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by David Wright

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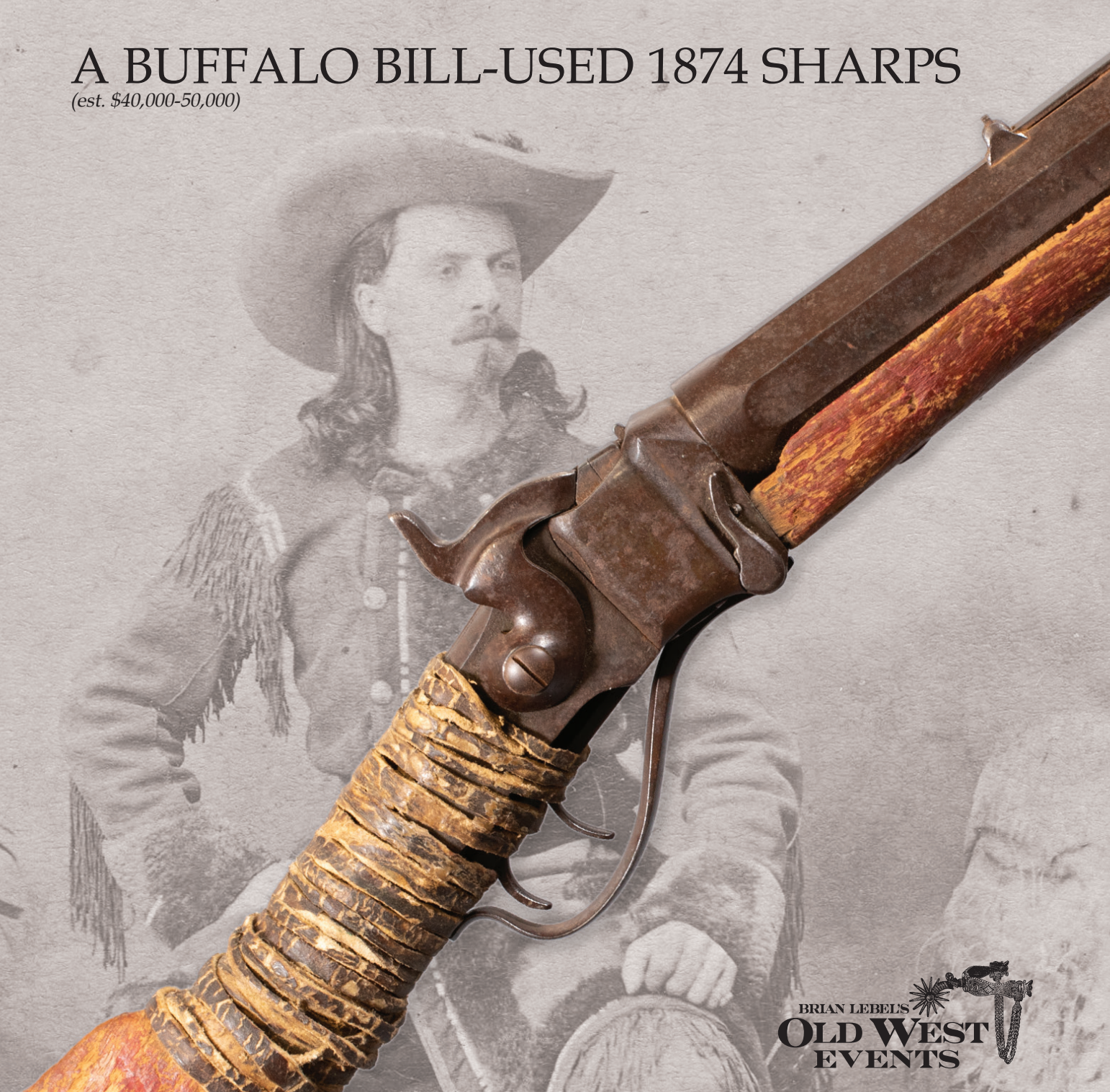
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Saturday, January 22, 2022

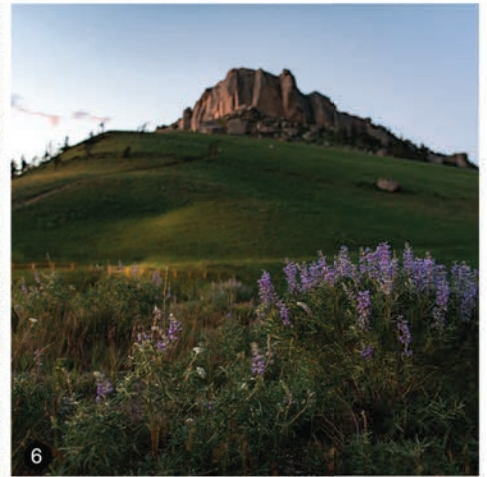
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1. ROAD TRIPPING THE ICONIC BIGHORN MOUNTAINS 2. A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS WITH SHERIDAN TENT & AWNING IN THE NORTHERN BIGHORNS 3. SIBLEY LAKE RECREATION AREA 4. AN EVENING PADDLING PARK RESERVOIR 5. EPIC EXPERIENCES ON HORSEBACK WITH DOUBLE RAFTER CATTLE DRIVES 6. STEAMBOAT POINT AT SUNSET FROM THE BIGHORN SCENIC BYWAY

Wyoming was purpose-built for social distancing. There are more deer and antelope than people 'round these parts, and you won't hear many folks complain about that. We've all got our own spaces, but we love to explore the public ones we share, and we don't mind sharing some of them with strangers. After all, our Bighorn backyard is a wild, untamed realm of endless adventure. With our new streaming webseries titled *The Backyard*, we hope to show everyone beyond the borders of Wyoming what makes the great outdoors special, and why the Bighorns are the ultimate playground for those who choose to go outside and play. In this wild time of social distancing, distrust, and disbelief, we believe that the mountains can bring us closer together, and that there is no place in the world more authentic. Is there a more spectacular experience than backpacking into a part of the Bighorn National Forest

that you have never seen before? We. Think. Not. Each and every trip into these mountains offers blissful solitude, and a respite from the hustle of everyday life. We have worked hard to present some of our backyard's most epic hikes, legendary attractions, national historic landmarks, and much more. With two feet and a heartbeat we hiked and backpacked into uncharted territory in the Bighorn National Forest and shared the stories of some of the most iconic locations in the region. We took a step back into history and experienced Ernest Hemingway's Wyoming firsthand. We kayaked pristine rivers, paraglided from perilous peaks, sussed out outlaw history, and stargazed at the brightest night skies in America. Yeah, there is a metaphor tucked in there somewhere. It was only a matter of time before the clouds broke over 2020. We hope that you have had a chance to see some of these episodes, and that you will continue to celebrate Sheridan County with us as we look ahead to producing Season 2. This time, we plan on

delving deep into centuries of Indian storytelling, diving headlong into local craft culture, and touching the heart of Sheridan's creative community. We also know that it has never been more important to know that you will be safe when you explore Bighorn Mountain Country. While Wyoming is the perfect place for socially-distanced escapes, we will do what we can to keep you informed, and up to date, on any COVID-19 related news and information, travel rules or restrictions, or local health and safety advisories. We believe that the road to recovery from this pandemic begins right here in *The Backyard*, so you can count on us to provide you with information that matters. We hope that you will stay safe, and that our local businesses will continue to benefit by welcoming you to our community. For more information, please visit us at www.sheridanwyoming.org

EXPLORE BIGHORN MOUNTAIN COUNTRY

The world comes out west expecting to see cowboys driving horses through the streets of downtown; pronghorn butting heads on windswept bluffs; clouds encircling the towering pinnacles of the Cloud Peak Wilderness; and endless expanses of wild, open country. These are some of the fibers that have been stitched together over time to create the patchwork quilt of Sheridan County's identity, each part and parcel to the Wyoming experience. Toss in a historic downtown district, with western allure, hospitality and good graces to spare; a vibrant art scene; bombastic craft culture; a robust festival and events calendar; and living history on every corner, and you have a Wyoming experience unlike anything you could have ever imagined. This is Sheridan County, the beating heart of Bighorn Mountain Country.



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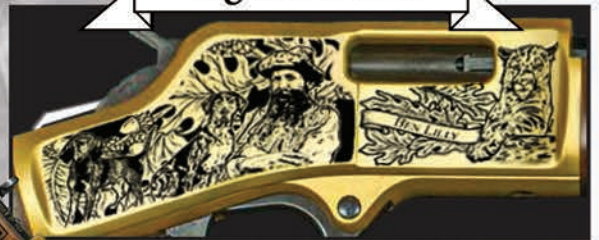
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As America expanded West it gave rise to a new type of explorer: the Mountain Man. Most prominent through the mid 1800's, the Mountain Man was a unique character in the burgeoning frontier; to survive and be successful a man would have to be extremely rugged and also an expert in the dangerous wilderness. Many famous mountain men were fur trappers, taking advantage of the plentiful, if often dangerous, wildlife found in the newly explored Rocky Mountains. The grizzled hunter in buckskin is a familiar figure in Western legend and lore and for good reason; these men were specially equipped with knowledge and skills for life in an unforgiving and harsh environment.

Mountain Men throughout the century made many historical impacts on the nation. Through exploration men like James Beckwourth and Jim Bridger made possible safe passage West. Relationships with Native American tribes facilitated trade and expansion, the economic impact of the fur trade was felt across the country as it paved the way for new opportunities on the west coast. While the legacy of the Mountain Man is too epic to ever fade away, the reality of these figures and what they endured and accomplished is far more significant.

Heroes and Patriots is proud to present this Special Limited-Edition Henry Big Boy .45 LC with 24Kt Gold plating in a satin finish on the Receiver and Butt plate and beautifully engraved, will become a treasured Family heirloom worthy of passing down to your future generations. Makes a great gift for Retirements, Bonuses for Employees and Executives, Birthdays, Holidays, Fundraisers and more! There will only be 50 for this edition!

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Douglas took its beginnings along the railroad tracks and trains continue to be an important part of the community's culture and economy. They're also reflected in many of the buildings and businesses across the community.

The Douglas Railroad Museum & Visitor Center is housed in the historic FE & MV Railroad Passenger Depot. The building is listed on the National Historic Register and is surrounded by seven historic railcars, including the Chicago Burlington and Quincy Railroad 4-8-4 Steam Locomotive #5633. Visitors to the museum are invited to go inside many of the rail cars, including a day coach, a dining car and a sleeper, as well as a little red caboose.

You'll also want to ask to see the model train on display in the back room!

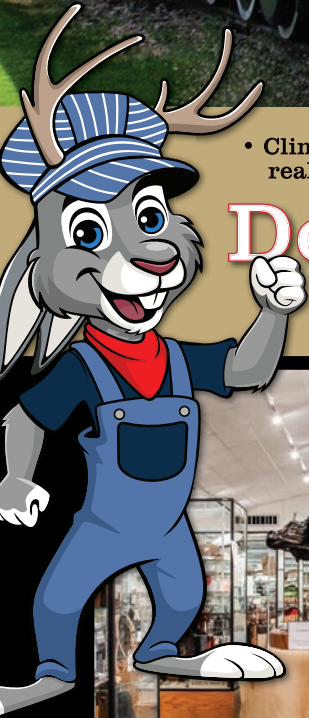


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Wyoming Pioneer Museum

Located on the Wyoming State Fairgrounds in Douglas, the Wyoming Pioneer Museum is a must see for western history enthusiasts.

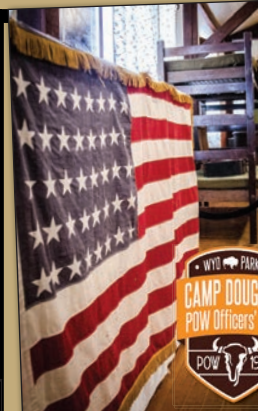


WWII Prisoner of War Camp Douglas

During World War II, Douglas was home to the primary prisoner of war (POW) camp for Wyoming. Construction of the camp began early in 1942; the first prisoners to arrive at the camp were 412 Italians on Aug. 28, 1943.

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OPENING SHOT

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STAND TO BE COUNTED

Dakota Territory photographer David Francis Barry, well known for his portraits of Chief Joseph and Sitting Bull, recorded census day at the Sioux Agency at Standing Rock Agency in 1888. Chief Gall is standing between tables holding a cane, while Indian Agent James McLaughlin is seated by the table on the left. By order of Congress, a census had been held at the agency every year since 1885. According to a report in *The Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times* on November 25, 1888, there were "4,385 Sioux of the various bands" at Standing Rock.



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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A TRULY MONUMENTAL ARCHIVE



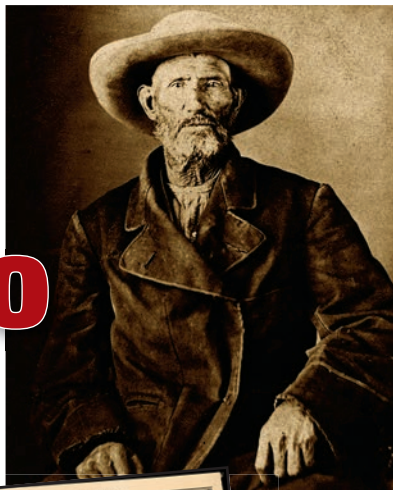
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20 KNIGHT OF THE ROCKIES

Jim Bridger, once a teenaged mountain man, became one of the most dependable and renowned trailblazers of the vast lands of the American West.

—By Jerry Enzle

26 DAVID WRIGHT

A Search for Historical Truth.

—By Ted Franklin Belue

32 LAST OF THE OLD TIME PROSPECTORS

Shorty Harris's bonanzas and burros were almost as legendary as he was.

—By John Fillmore



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38 CITY OF DREAMS

Nome's glittering gold strike of 1898 lured thousands north by sea to seek their fortune in Alaska's Bering Strait goldfields.

—By Michael Engelhard

44 CHAOS OF A BOOMTOWN

A Yankee prospector's scrapbook of his summer in Nome reveals the hardships of the Arctic gold rush.

