of Spanish Mustangs, like those in the Mountain Home Range in Sulphur Springs, Utah, kept apart from other horses. Because of this isolation, the

FERAL HORSE HERDS IN THE U.S.



In 1977, Ron Harding, a wild horse specialist for the Bureau of Land Management, was inspecting mustangs from the latest roundup when he realized the rumors could be true. He had heard of barb-headed horses at Beauty's Butte in Oregon, but this was the first time he saw them for himself. He was excited that these could very well be Spanish Mustangs that had survived, isolated from man. Dr. Gus Cothran of the Equine Parentage Institute at the University of Kentucky confirmed Harding's suspicion; Cothran found the presence of an A3 genome cluster linking the mustangs closely to the Iberian breed.

Where else have wild Spanish Mustangs been found in the States? D. Phillip Sponenberg, a professor at Virginia Tech Veterinary College, located them for his 1997 article on the North American Colonial Horse in *Conquistador Magazine*.

- Book Cliffs in Utah
- Cerbat Mountains in Arizona
- Kiger region and Riddle Mountain in Oregon
- Pryor Mountains between Wyoming & Utah

Will James would be proud to hear these Mustangs are still running wild. The cowboy author lamented his days as a wild horse hunter: "I'm kind of sorry now so many were caught, 'cause I have a lot of respect and admiration for the Mustang.... For they really belong, not to man, but to that country of junipers and sage, of deep arroyos, mesas—and freedom."

Editor's Note: We want to make the distinction that feral mustang herds are usually not Spanish Mustangs. A very small group can be considered part of the breed, and some Spanish Mustang purists disagree entirely on this point.



The bloodline of the original horses brought to America by Spanish conquistadors are being preserved to this day thanks to mustang enthusiasts across the nation.



Saving America's First True Horse

bloodline has been preserved better than most.

The horses from early Spanish adventures into Florida likely didn't survive the ordeal. Those horses were killed for food, murdered by the native people or died from starvation and the perils of the swampland they invaded.

Yet the horses from the Spaniards' western movement—through Mexico into California, Texas, Arizona and the New Mexico, Utah and Colorado Territories—fared better. From the *mestas*—the Spanish horse farms of the hacienda and *ficas* of Old Mexico—and the vast Spanish territories, horse blood remained as pure as it could, for a time, and the breed thrived.

Tribes stole horses, traded for them, captured *mestenas* (mustangs) that escaped from the *mestas* and the farmers who raised the steeds. Plains Indians learned quickly how to domesticate the horse. They hunted bison by horseback, used them as beasts of burden and quickly became horse cultures while before dogs had served their needs for domestic animals.

From Millions to Thousands

In the American West, wild or feral horses accentuate the traits of most every breed that was introduced by waves of settlers and pioneers.

Plow horses mixed with thoroughbreds,

Morgans mixed with Arabs. The little Iberian horses from the Sor and Raia tributaries that formed the Sorraia River in Portugal on the Spanish border ran wild with vast herds that numbered two million on the Western frontier in 1900.

That number was culled to fewer than 20,000 by 1971, after systematic slaughter of wild horses for pet food, fertilizer and sport reduced the wild herds.

Some protection was afforded feral horses under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971. It is a law continually eroded by human greed, arrogance, expansion, population explosion, development and competition for rangeland. The latest incarnation was in 2004, when President George W. Bush's administration removed protection for wild horses and burros that were over the age of 10 or were unsuccessfully adopted after three attempts. Since these feral horses are sold without restrictions, it's likely that many were sold to slaughterhouses. (Congress is currently considering a bill that will ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption.)

The path of destructive legislation has left merely 31,000 wild horses in the American West. About 2,000 living horses are registered in the Spanish Mustang Registry, celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Of those, less than 200 are the

pure blood Sorraia horses first brought over to our country by Columbus and Cortez.

"Spanish Mustangs were the Indian ponies. They are descendants of the feral horses brought over by the Spanish. These Spanish Mustangs today are what Mother Nature worked out. Nature is a better breeder than us. If something is not fit, it gets ate," Sharron Scheikofsky says.

Sharron began working with Spanish Mustangs 30 years ago. She was inspired by Bob Brislawn, who she says "began in the 1920s to save the true Spanish Mustangs from being bred out of existence. His son Emmett has devoted his whole life to them."

Bob Brislawn was the founder of the Spanish Mustang Registry, with its 2,000-strong membership of horses. Bob started the registry in 1957 with just 20 steeds, after half a century of breeding and recording the bloodlines of Spanish Mustangs.

Bloodlines play a huge role in determining whether or not a horse is a Spanish Mustang. Yet mitochondrial DNA tests can be misleading. The genetic material is definitely more reliable than nuclear DNA, in that mitochondrial DNA usually shows no change from parent to offspring. Sounds foolproof, right? Except the DNA only accounts for the mother's lineage. This means that progeny can test positive for Spanish Mustang mitochondrial DNA and look nothing like a Spanish Mustang. In that case, it's likely that somewhere along the line, the females bred with horses outside of the pure herd.

Since a horse can test positive for the DNA and yet not exhibit the "look," Spanish Mustangers, like Sharron Scheikofsky, view the whole horse to determine its ancestry. Sharron's eye gauges the Spanish phenotype, the conformation typical of the Sorraia breed that is her specialty.

"In Iberia, there are about 150 Sorraia horses left. They are named for the river in Portugal in the Aleantejo and Andalusian regions where they are found. Eleven of these horses were taken from the wild by Dr. Ruy d'Andrade around 1920, and thus saved from extinction. Every Sorraia horse goes back to these 11 that are heavily inbred," Sharron says.

"Hardy Oelke, a man from Germany, came over here. He wanted to see some [American] mustangs. The Spanish Mustang Registry told him to get in touch with us. We have more grulla types



Remington's bucking horse shows the Mustang breed's ability to coil and spring without leaving far from the ground. They are sure-footed and flexible horses, which makes them extremely versatile.



Although the Spanish Mustang proved hardy as a cow horse, the better specimens were usually reserved for breeding stock or the mounts of ranchers. As such, they were not the focus of the romance of the cowboy and were rarely depicted in artwork of the times. The “U” neck in the above Charlie Russell drawing clearly shows cow horses were not the ideals of the breed, but they were brave mounts with superior hearts and wills.

than anyone. Hardy thought that the Sorraia Mustangs might be able to help the breed survive.”

Intrigued by Dr. d’Andrade’s Spanish herd, Hardy wanted to see if any Sorraias existed in the Americas. His research was already proving fruitful; he had discovered two Spanish Mustang mares in a herd at Book Cliffs, Utah. When he visited Sharron, he tested one of her mares and discovered she also carried the Sorraia DNA.

Today, Sharron and her partner Dave Reynolds own the largest number of Sorraia Mustangs in the Spanish Mustang Registry.

Champions of the Indian Pony

Sharron, born in Salt Lake City, Utah, grew up in Denver, Colorado, where her grandparents owned horses. A picture of Cochise and an article about the horse of Spanish blood got her started on a quest to find out more about them.

“I got my first one in 1974. I found out you can’t have just one,” says Sharron, laughing, her bright blue eyes twinkling. “Every year we say we are not going to keep any foals.”

“We said ‘we are going to keep it at 20 head.’ We have 80. We broke that limit,” Sharron’s partner Dave Reynolds adds.

Dave was born in Tyler, Minnesota. He left his

family’s dairy and cattle farm in 1980, when he came out to the Black Hills of South Dakota. “I liked to be where there were cattle and horses. I was tired of running farm machinery in Minnesota,” Dave says.

Dave got a job at a livestock auction yard and began shoeing horses and starting colts. “I learned horse shoeing from an old boy in Minnesota. He took me twice on his rounds and finally said that’s all I can show ya,” Dave says.

“Spanish Mustangs, there is not near as much trouble with them as with [other] horses. I was telling them ranchers about their horses with little feet and big bodies. It’s like taking a pickup and puttin’ motorcycle wheels on it. It won’t last,” he says, smiling.

Dave met Sharron at a ranch. “She had this little grulla stallion, and he had all kinds of Barb characteristics. She had the horse in Wyoming. I thought it belonged to the rancher so asked him how much. He said a friend of theirs owned the stallion. So I asked him what the friend wanted for the horse. The rancher laughed and said ‘She won’t sell him for a million dollars.’”

“I finally met Sharron, and we found out we were trying to save the same kind of horses—the Barb-type Spanish Mustangs. We decided to join in our

efforts to do this in 1990. That’s how we got together,” Dave says.

“I have never seen any breed of horse with personality like them. It’s due to the fact that they’re intelligent. Man has bred so many modern breeds to put up with you that they are dull. These horses are so smart you can see the wheels turning, the things they will do. Bob Brislawen talked about their natural affinity for man. He worked for the Geological Survey and used them as pack animals. He never tied them together, never hobbled them at night,” Sharron says.

When training Spanish Mustangs, Sharron and Dave offer impeccable advice. “I always tell people to start with being their friend. Get ‘em to like you, then start training,” Sharron says.

“Training varies with the horse,” Dave adds. “I always start where the horse is at. See where the horse is at, what’s scaring him, what’s he afraid of.”

“Don’t approach him with the idea of making him do anything,” Sharron adds.

“Some of these horses, their defense mechanism is real close to the surface. If you don’t approach it right, you get that self-defense to come out. People want to call it meanness. It’s not meanness; it’s what the horse had to do to survive,” Dave explains. “Wolves and mountain lions would’ve got ‘em. Being this close to nature is what makes them unique. The true old Mustang horse was free and able to move on. They’re not kept in stalls, so they’re happier and healthier.”

The Spanish Mustangs raised by Sharron and Dave are free to run on South Dakota prairie rangeland year round, so they can “be able to be a horse,” says Sharron, emphasizing the love she and her partner share for these few remaining Spanish Mustangs whose blood lines and characteristics they hope to keep pure. They are not big horses, about 14 hands high, and they generally weigh 700-800 pounds.

So what exactly are those special traits of the Spanish Mustangs that Sharron and Dave are fighting so hard to preserve?

“The Spanish Mustangs have a deep set neck that starts lower in the chest,” Dave says. “Flat smooth muscling. No creases or bulgy muscles; that’s not right.”

“They have a low set tail,” adds Dave, putting his hand on the grulla’s tail, showing its position at the base. “The old Sorraia horse had either a



Saving America's First True Horse

flat or convex head."

"We say convex rather than Roman nose," Sharron explains. "That expression is used for draft horses. It's not the nose, but the whole head."

"Their feet are sounder and stronger. Very little leg and foot problems," Dave says.

"The legs are all in proportion. Man hasn't been screwing with them. Birthing is never a problem with these horses. In the hundreds we raised, we only had one problem," Sharron says. "It was a foal with a leg back so the mare couldn't have the baby."

"That to me is amazing. We have 100 percent every year. They're being bred naturally. The stallions run with 'em all year long. That's a problem with [other] horses, [man] won't let 'em run naturally," Dave says.

"They have a narrow chest. If you look at anything Mother Nature made that's got to move, you see they don't have wide lungs; they are long. That narrow chest is for lung capacity. That's for running. They're flexible," Dave says. "They have very smooth gaits and are sure-footed. Very good in rough country. They can jump from a standstill into a gallop.

"The back legs being under them, they have agility. Bob Brislawn used to say 'it is like they are leaning forward on their front legs, head and legs under them. Always in a position to jump and go.' They had to be that way in the wild."

Healing is also fast and sure in Spanish Mustangs—necessary for survival that kept the horses alive in the wild.

"We had six or so very bad wire cuts on their legs. We've never had any 'proud flesh' problems. We never bandaged or doctored any of 'em. That's what's amazing to me," says Dave, while picking up a hoof of one of his stallions.

"I used to raise Arabian horses. If you had cuts like Shadow had, you'd have proud flesh and be bandaging and doctoring it. Shadow got his foot in wire." Dave points with his finger to the missing ball of the stallion's hoof.

"It took a quarter of the hoof wall. The bulb of the heel is gone. He doesn't even limp now. He barely limped when he did it."

"It looked like raw hamburger, and he was barely limping," says Sharron, while giving the stallion an affectionate scratch on his neck.

Clearly Sharron and Dave love their horses, almost to the point of not being able to sell the



This horse from the Townsend & Pickett's Ranch in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) shows a classic early American cow horse of Spanish Mustang descent.

— COURTESY ROBERT G. MCCUBBIN —

foals. "We can't keep them all," a disappointed Sharron says. She does admit the temptation is high when they get an exceptional colt or filly: "We want to see how it will turn out."

Blackfeet's Buffalo Runners

It's clear why Spanish Mustangs are known for their endurance. "I rode out to the Brislawn ranch a hundred miles, unshod," Dave says. "No big deal."

A Blackfeet elder once told him, "They have hooves like steel ... they don't need shoes. Perhaps these purebred Spanish Mustangs, not the BLM mixed breeds, will enable our youth to understand our traditions and culture."

For Indians in the American West, the endurance of these Spanish Mustangs made them useful mounts for buffalo hunts. The Blackfoot is the only Western tribe known today that has taken on the mission of preserving their ancestors' buffalo horse.

It all began when Blackfoot artist Robert Black Bull was gifted a Spanish Mustang from Montana artists Jack and Jessica Hines. The Hines had purchased paintings of his, and they felt he should raise the horses on the Blackfeet Reservation in northcentral Montana. Black Bull

took the proceeds from the sale and bought six mares from the Brislawns' ranch, where the Hines had purchased his other mustang.

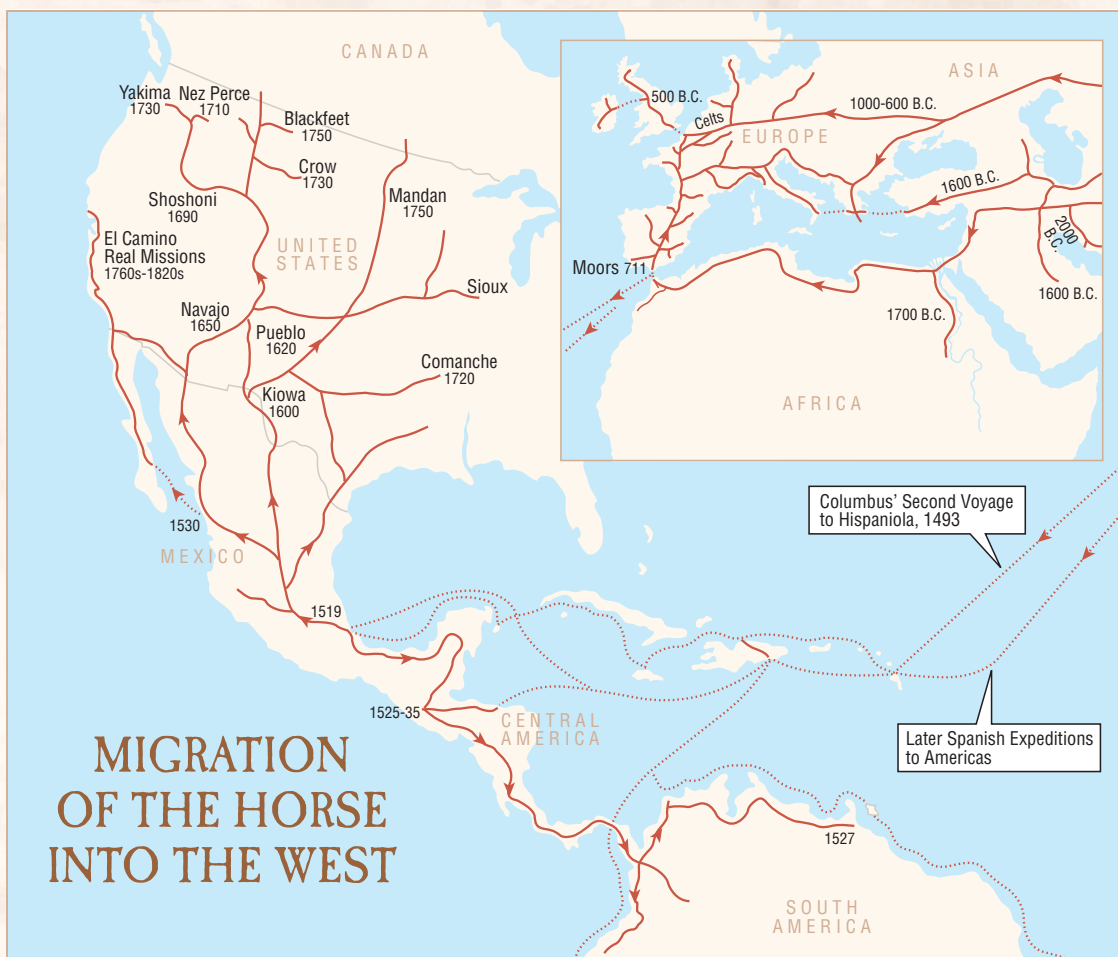
He calls them "buffalo runners," and the nonprofit program he started on the reservation in 1994 is another courageous effort to save the Spanish Mustang. The Blackfeet Buffalo Horse Coalition is a lease program that allows Blackfeet, with appropriate facilities, to lease a stallion and two mares at no cost. The lessee keeps the first foal. If two more are born, one returns to the base herd, and the other is kept. If three are born, two return to the herd, and so on and so forth.

If other native tribes in the West—most notably the Shoshoni, who were the first to revere the Spanish Mustang and referred to it as the "Dog God"—were to follow the example set by the Blackfeet Reservation, the salvation of these sturdy steeds could surely be promising.

