

# TRUE WEST

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

## THE GREAT CHIEFS

HOW THEIR COURAGE SHAPED A NATION

PLUS:

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THE LEGACY OF LARRY McMURTRY AND HIS GREATEST NOVEL

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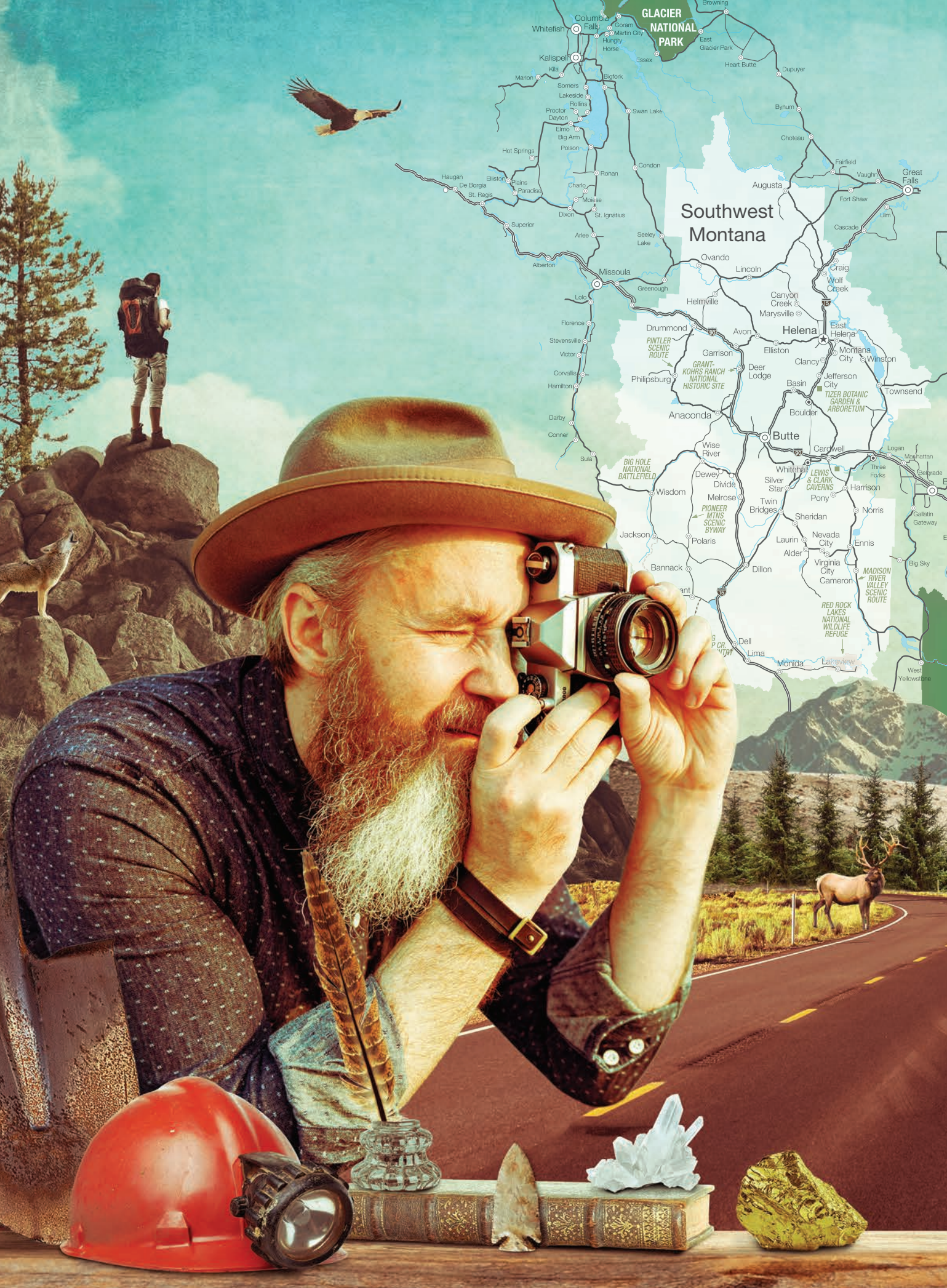
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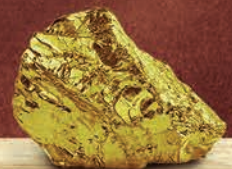
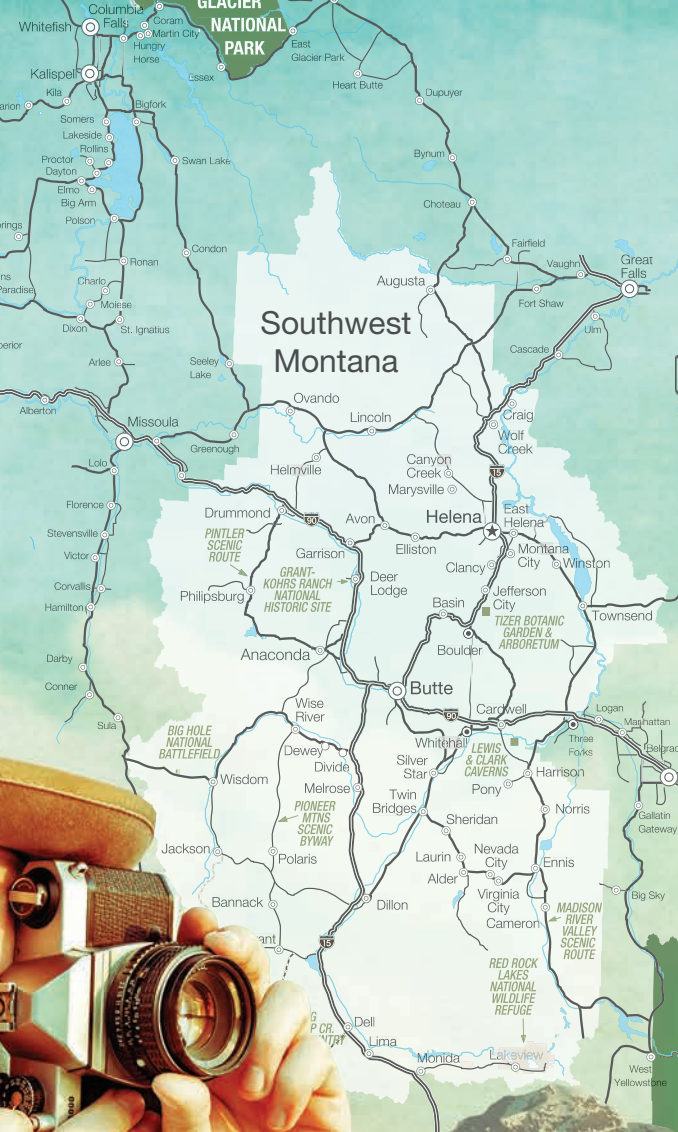
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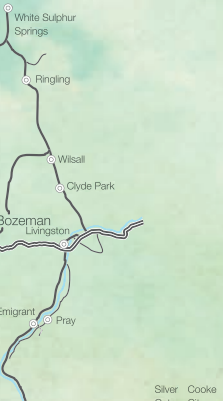
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Quanah Parker was a prominent and respected leader of the Kwahadi band of the Comanche nation.

Born to Native and Anglo parents he rose to prominence within the Kwahadi tribe after the apprehension of several Kiowa chiefs. Quanah would have clashes with Rangers and the Military during the Red River War, he repeatedly struggled with Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie over the preservation of the Bison population and the Native American way of life. Eventually Quanah Parker's efforts were subverted during a raid on Anglo merchants, leading to the surrender and peaceful relocation of many Native Populations into Indian Territories, saving them from the often violent and forced migration they were experiencing at the hands of officials and the military. The move proved to be very beneficial for Parker, his leadership skills were noted among the relocated Natives, and he was appointed as principal chief of the entire Comanche nation.

Parker developed a close relationship with the Burnett family, prominent Texas cattle ranchers and businessmen. The family, particularly Samuel Burke Burnett, assisted Parker in building his home, The Star House, and facilitated trade of important artifacts and customs. Parker was also the founder of the Native American Church, the principles of which he strongly advocated for and shared with his Anglo friends as well as the multitudes of Natives that looked to him for leadership of the territories. Parker expanded his influence and was often visited by Teddy Roosevelt who shared his ideas on conservation. Before his death in 1911 he would be renowned as one of the wealthiest Native Americans of the era and a successful leader to many Native American people. After his death the title of "Chief" was retired, and Parker is unofficially known as the last Chief of the Comanche people.

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*SHOWN (clockwise from top left): a) Pat Garrett's Dona Ana County, NM Sheriff's desk; b) bull head from Ben Thompson's Bulls Head Saloon in Abilene, KS; c) J.B. Farr's gold presentation sheriff's badge; d) Arizona Ranger O. Frank Hicks' Colt Single Action.*

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## STANDING TALL

In September 1877, Red Cloud and Spotted Tail led a delegation of 10 Oglala, 10 Brulé and three Arapaho leaders to Washington, D.C. They traveled from Nebraska to meet with President Rutherford B. Hayes in opposition to the consolidation of their Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies on the Missouri River. President Hayes heard their case, and in a compromise, required the tribes to move to the Missouri River site for the winter, but in the spring of 1878 they could choose permanent reservations. The delegation sat for three images for Mathew Brady in his Washington, D.C., studio. The first image featured the members of the Red Cloud Agency, except American Horse, who is not in the photo.

Seated, left to right: Red Cloud, Little Wound (ca 1835-1899), Yellow Bear (ca 1844-1913), Iron Crow, He Dog (ca 1840-1936)

Standing, left to right: Probably F.C. Boucher (or another interpreter), Little Big Man, Big Road, Young Man Afraid of His Horses (1836-1893), Three Bears, William Garnett (also known as Billy Hunter, interpreter)

Mathew Brady, Courtesy Library of Congress



True West captures the spirit of the West with authenticity, personality and humor by providing a necessary link from our history to our present.

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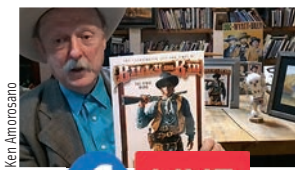
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Ken Amorosano



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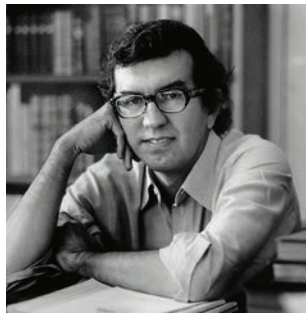
An old photo is reexamined by the world's top Doc Holliday expert.

—By the Editors of True West and Gary L. Roberts

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The summer of 2021 is a great time to travel across these grand Old West highways.

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Cover design by Dan Harshberger

BY BOB BOZE BELL

# Horseman, Pass By, Again

*The long and circuitous road from the Hayloft Bar to Larry McMurtry's typewriter and back again.*

**B**ack in my Honkytonk Days (and Nights!), I played drums in a Country-Western band at the Hayloft Bar on Ruthrauff Road in Tucson. Wild place. During breaks I would sit at the bar and sketch the patrons. My experiences there led almost directly to my cartoon creation, *Honkytonk Sue*, which premiered in *National Lampoon* in the summer of 1977.

When I moved back up to Phoenix in 1978, I started doing *Honkytonk Sue* as a comic strip in *New Times Weekly*, and in 1979 I self-published the first of four comic books on the Queen of Country Swing.

In 1983, Columbia Pictures bought the movie rights to my girl Sue and they hired Larry McMurtry to write a script for a proposed movie starring Goldie Hawn.

Diana Ossana was living in a camper shell off of Fourth Avenue in Tucson when she went to an all-you-can eat catfish restaurant and met Larry McMurtry, who just happened to be dining there as well. They soon moved in together and started collaborating on stories, with Larry writing everything on a typewriter, and Diana converting it to a computer and editing, and rearranging.

She told *Texas Monthly*, "When I first met Larry, he was involved with about five or six different women. He was quite the ladies' man. I was always really puzzled. One day I said to him, 'So all of these women are your girlfriends?' And he said, 'Yes.' And I said, 'Well, do they know about one another?' He said, 'Nooo.'"

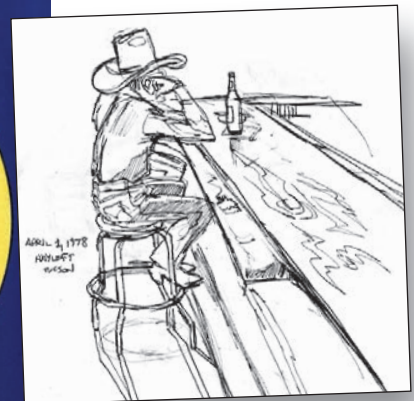
In 2013 we presented Larry and Diana the first True Westerner Award.

After he accepted the award from me at Tucson's La Paloma, I had a chance to talk to him, so I asked him about the all-you-can-eat catfish place where he met Diana. Larry said, "It's on Ruthrauff Road, and it used to be the Hayloft Bar."



Larry McMurtry was Columbia Pictures' first choice to adapt *Honkytonk Sue* to the big screen, but despite multiple scripts, the movie was never produced.

All Images Courtesy True West Archives



One of the many sketches I made while our band was on break at the Hayloft Bar on Ruthrauff Road in Tucson, Arizona.

**March 9, 2013: 6:47 P.M.:**  
Cottonwood Room, La Paloma Resort, Tucson. Diana Ossana and Larry McMurtry receive the first True Westerner Award.

Our coverage of the late, great Larry McMurtry begins on page 40.



For a behind-the-scenes look at running this magazine, check out BBB's daily blog at [TWMag.com](http://TWMag.com)



True West Archives

# BOB BOZE BELL

# BILLY: THE FINAL WORD

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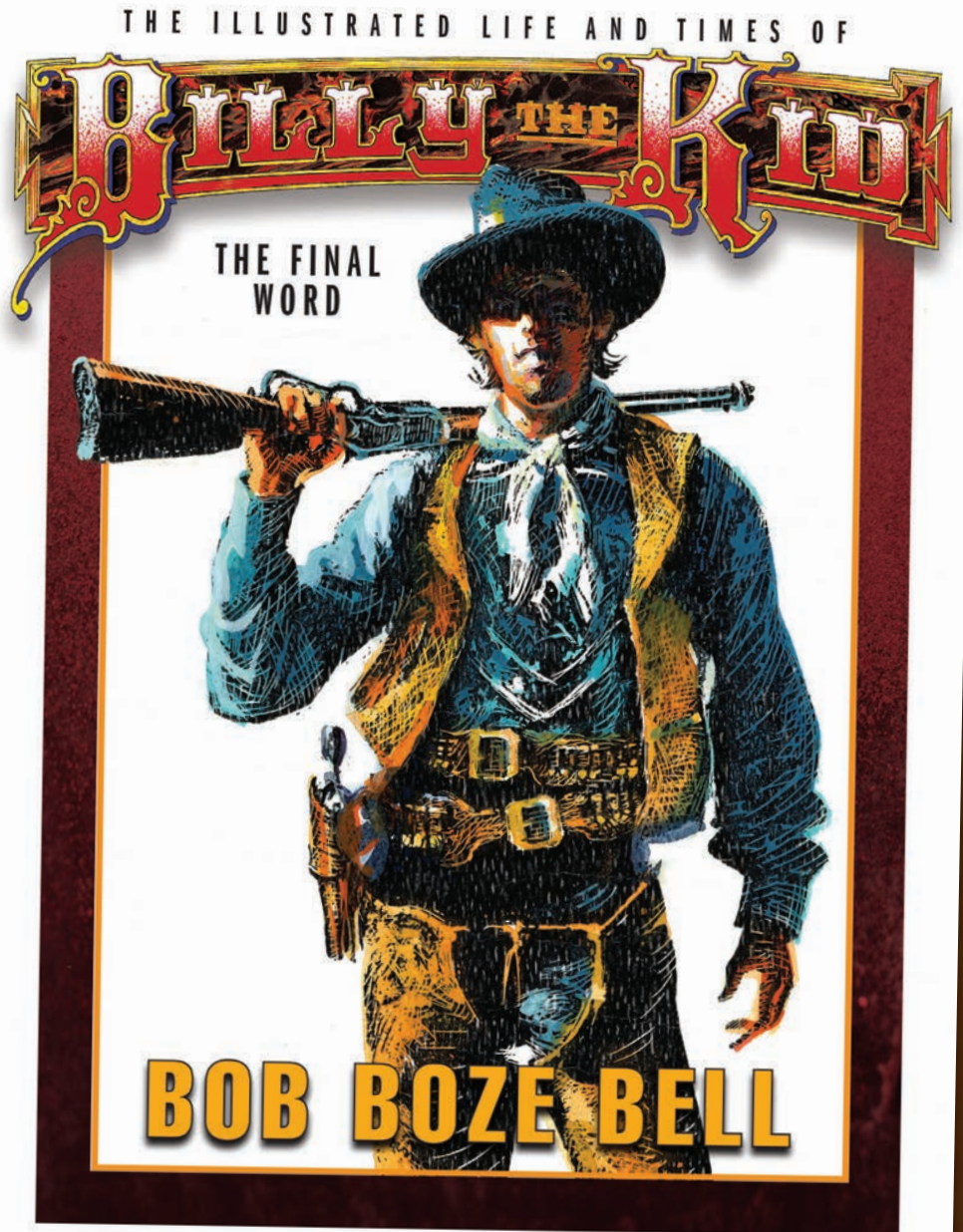
—Mark Lee Gardner, author of *To Hell on a Fast Horse: The Untold Story of Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett*

“Having lived in Billy country for almost fifty years, I believe that Bob’s intriguing mosaic of historical vignettes, art and images will blow the lid off the staid and proper history books. It will bring in new readers and the colorful legend and life of Billy will continue for yet another century.”

—Lynda Sánchez

“I truly believe after we are all gone—when none of us Kid historians walk this Earth—the future Kid historians will refer to this book as your magnum opus, and the beating heart of William H. Bonney.”

—Bob Reece



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## Old Vaquero Saying

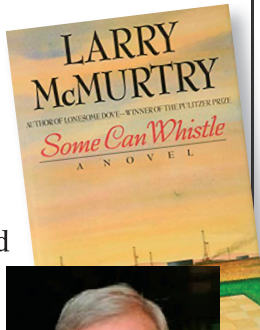
“Give someone a book and they’ll read for a day. Teach someone to write a book and they’ll spend a lifetime mired in paralyzing self-doubt.”



## Quotes

“We expect far too much of a first sentence. Think of it as analogous to a good country breakfast: what we want is something simple, but nourishing to the imagination.”

—Larry McMurtry, *Some Can Whistle*



Larry McMurtry  
1936 to 2021  
Courtesy WireImage.com

“Larry McMurtry painted with eloquent prose and dialogue a world of authenticity, complexity and humanity. He captured a legacy I knew well, and I loved his books and scripts. That American West has disappeared, but it will live forever through his genius. He will be missed.”

—Dan Rather, journalist

“As much as he despised literary provincialism and argued for a turn from rural to urban literature, his focus remained on Texas.”

—Henry Chappell, author

“Larry McMurtry was a great storyteller. I learned from him, which was important. I was entertained by him, which was ALL important.

“RIP, cowboy.  
“Horseman, pass by.”

—Stephen King, author

“To this day, I still think *Lonesome Dove* is my best part.”

—Robert Duvall, actor

“Beers raised up, tears raining down for the realist of the real ones. Arguably the greatest American novelist of the 20th century.”

—Andy Greenwald, author



Robert Duvall as Augustus Gus McCrae, *Lonesome Dove* (1989)

Courtesy CBS Television

“With two novels [*Horseman, Pass By* and *Leaving Cheyenne*], Larry McMurtry firmly established himself well in the ranks of the new generation of Texas novelists.”

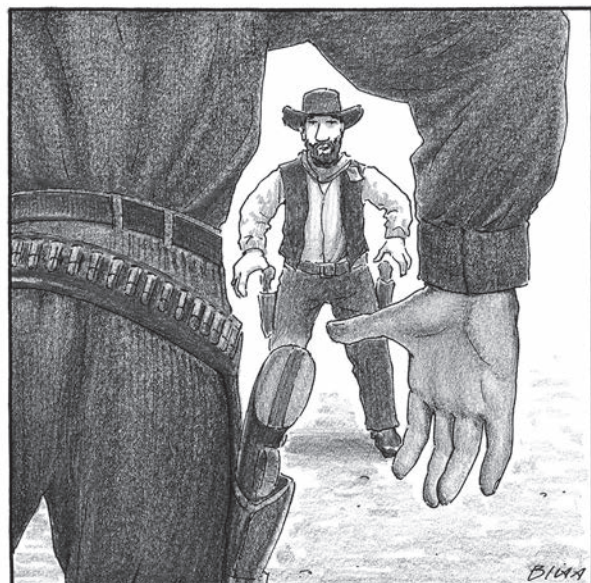
—Leonard Sanders, “Hud Author has New One,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 30, 1966

“If McMurtry’s story [*The Last Picture Show*] of a decaying Texas town and its decaying inhabitants had a universality which touched eastern readers and viewers, it has even more impact on natives of these parts. The feeling that ‘I’ve been there,’ and ‘I know these people’ is almost too much to bear.”

—Perry Stewart, “A Film for All Time,” *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 10, 1972

“Among the best writers ever.”

—James L. Brooks, writer, director, producer, *Terms of Endearment* (1983)



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BY MARK BOARDMAN

# Remember... Velasco?

*The 1832 battle set the stage for the Texas Revolution.*

**T**he names are spoken with reverence in Texas: The Alamo. Goliad. San Jacinto. The great battles of the Texas Revolution, a conflict that lasted just under seven months. But the seeds of the war were planted years before that; the first real bloodshed came in June 1832.

Mexico was in the middle of one of its myriad civil wars. That made military officials in the northern provinces, specifically Texas, very nervous. They feared the Texians would take advantage of the disorder to seek independence for the region. To head things off, the officials arrested a number of potential revolutionaries, including William Barret Travis, who would later command The Alamo.

This arrest just served to anger the Texians. By early June, about 150 militia had gathered at Brazoria, along the Brazos River in southeast Texas, determined to free the captives. Secondly, the Texians hoped the action would show support for rebel Gen. Santa Anna (a large irony there).

On June 22, the troops, led by John Austin (no relation to Stephen F.), began moving the 25 miles to Fort Velasco—some 40 men aboard a ship carrying a cannon, and the rest overland. The Texian forces, including the ship, covered three sides of the fort. Just before midnight, they attacked.

Most of the fighting was done at a distance, with the Texians unable to breach the walls of the fort and the Mexicans failing to take over the ship or disable the cannon. Sharpshooters did most of the damage for both sides. Heavy firing continued throughout the night. As dawn broke, rain erupted, dousing all the participants. Mexican ammunition was running low. The Texians sent messengers to Brazoria, seeking reinforcements. With all this in mind, the fort commander offered to surrender.

After some back and forth, the Mexican troops were put on a ship to Matamoros. They carried minimal supplies. Fort Velasco's cannon



When Mexican authorities arrested William Barret Travis in early June 1832, it triggered a precursor to the Alamo, the little-known June 26, 1832, Battle of Velasco between Texians and the Mexican Army, just upstream from the mouth of the Brazos River.

Map of 1830 Texas by Stephen F. Austin Courtesy Library of Congress/Map of the City of Velasco Courtesy Beinecke Library, Yale University/News clipping from Aug. 3, 1832 "National Gazette" (Philadelphia, PA) Courtesy Newspapers.com

and swivel gun were left behind—as were the Mexican wounded, who were cared for by Texian doctors.

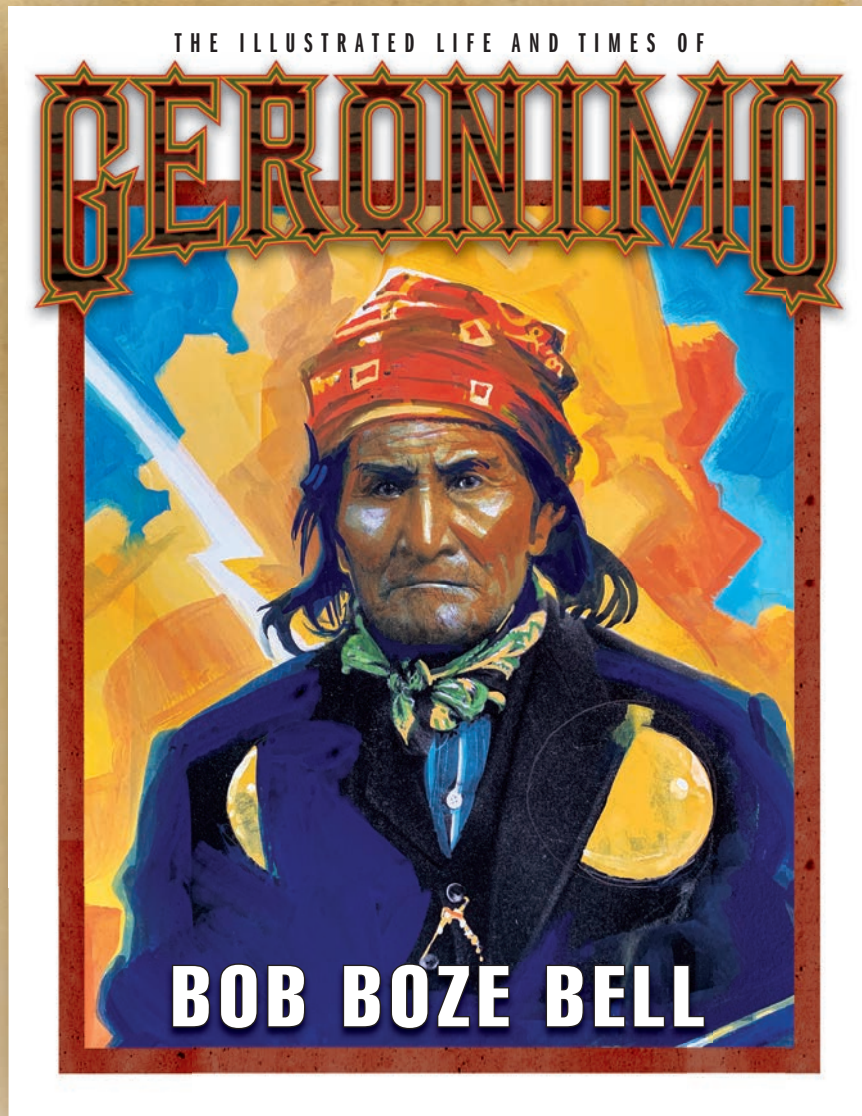
Travis and the other prisoners, who were being held in nearby Anahuac, were soon released and the Texian militia dispersed. The casualty count from the Battle of Velasco was pretty even on both sides: The Texians suffered seven killed and 14 wounded, while five Mexicans died and 16 were wounded.

Velasco was the first time Mexicans and Texians shed each other's blood. But from there, things happened quickly. Santa Anna became Mexico's president the following April. He began cracking down on the Texians, who bristled and declared independence in March 1836. And then those names—The Alamo, Goliad, San Jacinto—achieved a new luster, ones that overshadowed the seminal Battle of Velasco.



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—Paul Andrew Hutton



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BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

# Searching For Wyatt Earp As A Boy

*The Pella Historical Society starts at home.*

*Wyatt S. Earp.*  
1848 - 1929

Wyatt Earp  
This image  
taken in h  
And while  
abound, t  
in 1928, a  
IMAGE AND SIGNATURE CO

**C**ertainly, Wyatt Earp didn't play cowboys and Indians growing up in Pella, Iowa. We know because it would be decades before cowboys were glorified enough for little boys to imitate, and Indians were still too real and seen as too dangerous. But this is about all that's certain for the years when Wyatt was a lad.

Few shreds of information exist. Maybe he pitched marbles like other boys; perhaps played hide-and-seek; probably had a slingshot; maybe staged shoot-em-up matches with his brothers or neighbor boys.

We know he and his brothers got into fights with the Dutch boys whose families founded Pella. In one, a Gaass brother took off his wooden shoe and bonked one of the Earp brothers. No report on the outcome, but it's

likely Nicholas gave his sons the win, since he bragged how proud he was that he'd taught them all to fight.

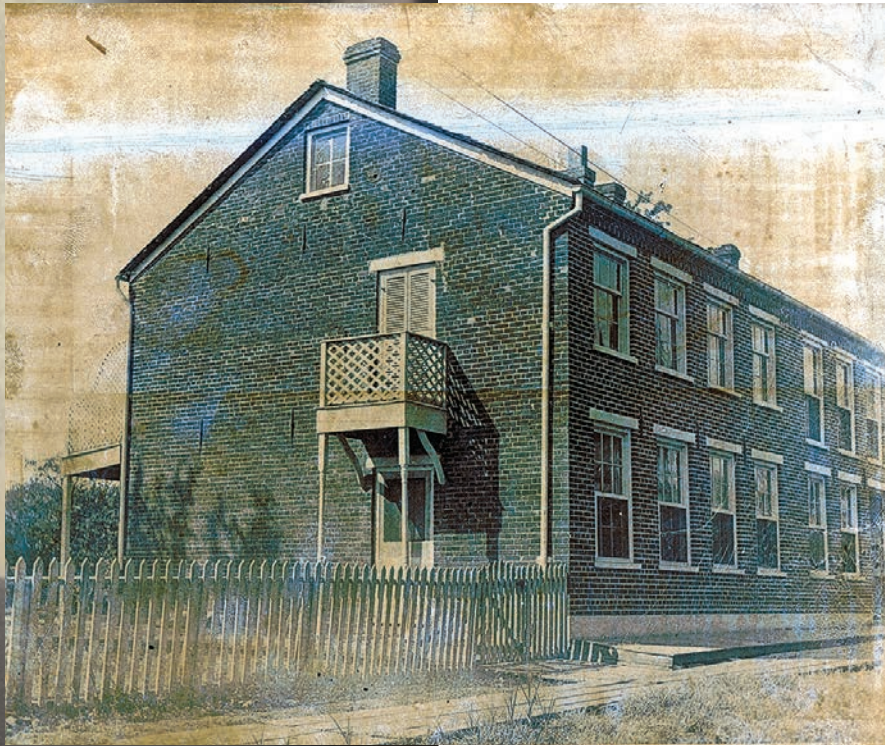
We know Wyatt loved horses, again, from his father's tutelage. We have evidence he adored "Mother Earp." Everyone knows he admired his older brothers and was in charge of the two younger ones, Morgan and Warren, born in Pella. Did he cry when one sister and then another died? Did he tend the boiling water for the birth of his baby sister, Adelia, who'd be the only one with him all his life? Did he go to school in Pella—a school that taught in both Dutch and English, and if he did, what kind of student was he? He had to have gone to school somewhere, since he could read and write, and he couldn't have learned it from home because his mother, Virginia Ann, was illiterate. We know

Mother taught him manners, and Father showed all his sons that a living could be made in law enforcement. Nicholas Earp was proud that most of his boys were chips off the old block.

The only other certainty about young Wyatt is that he couldn't have guessed the life he'd lead—that he'd have 80 years and become the last surviving Western legend. Imagine if he knew he'd be the only one unscathed in the most famous gunfight of the Old West near the O.K. Corral in Tombstone; that his lifelong titles included frontier lawman, prospector, gambler, saloonkeeper, boxing referee, pimp, horse thief and avenging murderer; that he'd swear off whiskey after his first drunk; that he'd be considered the "cool head" of the Earp boys; that he'd outlive all his brothers—from the most popular Virgil to the most tragic Warren; that

The final exhibition room of the Wyatt Earp Experience allows visitors to reflect on who they think Wyatt Earp really was in life and legend.

All Images Courtesy Pella Historical Society and Museums Unless Otherwise Noted



**Earp at 75**  
 Wyatt is believed to have been  
 his home in Los Angeles around 1923.  
 The false or forged Wyatt Earp signatures  
 this one was signed by Wyatt himself  
 a year before his death.

Nicholas and Virginia Earp moved into the first-floor apartment of the Van Spanckeren brothers' row house on Franklin Street near the center of Pella, Iowa, in 1861. The Earps left Pella in 1864, but the Dutch-style building, as seen in 1880, remained a residence for many decades afterwards.