—By Stuart Rosebrook

68 THE ROADS LESS TRAVELED

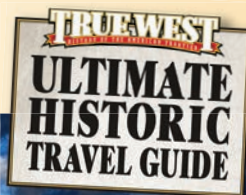
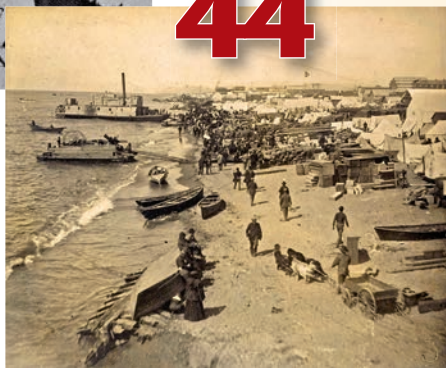
Adventures await along the West's byways and highways to history.

—By Stuart Rosebrook

38



44



26



68



Cover design by Dan Harshberger

"Wind River Man" Courtesy David Wright

COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Old Vaquero Saying

“The most complicated thing in the world is to be able to keep things simple. The simplest thing in the world is to make things complicated.”



Quotes

“No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.”

—Charles Dickens

“When love is at its best, one loves so much that he cannot forget.”

—Helen Hunt Jackson

American author and poet Helen Hunt Jackson was a great defender of American Indian rights. It is estimated that her best-selling novel *Ramona* has been reprinted 300 times.

Courtesy C.C. Pierce Collection of Photographs, Huntington Library



“For it is in giving that we receive.”

—Francis of Assisi

“A mountain man tries to live with the country instead of against it.”

—Louis L'Amour

“The hills of one's youth are all mountains.”

—Mari Sandoz

“I am always at a loss at how much to believe of my own stories.”

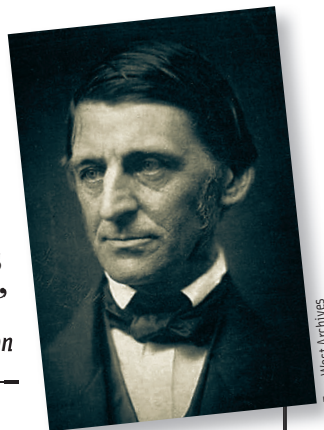
—Washington Irving

“There are some things you learn best in calm, and some in storm.”

—Willa Cather

“Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



True West Archives

“If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.”

—Mark Twain

“It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature.”

—Henry James

“Any desert land that will grow big sage will produce more fortunes than most gold mines—if you can only get the water.”

—Peter B. Kyne, *The Long Chance*



Spanish-American war veteran and prolific early 20th-century author Peter Kyne penned one of the most popular Old West Christmas novels, *The Three Godfathers*, which was first produced as a film in 1916 starring (l.-r.): Frank Lanning, Harry Carey Sr. and Joe Rickson.

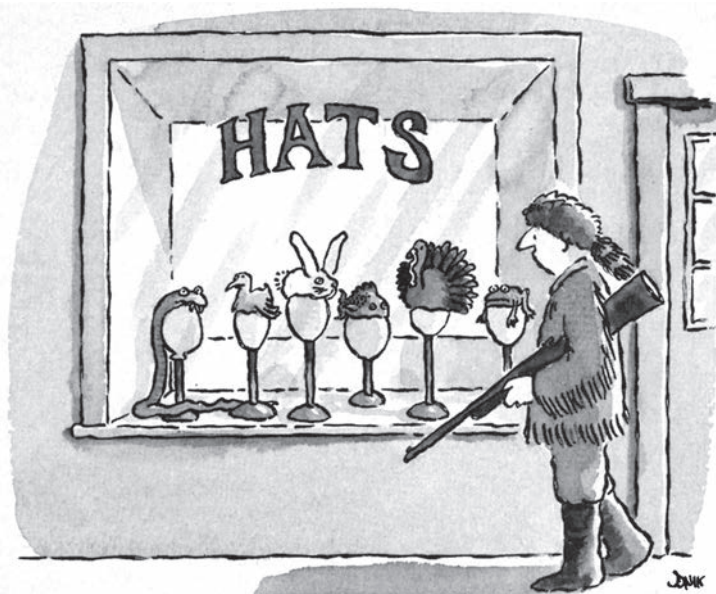
Courtesy Universal Pictures

“A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road.”

—Henry Ward Beecher

“God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December.”

—James M. Barrie



CartoonStock.com

The Seekers

Once and for all, did the mountain men wear ZZ Top beards?

It has become somewhat of a tradition at *True West* magazine to do a mountain man on the December cover. In the past two decades we have run at least a half dozen and they are always quite popular and invariably best sellers. That's not to say we don't receive a little criticism. Last year's cover (see page 12, December 2020, "Daniel Boone") got some blowback because more than a few of our readers considered the cover boy to be "too darned pretty" and not "authentically rough enough," which begs the question: did the mountain men all wear scruffy ZZ Top beards? (For that answer, see page 31.)

If there's one thing we pride ourselves on at this magazine it's getting to the historical truth, warts and all. And for our cover artist in this issue we went to one of the very best in the historical accuracy business.



Clean Shaven for a Reason
Old Capote by David Wright
 Courtesy David Wright



For a behind-the-scenes look at running this magazine, check out BBB's daily blog at TWMag.com



December 2019



December 2017



December 2015



December 2000

True West's first December issue to feature a mountain man on the cover was in 2000.

"I feel it's an historical artist's obligation to present and future generations to paint the subject with as much historical accuracy as possible."

—David Wright

OUR READERS REMIND US OF THE VARIABLES AND VAGARIES OF HISTORIC TRUTHS, "WELL-ESTABLISHED" FACTS, HEADLINES AND HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

THE MANY FACES OF THE MOUNTAIN MAN

A year ago, *True West*'s cover featured the fine art painting by ZS Liang titled *Mountain Man*. Liang's masterpiece is from the Peterson Family Collection at Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. The Chinese-born and American-trained artist, well-known for his dedication to field research and historical accuracy, has received national and regional awards for his Western art.

After the issue's publication, the magazine received several letters with opinions that Liang's mountain man's features "were too darn pretty." In response, we asked readers in the February-March 2021 issue's "Shooting Back" column to send in their opinions and favorite images of a mountain man.

We also asked Ted F. Belue, a Daniel Boone and mountain man/long hunter historian, and renowned Western and frontier America historical artist David Wright to share their expertise on the subject in both words and art (see page 26).

Here is a selection from the responses we received. What is your opinion?



Covers Courtesy True West Archives

Thanks to all who sent in their mountain man submissions. We are glad for the inspiration, and we believe you will be inspired by our features in this issue on Jim Bridger, the mountain men, desert prospectors and latter-day frontiersmen and women who sought their fortunes in gold on Cape Nome's Arctic shores of the Bering Sea. Their courage, bravery, determination and even foolhardy craziness helped build a nation, and we are all better knowing more about them through their words, photos and art.

Speaking of inspiration, we reviewed the magazine's archives and discovered that in the 1950s prospectors were featured on the cover four times—the first a Taylor Oughton illustration in June 1955—while it took until February 1962 before artwork of mountain men by Joe Grandee graced the magazine's cover.



While I thought the mountain man gracing the December cover was perfect, I'd also like to suggest the attached beautiful man! This is a signed print by artist Jim Thomason, of my old friend Burt Marchman, aka "Big Medicine." I think Burt's passed away now, but he was a fixture at the Fort Bridger Mountain Man Rendezvous gatherings in the '70s and '80s. He resided in Big Timber, Montana, and lived the mountain man life part-time. He was also a jovial, bigger-than-life (big man too) storyteller, and a wonderful, kind soul. Thanks for your consideration!

—Rachelle "Rocky" Gibbons
Central, Utah

Shining Times, aka "Big Medicine" by Jim Thomason

Courtesy Rachelle "Rocky" Gibbons

In the February-March 2021 issue, you asked readers for images of their favorite not-like-a-model-looking mountain man. Here's mine: Jack Dalton, the Alaska pathfinder who put snowshoes on his horse.

—Michael Engelhard
Fairbanks, Alaska



Latter-day mountain man Jack Dalton poses with his snowshoe-wearing horse.

Courtesy Michael Engelhard

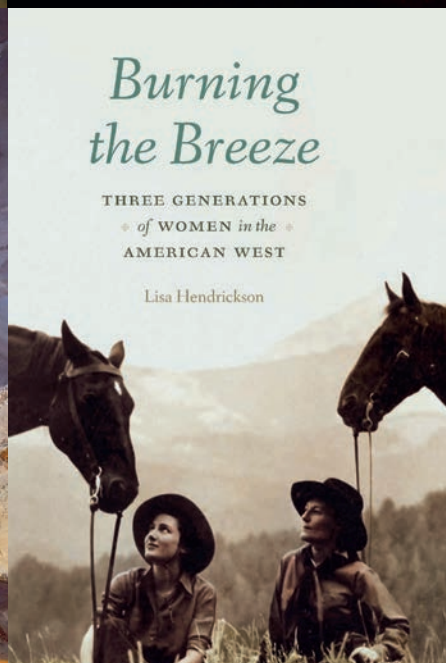
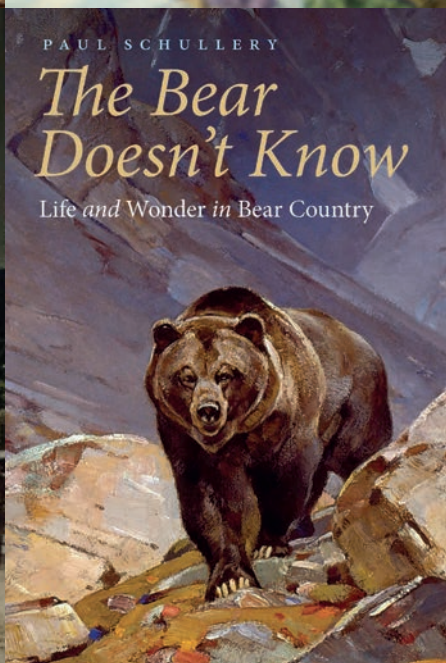
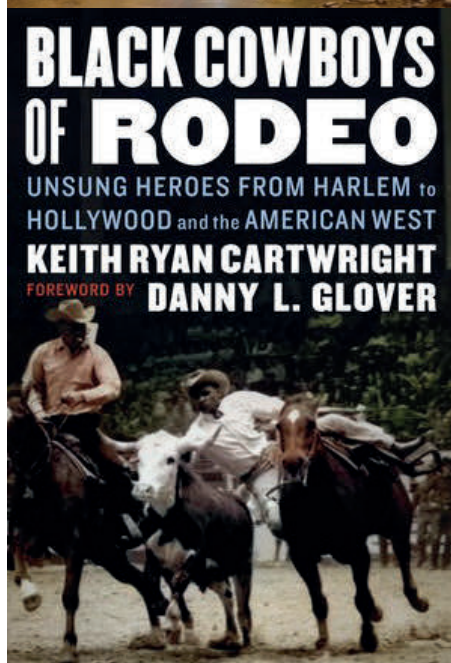
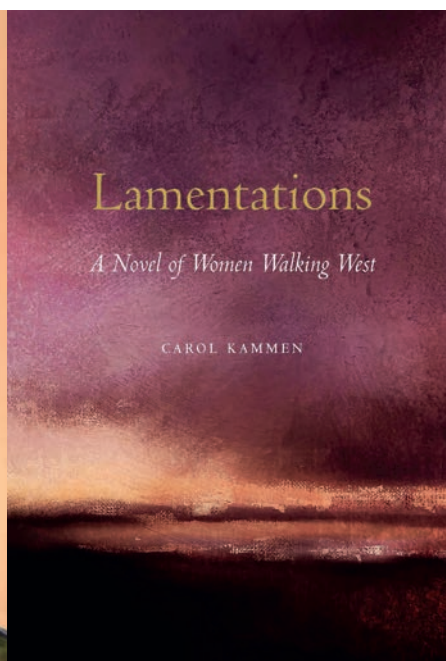
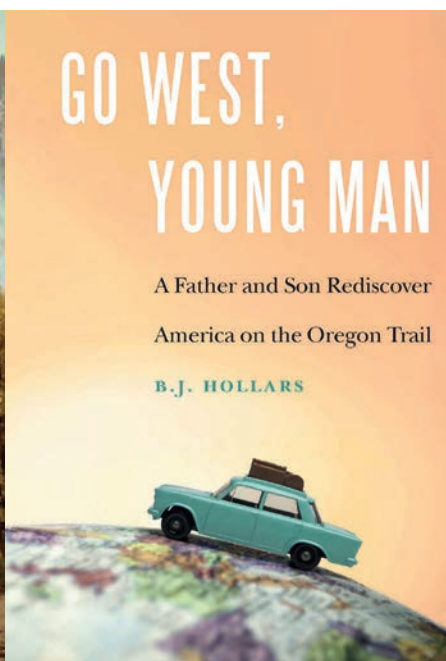
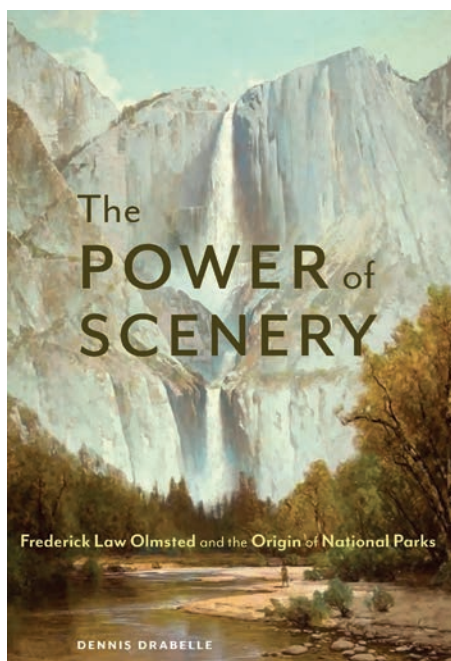
Though there was only one published letter with a differing opinion about the appearance of a mountain man, I gather that you thought it might represent stronger feelings. Mr. Cajero (the letter writer) summed up his feelings that the face done by the splendid artist ZS Liang was "too darn pretty." Riding his thought, I am submitting an alternate mountain man version, one certainly not so "pretty." He is *Frenchie—The Bear Kisser*. The title reversal was done by Frenchie's buddies around the campfire. Your idea of the image submission effort was stimulating—certainly enough to pull this artist away from the business at hand and onto something fun.