Let Wild Horses Run Free

Susan Watt is justly proud of the band of Spanish Mustangs free to run wild at the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary.

"They are primitive colors—duns, grullas. They have a dark stripe down the middle of their



SPANISH MUSTANGS IN THE AMERICAN WEST

1493: Christopher Columbus introduces horses—Iberian Sorraia—to the island of Hispaniola (between the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico) on his second voyage of discovery.



Frederic Remington illustrates Coronado's expedition in the West.

1519: Cortez and his crew land on the coast of Mexico at a place he names Veracruz, with 16 horses: Barbs from Morocco, Sorraia from Portugal and Andalusians from Spain.

1540: The first branded horses enter the U.S. with the Coronado Expedition. The nation's first horse race of record is run between Rodrigo Maldonado and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. Coronado falls off his horse in front of Rodrigo's horse and is hit in the head.

1598: The muster rolls for the original Oñate entrada

shows that he and the settlers bring to New Mexico more than 1,500 head of horses and mules.

1599: The first band of horses, on record, runs free in the U.S. after a freak blizzard allows horses to escape from a temporary corral set up by the military near Acoma, New Mexico.

1621: Use of horses begins spreading among the Pueblo after ranchers in New Mexico begin employing them to work on horseback.

1623: Father Benavides makes the first documented reference to an Indian riding a horse when he notes in his journal his encounter with a band of Gila Apaches and the war chief, who is riding a horse.

1676: Ayala, a priest working in New Mexico, brings back several hundred horses from New Spain.



El Paso, Texas, statue pays tribute to Oñate.

1680: After the first Pueblo Rebellion in New Mexico leaves nearly 400 Spaniards dead, the herd of horses left behind by the Spaniards begins to spread across the West, with virtually every tribe owning horses by 1700 (see above map).

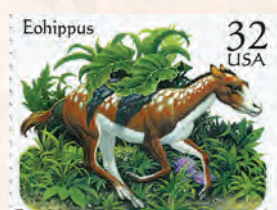
1684: The chronicler of the

Mendoza expedition to Texas writes "when Mendoza met the Tejas Indians they were a settled people who raised grain in such quantity that they even fed it to their horses."

1719: Frenchman DuTisne sights 300 horses with Spanish brands among the Pawnees in the Arkansas River area.

1724: The Canzas tribe on the lower Missouri River do not yet have the horse. De Bourgmont writes, "They were moving camp and they loaded their possessions on 'dog travois' and on the backs of their women."

1876: Othniel C. Marsh finds a full skeleton of the earliest-known member of the horse family in the U.S., which he names Eohippus (dawn horse). The Sioux and the Cheyenne living along the Little Bighorn River own between 20,000 to 40,000 horses.



The Dawn Horse

1900: Population of mustangs in the U.S. is estimated at two million.

1926: Population of Mustangs in the U.S. drops to around one million.

1957: Bob Brislaw forms the Spanish Mustang Registry, the first and oldest registry that is aimed at saving America's first true horse.

1971: Congress passes the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

2004: President George W. Bush's administration removes protection for wild horses and burros that are over the age of 10 or are unsuccessfully adopted after three attempts. The Disney movie *Hidalgo* is released, sharing the tale of Frank Hopkins and his fictional 3,000-mile endurance race across the Arabian desert on his Spanish Mustang.

2007: Population of mustangs in the U.S. hovers around 30,000, with Sorraias numbering less than 200.



Hidalgo featured American Paints and not true Spanish Mustangs.

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first collected by Bob Brislawn (Oshoto, WY):
307-467-5394 • cayuseranch.com

Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary (outside Cascade Falls, SD): **800-745-5955 • wildmustangs.com**

Sharron Scheikofsky/Dave Reynolds' Spanish Mustangs (near Hot Springs, SD):
605-745-4883 • sorraiamustangs.net

Blackfeet Buffalo Horse Coalition
(Blackfeet Indian Reservation, MT):
406-338-7434 • buffalohorse.org

Oregon State Office, Bureau of Land Management
(Portland, OR):
503-808-6002 • blm.gov/or/districts/burns/wildhorse/kiger.php

backs. Zebra striping on their legs. You see it on Don Juan the stallion and on that baby," says Susan, pointing to a nursing foal.

"Typical is a bi-color mane that stands straight up like a Zebra on the babies until it grows out and falls over. They have dark-tipped ears. Don Juan is from the Sulphur herd in Utah. I bought some of these grulla mares from Sharron," Susan adds.

These Spanish Mustangs are the remnants of exceptional Sorraia horses that have survived over the test of time, perpetuating the best traits selected by Mother Nature.

"Don't mess with them," Sharron would say. They are what mother nature perfected; tested in the crucible of wilderness to survive.



John Christopher Fine is the author of 24 books, and his special interest in Spanish Mustangs arose when he and his friends discovered Cortez's Spanish treasure. He is president of the American Heritage Iberian Mustang Foundation.

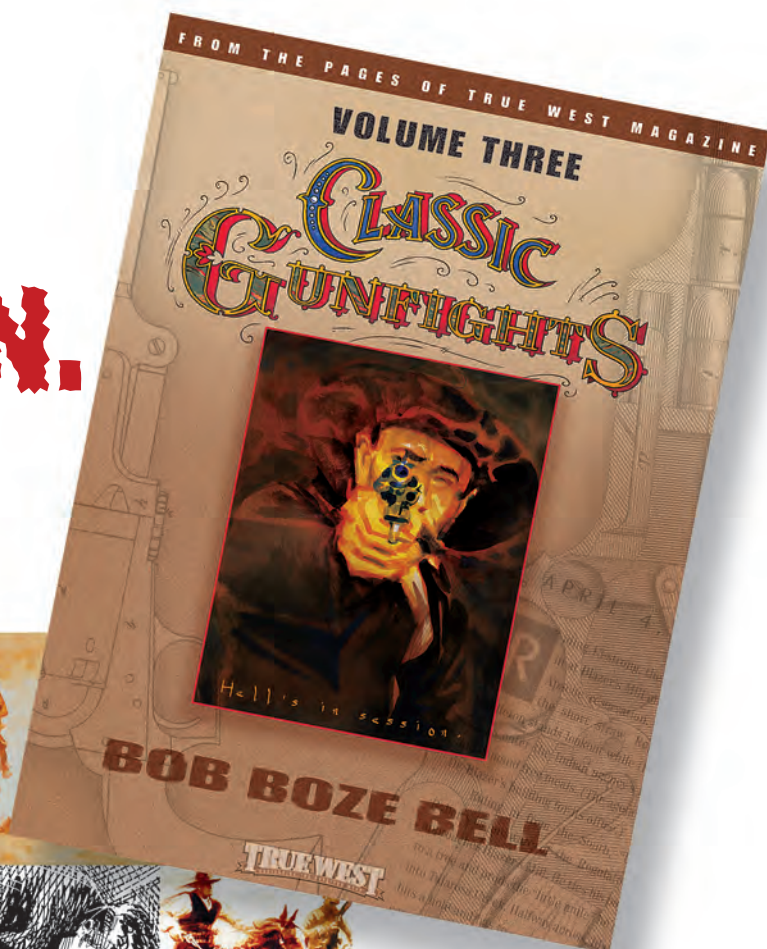


Today's Spanish Mustangs are more robust and reflect the heart and stamina of the pre-cow horse days. The earlier artwork shows under-developed Spanish Mustangs because they were working horses that ate whatever they found on cattle drives and at the ranch; they didn't get the high dollar feeds nor the personal care that a wealthy rancher would have shown his horse today. (Also shown above is Sharron Scheikofsky, with one of her prized Sorraia horses.)

— BY JOHN CHRISTOPHER FINE —

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By Mark Boardman

Not Just Horsin' Around

Denton County, Texas, is building a top flight horse industry.

No one would call this Texas robber a criminal mastermind, despite the legend that often trails his name.

One stagecoach holdup netted about \$38, while the take from an 1878 train robbery totaled just over \$600. Hell, the robber didn't even lead the infamous 1877 raid on a Union Pacific train in Nebraska, which garnered more than \$60,000. His freighting partner, Joel Collins, actually did; but since it is still the single largest robbery of the Union Pacific, it makes sense that it launched the 26-year-old Sam Bass to fame.

Sam did have an eye for horseflesh though, especially horseflesh that ran fast. He proved the point in the fall of 1874.

Bass was living near the town of Denton, about 35 miles north of Fort Worth, working odd jobs here and there. He also owned four horses, perhaps for use in some freighting work. Sam got interested in "scrub races," one-on-one horse sprints over improvised quarter mile, straight-ahead tracks. These social affairs were well-attended, attracting dozens of onlookers—and plenty of betting money. Bass wanted a piece of the action. He spotted a two-year-old gray mare named Jennie, a speedy animal bred in the Denton area, and quickly bought her. With the skinny black jockey Charlie Tucker aboard, Jennie began winning races.

In fact, the Bass stable was doing so well that Sam began taking Jennie across Texas. Folks started calling her the "Denton Mare." Even today, she is one of the best-known horses in North Texas history.

That says a lot. For the Denton County horse industry was up and running long before Sam Bass came around (and long after he was gone).

A History of Horses

Cattle ranches dominated the scene in Denton as far back as the 1850s. Ranchers needed horses, of course, so they either had to buy them from somebody else or grow their own, as it were. John Chisum—who later became famous for his role in New Mexico's Lincoln County War—was one of the top ranchers just prior to the Civil War. By 1860, he claimed about 6,000 of the 20,000 cattle in Denton County, and he bred his own Spanish cow ponies to help run the herd. His neighbor William Wright went a step further—he bought some Spanish mares in Mexico and started the first horse ranch in north Texas.

The Civil War disrupted Denton during the 1860s. The livestock operations struggled as many animals went toward the Confederate war effort. Men like Chisum moved farther west, to New Mexico and Arizona. The cattle industry did

a free fall; by 1920, only about 12,000 head remained in the county. The region's economy fell back on agriculture—cotton, wheat, even some peanuts. In the 1960s, the town of Denton grew as a bedroom suburb to the metroplex of Dallas/Fort Worth.

Yet Denton's past was about to come charging forward.

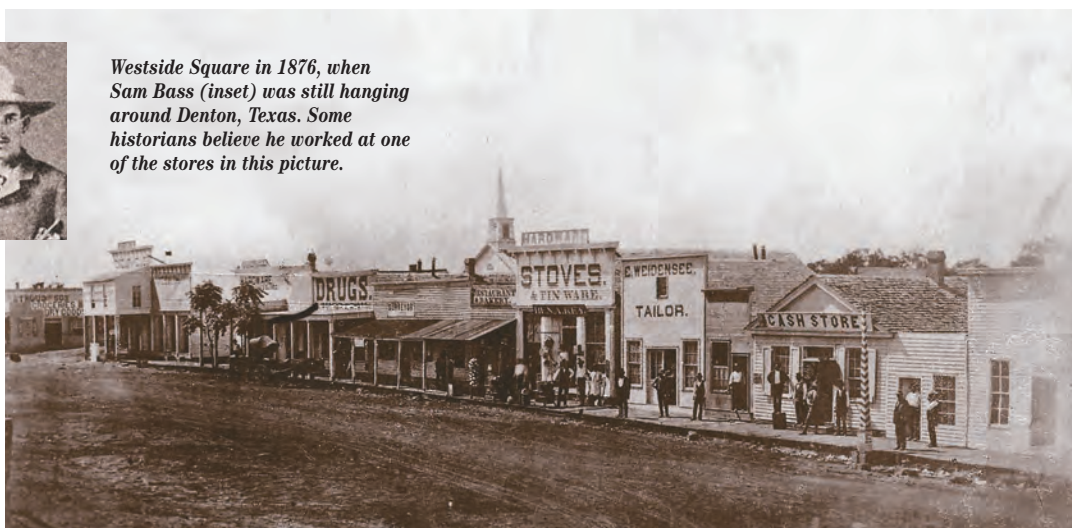
Come the Horsemen

In the early 1970s, a handful of horsemen saw the possibilities in Denton County. Its soil composition is a sandy loam, which allows quick absorption and runoff of water—standing water can cause physical problems and illness for horses. The climate is favorable, with January lows averaging 34 degrees and the average July highs hitting the mid-90s. And north Texas land is a lot cheaper than the bluegrass of Kentucky, making it attractive to folks with limited budgets. So when traditional farms started struggling in the 1970s—many went under, while others were forced to sell for whatever they could get—ranchers picked up large tracts at bargain-basement prices.

They saved money in one area, but spent it somewhere else. Breeding, raising and training horses is a big bucks endeavor. An operation needs barns, training space, fencing,

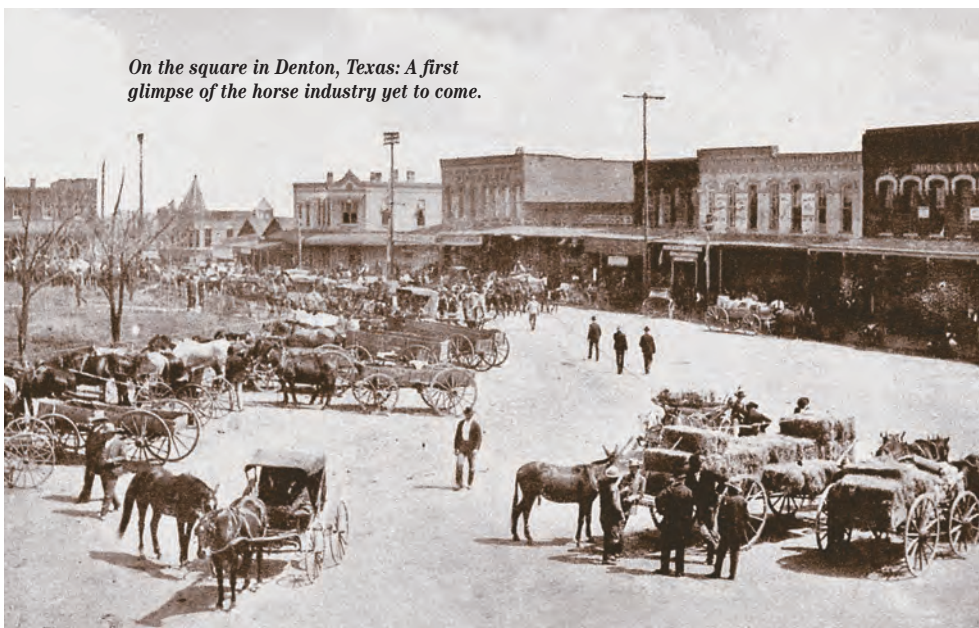


Westside Square in 1876, when Sam Bass (inset) was still hanging around Denton, Texas. Some historians believe he worked at one of the stores in this picture.



— ALL PHOTOS COURTESY DENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED —

On the square in Denton, Texas: A first glimpse of the horse industry yet to come.



laboratories and medical facilities, qualified workers and, of course, horses. Today, smaller operations need an initial outlay of more than a million dollars to get things going. By contrast, Sam Bass paid about \$250 for the Denton Mare, and probably boarded her and his other horses for just pennies a day.

Cost hasn't hindered the growth of the north Texas industry. More than 300 horse operations, with a total of about 25,000 animals, flourish in Denton County. Horse sales in 2004, the last year surveyed, totaled more than \$20 million. Boarding fees alone topped \$11 million. This is big business, even in Texas, where "big" is a lifestyle and heritage.

Some of these ranches are just small "mom and pop" setups that handle just a handful of horses. Others are multi-million dollar operations that board horses for other owners, as well as breed and train animals for pleasure or competition.

The modern horse operation is into specialization. A ranch or farm usually emphasizes a particular breed, whether it be Thoroughbred, Quarter Horse, Paint, Andalusian or any number of others. Then the horses are trained for specific disciplines—racing, jumping, hunting, cutting and many more. John Chisum's lessons aren't forgotten here; Spanish cow ponies are still bred for ranch work.

Thoroughly Modern Ranching

If John Chisum or Sam Bass came back and

toured the modern horse operations in Denton County, some sights would be familiar. Others would leave them scratching their heads.

They would still see barns with stalls, and horses.

But the cowboys are not always boys. Visit the McQuay Stables, for example, and some of the riders are women. All are college educated. Some are from Europe. And there's nary a cowboy hat in sight—most everybody wears a baseball cap.

At places like Star Gate Ranch, the riders exercise the horses in huge, covered amphitheaters—complete with seating for visitors. And each exercise session is planned for the individual animal. Horse trainers at larger operations ride sometimes up to 11 hours per day.

Bass would probably be shocked at the number of veterinarians. Most ranches have at least one on retainer, ready to come at a moment's notice. A handful actually have vets on staff, living on or near the facilities. They practice preventive medicine, trying to avoid illnesses or diseases that could damage or kill a horse. They harvest a mare's eggs, acquire a stud's semen, create life in the test tube and implant embryos. They help mares give birth and keep a close eye on each baby during its first few days on earth. Their laboratories—many just down from the stalls—are high tech and cutting edge. After all, if you're dealing with a horse worth tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars—and who might sire

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The other striking feature is that the facilities are incredibly clean. Sure, they have to muck stalls, and that hasn't changed in centuries. But the barn floors you'll see around Denton are made of special materials that are easy on the horse and easy to keep spit-shine fresh (well, almost). Outdoor walkways, paths, roads and even the pastures are also beautifully kept. Sure, some of it is for the appearance sake. But a clean environment also makes for a healthier horse. And a healthy horse is a more valuable horse.