The Pella Historical Society has fully restored and reopened the boyhood home of Wyatt Earp, including the returning the building to its natural, original brick color.

he'd love three women—marrying only once, but becoming a widower who buried a wife and unborn child before their first anniversary, then hooking up with a woman he'd abandon in Tombstone as her addiction took over their lives, and finally spending half his life with a woman who'd try to glamorize his exploits and has mucked up the real story to this day; that he'd never have children; that he'd be remembered as a generous man who loved giving gifts and was devoted to reading; that dozens of books, TV shows and movies would be made about him, and his name would come to mean "Old West" all by itself.

He'd have probably laughed if he knew that when he died in Los Angeles on January 13, 1929, the *Los Angeles Examiner* would write: "He was 80 when death knocked; it found the

old lion of Tombstone, as ever, ready. They were what might be called old acquaintances, having played hide-and-seek with one another all over the west for nearly sixty years."

No, his days in Iowa were the days of a little boy—then a teen—who probably marked only Christmas and his birthday on March 19. The rainy day he was born in 1848, his father gave him the full name of his commanding officer from the Mexican War: Wyatt Berry Stapp Earp.

All that name came to mean was still far, far away. But then, so were the names Wichita and Dodge City and Tombstone, none of which existed in these years when Wyatt Earp was growing up.

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of Pella, Iowa, enumerated by me, on the 22 day of July, 1860.

NAME	SEX	AGE	COLORED	W	M	F	SLAVE	FREE	INDIAN	PAID	UNPAID	VALUATION
W. B. Stapp	M	12										
Virginia Earp	F	12										
Nicholas Earp	M	12										
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

A year before the start of the Civil War, the 1860 census records the entire Earp Family under one roof in Pella, Iowa. It would be the last time Nicholas and Virginia Earp would have all their children together in one home.

## The Earps of Pella

Wyatt Earp was two years old when his father brought the family to Pella in 1850. Big brother James was nine, Virgil was seven and sister Martha was five. Mother Virginia Ann gave birth to Morgan in 1851 and Warren in 1855. The family would tragically lose Martha in 1856.

The 1850 census lists Nicholas P. Earp as a cooper and a farmer, but he first supported the family as a steamboat captain for the Des Moines Steamboat Co. Starting in 1852, he bought “a considerable amount of farmland” northeast of Pella. One purchase included a “set of house logs, shingles, lumber, rails as well as logs still at the mill,” according to local archives. There’s no evidence he used the material to build a home, but it’s easy to surmise he had to, since the family was out there on the land and had to live somewhere.

Wyatt spent four years on that farm, near a town that eventually called itself “A Touch of Holland on the Prairie.” Pella was founded in 1847 by 800 immigrants fleeing religious persecution from The Netherlands—people wealthy enough to purchase the land and build a town with the motto: “In God Our Hope and Refuge.” (Only later generations could afford the tulips from the homeland that now give the town an annual Tulip Time Festival in May.)

The Earps left in 1854, moving back to their previous abode in Monmouth, Illinois, where they stayed for six years. Nicholas was busy politically, peeling off Democrats who were also antislavery to form a new political party known as Republicans. He was one of the organizers of a debate in the town square for the Illinois Senate candidates Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln. Democrat Douglas won the Senate race, but eventually lost to Lincoln in 1860—the first Republican candidate for president. The Earp family also grew, with the birth of Virginia Ann in 1858.

In 1859, Nicholas moved his family back to Pella, and eventually settled into a downtown row house. Wyatt was now 11. They stayed five years, until Nicholas led a wagon train to California in 1864 with three other Pella families.

There is no record of Wyatt Earp mentioning any of his two stints in this town, where workers wore wooden shoes and Dutch-born women still preferred long skirts, lace caps and aprons.



Nicholas Earp was a restless patriarch, and he moved his wife, Virginia, and their growing family twice between Monmouth, Illinois, and Pella, Iowa, between 1850 and 1859. Dissatisfied with the Midwest, the Earps joined a wagon train for California in May 1864 and settled in San Bernardino.



A mural covers the walls in the room of the Wyatt Earp Experience, detailing the Earp family's journey west from Pella, Iowa, to San Bernardino, California, as well as the life of Wyatt himself.

exhibits to capture the entire life of Wyatt Earp. Archivist Lois Smith notes it includes Pella during the Earp years, the Earp brothers in the Civil War, the three women in Wyatt's life, the legend that grew around him, the wagon train trip to California when Wyatt was 16, and Wyatt as an old man.

The Earp family lived in the first-floor apartment of a row house built by the Van Spanckeren brothers on Franklin Street near the center of town from 1861 until 1864. This is where, in 1861, Adelia was born in June and three-year-old Virginia died in October, while their father was an alderman on the Pella City Council. Nicholas was appointed town marshal in 1862, serving until he left with the wagon train.

The house, done in the 18th-century Dutch style of architecture, is an unusual look for the Midwest, and now is on the National Register of Historic Preservation. In 1966, it became the

That doesn't mean Pella is mute about the Earps. At least, not anymore.

"For years, people didn't want to talk about the Earps living here," says Valerie Van Kooten, executive director of the Pella Historical Society and Museums. "They felt it was not a good role model. Five years ago the house was in such bad shape, some said we should tear it down.

But I thought we were sitting on a gold mine—we're the only ones who can tell the story of Wyatt from age two to 16, and we should tell it the best way we can."

The Society has been hard at work on the project ever since, and now can proudly say it has not only totally restored the row house to its 1800s glory but has created new multimedia

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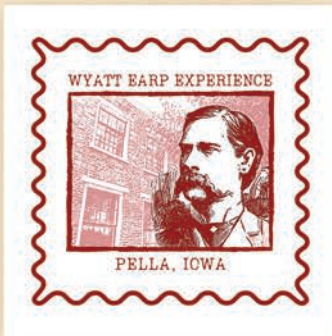


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14 years in a little Dutch  
town on the prairie.



*Pella Historical Society Museums*

**PellaHistorical.org**  
**(641) 620-9463**



Visitors touring the Wyatt Earp Experience in the Earp House at the Pella Historical Society will learn how his life became a legend after he left the Iowa farm community in 1864.

The Earp Family Tree providing details on the family history is displayed in one of the rooms that made up the apartment the Earp family lived in during part of their time in Pella.



first official office of the Pella Historical Society, and a small Earp museum was started as part of the Historical Village. But there's nothing "small" about the new museum, which officially opened in early May during the town's annual Tulip Time Festival. Some Earp descendants surely attended, including Van Kooten's daughter-in-law, who is related by marriage to the Lorenzo Earp side of the family that still lives in the Pella area.

Archivist Smith also agonizes that few records exist about young Wyatt, but says if he went to school here, he'd only have had a couple blocks' walk to the town's first brick, two-story Park School. She suspects he enjoyed the traditional Fourth of July celebrations that were popular throughout the nation. But records do tell of Wyatt's thirst to fight in the Civil War. His older brothers all went off to fight on the Union side, including Nicholas's son from an earlier marriage, Newton. Wyatt watched as 13-year-old Tommy Cox of Pella joined up as a drummer boy, and decided he could go too, after all, he was 25 days into his 13th year when war broke out. But his father and mother declared he was too young to go, and even though Wyatt ran away to join up a couple times, his father always apprehended him and brought him home.

Nicholas put Wyatt in charge of one of the farms, expecting him to get help from younger Morgan and Warren. Wyatt learned he wasn't a farmer. It paled in comparison to the action

he imagined his brothers facing. But in the end he stayed put, because the strongest tie was to family.

And it was these years, mainly in Pella, that "family" became defined in the heart and soul of Wyatt Earp.

It would be nice to know more about his life in those years—the few shreds we have seem too pitiful, considering the volumes we have about his life after these years.

But thanks to the Pella Historical Society, the story we can piece together is being told.



**Jana Bommersbach** has earned recognition as Arizona's Journalist of the Year and won an Emmy and two Lifetime Achievement Awards. She cowrote the Emmy-winning *Outrageous Arizona* and has written three true crime books, a children's book and the historical novel *Cattle Kate*.

## Author's Note:

I want to thank the experts who so generously shared their time and information with me in writing this column: Valerie Van Kooten, executive director of the Pella Historical Society; Lois Smith, archivist of the Pella Historical Society; historian and journalist Nicholas R. Cataldo, an authority on the Earp family in California; Dr. William Urban, the Lee L. Morgan Professor of History and International Studies at Monmouth College, Illinois; historian and award-winning columnist Scott Dyke of Green Valley, Arizona; *Wyatt Earp* author Casey Tefertiller, and historian and *True West* Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell.



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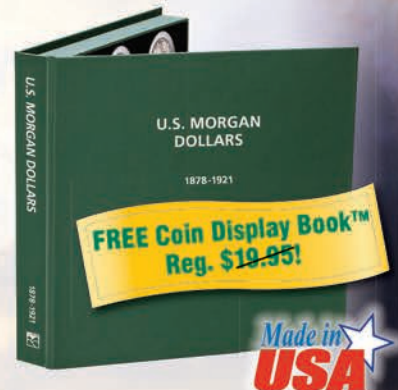
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BY STEVE FRIESEN

# Winchester Dominates at the Rock Island Auction

*The annual Western firearms auction was a success for all.*



The auction included an assortment of edged weapons and six cannons. This field cannon, with a complete set of accessories, took top dollar among the big guns, hammering in at \$9,200.



Over 2,000 handguns were sold at the Rock Island Auction, including a large assortment of Colts. They included this example of the iconic Colt Single Action Army revolver, which brought \$10,925.

**R**ock Island Auction Company's February event was a "personal best" for the auction house. With a record number of over 4,800 lots, totaling 8,700 firearms, the auction brought in \$11,143,413. Two hundred different manufacturers were represented, but Winchester Repeating Arms Company was the star of the show, with a total of 943 lots. Nearly 30 of those brought the top prices of the auction.

The products of Winchester Repeating Arms Company represent the convergence of shrewd businessmen and innovative arms design. Horace Smith and Daniel Wesson (who later founded Smith and Wesson), designer Benjamin Henry and clothing manufacturer Oliver Winchester were all associated with the

company during its early history. Henry worked for Winchester from 1856 to 1864, leaving a legacy as the inventor of the repeating rifle. Even after Henry left Winchester, the company continued to build on his innovations, creating the Winchester Model 1866 and the Winchester Model 1873. Winchesters quickly became the most popular rifles in the American West, with the Model 1873 nicknamed "The Gun That Won the West."

Oliver Winchester's first company, the New Haven Arms Company, was renamed the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in 1866. The highest price realized during the auction was \$34,500 for a Henry lever-action rifle made by New Haven Arms in 1862. Henry rifles were particularly popular during the Civil War with

Union soldiers, who purchased them during the war and later kept them as they moved westward. A Winchester Model 1866, nicely engraved and signed by John Ulrich, brought \$28,700. There were around 100 Winchester Model 1873 rifles sold in the auction, with a deluxe model shipped in 1889 taking the top dollar among them for \$6,325. Winchester's popularity has clearly not subsided; Winchester dominated this auction, just as it dominated the Old West. ❏

All images courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

**Steve Friesen** comes to "Collecting the West" with over 40 years of experience in collecting for museums, including evaluating and acquiring artifacts from the American West.



This Winchester Model 1866, beautifully decorated with geometric designs, was created by the company's master engraver, John Ulrich. It sold for \$28,750.

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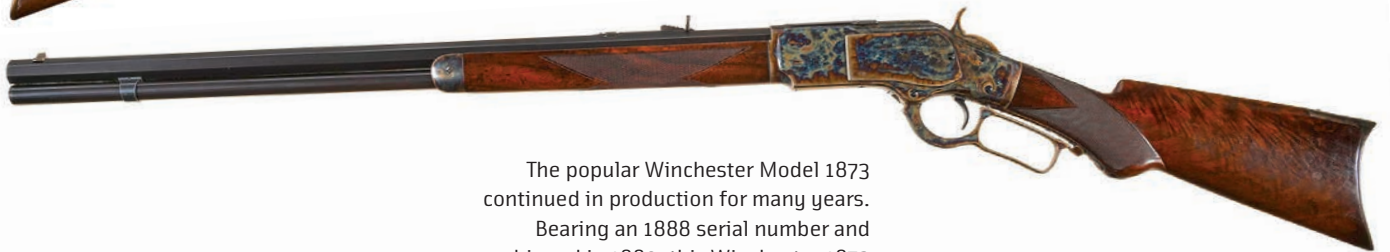
Premier Firearms Auction #83  
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An early lever-action rifle, designed by Henry in 1860 and manufactured in 1862 by New Haven Arms, brought in \$34,000.



This Henry-designed lever-action rifle, produced for use in the Civil War by New Haven Arms in 1863, sold for \$23,000.



The popular Winchester Model 1873 continued in production for many years. Bearing an 1888 serial number and shipped in 1889, this Winchester 1873 sold for \$6,325.

Resting here until day breaks  
And shadows fall  
And darkness disappears  
Is Quanah Parker, the last chief of the Comanches.

—Epitaph on Quanah Parker's gravestone

# The Great Chiefs

## THEIR COURAGE SHAPED A NATION.

On March 4, 1905, Comanche Chief Quanah Parker paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue in President Theodore Roosevelt's inaugural parade. With him in the parade of 35,000 were five other Indian leaders: Geronimo, Little Plume, American Horse, Hollow Horn Bear and Buckskin Charlie, representing the Apache, Blackfeet, Oglala, Brulé and Ute people, respectively.

Despite criticism from politicians and the press that six Indian leaders who once fought against the United States would be in the parade, the befeathered leaders rode with dignity and pride, and were greeted along the parade route with applause.

According to the *Baltimore Sun*, when "Old Quanah Parker, who was nearest the President's Stand, rose in his stirrups and shot his glance at the President in salutation," Roosevelt heartily applauded and waved his hat in return. And marching right behind them were the cadets of the Carlisle Indian School. It seemed to all those optimistic about the future, that a new era was about to begin for Indians in America.

More than 115 years later, Roosevelt's inaugural parade remains symbolic of the enigmatic relationship between the United States and its Indian citizens and leaders. The parade took place just 15 years after the Massacre at Wounded Knee, less than 20 years after Geronimo surrendered and 30 since Quanah Parker and the Comanches had surrendered to the reservation after the Red River War. The majority of American Indians in 1905 were relegated to reservation life and "Americanization." And for most of them, it was still a time

"in-between": the old life remained a strong memory, but the reality of the present and future meant greater change and adaptation to modern American life.

Yet most historians agree that the fate of the nation's Indian tribes could have been far worse if not for the courageous and valiant leadership of the tribal chiefs. Many Indian leaders fought and died for their people without ever enjoying the benefit of peace, while other chiefs led the way, first in war and then in peace, to ensure a future for their people.

We have asked four historians to write about eight of these men and their roles in shaping our nation and their tribal histories. Of course, many other leaders could be profiled, including those we do not have photos of—Crazy Horse, Cochise, Victorio and Mangas Coloradas.

Without the great chiefs—whose skillful tactics and unfettered determination protected their tribal lifeways—it is unknown what the fate of the American Indian people would have been. We honor them today and forever because we know that their courage and leadership helped to shape a nation, yesterday and today.

—Stuart Rosebrook



Comanche Chief Quanah Parker, standing in the doorway of his Star House in Cache, Oklahoma Territory, circa 1890, fought for the rights of his people until his death in 1911.

Courtesy Library of Congress



Prior to the beginning of President Theodore Roosevelt's Inaugural Parade on May 4, 1905, Edward S. Curtis photographed the president's six special guests, Indian leaders (l.-r.): Little Plume, Buckskin Charley, Geronimo, Quanah Parker, Hollow Horn Bear and American Horse.

True West Archives

# The Great Chiefs

# Sitting Bull

**The Hunkpapa Lakota holy man and patriot never wavered in his fight for the traditions and rights of his tribe.**

The charismatic Hunkpapa Lakota Sitting Bull (1831-1890) is rightly remembered as the Indian most responsible for wiping out Custer. That was, after all, his village at the Little Bighorn, and in the minds of most Americans, that great Indian war of 1876-77 was Sitting Bull's War, as he was the traditionalist most unwilling to surrender the northern plains to railroaders and settlement. Any deeper look only leads to the truths of those bold statements.

Like most Lakotas, Sitting Bull was first a prominent warrior, his early successes against enemies earning much acclaim. But through most of his adult life he was foremost a holy man, a spiritualist who repeatedly sacrificed himself in the Sun Dance and prayed and dreamed, always for the well-being of his people, and most memorably on the eve of the battles of the Rosebud and Greasy Grass.

Sitting Bull could also bedevil his detractors. In the long wake of the Little Bighorn, he defied repeated pleas to surrender, hating the word surrender itself and often repeating that he was never at war with the whites but only defending himself in his own country. All he wanted, he declared, was to be left alone to hunt buffalo.

Even after surrendering and returning to the United States from Canada, Sitting Bull never surrendered his traditional values. He barely tolerated reservation life, shunned whites with few exceptions—Mounted Police Officer James Walsh and showman Buffalo Bill among them—and embraced the hope of the Ghost Dance, which ultimately led to his death in a botched arrest aiming to remove his powerful influence from the Standing Rock Reservation.

Today, a college awarding associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees is named for this greatest of all Lakota traditionalists.

—Paul L. Hedren



True West Archives

## The Great Chiefs

# Red Cloud



Courtesy Yale University

**The Lakota chief valiantly defended his land and his people in war and peace.**

Like many great 19th-century Lakotas, Red Cloud (Oglala, 1821-1909) led a complex life partly in the free and unconstrained days of the buffalo prairie, warring on tribal enemies and leading in the defense against an emigrant tide swallowing his homeland. But Red Cloud's long journey played out as well in the tumultuous era of reservation confinement, the Ghost Dance and culturally destructive white control.

Foremost, Red Cloud's reputation is grounded in the early defense of the Lakota homeland, particularly when whites dared traverse a gold rush trail slicing straight through the Powder River buffalo country of Wyoming and Montana. We rightly remember the resulting conflict as Red Cloud's War, reflecting his stalwart resistance to the forts and soldiers futilely attempting to secure that road, and his unwillingness to the last to sign a treaty ending that war until personally witnessing the abandonment of the hated road and its forts.

Red Cloud's legacy in the early reservation era is equally compelling if sadly less appreciated. He traveled often to Washington and knew Presidents personally. He grasped the enormity of the white culture enveloping his own, all the while steadfastly embracing Lakota values and traditions, becoming a pragmatic voice for his people and a tireless advocate for their welfare and betterment.

Red Cloud, renowned as the most often photographed Indian in America, outlived his other great Lakota contemporaries and to the last stayed true to his people, giving his all to lead them through the difficult days.

Today, no massive granite monument is carved in Red Cloud's honor, and we can only wonder why.

—Paul L. Hedren

**Paul L. Hedren** of Omaha, Nebraska, is a historian of the Northern Plains and its Indian wars. His most recent books include *Powder River* (2016), *Rosebud, June 17, 1876* (2019) and *John Finerty Reports the Sioux War* [editor] (2020).

# The Great Chiefs

# Looking Glass

**The Nez Perce war chief led his people with honor and pride.**

Looking Glass, born in 1832, was a war chief and spokesman for some 40 families. They lived on the newly established reservation in 1877. But without provocation Army Gen. Oliver O. Howard ordered Capt. Stephen G. Whipple to “surprise and capture this chief and all that belonged to him.”

After the attack, Looking Glass joined with Chief Joseph and others. He had vast knowledge of fighting techniques, the lands of the Nez Perce and the buffalo country to the east. He provided primary war chief leadership for the tribe as they fled across the Lolo Trail and up the Bitterroot Valley. When soldiers located the Nez Perce camp at the Big Hole, Looking Glass organized the defense while Chief Joseph guided the families away.

Following that battle, Lean Elk assumed leadership command of the tribal groups, staying in charge as they traveled through Idaho, Yellowstone National Park and across Montana heading north to Canada. Lean Elk's rigid schedule became wearing and Looking Glass again assumed primary leadership. Almost immediately the travel pace slowed. Despite disagreement among the headmen, the people complied with Looking Glass's order to make camp on Snake Creek at noon on September 29. They were just 40 miles from Canada when the Army surrounded them. Joseph counseled surrender, but Looking Glass said he never would. While standing to look over the battlefield, he was shot. Looking Glass was the last Nez Perce fighter to die at the Bear's Paw battle.

—Candy Moulton



True West Archives

# The Great Chiefs

# Chief Joseph



Courtesy Library of Congress

**The Nez Perce leader was a peacemaker, a diplomat and tireless activist for Indian rights.**

With the words “I will fight no more forever” Chief Joseph put an end to a 1,500-mile flight of the Nez Perce tribal bands who had refused to abide by an 1877 treaty and move onto a reservation in Idaho. For years he was revered as the great chief of the Nez Perce War. In reality, Joseph was a headman who always advocated for cooperation and peace with the Army and encroaching whites. Born in the Wallowa Valley of Oregon, he accompanied his father (also called Chief Joseph) to the 1855 treaty council, sitting behind the older men and learning the techniques of Indian diplomacy.

By 1877, he was the recognized leader of the Wallowa band. At the treaty council that year he joined other headmen in efforts to remain in their homelands. But they were ordered onto the reservation in Idaho. Instead, they fled. Joseph’s role during the five-month flight was as a leader of the families, a protector of the young and the old. The fighting men were commanded by others, including his brother Ollokot, White Bird, Toohoolhoolzote, Lean Elk and Looking Glass.

Finally, surrounded and under siege at the Bear’s Paw Battle, and with concern for the families foremost in his mind, Chief Joseph surrendered to Gen. Nelson Miles. All the other headmen had been killed or escaped to Canada with White Bird.

Removed to Indian Territory, Chief Joseph utilized political forums and enlisted the aid of Indian rights groups to win approval for the Nez Perce to return to the Pacific Northwest. Joseph and his closest band members were relocated to the Colville Reservation in Washington.

—Candy Moulton

**Candy Moulton** is the author of the Spur Award-winning biography *Chief Joseph: Guardian of the People*, and a lifetime member of the Nez Perce Trail Association.

## The Great Chiefs

# Quanah Parker

**In war and peace, the Comanche leader valiantly fought for his people's rights.**

Quanah Parker was a giant among American Indians, a man with ties to both the white and Indian worlds. He strode through different eras, from the American pioneer period to the modernization of the 20th century. He was a successful rancher and businessman with a showcase house that still stands.

Pretty good for a man whose name means “smell.”

Quanah was born in around 1845 in what became southwestern Oklahoma. His father was the great Comanche warrior Peta Nocona. His mother was Cynthia Ann Parker, a white girl taken captive by the Comanches in the 1830s. As he grew up, Quanah built a reputation as an able hunter and warrior, a worthy successor to his father and a true Comanche. In the 1860s, when many tribal chiefs talked peace with the whites, Quanah Parker spoke only of war.

He had the chance to back up his words in 1874 when he led an estimated 700 warriors against a small group of buffalo hunters at Adobe Walls in Texas. The whites managed to hold off the attack; when Quanah was wounded, the battle came to an end.

The next year, Quanah Parker led his people on to the reservation—and showed even greater leadership. Named chief by the U.S. government, he embraced ranching and business. He advocated for education for Indian youth. He was one of the founders of the Native American Church, a mix of Christianity and traditional beliefs. He became friends with many whites, including President Theodore Roosevelt. And when he died in 1916, Quanah Parker was one of the most respected Indians in the U.S.

—Mark Boardman



Courtesy National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, NPG\_96\_178

The Great Chiefs

# Kicking Bird



True West Archives

**The Kiowa leader fought against all odds for his tribe before his tragic death.**

His name may not be as well-known as those of some Indian figures, but over a decade or so, Kicking Bird was one of the most important leaders in the Texas Panhandle, western Oklahoma and southwestern Kansas. And his efforts in war were eclipsed by his work for peace.

Kicking Bird was of Crow and Kiowa ancestry, born around 1835. His name—which also translates as Striking Eagle—was an indication of his fighting prowess. With other Kiowa warriors, he battled other Southern Plains tribes through the early 1860s. Perhaps it was inevitable that they would turn their attention to the migrating whites. Kicking Bird fought in the First Battle of Adobe Walls in 1864.

By 1865, he'd become a sub-chief of the Kiowas and was convinced that peace was the only way for his people to survive. And outside of one incident in 1870 (the Battle of Little Wichita River), he worked for that peace for the rest of his life. He was also a great proponent of education for Kiowa children.

But Kicking Bird's work for peace made him many enemies among his own tribe. Even when he became head chief in 1875, several bands wanted to fight the whites. The reservations provided terrible conditions and destroyed the old culture.

On May 3, 1875, at Fort Sill, Kicking Bird died mysteriously after drinking a cup of coffee. Many believed he'd been poisoned. Others thought a medicine man had killed him with a hex. But he had laid the foundation for the Kiowa people to find peace with the United States.

—Mark Boardman

**Mark Boardman** is Features Editor at *True West*, Editor of *The Tombstone Epitaph*, and pastor at Poplar Grove United Methodist Church in Indiana.

## The Great Chiefs

# Naiche

**The Chiricahua chief valiantly fought for his people in war and peace.**

In his memoir, *The Names*, N. Scott Momaday wrote about his father who moved out of the old world of the Kiowas to make a life for himself: "I know now that this was an act, not of renunciation, but of profound affirmation, and that it required considerable courage and strength." This viewpoint is also apropos to Naiche, grandson of Mangas Coloradas and youngest son of Cochise.

Naiche became the chief of the Chokonen Chiricahuas in 1876 at the age of 19 after his brother, Taza, who Cochise had groomed to be chief, died from pneumonia. Naiche knew he was not prepared to lead his People. He had no supernatural warfighting powers like Geronimo and soon made Geronimo his di-yen (medicine man), his consiglieri and his war chief. Geronimo often appeared to be the leader of the two, but whenever there was any question of authority, Geronimo always made it clear that Naiche was chief.

After their surrender to General Miles in 1886 and subsequent exile to POW camps first in Florida, then Alabama and finally Oklahoma, Naiche led the Chiricahuas away from their former lifeway of fighting and raiding. He led them, like himself, to "live like white people in a home; keep my clothes clean, keep myself clean, and be a man...think good [and] act good." At the same time, Naiche fought the bureaucracy to keep Chiricahua tribal culture intact and to push for its just due in a good place to live.

—W. Michael Farmer



True West Archives

# The Great Chiefs

# Alchesay



Courtesy John Langellier Collection

**The Apache chief stood alone in his indomitable dedication to peace for his people.**

The courage of Alchesay, nephew of the White Mountain Apache chief, Pedro, showed many facets reflecting his roles as warrior, chief or diplomat.

At 18, Alchesay, the warrior, became a member of Gen. George Crook's scouts and fought in the 1872-73 Tonto War. He was a superb scout who knew the land and people and showed great courage under fire, which was followed and noted by his commander. Alchesay and nine other scouts were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1875.

Noch-ay-del-kinne, the Cibecue Apache ghost dance prophet, was killed in 1881 when his people tried to free him from arrest by Col. Eugene Asa Carr. As a sergeant of scouts, Alchesay courageously spoke up against the arrest disaster and was jailed for fighting against the Army but released for lack of evidence. In 1883, he, with other sergeants, helped General Crook lead nearly 200 scouts into Mexico and returned the Chiricahua Apaches to San Carlos. The nearly bloodless Chiricahua return was the beginning of the end of the Apache Wars.

Alchesay became the leading White Mountain chief in 1884 and helped the returning Chiricahuas establish their farms on Turkey Creek near Fort Apache. Geronimo led an escape from the reservation in May 1885. Alchesay played a key role in helping General Crook talk most of the Chiricahuas into surrender in late March 1886.

As a chief, Alchesay met and advised Presidents Cleveland (1887), Roosevelt (1909), and Harding (1921) to push for better living conditions for his People.

—W. Michael Farmer

**W. Michael Farmer** of Smithfield, Virginia, is a Western historian and novelist. His most recent books are *True Stories of Apache Culture 1860-1920* (2018), *Geronimo: Prisoner of Lies: Twenty-Three Years as a Prisoner of War, 1886-1909* (2019) and *The Odyssey of Geronimo: Twenty-Three Years a Prisoner of War, A Novel* (2020).

# The Great Chiefs

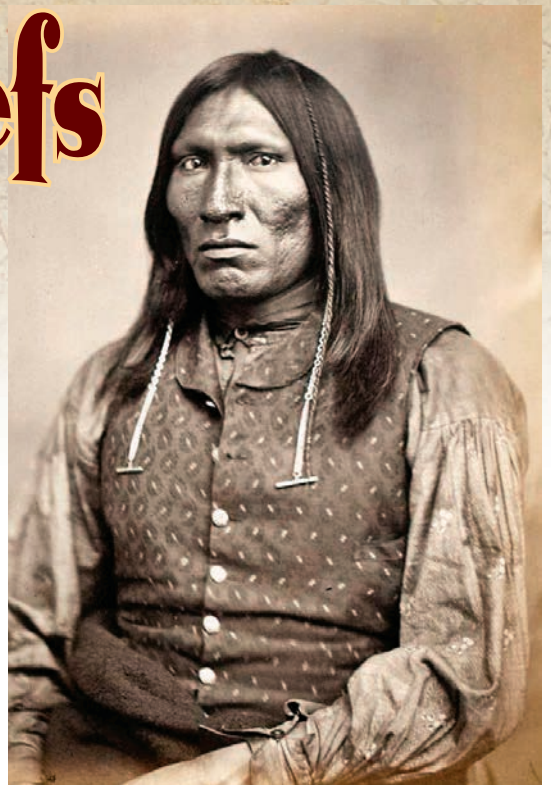
A PHOTO GALLERY



Bird Chief, Arapaho  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Chief Ouray, Uncompahgre Ute  
True West Archives



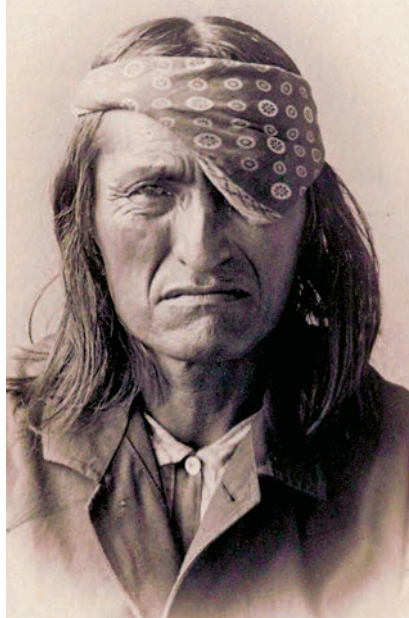
Ho-Wear, Comanche  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Chief Yellow Bear, Arapaho  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Bacon Rind, Osage  
Courtesy Library of Congress



Chief Bay-kath-lay, Apache  
Courtesy Yale University



Mountain Chief, Blackfoot  
Courtesy Digital Commonwealth



Wolf Robe,  
Southern Cheyenne  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Chatto, Chiricahua Apache  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Albert Waters, Nez Perce  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Son-of-a-Sun, Kiowa  
Courtesy Yale University



Chief Wets-It, Assinaboine

Courtesy Digital Commonwealth



Ton-an-key, Kiowa

Courtesy Yale University



Gall, Hunkpapa Lakota

True West Archives



Rain In the Face,  
Hunkpapa Lakota

True West Archives



Small Sharp Nose,  
Northern Arapaho

Courtesy NARA, 43-0753a



Stumbling Bear, Kiowa

Yale University



Spotted Tail, Kiowa

Courtesy Yale University



Pawnee Killer, Kiowa

Courtesy Smithsonian



White Man, Kiowa

Courtesy Digital Commonwealth



Chief Hollow Horn Bear, Brulé Lakota

True West Archives

# The Great Chiefs

A PHOTO GALLERY



Manuelito, Navajo  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Ka-e-te-nay, Chiricahua Apache  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Black Elk and Elk, Lakota Sioux  
True West Archives



Sitting Bear, Kiowa  
Courtesy NARA, 075-BAE-1375-43-0754M



Washakie, Eastern Shoshone  
Courtesy Smithsonian



Satanta, Kiowa  
True West Archives



Unidentified Pawnee Chiefs

Courtesy Library of Congress



Chief Umapiine, Cayuse

Courtesy Library of Congress



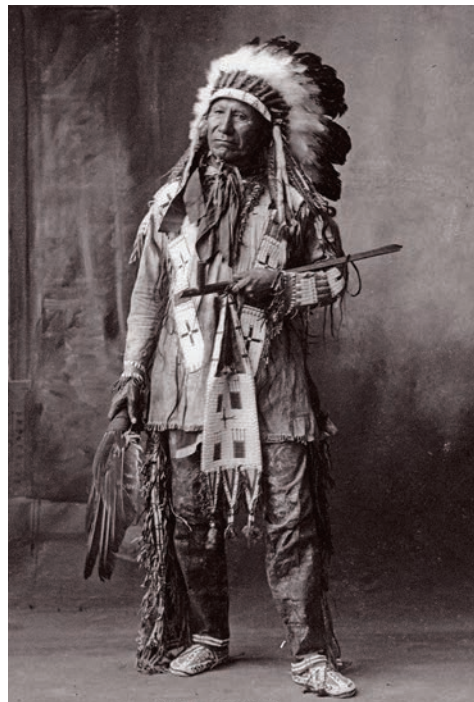
Gotebo, Kiowa

True West Archives



Nana, Chiricahua Apache

True West Archives



American Horse, Oglala Lakota

Courtesy Digital Commonwealth



Pacer, Kiowa-Apache

Courtesy NARA, 518914

BY C. LEE NOYES

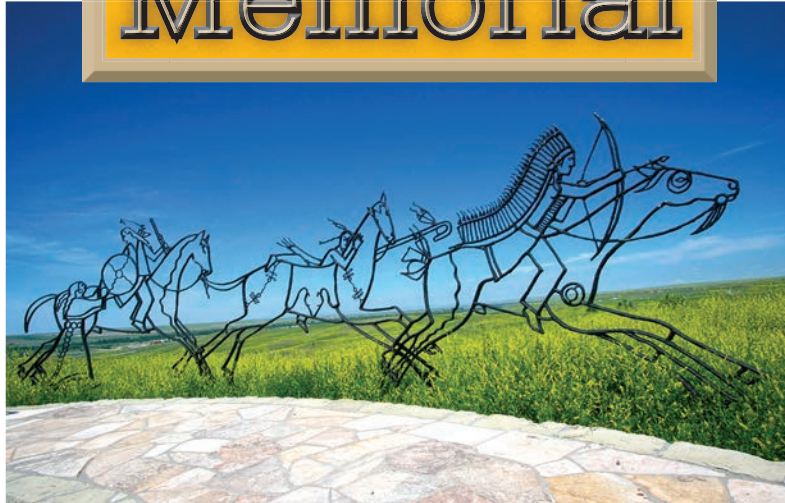
# Little Bighorn Indian Memorial

## A VISION REALIZED ON THE 145TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE

The Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in Montana was created to honor and recognize those American Indians who died to preserve their traditional way of life at the 1876 battle, as well as to provide a better understanding of the causes and consequences of what is popularly known as “Custer’s Last Stand.”