—H.C. Zachry
Abilene, Texas



Frenchie—The Bear Kisser

Courtesy H.C. Zachry



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BY MARK BOARDMAN

The Donner Business

Where did the wagon train party fall short?

Back when I was in high school, a group of us loved to go winter camping out in the middle of nowhere. It was calm and peaceful and beautiful. One of the guys was Karl—and maybe it's better that I didn't know his background, for Karl's direct ancestors were named Donner. Yes, that Donner.

The group that got stuck in the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1846-47. They ran out of food, so they turned to cannibalism. Of 87 folks in the Donner Party, 41 died. It may be the most infamous wagon train disaster in American pioneer history.

We know of some of the issues that led to the debacle. The party got started a bit late and then was slow on the trail. They took a cutoff that was supposed to save time and mileage—but it had never really been tested and ended up costing the group weeks. They went into the mountains well after experts recommended and got caught in terrible snowstorms that prevented any movement. And it stopped relief efforts for weeks.

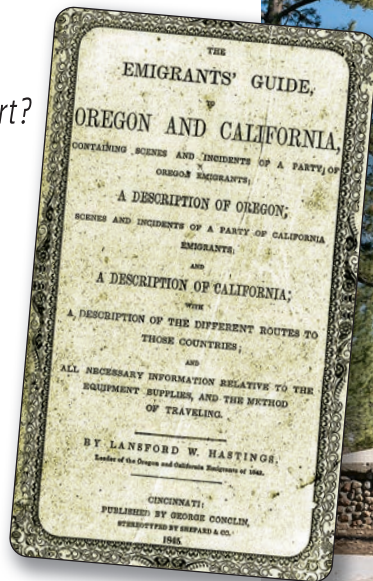
Some years after those high school camping trips, I ran into Karl again. He was a human resources consultant, and one of his presentations was "Modern Lessons of the Donner Party." It was—and is—a fascinating look at the incident through today's business lens.

Among the issues Karl raised:

1. Lack of strong leadership

Karl's direct ancestor, George Donner, was one of the oldest members of the train at age 60. He was solid, careful, popular, but not terribly dynamic. And when things began to go wrong, George wasn't forceful enough to keep people in line.

The other de facto leader was James Reed. He was strong, assertive, outgoing—and disliked by most of the travelers. In October 1846, he killed a teamster on the trail, probably in self-defense, and Reed was banished from the party. (He later led relief efforts).



George Donner and James Reed's decision to rely on Lansford Hastings's 1845 *Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California* and his supposed "cutoff" to shorten the route to Nevada through Utah's Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake Desert led to a 125-mile boondoggle and 31 extra days on the trail to California.

True West Archives

If the strengths of each man had been combined in one person, that might have created the leader the group needed. However, Donner and Reed agreed on one point: to take the Hastings Cutoff, the alleged shortcut to the mountains. They both ignored warnings from several sources that claimed it was untried. That decision, by itself, probably resulted in the terrible situation.

2. Conflict resolution and team-building and poorly handled diversity

Even before the Donner Party hit the mountains, there was division in the ranks. Socio-economic status, ethnicity, etc., drove people apart. A fair amount of it was based on blood: families stuck together, sometimes isolating themselves from others. Things only got worse when the heavy snows hit in the high country. By that time, it was too late to resolve conflicts or build teams. It was every family for itself. A joint effort at survival might have spared lives.

The Pioneer Memorial at Donner Memorial State Park stands at the Donner Party encampment site, honoring the California Trail pioneers and the tragic emigrant party. The base of the memorial is 22 feet high, the height of the accumulated snow in Donner Pass that winter.

Courtesy The Jon B. Lovelace Collection of California Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith's America Project, Library of Congress

3. Poor interpersonal communication skills

Some folks were too loud and abrasive when it came to expressing their feelings—James Reed being a perfect example. Others just kept quiet, and let issues build up to a breaking point (including dissent about the Hastings Cutoff). They didn't know how to talk to one another, so frequently they didn't talk to one another at all. And there was nobody to mediate, to bring the various sides together (another aspect of conflict resolution).

Karl had other points and a few slides, but that hits some of the high points. The bottom line: the group called the Donner Party was unable to work together toward a common goal. Dozens died. Others suffered from frostbite, PTSD and more for the rest of their lives. Worst of all, they were tagged as cannibals, a designation nobody wanted.

In case you wondered, when Karl got hungry on the winter camping expeditions, he went for a candy bar. Whew...





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BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

The Duke Stars on a New Stage

His personal belongings tell a lot about the big man.

The wooden crate is 8-by-8-by-8 feet. Inside the oversized box are bag after bag of unopened fan mail, all addressed to the same man.

Some have real addresses; others just say “John Wayne, Hollywood, California,” but all 300,000 letters were delivered in those last days in 1979 as one of America’s icons was dying of cancer.

The letters came from every state and many foreign countries. John Wayne, who made a point of always answering his fan mail, never got a chance to open them and they’ve stayed in their mail pouches all these years.

It must take your breath away to stand in front of that crate and realize how loved The Duke was. But that’s just one breathtaking moment for visitors in Fort Worth, Texas, at one of the West’s newest museums: John Wayne: An American Experience.

That crate, along with a warehouse full of Wayne’s belongings—from scripts to costumes to his Academy Award to his Presidential Medal of Freedom to film clips to family items—stayed packed away until 2003, when his family started going through everything.

“We didn’t plan a museum, but to preserve the items,” notes Amy Shepherd, a longtime family friend. “In 2017 we did a pop-up in Nashville during A Country Christmas and had 5,000 visitors in 40 days. In 2019 we did a pop-up in Las Vegas during the National Rodeo and had 30,000 visitors in seven days. It was just a fantastic response.”

Wayne’s youngest son, Ethan, then was convinced the best place for a full-time museum was the Stockyards in Fort Worth, which already had made a name for itself as a Western tourist draw.

The John Wayne museum opened its doors December 4, 2020, and even though the nation was in the midst of a pandemic, the response



The great hall entryway to the John Wayne: An Experience museum in Fort Worth, Texas, leads visitors into an immersion in the life and career of cinema’s greatest Western-action movie hero.



Discover the evolution of John Wayne’s diverse cinematic career in a timeline exhibit of his costumes from such Duke classics as *The Horse Soldiers* (1959) and *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) at Fort Worth’s John Wayne: An Experience museum.

Photo by Joel Pena, Courtesy John Wayne Enterprises

was immediate and gratifying. On May 26, 2021, Fort Worth declared this birth date as John Wayne Day, and it’s expected to become an annual celebration. (The John Wayne Birthplace Museum is in Winterset, Iowa.)

“We hope to make his birthday celebration a fundraiser for the John Wayne Cancer Foundation that his family founded in 1985,” Shepherd says.

The museum promises an intimate experience with “one of the greatest male stars of classic American cinema.”

Although some of Wayne’s views on race and social issues have caused controversy,

most people come to see the life of a rugged American icon.

“We see lots of families because people like to share John Wayne with their children and grandchildren,” Shepherd notes. “John Wayne believed in civil discourse and free speech, and he thought it wasn’t about party, but about being an American patriot.”

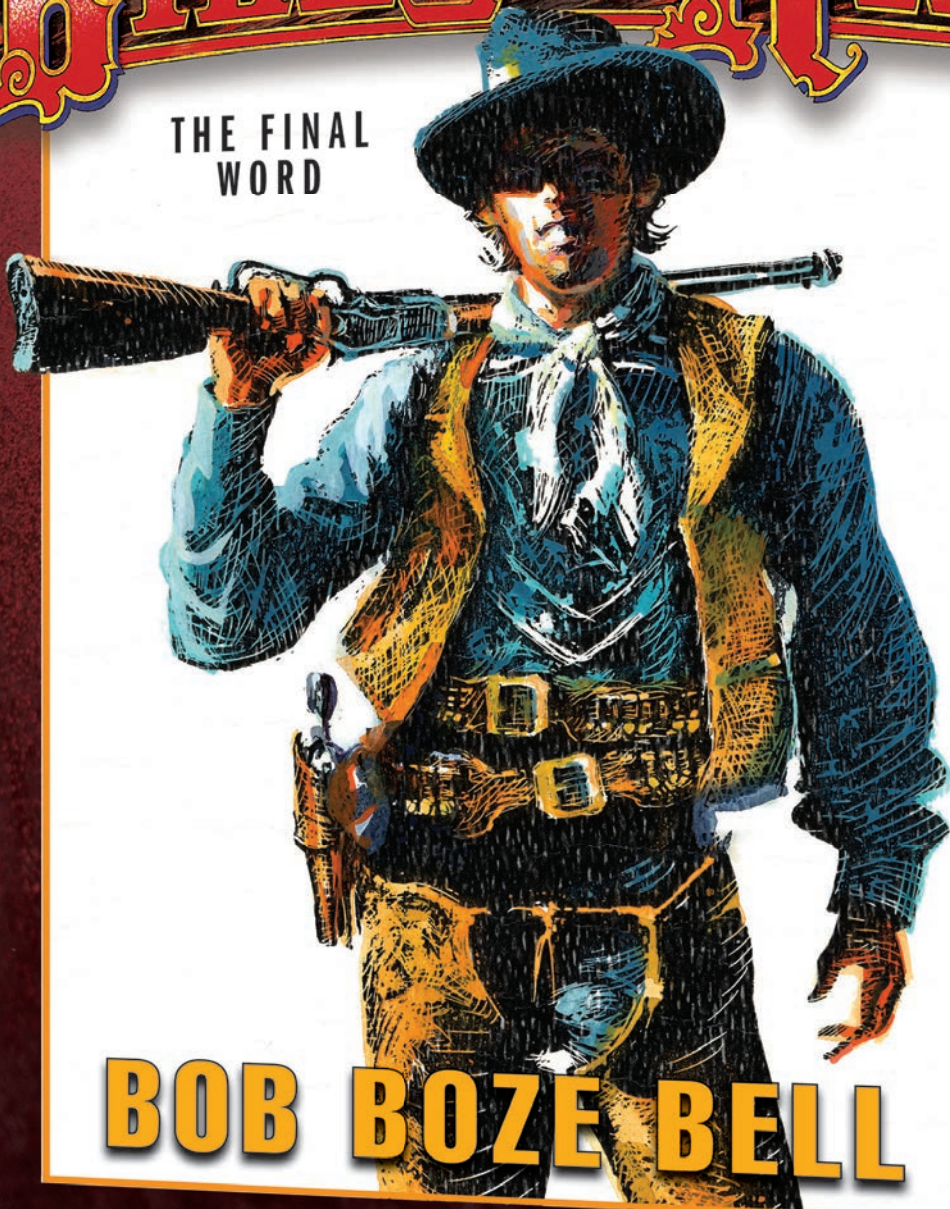
Jana Bommersbach has earned recognition as Arizona’s Journalist of the Year and won an Emmy and two Lifetime Achievement Awards. She cowrote the Emmy-winning *Outrageous Arizona* and has written three true crime books, a children’s book and the historical novel *Cattle Kate*.

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BY STEVE FRIESEN

"Christmas Dinner" With Charlie Russell

Highlights from *The Russell Auction in Great Falls, Montana.*



Christmas Dinner, an 1898 pen-and-ink drawing by Russell, with watercolors added by an unknown artist, went for \$140,400.

Cochran Shot the Indian, a watercolor, was created by Russell based on an actual historical event and appeared as an illustration in the book *Fifteen Thousand Miles by Stage*. It went for \$994,500.



As might be expected, the strongest sellers at the Russell Auction, held at the C.M. Russell Museum on August 19, were works by the artist himself. Charles Russell's painting *Drifting*, an early work from 1889-90 and based on his experiences as a cowboy in Montana, pulled in \$643,500. *Christmas Dinner*, his pen-and-ink drawing of American Indians arriving at a cabin on the holiday fetched \$140,400. The drawing begs the question, were they invited or unexpected guests? A decidedly less peaceable image, *Cochran Shot the Indian*, effectively captured the Old West action that has made Russell so popular over the years. When the hammer fell at \$994,500, the watercolor had taken top dollar at the auction.

For many years I have been a fan of Charles Russell's illustrations on letters, cards and other

correspondence. They often reveal his love of things truly Western as well as his sense of humor. A greeting card, illustrated by him with a stagecoach, went for \$40,950 at the Russell auction. *Do I Look Like a Piker?*, a humorous watercolor, went for \$38,025.

Several of Russell's contemporaries, who carried the Western Art tradition well into the 20th century, were represented. These included Charles Schreyvogel, whose *Indian on Horseback* commanded \$140,400, and Edgar Paxson, whose portrait of a Cheyenne brave gathered \$36,270. Most of the pieces at the auction, however, were by living artists, like Russell Skull Society of Artists' member Charles Fritz. *When Winter Prayers Are Answered*, his rendition of two American Indians hunting buffalo in a winter landscape, went for \$23,400. Skull Society

member R. Tom Gilleon's *Mourning Star*, fetched \$409,500, the highest price commanded by a living artist at the auction.

Twenty of the 205 lots offered were pulled because they failed to meet their reserves. These withdrawals included several works by Russell and suggest some sellers may have had unrealistic expectations of the current market. Nevertheless, the annual Russell Auction succeeded this year in bringing in a total of \$3,687,360 plus another \$117,527 in an additional "quick draw" auction, with all proceeds from that sale going to benefit the museum.

All Images Courtesy C.M. Russell Museum

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.



Drifting, one of his earlier paintings, illustrated the life Russell had known as a cowboy on the Montana plains and went for \$643,500.



R. Tom Gilleon is best known for his paintings of tepees, often illuminated from within by a campfire. His *Mourning Star*, depicting one such luminescent tepee with a solitary star above it, sold for \$409,500.

UPCOMING AUCTIONS

December 3-5, 2021

Premier Firearms Auction #85
Rock Island Auction Co. (Rock Island, IL)
RockIslandAuction.com • 800-238-8022

December 12, 2021

Arms & Armor, Civil War & Militaria
Signature® Auction #6245
Heritage Auctions (Dallas, TX)
HA.com • 877-437-4824

December 14-17, 2021

Collectible Firearms & Militaria
Morphy Auctions (Denver, PA)
MorphyAuctions.com • 877-968-8880

January 21-22, 2021

Friday: Richard Sr. and Daro Flood Family
Collection of Art & Ephemera
Saturday: 32nd Annual Mesa Old West
Show & Auction
Brian Lebel's Old West Events (Mesa, AZ)
OldWestEvents.com • 480-779-9378



The sole Remington piece at the auction was a 17-inch bas-relief bronze depicting a Cheyenne warrior on horseback. It went for \$21,060, nearly twice the expected price.