Love of the Game

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Quarter Horse mares and foals, walking along the pond at Edgewood Lanning Ranch, est. 1997, one of the stops you'll find on the Horse Country Tours in Denton.

— BY NADINE VERSTANDIG —



*Farmer George Briar Smith
with his prize stud horse in
Denton, Texas, in 1924.*



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IBC
p.73
p.74
p.13
p.54
p.86

p.85
p.11
p.63
p.14
p.88
IFC
p.87
p.86
p.88
p.87
p.51

p.87
p.78
p.25
p.77
p.87
p.90
p.89
p.88

p.55
p.74
p.9
p.29
p.28
p.29
p.89
p.12
p.61
p.20
p.60
p.95
p.79
p.85
p.21
p.3

p.17
p.89
p.86
p.91
p.78
p.7
p.90
p.1

p.85
p.37
p.28

p.90
p.90
p.89

p.90
p.51
p.54

p.88
p.37

Historic Plains Hotel, WY
Irma Hotel, WY
Marriott Hotels, AZ
Taos Inn, NM

p.85
p.63
p.37
p.86

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University of New Mexico Press
Walker Avenue Gang

p.5
p.83
p.82
p.45
p.85
p.87
p.84
p.82
p.84
p.86
p.83
p.55
p.82
p.83
p.84

Miscellaneous

Dickinson Cattle Company
Millerosa
Old Livery Mercantile, Inc.
Old West Signs
Rawhide Gifts & Gallery
Sheridan Tent & Awning
Sloan Brands
Wild West Badges

p.89
p.90
p.86
p.47
p.20
p.89
p.88
p.88

Museums

Autry National Center, CA
Bison Museum of America, AZ
Buckhorn Saloon & Museum, TX
Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum, KS
Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, OK
Coronado-Quivera Museum, KS
Dubois Museum, WY
Humboldt Museum, NV
King Ranch Museum, TX
Morton County Historical Society Museum, KS
National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, OK
Old Cowtown Museum, KS
Western Mining & Railroad Museum, UT

p.15
BC
p.79
p.29
p.62
p.28
p.76
p.92
p.44
p.28
p.21,29
p.28
p.73

Preservation

SASS Membership

p.57

Real Estate

Antelope Creek, AZ
Bison Homes, AZ

p.85
BC

Tourism

Abilene CVB, KS
Carbon County Visitors Council, WY
Coffeyville Area Chamber of Commerce, KS
Denton Horse Country, TX
Downtown Cheyenne, WY
Duncan CVB, OK
Edmond CVB, OK
Ellsworth/Kanopolis CC, KS
Guthrie CC, OK
Hays CVB, KS
Kane County Tourism, UT
Kingsville CVB, TX
Northern Nevada's Cowboy Country, NV
Prescott Tourism, AZ
Rim Country Regional Chamber, AZ
Silver City/Grant County CC, NM
Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, AZ
Winnemucca CVB, NV

p.28
p.74
p.29
p.47
p.9
p.62
p.76
p.29
p.74
p.28
p.87
p.44
p.93
p.37
p.2
p.73
p.2
p.93

Other

Beal's Cowboy Buckles
Buckles, etc.
Miller Hats

p.88
p.90
p.54



A Quarter Horse thoroughbred stands alone at Valor Farm in Pilot Point, Texas. It's just one of the beautiful horses you'll come across while touring the Denton-area horse country.

— BY NADINE VERSTANDIG —

stables, and he can tell you everything about each animal—parents, children, health, competition record, you name it. And the horses know him, greeting him as he approaches their stalls or outdoor enclosures. They know he'll probably have some treat in a pocket, a kind word and a pat on the head. There's genuine affection going on here.

The folks who work at the ranches—from the guy who mucks the stalls to the millionaire owner—love horses. Plain and simple. They love to be around the sights and sounds and smells of horses, to watch these magnificent creatures at exercise or at ease.

It's easy to see how folks like Sam Bass could be so attracted to horses—not just to the race winnings, but also to the animals themselves.

Bass Ackwards

Back to our soon-to-be wayward hero, Sam Bass. Bass and Co. ran the Denton mare for a couple of years—and then she's lost to history. Maybe Sam sold her. Maybe he lost her to a bet. Or maybe she was collateral for some mounting debts as the young man felt his oats, falling deeper and deeper into a lifestyle of wine, women and song.

What is known is that by the summer of 1876, Sam was hanging out with some shady characters, engaging in various schemes to fleece poor suckers. More often than not, the frauds involved horses and gambling. In less than a year, he and his pals were robbing

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SERVING UP HISTORY IN DENTON

*Area museums that are
worth the visit.*

- **Bayless-Selby House Museum:** Dates back to 1884 and provides a glimpse of Victorian living in north Texas. It features exhibits on furnishings, dolls and glasswork. 940-349-2865
- **Denton County Historical Museum:** Called “the best kept secret in Denton County,” partly because it’s not located in the downtown area (it’s at the intersection of Loop 288 and I-35). But those who find it are rewarded by a huge collection of photographs, documents and artifacts from the area’s past. And as Denton celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, the museum showcases exhibits on founder John B. Denton and his descendants. 940-380-0877 • dentoncountyhistoricalmuseum.com
- **Courthouse-on-the-Square Museum:** In downtown, the 1896 courthouse still dominates the square, but it’s now more known for its museum. Exhibits include Denton County on Horseback, Weaponry, Farm Life and historic African American and Hispanic Families of the area. If you’re lucky, you can talk with volunteer Bill C. James, the author of several books on outlaws and lawmen (including one on Killin’ Jim Miller). Bill seems to know everything about Denton, and his stories are priceless. 940-349-2850

stagecoaches in the Dakotas. And he never looked back.

Sam Bass met his end in Round Rock, Texas, in July 1878. He and his gang members walked into a trap as they prepared to hold up a bank. Ironically—or not—Sam took a fatal bullet in the back as he was mounting his horse, trying to get the hell out of Dodge. He died the next day, July 21, his 27th birthday.

Even to this day, folks in Denton still have fond stories to tell of Sam Bass—and of Jennie, the Denton Mare, the filly that was several historical steps ahead of the booming horse industry that dominates the landscape of Denton County today.





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Wanted: Riders for the Pony

Sheriff posse's 13th annual horseback relay ride.



Darley, on top of her bay quarter horse Jack (center), rides with the Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse on its Pony Express trail ride, held every August.

— ALL PHOTOS COURTESY DARLEY NEWMAN —

On a hot August day, I borrowed a dark bay quarter horse named Jake to participate in a Pony Express Trail Ride from the ghost town of White Oaks to the historic town of Lincoln in New Mexico.

I was one of about 40 riders, some from as far away as Indiana, who saddled up for a three-day ride in Billy the Kid Country. I felt like I had to watch my back (Billy the Kid and other outlaws once rode on these trails). Thankfully, Jake seemed right at home and not at all agitated by the other horses, the bright sunshine or the rugged terrain.

Every August since 1994, the Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse has been organizing a commemorative Pony Express ride (the Pony Express route did not go through New Mexico). The ride begins in White Oaks. You may want to arrive early to take in the sights of this once thriving mining town. All told, the mines in the area yielded around \$20 million worth of gold and other minerals, with Baxter Mountain surrendering the most pure gold.

Today, you can stop by the Cedarville Cemetery to pay your respects to John V. Winters, who was one of the first to discover gold at Baxter Mountain in 1879. Deputy Sheriff James Bell, who was killed by Billy the Kid while escaping from Lincoln County Courthouse, is buried here, as is Susan McSween (Barber), whose

husband was the de facto leader of the Billy the Kid faction. Her large ranch holdings in the Three Rivers area earned her the title "Cattle Queen" of New Mexico.

Day one of the ride out of White Oaks was the most challenging for our group. Riders had to navigate somewhat steep and rocky switchbacks, but this only lasted for an hour or so. The exact route of the ride varies each year, but a rider should be prepared to spend about five to seven hours each day in the saddle and to bring his own horse, unless you can work out borrowing a horse from a friend.

The ride covers less than 50 miles of stunning trails and rangelands, right up through the Capitan Gap into the high country for spectacular views of valleys and snow-covered mountains. You'll ease down through fragrant Junipers into grassy country, enjoying stunning vistas every day. What makes this ride particularly unique is that you travel through some private ranch land as well as the Lincoln National Forest.

The sheriff's posse makes the ride easier for horse and rider. They move your rig from one campsite to the next and organize sack lunches and chuckwagon meals, including a steak dinner with live music. They make sure a doctor is along for the ride in case of any on-the-trail calamities, and a farrier is at each campsite should your horse lose a shoe. The wranglers bring up the front and rear of the ride to ensure everyone is safe in the saddle.

Lincoln County Pony Express Ride
(August 3-5): 505-354-2664 •
lincolncountysheriffspose.org

Even though I started out riding with strangers, by the end of the ride, I had made a few friends. It's that subtle chitchat that happens so naturally on a trail ride that can cause the area to come alive with color, especially if you get to talking to a local—and you will. Each day you'll eat lunch on the trails and at night, camp out under the stars. This means that both you and your horse have to be prepared to camp out and play well with others.

Riders are rewarded at the end of their three days with the opportunity to ride in an all-American parade in Lincoln, where the mail is ceremoniously delivered to the local post office (riders take turns carrying the mail during the trek). When we rode down Main Street, it was lined with people in beach chairs, on benches and in truckbeds, cheering us on. I felt a real sense of accomplishment, riding in my very first parade alongside the sheriff's posse.

The ride takes place during Old Lincoln Days, so the town is packed with people and offers many events. I dismounted at the end of Main Street so I could explore Lincoln and watch the "Last Escape of Billy the Kid" pageant.

If you are interested in joining this Pony Express ride, you'll want to sign up early because the ride is limited to the first 45 riders who pay the \$350 fee. This covers your meals and water, transport of your belongings to each of the campsites and the use of port-o-potties and hot showers—a luxury while camping out.

August is monsoon season in New Mexico, so you'll want to pack rain gear, sunscreen and lip balm. Our group lucked out with the kind of big blue skies dotted with puffy clouds that can only be seen in parts of the great American West.

It takes some preparation to enjoy a multi-day trek like the Pony Express ride, but the Lincoln County Sheriff's Posse takes care of so much for you that planning for this ride is a lot easier. The rewards of experiencing the camaraderie of a trail ride and living history on horseback are well worth it.



Darley Newman is the host of the Public Television series *Equitrekking*®, which takes viewers on horseback riding vacations around the world. Visit equitrekking.com and check your local listings for air times.

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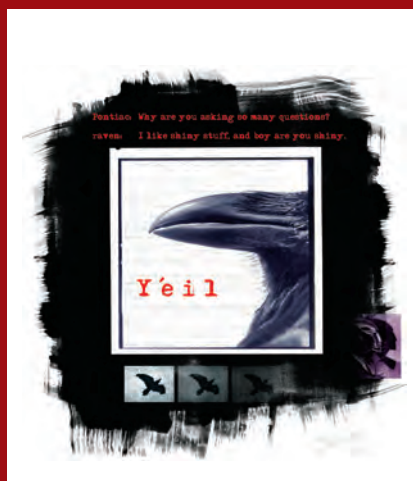
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LEFT Larry McNeil (Tlingit), *Y'eil*, 2006. Courtesy of the artist. RIGHT Frank A. Rinehart, Photograph of Pete Mitchell (Ponca), 1898. Braun Research Library, Autry National Center.

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BY MARK BOARDMAN

Who Killed Col. Fountain?

A new book tries to solve one of the greatest Old West mysteries.

On February 1, 1896, Col. Albert Jennings Fountain and his eight-year-old son Henry were on the last leg of the 150-mile trip from Lincoln, New Mexico, to their home in Mesilla. They'd been on the rough road for nearly three days, braving cold winter winds and temperatures. They passed the White Sands area as daylight faded; they were about to become the subjects of a great Old West mystery.

What happened to the colonel and his boy? It's a question that's been posed for more than 110 years. A few books included the odd chapter to the case, but it's only now that someone has written a full-length treatment of the Fountain disappearance—first-time author Corey Recko, in his book *Murder on the White Sands*. Recko discusses some previously unpublished writings of men investigating the case.

The Threat of Death

That somebody had it in for Albert Fountain was no surprise.

He'd always been a "love him or hate him" kind of guy—an attorney, politician and public figure who spoke his mind. He made some powerful enemies, so threats against his life were all too common. His reputation also took a hit when he served as defense counsel at Billy the Kid's 1881 murder trial.

In Lincoln in January 1896, the colonel obtained grand jury indictments against rancher Oliver Lee, his pal Bill McNew and 21 others on charges of cattle rustling. A dangerous man, Lee had at least one killing to his credit; He and McNew also served as Dona Ana County

deputy marshals. The deputies were close associates of Judge Albert Fall, a leader of New Mexico's Democrats—and a bitter enemy of Albert Fountain. The indictments came down; Fountain took much of the evidence with him on the return to Mesilla.

He knew the trip was dangerous. On the last day of the grand jury, somebody handed him a note stating, "If you drop this we will be your friends. If you go on with it you will never reach home alive."

His son Henry had traveled with him, after Albert's wife insisted nobody would kill the man in front of a little boy. And they certainly wouldn't hurt the kid.

As father and son made the lonely journey home, the elder Fountain saw a number of riders watching them from a distance. They never got close enough to identify. Others who passed the Fountains on the road saw the men too and urged the colonel to be careful. But he wanted to get home, and he didn't want to show any fear. The trip continued.

The Investigation

When they failed to arrive home on February 2, folks went looking for them. Searchers found their empty wagon, and some of Henry's clothing. A large bloodstain covered the ground near where the wagon had left the road. Not far away, shell casings proved at least one man had knelt behind some brush and fired a rifle. Something bad had taken place—but just what?

A top Pinkerton agent was hired to look into the case. Legendary lawman Pat Garrett was also called in. Tracks

The disappearance of Col. Albert Jennings Fountain (far left) and his son Henry (shown circa 1893) has been unsolved for more than a century.

— (FAR LEFT) COURTESY PALACE OF THE GOVERNORS / (LEFT) NEW MEXICO STATE UNIV. LIBRARY —

from the crime scene—most were convinced Albert and Henry had been murdered—led to Oliver Lee's ranch. Yet the evidence was circumstantial, and nobody had found any bodies. Investigators also faced numerous roadblocks thrown up by Lee and his men, and their friend Albert Fall.

A grand jury handed down indictments against Lee, McNew and Texas hardcase James Gilliland later that year, but the accused made themselves scarce. Not until three years after the murders, in May 1890, were Lee and Gilliland put on trial. (McNew was never brought to trial.) And they were charged only in the murder of Henry Fountain. The defense lawyer Albert Fall was one of the best, ripping into witnesses and blowing big holes in the prosecution's case. The jury deliberated just eight minutes before finding the defendants not guilty. Nobody was ever tried for the murder of Albert Jennings Fountain.

An Admission of Guilt?

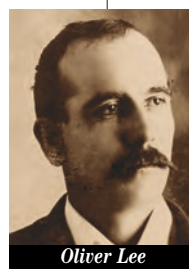
Fast forward to 1937. An elderly Gilliland spills his guts about the case, admitting that he, Lee and McNew had killed the Fountains—and he showed one man the site where the two were buried. Yet when authorities dug through the area, they found no remains. For their parts, Lee and McNew (and their descendants) always denied any involvement in the murders—so did Albert Fall, who some suspected of ordering the hits.

In his book, Corey Recko reports that Lee, McNew and Gilliland probably did commit the crimes, and Fall was likely not directly involved. But even Recko admits that many questions remain to be answered about this great Old West mystery.

Corey Recko's book, *Murder on the White Sands*, is available for \$24.95 from the University of North Texas Press at unt.edu/untpress and 940-565-2142.



James Gilliland



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The Bad Man From Bodie

One journalist's creation forever taints a gold mining boomtown.



*The Bad Man From Bodie was a nationwide phenom that infiltrated papers on both coasts and even made its way to Hollywood (1925's *Bad Man From Bodie*, starring Guinn "Big Boy" Williams).*

— ALL PHOTOS BY MICHAEL H. PIATT —

Bodie is a ghost town—perhaps the West's best preserved ghost town, where abandoned weather-beaten buildings stand stoically against encroaching sagebrush.

But years ago, the remote mining camp east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California became the object of a gold rush that gave rise to one of the West's wildest boomtowns. Saloon brawls, stagecoach robberies, vigilante justice and gunfights earned Bodie a reputation for violence that rivaled Tombstone, Deadwood and Dodge City. Those boomtowns are famous today, recognized largely for celebrated gunmen who stalked their streets, such as Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and Wild Bill Hickok. Yet Bodie's killers, depraved or otherwise, were soon forgotten.

Still, Bodie's penchant for trouble gave rise to one legendary figure. Though his fame was short-lived, the "Bad Man From Bodie" was a name recognized across the country. Evoking peril, "bad man" was a popular 19th-century expression that meant "ruffian," "tough guy" or "cold-blooded murderer."

Did the "Bad Man From Bodie" really exist? Or does he just stand exemplar for the shady characters who drifted through the dangerous boomtown?

Gambling on Bodie

After prospector W.S. Bodey and his companions discovered gold in 1859, Bodie remained nearly unpopulated until a cave-in exposed an ore body that inspired San Francisco speculators to set up industrial-scale mining. Their gamble paid off in late 1877, when the mine produced \$784,523 in

gold and silver bullion, and investors received four consecutive monthly dividends. The company's good luck infected the nation's investing community with gold fever and aroused fortune hunters who headed for Bodie. As the population swelled past 1,000 restless souls, the mining outpost's startup newspaper summarized the situation.