The long-delayed effort to provide a balanced interpretation of this historic clash represents a notable departure from the previous focus of the National Park Service (NPS) on Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer and the U.S. Army’s side of the story. Since the battlefield’s inception as a national cemetery in 1879, retired NPS historian Jerome A. Greene notes, the U.S. government had “viewed the Indians largely as faceless people without historical investment in the struggle that had occurred there, even though the short-term aftermath had proved cataclysmic to their traditional existence.” Thus, a major reassessment of the historical treatment of Native Americans at the battlefield was long overdue.

Congress mandated the memorial in the 1991 legislation that changed the name of Custer Battlefield National Monument, emphasizing that there was no commemoration of those Native Americans “who gave their lives defending their families and traditional lifestyle.” Public Law 102-201 also required that it be located “in the vicinity of the 7th U.S.



The Little Bighorn Battlefield Indian Memorial was dedicated on June 25, 2003, and rededicated on June 25, 2014, with the addition of interpretive panels representing all Native tribal combatants and scouts that participated in the June 25-26, 1876 battle.

NPS.gov



Opening remarks were made by Crow Tribe Chairman Carl Venne at the Little Bighorn Battlefield Indian Memorial dedication program on June 25, 2003.

All Images by C. Lee Noyes Unless Otherwise Noted

Cavalry Monument.” It did not, however, provide public funding.

The Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt approved both the memorial’s design and its site near “Last Stand Hill” in 1997, based on the recommendation of an 11-member Advisory Committee established by this legislation. The committee included nine representatives from

the tribal groups that had participated on both sides of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The selection was the result of a national design competition that involved over 500 applicants, whose names were withheld from the committee. Philadelphia residents John Collins and Allison Towers submitted the winning design, which encompassed an earthen circular form, metal sculptures of mounted warriors and a “Spirit Gate” facing the cavalry monument.

Once the memorial design and its projected costs were known, the most difficult challenge was how to pay for this tribute, in view of the failure to receive sufficient donations from business and other private sources. “The memorial,” former Little Bighorn Battlefield Superintendent Neil Mangum noted, “was clearly not going to be done with the private sector. We were not going anywhere with fundraising.” Nor did raising park entrance fees accomplish this goal. Finally, Congress appropriated \$2.3 million in 2001 to fund the memorial, due largely to the efforts of Mangum and other NPS officials who advised Montana’s congressional delegation. “It took ten years,” the superintendent noted, “but finally there will be an Indian Memorial at Little Bighorn

“I have been in many hard fights,  
but I never saw such brave men.”  
— Brave Wolf, Cheyenne (1895)

Photo by Joe Creaden and Derry Mounce



Chief Historian John A. Doerner officiated at the dedication of the Unknown Warrior marker at Little Bighorn Battlefield on June 25, 2003.

Battlefield National Monument.” Besides his role in raising the money, he deserves much of the credit for fostering the balanced historical interpretation at the park that the memorial so clearly reflects.

Dedication of the memorial on June 25, 2003, highlighted observance of the 127th anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Private tribal ceremonies before the formal ceremony offered prayers for peace that emphasized the sacred nature of the observance. The presence of several veterans groups testified to the event’s importance to those who had served their country, as the Fort Peck Sioux Tribe Post 54 and Fort Hood 7th Cavalry color guards led the procession to the memorial. The official program at the park’s Visitor Center amphitheater included remarks by representatives of the five tribes who fought on both sides at the battle.

Opening remarks by Crow tribal chairman Carl Venne set the tone for the event attended by an estimated four thousand persons. “It is now time,” he declared, “for the U.S. government to recognize Indians as true Americans because I am proud to be an American.” His welcoming visitors to “Crow Country” underscored the fact that the 1876 battle had occurred on the tribe’s reservation and that six Crow scouts had fought on the side of the soldiers. The chairman urged the audience to acknowledge the event’s theme, “Peace Through Unity,” expressed by tribal elders Austin Two Moons of the Northern Cheyenne and Enos Poor Bear, Sr. of the Oglala Lakota. Others echoed this appeal for reconciliation.

Montana Governor Judy Martz, U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton were among the dignitaries attending the ceremonies. As President Bush’s representative, Secretary Norton observed that the memorial represented “another step” in the vision of the Lakota Black Elk toward peace between nations. “Children will come to this battlefield,” she noted, “and [now] understand

the tragic clash of cultures.” The program also included an unscheduled but rumored appearance by actor and activist Russell Means of the American Indian Movement.

Ceremonies also included the dedication of markers for two warriors killed at Custer’s battlefield and the Reno-Bentzen defense site.

The Indian Memorial “is in the correct place at

the correct time,” historian Greene has written. “The dedication of the memorial to their fallen held great significance to the people of the tribes involved in the battle of the Little Bighorn....The people’s ownership of the place was acknowledged and their dignity respecting it affirmed.”

Visitors to Little Bighorn Battlefield will not only appreciate the magnitude of the landscape on which the 1876 battle was fought but also the American Indian perspective of this historic clash of cultures. Historians will continue to argue about the battle’s details, its legacy and the reasons for Custer’s defeat (or the Indians’ victory). Nevertheless, by exemplifying the commitment to provide true interpretive balance, the Indian Memorial clearly illustrates the fact that there are at least two sides to the story of the Little Bighorn.

## POSTSCRIPT

On June 25, 2014, the NPS rededicated the Indian Memorial to commemorate installation of permanent interpretive panels that pay tribute to all Native people who fought at the 1876 battle. The granite pieces are incised with texts and graphics chosen by the tribes (see above).

Most panels are inscribed with quotes from chiefs and warriors after the tribes had

identified those who fought there on that Bloody Sunday. Perhaps the most poignant words are those that have been attributed to Arikara scout Bloody Knife, who was killed during Maj. Marcus A. Reno’s valley fight: “I will not see you [sun] go down behind the mountains tonight.... I am going home today, not the way we came, but in spirit, home to my people.”

The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (*NPS.gov*) is open to the public year-round. Summer hours at the park are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily. Check with the park service for up-to-date operating hours, as they have been adjusted due to the pandemic.



Dignitaries at the Little Bighorn Battlefield Indian Memorial dedication included (l.-r.): U.S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Former Little Bighorn Battlefield Superintendent Neil C. Mangum, Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Montana Governor Judy Martz and Crow Tribe Chairman Carl Venne.

**Recommended reading:** Jerome A. Greene, *Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 2008)



**C. Lee Noyes** resides in Morrisonville, New York, with his wife, Michele. Noyes is the former editor of *The Battlefield Dispatch*, the quarterly newsletter of the Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Association. He coauthored *Last Man Standing: William Spencer McCaskey*.

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

# REMEMBERING LARRY MCMURTRY

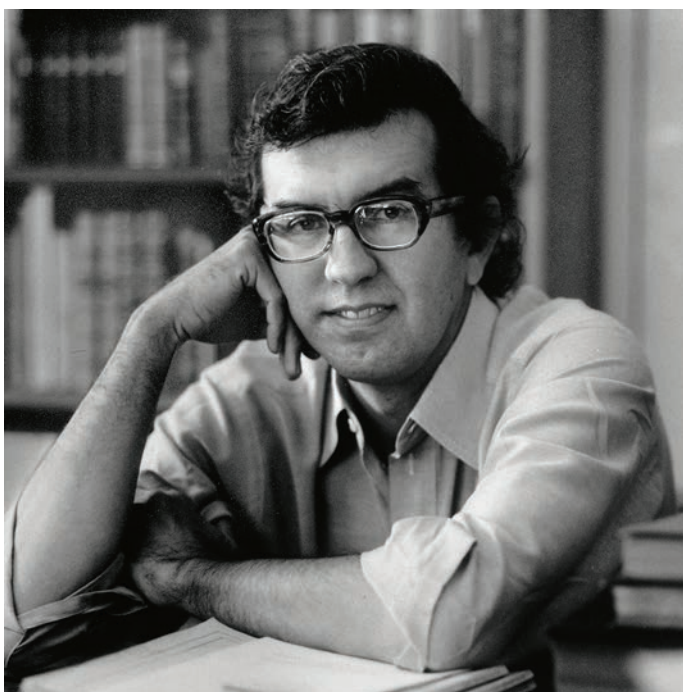
The life and times of the legendary  
Western writer and the legacy of  
*Lonesome Dove*.

“Sometimes Sonny felt like he was the only human creature in town.”

Those were the first words I ever read written by Larry McMurtry, who died March 25 at age 84. They certainly weren't the last.

In 1984, as a young reporter at the *Dallas Times Herald* (and a Texas transplant from South Carolina), McMurtry was required reading, so I devoured *The Last Picture Show*, *Leaving Cheyenne* and *Horseman, Pass By*—his first three novels—in my apartment. Back then, McMurtry was known for wearing a sweatshirt that identified him as a “Minor Regional Novelist.”

Regional? Yes. Minor? Debatable. Not many minor writers see their first three novels turned into motion pictures. But McMurtry was what Pat Conroy was to South Carolina, and what Max Evans and Tony Hillerman were to New Mexico. A regional writer who attracted readers outside his region. McMurtry wrote about the 20th-century West—sometimes putting contemporary cowboys in urban settings, as in *Cadillac Jack* (1982), about a bull-dogger turned



Texas author Larry McMurtry had a remarkable writing career that spanned six decades. He wrote fiction, nonfiction, memoir, television and film and was the rare writer to earn both a Pulitzer (*Lonesome Dove*) and an Oscar (*Brokeback Mountain*).

Photo by Diana Walker, 1978, True West Archives

antique scout in Washington, D.C. And often skipping cowboys altogether; *Somebody's Darling* (1978) chronicled a woman director in Hollywood. In one interview, McMurtry said Western writers should give up the mythical frontier and focus on the modern West.

Ironically, when I read that quote, McMurtry had to have been writing what would become his masterpiece.

In 1985, Simon & Schuster published *Lonesome Dove*, an 843-page novel about an 1870s cattle drive from Texas to Montana, but McMurtry's story began much

earlier. Peter Bogdanovich, who had directed *The Last Picture Show* (1971), and McMurtry planned a period Western movie, *Streets of Laredo*, that would star John Wayne, James Stewart and Henry Fonda. “They were to be old cowboys that had tumbled into their last adventure,” McMurtry told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in 1987. “When their adventure was over, the West was over.”

On his way to a steakhouse, McMurtry passed a school bus on the side of the road. Painted on the bus's side was: Lonesome Dove

Prior to his 1985 novel *Lonesome Dove*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1986, Larry McMurtry wrote exclusively about the post-World War II West. In 1989, *Lonesome Dove* became a television phenomenon starring (right, l.-r.) Robert Duvall as Capt. Augustus McRae and Tommy Lee Jones as Capt. Woodrow F. Call.

Courtesy CBS Television



Baptist Church. “I knew *Lonesome Dove* would make a great title,” McMurtry said in that 1987 *Star-Telegram* profile. “Five years passed before I put the name on the bus with the story in the screenplay and wrote *Lonesome Dove*.”

When *Streets of Laredo* never got out of development, McMurtry bought back the rights and started writing the novel, pecking away at it when he found time while focusing on *Cadillac Jack* and *The Desert Rose* (1983). He set out to trash the myth of the cowboy. Readers took his tale entirely differently.

*Lonesome Dove*’s sales skyrocketed. It won the Spur Award from Western Writers of America and the Pulitzer Prize and was adapted into an equally successful CBS miniseries in 1989.

It wasn’t that publishers had shunned literary fiction set on the American frontier before *Lonesome Dove*. Douglas C. Jones’s *The Court-Martial of George Armstrong Custer* (1976), Brian Garfield’s *Wild Times* (1978), Lucia St. Clair Robson’s *Ride the Wind* (1982), Ron Hansen’s *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (1983) and Ivan Doig’s *English Creek* (1984) were success stories, but *Lonesome Dove* took success to an entirely new level for Western fiction.

Other well-received novels—Gary Matthews’ *Heart of the Country* (1986), Pete Dexter’s

*Deadwood* (1986), Elmer Kelton’s *The Man Who Rode Midnight* (1987), Glendon Swarthout’s *The Homesman* (1988), Jane Candia Coleman’s *Doc Holliday’s Woman* (1995)—followed. McMurtry also opened the doors for many new, young writers of the American West.

None came close to matching *Lonesome Dove*’s landmarks.

“Now it seems to be replacing *Gone With the Wind* as a national epic,” McMurtry told the *Los Angeles Times* in 1989.

The Texas ranch kid who had once said 20th-century writers should not write about the 19th century began producing more Westerns set in the 1800s, including *Lonesome Dove* sequels and prequels—*Streets of Laredo* (1993), *Dead Man’s Walk* (1995), *Comanche Moon* (1997).

*Lonesome Dove* also made McMurtry a “captive,” as he told *The Arizona Republic* in 1995. When *The Late Child* was published that year, McMurtry said: “I like it a lot, but I suspect it’s going to be treated like a little orphan book slipped in around the *Lonesome Dove* books.”

McMurtry’s other period novels hit the bookshelves: *Anything for Billy* (1988), *Buffalo Girls* (1990), *Zeke and Ned* (1997), *Boone’s Lick* (2000) and his Berrybender series about a troubled 1830s hunting expedition: *Sin Killer*

(2002), *The Wandering Hill* (2003), *By Sorrow’s River* (2003), *Folly and Glory* (2004).

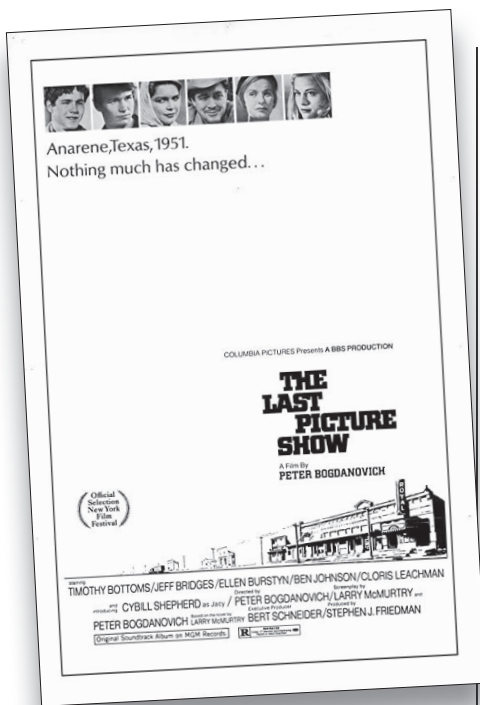
Not all captivated critics.

While most of us never read McMurtry expecting historical accuracy (just mesmerizing prose), McMurtry’s treatment of history and the Cherokees in *Zeke and Ned* enraged a number of high-profile and well-respected Western novelists, including Cherokee Robert J. Conley and best-selling Don Coldsmith, the latter saying that many Cherokees refused to speak McMurtry’s name after *Zeke and Ned*.

McMurtry’s fiction began getting mediocre reviews, and sometimes not even that. “If you’re looking for another *Lonesome Dove*,” the *Des Moines Register* said of *By Sorrow’s River*, “you’ll be disappointed.” “McMurtry has tipped away from realism and the concrete into the cartoonishly absurd,” the *Austin American-Statesman* said of *Folly and Glory*.

Perhaps McMurtry thought the same. “Eventually all novelists, if they persist too long, get worse,” McMurtry wrote in *Books: A Memoir*. “No reason to name names, since no one is spared.”

But McMurtry kept producing at a Louis L’Amour pace, not just fiction, but nonfiction. While *Crazy Horse* (1999) garnered good reviews, other titles were ripped. “You’d think



Larry McMurtry's third novel, *The Last Picture Show* (1966), also became his first screenplay credit (1971). He adapted the book for the screen with writer and director Peter Bogdanovich. The film received eight Oscar nominations, including for Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium.

Courtesy Columbia Pictures



Longtime writing partners Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana received the 2006 Academy Award for Best Writing, Adapted Screenplay for *Brokeback Mountain*.

Courtesy WireImage.com



Few American authors have achieved as much success in as many modern mediums as Larry McMurtry. His first novel, *Horseman, Pass By* (1961) was adapted and produced as *Hud* (1963), starring Paul Newman as the iconic title character and Melvyn Douglas as his father, Homer Bannon.

Courtesy Paramount Pictures

that *Lonesome Dove* creator McMurtry would add a big dose of Western sensibility to his account of the Wild West shows," the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* wrote of *The Colonel* and *Little Missy: Buffalo Bill, Annie Oakley and the Beginnings of Superstardom in America* (2005), "but his efforts proved little more than a superficial glossing of Cody's life." Distinguished Texas writer Bryan Wooley wrote for *The Dallas Morning News* that McMurtry's *Oh What a Lovely Slaughter* (2006) "doesn't carry the reader much beyond generalization" and "its language is devoid of grace or power."

Yet McMurtry did what writers are supposed to do. He wrote. A lot. Often two to three books in a year. And while his fiction and historical nonfiction were often sloppy, his memoirs—*Walter Benjamin at the Dairy Queen: Reflections at Sixty and Beyond* (1999), *Roads: Driving America's Great Highways* (2000), *Books: A Memoir* (2008), *Literary Life: A Second Memoir* (2009) and *Hollywood: A Third Memoir* (2010)—earned raves. He and writing partner Diana Ossana also won the Academy Award for adapting Proulx's short story *Brokeback Mountain* into director Ang Lee's 2000 film, which collected two other Oscars and was nominated for five more.

"Because of when and where I grew up, on the Great Plains just as the herding tradition was beginning to lose its vitality, I have been interested all my life in vanishing breeds," McMurtry said.

McMurtry was a vanishing breed himself. "Live through it," Woodrow Call says in *Lonesome Dove*. "That's all we can do." That could be McMurtry's epitaph.

He might always be remembered for one novel, but his legacy goes beyond *Lonesome Dove*. For even in his worst books, McMurtry could still turn that perfect sentence that most of us could never dream of writing. And in his best works...well, here's another fitting epitaph for Larry McMurtry, June 13, 1936–March 25, 2021, spoken by the Mexican cook, Po Campo, in...what else?... *Lonesome Dove*:

"I sing about life. I am happy, but life is sad."

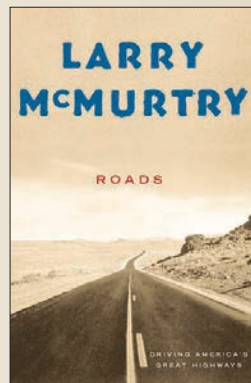
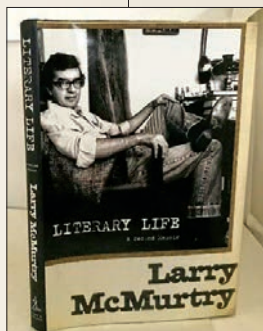
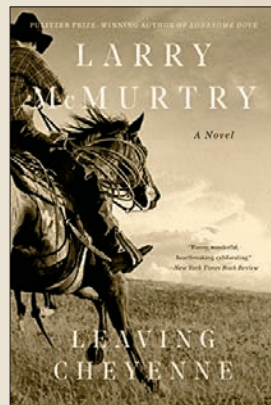
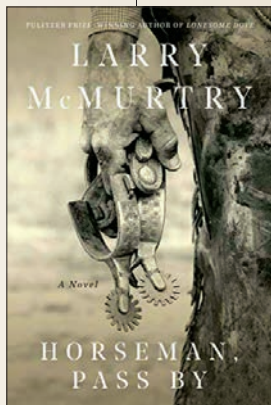
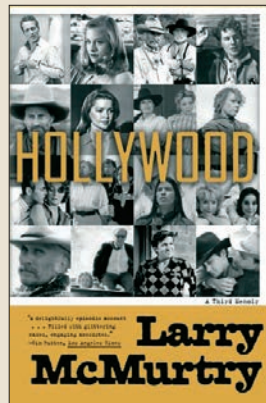
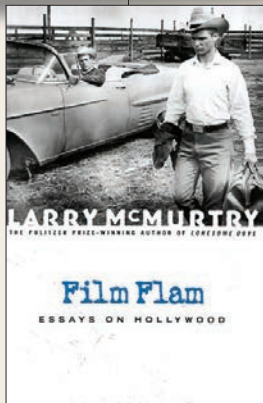
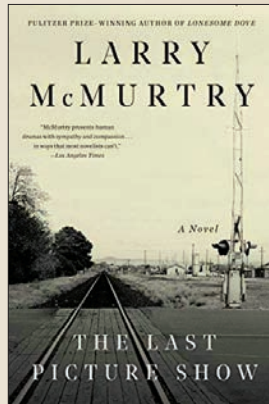
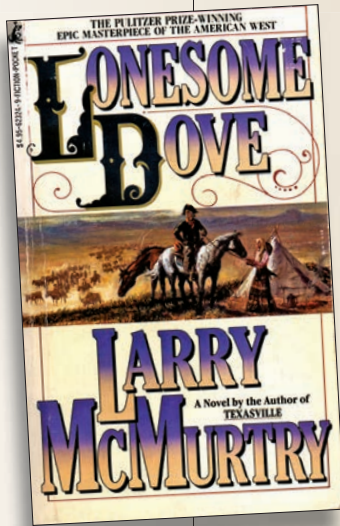


**Johnny D. Boggs's** favorite Larry McMurtry line comes from *In a Narrow Grave*: "Only a rank degenerate would drive 1,500 miles across Texas without eating a chicken-fried steak."



Larry McMurtry opened his first Booked Up bookstore in Georgetown, Washington, D.C., in 1970. His second Booked Up in his hometown of Archer City, Texas, became one of the largest in the country, with upwards of 450,000 books, before McMurtry downsized it in 2012.

True West Archives



## Must-Read McMurtry

Listed by year of publication.

**1. *Horseman, Pass By* (1961):** In many ways, McMurtry's first novel was his most earthy and realistic, told by Lonnie as he looks back on growing up during the 1950s Texas drought, pulled in a tug-of-war with his honest rancher grandfather and the freewheeling, nasty relative called Hud.

**2. *Leaving Cheyenne* (1962):** Told in first person by three Texans—rancher Gideon Fry, cowboy Johnny McCloud and Molly Taylor, the girl they both love—Leaving Cheyenne is another mix of comedy and tragedy. Marshall Sprague put it best in his New York Times review: “[I]f Chaucer were a Texan writing today, and only 27 years old, this is how he would have written and this is how he would have felt.”

**3. *The Last Picture Show* (1963):** A bleak, yet beautiful, portrait of a dying Texas town—Thalia is McMurtry's thinly disguised Archer City—in the 1950s that includes arguably McMurtry's most honest, memorable character, Sam the Lion. “Oh, [growing up] ain't necessarily miserable,” Sam tells Sonny. “About eighty percent of the time, I guess.”

**4. *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas* (1968):** “Before I was out of high school, I realized I was witnessing the dying way of life—the rural, pastoral way of life.” McMurtry's homage to what it's like to be a Texan.

**5. *All My Friends are Going to be Strangers* (1972):** The ups and downs of a writer's life, told with pathos and laugh-out-loud humor, with cameos by dozens of richly developed characters. How many writers have wanted to drown their manuscript in a river?

**6. *Terms of Endearment* (1975):** Known for his believable female characters, McMurtry created two of his most memorable, dominating Aurora Greenway and her headstrong daughter, Emma. Don't look for Jack Nicholson's astronaut in the novel; Garrett Breedlove was producer-director-screenwriter James L. Brooks's creation.

**7. *Lonesome Dove* (1985):** What else can be said about Gus, Call, Newt, Lorena, Clara, Jake, Blue Duck, Pea Eye, Deets, July, Roscoe, Dish and a memorable cast of hundreds? McMurtry set out to tear down the Western myth; instead, he revitalized interest in the Old West and reinvigorated Western literature.

**8. *Film Flam: Essays on Hollywood* (1987):** “If one were to make a misery graph of Hollywood,” writes McMurtry, no stranger to Hollywood, “screenwriters would mark high on the curve.” Anyone who ever thought about writing a screenplay should read this.

**9. *Roads: Driving America's Great Highways* (2000):** Inspired by his well-traveled singer-songwriter son James's words, “There's just so much to see,” McMurtry sets out to rediscover America's great highways. “I had no river to float on,” he writes of his childhood days on a landlocked Texas ranch. “Highway 281 was my river, its hidden reaches a mystery and an enticement.” For the road warriors in us all.

**10. *Books: A Memoir* (2008):** McMurtry details his love affair with books, not as a writer, but as a collector and dealer in rare books in Washington, D.C., Archer City and Tucson. This beautiful memoir strikes a chord with anyone who loves the written word.

—Johnny D. Boggs

# Is Doc Holliday in This Photo,

AN OLD PHOTO IS REEXAMINED BY THE WORLD'S TOP DOC HOLLIDAY EXPERT.

**“Doc Holliday is ten feet tall and weighs a ton.”**

—*Tucson Daily Star*, June 11, 1882

The first time we saw this historical group photo taken in Las Vegas, New Mexico Territory, was in 1998 in Frederick Nolan's book *The West of Billy the Kid*. Recently, some have suggested after closer study of the image, that Doc Holliday might be one of the nine men standing outside the Old Town Las Vegas Jail in March 1880.

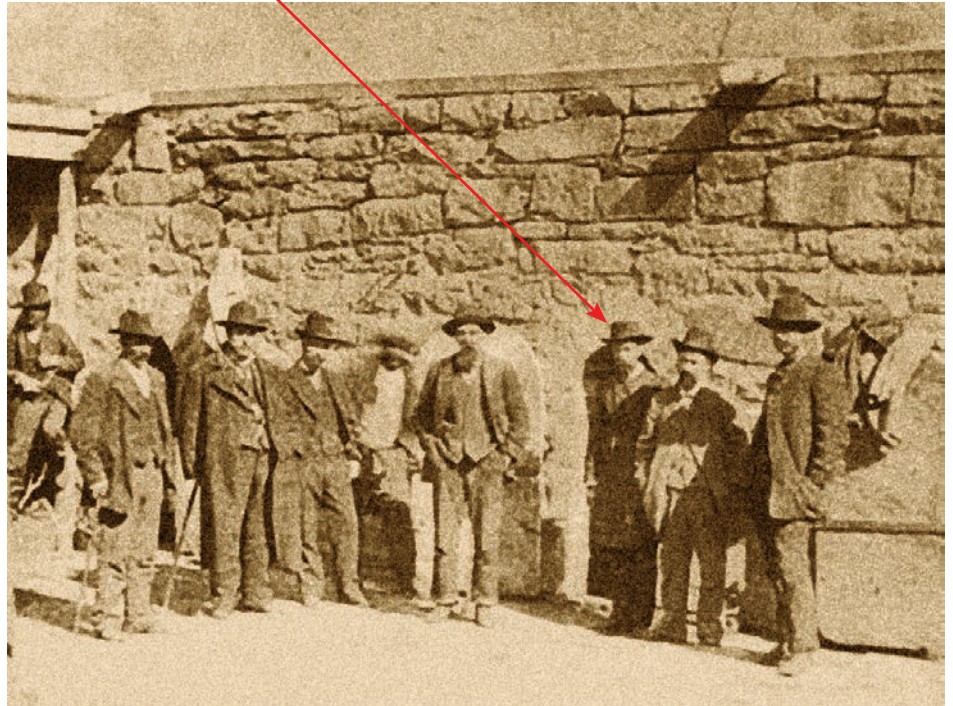
So we went to the foremost Doc Holliday expert, Gary L. Roberts, author of *Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend*, and here is what he said:

“This somber image was taken at the Old Town Jail in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in March 1880 during or after John Joshua “J.J.” Webb’s trial for the murder of a freighter named Mike Kelliher. Webb was a policeman in East Las Vegas (New Town), and a coroner’s jury ruled the killing justified, but the violence and crime associated with New Town prompted the San Miguel County Grand Jury to indict Webb for murder.

“What we do know is that Doc was in Las Vegas at the time for his own court dates and to settle some business matters besides, after spending the winter in Prescott, A. T. In fact, Doc appeared in court on March 2, 1880, the same day that Webb killed Kelliher. He was still in Las Vegas when Webb was convicted and sentenced to hang on April 9, 1880.

“Holliday’s Saloon was one of Webb’s hangouts when Doc was running the place in 1879 before his departure to Prescott in company with Wyatt Earp and other members of the Earp family. It is safe to say they knew each other well and were on friendly terms. I find it consistent with Doc’s character that he would have visited Webb.

“Dodge City was interested in Webb’s case as well. Webb had served frequently as a police officer with Bat and Jim Masterson in the pursuit of outlaws. The day after Webb’s conviction, Michael Sutton, a prominent attorney in Dodge City, left for Las Vegas with



a petition on his behalf and money collected to assist in his appeal.

“In April, Dave Rudabaugh and John Allen made their failed attempt to help Webb escape, although Webb appears to have attempted to help the jailor who was shot (and killed) by Allen, rather than attempt to run. (I think he still hoped he would be pardoned or his sentence shortened at the time.)

“Looking at the photo itself, notice the rather stark difference between the rumpled clothing of most of the men in contrast to the dapper and well-fitted attire of the man we think could be Doc. This is something consistently commented on by observers of Doc through the years—his immaculate style.

“Doc was less than six feet in height, how much depending on the observer. In 1882, the *Denver Times* described him as a ‘delicate, gentlemanly man, apparently not weighing more than one hundred and thirty pounds...’ *The Pueblo Chieftain* described him as ‘a man of slight weight, rather tall, smoothly shaven, and is always well dressed.’ *The Denver Tribune* called him a ‘thin, spare man,’ and the *Denver Republican* wrote, ‘Holliday is a slender man, not more than five feet six inches tall and

## J. J. Webb at the Old Town Las Vegas Jail, 1880

This photo first came to our attention when it appeared in Frederick Nolan’s book *The West of Billy the Kid*. Nolan published it, in part, because the Kid spent time in this jail in December 1880, when

Pat Garrett escorted him and members of his gang to Santa Fe.