Charles Schreyvogel painted comparatively few oils, which were extensively reproduced as platinum prints and lithographs. Thus his paintings are very much in demand, like *Indian on Horseback*, which sold for \$140,400 at the Russell.



In Do I Look Like a Piker? Charles Russell humorously portrayed himself as a cigar-smoking dude on a camel. The watercolor fetched \$38,025, while a greeting card, illustrated with a stagecoach by Russell in 1920, went for \$40,950.

BY JERRY ENZLER

KNIGHT OF THE

JIM BRIDGER, ONCE A TEENAGED MOUNTAIN

MAN, BECAME THE MOST DEPENDABLE AND

RENOWNED TRAILBLAZER OF THE VAST

LANDS OF THE AMERICAN WEST.



ROCKIES

For more than a century, some historians have marked a distinct period of exploration dating from the expedition of Lewis and Clark in 1804–06 to the establishment of Fort Bridger on the Oregon Trail in 1843. Jim Bridger played a significant role in that period and in the next as well.

Bridger was a mountain man, “the proudest of all the titles worn by the Americans who lived their lives out beyond the settlements,” wrote Bernard de Voto in *The Year of Decision, 1846*. And he was one of the best of the mountain men, with courage and skill, knowledge and

determination. He lived a life wild and free, and he embodied an American ideal, as Daniel Boone had a generation earlier. Bridger had not set out to be a hero. What had mattered to him, as it happened, mattered to the nation: exploring the Rockies, discovering the Great Salt Lake, opening the routes to Oregon and California, and forging alliances with the Shoshones, Salish, Nez Percé and Crows.

A COMPANY MAN

Under Andrew Henry and William Ashley’s direction, Bridger and his fellow trappers had been active participants in revolutionizing

the fur trade. With free trappers, overland routes and the annual rendezvous, there was no need for established forts. The men were free to hunt the mountains year-round, and by living in lodges each winter, they were able to set traps each fall and spring, the prime trapping seasons. They could be resupplied each summer and only paid when they brought in pelts.

The first Rocky Mountain rendezvous in July 1825 marked the beginning of a new way to supply American trappers and collect their hauls. Bridger and the others would remain full-time hunters, spending the whole year in the mountains instead of taking time to travel to and from St. Louis each spring and fall. A supply caravan would come west each spring laden with goods and return to St. Louis with beaver skins.

Rendezvous was not just a time to swap goods. For Bridger it was a connection to the life he had left behind some twelve hundred miles to the east. It was also a time for him to learn what had happened to fellow trappers



As a Henry and Ashley Company man, Jim Bridger was at the first Rocky Mountain rendezvous along Wyoming’s Henrys Fork in July 1825. David Wright’s *Rendezvous Bound* illustrates the great anticipation the mountain men had for the annual gathering of their fellow trappers, traders, Indian friends—both men and women—and the company men with money and supplies from Missouri.

“Rendezvous Bound” Courtesy David Wright

DAVID WRIGHT ©1934

who had been hunting other regions and what had transpired with the leadership of the company during the past year.

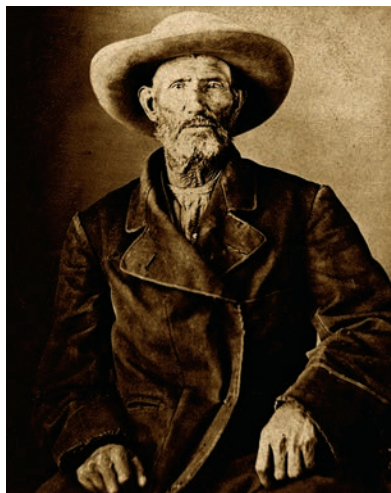
PILOT FOR THE BRIGADES

Following the 1826 rendezvous, Bridger became one of the leaders in William Sublette's foray into the dangerous but beaver-rich lands of the Blackfeet. Over the past two years Bridger had proven his reliability and self-reliance through his solo exploration of Bear River to the Great Salt Lake, his solo shooting of the rapids at Bad Pass and his leadership with Fitzpatrick in retrieving the stolen horses from the Bannocks. Though Bridger was only 22 years old, he had four years' experience and was now one of the "spies" sent several miles ahead to scout the terrain and report any danger or possibility of attack. He would then signal his discoveries or report directly to the brigade leader.

The Sublette party trapped their way to Pierre's Hole (in present-day eastern Idaho), which offered stunning views of the Teton Range and its three prominent peaks. This became one of Bridger's favorite places. These peaks had been called the Pinnacles, the Pilot Knobs, the Three Paps and the Three Brothers; the Shoshones called them Hoary Headed Fathers. But the romantic name that prevailed was the French "Trois Tetons" meaning "three breasts." (The name had earlier been attached to a formation on the Snake River plain that came to be called the Three Buttes.

The trappers crossed the mountains west to east, either through Conant Pass or Teton Pass, and came to the stunning valley on the eastern slope of the Tetons, soon to be known as Jackson's Hole, after David Jackson. But the beauty of the setting was countered by the cunning of the Blackfeet who harried the American interlopers. From that high valley the brigade trapped north along the course of the Lewis River, a tributary of the Snake River. The land kept rising, and soon they stood six hundred feet above the river. The brigade eventually came across a huge alpine lake, refreshingly cool and remarkably blue. They called it Sublette's Lake; it would later be known as Yellowstone Lake.

In the 1820s and 1830s, this band of adventurers, which included Bridger, became the



In 1866, when Bridger was 62 years old he posed for a photograph. He'd spent much of the year engaged as an Army scout in the Red Cloud War.

Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society

most significant group of explorers ever assembled in North American history. They called themselves mountaineers, and Washington Irving described them: "A totally different class has now sprung up, 'the Mountaineers,' the traders and trappers that scale the vast mountain chains, and...move from place to place on horseback...heedless of hardship; daring of danger; prodigal of the present, and thoughtless of the future. There is, perhaps, no class of men on the face of the earth who lead a life of more continued exertion, peril, and excitement."

WINTERING ON THE WIND RIVER

In the fall of 1828, Bridger piloted Robert Campbell's 12-man brigade to Crow country. They hunted along the Powder, Tongue and Bighorn rivers and then wintered with the Crows on Wind River under Long Hair, an 80-year-old chief whose hair measured just under ten feet long. His people had to carry it for him as he walked. Bridger likely guided Campbell's brigade to Crow country again in 1829. In January, Beckwourth decided to leave the brigade and live with the Crows, but he embellished his departure with an implausible tale of Bridger reporting the "painful news" of his death and the trappers mourning his loss.

The 1829 rendezvous was held on the Popo Agie near the Wind River, and Campbell traded for 4,076 pounds of beaver pelts that he hauled back to the States. A second rendezvous of sorts happened that year at Pierre's Hole, where the mountain men were finally reunited with Jedediah Smith. He told them how the Mohaves had killed 10 of his men in the summer of 1827 as they tried to cross the Colorado River in two shifts, and how the Kelawatset Indians had killed 15 of his party on the Umpqua River along the Oregon coast in 1828. Bridger may have piloted Jedediah Smith and William Sublette in fall 1829 as they traveled the Snake River, the Missouri River headwaters and the Yellowstone River. On their way to winter camp in 1829 they crossed the mountains from the Yellowstone to the Bighorn, where the snow was so deep they had to break a path for their horses and mules. The animals still sank to their haunches in the snowdrifts. They lost a hundred animals from starvation and from being trapped in the snow.



Jim Bridger's superior skills at trail-finding and his knowledge of the trails of Wyoming's Wind River Chain (above) and Big Horn Range allowed him to lead companies of trappers in and out of the mountains trapping beaver in all seasons, including during the dangerous winter of 1829.

Unless Otherwise Noted All Alfred Jacob Miller Art (c. 1858-1860)
Courtesy The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Maryland



THE MOUNTAINEER

It was obvious to Bridger and the rest of the men on Wind River that they could not find enough forage for their horses and would soon be counting the animals' ribs. To reach a valley where their horses could survive, they would have to cross the mountains. On New Year's Day 1830 they began their journey, trudging through deep snow by day and huddling around fires by night. By mid-January they reached Powder River, the paradise they had hoped for.



Devil's Gate, at 1,500 feet long, 370 feet deep, and just 30 feet wide at the base, was a day's travel west of Independence Rock, Wyoming, and a major landmark on the Oregon Trail. Bridger encountered many similar formations, including Bear River Canyon and Bad Pass.

"The Devil's Gate" by Alfred Jacob Miller

Jim Bridger first went west as a member of Andrew Henry and William Ashley's company of trappers in 1822 when he was 18 years old. Bridger had no idea that when he put his X on his contract with Henry and Ashley that he would become one of the greatest trappers, mountain men and trailblazers in American history.

"Trapping Beaver" by Alfred Jacob Miller

Buffalo roamed thick in the cottonwoods and grazed into camp, a walking feast coming right up to the cook fires. They had to post double guards to keep the buffalo from trampling their lodges. Bridger and others regularly gathered cottonwood bark for their horses, carrying branches to camp, making draw knives to strip the bark, and bringing the shavings to the horses, which crowded each other to get to the nutritious peelings.

They shattered the solitude of winter with the echo of axes, the braying of the mules and the whoop of the mountaineers. They told epic tales of adventure and filled the night with stories, some of them true. Smoke floated in a haze above their fires as they tried to retell from memory the storylines of their favorite books. Joe Meek, a Virginian who had come to the mountains the previous summer, learned to read while sitting at the campfire. He labored over "an old copy of Shakespeare, which, with a bible, was carried about with the property of the camp."

The ice broke in April, and the trappers set out to cross the mountains with Smith as

their captain and Bridger as pilot. Bridger led them to the Tongue River and then the Bighorn. A heavy snowfall made travel difficult, and Bovey's Fork of the Bighorn River quickly rose from the runoff. They led their animals into the swift current, but it proved too strong for them and swept many away. The animals gasped for air and screamed in panic, and the mountaineers struggled to not be pulled away with them. Thirty horses drowned and three hundred traps went down with them, a significant loss to the trapping brigade.

Bridger led them west over a low range through Pryor's Gap to Clark's Fork, the Rosebud and finally the Yellowstone River, which was still high in its banks. They made bullboats by stretching buffalo hides over willow frames and floated themselves and their gear across. Bridger then took them to the Musselshell and the Judith rivers, where Henry's men had trapped their first season in the mountains in 1822. As always, the Blackfeet were a constant presence, harassing the trappers and stealing traps and horses.

When they reached the Bighorn, a party of men under Samuel Tullock tried to excavate a cache of furs. The overhead soil caved in on Meek and a Frenchman named Glaud Ponto, who often spent his money on riotous behavior. Their companions dug the trappers out of the caved-in cache, only to find Meek seriously injured and poor Glaud Ponto dead. He was "rolled in a blanket and pitched into the river." This was the same Ponto who two years earlier had returned to St. Louis from the 1828 rendezvous to find that his brother had died.

Jim Bridger and many of his fellow trappers became accustomed to Shoshone ways of communicating, trading and courtship. This scene shows a trapper inside a Shoshone lodge about to enjoy a feast.

"Indian Hospitality" by Alfred Jacob Miller



He told his companions, "I am mighty glad my brudder died and I got his fine clothes."

Despite the deadly accident, Tullock got his pelts and joined the other trappers as they headed for the 1830 rendezvous. Bridger looked forward to the gathering but had no idea of the good fortune that lay in his future.

KNIGHT OF THE ROCKIES

Bridger is often viewed as his era's greatest American frontier scout. His knowledge of the West was uncanny, and his frontier survival skills were unparalleled. He could read the land at a moment's glance and recall thousands of miles of past trails in an encyclopedic recital. His contributions to Western exploration and history are enormous, though the details are often forgotten today.

He discovered Great Salt Lake when he was 20 and ran the Bad Pass rapids at 21. He led Rocky Mountain fur trappers, including Kit Carson, throughout the West, and interpreted and mapped for the great Horse Creek Treaty of 1851. He built Fort Bridger on the Oregon and California trails and helped chart Bridger Pass and the Overland route that became the preferred route across the Rockies.

Bridger guided more trappers, emigrants, miners, engineers, scientists and soldiers than

any scout in American history. He was chief scout for noted cartographers and scientists Stansbury, Warren, Hayden and Reynolds, and he guided major military expeditions for Johnston, Collins, Connor and Carrington.

Equally significant, Bridger was a friend and ally to the Shoshone, Crow, Flathead, Nez Percé and Ute Indians. He was widely re-

Jim Bridger and many of his fellow trappers became accustomed to marrying Indian women, with many nuptials occurring at rendezvous. Bridger had three wives: Cora, a Flathead; Chipeta, a Ute; and Mary, a Shoshone. Together they bore him seven children.