Gold—But a few short months ago Bodie was an insignificant little place, now she is rapidly growing in size and importance and people are crowding in upon her from far and near, and why? Because of the rich discoveries of gold—yellow, glittering, precious gold.

Except for a few minor altercations, Bodie remained peaceful during the early months of the excitement. But on January 15, 1878, gunfire pierced the wintry air. In the initial

moments of the exchange, James Blair, age 28, received a bullet in the left arm near the shoulder, but he continued firing until John Bresnan, age 30, lay dead. A week later, doctors administered chloroform and operated on Blair's arm. They removed the shattered upper portion of his humerus bone, but the patient died 26 days after the street fight. Some 20 miles away, at the county courthouse in Bridgeport, the recorder wrote the names Bresnan and Blair on a clean page in the spanking new *Mono County Register of Deaths*, an impressive leather-bound volume adorned with gold lettering. The official record of violence at Bodie had begun.

Bluffer Washoe Pete

Boomtown Bodie churned with activity in spring 1878, when newly unearthed bonanza veins attracted even more gold seekers, multiplying the camp's population five times over before year's end. Just days before the discoveries, San Francisco's *Argonaut* published a tall tale by journalist and humorist E.H. Clough that spoofed the distant mining town's rough-and-tumble inhabitants. Titled "The Bad Man of Bodie," the story told of Washoe Pete, a "bluffer" whose wild exaggerations were sources of amusement. "He swaggered and boasted to his heart's content," the yarn began. Whenever Pete drew his revolver and shot out the lights, he only evoked onlooker smiles and remarks of "purty fair shootin'."

One day, Pete entered a saloon where he encountered a meek, peaceful mining expert. "You are an expert, eh?" shouted Bodie's baddest bad man, eyeing the newcomer menacingly. "You're one o' them fellers as allows he knows payin' mines, are ye? Well, ye're the wust I ever saw."

"I don't want to quarrel with you, sir," responded the expert.

"Ye'd better not, young feller, ye'd better not. I'm a whirlwind in a fight, and don't ye forget it."

"I'm a man of peace," the cowering visitor pleaded. "I carry no weapons, and of course I could not hope to stand before an untamed whirlwind."

Pete leaned over the stranger and shook his fist in the man's face as if preparing to annihilate him. "I'm bad; I'm chief in this yer

camp, an' I ken lick the man who says I ain't. I'm a ragin' lion o' the plains, an' every time I hit I kill. I've got an arm like a quartz stamp, an' I crush bones when I strike."

"Please don't joke so roughly," pleaded the helpless expert. "Let's take a drink and call it square. I'm very sorry that I have offended you."

"Ye think I'm jokin', do ye?" hollered the bad man. "Ye take me for a josh, eh? I'll show ye what I am afore I git through with ye. Ye don't play me fur no tenderfoot."

By this time a crowd had filled the room; all smiling and enjoying the drama.

"This has gone on 'bout long 'nough," yelled Bodie's bad man. "Square yerself—I'm goin' ter kick, an' a Comstock mule ain't no match for Washoe Pete—d'ye hear me?"

The bully raised his ponderous boot. But just then the little man straightened up and his left fist struck Pete between the eyes like a locomotive piston. The blow sent the surprised bully sprawling onto the sawdust-covered floor. The expert pounced on his victim, drew back, and struck again. Then blows fell like thunderbolts. Pete reached for his knife and six-shooter, but the little man flanked his moves and planted more punches on the braggart's prostrate form.

"Let up!" the tyrant howled. "I was only foolin'—can't yer take a joke, dern ye? I give in, dern ye, I give in!"

The sight was too much for the onlookers, and their laughter echoed through the hills beyond Bodie Bluff.

Rising from his victim, the victorious expert called out "all hands to the bar for drinks."

Meanwhile, the "Bad Man of Bodie" crawled away muttering to himself, "I didn't lay out to fall up against batterin' rams."

The yarn played upon Bodie's growing reputation for violence. After the *Reno Record* reported that in December 1878 a man was cut to pieces in Bodie, the *Gold Hill News* queried, "Why can't a man get along in Bodie without fighting?" Bodie's press answered whimsically, blaming the district's 8,500-foot elevation.

Really, we can't say. It must be the altitude. There is some irresistible power in Bodie which impels us to cut and shoot each other. . . . The

clashing of revolvers up and down Main street can be constantly heard, and . . . a man cannot go to his dinner without getting a bullet hole in his hat, or the seat of his unmentionables cut away by the deadly knife of the desperado. Yes, it is sad, but only too true, that everybody must fight that comes to Bodie.

Tall tales of the West that portrayed its inhabitants as unsophisticated, ornery and dangerous were popular across America. Even the *Boston Daily Globe* amused East Coast readers in July 1879 by describing a stranger who "staggered" into a tony drinking establishment.

"Everybody come up and have something to drink," demanded the newcomer as he lurched up to the bar. He gave a furious whoop and smashed a bottle over his head. Then the brute performed a war dance and declared, "I'm a bad man and always make it a practice to strew upon the floor the bowels of any person who declines to drink upon my invitation."

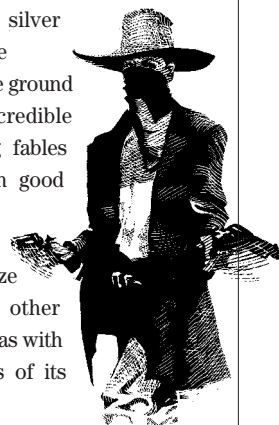
Affirming his remarks, he drew an 18-inch "Arkansas toothpick" from the back of his collar, sending patrons stampeding for the exits.

"Who is he?" muttered a terrified spectator as he took cover behind the bar, "From Bodie, I suppose."

"Bodie, hell no!" thundered the bartender. "He's from Boston. He belongs to that Sunday-school excursion."

Stories of Devilry

Americans had long enjoyed mixing fantasy with reality so that by 1830, their storytelling knack had elevated leg pulling to a national art form. The frontier and its heroes were popular subjects, but gold and silver discoveries in the West provided fertile ground for even more incredible tales. Some mining fables were not always in good fun, beginning with gold rush stories of fist-size nuggets and other humbugs. At Bodie, as with most mining camps of its



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Actor John Wayne peers through the bars at the Bodie jail while on site for a TV special in 1970.

day, fraudulent reports of rich mineral strikes manipulated stock prices to swindle investors for the benefit of well-connected insiders.

Blurring the line between fact and fiction, "Bad Man From Bodie" stories followed a rich tradition of playful exaggeration for entertainment's sake. Fanciful characters, such as Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill, remain popular today, but when the West was wild, tales of Bodie's bad man drew upon exaggerated stories about the community's utter disregard for law and order and almost surpassed over-inflated reports of wealth in its mines. Even New York's prestigious *Engineering and Mining Journal* departed from printing mining news and reported with a

touch of hyperbole that "Bodie contains about 6,000 inhabitants, who support 156 drinking places, several newspapers, and many attorneys-at-law, without a single church."

Newspaper editors far and wide, it seemed, took pleasure in embellishing stories of devilry and attributing them to any passing stranger who could be conveniently labeled a "Bad Man From Bodie." In a San Francisco courtroom, a defendant charged with "vulgar language" argued that the city's press had unfairly dubbed him the Bad Man From Bodie.

"I have been mortified by glaring headlines," complained W.H. Branch. "I am suspected of carrying nitroglycerine in each pocket, of having a large and

ugly-shaped knife in each boot and a brace of pistols in my belt." The defendant begged for leniency, arguing that the reports were overstated. "Yes, your honor," he implored. "Despite the implication, I have never been in Bodie in my life!"

Clough's Bad Man

The expression "Bad Man From Bodie" had become well known by 1880, when the writer who coined the term two years earlier published a second tale that appeared in Sacramento's *Daily Bee*.

"Having made a close study of the peculiar class of 'bad men' generally known as Bad Men from Bodie," E.H. Clough proclaimed, "I am prepared to add my plethora of wisdom in this respect to that already extant in the world at the present time." Dropping Washoe Pete from the story line, Clough spun a yarn about another equally improbable character.

One of the peculiarities of a Bad Man From Bodie is his profanity. A Bad Man From Bodie who never used an oath is as impossible as perpetual motion or an honest election in Nevada. This trait is especially noticeable whenever he kills a man or endeavors to kill one. . . . Meeting an eligible candidate for a place in the graveyard, he emits his stereotyped oath and blazes away.

The columnist claimed to have actually witnessed a Bodie bad man enter a saloon and leap upon a billiard table.

"Here I am again," the make-believe thug shouted, "a mile wide and all wool. I weigh a ton and when I walk the earth shakes. Give me room and I'll whip an army. . . . I was born in a powder house and raised in a gun factory. I'm bad from the bottom up and clear grit plumb through."

From atop the pool table, the bad man roared, "I'm chief of Muddertown, and I'm dry! Whose treat is it? Don't all speak at once for I'll turn loose and scatter death and destruction Hell bent for election. Your treat, is it? Well, come up everybody. Pass the old rat poison."

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Whenever a Bodie bad man entered a mining camp, Clough added, the locals would wring their hands and say, "Reckon it's goin' to liven up around here; I see the bonebreaker's in town." Then the undertaker would dust off his hearse and groom its black plumes; the coroner would convene a jury to hold inquests and make arrangements with the physician for autopsies; the gravedigger would buy a new spade; and the stonecutter, who "epitaphs the dead" on marble, would put in a stock of new chisels.

Clough's wild stories inspired other writers, who drew inspiration from Bodie's lawless inclination. Another tale described an inebriated loudmouth who entered the Fern Leaf concert hall in San Francisco.

"I'm a chip from the side of Bodie Bluff," the stranger yelled as he upset a table and jumped onto the stage, driving a terrified soloist into a corner. "I'm an old stager myself, and capture whole camps with my actin'."

The intruder pulled his gun and fired a shot, extinguishing the footlights and sending musicians and the audience fleeing toward the door.

"This is what I call fun," proclaimed the bad man. "This old town needs shaking up a little; the boys seem to be sort o' low and need a boom."

A Gross Injustice

Violent stories, both real and fabricated, gave Bodie an air of danger, an aspect of the camp's far-flung fame that delighted some but troubled others. One Bodie editor challenged the motives and accuracy of distant-city reporting:

When the witty paragrapher of one of our metropolitan contemporaries has touched up all the live topics of the day, and still lacks a little filling of the space in his paper, he dashes off a few lines about the "bad man of Bodie," and his exploits in the way of "cleaning out" a saloon full of city loafers, blowing out lights with his revolver, or other equally improbable performances. In brief, we do not enjoy having our town pointed out either as a murderer's paradise or the chosen headquarters of the Angel of Death, because neither proposition is true. The fact is, the "bad man of Bodie" is as much a myth,

and is as unreal as "the baseless fabric of a vision." He does not exist.

The columnist later admitted that killings actually did take place in Bodie, but only among its rowdy citizens.

As to the occasional homicides which occur here, there never has been yet an instance of the intentional killing of a man [that] was not a verification of the proverb that "He that liveth by the sword shall perish by the sword." As to the health of Bodie, there were about 111 deaths in this place [during 1879], out of a population varying from 5,000 to 8,000 people. A very considerable number of these were killed by accidents in mines.

One Bodie resident who sought to correct his town's image visited the Bay Area and complained to the *San Francisco Daily Report* that "people living at a distance from our mining district often do us a gross injustice in commenting on our fighting affairs. . . . [They] assume that Bodie is a terribly wicked place. . . . The 'Bad Man from Bodie' has become a popular phrase and every time a fatal shooting scrape occurs in the town some paper heads its account with 'Another Bodie fighter gets his man for breakfast.'"

Also objecting to unflattering reports, a newsman in Bodie remarked, "But Bodie is much misunderstood by those outside. They have met with an occasional 'Bad Man from Bodie,' and have been too ready to judge the entire community from the bad man's standpoint."

While law-abiding citizens sought to change outside opinion, their efforts did little good. Bodie's violent reputation did not subside until years after the boom. The town's population decreased precipitously beginning in mid-1880, then leveled off at around 800, comprised of mostly wage-earning miners and their families.

Cowboy One-Ups Bad Man

As the camp matured, its once-famous Bad Man faded into the mists of forgotten folklore, overtaken by a more powerful legendary figure—the cowboy. An article

in the New York-based *National Police Gazette* anticipated the popularity of cowboys and compared them to the Bad Man From Bodie.

The untamed cowboy generally sports a large six shooter, a belt, a knife, repeating rifle, and a huge pair of spurs, while the mustang which he rides is supplied with a Spanish saddle, and held in check and guided by a huge Spanish bit. Herding cattle being his vocation, nothing delights him more than a wild chase after an untamed steer, and, being a splendid rider, neither an Apache nor a soldier can get the best of him on the plains. Sometimes he is an American, sometimes a Mexican, a half-breed, or Indian, but no matter what his nationality may be he is as uncivilized as a grizzly bear and reckless as a savage. . . . He it is who does the shooting in most of our frontier towns, and is fast becoming a terror to the citizens of the region where he chooses to visit. Like "the bad man from Bodie," fear to him is an unknown quantity, and the greater the danger the more desperate he seems to become.

Marking the early stages of America's fascination with cowboys, the nationally read tabloid portrayed troublesome ranch hands as equals to Bodie's hard drinking, reckless mining men. Cowboys, however, gained popularity after Wild West shows, then motion pictures and TV cast them as galloping do-gooders who lived by an imaginary Code of the West. Based on the entertainment value of fast-shooting buckaroos on horseback, action-packed adventures followed phony story lines and depicted cattle driving as if it were the West's highest calling. Ranching now symbolizes America's frontier past, suggesting no other occupation—including gold mining—ever existed.

As for the fabled "Bad Man From Bodie," he faded into obscurity, while cowboys came to symbolize the entire nation.



For a comprehensive history of Bodie and its mines, read Michael H. Piatt's *Bodie: The Mines Are Looking Well...*, published by North Bay Books. Visit BodieHistory.com to learn more about Bodie and gold mining technology.

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GUNS.”



*Insurgent snipers man the rooftops
to rain fire down on the Texas
Rangers' compound.*

— ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB BOZE BELL —

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

Based on the research of
Paul Cool

DECEMBER 13, 1877



t the Texas Ranger compound in San Elizario, Texas, Ranger Sgt. C.E. Mortimer walks down to El Molino to check in on the Rangers stationed there.

On his way back to the barracks, a shot rings out from the roof of Nicholas Kohlaus' store and hits Mortimer in the back. The Ranger runs a few steps but falls. Firing breaks out on both sides as Lt. John B. Tays runs out from the barracks and pulls Mortimer to safety. (Mortimer dies three hours later.)

Charles Howard is the target of the shooters. He killed a popular local politician, Louis Cardis, who opposed Howard on ownership of the salt lakes. After agreeing to leave town, never to return, Howard did anyway and is now under the protection of the Rangers.

Tays deploys men on the roof of the barracks, yet they are at a disadvantage as snipers on the roof of Mauro Lujan's house, 150 yards away, are slightly higher. One shot cuts the rim of merchant John Atkinson's hat as he hugs the roof; the shot also gives Rocky Mathews a haircut. As the men attempt to cut a hole in the roof, Ranger John Eldridge chops off two of his fingers getting it done.

Several charges are beaten back, although Mathews later testifies, “[I] never saw a man after the first half hour's firing.”

Two Rangers on the roof of El Molino pick off an insurgent as he raises his sombrero-clad head a little too high.

Around 4 p.m., the insurgents request a truce. Yet when Rangers attempt to retrieve blankets from the roof, insurgents fire at them. Firing continues sporadically throughout the night.

The next morning, insurgents charge the Rangers' corral but are once again beaten back by bullets. They make eight attempts to broach the Ranger defenses, but the able fighters inside hold them off. Attacks continue into the night, some say three.

The following day, December 15, insurgents try to flood the Ranger

position but fail. So they begin tunneling under the headquarters to place explosives.

Mrs. Frank Campbell and her two children cross from the Ellis store (inside El Molino) to the Ranger barracks. Insurgents fire at them, but the three safely cross. She tells Tays the insurgents are breaking through a wall in Atkinson's store to get to Ranger Capt. Gregorio Garcia's men.

She asks Tays to leave the door open and have his men cover her husband and fellow Ranger Frank Kent, so they can make a break for the barracks. The men safely cross and report that Capt. Garcia is wounded in the head and leg, and Miguel Garcia is also wounded.

Meanwhile, insurgents have discovered store owner Charles Ellis in a wine cellar. They jerk him out into the street and lasso him to a horse. They then drag him out of town where they slit his throat and leave him to bleed to death.

By Sunday, December 16, El Molino has fallen and the Rangers have lost the field of fire. Insurgents now brazenly run right up to the barracks and fire into the Rangers' own portholes. The Rangers abandon the front rooms and retreat to the rear of the building. As they do, their adversaries spring the “mine” they had dug, but the explosion does only minor damage to the structure.