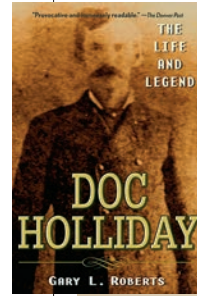
Recently some historians have speculated that Holliday is in the photograph, to the right of Webb (in shackles).

True West Archives

would weigh perhaps 150 pounds.’ He was described later as a ‘mild-mannered little fello.’ At the time of his Leadville fracas with Billy Allen, he said that he weighed 122 pounds.

“His spare figure and better fitted clothes may actually make him seem smaller. Webb was definitely heavier, but he’s not that much taller in the photo. Remember that six-footers were less common then than now. It is one of the things that seemed to separate the Earps in newspaper descriptions.

# or Not?



## DOC HOLLIDAY IN NONFICTION AND FICTION

Interested in reading more about the enigmatic John Henry “Doc” Holliday?

Where to start? In nonfiction, the definitive biography of the Southern dentist-turned-Western gambler-gunfighter is *Doc Holliday: Life and Legend* by Gary L. Roberts (Wiley). After reading Roberts, we recommend:

Bob Boze Bell’s *The Illustrated Life and Times of Doc Holliday* (Two Roads West)

John Boessenecker’s *Ride the Devil’s Herd: Wyatt Earp’s Epic Battle Against the West’s Biggest Outlaw Gang* (Hanover Square Press)

Victoria Wilcox’s *The World of Doc Holliday: History and Historic Images* (TwoDot)

Karen Holliday Tanner’s *Doc Holliday: A Family Portrait* (University of Oklahoma Press)

Since Walter Noble Burn’s *Tombstone: An Illiad of the Southwest* was published in 1927 Doc Holliday has been a favorite character of novelists dramatizing the life of the legendary Westerner. We recommend the 1999 University of New Mexico edition with a foreword by Earp biographer Casey Tefertiller. After you read Burns and Tefertiller, we recommend these novels:

Matt Braun’s *Doc Holliday* (Griffin)

Mary Doria Russell’s two-volume series: *Doc* and *Epitaph: A Novel of the O.K. Corral*

Victoria Wilcox’s three-volume series: *The Saga of Doc Holliday: Southern Son*, *Dance with the Devil* and *Dead Man’s Hand* (TwoDot)



### Doc In Prescott, 1879

This verified photograph of John H. Holliday was taken in the capital of Arizona Territory in late 1879. Does it match the figure in the Las Vegas photo? The debate continues.

True West Archives

“I do not recall an article mentioning Doc and BS Jack visiting Webb or about the photograph. By any

measure, it is an important photo. If this is indeed Doc, it is especially noteworthy. I don’t remember a newspaper reference to the photographer or to a gathering of friends. On April 4, the *Las Vegas Gazette* reported that Jack Allen and Dave Rudabaugh called at the jail to see Webb. Their visit was a rather pitiful attempt to free Webb. Once they were inside, they shot the jailor and threw the keys into Webb’s cell, ‘telling him that there were the keys that they must go. Even the paper was surprised at the ineptitude: ‘How did they imagine that he should get out and escape on foot without arms?’

“This photo was taken within months after the well-verified Prescott photo of Doc that Craig Fouts acquired from the McKey family in Georgia. The Prescott photo was made in the late fall of 1879, and this photo was likely made in March 1880. In the photo with Webb, Doc is wearing a hat and a topcoat which makes him look a little heavier.”



“I’m not a photo expert, but this is a place that he could well have been, and he stands out in this photo in precisely the same ways that 19th-century reporters described him. Are any other of the persons in the photo identified?”

“I don’t have a definitive answer, but I wouldn’t bet against it being him.”

## Bullshit Jack

Billy the Kid also spent time in the Old Town Las Vegas Jail, when Sheriff-elect Pat Garrett came through on his way to Santa Fe to collect the reward on the Kid. This was in December of 1880. There has been some talk, online, about Bullshit Jack also being in the group photo. As you might recall if you read *True West* magazine, we published a long-lost newspaper clipping, courtesy of James B. Mills, about the Kid and Bullshit Jack being in the Santa Fe Jail together (*TW*, April 2020).

Again, we turned to our esteemed colleague, Gary L. Roberts, to weigh in:

BY KENT F. FRATES

# The Hero or Goat of Beecher Island?

The legacy of  
Gen. George Forsyth's  
leadership in the famous  
battle remains controversial  
over 150 years later.

George "Sandy" Forsyth was a hard-charging cavalry officer—tough, brave and aggressive. He was also stubborn to a fault and willing to push his men to the limits of their endurance. Forsyth compiled an impressive combat record during the Civil War, but it was as an Indian fighter that he earned his fame and became known as the "Hero of Beecher Island." In many ways, Forsyth was a hero, but some of his heroics occurred because of the bull-headed tactics that placed him and his men in desperate situations.

Born in Muncey, Pennsylvania, in 1837, Forsyth as a young man moved to Chicago, where he trained to be a lawyer. He volunteered to fight for the Union in 1861 and served with distinction throughout the Civil War, rising to the permanent rank of major and the brevet rank of brigadier general. Forsyth led cavalry troops in many hard-fought, bloody battles. During the course of the war, he contracted typhoid fever and was seriously wounded at the Battle of Brandy Station. He ended the war as a member of Gen. Phillip Sheridan's staff. Forsyth's association with Sheridan would propel the remainder of his military career.

After the war, Forsyth was initially given a series of administrative and reconstruction duties, which did not appeal to his desire for action and adventure. Forsyth's chance to return to combat duty came after Sheridan



Legendary Northern Cheyenne warrior Roman Nose's famous charge across the Arickaree River against Maj. George A. Forsyth's scouts entrenched on Beecher Island not only failed but led to his death, as he was mortally wounded in the skirmish the Indians named the Fight Where Roman Nose was Killed.

Rufus F Zogbaum, True West Archives

was appointed commander of the Department of the Missouri, a job that made the general responsible for keeping safety by pacifying the Indians in Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Missouri, Illinois and Indian Territory.

An 1868 series of Indian raids in western Kansas set in motion the events that would lead to Forsyth's initiation as an Indian fighter. Sheridan ordered Forsyth to take command of a group of 50 volunteer scouts and to find and attack the Indian raiders.

On September 17, 1868, Forsyth's scouts held off a frontal attack by an estimated 900 Cheyenne, Sioux and Dog Soldiers. Forsyth's men killed at least 32 Indians, including the famous Northern Cheyenne warrior Roman Nose, and wounded many more. The scouts also suffered severe casualties, with six killed and 18 wounded. Forsyth himself was shot in the right thigh, hit again by a bullet that broke his left leg and also shot in the head, suffering a skull fracture that knocked loose a small piece of his skull. In spite of his wounds, he continued to fight bravely and kept command of the scouts during the battle.

There was no question that Forsyth and his scouts fought courageously against desperate odds. The question is, should they have been trapped and attacked, in the first place?

The scouts first picked up the trail of the Indian forces near Sheridan, Kansas, where a

raiding party had attacked a group of teamsters, killing two of the them and driving off much of the teamsters' stock. The raiding party was estimated at around 25 warriors, and Forsyth led his men in pursuit of the marauders.

Over the next few days, the Indian raiders' trail became hard to follow. The scouts continued to try to pick up the trail as Forsyth drove his men hard, covering 25 to 40 miles a day, sometimes without water. Eventually, the scouts picked up the trail again, which now began to widen, indicating a large band of Indians, far superior in number to the scouts. Some of the experienced scouts warned Forsyth that they were now facing a large force, but he insisted that the troops press on. He later said, "I had determined to find and attack the Indians, no matter what the odds might be."

The scouts had another serious problem. They were running perilously low on supplies. They were only provisioned for a week, and they had been following the Indians for six days. At the beginning of their campaign they had been able to supplement their provisions by killing game, however the presence of the large band of Indians had driven the game out of the vicinity.

When the scouts were attacked on the sixth day, they were camped near a tributary of the Arikaree River in eastern Colorado. The scouts made their stand on an island in the river, which at that time of year was almost dry. The island became known as Beecher Island, named for Lt. Frederick Beecher, who was killed in the fight. The initial Indian attack drove off the scouts' pack mules with the scouts' meager remaining food supplies and all of their medical supplies.

After a fierce day of fighting and another few days of constant sniping, the scouts were stuck on the island with virtually no food and no medical supplies. At first they ate their horses, which had



One of Lt. Col. George Forsyth's last field commands was at Fort Cummings in southwestern New Mexico, where he commanded the 4th Cavalry in action, with mixed results, against the Apaches.

All images True West Archives unless otherwise noted

After the Civil War, Gen. Philip Sheridan leaned on his favorite senior officers, including Maj. George A. "Sandy" Forsyth, to secure the peace in the Western Indian Wars, a decision fraught with mixed results, as illustrated by Forsyth's bungled command at Beecher Island.



been killed by the Indians in the first hours of the fight. However, the horses' bodies quickly began to spoil in the sun and became rancid and inedible. Without horses and with Indians still in the vicinity, the scouts could not travel far to look for food. The men began to starve, and many of the wounded men suffered infections, pain and complications from serious

wounds. Finally, eight days after the battle, the scouts were rescued by a relief column.

The Battle of Beecher Island and its "hero" were lauded by Sheridan, who proclaimed a great victory. The press loved the story, and the battle was portrayed as a classic clash between fearless frontiersmen and a horde of wild savages. But should the scouts have been there at all? Forsyth had led his men into a trap, without proper food or medical supplies. He knew he was far outnumbered but recklessly pressed on in spite of being warned.

Part of Forsyth's problem in leading his men into a trap was his disdain for the enemy. He had never faced Indians in battle and thought of them as an inferior, unsophisticated race. This attitude, coupled with Forsyth's aggressive and stubborn personality, caused the battle to happen on the enemy's terms, and only the courage and marksmanship of the scouts avoided disaster.

Later, in 1882, Forsyth's attitude toward Indians had changed, but his impulsive aggression had not. Having largely recovered from his wounds and now a lieutenant colonel, Forsyth was placed in command of Fort Cummings in southwest New Mexico. Forsyth's job was to protect the area from renegade Apaches who frequently crossed the border from Mexico or left the reservation and carried out raids on miners, ranchers and settlers. By now Forsyth had come to view Indians differently, describing the Apaches as "cruel, crafty,

Frederic Remington's 1885 dramatic watercolor *Battle of Beecher Island, 1868* was based on firsthand accounts of the battle from Col. James Forsyth.



wary, quick to scent danger, equally active to discover a weak or exposed place within his reach, tireless when pursued, patient in defeat, and merciless in success, always seeking the maximum of gain at the minimum of risk.”

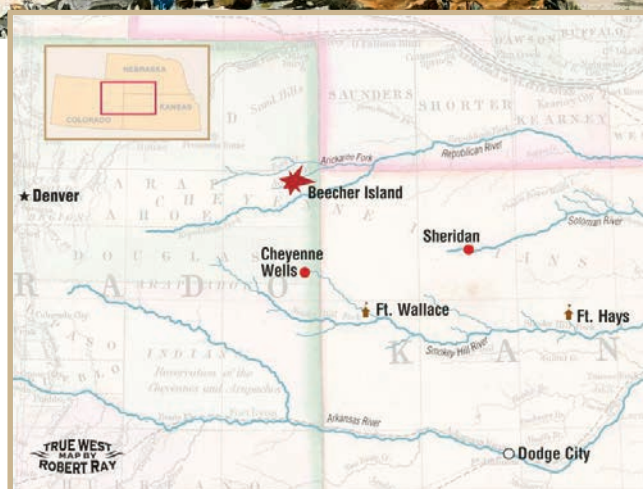
In April 1882, Forsyth learned that a band of Apaches had slipped across the border and persuaded or compelled some previously friendly Apaches near San Carlos Agency in Arizona to accompany them back to Mexico. As these Indians moved south toward the border, they raided and stole horses, sheep and mules.

Forsyth was determined to catch and attack the Apaches before they crossed into Mexico. Leading six troops of cavalry, he set out to hunt down the Indians. On the third day of the campaign, Forsyth had deployed seven Indian scouts under the command of Lt. D.N. McDonald to pick up the Apaches' trail. The scouts were ambushed and trapped by the Apaches. Four scouts were killed, but McDonald was able to send one scout to notify Forsyth.

Upon learning of McDonald's predicament, Forsyth galloped his entire command 16 miles across the desert to relieve him. An honorable act, but a killer for the horses and brutal for the men.

McDonald managed to escape the ambush and join Forsyth, who impetuously charged ahead into Horseshoe Canyon. In the canyon, the Apaches occupied the high ground. They were fortified by rocks and located hundreds of feet above the cavalrymen. Although Forsyth was in an untenable position, he pressed the fight, sending troopers climbing up the rocks, trying to flank the Apaches.

The Apaches rained down fire on the cavalry, as the Apaches slowly withdrew and escaped over the rim of the canyon, where they continued their dash for Mexico. After regrouping, Forsyth resumed his chase. The



Beecher Island is on the Arickaree River in east-central Colorado, 85 miles from Fort Wallace in western Kansas.

soldiers were lucky to only incur three killed and about eight wounded. The Apaches suffered only light casualties.

Once again, Forsyth had placed his command in a dangerous position and had driven his men



TRUE WEST EXCLUSIVE

# CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

## THE BATTLE OF BIG DRY WASH

AL SIEBER & U.S. TROOPS  
VS  
NA-TI-O-TISH'S APACHES



One of the scouts spots the Apaches waiting in ambush on the north side of the canyon.

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps by Gus Walker

Based on the research of Dr. Sam Palmer and Dan Thrapp



Apache leader Na-ti-o-tish (center) positions his warriors along a narrow gorge eight miles north of the Mogollon Rim in east central Arizona. They have built rifle pits and stacked rock wings adjacent to large pine trees, awaiting a small troop of soldiers (55 men) who will pass, single file on horseback, directly below them.

Stopping within three-quarters of a mile from the chasm, the first officer on the scene, Capt. Adna Chaffee, sends 30 scouts on foot to the west to get behind the canyon, as a precautionary move. The troopers and the remaining scouts move into a skirmish line along the south rim of the canyon. As they do, one of the Indian scouts discerns the hostiles' position on the north side of Big Dry Fork. Captain Chaffee orders a feint to the center, then sends out two flanking movements: one to the west and one to the east of the Apaches' position.



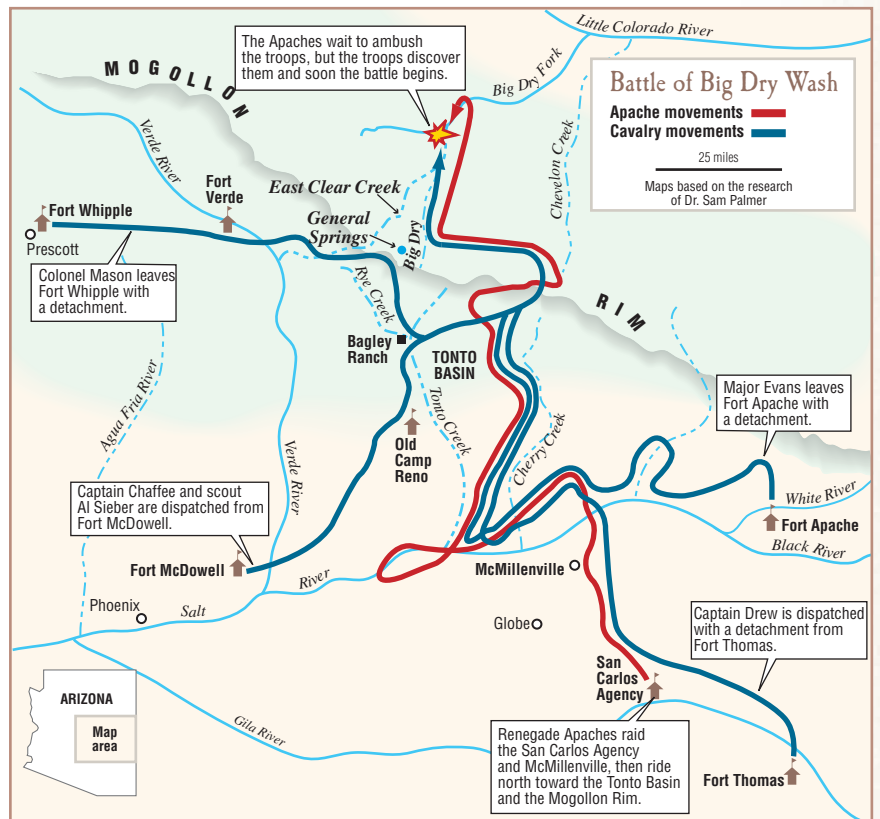
More troops arrive, but before any of them can get into position, a nervous "recruit lets his piece go [fires his weapon]," which opens up the fight. Both sides, some 700 yards apart, begin firing.

The westside flanking troops led by Capt. Lemuel Abbott run headlong into an Apache force attempting the same thing. Both sides open fire, and a hailstorm of lead fills the draw.

Chief of Scouts Al Sieber and his crew appear on the opposite rim just as the Abbott fight ensues. The Apache pony guards cock their heads toward the firing, and Sieber and another soldier "wipe them out."

Scooping up the pony herd and stolen stock, Sieber and Lt. Thomas Cruse lead an assault into the rear of the hostiles' position, firing as they run.

On the ridge, Lt. George Morgan, in his first major engagement with the Apaches, fires several times before finally hitting someone, yelling, "I got him! I got him!" as he exposes himself to enemy fire.



An Apache bullet rips through his arm and into his body.

Hearing Sgt. Daniel Conn of Troop E shout orders to his troopers, some of the hostiles who had been scouts before the Cibecue fight (see time line, below) recognize his voice. He had served pork to them on ration day; they know him as "Hog Sergeant."

The hostiles taunt him, yelling "Aaaaaiiah! Coche Sergeant!" Conn yells something back, and an Apache bullet hits the sergeant in the throat, "opening a hole as big as a silver dollar through a size-thirteen neck," reports Lt. Thomas Cruse.

The day is expiring, and the shadows lengthen as various elements of the attacking troops form a line to push the Indians back toward the camp. Seeing this, Na-ti-o-tish harangues his men, ordering them to fight to the last man.

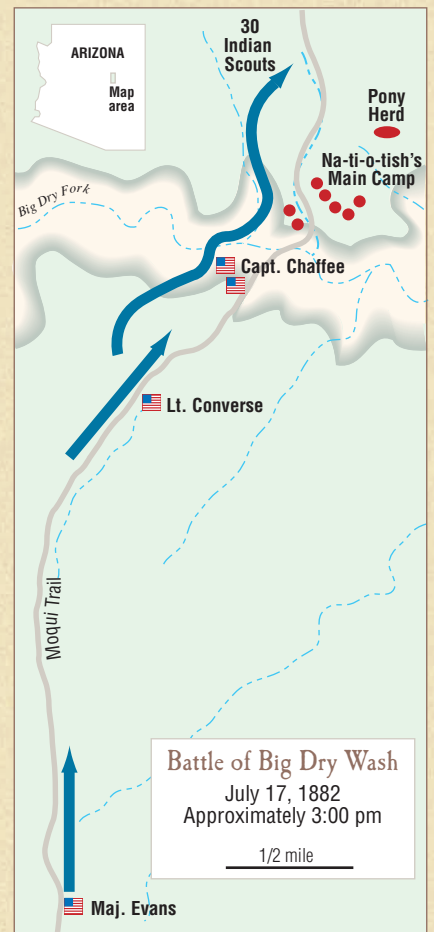
Lieutenant Cruse watches Sieber shoot and kill three renegades as they run

toward the edge of the canyon. Sieber keeps on running and rolling, each time coming up firing. When Cruse calls up his men and attempts a charge into the Apache position, Sieber and Capt. Adam Kramer's troops cover them with fire.

As Cruse advances, an Apache jumps up within two yards of the lieutenant and fires, just missing Cruse and hitting Pvt. Joseph McLernon, who falls mortally wounded. Cruse recovers and drags McLernon back to a ravine.

The hostiles make one more heroic attempt to break out to the north, but they are repulsed by the soldiers. As darkness envelopes the battlefield, a stalemate ensues, with the two sides less than 50 yards apart. A severe hailstorm sweeps across the rim, pelting and soaking everything and everybody. The dead are covered in an icy shroud, "four or five inches deep."

The last major Apache battle on U.S. soil is over.



## Apache Time Line

In the spring of 1881, Noch-ay-del-kinne (right), a White Mountain Apache medicine man, taught the Apaches a new dance. The performers arranged themselves like the spokes of a wheel, all facing inward, while the medicine man stood in the hub and sprinkled them with the sacred hoddentin (from the pollen of the tule) as they circled around him.



As Apaches flock to these dances, held near Cibecue, Arizona, reservation agents worry that Noch-ay-del-kinne is actually preaching to the others that their chiefs will return from the dead and the white man will disappear. To halt the medicine man's influence, Joseph Capron Tiffany, the agent at the San Carlos Reservation, sends his Indian police to arrest the prophet, but they come back empty-handed, grumbling about white aggression. The enlisted scouts at Fort Apache demand passes to attend the dances, and they, too, return as converts.

### August 14, 1881

Agent Tiffany sends a demand to Col. Eugene Asa Carr, the commander at Fort Apache: "I want [the Apache medicine man] arrested or killed or both."

### August 29, 1881

Colonel Carr sets out from Fort Apache with 117 men and 23 Apache scouts. Arriving late in the day in Cibecue, a 75-mile ride, Carr and his men arrest Noch-ay-del-kinne without incident, but his assembled converts follow Carr into camp, a mile from the arrest site. After several confrontations, a fight breaks out and Capt. Edward C. Hentig is shot point-blank in the heart, and is killed instantly.

A bugler of Troop D shoots the prophet three times in the head (Carr had threatened to kill him if there was any trouble). The Indian scouts defect. In the ensuing gunfight, eight soldiers and 18 Apaches are killed.

Vastly outnumbered, Carr and his command slip away by night and make it back to Fort Apache. Roving bands of Apaches sweep the area, killing soldiers and civilians wherever they find them.

Geronimo, living peacefully at San Carlos, is nervous. Twenty-two companies from California and New Mexico have descended on the reservation, where no soldiers have been on post since John Clum kicked them out in 1876.

## A Tactical Bronco Blunder

In the parlance of the times, Apaches who escape the San Carlos Reservation are called "Bronco Apaches." Na-ti-o-tish, neither a chief nor a war leader, leads about 54 Bronco Apaches—including women and children—on a killing and raiding spree, no doubt angered by the death of their medicine man (see time line).

After plundering through Pleasant Valley for more than a week, they are about to turn east at the top of the Mogollon Rim and head back to the reservation when they spot pursuing troops at General Springs. They count 50 white horse troops on their trail.

What the Apaches fail to see are the numerous brown horse troops, some 200 men in all, coming up behind from four different forts (see above map).

Na's warriors build rifle pits at General Springs, but for some reason, abandon them and travel eight more miles to Big Dry Wash to make their stand.

Some historians speculate that the Indians may have been drinking (liquor bottles are later found along the trail) and perhaps that leads to their miscalculating the strength of the U.S. troops.

## Arizona Charlie

Arizona is the home today of many famous people, but its first real superstar was a rodeo cowboy and Wild West performer named Charlie Meadows, better known as "Arizona Charlie." In 1877, the Meadows family settled on a ranch at Diamond Valley, north of Payson, where the community of Whispering Pines is today.

In July 1882, Charlie had ridden to Pine Creek to guide an Army detachment through the pass at the head of the East Verde River onto the Mogollon Rim when a war party of Apaches swept through the Rim Country and attacked the Meadows ranch. His father and one of his brothers were killed and another was wounded in the ambush.

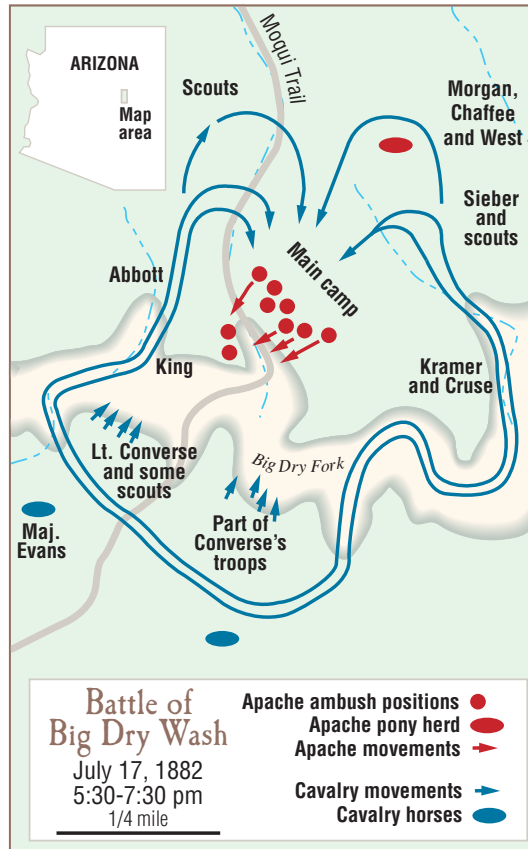
Following the raid, Na-ti-o-tish and his warriors headed up the Mogollon Rim for a place called Big Dry Wash.

Charlie was left in charge, and while caring for the family ranch in 1884, he, along with John Chilson, organized America's first rodeo. Charlie won nearly every event, beating the famous Tom Horn in the roping contest. He went on the rodeo circuit and set new records in steer tying at Prescott. He won again in Phoenix. Show business was in his blood, and Charlie made up his mind to become a performer in a Wild West show.

—Marshall Trimble



Charlie Meadows, aka "Arizona Charlie," allegedly co-founded the first Payson Rodeo, then went on to a celebrated career in Wild West shows, including Buffalo Bill's. Afterwards he became a rancher and newspaper publisher of *The Scorpion* in Yuma, Arizona, where he attacked everyone with his pseudonym, I. Sting. He predicted he would die in a snowstorm in Yuma, and on December 9, 1932, he did!



"All the men performed their duty well. ...It is no disordeth [sic] to the men to say that when they reached the top of the bluff, blowed and at pretty close quarters and heard the zip of bullets thick and hot they looked crosseyed for a few moments."

—Captain Adna Chaffee



### White Mountain Apache Scouts Returning From the Victorio Campaign

In El Paso, Texas, in October 1880, Lt. Charles B. Gatewood (center, large hat), civilian scout Sam Bowman (behind Gatewood) and Lt. Thomas Cruse, (far left, tall crowned hat) posed after returning from the Victorio Campaign in Mexico. Cruse and many of these scouts fought at the Battle of Big Dry Wash. The young lieutenant, who would live until 1943, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his "distinguished conduct in battle!"

Courtesy National Archives

## Al Sieber's Deadly Efficiency

An immigrant from Germany, Sieber joined the Army just after his 18th birthday, fighting at Gettysburg with the First Minnesota. On the second day of the battle, he was severely wounded in a bayonet charge.

Ultimately discharged, he wandered West, landing in Prescott, Arizona, where he distinguished himself in several Indian fights. He rejoined the Army and rose to the rank of chief of scouts. He and his men just returned from killing 14 Apaches during the Tupper Battle (see time line) prior to the Big Dry Wash fight.

Describing the opinion of the time, Dan Thrapp, Sieber's biographer, wrote, "Killing Indians was the dirty climax of the exciting sport of hunting them." This sentiment applied to the Apache warrior side of the equation as well.

Many modern-day readers are puzzled and disturbed by the Apache scouts hunting their own people, but their warrior class, perhaps even more

**"Al Sieber took part in more Indian fights than Daniel Boone, Jim Bridger, and Kit Carson together. He shot more red adversaries than all of them combined."**

—Dan L. Thrapp, *Al Sieber: Chief of Scouts*

so than the "Americans," loved the exciting sport of hunting. The "dirty climax" just came with the territory.

Before the Big Dry Wash fight, Maj. Andrew W. Evans and Lt. George Morgan's scouts advised them that the hostiles were too far ahead. "Sieber, in his abrupt way, started them along pronto," Morgan wrote.

Thrapp credited Sieber with dispatching almost half of the Apache casualties at Big Dry Wash.

## Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Lieutenant George Morgan survived his wound, as "the slug had only gone around his ribs and lodged in the back muscles." Sgt. Daniel Conn ("Hog Sergeant") survived his throat wound, joking, "Sure, I heard the Cap'n say I was kilt, but I knew I was not. I was only speechless!" Pvt. Joseph McLernon died within an hour.

One of the Apache scouts, Pvt. Pete (Hoski-ta-go-lothe) was killed in the battle. An account, told years later by C.P. Wingfield, described that deadly day for Pete, who "saw two of his brothers and his father with the Indians. He threw his gun down and started to run to his folks. Sieber told him to halt. He did not heed him. Sieber raised his rifle and fired, shooting him in the back of the head."

Shielded by the dark night, the hostiles stole away from their camp, leaving behind everything they owned, including "73 head of stock, 24 saddles, blankets, baskets, cooking utensils," reported Capt. Adna Chaffee.

The morning after the battle, patrols scoured the area for the dead and wounded (accounts ranged from 16 to 22 dead bodies found). Lt. Frederick G. Hodgson and his men discovered a young Apache woman, badly wounded and shielding her baby, who fired on them three times. Troops captured her, amputating her shattered leg, which she endured without a murmur. She, along with her child, were transported back to Fort Apache where she recovered.

**Recommended:** *Al Sieber: Chief of Scouts* by Dan L. Thrapp, published by University of Oklahoma Press; *Apache Days and After* by Thomas Cruse, published by University of Nebraska Press.



AL SIEBER, CHIEF OF SCOUTS

## Four Medal of Honor Recipients for Big Dry Wash

The official citations read:



**THOMAS CRUSE**  
(JULY 12, 1892)

"Second Lieut. 6th US Cavalry—Gallantly charged hostile Indians, and with his carbine compelled a party of them to keep under cover of their breastworks, thus being enabled to recover a severely wounded soldier."



**FRANK WEST**  
(JULY 12, 1892)

"First Lieut. 6th US Cavalry—Rallied his command and led it in the advance against the enemy's fortified position."



**GEORGE MORGAN**  
(JULY 15, 1892)

"Second Lieut. 3rd US Cavalry—Gallantly held his ground at a critical moment and fired upon the advancing enemy (hostile Indians) until he was disabled by a shot."



**CHARLES TAYLOR**  
(DEC. 16, 1892)

"First Sergeant Co. D 3rd US Cavalry—Gallantry in action."



## CLASSIC TRUE WEST

FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

**Editor's Note:** Historian Frederick W. Nolan, a friend of and contributor to *True West* for decades, is considered one of the foremost historians of Billy the Kid and the Old West. If you'd like to read more of Nolan's articles like "Ambushed on the Pecos" from the September 2013 issue, please go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com) and subscribe for full access to more than 67 years' worth of exciting issues of *True West*.

BY FREDERICK W. NOLAN

# AMBUSHED ON THE PECOS

THE COURAGEOUS LIFE AND DEATH OF OLIVER LOVING.

In 1867, beneath a bluff a few miles from Carlsbad, New Mexico, two Texas cattlemen—one of them a trail-hardened 52-year-old, the other a 23-year-old roughneck—were fighting for their lives, surrounded by a marauding party of Comanches. If recorded at all, such an event would have been no more than a blip on the historical calendar of the American West, but this one—and its aftermath—turned out to be one of the most amazing examples of courage, loyalty and sheer grit in all the annals of the frontier.

Oliver Loving spent 10 years on the trail, first driving cattle up the Shawnee Trail, then to Confederate forces along the Mississippi River in the Civil War and finally up his Goodnight-Loving Trail, which followed the Butterfield Overland Mail route, turning north at the Pecos, leading to Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and on to Denver, Colorado.