"The Trapper's Bride" by Alfred Jacob Miller

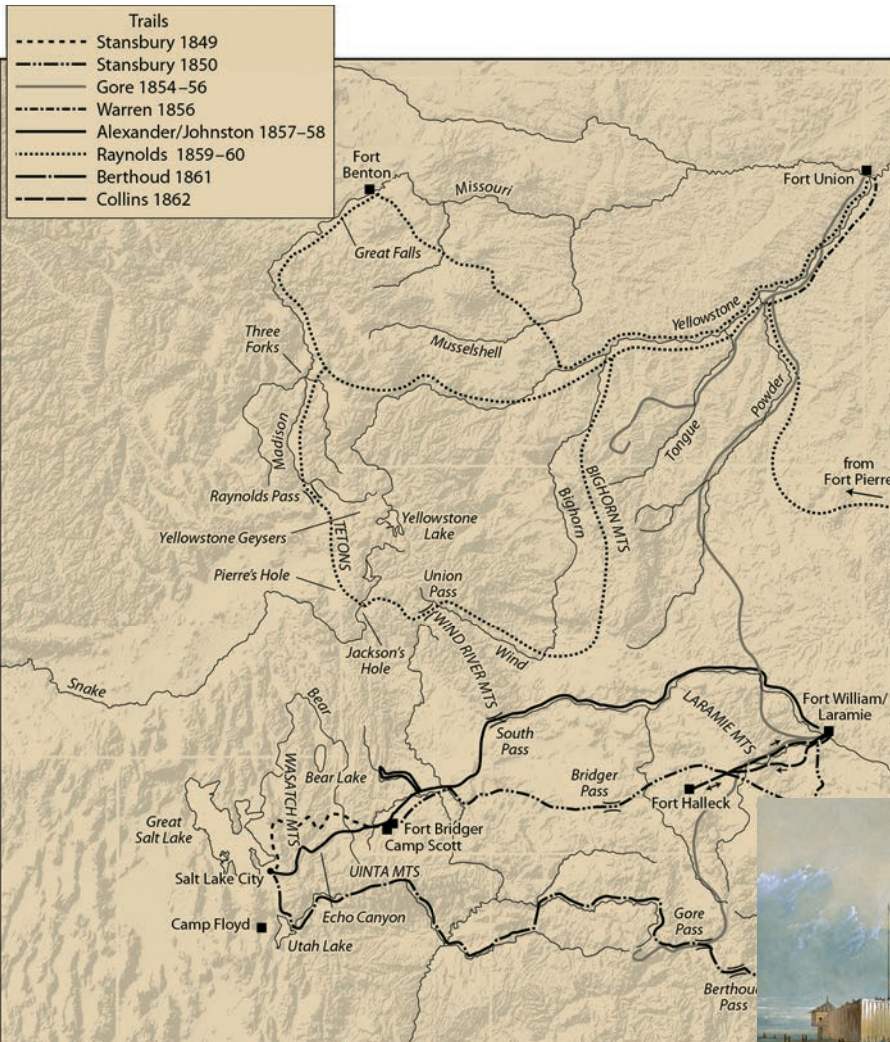


Jim Bridger is in the left foreground (on horseback) wearing a polished steel helmet with plume and a cuirass given to him at the 1837 rendezvous by Sir William Stewart. Alfred J. Miller's 1837 sketch (inset) shows the details of the English suit of armor, which Stewart hoped would protect Bridger from enemy arrows.

Alfred Jacob Miller's "Rendezvous 1837" (1858-186) Courtesy Walters Art Museum, Baltimore/A.J. Miller's "James Bridger in Spanish Suit" Courtesy Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha

spected by the Cheyennes, Sioux, Arapahos and other indigenous peoples and could invariably treat with them to avoid conflict. He blazed the Bridger Trail and advocated for its use to try to prevent the bloody war with the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahos that lasted from 1865 to 1868. When the Army foolishly selected the Bozeman Trail instead, he tried to protect the lives of soldiers who built their forts in Indian lands.

Bridger went west at age 18 and lived among the Indians and the mountains. He had a sense of family when he traveled with the fur brigades. Then he married and had his own family with the Flathead woman, Cora; the Ute woman, Chipeta; and the Shoshone woman,



After his years of success piloting companies of trappers safely in and out of the mountains, Jim Bridger was the mountaineer his peers could trust to lead them across the most difficult trails during the post-fur-trade era.

Map by Bill Nelson, Courtesy the University of Oklahoma Press

Bridger and his partners owned this fort on the Laramie River for about 12 months in 1835–36. Originally built in 1834 as Fort William by William Sublette, it later became known as Fort Laramie.

"Fort Laramie" by Alfred Jacob Miller



In all seasons, a leader like Jim Bridger knew that fresh meat was essential to assure the survival of his trappers. Bridger was an expert shot and hunter and was known to have killed 20 buffalo with 20 consecutive shots.

"Preparing for a Buffalo Hunt" by Alfred Jacob Miller

Mary. When he had to leave Fort Bridger, his only permanent home in the West, he settled in Westport, Missouri, but he also lived on the road as a scout for more than a dozen expeditions. When he wasn't guiding, he often found a bunk at forts Laramie, Phil Kearny and C. F. Smith.

All of Bridger's life he searched for home. In that journey he found America and helped shape it.

Editor's Note:

In 1837, Scottish adventurer William Stewart hired artist Alfred Jacob Miller to paint the spectacular scenery, the mountaineers and the Indians of the Rocky Mountains. In 1858-60, Stewart paid Miller to produce paintings from his sketches, and they offer today some of the best first-person perspectives on the day-to-day lives of the mountain men in the West.



Few photographs exist of the 1820-40 free trappers. Bridger, who lived until July 17, 1881, sat for his portrait a few times late in his life, including for Henry J. Cross in 1879.

"James Bridger", 01.1750.1879, Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma



"Knight of the Rockies" is an excerpt from *Jim Bridger: Trailblazer of the American West* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2021). **Jerry Enzler**, a renowned Bridger expert, directed the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa, for 37 years.

BY TED FRANKLIN BELUE

DAVID WRIGHT

A Search for Historical Truth

Validity, integrity and authenticity remain the watchwords of David Wright's heroic renderings of the frontier. Born in 1942 in the hills of Rosine, Kentucky, the artist has built a storied career by blending on canvas his love of art, the outdoors and our nation's fur-trade past. "I am fascinated with frontiersmen, the long hunters in the East and mountain men of the Far West," he notes. "And I've always admired the lifeways and creative art of American Indians."

Historians and frontier aficionados praise Wright's work, while his artistic peers and reenactors study it for glimpses into an era when cameras did not exist. Critical to his muse is his rigorous pursuit of living history. "Utilizing the firearms and tools of another time gives me an edge in seeing what the lives of our frontier forebears were like. I know what it's like to build a cabin, split rails, hunt with a flintlock and be freezing cold in 18th-century clothing. I know how wool feels in a snowstorm and how leather clings to your body when it's wet."

Wright's quest for accuracy has taken him from Henry's Fork on horseback dressed in brain-tanned buckskin and armed as Jim Bridger to Canada's Alneau Peninsula by birch-bark canoe to hunt moose with the trappings of a Leatherstocking. His art, then, is best seen as an extension of the same linear flow, 150 years later, as that of Alfred Jacob Miller, George Catlin, Karl Bodmer and Frederic Remington.

The first three painters had a big advantage: their subject matter was in front of them. Wright has to recreate, in an informed way, what they saw but leave his own stamp on his art. Long cherished myths—like the Winchester '73 "won the West," every mountain man sported a ZZ Top beard and toled a Hawken, and that Dan'l Boone wore a 'coonskin cap—can be hard to sift through, but his studied insights give him flexibility in interpretation. Because his standards are so high in a medium so exacting, David Wright helps us see America's past far better.



Wind River Man

Casein on board • 20" x 30" • 1979

All artwork by David Wright



The newest release by Western Writers of America Spur Award-winner and popular history writer **Ted Franklin Belue** is *Finding Daniel Boone: His Last Days in Missouri & the Strange Fate of His Remains*. He served as consultant for the INSP Network's forthcoming frontier series, *Wild Americans*.



Northwoods Trappers

Acrylic on board • 10" x 16" • 1991



Climbing the Western Slope

Casein on panel • 28" x 40" • 1984

“I feel that it is the historical artist’s obligation to present and future generations to paint the subject with as much historical accuracy as possible.”

— David Wright



First View of the Rockies

Oil on panel • 14" x 20" • 2020



Fort Dandy

Oil on panel • 16" x 30" • 2020



Rocky Mountain Trapper

Oil on panel • 24" x 30" • 2004



Keeping a Sharp Eye

Pencil on board • 16" x 20" • 1981



Looking for a Horse

Oil on panel • 11" x 14" • 2019



Caught Off Guard

Oil on panel • 26" x 33" • 2013



Defender of the Hearth

Pencil on board • 12" x 12" • 1988



Green River Trapper

Casein on panel • 20" x 30" • 1980



The Captives

Oil on panel • 36" x 48" • 2008



The Station Camp

Oil on panel • 16" x 20" • 2006

STEREOTYPES: TRUE OR FALSE?

Mountain Men...

...toted a Hawken like Jeremiah Johnson: Mostly false. Jim Bridger, Kit Carson and Mariano Medina used Hawken rifles late in life. Aside from a few strays, most Hawkens reached the Far West in the 1840s, just as the fur trade ended. A .56 caliber Hawken is attributed to John “Liver Eating” Johnston (the real “Jeremiah,” who prowled the Plains from 1862 to 1900). He also owned a hybrid sporting carbine fitted with a Spencer seven-shot magazine on a Hawken barrel—hardly a typical mountain man firearm.

...could not read: False.

Most could, actually. Many trappers wrote letters, kept diaries and journals. Fewer than 13 percent of them were illiterate.

...sported Santa whiskers: Mostly false. Frederick Ruxton, the day’s chronicler, described their appearance as being “clean-shaven, after the fashion of the mountain men,” though a few goatees appeared in the day’s art, notably that of Alfred Jacob Miller’s. Most men shaved to cut down on dirt and lice and stay on good terms with Indians; hirsute “Dog Faces” were not welcome in tribal societies. But since we do not have any artwork from deep in the woods, they may have let their beards grow before shaving, as David Wright’s *Wind River Man* illustrates on the cover and page 26. Come rendezvous, yes, clean up, shave, wash off months of beaver castor and other crud. Trappers did have notoriously bad hygiene, a big turnoff to Native women who bathed daily. Little wonder soap, along with razors, was a popular rendezvous trade item. Waugh!

authors Lewis Garrard and Frederick Ruxton, who rode with them and wrote books about them. Whether they all used such slang is doubtful; these cocks-of-the-walk were a multicultural, multihued lot and a famously boneheaded one.

...swindled Indians by getting them drunk to swap peltry for cheap gewgaws: False. Indians were conscientious consumers. Savvy traders met their demands by trading high-dollar wares for lush furs.

...craved buffalo tongues, hump meat, intestines (“boudins”) and beaver tails: Yep. Such delicacies were huge sources of the energy-producing fat mountain man diets lacked.

—Ted Franklin Belue



The Hunter

Casein on board • 26" x 33" • 1981

...were antisocial cranks: False, except for Bill Williams, an eccentric but superior free-trapper and guide rubbed out by the Utes. Most were low-wage “company men” in their twenties operating in paramilitary fur brigades traversing a wild land that offered many ways to die.

...said Waugh! and referred to themselves as “this child”: Some certainly did, say



The Wagon Scout

Oil on panel • 20" x 24" • 2021



BY JOHN FILLMORE

THE LAST OF THE OLD-

SHORTY HARRIS'S BONANZAS AND BURROS WERE
ALMOST AS LEGENDARY
AS HE WAS.



HE may be the last person to have been buried on public property after it had become a national park or national monument. Two years after his death in 1934 a special memorial service was conducted at his grave with some 200 people attending. At the ceremony a bronze plaque was placed with the words, which said in part: "Bury me beside Jim Dayton in the valley we loved. Above me write: Here lies Shorty Harris, a single blanket jackass prospector."

Frank Harris was born, by his own account, on July 21, 1857, in Rhode Island to an Irish father and Scottish mother, both of whom died when he was about seven years old. Adopted by an aunt, he began working at 11 years old in a calico mill. At 14 he ran away from his aunt's home and worked a variety of jobs in the surrounding states, until at last he got an itch to travel west. By 1878 he had found his way to Leadville, Colorado, which was at the peak of gold and silver mining in the state. He worked for a time as a hard rock miner in shafts and

Rhode Island native Frank "Shorty" Harris was born on July 21, 1857, and orphaned at age seven. His 5'4" stature never diminished his adventurous spirit, hobbing on trains to find his fortune in the West as a prospector in the late 1870s

Courtesy Eastern California Museum

tunnels before he and two friends decided to try their hand at prospecting. They saved enough money to outfit themselves with the typical miner's necessities, including burros.

Several weeks after leaving Leadville, they made their first strike, staking a claim on a site with a good showing of silver ore, which they subsequently sold for \$7,500. This, Harris claimed, was the first real money he ever got. He traveled to Denver to "put on a party that made them all sit up and take notice," but in six weeks he was "stone broke."

That was all Harris needed to get hooked on prospecting, and he seemed to have been fortunate in locating good claims as he drifted

from Colorado to Wallace, Idaho, and from there to several mining districts in Montana. The mid-1880s found him in Frisco, Utah, and shortly after that, Tombstone, Arizona. From there he journeyed to Virginia City, Nevada, and Bodie, California. But the area where he spent the most time was in the eastern California desert, Death Valley and vicinity. In the Panamint Range he and a partner found ore so rich that, as miners say, "it has the eagle stamped right on it."

Harris's use of burros was summed up in an interview he gave a few years before his death:

"All my traveling in this country was done on the hurricane deck of a jackass, and believe me, that's the way all the big strikes have been made. A jack can go almost anywhere that a mountain sheep can and carry all that a man needs for several weeks. You've heard it said that 'gold is where you find it.' I can tell you that it's usually found in places that are hard to get to, and a burro can get there when a horse or a mule would be stalled for good."

- TIME PROSPECTORS

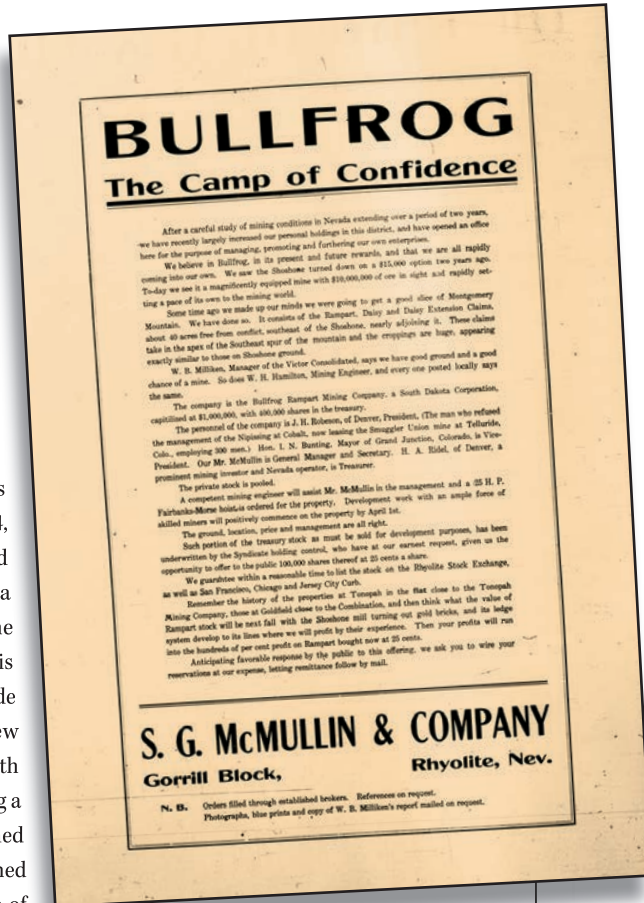
His Bullfrog Bonanza

It was his burros that led Harris to his most famous mining discovery in 1904, the Bullfrog claim. He and partner Ed Cross made a camp in the Amargosa Desert of southwestern Nevada. In the morning Harris went out to round up his burros and found them feeding on the side of a mountain near the camp. A few hundred feet away he spied a ledge with some copper stains on it. After breaking a piece off with his pick, he was astonished to see chunks of gold so big that "it seemed to me the whole mountain was made of gold." It was the greenish color of the rock that led Harris to name it the Bullfrog Mine.