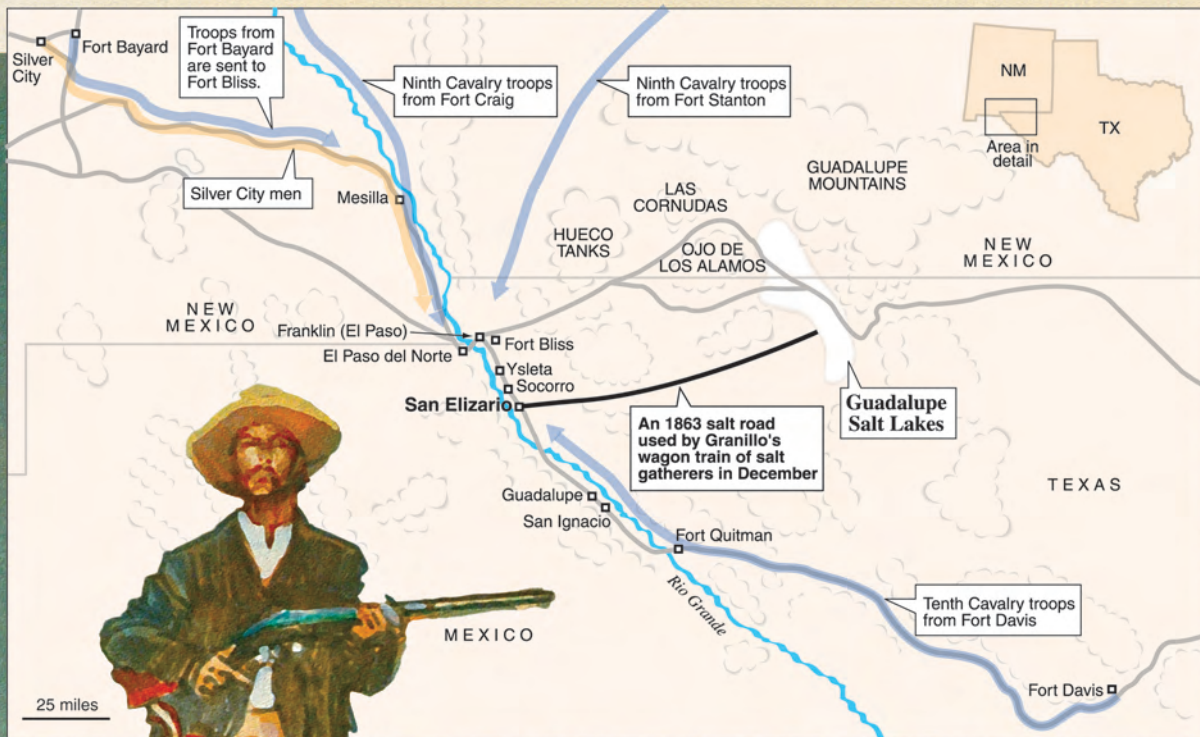
Around 11 a.m., Tays raises a white flag. Pecos County Deputy Sheriff Andrew Loomis wants to leave. Tays steps outside to parlay with an emissary, who offers a ceasefire until morning, with negotiations to follow. Tays agrees. As the Rangers bed down, they can hear digging.

When they awaken, they discover rifle pits built closer to the barracks. The Rangers prepare to negotiate. Insurgent leader Francisco Barela's offer: If Howard relinquishes his rights to the salt lakes, they will not hurt him.

Tays presents the terms to Howard, who wearily hangs his head, saying, “I will go, as it is the only chance to save your lives, but they will kill me.”

He is right on both accounts.





Salt War Timeline

AD 800: Indian hunters and gatherers occupy the Guadalupe Salt Basin.

1598: Spaniards arrive at the Pass of the North (El Paso del Norte). The King of Spain grants the salt lakes to the people in common.

1789: Construction begins on San Elizario Presidio.

1848: San Elizario, Socorro and Ysleta become American towns. The people retain ownership of the lakes.

1862: El Paso County's Tejanos rise up against Sibley's retreating Confederates.

1866: The Texas State Constitution allows private ownership of mineral deposits. Anglo politicians and capitalists begin years of vicious in-fighting for control of the county and its salt lakes.

Summer 1877: Austin capitalist George B. Zimpelman and his agent, son-in-law Charles Howard, lay claim to the salt lakes and demand that the people pay for their salt.

October 1, 1877: About 200 Tejano insurgents seize Howard and force him to sign away Zimpelman's salt rights.

October 10: Howard shotguns Louis Cardis, the Tejanos' political champion.

November 10: Frontier Battalion commander Maj. John B. Jones puts Lt. John B. Tays in charge of a ragtag new Texas Ranger detachment.

December 1: Insurgent leader Leon Granillo defies Howard by leading a wagon train of Tejano salt gatherers to the lakes.

December 12: Howard unwisely returns to San Elizario to press his claim in court.

December 13: More than 600 Tejanos and Mexican citizens under Francisco "Chico" Barela lay siege to the Texas Rangers protecting Howard.

December 17: Howard gives himself up, and the Texas Rangers are also tricked into surrendering.



The Lujan home (top) and compound serve as the insurgent headquarters for most of the fight. El Molino (above) houses two "American" stores: the Ellis Store and the Atkinson Store. Both owners lose their lives. Ironically, prior to the fight, John Atkinson sold his store and liquidated his assets, and was planning to leave town.



Louis Cardis (at left) and Charles Howard (at right) both die tragically.

— COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS / EL PASO —

Faces of the Insurgency



The insurgents came from all walks of life (above and below). And, unlike the stereotypical portrait of the insurgent leader, Chico Barela is described as, "a quiet man, fair for a Mexican, with brown hair and blue eyes."



Acabenlos! (Finish them!)

The Tejanos (Texans of Mexican descent) who fight at San Elizario successfully overthrow the local government in El Paso County for 84 days and force the surrender of 20 Texas Rangers. As many as 650 men bore arms, 20 to 30 died and scores more were wounded.

Led by "Chico" Barela, the ragtag insurgency boasts Indian fighters and former Rangers, although most are farmers and vaqueros. They are brave and determined men, but from the Texas Rangers' point of view, the insurgents are one step above a mob.

Barela tells Lt. Tays that Howard is safe so long as he relinquishes all claims to the salt lakes. Having convinced Howard to surrender, Tays accompanies Howard and Atkinson (who joins them as a translator) to the Gandara home where Barela shrewdly separates the trio. Howard and Tays are held in one room, while Atkinson is isolated and persuaded to fork over the \$11,000 of assets he is carrying. He agrees on the condition that he, Howard, McBride and all the Rangers will depart without molestation. Atkinson is also assigned the task of writing out an agreement for the Rangers' surrender (Tays is in another room and isn't privy to any of this).

Sent to the Ranger compound, Atkinson tells the Rangers that Lt. Tays has "ordered" them to go down "with [their] arms" as they are "wanted as witnesses, and that all [has] been peaceably settled."

Using Atkinson as a wedge, Barela has successfully convinced the Rangers at the compound to give up the fight.

Once the Rangers walk out and they are disarmed, the junta leaders decide to execute Howard, Atkinson and McBride. One at a time, the three are walked to a wall near the Borrego building and shot. Atkinson brings up Barela's promises, but the crowd shouts, "Acabenlos!" (Finish them!). The insurgents hack their bodies to pieces and throw them down an abandoned well.

The gathered crowd is not satisfied and begins demanding the lives of all anglos. To his credit, Barela convincingly threatens them with bodily harm, and they desist. But even Barela can't stop the subsequent looting, which spreads to even the stores of Tejanos who support the insurgency.

In the end, Chico Barela rises to leadership in a crisis, then fades into obscurity.



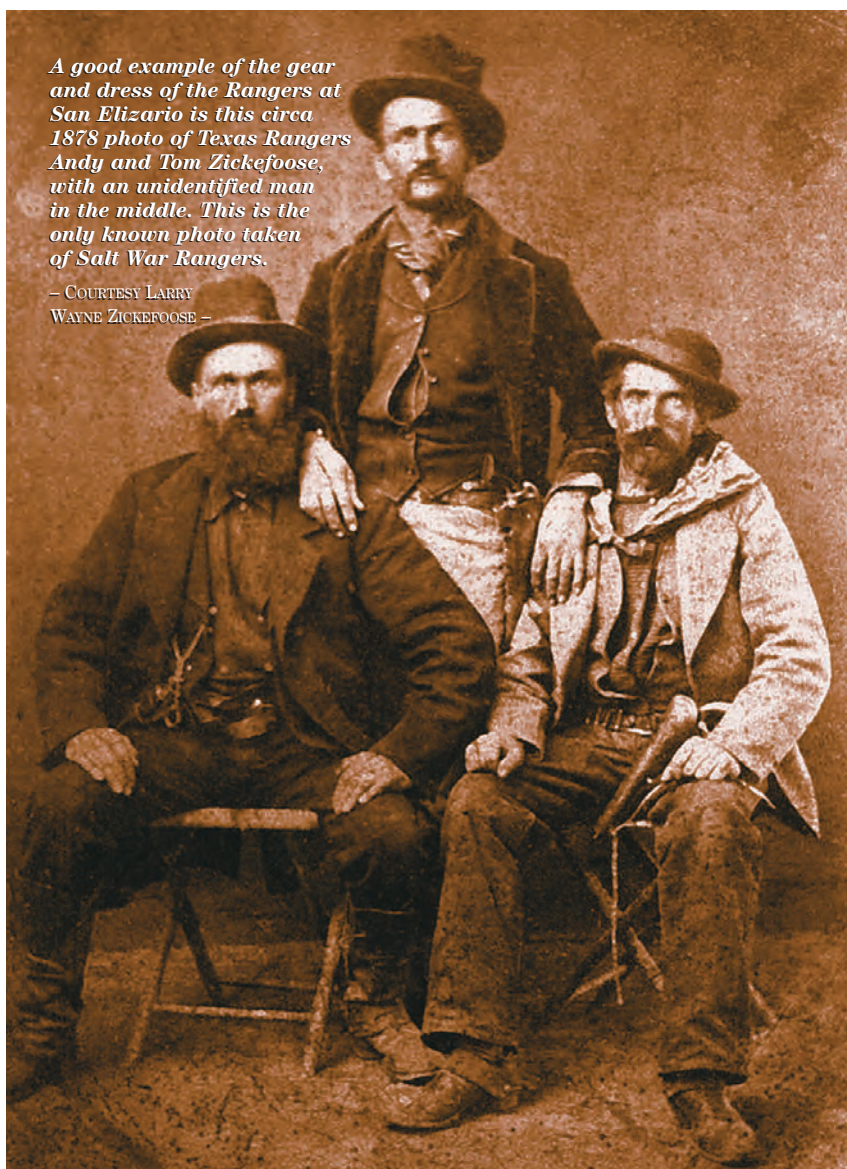
Capt. Thomas Blair



**El Paso Sheriff
Charles Kerber**



Texas Ranger Lt. John B. Tays



A good example of the gear and dress of the Rangers at San Elizario is this circa 1878 photo of Texas Rangers Andy and Tom Zickefoose, with an unidentified man in the middle. This is the only known photo taken of Salt War Rangers.

— COURTESY LARRY
WAYNE ZICKEFOOSE —

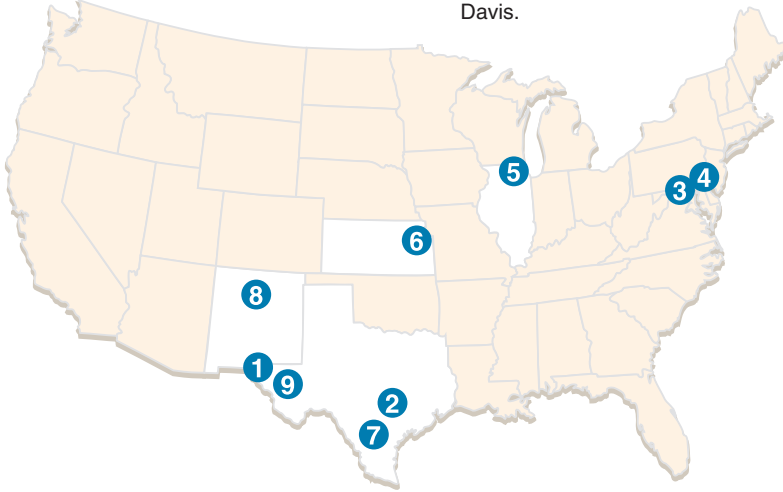
Motley Crew of Rangers

Texas Ranger Lt. John B. Tays (left) makes a serious tactical mistake when he leaves the Ranger compound with Howard to discuss terms of a settlement. He separates himself from his command and does not provide instructions for the Rangers left behind. Everything unravels when Barela shrewdly detains Lt. Tays in another room, then promises Atkinson freedom if he goes back to the compound and convinces the Rangers there that he has bought their freedom. Exhausted and unsure of what to do with Tays gone, they comply. Once outside, they are surrounded and disarmed. Thus, Company C becomes the only Texas Ranger outfit ever to surrender.

The unit was formed only months before, when authorities in Austin ordered Maj. John B. Jones of the Frontier Battalion of Texas Rangers to go to El Paso and form a unit of 20 men to deal with the growing crisis there. Although an excellent judge of men, Jones took whoever he could get. They were undoubtedly decent fighters, but their training was nil. Jones found these men through an ad he ran in the *Mesilla Valley Independent*, stating his intention of “recruiting a company to put down the El Paso County mob. Reliable men with horse and Winchester rifle will be paid \$40 per month and board. Here is a chance to serve your county!”

Communication Breakdown

1. Pleas for help come from El Paso County to Gov. Richard Hubbard in Austin, Texas.
2. Hubbard contacts President Hayes in Washington, D.C.
3. Hayes contacts Secretary of War George W. McCrary, also in Washington.
4. McCrary contacts Gen. William T. Sherman, also in Washington.
5. Sherman contacts Gen. Philip Sheridan in Chicago.
6. Sheridan contacts Maj. Gen. John Pope at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and
7. Maj. Gen. O.O. Ord in San Antonio.
8. Pope sends orders to Col. Edward Hatch in Santa Fe, New Mexico.
9. Ord sends orders to Col. Andrews at Fort Davis.



Where Was the Cavalry?

Thanks to the modern marvel of electromagnetic communication (the telegraph), officials in Washington and elsewhere (see map, above) were in immediate communication about the situation at San Elizario. Even though the U.S. Army committed troops from every available post within a 200-mile radius, no one arrived in time to save the lives of Howard and the others.

The most damning aspect of the siege is that Capt. Blair was in the county with about 20 troops when the fighting started. He marched with his men to San Elizario on December 12, but he was intercepted by Chico Barela and a large group of insurgents just outside town (some reports say within 300 yards of the plaza). Barela intimidated him into retreating back to Franklin. Blair then wired his superiors a series of reports covering his tail (and lack of direct action), and remained there until after the executions.

Colonel Edward Hatch arrived in Franklin with another company or two (very small outfits). He had intended to wait until the other six or seven companies arrived, but he decided to move quickly down the valley. He made it all the way to San Elizario with 54 men, but most of the insurgents had already fled. Meanwhile, the Texas Rangers and Silver City rogue civilian outfit moved down the valley behind him and avenged the executions by killing civilians and several insurgents who had remained behind.

In Washington, Chicago and Fort Leavenworth, the frustrated generals couldn't figure out what the delay was in getting the army into action.



Spooked!
Chico Barela
meets the Blair
detachment
and intimidates
them into
turning around
and going back
to Franklin.
This is the
deciding factor
in the fates of
the Rangers
and Howard.

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

On December 18, the Texas Rangers were released, without their firearms. They vowed vengeance. Most of the insurgents flee to Mexico.



Colonel Edward Hatch arrived on December 21 with lead elements of the Ninth Cavalry, as did 30 Silver City Volunteers led by John Kinney and Grant County Deputy Sheriff "Dangerous Dan" Tucker.



El Paso Sheriff Charles Kerber led the Rangers and Silver City men on a killing spree in Ysleta and Socorro before Col. Hatch put a stop to the mayhem.



Major hostilities ended by 1878, yet guerrilla activity and crime continued to plague El Paso County.



In 1879, Benito Gonzales, the new sheriff, and George W. Baylor, El Paso's new Texas Ranger commander, tacitly decided not to pursue anyone further for Salt War crimes. Slowly, the Salt War faded into the past. The shame of the Texas Rangers' surrender is still felt to this day.



Recommended: *Salt Warriors: Insurgency on the Rio Grande* by Paul Cool, forthcoming from Texas A&M University Press.



RENEGADEROADS

The earliest Ute Indian agencies in Colorado were located in the area west of Saguache, a place that is now ranch country.

— ALL PHOTOS BY CANDY MOULTON UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED —



Following 19th-Century Ute Trails

From Pueblo, Colorado, to Price, Utah.

Nathan Meeker raised a crop of distrust, anger and resentment among the Utes that led to disaster.

In one of his first acts as agent, Meeker relocated the White River Agency to a place known as Powell Meadow or Powell Bottom, named for Colorado River explorer John Wesley Powell. Meeker paid little heed to the fact that it was the area where the Utes grazed their horses and where they had a track for horse racing events. He started plowing the meadow in anticipation of planting crops. As if that wasn't enough, he angered the Utes even more by suggesting they had too many horses and ought to kill some of them.

Meeker's agrarian aims would fuel one of the West's most violent Indian uprisings protesting reservation life.

No More Blue Sky

The Utes once roamed across most of Colorado and Utah, with some spending time in New Mexico, Arizona and Wyoming.

Known as Yutas, Utahs and Blue Sky People, the collective nation had divided into seven distinct bands by the late 1700s. The Utes raided into lands surrounding their homes, skirmishing with the other tribes. Yet they had few conflicts with outsiders.