Courtesy Frederick Nolan



**K**entucky-born Oliver Loving was a remarkable cattleman-entrepreneur who, in 1858, partnered with John Durkee in taking a herd from Palo Pinto County in Texas to Chicago, Illinois, the very first such drive on the historical record. In 1859, he blazed another trail to Denver via Pueblo, Colorado, and throughout the Civil War, he supplied the Confederacy with beef. In 1866, he teamed up with a 30-year-old cattleman named Charles Goodnight, well over 20 years his junior.

They put together a herd of 2,000 and blazed a new trail up the Pecos River into New Mexico and on to Denver, Colorado. The following year, they started another herd west over the same route, striking the Pecos during the latter part of June. About 100 miles upriver, Loving traveled ahead of the herd on horseback in order to bid on the contracts, which were to be let in July.

Because Loving was impatient, even reckless, Goodnight not only insisted he be accompanied by one of Goodnight's top men, Arkansas-born herder Bill Wilson, who had already lost an arm sometime

during his 20-odd years, but also made Loving promise to ride only by night. After only two nights, however, Loving—who detested night riding—talked Wilson into changing tactics so they could proceed by daylight.

Loving probably didn't have to work too hard: by all accounts—including this

one—Wilson was a man ready to ride any river, with many stories spun about him. He was said (unreliably) to hold off a posse after one of his brothers, George, shot a sheriff in Palo Pinto County. The matter of his lost arm is also a moveable feast: it may have been bitten off by a mean horse before Wilson was five years old, or it may have been congenital. Another story claims a hay baler ripped it off, which would be historically inconsistent, since the injury happened before the 1860s.

Crossing the plain in broad daylight, the two riders, visible for miles, were spotted by a Comanche raiding party that came thundering after them. The cowmen made a four-mile run for the Pecos, spurring their horses over an incline and down to a sand dune at the foot of a bluff, where it formed



Colonel Goodnight Entering the Palo Duro, oil by Joe Beeler

Courtesy Altermann's Auction

a shallow cave open to view only from across the river. As the Comanches surrounded them, Loving and Wilson readied themselves for a fight to the death.

## Fighting For Their Lives

Wilson was armed with a revolving six-shot rifle and saddle holsters as well as his own cap-and-ball six-shooter, while Loving had pistols and a Henry rifle. The Comanches—Wilson estimated that they numbered several hundred—swarmed down the bluffs around them, but the first one who fired at the cowboys from across the river got shot by Loving, after which no others tried to open the ball.

Late in the evening, the drovers heard someone call from the bluff in Spanish. Realizing it could be a trap, but with the situation bordering on hopeless, Wilson took a chance and stepped up on the dune to parley, with Loving behind him, Henry rifle in hand, his holsters across his arm. As Wilson stepped into view, Indians hidden in a clump of *carrizo*, or cane, opened fire, with one of their bullets smashing through Loving's wrist and ploughing into his side. Wilson hastily fell back into the ditch, giving his attention to Loving. After staunching the bleeding, they readied themselves for a siege.

"The Comanches shot their arrows high into the air to make them fall at a sharp angle into the ditch,

while Wilson and Loving hugged close to the low but perpendicular wall of the washout, and the arrows either stuck in the sand above them or passed over their backs into the other bank," Goodnight told J. Evetts Haley in the 1920s. He would share the cowman's life story in his 1936 book.

Next, Goodnight recalled, the Comanches tried bombarding their quarry with gravel, but that didn't work either.

The evening wore into dusk; weak from loss of blood, Loving was racked with pain and fever. Wilson managed to get to the river and brought back a bootful of water for the suffering man, but Loving's condition worsened, and he implored Wilson to escape, if possible, and carry the story of his fate downstream to Goodnight and to his family. "I'll stand the Comanches off the best I can," he told Wilson, "but rather than be taken and tortured to death, I will shoot myself and fall into the river. If the Indians leave me and I find strength enough to travel, I'll head downstream a couple of miles and hide."

Wilson agreed to make the attempt. They calculated carefully; if he could hold out for a day and a half, he would have a good chance of meeting the advancing Goodnight.

"He spread their five six-shooters and Goodnight's rifle by Loving's sound arm, but took the Henry and its metallic cartridges, which would be unaffected by water, for to escape by the river was his only chance," Goodnight



The Comanche attack wounded Oliver Loving to the point that he needed his arm amputated. His partner during that attack, W.J. Wilson (above), was already cowboying with one arm—he lost it in childhood. Had Loving survived, Wilson would have proved a good ally in helping the cowman work around the loss.

Courtesy Frederick Nolan

said. "When the moon went down, he told Loving goodbye, moved to the mouth of the gully, and divesting himself of his clothing, hid his clothes in one place, and his knife, which dropped from his pocket, in another, all beneath the water. He pulled off everything but his hat, drawers and undershirt, which he hoped would protect him from the sun, and slipped into the treacherous stream."

## A Swim For Survival

The river was quite sandy and difficult to swim in, Wilson recalled, "so I had to pull off all of my clothes except my hat, shirt and breeches."



This map of southern New Mexico shows the location "7 miles below Carlsbad where Loving had fight," as identified by Charles Goodnight.

Courtesy Haley History Center in Midland, Texas

He nearly drowned, trying to hold on to the rifle with his one hand, so he "leaned it up against the bank of the river, under the water, where the Comanches would not find it," Wilson said. "Then I went down the river about a hundred yards, and saw an Indian sitting on his horse out in the river, with the water almost over the horse's back. He was sitting there splashing the water with his foot, just playing. I got under some smart weeds and drifted by until I got far enough below the Indian where I could get out. Then I made a three days' march barefooted. Everything in that country had stickers in it. On my way I picked up the small end of

This illustration from *The Great Cattle Trail*, the 1894 book written by Edward S. Ellis, depicts a Comanche attack on two lone cowboys, similar to that which unfolded for Loving and Wilson. They at least had the protection of a bluff; with their horses snatched by the Comanches, they could not rely on their horses as shields like these cowboys did.

True West Archives



a tepee pole which I used for a walking stick.”

On the last night of his slow and painful journey, he was followed by wolves all night. “I would give out, just like a horse, and lay down in the road and drop off to sleep and when I would awaken the wolves would be all around me, snapping and snarling. I would take up that stick, knock the wolves away, get started again and the wolves would follow behind. I kept that up until daylight, when the wolves quit me,” Wilson recalled. “About 12 o’clock on that last day, I crossed a little mountain and knew the boys ought to be right in there somewhere with the cattle. I found a little place, a sort of cave, that afforded protection from the sun, and I could go no further [sic]. After a short time the boys came along with the cattle and found me.”

During their earlier drive to Denver, Loving and Goodnight had discovered a valley about two miles long and a mile wide close to the New Mexico line, near the upper end of which were some gravel hills; in one of them, a cave extended back 10 or 15 feet, which they marked as a splendid hiding place for Comanches planning a surprise attack.

“[I] was...watching carefully for Indians,” Goodnight remembered, “suspecting they might be behind the hill, [when] I saw a man come out of the cave and go back into it.”

Goodnight gave orders for the herd to be held and for the men to be ready for a fight. When Wilson came out of the cave, a quarter of a mile away, and gave the old frontier signal, ‘Come here,’ Goodnight said he “knew positively that it was Wilson, and...I immediately put the horse down to full speed and went to him. For a few moments he seemed unable to talk, probably overwhelmed with emotion,

knowing his life was saved at last.”

With what was left of his underwear, saturated with red sediment from the river, Wilson was the “most terrible object I ever saw,” Goodnight said. “His eyes were wild and bloodshot, his feet were swollen beyond all reason, and every step he took left blood in the track. I inquired about Loving, but he could scarcely make a reply, and what he did mutter was entirely unintelligible. I put him on my horse and got him to the herd as soon as possible...I tore up a blanket, wet it, wrapped his feet to remove the fever and then made him a light meal of gruel, which I gave him at intervals for about an hour. By then he was perfectly himself. I asked him for particulars and he told me in detail of the trip and the attack by the Indians.

“When Wilson finished his story, I decided to start immediately.... We rode the rest of the evening and all that night. It not only rained, but it rained torrents, and was so dark at times we were forced to halt. When I reached the place where Wilson told me he had left the trail, I recognized it easily from his description, although the plains were unmarked, or would have appeared so to the untrained. Besides his description, the place was distinguished by the fact that a bunch of Comanches had again come out of the mountains and passed over the same trail they had taken when chasing the two men. Their tracks seemed as fresh as ours, and we supposed they were under the bluffs still trying to get Mr. Loving...[but] when we got to the top of the bluff, there was not an Indian in sight.

“In a moment, I found where Mr. Loving had been in the ditch, which was now half filled with stones, and its banks perforated with probably a hundred arrow shafts, though the Indians had gathered the arrow[head]s before leaving. I knew they had not got him, as there was ample



This photo of a young Charles Goodnight gives us a good idea of how the 31-year-old looked at the time of the Comanche attack that led to the death of his partner. No longer would the pair ride together, with their herd of Texas Longhorns, up the trail they had blazed the year before, the same trail we remember today as the Goodnight-Loving Trail.

Courtesy Charles Goodnight Historical Center in Claude, Texas

evidence that they had been hunting for him everywhere. We searched down the river...but...no tracks could be found. I believed he had carried out his threat; that he had shot himself and floated down the river, the torrent obliterating all traces. After dark the party sadly made its way back to the herd and again took the trail.”

But Loving was not dead.

## Loving’s Courageous Crossing

After Wilson left, the Comanches had continued to shower Loving’s position with rocks, and they tunneled through the dune to within a few feet of where he lay, but lacked the courage to get closer. Racked with hunger and the fever of his wounds, he somehow managed to keep his attackers at bay, but few men could endure a shot-shattered wrist and three foodless days and sleepless nights without collapse. In spite of his age, however, Loving was blessed with an iron constitution. When no help showed up, he followed Wilson’s lead. On the third night, he crawled into the water and started upstream, instead of downstream, hoping to reach the trail crossing [present-day Carlsbad] about six miles above, where some passerby might help him.

“At last he gained the crossing and lay down in the shade...about four feet above the water,” Goodnight told Haley. “He attempted to shoot some birds that came into the trees, but the river had soaked his powder and caps, and the guns were useless. He tried to eat his buckskin gloves, but could not kindle a fire to parch them to a crisp, and again settled back to wait. For two days and nights he stayed there, too



This view of the Pecos River shows the bluff a few miles from Carlsbad, New Mexico, where Oliver Loving and W.J. Wilson were surrounded by Comanches. Although Loving survived the battle, he died soon after, on September 25, from complications after his amputation surgery. In the inset is the 55-year-old's grave marker in Weatherford, Texas.

Courtesy James Owen of Hobbs, New Mexico



weak to move, but satisfying his thirst by tying his handkerchief to a stick and dipping it in the river below. On the third day his superb endurance broke and he sank into a stupor.

"Three Mexicans and a German boy, in a wagon drawn by three yoke of oxen, passing through on their way to Texas, stopped at the crossing to prepare their dinner. The boy...found Loving, apparently asleep.... He was taken to the wagon, where the Mexicans prepared him some *atole*, similar to our corn meal mush...after which he offered them \$250 to take him to Sumner, about 150 miles away."

Meanwhile, Goodnight's herd kept moving north. "About two weeks after this," Wilson said, "we met a party coming from Fort Sumner, and they told us Loving was at Fort Sumner. The bullet which had penetrated his side did not prove fatal, and the next night after I had left him, he got into the river and drifted by the Indians as I had done, crawled out and lay in the weeds all the next day. The following night he made his way to the road where it struck the river, hoping to find somebody traveling that way. He remained there for five days, being without anything to eat for seven days. Finally some Mexicans came along and he hired them to take him to Fort Sumner."

Some 30 miles from Fort Sumner, a courier brought Goodnight the news that although Loving was alive, gangrene had set in and his arm needed to be amputated. "Loving did not want the operation performed unless I was there," Goodnight said, "as he feared he might not survive it.... The old doctor was in Santa Fe...and the young doctor put me off from day to day with

various excuses.... Fortunately I found him at the hospital alone, and told him briefly and in no uncertain words that I presumed he was putting me off because we were rebels, and that he must now operate or make wounds on me."

The doctor performed the amputation, and Loving seemed to be doing well. Just to be on the safe side, Goodnight paid a man (reportedly Winfield Scott Moore) \$500 to ride to Las Vegas and bring back Dr. John H. Shout; they arrived two days later only to find out that Loving had suffered a relapse. "In spite of neglect, starvation and punishment he lived for 22 days, perfectly rational to the last, [when] his mind turned back to Texas," Goodnight recalled, "and at last he said, 'I regret to have to be laid away in a foreign country.' I assured him that he need have no fears, that I would see his remains were laid in the cemetery at home [in Weatherford, Texas]. He felt that this would be impossible, but I told him it would be done."

Loving died on September 25, 1867, and his body was temporarily buried in a simple wooden casket at Fort Sumner. Four months later, Goodnight returned.

### Riding Shotgun Over a Tin Casket

Transporting the remains of his friend back to Texas would be a daunting task, but the cattleman was determined to keep his promise. Gathering scattered oil cans from about the fort, his cowboys beat them out, soldered them together and made an immense tin casket. Inside this, they placed the rough, wooden one, several inches of

powdered charcoal packed around it, sealed the tin lid and crated the whole in lumber. They lifted a wagon bed from its bolsters and carefully loaded the sarcophagus on to it. On February 8, 1868, with six big mules strung out in harness, the rough-hewn cowmen from Texas rode ahead and behind the strangest and most affecting funeral cavalcade in the history of the cow country, bringing Oliver Loving home. "The Pecos—the graveyard of the cowman's hopes," Goodnight humanized the bleak terrain.

"Down the relentless Pecos and across the implacable Plains, the [388-mile] journey was singularly peaceful," Goodnight told Haley. "Through miles of grazing buffaloes, they approached the Cross Timbers, reached the settlements and at last delivered the body to the Masonic Lodge at Weatherford, Texas, where it was buried [in Greenwood Cemetery] with fraternal honors."



**Frederick W. Nolan** is one of the foremost authorities on Billy the Kid and the general history of the American West. For more on Charles Goodnight, he recommends reading J. Marvin Hunter's *The Trail Drivers of Texas* (the first book to feature Goodnight and Wilson's stories) and J. Evetts Haley's biography, *Charles Goodnight, Cowman and Plainsman*.

## TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

For the first time ever, every issue of *True West* magazine is now online, including Frederick W. Nolan's original, unabridged article as it appeared in the September 2013 issue. To learn more about how you can read all of Nolan's articles and subscribe to True West Archives, go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com).  
**Our past awaits you!**

BY CANDY MOULTON

# History, Haunts and Hotels

*Old West adventures await across the Cowboy State's colorful Carbon County.*

**Q**uite likely the most gruesome artifact on exhibit in any museum in Wyoming (maybe the West) is the pair of shoes at the Carbon County Museum in Rawlins. They might appear to be just simple leather shoes, and they are...except that the leather is the skin of Big Nose George Parrott.

The skinning came after the hanging from a telegraph pole in front of the Hugus Store on Front Street in Rawlins...and that happened after Parrott hit Sheriff James G. Rankin over the head with a pair of shackles and then escaped from the county jail.

It all started in 1878 when Parrott, Dutch Charley Burris, and some accomplices attempted to derail a Union Pacific train near the coal mining town of Carbon. They weren't successful, but the effort earned the attention of Carbon County Deputy Sheriffs Tip Vincent and Robert Widdowfield, who pursued the outlaws right into an ambush on the west side of Elk Mountain. Vincent and Widdowfield were the first two lawmen to die in the line of duty in Wyoming Territory, and after their killing, Parrott and Burris struck out north to Hole-in-the-Wall country and eventually to Montana, where they were arrested two years later.

Brought back to Carbon County, Burris was dragged off a train near Carbon and hanged. Parrott went to trial and was sentenced to death, but he escaped before his execution date. He was quickly recaptured and hanged and then skinned by the doctor who did the autopsy on his body. (There is more to his story that you can learn at the Carbon County Museum!)

Parrott was not the only outlaw to ride through Carbon County. Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch frequented the Little Snake River



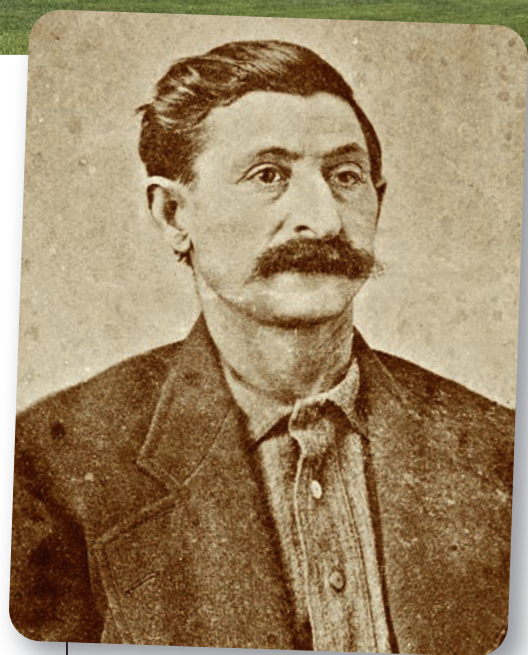
When on a history tour of Carbon County, Wyoming, a key stop is Encampment's Grand Encampment Museum, a superior collection of 14 relocated and restored mining camp buildings.

*Photo by Candy Moulton*

Valley, which was isolated and, more importantly, strategically located between Hole-in-the-Wall and Brown's Park—both regular hangouts for the gang. The Gaddis-Matthews House in Baggs is a tangible reminder of the connections Cassidy and the Wild Bunch had to the area.

## Little Snake River

The oldest building at the Little Snake River Museum in Savery is a two-story hand-hewn log cabin built in 1873 by Jim Baker, an old mountain man with ties to the Shoshone tribe. The museum opened a new sheep industry exhibit in 2020 and has a number of other historic structures from ranches and homesteads. The museum holds



Visitors at the Carbon County Museum in Rawlins, Wyoming, will enjoy the exhibits on the diverse history of Wyoming, including the life and death of outlaw Big Nose George Parrott.

*George Parrott photo courtesy True West Archives*



In 1888, the Strobridge Family hired W.T. Morgan to build the grandest home in Savery in the Little Snake River Valley. Today, it is one of eight historic frontier houses and cabins at the Snake River Museum.

Courtesy Little Snake River Museum



Hot springs have soothed travelers at the Saratoga Resort and Spa since it was a log cabin in 1877; today's guests of the resort can also relax in smaller pools sheltered by tipis.

Images Courtesy Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce

regular history programs and annually hosts a trek to local historic sites.

Kit Carson and John C. Fremont crossed the Sierra Madre between Savery and Encampment in 1843, and this region was filled with workers from 1896 to 1908, when the Grand Encampment Copper District swelled following the discovery of copper ore by Ed Haggarty, a shepherd and prospector. Original buildings and artifacts from the mining camps, tie camps, the town of Grand Encampment and surrounding communities (many of them now ghost towns), are the foundation of the Grand Encampment Museum that has a one-room school, a two-story out-house and a forest fire lookout tower. This year the museum hosts Bob Boze Bell in its *True West* History Symposium (June 11 and 12). Other speakers include Johnny D. Boggs, Linda Wommack and David Heska Wanbli Weiden.

### Saratoga's Hot Springs

Originally known as Warm Springs, Saratoga became a neutral area for tribes in the 19th century as they came to the area to soak in the natural hot mineral springs. Visitors still have a chance to enjoy the hot pools at the free Hobo Pool, located so close to the North Platte River that some who soak take a plunge

into the cold river water as part of their "treatment," just like the Indians used to do. Another hot springs soak is possible at the Saratoga Inn Resort in its medium-sized swimming pool and smaller soaking pools sheltered by Indian tipis.

The Wolf Hotel in downtown Saratoga is a rare gem. It once changed ownership in a poker game, but the Campbell family bought it decades ago and restored it to Victorian grandeur. The rooms are uniquely decorated (one is now named for Joe Pickett, the Wyoming game warden created by local author C. J. Box), the bar is small and inviting, and the dining is among the best in the county.

### Elk Mountain

The killing of Tip Vincent and Robert Widdowfield by Big Nose George Parrot and his associates took place on the west side of Elk Mountain. It took a sheriff's search party nine days to find the two lawmen. Traveling today from Saratoga to Elk Mountain, take the Rattle Snake Pass Road which passes through the country where the lawmen met their end. This route was used by Cherokee Indians traveling to California after 1850, and it became a part of the Overland Trail.

In 1862, the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry established Fort Halleck, named for Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, as one of a series of forts/stations situated to protect the Overland Trail, which had replaced the more northerly Oregon-California trails as the major route linking East and West. Jack Slade worked for a time at Fort Halleck as the superintendent of the Overland stage line. The fort on the northside foothills of Elk Mountain was a tough assignment in winter due to deep snow and sometimes brutal winds.

While Elk Mountain is a very small town today, it has an excellent historic property—The Elk Mountain Hotel—where you'll find a quiet room and a good meal. This town has ranch roots, but the nearby ghost town of Carbon was a mining and railroad town, the first coal town established on the Union Pacific Line in Wyoming. One early history says in 1869 the houses "sprang up as from the earth itself, as miners dug caves into the side of the nearby ravine and covered the fronts with board and earth, with a stovepipe poked through a hole in the top of each roof."

More substantial homes and businesses quickly followed, and the *Black Diamond* newspaper dished the news of the camp. Miners flocked to the region to dig coal, producing an



estimated 4.7 million tons from 1868 to 1902. There are multiple factors for the demise of Carbon. A cholera epidemic devastated many families, but the decision by the Union Pacific to move its main line farther north was the final blow. The new tracks spawned the coal-mining town of Hanna, and most people in Carbon moved there. (They even took some of the buildings with them.) The Hanna Basin Museum interprets the area's coal-mining history, especially the tragic 1903 mine explosion that killed 171 miners.

### Medicine Bow

When Owen Wister visited Medicine Bow in 1885, he wrote in his journal a passage that later appeared almost verbatim in his classic novel *The Virginian*: "This place is called a town... Medicine Bow, Wyoming, consists of 1 depot house and baggage room, 1 Coal shooter, 1 water tank, 1 store, 2 eating houses, 1 Billiard hall, 6 Shanties, 8 Gents and Ladies Walks, 2 Tool houses, 1 Feed Stable, 5 Too late for classification, 29 Buildings in all."

Owen Wister (above) used actual Wyoming locations, including Medicine Bow, in his seminal Western novel *The Virginian*. Today, the town has not grown much larger than in Wister's day, but guests of the Virginian Hotel can enjoy a drink in the historic bar (above left) and a meal in the Owen Wister Dining Room.

Photo of Owen Wister Courtesy Library of Congress/  
Photo of Virginian Hotel Bar by Candy Moulton



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# A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

When you visit today, you'll see that the Bow is little changed.

Wister also said Medicine Bow appeared to be "Strewn there by the wind." Yep! That still fits, so hold on to your hat.

Walking into the Virginian Hotel is like stepping back in time. The bar is almost a history exhibit with its collection of rodeo, ranching, cowboy and other historic photos on the walls, including a large original print of the Vern Wood photograph of the famous wild horse Desert Dust. A lunch counter and dining area with big booths are casual, but the Owen Wister Dining room is elegantly decorated in rich red with white linen, crystal and silver décor. The rooms in the main hotel include the Owen Wister Suite.

Union Pacific trains rumble routinely through the town (the tracks are across the street/U.S. Highway 30) from the Virginian. The former Union Pacific Depot has been converted into the town's museum, which also has a UP caboose, and the small Owen Wister Cabin. ❏

**Candy Moulton** is a lifelong resident of Carbon County and has written several books highlighting the history of the area. Come visit her at the *True West* History Symposium in Encampment in June.

## FORT STEELE STATE HISTORIC SITE

In 1879, when Ute Indians revolted against the Indian agency managed by Nathan Meeker in northwest Colorado, perpetrating what became known as the Meeker Massacre, soldiers under the command of Maj. Thomas Thornburg rode from their post at Fort Steele to provide relief to the agency. Those troops encountered angry Utes and were themselves attacked in a battle that became a siege. Fort Steele was located adjacent to the North Platte River on a 36-square-mile military reservation with most buildings constructed of logs hauled in from Elk Mountain or floated down the North Platte River from camps in the Sierra Madre.

Fort Steele had adequate quarters for five companies of soldiers. Buildings also included a library, storehouse for the quartermaster and commissary, stables, shops for carpenters, a blacksmith, bakery, a granary and an area for laundresses. Once the Union Pacific Railroad was in place, the fort was a strategic supply location. Foundations and crumbling ruins of some of the buildings remain at the state historic site, located just off Interstate 80 east of Sinclair.



Fort Steele State Historic Site,  
1-80 East of Sinclair, Wyoming

Courtesy Wyoming Dept. of Tourism

## GOOD EATS AND SLEEPS

**GOOD GRUB:** *Su Casa, Sinclair; West End Café, Rawlins; Buck's Sports Grill, Rawlins; Cowboy Inn, Baggs; The Divide, Encampment; Hotel Wolf, Saratoga; Bella's Bistro, Saratoga; Saratoga Sandwich Shop, Saratoga*

**GOOD LODGING:** *Spirit West River Lodge, Encampment; Hotel Wolf, Saratoga; Saratoga Inn Resort, Saratoga; Elk Mountain Hotel, Elk Mountain; Virginian Hotel, Medicine Bow; Best Western Cotton Tree, Rawlins*

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## Blood on the Trail

The latest biography of Daniel Boone, plus new bios of Doc Holliday and Buffalo Bill, and histories of the Chiricahuas and California good-time girls.

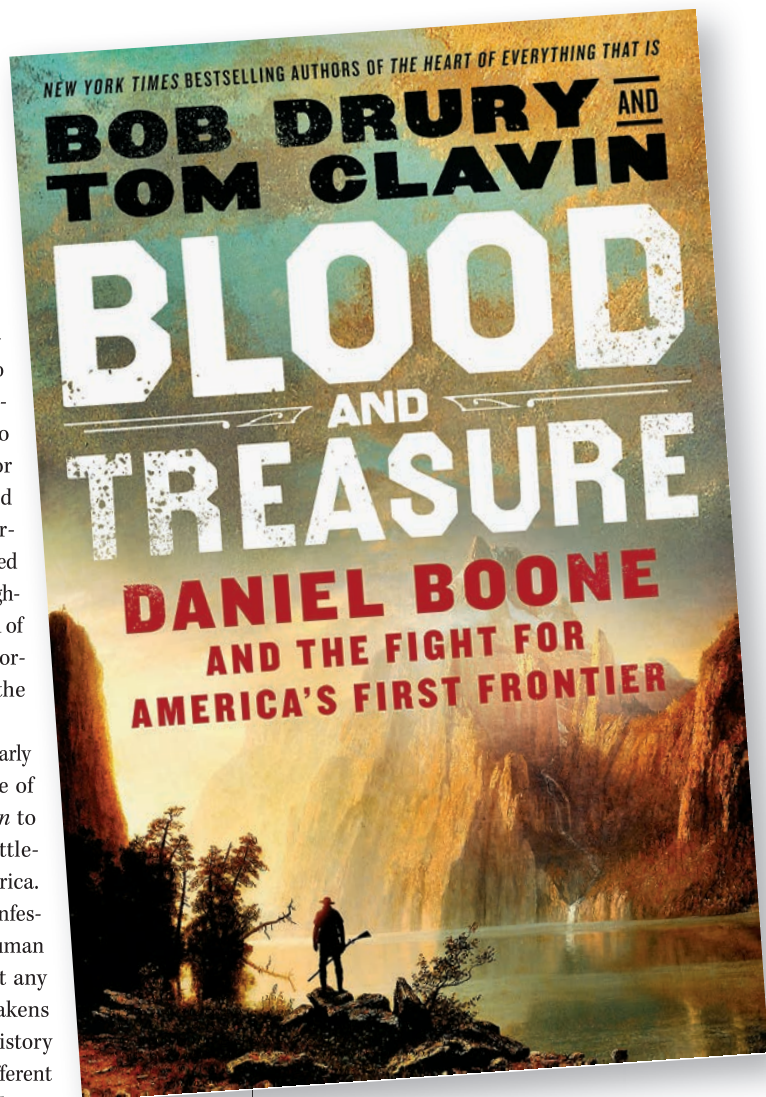
**B**ob Drury and Tom Clavin make an excellent writing team and have found success in recent years with their creative collaboration, including their best seller *The Heart of Everything That Is: The Untold Story of Red Cloud, An American Legend* (2013). Most recently they have tackled together the American Revolution with *Valley Forge* (2018) and World War II with *Lucky 666: The Impossible Mission That Changed the War in the Pacific* (2016). I am not sure why they decided to return to American 18th- and early-19th-century history with *Blood and Treasure: Daniel Boone and the Fight for America's First Frontier* (St. Martin's Press, \$20.99), but it might have been that together and separately they have found success in big-concept, narrative popular history books and biographies that toggle between different centuries of America's past, and can be broadly marketed to hit target audiences.

Readers of *Blood and Treasure* who are not familiar with Daniel Boone, or have not read another biography of the legendary American frontiersman, will walk away with a mixed message: Is it a biography of Daniel Boone or an amalgamated condemnation of Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis, American-Indian relations in the New World (although the Spanish, French and Portuguese receive little coverage) and Euro-imperial conquest of the New World? As a historian, I prefer my biographies straight-up, and this is definitely not what readers will discover in the pages of Drury and Clavin's *Blood and Treasure*. I know they have a good formula going at St. Martin's Press, and I applaud them for their success and notoriety, but they need to pull back, in my opinion, to

what made them successful in the first place: good solid, popular history that avoids political correctness and over-contextualizing. I also believe that if publishers are not going to include footnotes or endnotes, they should not add little asterisked, briefly annotated authors' notes throughout the book instead of finding a way to incorporate them into the narrative.

I was also particularly offended by the use of the word *infestation* to describe white settlement in North America. I believe the use of *infestation* to describe human beings anywhere at any time in history weakens the narrative of a history book. Choosing a different noun—like the word *invasion* or something similar—that does not carry such a history of prejudice, is more appropriate and would not have detracted from Drury and Clavin's outstanding storytelling.

I do recommend *True West* readers continue to support and read Drury and Clavin, including *Blood and Treasure*, despite my critique.



They are a successful for a reason: they write excellent historical narrative and are extremely adept at finding great topics and subjects to cover. I am always eager for their next book, whether written together and individually.

—Stuart Rosebrook



— Photo by Robert Ray —

## Western Writers of America 2021 Spur Award-Winners

Robert M. Utey's *The Last Sovereigns: Sitting Bull and the Resistance of the Free Lakotas*, published by the University of Nebraska Press, won for Best Historical Nonfiction. It is the 91-year-old "Dean of Western History's" fourth Spur.

Winners and finalists are scheduled to be honored June 16-19.

## Congratulations to this year's winners in the following categories:

**Best Historical Nonfiction:** *The Last Sovereigns: Sitting Bull and the Resistance of the Free Lakotas* by Robert M. Utey (University of Nebraska Press)

**Biography:** *Tecumseh and the Prophet: The Shawnee Brothers Who Defied a Nation* by Peter Cozzens (Alfred A. Knopf)

**Mass-Market Paperback Novel:** *A Thousand Texas Longhorns* by Johnny D. Boggs (Pinnacle/Kensington)

**Historical Novel:** *All Things Left Wild* by James Wade (Blackstone Publishing)

**Romance Novel:** *Midnight's Whisperer* by Tom Lowe (Kingsbridge Entertainment)

**Traditional Novel:** *Like Rum-Drunk Angels* by Tyler Enfield (Goose Lane Publications)

**Short Nonfiction:** A three-part series "Daniel Boone's Life in the Far West: An Inquiry into his Alleged Yellowstone Hunt" by Ted Franklin Belue (*Muzzleloader* magazine)

**Documentary Script:** *Charlie Russell's Old West* by Paul Zalis (Montana PBS).

**First Novel:** *Winter Counts* by David Heska Wanbli Weiden (Echo/HarperCollins)

**First Nonfiction Book:** Laura J. Arata's *Race and the Wild West: Sarah Bickford, the Montana Vigilantes, and the Tourism of Decline, 1870-1930*

For a complete list of winners and finalists in all categories, visit [WesternWriters.org](http://WesternWriters.org).