Within a few weeks thousands of people swarmed to the area of the new strike, many from nearby Goldfield. New towns were staked out: Bonanza, Bullfrog, Amargosa City and Rhyolite. Eventually, Bullfrog and Rhyolite absorbed the others, and Rhyolite became the commercial center of the district, at one point having stations for three different railroad lines. The largest and most successful mine in the district was the Montgomery-Shoshone, which eventually came to be owned by Charles Schwab.

But if it seemed Shorty Harris had finally found the claim that would make him his first million dollars, a moment of weakness had cost him that opportunity. In his own words:

"One night, when I was pretty well lit up, a man named Bryan took me to his room and



On March 22, 1907, S.G. McMullin and Company advertised an investment opportunity in the Bullfrog Mine. According to the sales pitch, 100,000 shares at 25 cents a share were to be made available to sell to the public. Unfortunately, Harris and Cross would never see the profits they could have made from the Bullfrog Mining District which produced nearly \$1.7 million in ore from 1907 to 1910.

Courtesy Library of Congress.

put me to bed. The next morning, when I woke up, I had a bad headache and wanted more liquor. Bryan had left several bottles of whiskey on a chair beside the bed and locked the door. I helped myself and went back to sleep. That was the start of the longest jag I ever went on; it lasted six days. When I came to, Bryan

showed me a bill of sale for the Bullfrog, and the price was only \$25,000. I got plenty sore, but it didn't do any good. There was my signature on the paper, and beside it, the signatures of seven witnesses and the notary's seal. I felt a lot worse when I found out that Ed had been paid a hundred and twenty-five thousand for his half, and had lit right out for Lone Pine, where he got married."

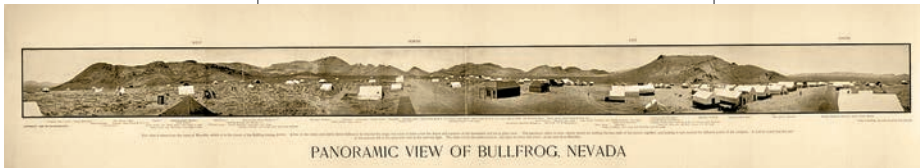
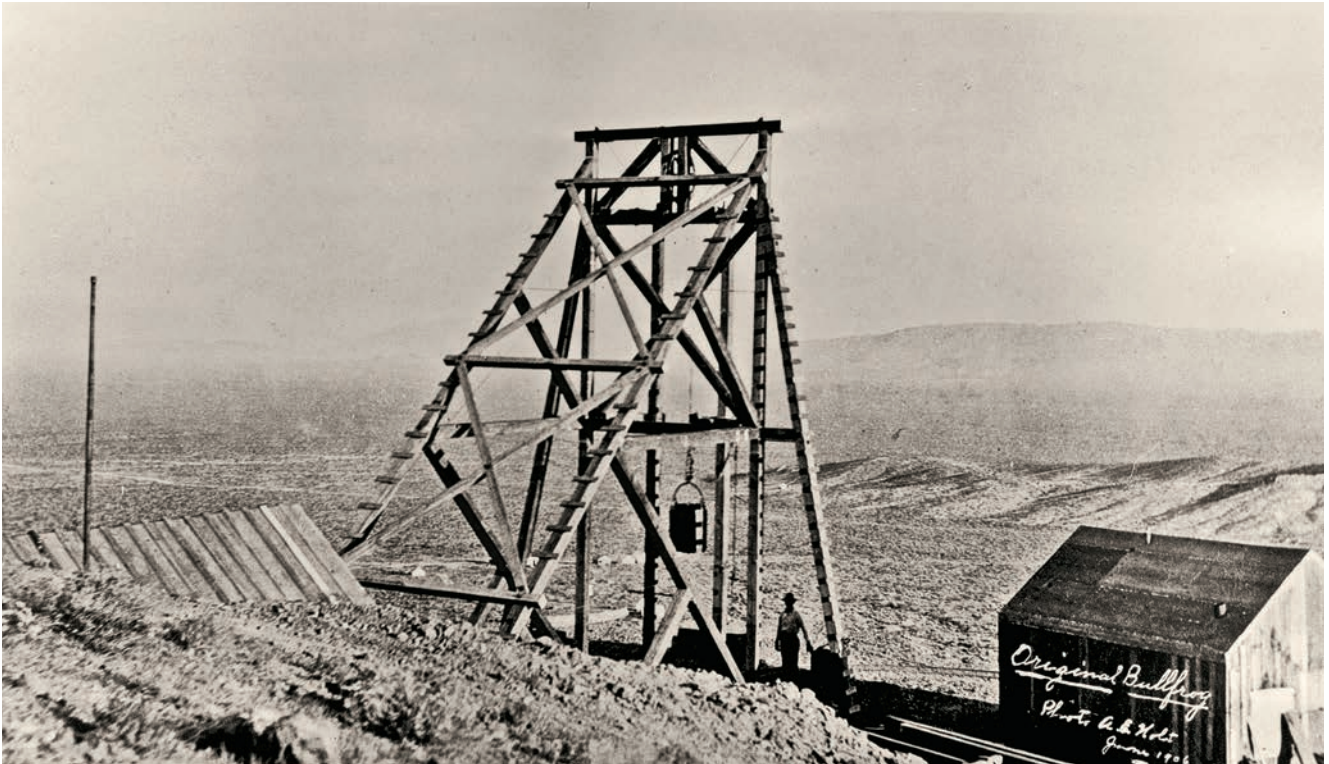
Whether this particular version of the circumstances surrounding the sale of the Bullfrog Mine is

accurate is difficult to ascertain, since Harris never told the same story about it twice. To be sure, the Bullfrog excitement, like many other big strikes, was far less profitable for the gold extracted than it was for the sale of stocks and mining properties. Less than a decade after Harris and Cross located the Bullfrog claim, Rhyolite and Bullfrog had become ghost towns.

None of this stopped Harris from continuing his quest for the mother lode. He crossed Death Valley and soon located claims near Skidoo and a site which became his namesake, Harrisburg. The Harrisburg Mine had the potential to make him a rich man. He accepted a combination of cash and stock, but at that time company directors could vote to levy an assessment on stock, requiring the holder to pay up or lose his holdings. Such was the case

Shorty Harris gambled away his stake in the Bullfrog Mine for \$25,000, while his partner Ernest "Ed" Cross was able to parlay his stake into a payday of \$125,000 and a ranch in Escondido, California.

Courtesy Library of Congress



with Harris, who let his stock go instead of paying the assessment.

The Final Years

Harris spent his remaining years just west of Death Valley in the desert ghost town of Ballarat, California. He lived in the abandoned schoolhouse and continued to prospect the surrounding hills, always optimistic about finding the next big strike. In 1933 a portion of the adobe schoolhouse collapsed, trapping Harris and causing him serious injury. He was discovered by friends, few of whom held out any hope of his survival, but survive he did, and after a long recovery, he was determined to return to the Panamint Mountains to prospect. He also did some work on the local roads for the county, which provided him some money for food. He and the few remaining residents of Ballarat regaled each other with

Today, the town of Bullfrog, Nevada, is a ghost town about a mile from the remnants of Rhyolite in Nye County. Shorty Harris and Ed Cross's discovery of gold in the area on August 9, 1904, led to the founding of Bullfrog, which had over 1,000 residents in four months.

Courtesy Library of Congress

stories of the old days. His best friend, Jimmy Dayton, had died in July of 1898. Dayton, a former prospector and swamper for the famed twenty-mule-team borax wagons, had been a caretaker at the Furnace Creek Ranch. The circumstances of his death were recounted several years later in one of Rhyolite's newspapers, the *Bullfrog Miner*:

"Dayton had started from Furnace Creek for Daggett with an empty wagon to get supplies for the farm. He was drawn by four horses and had two horses tied to the wagon in the rear.

He had a cat in a box which he was taking to a friend at Daggett and a dog followed along.

"He had been due in Daggett for two weeks, and, not arriving, Frank Tilden and a Mexican by the name of Dolph started out in search. It was midsummer and they traveled by night. Within a mile and a half of the old Eagle borax works they came upon the wagon of Dayton, which was in the road about eight miles this side of Bennett's Hole. Around the wagon were six dead horses in harness. Dayton's body lay under a mesquite bush near the road side and his dog sat by it as the only silent mourner. The cat in the box was also dead. They had been there 22 days."

A survey of the place told the story. Dayton had become deranged from the heat. He had left his wagon and sought shade under the mesquite. He had died. The lead horse had drawn his companion around to the wagon to

Frank "Shorty" Harris (second from right) with other prospectors prepared to set out from Ballarat, California, possibly between 1909 and 1912.

Courtesy Author's Collection



secure water or feed and became entangled with a standard projecting above the wagon body. They had stood there in a circle until they all perished. The dog had found his way to a pool of slimy water a mile and a half distant and sustained himself. He kept the vultures and coyotes away from the body of his master for 22 days.

Once, when Shorty was visited by writer and friend William Caruthers, the two men were driving through Death Valley and stopped at Dayton's grave. Shorty walked into the brush and gathered up a handful of desert wildflowers to place on the grave, then turning to Caruthers he said, "When I die bury me beside old Jim. Above me write, 'Here lies Shorty Harris, a single blanket jackass prospector.'"

Shorty died in his sleep on November 10, 1934. He was 78 years old. "The Short Man" was laid to rest next to Jimmy Dayton, with one of

Fee for Recording Location Notices, \$1.00 Each, Payable in Advance.

LOCATION NOTICE

QUARTZ CLAIM

Notice is hereby given, That the undersigned citizen _____ of the United States, over the age of twenty-one years, in compliance with the requirements of Chapter VI, Title 32, of the Revised Statutes of the United States, and the local customs, laws and regulations, has on this day located and claimed fifteen hundred linear feet along the course of this lead, lode or vein of mineral-bearing quartz, and three hundred feet in width on each side of the middle of said lead, lode or vein, together with all mineral deposits contained therein, and all timber growing within the limits of said claim, and all water and water privileges thereon or appurtenant thereto, situate in the _____

Wild Rose

Mining District, County of *Inyo*, State of California, and more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Commencing at *the monument and*
Running north 40° east 1/4 mile to 700
feet on the north side of the
monument local coal about 2000
feet south of the monument and
then south 40° west to the
monument

The date of discovery of this lead, lode or vein is the *10* day of *May*, 192*5*.
 It is named and shall be known as the *Wild Rose* Mine. Located _____ 192*5*.

WITNESS _____ LOCATOR _____

Thomas Wilson *Frank Shorty Harris*

This location notice was filed by Shorty Harris for a claim in Death Valley's Wild Rose Mining District in the Panamint Mountains near the town of Skidoo in Inyo County. Today, the claim is in Death Valley National Park, California.

Courtesy Author's Collection

In 1912, Shorty Harris lived in Ballarat, California. The Death Valley prospector lived on and off in the gold mining town—despite it being nearly abandoned after 1917.

Courtesy the U.S. Geological Survey



In January 1909, the population of Rhyolite, Nevada, was estimated at about 7,000. Rhyolite was founded in 1904 after Shorty Harris and Ed Cross discovered rhyolite quartz at the Bullfrog mine. By 1906 the town had two railroad lines and a population of 10,000. The mines, however, did not produce as expected and by the early 1910s Rhyolite was abandoned.

Courtesy Author's Collection

the largest crowds ever gathered in Death Valley in attendance. A miner, Wallace Campbell, wrote a poem for him:

THE LAST TRAIL

He lies in state, as well becomes a knight
Of that intrepid, desert-loving clan,
Whose number soon will have
Climbed the height
That marks the passing of the burro man.

The last camp made, no more
his eager feet
Shall search the dim, yet
never-ending trail,
Through winter's chill or summer's
thirsty heat.
His task is done; perhaps he's
found the Grail.

That beckons all who dwell in this domain
Of rugged hills and drifting, velvet sand;
A mystic thread, for none can
speak its name—
Which gently binds us in
a phantom strand.

So stake for him a claim, six feet by four,
Where thorned mesquite and varnished
greasewood grow;
There let him sleep, beneath the
Valley floor;
And men may pass, but God will know.

Soft be his couch, beneath the golden drift
Of sunlight, shining thus since time began,
While lonely winds their
chanting voices lift
To sing a requiem for the burro man!



On foot with his burros or by automobile, Shorty Harris continued to search for minerals and gold in Death Valley into the 1920s and 1930s. Harris (right) took this photo with a friend in an unknown location in Death Valley, circa 1920s.

Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library, Special Collections & Archives,
Death Valley Region Photograph Collection, P0126 Box 1, Item 10

It was 15 months after the death of Harris that the National Park Service conducted the memorial service and erected the monument which still stands today. It carries the bronze plaque which bears Shorty's epitaph, just as he had requested. A few months before Shorty died, while recovering from his accident, William Caruthers had asked him if he would choose prospecting again if he had his life to live over.

"I wouldn't change places with the President of the United States. My only regret is that I didn't start sooner. When I go out, every time my foot touches the ground, I think before the sun goes down I'll be worth \$10,000,000."

Caruthers reminded him that he never got his \$10,000,000.

Giving Caruthers an incredulous look, Shorty replied, "Who in the hell wants \$10,000,000? It's the game, man—the game."