The Uintah primarily lived in Utah's

Uintah Basin. The Yampa Utes occupied lands in the Yampa River Valley of northwest Colorado, while the Grand Utes made their homes along the Grand (later known as the Colorado) River. These bands became known as the Whiteriver Utes and along with the Uintah and Uncompahgre (formerly Tabeguache) bands, they make up the Northern Utes, who now live on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah, headquartered at Fort Duchesne.

The Capote and Mouache Utes lived in Colorado's San Luis Valley, north central New Mexico and the Eastern Slope of Colorado, occasionally traveling and living as far south as Santa Fe. The Weeminuche Utes had territory in southwest Colorado along the San Juan, Las Animas, Mancos and La Plata river valleys. Those three bands, Capote, Mouache and Weeminuche (Ute Mountain Utes), comprise the Southern Ute nation with a reservation in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, headquartered at Towaoc, Colorado.

By 1854, the Utes had recognized a graver enemy encroaching their territory. That year, the eastern bands participated in a raid on the new settlement at Pueblo, where we will begin our trip across some of the traditional Ute lands.

At the River's Bend

In Pueblo, Colorado, I visit the re-created El Pueblo, an early trading center. The El Pueblo History Museum shares the story of the Ute raid in 1854 that drove out the original settlers. I stroll along the Historic Arkansas Riverwalk, once a lively scene of traders exchanging goods, and enjoy its park-like setting and tour boats on the river.

From Pueblo, my route is west along highway 50 through Canon City, where the



PLACES TO VISIT

Ute Mountain Tribal Park (Towaoc, Colorado): Includes remnants of early homes used by Utes and other native people. Tours are conducted by Ute tribal members. **800-847-5485 • utemountainute.com**

Ute Indian Museum (Montrose): Home of the burial site for Chipeta, wife of Ute Chief Ouray, and the reinterred remains of the chief. **970-249-3098**

White River Museum (Meeker): Exhibits on Ute habitation in the region as well as the White River Agency and Meeker Massacre. Also houses memorabilia of early settlers in the area. **970-878-9982**

Anasazi Heritage Center (Dolores): Managed by the Bureau of Land Management, this repository houses thousands of artifacts and is adjacent to the ruins of pueblos noted in 1776 by Franciscan friars Escalante and Dominguez. **970-882-5600 • co.blm.gov/ahc/**

College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum (Price, Utah): Features dioramas depicting early Fremont people, the forebears of the Utes. **435-613-5060 • museum.ceu.edu**

Nine Mile Canyon (Price): Actually 40 miles long, the canyon offers petroglyphs left behind by the Fremont people and area Utes. **800-842-0789 • castlecountry.com**



The Milk Creek Canyon disaster (see Meeker Massacre, p. 75) was featured in the October 18, 1879, issue of The National Police Gazette, with the caption: "Death of the gallant Major Thornburgh [left], of the Fourth United States Infantry, while heading a charge of his men against a band of hostile Ute Indians in their ambushade."

— COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS —

road parallels the Arkansas River and skirts along the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas, a defile cut by eons of cascading water. The Royal Gorge is a thousand-foot canyon that can be viewed from above on the Royal Gorge Bridge, or from below by taking a ride on the Royal Gorge Railroad. But I stay on U.S. 50 to Salida and Poncha Springs, and then turn southwest along U.S. 285 to the small town of Saguache.

The Utes roamed this region until 1862, a year after the Colorado Territory was established, when tribal representatives met in Denver with Indian agent Lafayette Head, who ran the agency at Conejos. In Denver, the tribal representatives told Territorial Gov. John Evans they would live in harmony with the newly arriving settlers so long as the Utes could retain their own lands in Colorado and, by extension, in Utah. Subsequently, in the spring of 1863, a Ute contingent traveled to Washington, D.C., met with President Abraham Lincoln and ultimately ceded a portion of their lands, including the San Luis Valley and mountain areas where miners had already staked claims.

After the Ute Treaty in 1868 that established one reservation for all seven bands, the Utes had one agency on Los Pinos Creek some 50 miles northwest of Saguache on the west side of Cochetopa Pass, and another in northwest Colorado on the White River near the present-day town of Meeker.

Ouray's Uncompahgre Utes

Despite the treaty, the Utes remained near Saguache and the agency on Los Pinos Creek until mining activity escalated in the San Juan Mountains to the west. This led to the Brunot Treaty of 1873 that further concentrated the Utes in the western part of Colorado Territory by closing Los Pinos Agency near Saguache and opening a new agency near present-day Montrose on the Uncompahgre River. This agency, known as Los Pinos II or the Uncompahgre Agency, led to a renaming of the Tabeguache band under leadership of Chief Ouray, which became known as the Uncompahgre Utes.

To follow the route the Utes took when they were moved from Los Pinos Agency to the Uncompahgre Agency, I drive along Colorado Highway 114 west from Saguache through ranch country to connect with U.S. 50 just east of Gunnison, and then continue west to Montrose.

Ouray is one of the most well known of

the 19th-century Utes. He spoke Ute as well as fluent Spanish and English, a fact that enabled him to negotiate on behalf of his people. He died in 1880, a year before his people would be uprooted once again.

Land near the south edge of Montrose that once was a farm owned by Ouray and his wife Chipeta is owned by the State of Colorado and operated as the Ute Indian Museum. Chipeta is buried here and Ouray's remains, which were initially interred in a cave south of Ignacio on the Southern Ute Reservation, have also been removed to this farm site.

Ute Mountain Utes

As part of the treaty negotiations in the 1860s-70s, the Ute bands were separated. I head south from Montrose on U.S. 550 over the San Juan Skyway and the Million Dollar Highway to Silverton, once the site of a Ute camp and later a silver mining boomtown, to Durango, then west on U.S. 160 to Cortez and southwest to Towaoc. Much of the route is over old Ute trails. By any measure, it is spectacular, with some of Colorado's Fourteeners rising above the highway.

For a century, the Ute Mountain Ute tribe has occupied the land near Towaoc, in view of Sleeping Ute Mountain. Although you can visit the tribe's casino, I avoid that attraction and instead go to the Ute Mountain pottery plant where workers make the distinctive pottery decorated with black-on-white designs.

Southeast of Towaoc is a private park, part of the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation, encompassing 125,000 acres that contains thousands of cliff dwellings and pueblo ruins that are some of the best preserved remains of Anasazi culture in this region even though they aren't as well known as those of nearby Mesa Verde National Park. Ute guides can take you into the tribal park.

From Towaoc, I turn north back to Cortez and travel the western half of the San Juan Skyway by following Colorado highway 145 to Dolores, where I detour to visit the Anasazi Heritage Center with its incomparable collection of Indian artifacts. Back on the road, I head through Rico and over Lizard Head Pass to Telluride. I take Colorado route 62 from Placerville east to Ridgway where I complete the San Juan Skyway circle and head north to Montrose.

Whiteriver Utes

Having seen the agency sites and current reservation for the Tabeguache band and Southern Utes, I was now ready to enter traditional Northern Ute territory. Whiteriver Utes, one of the bands of Northern Utes, had claimed the area of Northwest Colorado for centuries.

From Montrose, I head north on U.S. 550 and U.S. 50 to Grand Junction, take I-70 east to Rifle and then Colorado highway 13 north to Meeker.

Meeker gets its name from the incident in



Sleeping Ute Mountain dominates the landscape in southwestern Colorado, near the Ute Mountain Ute Reservation at Towaoc. The area also has ruins from the homes of early Indian residents in the region, such as these at the Anasazi Heritage Site.

SIDE ROAD

BEAR DANCES TO POWWOWS

Bear Dance (Fort Duchesne, UT/Towaoc, CO): Utes hold their Bear Dance each spring for the green of the earth and the health of the people. For this traditional gathering, young and old alike dance to the Ute drums. In addition to the Bear Dance, activities also include sports. Both Northern and Southern Utes hold separate Bear Dance festivities. Fort Duchesne Bear Dance Spring Celebration, held May 25-28 (435-722-5241 • utetribes.com). Ute Mountain Ute Bear Dance Powwow, held June 1-2 (970-565-3751).

Northern Ute Powwow (Fort Duchesne): Ute dancers and representatives from other tribes engage in dances ranging from traditional men's and women's dances, to hoop dances, jingle dances and fancy dances, held June 28-July 1 (435-722-5241 • utetribes.com).

Council Tree Powwow & Cultural Festival (Delta, CO): Features competitive dancing by representatives of many tribes, including the Utes, as well as crafts and native foods, held September 14-16 (800-874-1741 • counciltreepowwow.org).

1879 that led to Ute tribal banishment from the region. Ranches spread in all directions from this small town, evidence that the goal of Indian Agent Nathan Meeker was grounded in sound agricultural principles. If Meeker had been more diplomatic in his relations with the Whiteriver Utes, perhaps the events of September 1879 would have played out differently; perhaps there wouldn't be a town with his name on it.

Meeker became the Indian Agent for the White River Agency in Northwest Colorado in 1878 and promptly set out to run it like a communal agricultural



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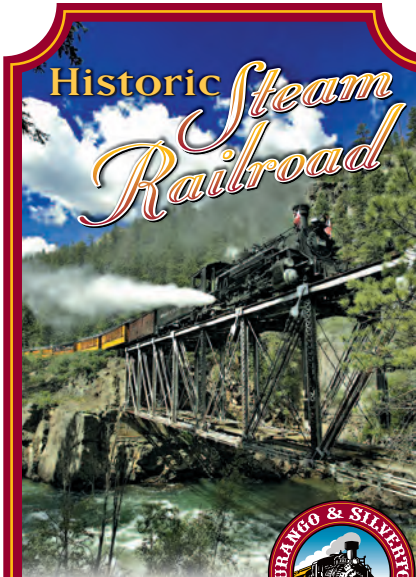
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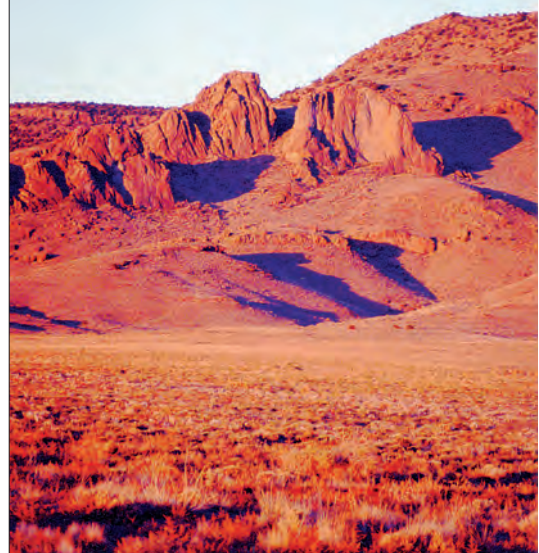
enclave. The Utes, however, were hunters and gatherers, preferring to spend their time in search of big and small game animals rather than tending crops.

At the agency, Meeker was joined by his wife Arivella and daughter Josephine, and several other men who worked with him, including blacksmith E. Jasper Price who brought his wife Sophronia and their children Mae, age two, and John, who was not yet a year old.

As the summer of 1879 began, the Utes migrated from the reservation to engage in their annual hunting and foraging trips. Some headed as far north as Jack Creek in southern Wyoming where they "caught some elk calves which they wanted to trade for cartridges, but the ranchmen would not trade," rancher Taylor Pennock wrote in July to Maj. Thomas Tipton Thornburgh, the commanding officer at Fort Fred Steele on the North Platte River. The ranchers did trade butter for the furs and skins, and Pennock wrote that the Utes "went south towards North Park [Colorado], between the 3rd and 5th of July, but did no damage nor made no threats."

Back at the White River Agency, however, Meeker had escalating problems

Utes once lived in the San Luis Valley of southern Colorado (below). Captain Jack (inset) led the Ute troops that ambushed Thornburgh and his men near Craig, Colorado, in September 1879.



through the summer and into early fall as he attempted to turn the Utes from hunters into farmers. The Utes may have threatened him; almost certainly he overreacted. And then he asked for military troops to come to the reservation and intervene.

In late September, troops under Thornburgh's command rode south from Fort Steele, eventually reaching Milk Creek, south of present-day Craig.

The route these troops took is roughly parallel to highway 13 from the Wyoming-Colorado border through Craig to Meeker. The troops crossed the Morapos Trail and took a route over Yellowjacket Pass, now accessible by following county roads between Craig and Meeker.

The soldiers and the Utes met in a field of battle September 29, 1879, south of Milk Creek Canyon. Thornburgh was killed and the soldiers soon found themselves surrounded by the tribesmen.

The military command could only defend itself, so that night, with many already dead and others wounded, four men mounted the strongest horses remaining and snuck through the guard line to seek help. Joe Rankin headed north into Wyoming, changing horses four times before reaching Rawlins and wiring Gen. George Crook in Omaha who ordered Gen. Wesley Merritt at Fort D.A. Russell near Cheyenne, Wyoming Territory, to relieve Thornburgh's men.

John Gordon, another of the relief riders, contacted a courier from the Meeker Agency, who had been sent by Meeker to find Capt. Francis Dodge and the Ninth Cavalry. That party of Buffalo Soldiers had ridden north from New Mexico and was southeast of the agency, awaiting instructions about whether to move onto the reservation.

Made aware of the situation, by daybreak on October 2, Dodge neared the area where Thornburgh's troops had been under siege since September 29. The relief soldiers forced their way into the soldier encampment but found they could not advance. Soon Dodge and his Buffalo

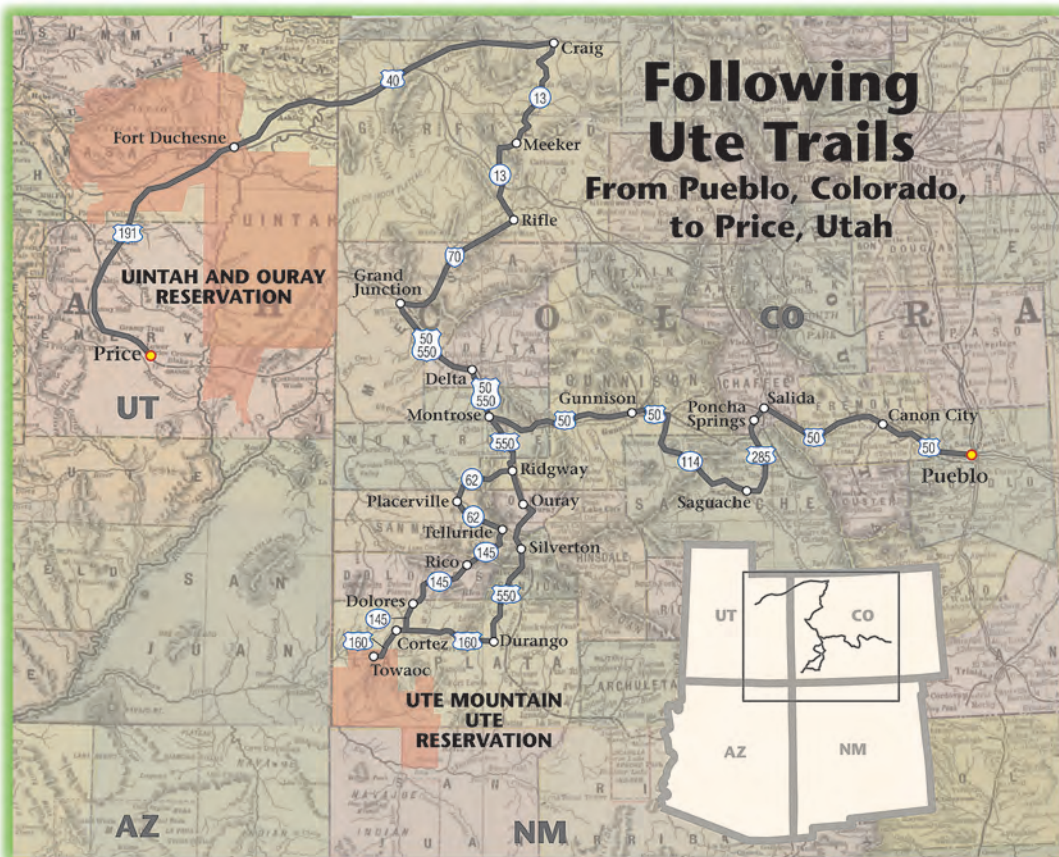
Soldiers were as pinned down as Thornburgh's troops had been. By noon of the second day after Dodge arrived, most of his cavalry horses were dead. Fortunately for the double group of besieged soldiers, Merritt had organized his relief column and began a forced march south from Rawlins toward Milk Creek.

Merritt reached the Milk Creek battleground before dawn on October 5. Upon his arrival, the Indians withdrew from their positions. Once the Utes retreated, the soldiers pushed on toward the agency, where they discovered the bodies of Meeker and several others. Arivella and Josephine Meeker and Sophronia Price and her two children had been taken captive. The women and children were held for 23 days before being released.

In response to the uprising, on June 8, 1880, the United States Senate ratified an agreement forcing relocation of the Northern Utes to a new reservation in Utah.

Following the Ute removal, White River Agency was abandoned. The military post metamorphosed into a town christened Meeker, incorporated in 1885. You can learn more about the agency and the area's early settlement at the White River Museum.

Following Ute Trails From Pueblo, Colorado, to Price, Utah



Ute Reservations

Today the Utes are concentrated on two reservations: Ute Mountain Ute Reservation in southern Colorado and New Mexico, and the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah.

From Craig, follow highway 40 to the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in Fort Duchesne, Utah. Then head south on highway 191 to Price.