—Stuart Rosebrook

# LEE MARTIN

**COMING SOON ON DVD, TWO NEW WESTERN FILMS, written by Lee Martin, and produced and directed by Michael Feifer:**

**THE SIEGE AT RHYKER'S STATION**, filmed in the mountains of Southern California in November of 2020. Stars include Brock Harris, Skylar White, Peter Sherayko, Jay Pickett, David Deluise, Michael Welch, Brock Burnett, Caia Coley,, Keikilani Grune, Cam Gigandet, and the legendary Bruce Dern.

"A powerful clan has a vast cattle empire and runs rough shod over New Mexico Territory, but when one's terrified, runaway bride is rescued and taken to a relay station by an old trader and a mysterious young saddle tramp with a fast draw, the clan surrounds it with a deadly siege."

**THE DESPERATE RIDERS**, which Michael Feifer just wrapped up in Tennessee, will follow. Stars include Vanessa Evigan, Drew Waters, Sam Ashby, Cowboy Troy, Victoria Pratt, Rob Mayes, and with Trace Adkins and Tom Berenger.

"A mysterious gunfighter-preacher, driven by a lost love, leads a small party of rescuers, including a teenage boy and a young Texas woman with deadly aim, on a wild ride through the mountains to save kidnaped women with a violent climax where secrets are revealed."

Lee Martin novels of both films will be published at a future date.

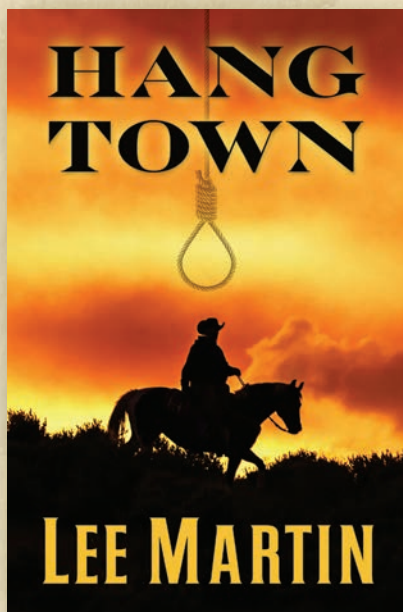
Lee Martin's 25th Western novel **HANG TOWN** (also being marketed as a screenplay) has already received rave reviews.

"When a young deputy learns the man who beat him into to running away at the age of twelve was not his father, and that his birth father, just out of prison, is headed for revenge at Hang Town, he rides hard to reach vigilante country where a hanged sheriff's daughter fights back."

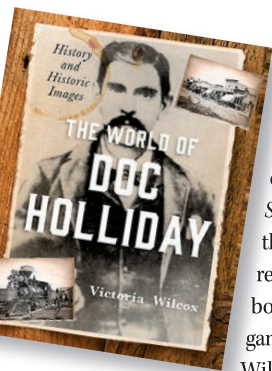
**SHADOW ON THE MESA:** While a hired gun for the cattlemen, Wes learns his Arapaho mother

was murdered. He also learns that his long lost white father is still alive, rich with a family, and may have hired the killer. Wes starts out on a trail for vengeance against his own father.

Martin also wrote the script for the movie, starring Kevin Sorbo, which won the Wrangler Award given by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.



Look for all of Lee Martin's 25 Westerns at **AMAZON** or wherever books are sold. Many are on audio with **BOOKS IN MOTION**.



### Doc in Life and Images

Victoria Wilcox, author of the celebrated *Southern Son* trilogy of books about the life of Doc Holliday, has released her first nonfiction book on the dentist turned gambler. Packed full of images, Wilcox's *The World of Doc*

*Holliday: History and Historic Images* (TwoDot, \$25.50) follows Holliday's life from his earliest years in Georgia through the rowdy Kansas cow-towns and into the Rocky Mountain West. Wilcox admits that her book is a different kind of history on Holliday, however. "[It is] a travelogue of his adventures, filled with images and anecdotes about the people and places that filled his world." Wilcox is right. Reading *The World of Doc Holliday* sets the reader on an adventure, and not since Bob Boze Bell's *The Illustrated Life and Times of Doc Holliday* (1993) has there been a book such as this to complement the stout biographies of Holliday such as Dr. Gary L. Roberts's monumental *Doc Holliday: The Life and Legend* (2007).

—Erik J. Wright, author of *West of Hell: The Badmen, Hardcases & Intrepid Lawmen Who Made the West Wild*

### A Man of the People

William F. Cody created Buffalo Bill's Wild West for general audiences. As Kellen Cutsforth explains in his "Introduction," *Buffalo Bill and the Birth of American Celebrity* (TwoDot Books, \$29.95) is not an academic treatise. Like Buffalo Bill's Wild West, it is a book for general audiences. As such, it provides a very readable narrative that keeps the reader's attention from beginning to end. Despite its conversational style, the book does not drop the ball when it comes to providing solid information about

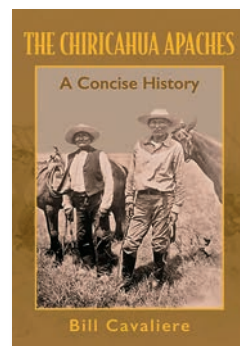


Buffalo Bill and his Wild West. A relatively short book, it could be considered an introduction to Buffalo Bill, providing an overview of his life that will stimulate the reader to seek out some of the more in-depth examinations contained in Cutsforth's bibliography.

—Steve Friesen, author of *Buffalo Bill: Scout, Showman, Visionary*

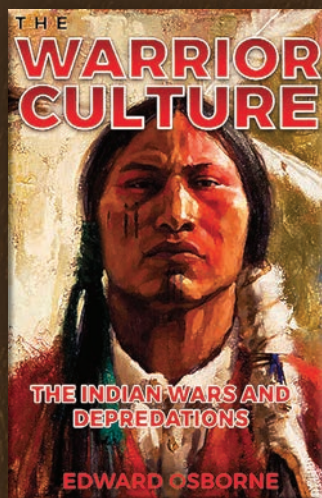
### Cochise's People of the Southwest

Bill Cavaliere's *The Chiricahua Apaches: A Concise History* (Herpetological Publishing, \$15.95), an easy-to-read history of the Chiricahua Wars includes a graphic account of almost every incident and battle. Remaining true to the history, the account is balanced showing the concerns of and suffering experienced by both sides. A friend of historian Ed Sweeney, Cavaliere reflects his respect for the Apaches and their leaders, especially those in the family of Cochise. While historians might fault the work for failing to expound at length on causes of conflict, this is a wonderful book for those with a casual interest in the Chiricahuas and an excellent quick reference for the serious historian who needs to keep his timeline straight. There are many color photos of the land where these people lived as well as historic photos.



—Doug Hocking, author of *Tom Jeffords: Friend of Cochise*

# EDWARD OSBORNE



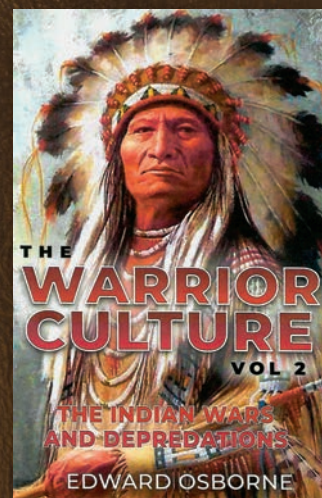
Vol. 1

These two books are bold and graphic views of the Indian Wars between the 1860's and 1890's. They are eye-opening and gut wrenching narratives.

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Photo by Jane Little Botkin



## AWARD WINNING TEXAS AUTHOR SHARES HER LOVE OF WESTERN HISTORY

A two-time Spur Award-winner, Jane Little Botkin turned to historical investigation and writing after 30 years of teaching English to high school seniors. Though a lover of Texana (her Western library consists of 350 volumes), her own books have been biographical, often involving Western labor. Recently released is *The Girl Who Dared to Defy: Jane Street and the Rebel Maids of Denver*. Botkin is currently researching Wyoming lawman Hank Boedeker and his relationship with Butch Cassidy. Here are five books she recommends:

- 1 ***A Darkness Lit by Heroes: The Granite Mountain-Speculator Mine Disaster of 1917*** by Doug Ammons (Water Nymph Press): This award-winning narrative, using newly discovered eyewitness testimonies, rebuts traditional stories about the worst hard-rock mining accident in American history.
- 2 ***Border: The U.S.-Mexico Line*** by Leon Claire Metz (Mangan Books): What Metz calls an "untold story of lines drawn in water, sand, and blood, of an intrepid, durable people," this historical accounting is a timely contextual study for the 21st century.
- 3 ***Copper Camp: The Lusty Story of Butte*** by the Writers Project of Montana (Montana State Dept.): *Copper Camp* contains stories about Butte

during the height of copper mining in the late 1800s and early 1900s, providing rich context for authors and lovers of Montana history.

- 4 ***The Corpse on Boomerang Road: Telluride's War on Labor 1899-1908*** by MaryJoy Martin (Western Reflections Publishing Company): Martin's research reveals that the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) was not the mythological union of villains and assassins during Colorado's labor wars.
- 5 ***The Women's West*** by Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson (University of Oklahoma Press): This collection of articles rejects one aspect of traditional Western history on the 19th-century frontier. Here, pioneer women are actors in their own lives, not passive participants.



## Golden Girls

Not every prostitute in Gold Rush California lived a difficult life. Certainly, many lived in squalid conditions and died young, but Jan McKell Collins's *Good Time Girls of California* (TwoDot, \$19.95) wore fancy dresses and caused

a stir with the "proper" women who wanted dresses as beautiful as what the "harlots" wore. With the Gold Rush came thousands of miners and right behind them came women looking to make a better life and grand profit. *Good Time Girls* explores the lives of several of the better-known women, including Cora Phillips, and a few lesser-known prostitutes, including the Chinese sex workers, whose roles in this illicit trade help shape our understanding of the American West. This well-researched, entertaining look at women in the world's oldest profession, is well worth a place on your shelf.

—Melody Groves, author of *When Outlaws Wore Badges*



# Action-Packed TALES OF THE American Frontier

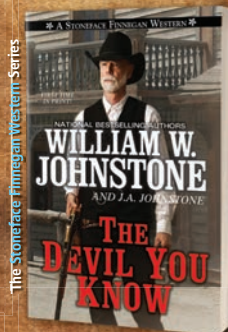
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BY STUART ROSEBROOK

# Telling Tales Out West

Short story and essay collections are great for summer reading.

With the recent passing of Larry McMurtry (see Johnny D. Boggs's memorial, page 40) and the early April release of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's PBS series *Ernest Hemingway*, we have been reminded of the power of well-written short stories and essays. Both Pulitzer Prize-winners, McMurtry and Hemingway are regarded as two of the best 20th-century American writers, although most critics would agree that McMurtry's body of work as an essayist surpasses Hemingway's nonfiction, and Hemingway is considered one of the greatest short-story authors, a category in which McMurtry rarely, if ever, wrote. So where do you start this summer? Why not with Hemingway's *Men Without Women* (Scribner) and McMurtry's *Roads: Driving America's Great Highways*

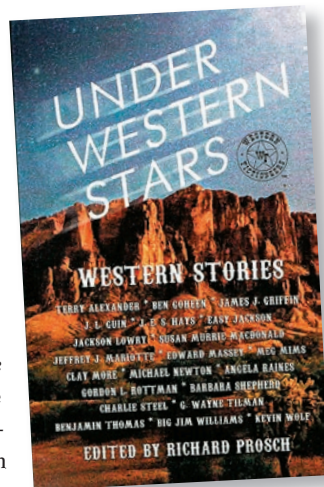
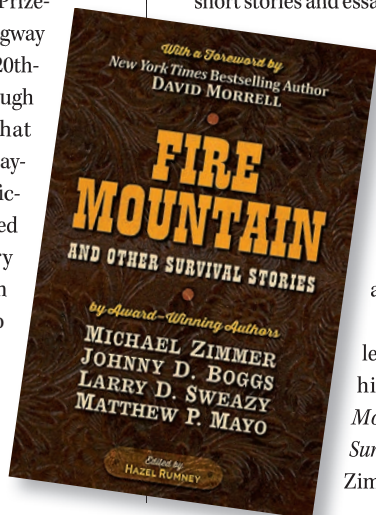
(Simon & Schuster). Guaranteed, you will soon have more Hemingway and McMurtry on your shelves waiting to read this fall!

Currently, we have to thank Western publishers for a recent renaissance in releasing Western short stories and essays. The two short forms of fiction and nonfiction are perfect to throw in your bag or backpack during summer travel, and for modern, minimalist travelers, most of these collections can be read as e-books.

The most recent collection of short stories to hit my desk is *Fire Mountain and Other Survival Stories* by Michael Zimmer, Johnny D. Boggs,

Larry D. Sweazy and Matthew P. Mayo (FiveStar). Edited by Hazel Rumney, with a foreword by David Morrell, the book will be released on June 23. A great companion to *Fire Mountain* is Five Star's 2020 collection of Western short stories,

*Hobnail and Other Frontier Stories: A Century of the American Frontier*, also edited by Rumney. Also from 2020 is Richard Prosch's finely edited *Under Western Stars: Stories by the Western Fictioneers* (Western Fictioneers), which earned a WWA Spur Award in Short Fiction for Kevin



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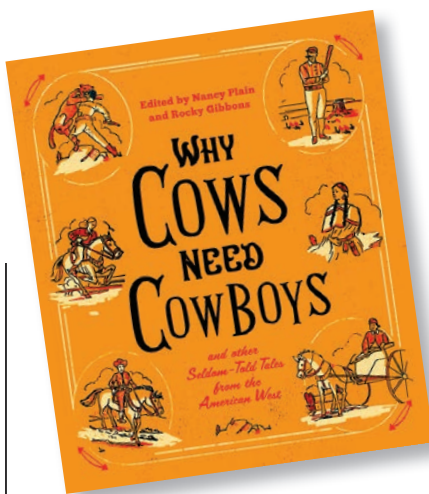
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Wolf's "Belthanger." From Wolfpack, I also recommend John D. Nesbitt's recently published *West of Dancing Rock & Other Western Stories*.

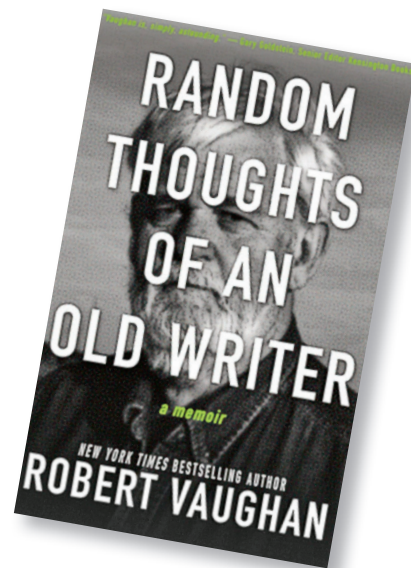
I also have to tout the spectacularly illustrated *Men's Adventure Quarterly: The Most Wanted Wild West Issue, Volume 1* edited by Robert Deis and Bill Cunningham with guest editor Paul Bishop (Subtropic Productions, LLC). If you love the graphic, over-the-top fiction and nonfiction from vintage men's adventure magazines, then this is one fun collectible you need to read this summer.

For fans of short form Western nonfiction, hot off the press and ready for summertime R&R is



*Why Cows Need Cowboys and Other Seldom-Told Tales from the American West* edited by Nancy Plain and Rachelle "Rocky" Gibbons (TwoDot). Contributors are a who's-who from Western Writers of America and the volume's essays cover the arc of history from ancient times to the present.

Two other timely books of essays just published on

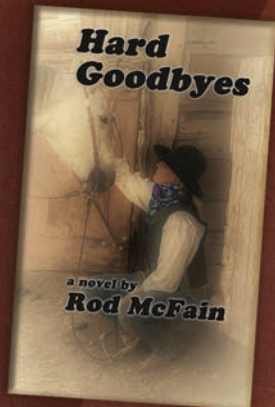


writing and the West are perfect for fans of McMurtry's essays: Robert Vaughan's *Random Thoughts of an Old Writer: A Memoir* (Wolfpack) and Rick Bass's *Fortunate Son, Selected Essays from the Lone Star State* (University of New Mexico Press).

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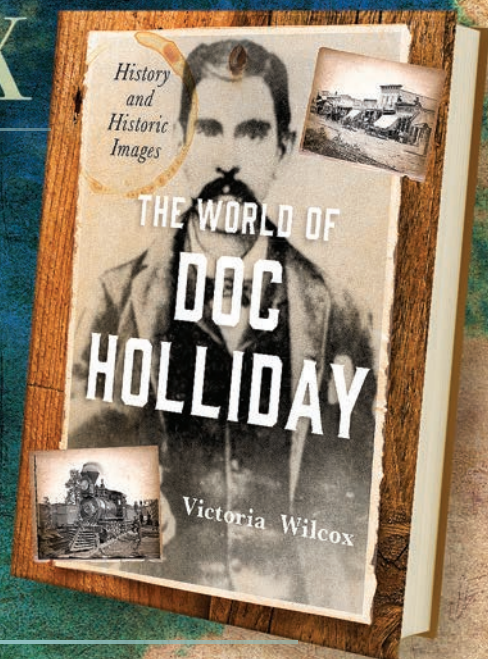
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## The Wild Wilder West

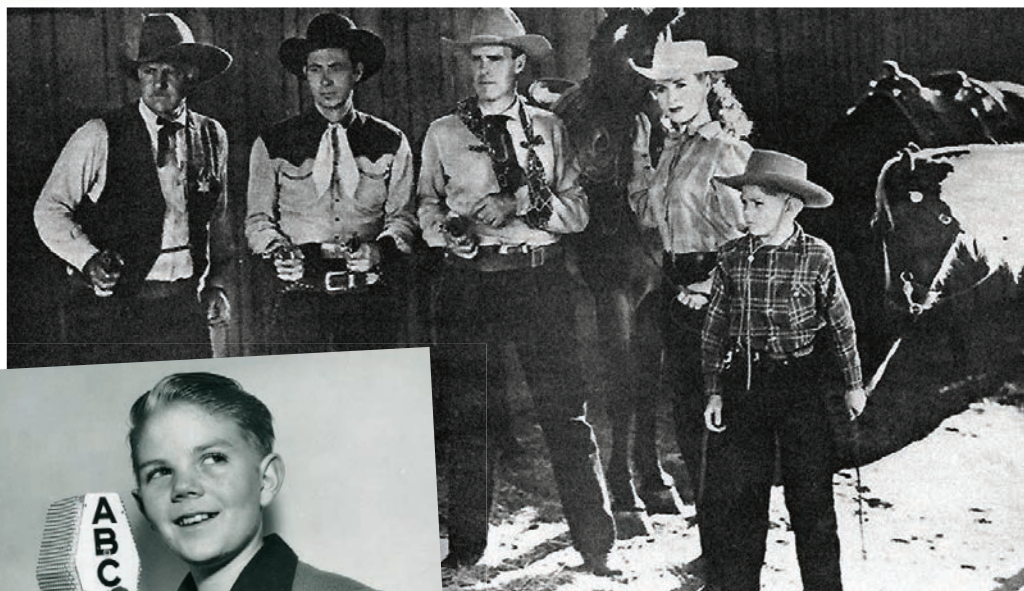


Few individuals have enjoyed such a successful, varied and influential career in Hollywood as 84-year-old actor, story editor, writer, director, producer and studio executive John Wilder.

Courtesy John Wilder

“My parents loved Westerns. My mother’s family were pioneers; they were the first four wagons into Seattle, Washington. When I was five, in a little house on American Lake in Washington, we’d listen to the radio, to the *Adventures of Red Ryder*. Two years later I’m at the microphone doing the voice of the little Indian boy.”

John Wilder’s journey from kid, to kid actor, to TV writer, to writer-producer seemed almost predestined to prepare him for the crowning achievement of his career: writing and



As a child actor, Wilder (far right, front) quickly graduated from radio to both television and film, including a role in the 1946 B-Western, *Tumbleweed Trail*, in which he co-starred as Freckles Ryan with (l.-r.) Eddie Dean, Frank Ellis, Kermit Maynard and Shirley Patterson.

Courtesy Producers Releasing Corporation



John Wilder began his career in the 1940s as a child radio actor, known then by his given name, Johnny McGovern. One of his favorite roles in radio was as Little Beaver on the *Adventures of Red Ryder*.

Courtesy ABC Radio

producing the monumental 26-hour miniseries, James H. Michener’s *Centennial*. It also nearly did him in. “I had basically a nervous breakdown working on that,” he recalls. “My marriage blew up, my world fell apart because of the stress. I’ll never do anything as hard again; never anything I loved as much, because I loved the characters.”

“I had bad allergies as a little guy. The doctor told my parents to go east of the mountains, or south to, like, Pasadena.” Pasadena won. He was directed by Maria Riva, Marlene Dietrich’s daughter, in a production of Lillian Hellman’s *Watch on the Rhine*. “She took my mom aside and said, ‘Johnny can read way above his years,

and in radio they look for children that can read.’ So [Mom] took me over to CBS for a general audition, and the next day [we] started getting calls. Within a month, I was doing *Lux Radio Theater*. In the five years I worked radio a lot, I had 13 running roles on different series.”

Among Wilder’s other radio appearances, starting in the late 1940s, were *The Jack Benny Show*, *The Roy Rogers Show*, *The Gene Autry Show* and he starred in the radio version of *The Adventures of Champion*.

The world of early television opened up opportunities for adventure, not all of them pleasant. “People think it’s all make-believe. But I almost rolled a stagecoach [on *Rin Tin Tin*], almost got mauled by a lion [on *Circus Boy*], and on *Broken Arrow*, the wad from a blank set my face on fire.” But there were many more positive experiences: working with Lloyd Bridges on *Zane Grey Theatre*, and making friends with Steve McQueen on *Wanted: Dead or Alive*.

He graduated from Van Nuys High, and started at USC on a baseball scholarship. He had leading-man good looks, but, he says, “I



Even while attending USC on a baseball scholarship, Wilder (left) continued to act, including a guest appearance with Ray Teal (center) and Steve McQueen in the 1958 *Have Gun, Will Travel* episode "Die by the Gun."

Courtesy CBS Television

wasn't going to be a star. I really wasn't a character actor. So, I thought I should direct. And I started writing."

Film work both paid for, and interrupted, his education—*The Benny Goodman Story*, *Summer Love*, *Five Guns to Tombstone*. But his most important role was in the World War II movie *Hold Back the Night*. On location, he bonded with roommate Chuck Connors over baseball. "And that changed my life because Chuck knew I wanted to get behind the camera. He got cast as *The Rifleman*, called me and said, 'You're going to write an episode.'" Frustratingly, that sale didn't lead to more work. "Friends who could've thrown me a bone, didn't. I couldn't get arrested." Just as he was starting Loyola Law School, he "got a call from Chuck. 'I just got a series, *Branded*. You're going to write all my dialogue,' what he called John Wayne dialogue: good and tight and lean. I went onto *Branded* as a story editor. It was terrific."

From there Wilder moved to the hottest show on TV, *Peyton Place*, writing 119 episodes, then to Universal, then to Quinn Martin, writing and producing *Streets of San Francisco*. "I loved it," but as he told Quinn when he left, "I really want to be doing what you're doing." Wilder was set to run drama development at a little Grant Tinker start-up called M.T.M. Until lunch with Universal President Frank Price changed everything. Price asked, "What can I do to get John Wilder to come back to Universal?" I said, you have one property, *Centennial*. And he said, "That's yours." This was the time of the grand miniseries. *Roots*, in 1977, was 10 hours long. "I've got a commitment for 13 hours," Price told Wilder, "and an option for 13 more." Wilder bailed on M.T.M.



Before John Wilder found success as a Hollywood television story editor and writer, he continued to receive acting roles in TV and film, including the 1960 Western *Five Guns to Tombstone*.

Courtesy United Artists

In his vast and wonderful novel, *Centennial* was the name Michener bestowed on a fictional town that was a microcosm of the history of Colorado, as well as a cautionary tale. "Michener's ultimate message," says Wilder, "[is] that we have an obligation to take care of the planet, and we're not doing a very good job of it. It's the ultimate ecological editorial, to see how the Indians lived with the land and thought only the rocks live forever. Who are the villains of *Centennial*? The real estate brokers."

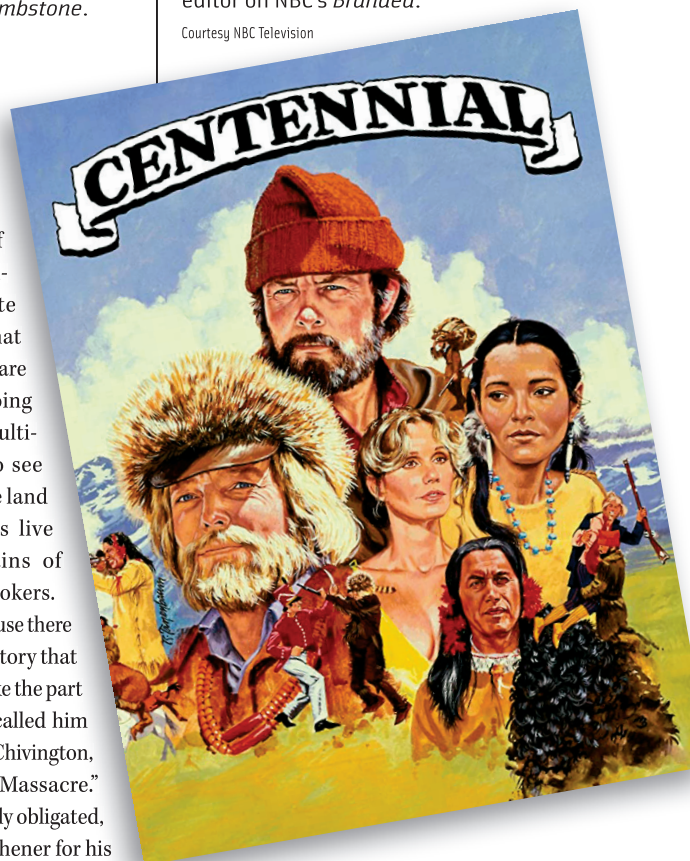
"*Centennial* spoke to me because there are moments in [my] family history that were replicated in Jim's book. Like the part that Dick Crenna played. We called him Skimmerhorn, but it was really Chivington, and it was the Sand Creek Massacre." Although he wasn't contractually obligated, Wilder sent every script to Michener for his approval. Michener loved appearing in the opening. They were close friends for the rest of Michener's life.

"My philosophy of producing television was, get the material as good as you can in the time you're allotted, hire a director who's a shooter, and hire bulletproof actors." With 128 characters in a 900-page story that reaches from the 1740s to 1974, casting was an immense job.



Fellow baseball star and actor Chuck Connors gave John Wilder his big break behind the camera in 1965 as the story editor on NBC's *Branded*.

Courtesy NBC Television



Following the success of the miniseries *Roots* in 1977, John Wilder was recruited by NBC to adapt and produce James Michener's novel *Centennial* into a 26-hour miniseries. The groundbreaking Western production was the largest and most extensive television miniseries in Hollywood history.

Courtesy NBC Television

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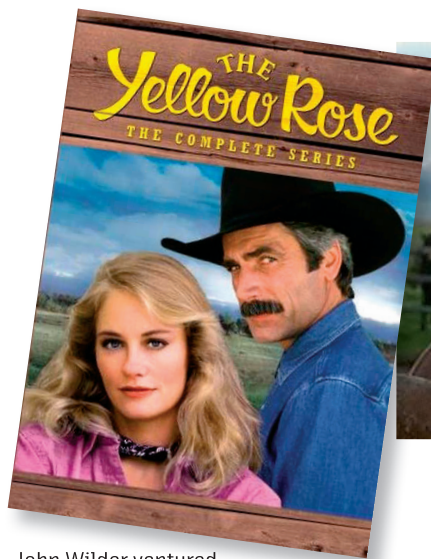
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John Wilder ventured back into TV Western series when he created *The Yellow Rose*, starring Sam Elliott and Cybil Shepherd, for NBC in 1983.

Courtesy NBC Television

For the first important character, Lame Beaver, he wanted Michael Ansara, who'd played Cochise with him on the *Broken Arrow* series. "Michael, please tell me you have native American heritage. And he said, 'No, but I'm blood brothers through the ceremony with five nations.' I said, that'll do." For his daughter, Clay Basket, he wanted Barbara Carrera. "Any Native American heritage? 'Well, I'm Nicaraguan. And that's Indian.' That'll do."

The core character for the first several episodes was a feisty, heroic French-Canadian trapper named Pasquinel, the first white man in the region. Richard Chamberlin would be McKeag, his Scottish partner. Carrera would be his wife, and Sally Kellerman would be Lise Bockweiss, his other, German, wife, "and she learned German, as did [her father] Raymond Burr." But who could play Pasquinel? Robert Conrad had been vigorously campaigning for the role, but was he a strong enough actor? A moving episode of *Baa Baa Blacksheep* suggested he was. They met. Wilder had three provisos he insisted upon, that Conrad wouldn't like. This was no Maurice Chevalier role: he'd have to learn an authentic French-Canadian accent. Pasquinel's wife is described as larger than her husband, and Kellerman was four to six inches taller than Conrad. And he'd have to say to her, "Maybe I'm a coward," words that the genuinely tough actor would despise uttering. Finally, "Richard Chamberlain is playing McKeag. We both know that he's gay. The line of dialogue I won't let you change is, 'Maybe you're a better man than I am.' I'm trying to do an authentic movie. If you can't do those things, it's not going to work. And Bob said, 'Hey man, I'm an actor,' and we shook hands."



When John Wilder was asked to write *Return to Lonesome Dove*, the sequel to *Lonesome Dove*, he elevated the role of Newt, reprised by actor Ricky Schroder, into one of the central roles of the miniseries.

Courtesy CBS Television

A few days into shooting, the tiny amount of footage coming in indicated that the wrong director had been chosen. Wilder remembered a director he'd used on *Streets of San Francisco*. "Virgil Vogel is an artist. He's not the most articulate man, he doesn't talk to actors at all, but boy, does he know where to put the camera. I sent him the script, he came into my office in the morning, and he cried. He said, 'I've been shooting shit all my life. And you send me something this beautiful, and I don't have time to prepare.'" Wilder offered to shut down the set to give Vogel three weeks to prepare, but Vogel flew up that night, "And, by God, he gave me more film that afternoon than the other director had given me with weeks to prepare." Vogel, Conrad and many in the cast and crew considered *Centennial* the best work of their careers.

Since *Centennial*, Wilder has produced and written many shows, notably creating the contemporary Western series *The Yellow Rose*, and developing *Spenser: For Hire*. In 1993, Jeff Sagansky, who had been an executive's assistant on *Centennial*, was now the president of CBS, and asked Wilder to write and produce a sequel to the miniseries *Lonesome Dove*. "It's a great novel, a Pulitzer Prize winner. What could I do with that story? It ended. What's left? And I thought, father and son. Newt is Call's son, but Newt doesn't know it, and Call won't admit it. So I sat down and wrote the last scene of *Return to Lonesome Dove*, where they say goodbye, and Call, in effect, gives him his name without saying, you're my son. And it made me cry at the typewriter. I thought, okay, that's powerful. I called Jeff and said, I'm in. My agent said, 'Don't; sequels are never any good.' And I said, 'Nobody's making Westerns. I love Westerns. And I think I can do a good

job, and that's good enough for me."

"Why do we keep coming back to Western stories? The best of them are about right and wrong, meeting challenges, of maintaining integrity and honor, at least the Westerns that you and I love."

## BLU-RAY REVIEW

### THE FURIES



Courtesy Paramount Pictures

(Criterion Collection; \$39.95) Often overshadowed by his brilliant Western collaborations with James Stewart, Anthony Mann's *The Furies* is a noir masterpiece. Walter Huston, in his final, exuberant performance, is T.C. Jeffords, a New Mexico rancher so arrogant that he prints his own money. Western goddess Barbara Stanwyck is his daughter in this Freudian nightmare, trying to save the ranch from her profligate dad, while drawn romantically between two men he's wronged: patrón-turned-squatter Gilbert Roland, and Wendell Corey, who tells her, "You've found a new love in your life. You're in love with hate." Sparks fly—as do scissors! Victor Milner's Oscar-nominated black-and-white photography accentuates the stark Arizona locations and massive sets. The Criterion Collection set includes shorts, interviews with Mann and the novel by Niven Busch. ✦

**Henry C. Parke**, Western Films Editor for *True West*, is a screenwriter, and blogs at [HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com](http://HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com). His book of interviews, *Indians and Cowboys*, will be published later this year.