Bullfrog
Nevada
The Greatest Gold Camp
In the World

High Grade Ore

Large Lots
30 to 60 Feet Wide—100 Feet Deep
Serves 80 Feet Wide
\$100 to \$5000

The Los Angeles-Bullfrog Realty & Investment Co., Inc. 418 N. W. Indiana Blvd. Los Angeles, Cal.

A 1905 advertisement for the Los Angeles Bullfrog Realty & Investment Co. helped fuel the rapid growth of Shorty Harris and Ed Cross's gold discovery into the boomtown of Bullfrog, Nevada. By 1910, the boom was over and the Death Valley burg died a slow death with investors clinging to hope of another Harris-Cross bonanza into the 1970s.

True West Archives

John H. Fillmore is a retired history teacher with a master's in education. He has traveled and researched extensively throughout the West. In 2012 he wrote *Rainbow Chasers and Ghost Towns*, a historic and contemporary view of ghost towns in the Western U.S.

BY MICHAEL ENGELHARD

CITY OF DREAMS

NOME'S GLITTERING GOLD STRIKE OF 1898 LURED THOUSANDS NORTH BY SEA TO SEEK THEIR FORTUNE IN ALASKA'S BERING STRAIT GOLDFIELDS.

The odds are good that a visitor to Nome, Alaska—landed as a cruise ship passenger or spectator of the Iditarod race finish—will pause before an antique roulette wheel enshrined at the Carrie M. McClain Memorial Museum. A label below the hairline-cracked, painted disc says it came from George Louis “Tex” Rickard’s saloon, the Northern, once located just up the street.

Luminaries from Wyatt Earp to Jack London, pulp fiction writer Rex Beach, and President Herbert Hoover supposedly touched this relic of frontier entrepreneurship. That has been hard to prove. A son of the couple who gave it to the museum remembers playing with it as a child in his parents’ attic. How it got there from the Northern and how it got to the Northern remain mysteries.

Rickard had befriended Jack London during the Klondike gold rush and opened the first Northern, in Dawson. A gambler to the hilt, he lost his share in it. Conceivably, the roulette wheel then traveled with Rickard from Dawson to Nome. He convinced his pal Wyatt, who briefly managed a canteen in Saint Michael, at the Yukon River mouth, to help him in mining Nome’s miners.

The starry-eyed visitor imagines the town’s rowdier, glory days. “For there’s never a law of God or man/Runs north of Fifty-three.” Jack London used Rudyard Kipling’s lines as an epigraph to a tale set in the city where no tree could be found for a lynching.

A BOOMTOWN IS BORN

Nome, incorporated in 1901, became during the summer of 1900 the territory’s largest settlement and the world’s busiest seaport without a harbor. About 15,000 gold hunters alighted in June, weary of the Klondike, Seattle or San Francisco. More left Adelaide, Australia, on the steamer *Inca* two years later. Drove of mariners jumped ship to join the fray.

Nordmän woefully late for the Klondike in 1898 had unleashed all this wanton craving; the Swedish tailor Erik Lindblom leapfrogged north as a deckhand on a whaler; Jafet Lindeberg from Norway wrangled free passage pretending to be an expert

herder; only John Byrnteson, the third of these “Three Lucky Swedes,” had wrested wealth from the ground professionally, mining iron and coal.

A limestone outcrop on a mountain above the creek where the trio struck paydirt lent the settlement its initial name: “Anvil City.” Within a year, Anvil Creek’s entire silver-gray schist bed got worked over at least once. A mapmaker’s scribbled *Cape (Name?)*, misread, then may have morphed into the headland and town’s current designation.

From the perspective of arrivals anchored in Norton Sound, the foreshore’s low ridges appeared littered with icebergs. Up close, those dissolved into a warren of canvas tents. Camps sprawled across 30 miles of coastline, from Cape Rodney to Cape Nome. Men piggybacked women to shore, queens vastly outnumbered in the Anglo anthill. Mountains of freight clogged the beach, a black-sand strip 60 feet wide: grain, hay, general merchandise, mining equipment and provisions, sewing machines... Luxuries heaped up there amid driftwood: pianos, fancy mirrors, and casks of brandy and bourbon, and eggs, selling for \$15 a case. Longshoremen simply dumped freight next to the water’s edge. A team of huskies hauled a wheeled water barrel, mutts powering Bacchus’s chariot. Absent natural shelter or sanitation, mayhem reigned with tarps flapping, and dog packs marauding between fly-buzzed offal and broken boxes. The city eventually commissioned waterfront closets on pilings the tides flushed.

Greenhorns broiled in the sun or, shivering under blankets, hugged hostile ground. Some, not eating regularly, improvised huts with packing crates or boats flipped onto their sides. A Newcastle-on-the-Tyne coal miner died of typhoid in his beach abode, leaving behind a watch, compass, rifle and knife as his sole possessions. The chief of police pulled a letter from the miner’s pocket. Phema, a sweetheart in England, had begged her man not to go to Alaska but to come home.

Lumber had to be freighted in, as the driftwood was of poor quality. An embalmer and undertaker announced his hope to put up a morgue as soon as supplies arrived. *The City of Chicago* became a hotel and beer garden, the *Quickstep*, reached via gangplank, a restaurant and hotel. A forerunner of *Wild, Wild*



West Steampunk designed to ease into the shallows on barrel wheels to dredge the seafloor was so heavy it never moved. An even grander harebrained scheme proposed building a casino—theater, saloon, hotel and dance pavilions—a marine league from shore on ice to evade gambling laws. The town teemed with lawyers and laborers, hostlers and quacks, card sharks and clerks, madams, storekeepers, laundresses, land speculators and dance hall girls. Nome sprawled “all length and no breadth” two blocks wide and five miles long. Boardwalks covered Steadman Avenue only. Front Street, a dust bowl in the summer, here and there bottlenecked to 15 feet. In the fall, a “slough of despond,” it swallowed wagons up to their axles and mules to their bellies. For one fortune seeker, “It really was part of the beach.” Mobs roiled. Foghorns moaned. Saws ripped, surf and hammers pounded. Mongrels fought over scraps. Mules bawled in their traces. Nome was “a perfect Babel of noise.”

ARCTIC BABYLON

The veteran prospector E. C. Trelawney-Ansell thought cheaper, easy access to Nome—merely stepping out of a lighter after they’d boarded a steamer on the West Coast—lured more shifty-eyed schemers than had the arduous Klondike:

“Nome was different, it was a place where the creeks and the town itself filled with thousands of cheechakos who had never known the hardship of the trail and few if any other hardships. Worse still, the camp and surrounding country was filled with gamblers, cutthroats and murderers of the worst kind.”

A tent city, including a drugstore tent, grew on the black, gold-bearing sand beach fronting the town. The Loman Brothers ran a successful photography studio and took this picture in 1900.

All Images Courtesy of Library of Congress Unless Otherwise Noted

Nearly all the promising claims had been jumped at least twice by July 1899, and multiple claimants contested others. The Three Swedes were accused of being aliens and thus having staked the best grounds illegally. Two actually were naturalized citizens.

In November, a headless body washed ashore. A Cape York recorder suffered when his cabin and books burned; the fact that one miner had secured over 140 claims there could have been a clue. A Cripple River recorder refused to surrender his books, holing up in a house described as “an arsenal.” He swore the re-election ousting him had been rigged, that more ballots had been counted than persons present in the room and that some lived outside the district or had not lived at Cripple 30 days—the more things change, the more they stay the same. In December, a man was killed on his sled, with his two partners, guns and provisions missing mysteriously, since they shared three prospect pits and a fine house, a tower made mainly of sod. Petty criminals prospered as well. Joseph Carroll, a fleet mail carrier and expert trailsman, absconded with three dogs and the wrong sled. He’d been in a bad frame of mind for a day or two, it was said. Thieves wheelbarrowed coal away, and from a permafrost cache, snatched 20 sacks of flour and 17 dressed

A unique feature of the gold rush in Nome, Alaska, was the heavy concentration of gold in the black-sanded beaches along the Bering Sea. Up and down the beaches, miners, like this 1900 argonaut, would stand along the edge of the surf and wash gold-bearing sand in a sluice box looking for the precious mineral.



chickens saved for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Brazen burglars slashed tent sides, pumping in chloroform to rob marks the moment they fainted.

The daughter of a Russian trader and Eskimo mother, Changunak Antisarlook Andrewuk, “Sinrock Mary” or “The Reindeer Queen,” at one point owned Alaska’s biggest reindeer herd—the government six years earlier had launched a program to convert starving Inupiaq seal and walrus hunters into capitalists, recruiting “Laplanders” as instructors. Rumrunners and grifters connived to cheat Changunak out of her wealth. Prospectors slandered the imposing, curly-haired woman who adopted orphan survivors of epidemics. They threatened and sued her, harassed her deer, scattering them, and shot some they left rotting on the tundra. They offered liquor to cloud her judgment. Miners staked turf inside grazing ranges, torched vegetation to clear ground, destroying forage, and, having eaten or scared off all game, rustled the reindeer.

Rex Beach, having encountered Nome’s misfits, fictionalized some in *The Spoilers*, which saw five screen adaptations. (The wartime one starred Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne.) “Yellow Kid,” operating a gold scale, smoothing his hair often, harvesting ounces of “trading dust” after each shift from his head brilliantined with syrup, perhaps was invented. Beach’s real-life foils included an embezzling postmaster, a tax assessor nabbed for shady financial deals and a crooked federal judge. Protection moneys changed hands where bar owners ruled the city council. Gold, driving all, in Thomas Hood’s words was “Heavy to get, and light to hold; Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled.”

And squander they did. Saloons mushroomed seemingly overnight, 42 by one count, over 60 by another, among them Earp’s Dexter, Rickard’s Northern, Charles Cobbs’s Horseshoe, William Robertson’s Eldorado and, one of Nome’s finest, the Second Class Saloon. Dick Dawson owned it with partners—plush Brussels carpets, electric lights, Eastern Beer Only, the extravagance of a sewer, and all. Dawson felt every saloon-man but him bragged about running a first-class establishment, hence the tongue-in-cheek advertising of his. *The Nome Gold Digger*, one of four local papers, broadcast news about epic gaming sprees, noting that keno caught on at the Hunter “like an epidemic of the measles” or that an Eldorado crap session run haywire forced the dealer

to upend his cash drawer on the table to prove the bank had really been busted.

GLIMMERS OF HOPE

The clink of coin wasn’t always so crass. The first baby born amidst it, to an ex-whaler and a sister of Sinrock Mary in the

Eskimo camp on the Snake River spit, was christened Nome, and the proud father reserved a claim for him. A fox-robe fundraising raffle, a free Thanksgiving meal at the Northern, a club supporting Scandinavians, miners’ grassroots meetings, the odd Congregational service, and Literary Society debates and recitals sounded social grace notes. The “flying Dutchman” Carl von Knobelsdorff en route to San Francisco dropped off mail for miners still stuck in Dawson or Skagway. The previous fall, he’d ice-skated on dulled whipsaw blades hundreds of miles between Kobuk River camps, delivering newspapers and letters for \$1 each. Rumors and gossip he carried for free. Dressed in knee-high, checkered socks, wool cap, sweater and mitts, a pack with sleeping roll on his back, pistol and hunting knife on his belt, the bearded Germanic Hermes swung a metal-tipped pole for propulsion and balance.

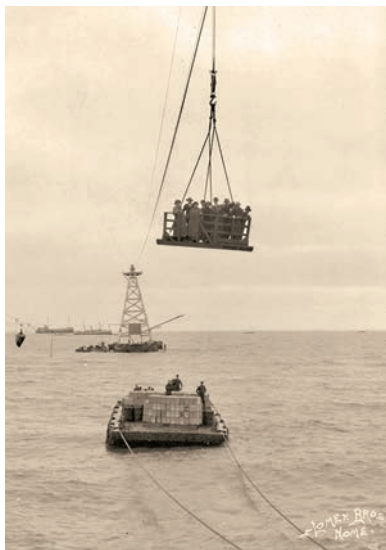
This newest migration, word of which Knobelsdorff had helped spread, swamped the “Poor Man’s Diggings,” because on the public beaches no man—or woman—had to stake or register claims. No ground had to be thawed out either. “Besides the rich ruby [garnet] sand,” the news crowed, “there is coarse gold, it may be in large amounts.” Latecomers



The Dexter Saloon (left) on Nome’s Front Street in July 1900 was owned by Wyatt Earp and his partner Charles E. Hoxie. When the boom played out in 1901, the Earps sold out their share of the Dexter for \$80,000 (about \$2 million in today’s money).

Courtesy of Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum

Because Nome did not have a natural harbor, in the summer an aerial tramway conveyed passengers from steamers anchored in deeper water to shore, while freight was barged to shore.



marveled at damsels in flowerpot bonnets and ankle-length skirts over petticoat layers feeding rockers and sluices with shovels of muck. “For many miles along the beach double ranks of men were rocking, almost shoulder to shoulder...passing jokes or singing as they worked,” a US Department of Labor agent reported.

Instead of streets paved with gold, five-year-old Klondy Nelson, joining her father (a Klondiker) on Ophir Creek, saw “an ugly blanket of soft-coal smoke hanging low over everything.” Homesick miners there paid a herder to play Santa for Klondy and gave her nuggets as presents.

True whoppers lay in them thar hills. Until 1989, a slug from Anvil Creek’s Number 5 Bench weighing as much as a gallon of paint held the title of largest lunker unearthed in Alaska. The district also coughed up the sixth-, seventh-, ninth-, and tenth-ranked ones. By century’s turn, the Bering Strait fields already had yielded \$3.5 million, and the next two decades netted another 80 million.

THE DARK SIDE OF DREAMS

The glitter hid grimmer realities. Behind Nome’s false-fronted boxes lay dozens of prostitutes’ cribs fenced off in the “Stockade” with their own phone system and messengers. Women billed as “actresses” or “vaudeville entertainers” worked at saloons where their popularity boosted lucrative sidelines. “There were more of these in Nome than in any mining camp I was ever in,” Trelawney-Ansell recalled. “Nothing in the worst days of Montmartre in Paris, or on State Street, Chicago, ever paralleled the shows given here.” Cigar stores too could serve as a front for ladies of the night. A few escaped this meat market. “Charlie the Bear made off with Halibut-Face Mary. A stinker named Misery Chris eloped with Toodles, and the King of Denmark stood up before the preacher with Deepwater Dorah,” wrote Frank Dufresne, Klondy’s future husband. As town got more civilized, the retirees’ primrose past was forgotten or politely ignored, since “in almost every case the old dance-hall habitués became the strictest sort of wives.”