Utes lived in Utah for centuries and evidence of their occupation is visible in pictographs through Nine Mile Canyon (which is actually 40 miles long) north of Price. The College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum in Price not only provides information on how to visit that site but also offers displays of early Fremont people, the ancestors of the Utes.

Although most were forced from their traditional lands, the Utes retain their culture, which they share with visitors during annual powwows and other events, such as the Bear Dance celebration held each spring as a rite recognizing renewal.



Candy Moulton, a frequent contributor to *True West*, is the author of *Roadside History of Colorado*.



Remembering Mountain Meadows

Will it be "forgotten" 150 years from now?

"It was very famous in its day. The whole United States rang with its horrors." But by 1872, when the classic *Roughing It* was first published, Mark Twain had to label it as "The now almost forgotten 'Mountain Meadows Massacre.'"

In 1872, the massacre was only 15 years old. Imagine how almost forgotten Mountain Meadows is today.

I'll tell you. When I googled "Mountain Meadows Massacre," I scored 60,400 hits. "Sand Creek Massacre" saw my hits shoot up to 191,000. Google "Johnny D. Boggs," because that's what I do when I google, and ... never mind.

Here I am, at a dot on the map off state Highway 18 north of St. George in Utah's Dixie National Forest. No national park. No museum. Just two monuments: one

dedicated in 1990, built by the Mountain Meadows Association and maintained by the state's parks and recreation department, another built in 1999 and maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, i.e., Mormons.

Of course, right now, I'm glad the site is forgotten because I'm listening to Will Bagley talk about the massacre and what part the leaders in the LDS church may have played. I have to think (hope) the powers-that-be in Salt Lake City don't know Will is here.

Will's monumental 2002 book *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows* won just about every Western history award there is, except the Western Heritage Wrangler Award, and that went to Sally Denton a year later for her 2003 book *American Massacre: The Tragedy at Mountain Meadows, September 1857*. Both books stirred up controversy in Utah.



Utah historian David L. Bigler will tell the tale of folks who were at the wrong place at the wrong time during the sesquicentennial commemoration of the massacre held at the site from September 7-11. Visit mtn-meadows-assoc.com for more information.

— BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS /
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Sally's not here. Probably a good thing. Then the powers-that-be would really be after us. Not that I'm paranoid.

Juanita Brooks is here. In spirit, I mean. After all, it was her 1950 book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* that resurrected that almost forgotten story of a wagon train of Arkansas emigrants murdered by Mormon militia and Paiute Indians on September 11, 1857. Some 120 men, women and children were slain, with 18 (all under age eight) spared to be adopted into Mormon households until most were reunited with their nearest kin two years later. Only one man, John D. Lee, was convicted of the crime, executed here in 1877. Yet for more than a century, many have pointed a finger in Brigham Young's direction and asked, "What did you know and when did you know it?" (if not, "Did you order it?").

I ask that question myself. Brigham takes the Fifth. I look over my shoulder. Then it

hits me: The powers-that-be don't care if Will Bagley's stirring up trouble again. No one's going to kick us out of Utah. Heck, Will still lives in Utah.

Mark Twain wrote about Mountain Meadows. America has seen a Special Report to the 57th Congress by James H. Carleton in 1859, a speech by (equally forgotten) President James Buchanan. John D. Lee went through two trials, and newspaper stories, depositions, journals, letters have been published and published.

More recently, the massacre has been discussed in novels, more nonfiction (not just Juanita's, Will's and Sally's), documentaries and at least two stage plays. Even a movie, *September Dawn* with Jon Voight, which has been moved up to an August 24 release date [see June 2007 *Westerns*].



Brigham Young



John D. Lee

John D. Lee paid the price for the massacre, but many historians directly implicate the head of the Mormon church, Brigham Young.

The powers-that-be have no reason to fear. Mountain Meadows will always be almost forgotten, which is the real tragedy 150 years later. And don't get me started on what happened at the Waxhaws in 1780. Criminy, that scored only 20,400 hits on Google.



Road warrior **Johnny D. Boggs** recommends the Green Gate Village Historic Inn and Scaldoni's in St. George.

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Craig Johnson on Walt, Wyoming and the West.

The Old Cheyenne were with me, and I could feel their strength as I continued along the trail, my heavy boots forming the snow as I went. The drums were there too, matching my progress in perfect fashion, providing an easy rhythm and keeping my legs moving. I felt strong, like I hadn't in many years, perhaps like I never had. I watched as my breath began blowing out ahead of me, and it was as if the wind did not affect it. The searing air felt good in my lungs, and I almost felt as if I could run; but the steady beat of the drums held, and so did I. —*The Cold Dish*

When you take a grizzled Wyoming sheriff who has an independent cadre of deputies and a diverse group of friends, and throw a murder into the mix, you stir a pot of surprises that will keep you turning the pages.

Craig Johnson's novels—*The Cold Dish*, *Death Without Company* and now *Kindness Goes Unpunished*—put a reader in the passenger's seat of "The Bullet" as Sheriff Walt Longmire of fictional Absaroka County, Wyoming, solves one case after another: the shootings of three youths on the edge of the Northern Cheyenne reservation along the Montana-Wyoming border; the death of a Basque woman in a nursing home; the killing of his daughter's ex-boyfriend in Philadelphia.

Sheriff Longmire does his work with the advice of his subordinates and his best friend Henry Standing Bear, a Northern Cheyenne tribal member, who happens to have a lot of relatives (some alive, some dead) who also give aid.

A former police officer, Johnson now writes and ranches near Ucross, Wyoming: Population 25. His fictional town of Durant is based on Buffalo, where Walt Longmire is so popular, he even got 13 write-in votes for Johnson County sheriff in the last election. "I had to go apologize to the incumbent sheriff," Johnson says.

Many people populate Durant and a Walt Longmire novel, including the "sheriff" himself.

TW: Sheriff Walt Longmire is a unique character—hard-bitten, but with a soft



Craig Johnson's book tour for Kindness Goes Unpunished stops at the Wyoming Festival of the Book in Cheyenne on September 14-16 and the South Dakota Festival of the Book in Deadwood on September 28-30.

— COURTESY CRAIG JOHNSON —

underbelly. Is he a composite of any real Wyoming sheriffs you know?

CJ: I didn't use any of the sheriffs I know as a model for the characters, but I did use characteristics of Wyoming sheriffs for bits and pieces of Longmire's character. It is a patchwork because rarely does someone walk in the door who is what you need. My characters are a Dr. Frankenstein kind of product, pieced together from real people, but all the characters in a book are there for a purpose.

"Henry is almost a superhero. Who wouldn't want a Henry in his or her life?"

How about his partner Vic?

She's everything that Walt isn't. She's technologically advanced, while he is the old style of law enforcement. It's turned out to be one of the best things I could have done. The books are first person with Walt telling the story in a strong masculine narrative. She provides the balance for that. And Vic and the other females in the stories are the lifeblood for the books. Walt Longmire books are not just cowboys and Indians, they're not just men's stories. They appeal to women as well because those female characters really bring another voice and another strength to the books.

Vic doesn't mince words does she?

Victoria Moretti is young, urban and profane. ... even with, or maybe because of, her language, she has become a fan favorite.

Where do you draw your inspiration for your Indian characters, especially Henry Standing Bear?

Marcus Red Thunder, Northern Cheyenne, is a really good friend of mine, and he has shared his culture with me. ... I love the Indian sense of humor. I utilize that a lot, because a lot of the Indians I deal with have these incredible senses of humors. ... A lot of times people paint people with a broad brush stroke—an Indian is an Indian, a cowboy is a cowboy, a sheriff is a sheriff. I always try to think, if I were this person: How would I feel? Who would I be? ... In the book, Henry is almost a superhero. Who wouldn't want a Henry in his or her life?

For the latest book, *Kindness Goes Unpunished*, Johnson transported Walt, Vic and Henry to Philadelphia where they engaged in solving the murder of Longmire's daughter Cady's ex-boyfriend, a story told to bring Cady into the books and to introduce Vic's Italian family. But don't worry readers, Johnson says the "West is in my soul," so don't expect Longmire to hang out long in the East.

How does the land and landscape affect what you write?

I have a ranch out in Ucross in northern Wyoming. It's just the rolling breaking hills coming off the Powder River. I go down to shovel out the barn and sometimes the light just hits, and I'm struck by the place, am faced with some of the romance of the West as far as the landscape is concerned. That's the trick. That's the underlying meaning of it all—to slow down to actually notice. I think that is part of it as a writer, to notice, to tell people about it.

What's next? Will Walt be back in Wyoming?

Yep, the fourth book in the Walt Longmire mystery series is *Another Man's Moccasins*, due out in the spring of 2008. It's always back to the three W's—Walt, Wyoming and the West.



Candy Moulton lives and writes near Encampment, Wyoming. See a review of her book, *Legacy of the Tetons: Homesteading in Jackson Hole*, on p. 82.

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BY BOB BOZE BELL

Jerkwater Towns

How the early railroaders fueled steam engines in the Old West.

One of our readers, Raymond Hill, asked me how railroaders got water up the water towers for trains traveling in the Old West, especially in the desert?

Good question. I've watched a lot of movies showing the old steam engines stop to fill 'er up. But who filled up the water tower? Frankly, I didn't know, so I called the Train Man, Jim Clark of Tombstone, Arizona. His answer? Windmills.

The towers had a windmill that pumped the water up into the tank (below). By the mid-1890s, "steam mules," or little engines, pumped water up into the towers.

Some towns, though, lacked a water tower. When trains stopped in those places, the crew had to find a nearby stream or well

and "jerk the water," bucket brigade style, to the train. These little backwater towns became known as "Jerkwater Towns."

Even today, some ranchers, especially in West Texas and Wyoming, still use windmills to pump water for their livestock.



Early day train crews had to "jerk" the water up to the tender in towns that were too small to have a water tower.

— ILLUSTRATED BY BOB BOZE BELL —



On the bigger stops, like this one on the Northern Pacific line in Laramie, Wyoming, in 1868, huge windmills pumped the water. Sometimes it was not the best utility as either there was no wind or too much wind, which kinked the machinery and stopped it from pumping water.

— TRUE WEST ARCHIVES —



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NONFICTION

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EDITED BY CATHIE DRAINE, SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS, \$25.95, HARDCOVER; 605-773-6009.

Philip was a lawyer and U.S. attorney whose letters to his children comprise reminiscences of his interesting early years (1897-1903) as a cowboy in the area west of Fort Pierre, South Dakota. The letters are anything but casual. Each one is virtually a mini-essay designed to extol the realities of cowboy life to his children. Philip was an educated and intellectually curious individual with the gift of almost total recall. He was also a natural born yarn spinner. —RICHARD H. DILLON



SOMETIMES THE BLUES

SUSAN CLARDY, ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESS, \$39.95, HARDCOVER; 520-617-1160.

Susan Clardy discovered her great grandfather's carefully preserved letters and diaries in a trunk in her parents' attic. Frank Hammon was an ordinary, hard-working man who got caught up in the boom, bust and chronic violence of his era and left a record of these hectic days. The accounts are quite bland, but there is much sadness and history underlying the words. Hammon lost his beloved wife Daisy to childbed fever. He had to let his children be raised in faraway Illinois. Eventually, Hammon even became embroiled in the gory Pleasant Valley War between cattlemen and sheepherders. Clardy begins



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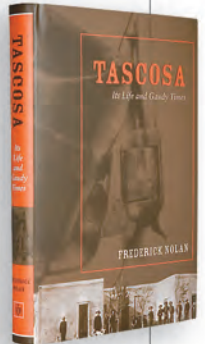
each chapter with an evocative comment on her own experience tracking down Frank's history. It is a gracious, literary touch.

—CYNTHIA GREEN

TASCOSA: ITS LIFE AND GAUDY TIMES

FREDERICK NOLAN, TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY PRESS, \$39.95, HARDCOVER; 806-742-2982.

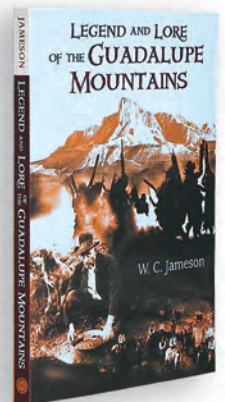
We have long needed this detailed account of the heyday of the old Texas cattle hamlet. Tascosa grew from a handful of placitas founded by New Mexican ex-Comancheros into a booming cattle market that saw its height during the beef bonanza of the 1880s. The town attracted gamblers and badmen like John Selman and Billy the Kid. Nolan extends his story with fine historic photos, endnotes and a bibliography. The only complaint that I can lodge against this splendid biography of a vanished Texas cowtown is the lack of a map—a feature that would be useful for those of us unfamiliar with the Panhandle and the Llano Estacado. —RICHARD H. DILLON



LEGEND AND LORE OF THE GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS

W.C. JAMESON, UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PRESS, \$16.95, SOFTCOVER; 800-249-7737.

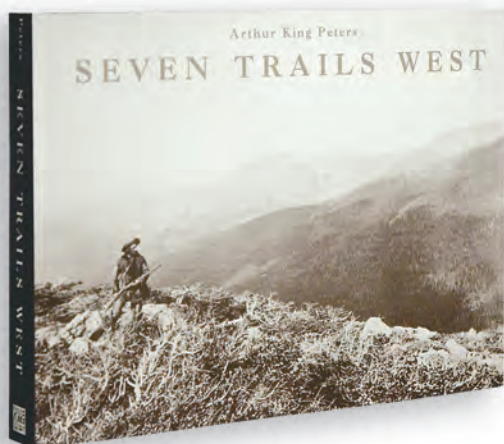
At first glance, this book suggests you're going to be subjected to another dose of lost gold mines, Indian raids, mysterious ghosts and local adventures like the ones in the last legend and lore book you just read. Well, you are. Fortunately, Jameson makes his tales so different and readable that you just can't put this book down. The stories of headless skeletons, buried treasure chests and Spanish conquistadors will have you turning the pages to continue absorbing the history and tantalizing puzzles of this intriguing Texas-New Mexico mountain range. This is a fun, satisfying read that will have you packing up to go explore those haunted hills. —CHUCK LEWIS



SEVEN TRAILS WEST

ARTHUR KING PETERS, ABBEVILLE PRESS, \$29.95, SOFTCOVER; 800-278-2665.

If a student of the exploration and expansion of the American West were to have only one book to cover it all, this big volume would be the one to serve the purpose. Based mostly on several particular



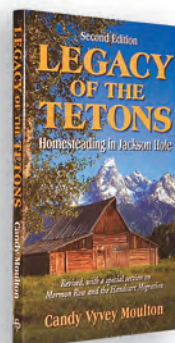
major routes, this book extends beyond the famed trails with further coverage of other related and admirable achievements. The text is succinct and well-written. All maps, illustrations and photographs are pertinent. Reading like an adventure novel, this book is a fine example of an all-inclusive history presented in a rich and interesting manner without being boring. —CHUCK LEWIS

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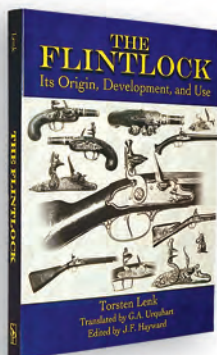
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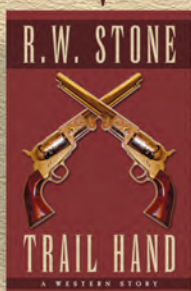
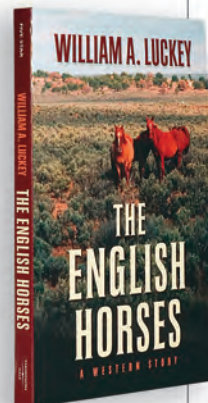


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WILLIAM A. LUCKEY, FIVE STAR, \$25.95, HARDCOVER; 800-223-1244.

This 1800s New Mexico Territory range war tale includes barbed wire, rustlers, mustangers, rape, child abuse and unrequited love. The novel is unusual in that each chapter depicts a different protagonist. While these people know each other and are in some way involved in the story, none of them takes over as the main character. As a consequence, the poor reader never finds one person for whom to cheer. Luckey's expertise in horseflesh is obvious, but wild horse roundups alone are not enough to overcome the lack of time-tested mechanics necessary in creating a true novel. The constant changes in point of view end in a meandering collection of short stories that leave too many questions unanswered. — PHYLLIS MORREALE-DE LA GARZA



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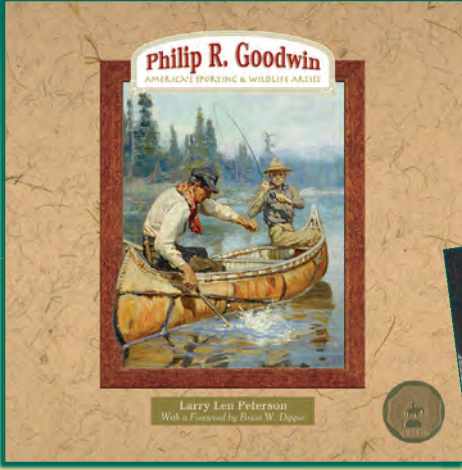


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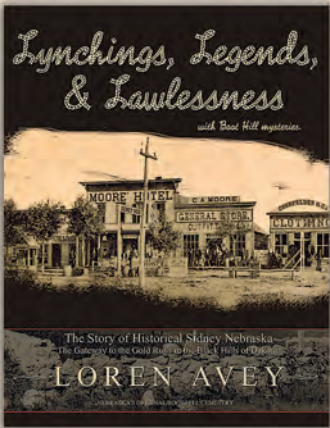
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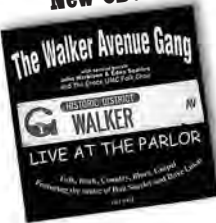
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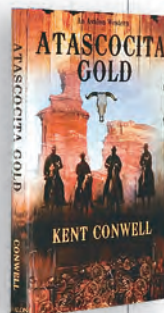
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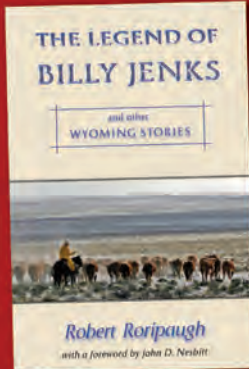
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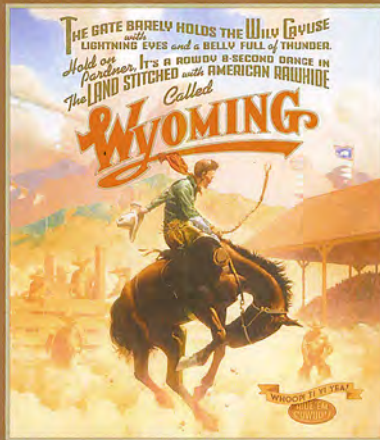


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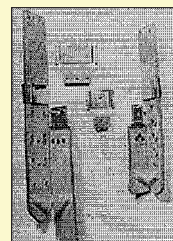
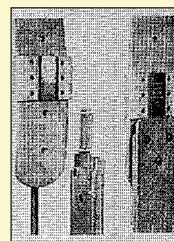
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Miss a profile of a True Western town? Visit the Travel section in our online archives.