# AT NIGHT

June 11–September 5, 2021

This 50-image exhibition, juried by renowned night photographer Lance Keimig, will be held at the Museum of the Big Bend in Alpine, Texas.

Presented in partnership with Texas Photographic Society, McDonald Observatory and City of Alpine.



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# A Flock of Lonesome Doves

**H**ow could it fail? Novelist Larry McMurtry's *Horseman, Pass By* had become *Hud*, and won three Oscars. *The Last Picture Show* won two, and its director, Peter Bogdanovich, loved Westerns as much as McMurtry, and was friends with every important Western director and actor alive. They collaborated on a screenplay, *Streets of Laredo*, signing John Wayne as Woodrow, James Stewart as Gus, and Henry Fonda as Jake Spoon! Only then, Wayne backed out. And the script went on the shelf.

McMurtry kept writing novels and scripts. Some movies were hits, like *Terms of Endearment*; some vaporized, like *Lovin' Molly* (adapted from his novel *Leaving Cheyenne*). And one day, McMurtry spotted a bus with LONESOME DOVE CHURCH painted on its side, put that name on the script on the shelf, and wrote it into a novel that would win him the Pulitzer Prize.

The 1989 miniseries was so beloved, the characters so endearing that, despite killing off the favorite, Gus, a sequel was inevitable. In 1993, John Wilder, who'd scripted and produced *Centennial*, wrote it, with McMurtry okaying the script. Rick Schroder returned as Newt, and when Tommy Lee Jones didn't want to do a sequel, Jon Voight played Woodrow. Voight had been first choice to play Woodrow in the original, but didn't like the treatment of Indians in the novel or script, and passed. He liked this script a lot, and when producers tried to make changes, he redistributed the original blue-paged draft—which he called “the blue bible”—to cast and crew, and insisted they stick to it. That same year, McMurtry, recovering from heart surgery, wrote an excellent sequel novel, using the original title, *Streets of Laredo*. *Lonesome Dove* had become a franchise.

In September of 1994, *Lonesome Dove—The Series* appeared. When Rick Schroder passed on playing Newt again, they cast Scott Bairstow, a competent actor who, 10 feet away, couldn't be distinguished from Schroder.

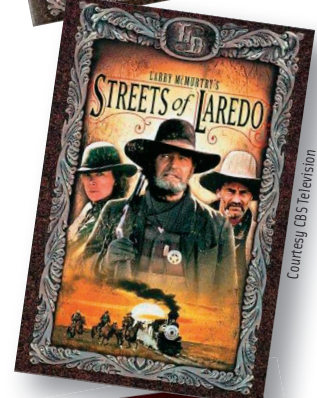
In September of 1995, McMurtry published the next fine *Lonesome Dove* novel. *Dead Man's Walk* was not a sequel but a prequel, making it possible to bring Gus McRae back. On the downside, knowing what will happen, and learning how the characters got there, is rarely as compelling as a forward-told story. That



Courtesy CBS Television



Courtesy CBS Television



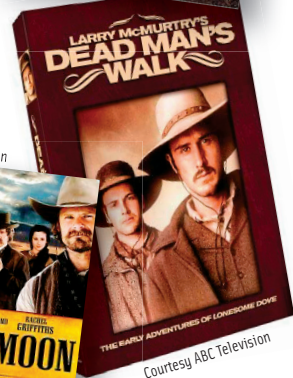
Courtesy CBS Television



Courtesy RHI Entertainment



Courtesy CBS Television



Courtesy ABC Television

same month, the series, now rechristened *Lonesome Dove—The Outlaw Years*, returned.

In November, the *Streets of Laredo* miniseries premiered, with James Garner as Woodrow, and Sissy Spacek as Lorena, Diane Lane's iconic role from the original, and a wonderful supporting cast. McMurtry scripted with Diana Ossana, who was his nearly constant collaborator for the last 28 years of his life. Later, they would share an Oscar for scripting *Brokeback Mountain*, a story of shepherds who realize they are gay.

Six months after *Streets*, *Dead Man's Walk* premiered, with David Arquette as a stripling Gus,

and Jonny Lee Miller as an already conflicted Woodrow; characters who hold little promise in their youth and are overshadowed by other familiar actors. A year and a half later, McMurtry published the final *Lonesome Dove* novel, *Comanche Moon*. In 2008, more than a decade later, the miniseries appeared, with Steve Zahn as Gus and Karl Urban as Woodrow. Its smaller budget is evident, and again, the supporting players more compelling than the leads, but original *Lonesome Dove* director Simon Wincer helped make it worth watching, which they all are.

—Henry C. Parke



# Wichita, Kansas

*The once wild and woolly cowtown still celebrates its Old West heritage.*

**T**he arrival of the railroad in 1872 transformed this trading post settlement on the Arkansas River into a cowtown, a destination for cattle driven north on the Chisholm Trail.

The Texas drovers brought trouble, and trouble brought a young lawman named Wyatt Earp. He did fine work until his temper won out and he used his fists to beat the socks off a candidate for city marshal.

Wyatt got fired and moved on to legend, while Wichita has grown into the largest city in Kansas.

“We see Wichita as the heart of the country, centrally located with unique attractions and museums,” says Jessica Sawatski, public relations manager for Visit Wichita. “People often describe us as a pleasant surprise.”

Old Cowtown Museum recreates frontier life with a replica town consisting of 54 buildings on 23 acres. Furnished to reflect the 1865-1880 period, 27 were original structures from around Kansas relocated to the site.

Wichita had 14 saloons in 1872, and visitors can experience that life inside Fritz Snitzler’s Saloon, named for a German immigrant who was “as liberal and jolly as he is heavy.” Walk the dirt streets to the 1887 wood-framed railroad depot, and see Old Cowtown come alive with costumed interpreters and gunfight reenactments.

Riverfest, the biggest annual party, offers nine days of music and fun in June. Watch a sundown parade or take in a woolly beard and mustache contest. Music lovers can attend a twilight concert by the Wichita Symphony.

Downtown has tons of shopping. The Spice Merchant offers its own roasted coffees and teas. The Nifty Nut House has every variety of candy and a cool collection of gumball machines. At Cocoa Dolce Artisan Chocolates, listen to live music in the Sweet Lounge while



Founded in 1868 near the confluence of the Little Arkansas and Arkansas rivers, the frontier outpost of Wichita quickly became a trailhead for Texas cattlemen and their herds of longhorns when the AT&SF Railroad arrived in 1872.

True West Archives

sipping wine and sampling tasty chocolate creations.

“You can overdose on sweets in a half-mile of downtown,” says Sawatski.

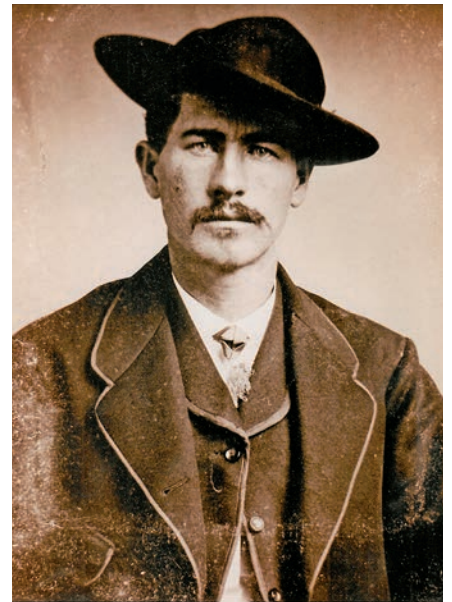
The Autumn & Art festival in September attracts 30,000 to the area’s largest art show and sale. On Saturdays, walk the brick streets of Old Town to the farmer’s market for fresh produce or watch a chef’s cooking demonstration.

At Mort’s Martini & Cigar Bar, puff a stogie while listening to great music. Try the cucumber gimlet martini—with Effen Cucumber Vodka and sweetened lime juice. Yowza!

The Museum of World Treasures is hard to describe. Its oddities include dinosaur skeletons, Egyptian mummies, a shrunken head and—why not?—Marilyn Monroe’s leopard tam hat. See weapons and uniforms in a replica Civil War camp.

Wichita boasts a Guinness record for the world’s largest mural by a single artist. It measures more than 50,000 square feet, and the best part—it’s on the side of an old grain elevator.

On the west bank of the Arkansas River, across from downtown, the Delano District was



Wyatt Earp had a memorable tenure in Wichita, Kansas, from 1873 to 1876, including stints as a bouncer at his brother James’s brothel and as a Wichita city policeman.

True West Archives



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Visitors to Wichita's Old Cowtown will experience longhorn cattle drives down the living history museum's Main Street.

Courtesy Kansas Tourism

once where cowboys holed up in saloons and brothels. In its reincarnation, Delano is a mecca for offbeat entertainment and shopping.

Need a new lid? Hatman Jack's Wichita Hat Works, the country's third-largest hat store, will customize something for you, as it has for celebrities like country music star Alan Jackson.

The Mid-America All-Indian Center has rotating exhibits on tribal food traditions, American Indians in the military, and more. See its impressive collection of fetishes and carvings.

Don't miss the *Keeper of the Plains* sculpture at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little

Arkansas rivers. Blackbear Bosin created the 44-foot piece in 1974, and it has become an icon of the city.

Every evening, fire pots at its base light up, creating a beautiful ring of fire with the river gleaming in the background.

**FUN FACT:** In 1939, Wichita native Hattie McDaniel became the first Black American to win an Oscar for her portrayal of Mammy in *Gone With the Wind*. ❖

**Leo W. Banks** is an award-winning writer based in Tucson. He is the author of the mystery novels, *Double Wide* and *Champagne Cowboys*.



Wichita Cowtown's 54 structures include 27 preserved historic buildings from around the state.

Courtesy Kansas Tourism

# WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY



The Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum is located in Wichita's former city hall. Built in 1890, the landmark was converted to a museum four decades ago.

Courtesy Kansas Tourism

To plan your trip, stop at *Visit Wichita*, 515 S. Main St., Suite 115.

## OLD COWTOWN MUSEUM

Built of logs in the 1870s, the Heller Cabin is considered among the top ten structures in the country from the settlement era. The 1869 Munger House, a two-story residence, was built on Wichita's original platted land. The logs are hand-hewn cottonwood, and the floors are walnut. [OldCowtown.org](http://OldCowtown.org)

## MID-AMERICAN ALL-INDIAN CENTER

Visit the exhibit on Blackbear Bosin, one of the founders of the center and creator of the *Keeper of the Plains* sculpture. See paintings, photos and film footage of this self-taught Comanche-Kiowa artist. [TheIndianCenter.org](http://TheIndianCenter.org)

## CHARLES RUSSELL PAINTINGS

The collection at the Wichita Art Museum focuses on American artists of the Great Plains and includes 20 works by the great Western painter Charles Russell. [WichitaArtMuseum.org](http://WichitaArtMuseum.org)

## PLANES, TRAINS AND COWBOYS

Kansas Aviation Museum displays historic aircraft like the B-52 Stratofortress. The Great Plains Transportation Museum has steam and diesel locomotives, as well as railroad signs, lanterns and other artifacts. At Exploration Place, Kansas's premier science center, see a photo exhibit on the vanishing life of the contemporary Great Plains cowboy. [VisitWichita.com](http://VisitWichita.com)

## FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S ALLEN HOUSE

See one of the architect's famous prairie houses which was completed in 1918. The living room has been called "one of the great rooms of the 20th century." [FLWrightWichita.org](http://FLWrightWichita.org)



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# WIDE OPEN SPACES AND WESTERN

BY STUART ROSEBROOK

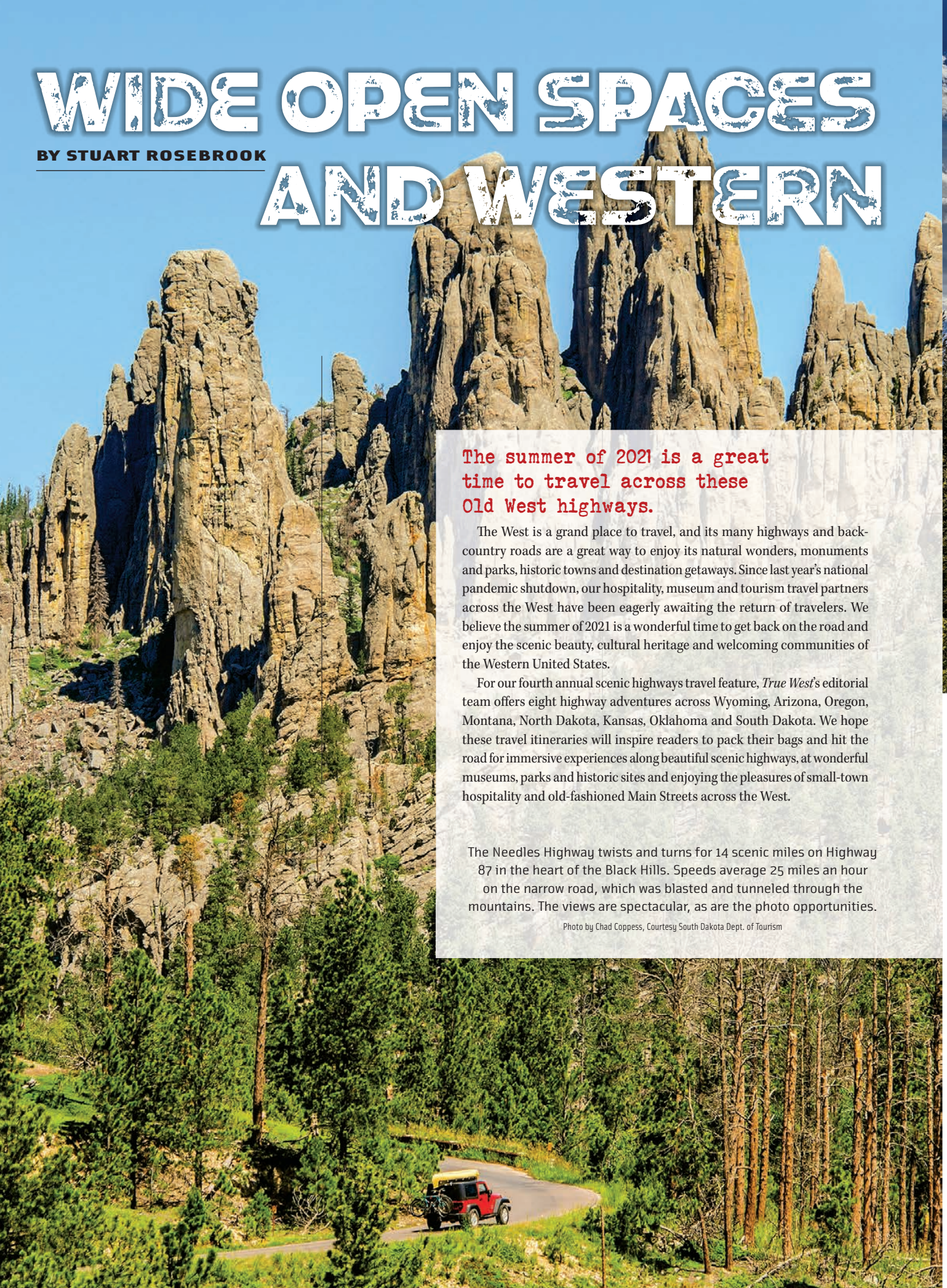
The summer of 2021 is a great time to travel across these Old West highways.

The West is a grand place to travel, and its many highways and back-country roads are a great way to enjoy its natural wonders, monuments and parks, historic towns and destination getaways. Since last year's national pandemic shutdown, our hospitality, museum and tourism travel partners across the West have been eagerly awaiting the return of travelers. We believe the summer of 2021 is a wonderful time to get back on the road and enjoy the scenic beauty, cultural heritage and welcoming communities of the Western United States.

For our fourth annual scenic highways travel feature, *True West's* editorial team offers eight highway adventures across Wyoming, Arizona, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma and South Dakota. We hope these travel itineraries will inspire readers to pack their bags and hit the road for immersive experiences along beautiful scenic highways, at wonderful museums, parks and historic sites and enjoying the pleasures of small-town hospitality and old-fashioned Main Streets across the West.

The Needles Highway twists and turns for 14 scenic miles on Highway 87 in the heart of the Black Hills. Speeds average 25 miles an hour on the narrow road, which was blasted and tunneled through the mountains. The views are spectacular, as are the photo opportunities.

Photo by Chad Coppess, Courtesy South Dakota Dept. of Tourism



# WONDERLANDS

## WYOMING'S SPIRIT OF THE WEST

Discover the Cowboy State on the scenic highways from Casper to Yellowstone and back.

Grand Teton National Park, Snake River Valley, WY

Courtesy Carole Highsmith Collection, Library of Congress

Internationally, Wyoming is synonymous with the Wild West. From its historic towns such as Casper and Cody to its natural wonders such as Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, it offers visitors to the Cowboy State real Western pioneer and Indian culture, endless vistas of snowcapped mountains and scenic byways. Visitors to Wyoming who immerse themselves in the communities they tour quickly discover the state's wonderful historic sites, museums, charming hotels and Western bars. Summertime also means fun-filled local celebrations with some of the West's most prestigious rodeos and Western parades.

Travelers who start their Wyoming tour in Casper will receive a great introduction to the early history of the state at the Fort Caspar Museum and National Historic Trails Interpretive Center.

From Casper, start your loop tour of the Cowboy State on U.S. Highways 20, 26, 14, 191 and 287 on one of the most incredible set of highways to Yellowstone National Park and back.

### BUCKET LIST:

**CASPER:** Visitors have a broad choice of national hotel chains to use as their headquarters for a long weekend in Casper. Start your tour at the extraordinarily re-created 1865 Fort Caspar Museum on the North Platte River, and then make time to visit Independence Rock, St. Martin's Cove, M.L. Bishop House, Salt Creek and Tate museums.

**THERMOPOLIS:** Stay a night and soak in the famous hot springs at this historic crossroads of U.S. Highway 20 and State Highway 120.

**CODY:** Home to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a Smithsonian-style complex of five museums, the town is also home to Buffalo Bill's Historic Irma Hotel. Book a room and relax for a long weekend of touring the local natural wonders and museums.

**MORAN:** Known as the gateway to Grand Teton National Park, Moran was named after the famous Western artist Thomas Moran, who visited the region on the Hayden Survey in the 1870s.

**DUBOIS:** Immerse yourself in the Old West in downtown Dubois. Book a room at one of the town's local hotels as your adventure headquarters for a short drive to Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.



Fort Caspar Museum, Casper, WY

Courtesy Fort Caspar Museum



Buffalo Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY

Courtesy BBCW

**LANDER:** In the heart of the Wind River Country, the historic city's Museum of the American West is a great place to start a tour. Also, take time to visit nearby Fort Washakie, home of Sacajawea's gravesite, and explore the region on the Circle the Continental Divide Driving Loop.

**RIVERTON:** The city earned its name from the four rivers that cross through it. Riverton borders the Wind River Indian Reservation, where you won't want to miss the Wind River Heritage Center and the Riverton Museum.

**Best Websites:** [TravelWyoming.com](http://TravelWyoming.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

# ARIZONA'S HISTORIC NORTH COUNTRY

From pines to cactus, from railroads to Route 66, northern Arizona has it all.



Jerome, Overlooking the Verde Valley, Arizona

Courtesy Carole Highsmith Collection, Library of Congress

Travelers to the Grand Canyon State visiting for the first time or the 100th time will always discover something new along its beautiful byways and highways. The state's vast distances, rugged terrain and world-renowned geography make it a great destination for auto tourists willing to put in the miles in search of adventure and history. Start or end your tour of northern Arizona in Prescott, the original Arizona Territorial capital, current Yavapai County seat and the state's centerpiece of Western heritage.

Summertime travel across the central highlands from Prescott to Flagstaff should be taken at a slower pace for two reasons: the scenic state routes, like 89A that switchbacks up and over the mountains through Jerome and Oak Creek Canyon, and the small towns to visit along

the way. Once in Flagstaff, Interstate 40 is the main east-west route across northern Arizona, but with dozens of places to stop and enjoy along Old Route 66, travelers can set their own pace and relax along one of the most traveled highways in the country.

## BUCKET LIST:

**PRESCOTT:** Experience this great city from which to start a tour of northern Arizona by booking a room at the historic Hassayampa Inn, within walking distance of the shopping district around the Courthouse Plaza, Whiskey Row, the Palace Restaurant and Saloon and Sharlot Hall Museum.

**JEROME:** A beautiful drive on State Route 89A from Prescott over Mingus Mountain leads to Jerome, one of the state's most spectacularly located historic mining towns. Today its narrow streets are packed with art galleries, unique restaurants, hotels and inns.

**COTTONWOOD:** In the Verde Valley below Jerome, Cottonwood's historic downtown should not be missed. Make time to visit Tuzigoot and Montezuma's Castle national monuments, downtown Clarkdale and Fort Verde State Historic Park.

**SEDONA:** In the heart of the state's most beautiful Red Rock country, Sedona is an international destination. Drive 89A through Oak Creek Canyon to experience one of Arizona's most beautiful scenic highways.

**FLAGSTAFF:** The unofficial capital of northern Arizona, Flagstaff is home to Northern Arizona University, Museum of Northern Arizona, Lowell Observatory and the spectacular San Francisco Peaks.



Main Street, Route 66, Williams, AZ

Courtesy Experience Williams

**WINSLOW:** Route 66 fans visiting Flagstaff should take a drive east on I-40 to Winslow, following the old route of the Mother Road to the historic railway town, home to La Posada Hotel and the famous statue of Glenn Frey at Standing on the Corner Park.

**WILLIAMS:** The historic gateway to the Grand Canyon, Williams is a perfect place to enjoy a weekend along old Route 66 and take the Grand Canyon Railway to the South Rim and tour Bearizona, a unique wildlife park.

**SELIGMAN:** West of Williams, exit I-40 at the Seligman exit and enter one of the great cities dedicated to the heritage of Route 66. Don't miss a takeout meal at Delgadillo's Sno-Cap Drive-In.

**PEACH SPRINGS:** When following historic Route 66 northwest from Seligman to Kingman, make time for at least an overnight at the Hualapai Lodge and tour Grand Canyon West on the Hualapai Indian Reservation.

**KINGMAN:** Start a tour of the Route 66 city, a historic crossroads of northwestern Arizona, at the Kingman Visitor Center to pick up directions and information on all of the city's attractions, including the Mohave County Museum of History and Arts.

**Best Websites:** [VisitArizona.com](http://VisitArizona.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)



Prescott Courthouse Plaza, Prescott, AZ

Courtesy Carole Highsmith Collection, Library of Congress

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# OREGON OR BUST!

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on the Oregon Trail.



Multnomah Falls, Columbia River Historic Highway, Troutdale, OR

Courtesy Carole Highsmith Archives, Library of Congress

## BUCKET LIST:

**BAKER CITY:** In this charming, historic Oregon Trail city visitors can relax downtown, enjoy the scenic beauty of the Powder River Valley and visit its wonderful museums, including the Baker Heritage Museum and National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center.

**LAGRANDE:** Book a room at The Lodge at Hot Lake Springs and enjoy the beauty of eastern Oregon; take a side trip to Joseph and visit the Chief Joseph Monument.

**PENDLETON:** When visiting this Old West destination famous for the Pendleton Round-Up and its historic downtown, take the Pendleton Underground Tours and visit Hamley's & Co., the famous saddle and Western wear shop, in business since 1883.

**THE DALLES:** En route to The Dalles on I-84/U.S. 30 from Pendleton, take a detour at the Deschutes River State Recreation Area. When in town, book a

hotel for a long weekend to enjoy the historic Oregon Trail city, Fort Dalles and the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center.

**HOOD RIVER:** At this wonderful destination city on the banks of the Columbia River, visitors enjoy the arts, food, wine, brew pubs and the scenic beauty of the foothills of Mount Hood. Don't miss a ride on the Mount Hood Railroad.

**PORTLAND:** Before arriving in the state's largest city, exit I-84 onto the scenic slow route, U.S. 30/ Historic Columbia River Highway. Don't miss Multnomah Falls, Oregon's tallest waterfall. When in Portland, be sure to tour the Oregon Historical Society and visit Powell's Books before heading south to tour the capital city, Salem.

**OREGON CITY:** The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City is the official Western end point of the Oregon Trail.

**Best Websites:** [TravelOregon.com](http://TravelOregon.com), [NPS.com](http://NPS.com)



National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, Baker City, OR

Courtesy BLM.gov



The Columbia River and Mount Hood, looking south from The Dalles, OR

Courtesy TravelOregon

Oregon's natural beauty, historic small towns and heritage sites are enhanced by its beautiful vistas and scenic highways. A great and interesting trip is to follow the Oregon National Historic Trail across the Beaver State.

The most direct way to start an Oregon Trail tour of the state is to enter from Idaho on Interstate 84, crossing the Snake River at Ontario, Oregon. (Oregon Trail fans might consider a month-long trip following the trail from Independence to Oregon City.)

Begin your Oregon Trail adventure with a long weekend in Baker City. Downtown has a wonderful historic hotel, the Geiser Grand, the perfect spot to stay while exploring the Powder River Valley. A full day should be scheduled at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, just outside of town on a bluff with 360-degree views of the valley and the surrounding mountains. While in Baker City, which has a rich emigrant, mining, ranching and Native peoples history, don't miss a tour of the Baker Heritage Museum and the Leo Adler House Museum.

The Oregon National Historic Trail route will lead travelers across the state on interstates and U.S., state and local highways. Take your time and enjoy Oregon's heritage and scenic beauty.

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The Petrified Wood and Art Gallery of Ogallala will host the American Plains Artists (APA) Signature Show March 15 through May 22, 2021.

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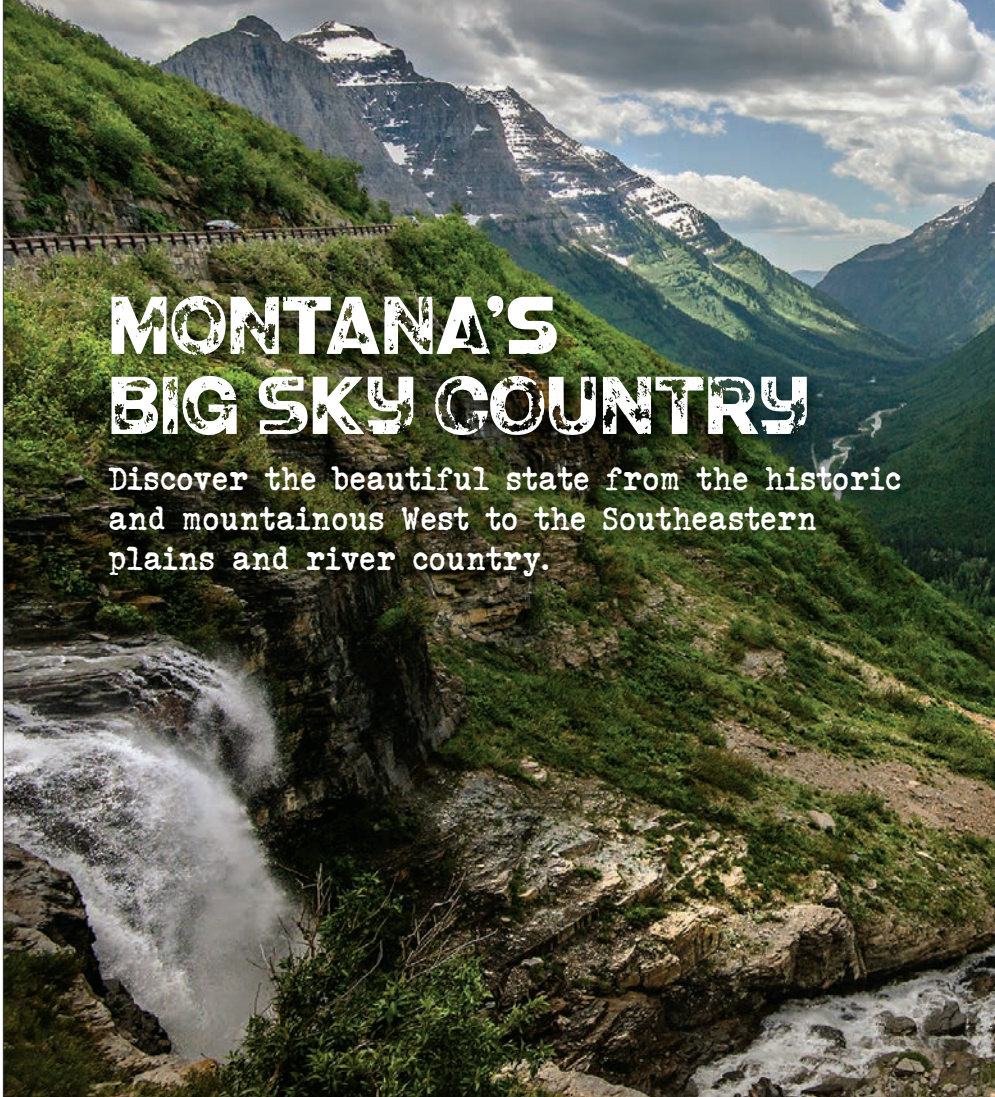
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Going to the Sun Road,  
Glacier National Park

Courtesy NPS.gov

The Big Sky State has something for everyone—from the historic towns and peaks of southwestern and northwestern Montana to southeastern Montana's plains and river country. A hallmark of Montana travel is the long beautiful drives across the nation's fourth-largest state, with scenic byways in almost every direction leading off the state's interstates, I-15, I-90 and I-94.

Bozeman is a great city to make as your first headquarters for a tour of Montana, especially if you are arriving in the state via Yellowstone National Park, but if you are coming from Sheridan, Wyoming, start in Garryowen and tour Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Stay longer in southeastern Montana and enjoy a sojourn in historic Billings before heading West or follow the Yellowstone River east to Miles City, Glendive, Sidney and its confluence with the Missouri across the border in North Dakota.

From Bozeman, the Montana visitor will quickly discover that southwestern and northwestern Montana offer a lifetime's worth



Grasslands, Little Bighorn Battlefield  
National Monument

Courtesy NPS.gov

of adventure and historic sites to tour. A great loop leaves Bozeman and goes as far west as Wisdom, just outside Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, along scenic highways State 84, 287, 41, 278 and 43.

Driving northwest from Bozeman, visit Butte, the state capital of Helena and Great Falls. Continue north to Glacier National Park via Choteau on U.S. 89 and circle back through Kalispell and Missoula on U.S. 2 and 93. Either head south on U.S. 93 to Idaho or pick up I-90 back to Bozeman.



Virginia City, MT

Courtesy Montana Tourism

## BUCKET LIST:

**BOZEMAN:** Home to Montana State University, Bozeman has a great downtown entertainment district and plenty of lodging, making it a great headquarters for touring the western part of the state.

**ENNIS:** Fly fisherman flock from around the world to fish the great trout waters of the Madison River.

**WISDOM:** This is the gateway town to Big Hole National Battlefield.

**VIRGINIA CITY:** In the summer, book a room in the historic mining boomtown and immerse yourself in early Montana history.

**BUTTE:** The historic town played a major role in Western mining history. Don't miss the World Museum of Mining.

**HELENA:** The capital of Montana is home to the Montana Historical Society, a destination for historians from around the world writing and researching about the state and the West.