What's it Like to Live There?

Winnemucca, Nevada—a True Western Town.

To encourage our readers to visit this year's winners of our Top 10 True Western Towns award announced in Jan/Feb, each issue will showcase the local flavor at one of these towns. Towns profiled in the past will be replaced with other True Western towns.

Trappers and Basque sheepherders arrived in today's Winnemucca, Nevada, in the 1830s, but a Wild Bunch robbery put it on the Old West map. On September 19, 1900, the Sundance Kid and two other members of the Wild Bunch robbed the First National Bank, galloping away with about \$32,000 in gold coin (see p.92). Basque customs (below) are still celebrated annually in Humboldt County, and Winnemucca is the place to eat for Basque-style cuisine: it has more Basque restaurants per capita than any other place in the world!

Best Route to Winnemucca: Located halfway between Salt Lake City and San Francisco, the city sits at the crossroads of Interstate 80 and U.S. 95.

What historic site do most of the schoolchildren visit?: Humboldt Historical Museum (175 Museum Ln.), which covers local history from the Wild Bunch to Paiute activist Sarah Winnemucca.

What's the latest gossip?: The wildfires sweeping through this country! During the first week of July, 300 residents of and near Winnemucca had to be evacuated.

Who knows Winnemucca's history best?: Pansilee Larson, the curator of the

Humboldt museum. She can weave the city's colorful tales in such a way that they seem relevant and important to how we are today as a community.

Favorite Local Cuisine: Basque dishes, of course! Eat at the Martin Hotel (94 W. Railroad St.) for the most delectable meals.

Old West Attractions: Camp McGarry (near Denio), est. 1865; Camp Winfield Scott (near Paradise Valley), est. 1866.

Best Cowboy Bar: Paradise Saloon (95 S. Main St.), which is well worth the 40-minute drive northwest of Winnemucca.

Best Western Bookstore: Tips Western (185 Melarkey St.), but don't just go for the books; owner Ken Tipton is renowned for his custom saddles.

Event to Attend This Month: Western Art Roundup (Labor Day weekend) celebrates its 25th year and features art ranging from horsehair to boots to bit and spurs.

Best Spot to View Wildlife: Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, located north near Denio, is home to wild horses (above), burros and bighorn sheep.

What radio personality do the locals listen to?: Evan Slick and his AM 1400 agricultural report are not to be missed!

Best Place to Buy Land: Nearby Grass Valley offers plenty of available acreage.

Average House Cost: \$188,000.

Average Temperature: Winter highs and lows range from the 40s to high teens, while summer temps range from 90s to 50s.

Preservation Projects: Most recent project was restoring one of Nevada's oldest bridges, Humboldt River Bridge, to its former glory. Also check out the state's oldest operating school, the Winnemucca Grammar School (522 Lay St.).

Special thanks to Nicole Maher, a 16-year resident of Winnemucca, for sharing her love of the town with us.



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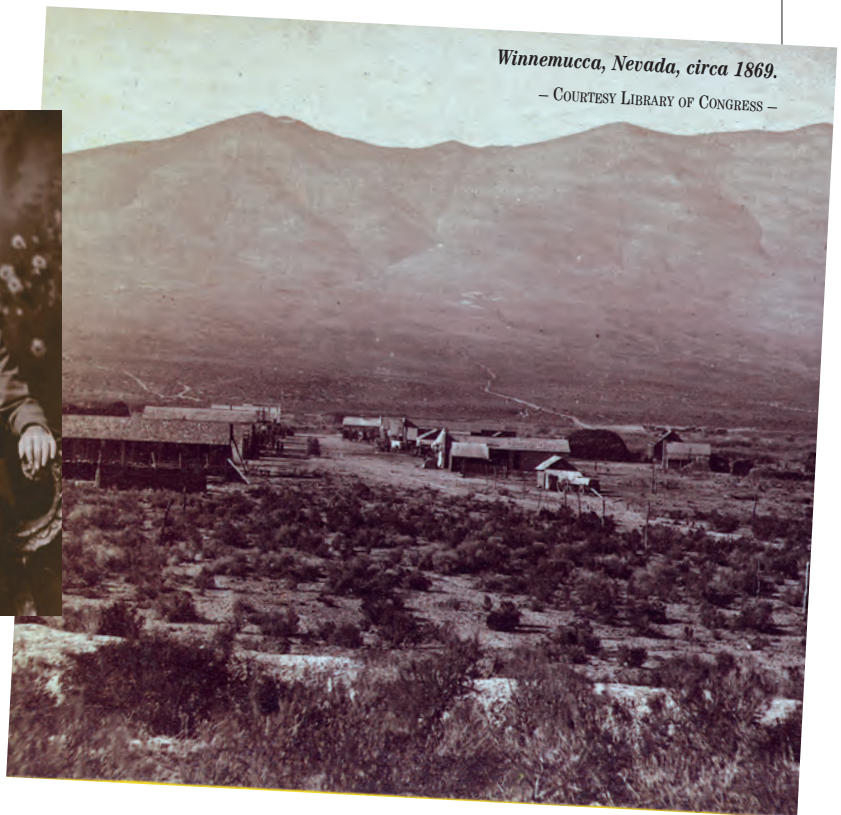


Wild Bunch Country?



Only in Nevada would a group of bank robbers send a personalized “thank you” to their victims. For years after the Sundance Kid’s September 19, 1900, filching of the First National Bank in Winnemucca, that was the story. Historians have since debunked the myth, proving Pinkerton detectives actually sent the photo to banker George Nixon. Yet the Wild Bunch, shown above in that famous Fort Worth Five photograph, is forever linked to Nevada.

—TRUE WEST ARCHIVES—



Humboldt Museum

Just above the site where thousands of wagon trains forded the Humboldt River on the long trek to California, sits the Humboldt Museum. The modern brick building mirrors its historic predecessor, a church turned museum.

Together, the buildings house the story of the community.

Remains from the ice age of 13,000 years ago, wonderful beaded and quilled regalia from an American Indian collection, vintage automobiles, keepsakes from Winnemucca’s “art nouveau” period and a charming rural parlor from the early days of nearby Paradise Valley are among the treasures awaiting your visit.

The Humboldt Museum located on the corner of Jungo Road and Maple Ave.
PO Box 819, Winnemucca, Nevada 89446 – 775-623-2912
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If you have a question, write: Ask the Marshall, PO Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327 or e-mail him at marshall.trimble@sccmail.maricopa.edu

I'm reading a book that claims Old West pimps were called Pi's. Is that pronounced like Pees or Pies?

Kriya Singh
New York, New York

**True West
Forum**

I've never heard that one, but if they did, it would most likely be pronounced like "pies" because if it was "pees," they would have just spelled it "p's". Speaking of the oldest profession, cowboys used to call the newfangled, factory-made cigarettes "pimp sticks," because pimps were the only ones who could afford to

buy them. You can dazzle your friends at the next cocktail party with that one. I don't get invited to parties much anymore because I pass out information like that, but it might work for you.

An 1872 newspaper article in Peoria, Illinois, suggested Wyatt Earp may have been a pimp (for more, see TW July 2003).

— ILLUSTRATED BY BOB BOZE BELL —



One victim of the Lincoln County War was Morris Bernstein. Who was he?

James Freed
Dennison, Ohio

On August 5, 1878, Billy the Kid and a group of Regulators raised hell at Blazer's Mill in Lincoln County, New Mexico, hoping to steal horses to replace some they'd lost. The trading post supplied beef to the local Mescalero Apaches.

The Lincoln County War had been waging since February with members of the House faction, who monopolized county trade, fighting Regulators once employed by cattleman John Tunstall. His murder in February had stirred his cowboys to avenge his death and finish his work to defeat the House.

At the Indian agency, Morris Bernstein, a former employee of House member James Dolan, handed out rations to the women. When gunshots rang out, everyone scattered. Riding into the midst

of the gunfight, Bernstein was shot and killed by Atanacio Martinez.

At a nearby spring, Indians and soldiers opened fire on Billy the Kid and George Coe. They escaped the hail of gunfire, riding double on Coe's mount.

The killing of Bernstein incurred public wrath upon the Regulators. He'd been shot four times, and his weapons and valuables were stolen. Killing him may actually have been an accident, but it looked like brutal murder. Even though the Kid was several hundred yards away at the time, he was branded as Bernstein's killer.

Read Fred Nolan's *The West of Billy the Kid* to learn more.

The latest research, though, indicates that Bernstein may have been a newspaper reporter with the pseudonym Soapweed, who criticized House members with articles about their corrupt business tactics. Jerry Klinger, president of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, discovered this while trying to find out more about this Londoner, born February 11, 1856, who first came to New Mexico in 1873, finding work in Santa Fe as a bookkeeper.

Why did Mountain Men prefer riding mules over horses? And how come the Indians never rode mules?

Paul Gordon
St Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Mountain Men preferred mules because they were surefooted in rough country and better pack animals. That being said, Mountain Men did prefer horses in open country and whenever they needed to get somewhere in a hurry.

Plains Indians and mountain tribes found horses more desirable than mules because their lifestyle consisted of hunting and warfare. Down in the Southwest, tribes like the Apache found mules better suited in rough country like Arizona's



Mountain Men transport their trade liquor via mule in this 1867 Harper's Weekly illustration.

— COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS —

central mountains and Mexico's Sierra Madre. They also found some other uses for them—early journals by American soldiers mention the Apaches liked the taste of roasted mule meat.

What can you tell me about the Western writer William W. Johnstone?

Jack A. Graves
Turlock, California

William W. Johnstone was one of America's most prolific writers of action-packed Western, military and thriller novels. He was born in southern Missouri in 1938, the son of a Methodist minister and a schoolteacher. He quit school at age 15 and joined a carnival. He later returned to school. After graduation, he worked briefly as a deputy sheriff before joining the army. Released from service, he began a 16-year career in radio.

Johnstone began writing in 1970, but his first book, *The Devil's Kiss*, wasn't published until 1979. During the next 20 years, he wrote close to 200 books including the best-selling "Ashes," "Eagle," "Last Gunfighter" and "Mountain Man" series. He also wrote under at least one pseudonym (William Mason).

Johnstone died in 2004, but his death was kept secret for nearly three years so that a "carefully selected author" could be chosen to carry on his work. Those books are currently published by Kensington Books in New York City.

While traveling through southern New Mexico and Arizona, I saw signs for "The Thing." What is it?

John Chambers
San Jose, California

"The Thing" is in a tourist store at Texas Canyon on I-10 between Benson and Willcox, Arizona. For a dollar, you can take a walking tour through a small museum and see the mummified body of "The Thing." The truth is: "The Thing" was the creation of Homer Pate, who owned Pate's Curiosity Store in Phoenix. Homer specialized in creating weird, fake mummies to sell to carnivals.

In some Westerns, characters hang a dead man's gun and holster on a crudely made cross marking his grave. Did they really do that in the old days?

Annette Brackin
Rutledge, Georgia

That was 1930s and 1940s Hollywood melodrama. A Colt revolver might cost less than \$25, but I guarantee the deceased's friends wouldn't leave prized guns out there to be stolen or to rust in the elements.

I grew up watching the same movies, and I fantasized about going out to where they filmed those shoot 'em ups and finding pistols laying scattered on the ground. It didn't occur to me at the time that the crew picked up the area after the actors called it a day.



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— TRUE WEST ARCHIVES —

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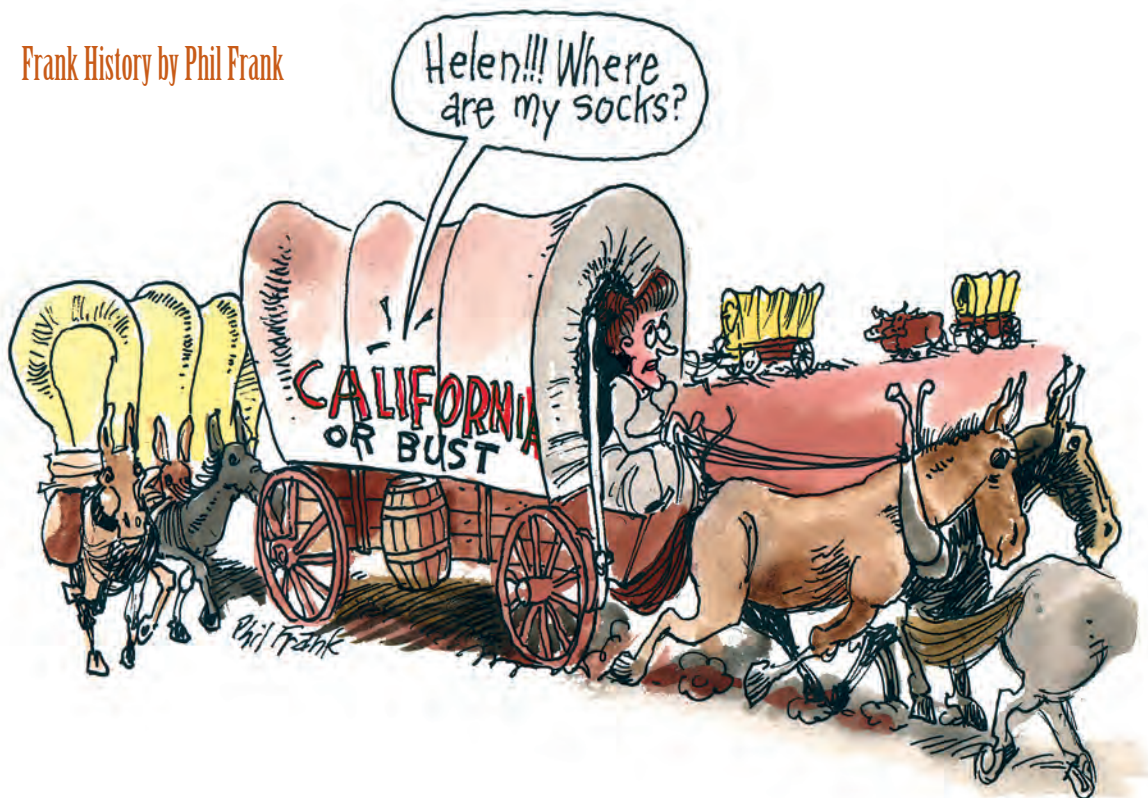
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—Richard M. Weaver
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—Old Vaquero Saying

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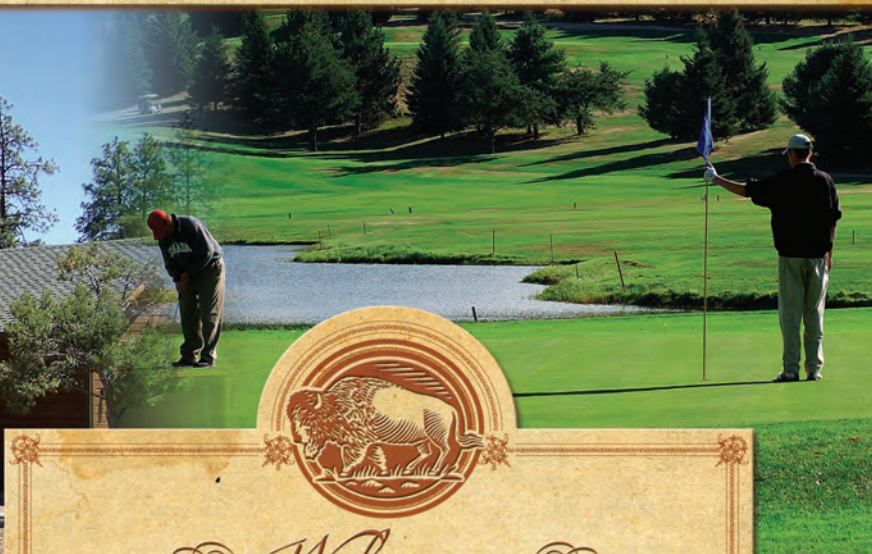
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