**MISSOULA:** The University of Montana is the centerpiece of Missoula.

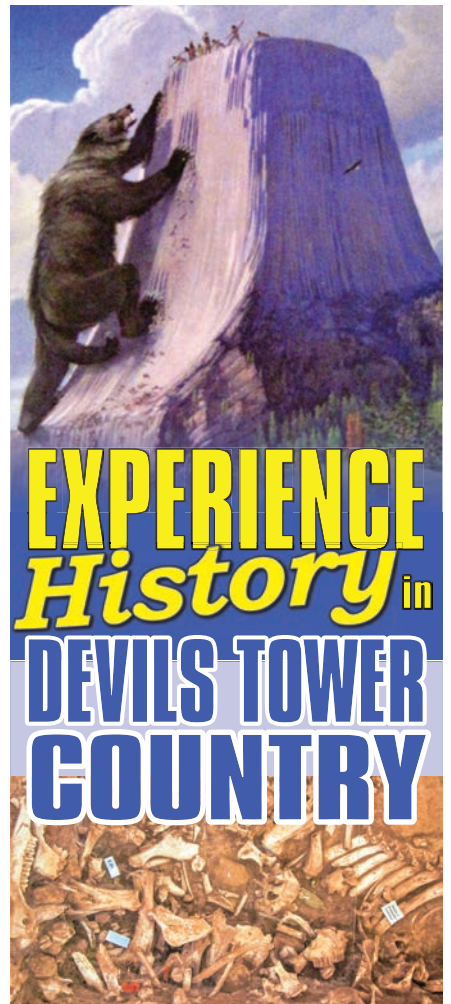
**GREAT FALLS:** Charles M. Russell called Great Falls home, and today the C.M. Russell Museum is one of the state's premier art museums.

**WHITEFISH:** When on a tour of northwestern Montana, visitors who go to Glacier National Park will enjoy Whitefish, a resort town known for its hospitality, restaurants and lodging.

**KALISPELL:** With its historic downtown, famous Conrad Mansion Museum and the Hockaday Museum of Art, this wonderful town offers visitors plenty to do.

**BILLINGS:** The unofficial capital of southeastern Montana's river and prairie country, Billings is a gateway city to Yellowstone and Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Don't miss a tour of the city's Western Heritage Center.

**Best Websites:** *VisitMT.com, NPS.com*



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## CROOK COUNTY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

At the Crook County Museum & Art Gallery in picturesque Sundance, Wyo., the history of Crook County is depicted in the many dioramas and exhibits. Over 7,000 artifacts are on display at "Old Stoney."



## WEST TEXAS TRAIL MUSEUM

Rated as one of the top six Cowboys, Cattle, and Ranching museums in the United States by TRUE WEST Magazine, the West Texas Trail Museum keeps the memories, awareness, and spirit of the great American West alive for future generations.

## HULETT MUSEUM

The Hulett Museum & Art Gallery has made its mission to collect and preserve the history, culture and integrity of northeastern Wyoming. These objects are artifacts of the heritage of the people of Hulett and surrounding area.

## CUSTER EXPEDITION

The historic 1874 Custer Expedition came through this area. You can see portions of the route, camp sites and historic locations throughout the county.



Discover More at [DEVILSTOWERCOUNTRY.COM](http://DEVILSTOWERCOUNTRY.COM)

# KANSAS'S COWTOWNS AND CATTLE TRAILS

Discover the Old West across the Sunflower State.



Boot Hill Museum, Dodge City, KS



Longhorn Cattle Drive, Trails, Rails & Tales, Abilene, KS

Summertime across Kansas means local festivals, living history exhibitions, carnivals, rodeos and parades. Travelers can cross the Southern Plains state by paralleling the National Santa Fe Historic Trail and discover its rich cultural heritage. From American Indian culture to cattle drives, from railroad history to cavalry forts, the Old West is alive in the Sunflower State.

If crossing the state east to west, start a tour in Abilene; or when going west to east, start in Dodge City. Both were at one time the wildest and wickedest cattle towns in the Old West, and both are two of the best Western heritage centers in Kansas.

While many zip across Kansas on Interstate 70, I like to travel across the Sunflower State on its U.S., state and local highways. Get off the fast track and enjoy Kansas's beautiful summers at a slower pace.

## BUCKET LIST:

**ABILENE:** The first great railhead for Texas cattlemen coming up the Chisholm Trail, Abilene celebrates its Old West heritage at the Dickinson County History Museum and the living history center, Old Abilene Town. During the summer reserve a ride on the historic Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad.

**SALINA:** Take old U.S. 40 to Salina, parallel to the Old Santa Fe Trail. When in town, visit the Smoky Hill Museum to learn about local history.

**RUSSELL:** Enjoy a stay at The Lodge at Russell while exploring the central Kansas city's environs. Visit the Deines Cultural Center in the historic crossroads city, at the junction of Interstate 70 and Highway 281.

**ELLSWORTH:** Once one of the great Kansas cattle towns, Ellsworth's railhead was a key destination for Texas cattlemen coming up the Chisholm Trail.

Don't miss a tour of the Hodgen House Museum Complex off State Route 14 and Fort Harker Museum, just east of the city.

**GREAT BEND:** This historic town was built along the famous curve of the Arkansas River on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

**LARNED:** Fort Larned National Historic Site is the state's best-preserved 19th-century frontier fort and is well-known for its summertime living history programs featuring rangers and docents in period dress.

**DODGE CITY:** From I-70, exit on U.S. Highway 50 and head southwest to Dodge City, paralleling the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. "The Queen of the Cowtowns" is a great place to stay for a long vacation and enjoy all the local historical attractions, including the acclaimed Boot Hill Museum.

**Best Websites:** [TravelKS.com](http://TravelKS.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

# NORTH DAKOTA'S TRAILBLAZERS

Discover the history of Lewis & Clark, Sacagawea  
& Teddy Roosevelt in the Great Plains state.



Fort Union Trading Post  
National Historic Site,  
Williston, ND

Courtesy NPS.gov

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Medora Musical, Medora, ND

Courtesy North Dakota Tourism

North Dakota is famous for its record-cold winters, and it is equally famous for its glorious Northern Plains summers that are perfect for travel and tourism, camping and fishing, wildlife viewing and stargazing. Travelers to the Peace Garden State will enjoy long, wide open vistas as they arrive in North Dakota from any direction and as they drive to the centrally located capital city of Bismarck.

Before hitting the road west to North Dakota's Badlands and Upper Missouri River Country, prime yourself on the state's history at Bismarck's North Dakota Heritage Center and Mandan's Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.

When traveling in North Dakota, enjoy the state's welcoming small towns, state parks and natural beauty. Interstate 94 is the primary route from Bismarck to Medora, but for the rest of the vacation, the route follows scenic U.S. highways.

## BUCKET LIST:

**BISMARCK:** Relax in the state's capital city and tour the North Dakota Heritage Center, Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Hall of Fame, Lewis & Clark Riverboat and the United Tribes Cultural Arts and Interpretive Center.

**MANDAN:** The state's leading living history center is at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, which includes General Custer's quarters, Cavalry Square, On-A-Slant Mandan Indian Village and Five Nations Arts Gallery.

**DICKINSON:** Spend a weekend in the gateway city to North Dakota's Badlands. West of Bismarck on Interstate 94, Dickinson is home to the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University, also enjoy a tour of the Dickinson Museum Center.

**MEDORA:** A centerpiece of summer tourism in the Peace Garden State, Medora is home to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Pitchfork Fondue and the Medora Musical, North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame, Chateau de Mores, Billings County Museum and the Painted Canyon Visitor Center.

**WATFORD CITY:** Visitors to the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park take U.S. 85 north to the welcoming town of Watford City—a great place to stay and explore the area.

**WILLISTON:** Just east of the Montana border off U.S. 85, the city is a destination site for followers of the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. Count on spending a couple of days touring Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site, Fort Buford State Historic Site (site of the surrender of Sitting Bull) and the Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center.

**MINOT:** From Williston, U.S. Highways 85 and 2 lead to Minot, a crossroads of three scenic prairie highways, U.S. 2, 52 and 83. The North Dakota State Fair is held every July in Minot, which is also home to some of the state's most popular Scandinavian festivals.

**LAKE SAKAKAWEA/GARRISON:** The water wonderland of the state, the lake is 180 miles long and is touted for having a longer shoreline than the California coast.

**Best Websites:** [NDTourism.com](http://NDTourism.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

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# OKLAHOMA: OUTLAWS AND LAWMEN, CAVALRY AND CHIEFS

Discover how the Sooner State's territorial history helped define the Southern Plains.

National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City, OK

Courtesy National Cowboy Museum and Hall of Fame

Congress originally created Oklahoma as the Indian Territory. First, Eastern and Southern tribes were forcibly relocated and resettled in the Territory, followed by tribes from across the West after the Civil War. After much negotiation between the Eastern Oklahoma tribes and the settlers in the western half of the I.A., in 1890, the Oklahoma Territory was created. Seventeen years later, Oklahoma became the 46th state. Today, the Sooner State has one of the largest American Indian

populations in the country. Visitors who would like to learn firsthand about Oklahoma's Indian heritage and complex territorial and state history, should begin in the capital, Oklahoma City, and tour the city's top museums: National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and Oklahoma History Center.

A visitor on the trail of the state's Old West history will soon discover the hospitality and small-town charm that makes the Sooner State a favorite destination for Western travelers.

## BUCKET LIST:

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** The state capital is home to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma History Center and Oklahoma Hall of Fame. The state's economic, cultural and political hub is a great place to start a week-long tour of the Sooner State.

**GUTHRIE:** The first capital of the Oklahoma Territory, Guthrie is due north of Oklahoma City. Exit off I-35 onto U.S. 77 and its historic downtown is at the crossroads of 77 and State Route 33. Stay a weekend and tour the country's largest contiguous urban historic district, which includes the Oklahoma Territorial Museum and Carnegie Library.

**EDMOND:** Founded as a Santa Fe Railway town, Edmond eventually was a crossroads for Route 66 and U.S. 77, which leads south to Oklahoma City. Take the Mother Road to Edmond and then stop and tour the local Edmond Historical Society Museum.

**DUNCAN:** Looking for the Old West in the Sooner State? Look no farther than the acclaimed Chisholm Trail Heritage Center north of the Red River along the historic Chisholm Trail. The city is located off U.S. Highway 81 southwest of Oklahoma City. The Chickasaw Nation is just east of Duncan.

**FORT SILL:** From Duncan, take U.S. 81 north to State Route 7 to Fort Sill, home to the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark and Museum. The interactive history facility boasts 38 buildings and curates over 235,000 objects at the 142-acre Historic Landmark.

**Best Website:** [TravelOK.com](http://TravelOK.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

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Wildlife Loop,  
Custer State Park, SD


All South Dakota Images by Chad Coppess,  
Courtesy South Dakota Dept. of Tourism

# SOUTH DAKOTA'S BLACK HILLS

Discover the beauty and heritage of the  
Mount Rushmore State's sacred mountains.

Summertime is a glorious season during which to explore South Dakota, especially its Black Hills. From just south of Interstate 80 to the border of Nebraska, the mountain range rises from the Great Plains that can be seen for hundreds of miles in all directions. The landmark hills are a great place to immerse oneself in Western history with towns located north to south to make a summer headquarters for exploring the legendary mountains. If you love driving scenic highways, U.S. 85, 14A, 385, 16A and 18, and State Highways 36, 40, 44, 71, 87, 89 and 244 will be more than enough to handle while driving the hills. Make sure to have maps and GPS, as driving the Black Hills can be a bit daunting, and it's easy to miss road signs and end up going in circles (I know, I've done it.).

For the traveler who wants to cut down travel time in visiting the Black Hills, splitting two weeks between the North and South Hills would



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DEADWOOD HISTORY  
DeadwoodHistory.com

DEADWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
CityofDeadwood.com

# SHOOTOUTS

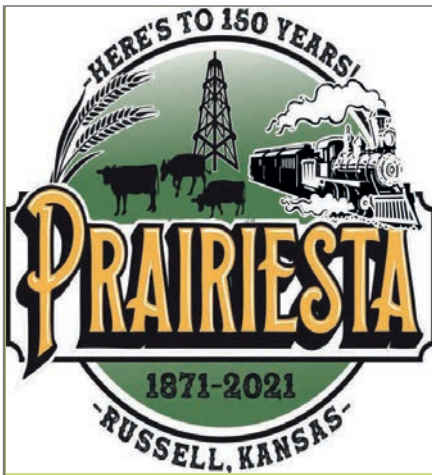
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Spearfish Falls, Spearfish Canyon,  
U.S. Highway 14A, SD

be ideal. Encamp in or outside of Deadwood or Lead in the north, and in Custer to the south. While in the North, visit Spearfish, Spearfish Canyon, Belle Fourche, Sturgis and Rapid City and all they have to offer. In the South, stay at Custer State Park and tour Hills, Keystone and Hot Springs, plus the Crazy Horse Monument, Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Wind Cave National Park.

### BUCKET LIST:

**DEADWOOD:** Make the historic Bullock Hotel your headquarters in Deadwood for touring the North Hills. Enjoy walking the historic streets of downtown—made famous by Seth Bullock, Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane—as well as visiting the city's many museums, including the Adams and Days of '76.

**LEAD:** Looking for a little less crowded atmosphere than Deadwood, but still in a historic city in the North Hills? Try Lead, just south on U.S. 85 from the famous boomtown. Enjoy downtown and its Black Hills Mining Museum adjacent to the Homestake Mine.

**RAPID CITY:** The largest city in the Black Hills region, Rapid City is a wonderful place to stay to explore the hills and the surrounding area. Don't miss the world-class Journey Museum and Learning Center. A great side trip is State Highway 44 to Badlands National Park.

**SPEARFISH:** North of Deadwood on U.S. 85 and I-90, the ranching and farming community of Spearfish has one of the best museums in the area, High Plains Western Heritage Center. When returning to Deadwood, take the long way on U.S. 14A up Spearfish Canyon to experience one of the most beautiful scenic highways (take your time) in the Black Hills.

**STURGIS:** In 1878, Fort Meade was founded near Sturgis, a supply town for the mining camps of the Black Hills. Sturgis is now internationally renowned for the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.



Days of '76 Parade, Main Street,  
Deadwood, SD

**BELLE FOURCHE:** North of Spearfish, Belle Fourche is the geographic center of the United States. Seth Bullock was one of the founders of the ranching community, anticipating the need for a railhead in the area. The Tri-State Museum expertly tells the local history.

**KEYSTONE:** The closest town to Mount Rushmore, Keystone has a vibrant downtown hotel and entertainment district, which comes alive in the summer. It is very close to the Peter Norbeck Scenic Byway and Needles Highway, two of the most beautiful drives in the Black Hills area.

**HILL CITY:** Strategically located on the northwest side of the South Hills, Hill City offers an entertainment and hotel district as a welcoming respite from touring the nearby monuments and scenic roads. Enjoy a ride on the Black Hills 1880 Central Railroad Train.

**CUSTER:** A gateway city to the South Hills, the quintessential Black Hills town is a great place to stay while touring the scenic region and the Crazy Horse Memorial. A popular destination is scenic Custer State Park, 14 miles east on U.S. 16A.

**HOT SPRINGS:** The southernmost community in the Black Hills, Hot Springs is true to its name and famous for its soothing waters which have drawn traveler and tourists for well over a century. North of Hot Springs, take the Custer Scenic Byway from the junction of state highway 87 and U.S. 385 near Wind Cave National Park to Sylvan Lake.

**Best Websites:** [TravelSD.com](http://TravelSD.com), [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

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# WESTERN ROUNDUP

FOR JUNE 2021



This photo of Billy the Kid sold at Brian Lebel's Old West Show & Auction in 2011 for \$2.3 million.

True West Archives

## ART SHOWS

### AMERICAN PLAINS ARTISTS SPECIAL SHOW

San Angelo, TX, June 24-August 1: An 1867 fort along the Concho River showcases nearly 100 Western paintings and a dozen sculptures. 325-481-2646 • [FortConcho.com](http://FortConcho.com)

## ENCAMPMENTS

### COWGIRL ROUNDUP

Loveland, CO, June 13-18: Discover your inner cowgirl at Sylvan Dale's Cowgirl Roundup. Come alone or with a friend. Making friendships with other "cowgirls" and bonding with your Sylvan Dale horse makes this adventure a top-of-the-bucket list experience. 970-667-3915 • [SylvanDale.com](http://SylvanDale.com)

### BRIAN LEBEL'S OLD WEST SHOW & AUCTION

June 25-27, 2021, Santa Fe, NM: A weekend dealer show and sale, along with an exciting, live/online Saturday night auction, the event showcases the best authentic cowboy, Indian and Western art, antiques and artifacts available for sale. 480-779-9378 • [OldWestEvents.com](http://OldWestEvents.com)

## FOOD & DRINK

### BREW FEST

The Dalles, OR, June 19: Choose from more than 50 beers from 25+ breweries from Oregon and beyond in a taproom experience. 541.296.2231 • [BeerFestTheDalles.com](http://BeerFestTheDalles.com)

## HERITAGE FESTIVALS

### HISTORIC LECOMPTON TERRITORIAL DAYS

Lecompton, KS, June 2021: Kansas's former Territorial capital celebrates with weekend activities for the entire family. 785-887-6285 • [LecomptonTerritorialDays.com](http://LecomptonTerritorialDays.com)

### BILLY THE KID FESTIVAL

San Elizario, TX, June 5-6: Outlaw Billy the Kid's rowdy 1876 visit to San Elizario to break a pal out of jail hits the stage in a live drama. 915-851-0093 • [SanElizarioHistoricDistrict.org](http://SanElizarioHistoricDistrict.org)

### PRAIRIESTA

Russell, KS, June 10-13: Prairiesta is a celebration of Russell County's history, heritage and culture. This celebration has been held every ten years, since 1941. In 2021, Prairiesta will be celebrating Russell County's 150th anniversary and the state of Kansas's 160th anniversary. 785-483-4000 • [Prairiesta2021.com](http://Prairiesta2021.com)

### GOLD RUSH DAYS

Sidney, NE, June 11-13: Experience the Black Hills gold rush of 1876 through skits, re-enactments and cowboy lore about the town's freighting days. 866-545-4030 • [SidneyGoldRush.com](http://SidneyGoldRush.com)

### NEBRASKALAND DAYS

North Platte, NE, June 16-26: Nebraska pays tribute to Buffalo Bill Cody's 1882 "Old Glory Blowout" with a rodeo, parades and concerts. 308-532-7939 • [NebraskalandDays.com](http://NebraskalandDays.com)

### JIM BOWIE DAYS

Bowie, TX, June 27-29: Texas Revolution hero and frontiersman Jim Bowie is honored with a rodeo, parades and an art and Indian artifact show. 940-366-1887 • [JimBowieDays.org](http://JimBowieDays.org)

## MUSIC

### TEXAS! OUTDOOR MUSICAL DRAMA

Palo Duro Canyon, TX, Through August 14: This outdoor musical re-creates the stories of Texas Panhandle settlers. 806-655-2181 • [Texas-Show.com](http://Texas-Show.com)

### LONE PINE FILM HISTORY MUSEUM CONCERT IN THE ROCKS

Lone Pine, CA, June 5: Every June, the magnificent Lone Ranger Canyon in the Alabama Hills is transformed into an under-the-stars venue for hosting the annual Lone Pine Concert in the Rocks. 760-876-9909 • [MuseumOfWesternFilmHistory.org](http://MuseumOfWesternFilmHistory.org)

## POWOWS

### RED EARTH FESTIVAL

Oklahoma City, OK, June 12-13: Experience the traditions of American Indian arts and cultures through dance, an art market and powwow. 405-427-5228 • [RedEarth.org](http://RedEarth.org)

### THE EAGLE SPIRIT DANCERS

Lander, WY, Every Wednesday, beginning June 23 to August 11: Experience American Indian culture through dance and drumming with nightly performances on the museum lawn. 307-332-3892 • [MuseumoftheAmericanWest.com](http://MuseumoftheAmericanWest.com)

## RODEOS

### SISTERS RODEO

Sisters, OR, June 9-13: Rodeo stars head to Sisters to show off their goods in this self-proclaimed "Biggest Little Show in the World!" 800-827-7522 • [SistersRodeo.com](http://SistersRodeo.com)

### RENO RODEO

Reno, NV, June 17-26: The "Wildest, Richest Rodeo in the West," the Reno Rodeo is celebrating 100 years of Wild West family fun. 778-329-3877 • [RenoRodeo.com](http://RenoRodeo.com)

### STONEWALL PEACH JAMBOREE AND RODEO

Stonewall, TX, June 17-19: A celebration of the annual peach crop includes peach judging, crowning of The Peach Queen, and more. 830-644-2735 • [StonewallTexas.com](http://StonewallTexas.com)

### WEST OF THE PECOS RODEO

Pecos, TX, June 20-26: Gather in Pecos for this historic PRCA rodeo, a top 40 prize money rodeo that originated in 1883. 432-445-2406 • [PecosRodeo.com](http://PecosRodeo.com)

### GREELEY STAMPEDE

Greeley, CO, June 25-July 4: Get bull riding and steer wrestling rodeo action, plus take in Western art and an Independence Day parade. 970-356-7787 • [GreeleyStampede.org](http://GreeleyStampede.org)

### CROOKED RIVER ROUNDUP

Prineville, OR, June 24-26: This PRCA rodeo includes steer wrestling, roping, bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding and more. 541-447-4479 • [CrookedRiverRoundup.com](http://CrookedRiverRoundup.com)

## WRITERS CONFERENCES

### WESTERN WRITERS OF AMERICA CONVENTION

Loveland, CO, June 16-19: Members, agents, publishers, editors and anyone interested in Western history and writing come together to talk shop, learn and make connections at the annual WWA Convention. 307-329-8942 • [WesternWriters.org](http://WesternWriters.org)

TWMag.com:

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# The Baron, the Cow-boys and the Trail Boss



Ask The Marshall

BY MARSHALL TRIMBLE

**Marshall Trimble** is Arizona's official historian and vice president of the Wild West History Association. His latest book is *Arizona Oddities: Land of Anomalies and Tamales*; History Press, 2018. If you have a question, write: Ask the Marshall, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327 or e-mail him at [marshall.trimble@scottsdalecc.edu](mailto:marshall.trimble@scottsdalecc.edu). Please always include your name, city and state.



James Addison Reavis's life as a charlatan in the Arizona Territory was dramatized in the Vincent Price Western, *The Baron of Arizona* (1950).

Poster courtesy Lippert Pictures

**I've read more than one article (including items from your books) about James Addison Reavis, the so-called "Baron of Arizona." Which side did he fight on during the Civil War?**

*Mark Manning  
Mesa, Arizona*

Reavis first joined the Confederate Army in Missouri. He was running a small business forging his commanding officer's signature on passes and selling them to his fellow Rebels. He sensed he was about to get

busted so he went "over the hill" and joined the Union Army. He returned to his old ways by forging passes; again, he was about to get caught so he went AWOL. He was an incurable charlatan. He was years ahead of his peers when it came to harnessing the Salt and Gila rivers and might have become rich and famous (instead of infamous), but he turned everything into a con or scheme.

**How did wranglers herd the horses on cattle drives?**

*Sylvia Weatherford  
Long Beach, California*

The wrangler on a trail drive was usually the youngest and least experienced of the hands, but his job was a serious one. He took care of the remuda, the horses that kept the drovers mounted. On the long drive, a wrangler was almost as important as the chuckwagon cook. Especially important: making sure they grazed as much as possible. Each cowboy had six to ten horses for his string, and he rotated them regularly. It was important that the animals were healthy and strong over the six to eight weeks on the trail, so the wrangler had to know every horse in the remuda, some 60 to a hundred head.

In the morning, he checked the remuda to see if any had strayed during the night. If any had, he would hunt for the missing horses while the rest grazed. He was expected to have every horse accounted for at noon camp, where the cowboys would change mounts. There were no pens, so after the horses were gathered, the drovers made a circle with ropes. When a horse was being broken, it was trained to respect a single strand of rope. A big remuda would stay inside this temporary fence.

**When did mercantile stores stop selling dynamite?**

*Chris Pepple  
Morongo Valley, California*

It wasn't too long ago. The early hardware stores did sell dynamite to individuals. You had to complete some paperwork, and the law stated you had to detonate it the same day you purchased it. It was illegal to store it, as it could become dangerous. The law regarding the sale of dynamite was changed in 1975. There were more restrictions after Oklahoma City and 9/11.



The youngest cowboys on cattle drives, such as this young Texan, were responsible for the great horse remudas that trailed along with the cattle on drives from Texas to Kansas and beyond.

Courtesy Degolyer Library, SMU

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An experienced wagon master earned his weight in gold leading emigrant and freight wagon trains safely across the Western trails to their final destinations.

William H. Illingsworth, circa 1874, Courtesy NPYL Digital Collections

## What was the pay for a wagon master?

Thomas Vais  
Beachwood, NJ

The wagon master generally earned \$125 a month, and he earned it. His responsibilities began long before his train set out. He chose his bullwhackers, oversaw the training of the unbroken animals and the loading of the wagons. On the trail, he had to be forceful enough to impose his authority on rough and tough men. He regularly patrolled his train and reconnoitered ahead on the lookout for hostile Indians and difficult stretches of the road. He chose routes, timed the march and decided where to camp. When the water ran high at river crossings, when the wagons mired down, it was he who made the decisions and gave the orders.

## Did John Slaughter and Wyatt Earp ever meet?

Mark Schoenfeld  
Wilmette, Illinois

I scoured the Wyatt Earp section of my library, which includes books by Casey Tefertiller, Gary Roberts, John Boessenecker, Chuck Hornung, Jeff Guinn, Allen Barra, Karen Holliday Tanner, Steve Gatto, Don Chaput, Ben Traywick and Jack Burrows. There seems to be no mention of Wyatt and John Slaughter ever meeting, or if they did, it would have been casual. They didn't have much in common—Earp was a Northern Republican, and Slaughter was a Texas Rebel.



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# What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

Courtesy Rose Speirs



## ROSE SPEIRS, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, DEADWOOD HISTORY, INC.

Rose Speirs works for Deadwood History, Inc. in Deadwood, South Dakota. For her, it is a privilege to go to work each day and share Deadwood's amazing history through five unique properties: the Adams House, Adams Museum, Days of '76 Museum, The Brothel Deadwood and the Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center. Speirs loves her job and describes it as "fun, challenging and worth every minute of it because of the great team I work with!"

**I grew up** an Air Force brat and was raised in South Dakota, but I did live in Guam for two years when my dad was stationed overseas during the Vietnam War in the late 1960s. My five-year-old self recalls that the shrews were huge.

**My parents** were both Irish Catholics. My dad was from Warwick, Rhode Island, and my mom was from Dubuque, Iowa. They have both passed away, and I truly miss them. They instilled a strong work ethic in me.

**A mentor** is a type of life coach. They pull you up by the bootstraps, as it were, and make you the best person you can be professionally and in life in general

**My love of Deadwood** is deep and ingrained in my heart and soul. Deadwood's history and its stories are often mind-blowing. I am at home in Deadwood. I love this community!

**The Bullock Hotel** is one of the most impressive architectural buildings in Deadwood. It also has a strong paranormal presence, isn't that right, Seth?

**When I visit Mt. Moriah Cemetery** I feel at peace. I can't get enough of it. It is one of my favorite locations in Deadwood. A must-see attraction while in Deadwood.

**Winter** is beautiful in Deadwood. We tend to get a lot of snow and sometimes ice. We offer an abundance of outdoor winter activities. However, it's not for the faint of heart, and it keeps the riffraff out.

**The Black Hills** are truly spiritual—a place to relax, hike, ski, ride a bike or walk the Mickelson Trail—a perfect place for nature lovers, geologists and paleontologists

**If I could play poker,** well I just wouldn't, I don't have a poker face.

**Wish I had a dollar for every time** someone asked me "Where's the bathroom?"

**People don't realize how hard** it is to read somebody's mind.

**One thing I definitely learned** from being quarantined is patience.

**The biggest secret in Deadwood is** that there were no Chinese tunnels (historians agree on this).

**You haven't lived until** you've gone to The Brothel Deadwood (taken a guided tour of the 104-year history of prostitution in Deadwood).

**A perfect weekend for me** is a bike ride on the Mickelson Trail.

**Some things are** overrated, like giant pretzels.

**My greatest challenge** has been believing in myself.

**Most people don't know** that I appeared on *Bozo's Circus* in Boston when I was two years old.

**To me Wild Bill Hickok is** a sexy, pistol-carrying Deadwood legend with a gambling problem, who was devoted to his wife, Agnes Thatcher Lake. Deadwood will always be grateful to Wild Bill.

**When it comes to Calamity Jane,** I admire her for her acts of kindness. She was woman who had to fight like hell from a very young age to fit into a man's world.

**The one thing that saved this town** is legalized gambling, with its annual share of gaming proceeds helping fund everything from Deadwood Historic Preservation projects to the South Dakota Department of Tourism.

**The secret to a long marriage** is keeping your finances separate and having a dog in the family.

**What history has taught me** is that you really can learn from the past. I wouldn't have believed that in my early 20s. Living and working in Deadwood has taught me a plethora of lessons, everything from the importance of historic preservation to the significance of museums and living history. History is exciting, shocking, and it's absolutely true what Deadwood History Exhibits Director Darrel Nelson says: "The truth is often better than fiction."



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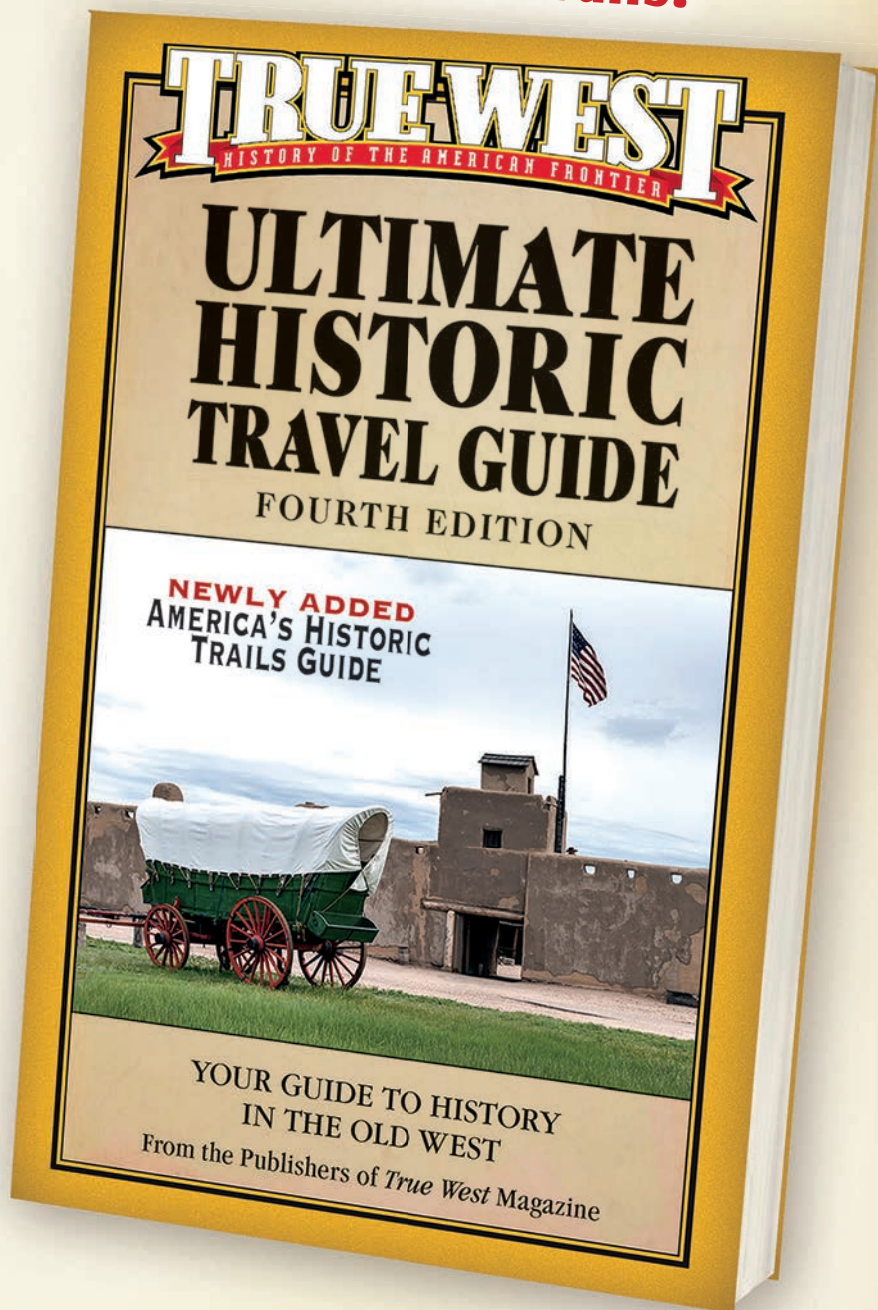
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