“Japanese Mary” was less fortunate. Ever the sporting woman, she bet \$1,000 on a compatriot in the winter marathon held on an indoor track and invested her winnings successfully by grubstaking prospectors. She was found strangled with a towel and shoelace, a gold-nugget necklace with a cross and all her money gone from her hutch. The demimonde dames were tough, though. They drugged and rolled Johns or rigged scales weighing payments for services rendered. Daisy Straws, “of evil repute,” for reasons unknown in the street brained a man with a hammer, but a soldier broke up the fight. In extremis, morphine or opium made life bearable—or ended it.

Nome’s grand jury recommended that to curb sin, women should be barred from saloons and those without visible means of support be watched and, if lacking decorum, prosecuted. Raiding the red-light district, the Law threatened prostitutes with arrest unless they paid a \$10 “fine” that funded the fire department and police. Military patrols enforced compliance with public health regulations. A “pest house” for medical outcasts quarantined for smallpox had sprung up a mile and a half away. The Army also expelled people without lodging or means to procure it before winter’s onset.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

Wyatt Earp, homeless in a different sense, was 52 when he disembarked in Nome. Though his walrus moustache showed streaks of silver, he’d not reformed into a proper senior citizen. The aging gunslinger traveled with his common-law wife Josephine “Sadie” Sarah Marcus Earp, a gambler and former dancer and “good-time girl” still a beauty at 37. Her gambling habit ran rampant in Nome until Wyatt cut off her funds and asked fellow barmen to do the same. An octagonal bone chip, if authentic, suggests that he signed some of the Dexter’s custom-made gambling chits, which he handed to desirable customers in lieu of his calling card while he roamed town looking for Sadie or on business. These could be redeemed for a drink. Other establishments used trade tokens for liquor or dances with girls. (In a pinch, male partners sufficed.)

In 1897 the couple had heeded gold’s call. Two years later Earp and partner Charles Ellsworth Hoxie had built the Dexter, Nome’s first two-story wooden showpiece. Among the town’s largest, poshest saloons, it sported 12 “clubrooms” upstairs. Under 12-foot-high ceilings, miners went broke playing faro, monte, blackjack or billiards. Across from the Dexter, Rickard at the Northern banked on a “scientific mixologist” bartending below nude paintings, but foremost on roulette and bare-knuckle prizefights. (He would go on to become a Barnum-like Madison Square Garden boxing promoter, staging Jack Dempsey in the first boxing match to attract a million-dollar crowd.)

On slow days, Earp walked the cratered beach, plinking whisky bottles he threw in the air. After a drink or two too many, he once “got the idea he was a bad man from Arizona and was going to pull some rough stuff,” according to B. D. Blakeslee, a civil engineer mapping the region. Marshal Albert Lowe simply slapped the erstwhile terror of cowhands’ face and took his hog leg. He asked Earp to go home, to bed, or he would run him in.

In 1901, the year before the Fairbanks gold strike, Earp and Sadie returned to California \$80,000 richer—Locomobile’s

steam chaise, a primitive car, at the time cost \$600. The year after, they moved to Nevada, where another bonanza, more brawls and yet another den of iniquity beckoned. By 1915, Earp had drifted into Hollywood, trailing Jack London, whom he knew up north, having

wintered at Rampart on the Yukon River when London left the Klondike luckless and wan but brimming with stories. One day, both were dining with one-time cowboy, sailor and movie actor-turned-film-director Raoul Walsh. Before long, the world's highest-paid entertainer and future star of *The Gold Rush* sauntered over. "You're the bloke from Arizona, aren't you?" Charlie Chaplin said to Tombstone's ex-deputy marshal with evident awe. "Tamed the baddies, huh?" He then looked at London and nodded. "I know you, too. You almost made me go to Alaska and dig for gold."



Michael Engelhard lived briefly a block up the street from the Discovery, now a private residence, finding the town's liquor too expensive, the churches too many, the wind too atrocious.



When the creek wasn't frozen over and covered in snow, miners sluiced gravel seeking their riches in gold along Anvil Creek near Nome, circa 1916.



In 1900, women miners were active in mining at Cape Nome and were not afraid of participating in the hard work.

Eric A. Hegg Collection, University of Washington



Circa 1905, Wyatt Earp (center) was shown with Norwegian frontiersman Ed Englestadt (at left) and former *Tombstone Epitaph* editor John Clum (at right) who was in Nome to run the postal service.

Wyatt Earp Photo Courtesy True West Archives/Calling Card Courtesy the Author's Collection



In 1900, at the height of the gold rush in Nome, the saloons and entertainment palaces were open 24 hours a day and offered entertainment of every sort imaginable including boxing matches.

Courtesy of Hathi Trust

A trio of prospectors of the Cape Nome Hydraulic Mining Co. proudly posed in 1900 with their life-saving polar bearskin bedding inside their thin-walled canvas tent.

Courtesy of Peter C. Brown.



Formerly used to chase fur seal poachers, the decommissioned revenue cutter *SS Corwin* served Nome and the outlying communities beginning in 1902. Here passengers and freight are unloaded in 1914. The *Corwin* was commissioned in 1877, decommissioned in 1900 and remained an important ship in the Bering Sea until 1916.



A miner's shack in Nome had sod insulation and driftwood for heat and a smokestack long enough (hopefully) to poke through the highest snowdrift.

Courtesy of Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum.

BY STUART ROSEBROOK

CHAOS OF A BOOMTOWN

A Yankee prospector's scrapbook of his summer in Nome reveals the hardships of the Arctic gold rush.

On a stormy May 23, 1900, Connecticut native Frank E. Downs and a group of friends steamed north from Seattle, Washington, on the *SS Olympia* to find their fortune in gold on the chaotic shores of the Bering Sea and Nome, Alaska. They were part of the Cape Nome gold rush that had started when three lucky Swedes discovered gold in Anvil Creek in September 1898. A few

short months later, the stampede was on to the Arctic boomtown. By December, Nome had over 10,000 residents dug in for winter on the isolated southern Seward Peninsula coast of the Norton Sound. Just like those who flocked to the Klondike and Fairbanks gold rushes, which were happening at the same time, men and women by the thousands turned their backs on their homes and struck out for Nome hoping to strike it rich.

Frank Downs, the son of a prominent feed lot owner in Bristol, Connecticut, had grown up hearing stories about his Uncle Robert Carleton Downs who had gone West during the California Gold Rush and had remained in the Golden State since 1849. Likely inspired by his uncle, 43-year-old Frank went to Nome, camera in hand, and set up his tent camp and sluice on the beach four miles from the town's center. Downs and his fellow stamperers, N. Muzzy, J.H. Pomeroy (a mining engineer), Jacob "Jake" Friedel and A. H. Buckingham, put their backs into it and worked their claims through



The Bering Sea storm of September 11-13 hit Nome's Front Street with high winds, heavy rain and powerful waves, leaving a swath of destruction in its path.

All Photos by Frank E. Downs, Courtesy NYPL Digital Collection

the Arctic summer. Downs took photographs along the beach, in camp, at work, in town and even at midnight when the sun did not set. The adventurous Yankee's images capture the rawness and hazards of living on the edge of the Arctic amidst the mud, disease, detritus and extremes of life under the midnight sun.

A major storm hit Nome on September 11-13 resulting in a great loss of life aboard ships at sea and on land, where many buildings were damaged or destroyed, as were encampments, including that of Frank Downs and friends. National newspaper reports recounted that the town's mines were hitting bottom and many fortune-seekers were leaving because the gold

was playing out. The desolation of the storm left Frank no choice: he, like hundreds of others, packed up and returned south by steamship to Seattle.

Downs's return to the states without riches did not quell his wanderlust. He continued to tour the Western United States and Mexico, chronicling his way-stops with his ever-ready camera along the way. Following in the

footsteps of another uncle, Ash Upson (well-known New Mexico journalist and co-author of Pat Garrett's autobiography), Downs settled in the Pecos River Valley near Carlsbad Plantation and Orchards Company. Frank's sister, Florence Emlyn Downs Muzzy, compiled the scrapbook a few years later, with unique annotations (most likely gleaned from stories told to her by her brother) that provide us with remarkable insight into the life of a prospector who had answered the call of the wild and gone north—north to Alaska!

Editor's Note: Florence Muzzy's daughter, Frank's niece, Adrienne Florence Muzzy, was a librarian for the New York Public Library and was responsible for the donation of the invaluable, annotated scrapbook to the library's special collections. Further reporting on the New Mexico connection to Frank and Florence's famous maternal uncle, Marshall Ashman "Ash" Upson, will await another story.





Frank Downs (far right) and his associates (l.-r.) N. Muzzy, J.H. Pomeroy (a mining engineer), Jacob "Jake" Friedel and A. H. Buckingham, posed on the deck of the *SS Olympia* en route to Nome, Alaska, in late May 1900.



Rough seas and crowded conditions above and below deck defined Downs's passage with 300 other passengers on the *SS Olympia* from Seattle to Nome in May 1900.



Frank Downs photographed the scenes that defined his summer in Nome, including the landing of freight and prospectors on his first day of arrival on the boomtown's shores. Note the lighter in the upper right packed to capacity with passengers incoming from one of the steamships anchored a mile and a half offshore.



At midnight on June 21, 1900, Downs photographed the steamboat *Quickstep*, which was then a hotel and restaurant, docked on the Snake River. The Clafin Brothers also had a hardware store on Front Street. Neither made it back to Boston: one committed suicide; the other died of typhoid fever.



The September 11-13, 1900, storm destroyed much of the beachfront property and camps along the beach of Nome.



One of the few people that Downs identified in his photographs was Nome lawyer A.J. Green (center), an active lawyer defending miners as well as a prospector. Note the fresh bananas hanging from the shop wall, foreground left.



Even with his primitive camera (which remains unidentified, but possibly was a Brownie Box camera), Downs was able to capture light and reflections of puddles in the mud of Front Street.



In July 1900, four miles of the Wild Goose Railroad opened from Nome to the Anvil Creek mining district. This is most likely the narrow-gauge's Climax Class A locomotive near its railhead in Nome.



A remarkable aerial view of the landing beach at Nome was most likely taken from the crow's nest of the barge *SS Skookum* docked on the shore.



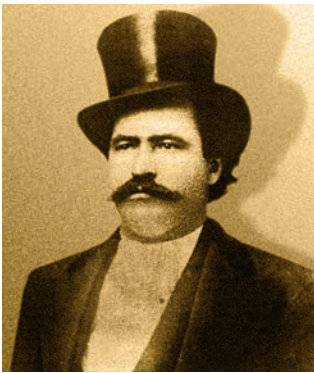
Downs's interior image looking east shows the bunks of Friedel, Muzzy and Pomeroy before they were destroyed and carried away by the September 11-13 storm, which ultimately led to the men picking up their stakes and returning to Seattle.



After the storm, Downs described himself, his friends and fellow miners who boarded lighter boats for their steamer south to Seattle as having "cold feet." Yet his departure was not entirely melancholy; he is quoted reflectively by his sister: "I'll leave my happy Nome for you!"

Frank Downs and his partners built a sluice to pump sand from their claim mixed with seawater in hopes of finding enough gold to at least cover the cost of their summer venture to Nome. It is not known if they succeeded in doing so.



TRUE WEST
EXCLUSIVECLASSIC
GUNFIGHTSDOUBLE-BARRELED
JUSTICEROWDY JOE LOWE
VS
BIG RED BEARD"MOLLIE" TAKES ONE
IN THE STOMACHIN HIS CUPS &
BLUE WHISTLERS

Rowdy Joe Lowe's description as a wanted man (reward \$100): "about 28 years old, 5 feet 9 inches tall, heavyset, dark complexion, black hair, and heavy mustache, gruff manners...a scar on right side of neck from a pistol ball. Had on, when last seen, black pants, brown frock coat, and a brown overcoat, trimmed with fur: rode a bay horse with a California saddle."

Courtesy Joseph G. Rosa

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Based on the research of Joseph G. Rosa,
Waldo E. Koop and Mark Boardman

Big Red Beard is deep in his cups as he goes to his room in the back of his saloon in Delano, Kansas, and returns with his signature shotgun and a pistol. Laying the shotgun on the end of the bar, Big Red drinks up before taking his shotgun and stepping outside.

Returning an hour and a half later, sans his shotgun, Big Red points his revolver at a white doorknob in the hall and fires. Customer Tom Pope draws his pistol to join in the fun, but Big Red turns and lays his weapon's barrel against Pope's head, warning him to put up his gun or be shot.

Someone nervously suggests a dance. Big Red dances for about an hour, then leaves. Bartender Walter Beebe tells two patrons to follow Big Red and try to keep him out of trouble.

Ten minutes later, Big Red returns and heads immediately to the east window of the saloon's dance floor, where he stands brooding for about five minutes. Everyone watches him with apprehension. He finally steps back, raises his six-gun and, using both hands, aims and fires. His bullet goes through the window, leaving a gaping hole.

Bartender Beebe runs to the hole and sees a shattered window on the building next door. Racing back to the saloon bar, Beebe tells a patron that Big Red must have been shooting at their next-door competitor, Rowdy Joe Lowe. Several minutes later, Rowdy Joe bursts into the saloon, clutching his neck with one hand and holding a shotgun with the other. Fuming, he asks, "Who just shot me?"

"I done it," says Big Red, swaying in the dim light beyond the bar.

Rowdy Joe pulls his shotgun up to his hip and bellows, "Take it, you sons of bitches!" as he cuts loose with both barrels. (The bartender later testifies that Lowe had the "muzzle elevated" and may have been trying to intimidate the crowd rather than kill anyone.) The two blasts rake the ceiling and east wall, and a patron at the bar, Billie Anderson, is hit on the bridge of his nose. Several Texas cowboys, in town to celebrate the completion of their cattle

drives, scramble for the east door and disappear.

Big Red advances, snapping his six-shooter at Rowdy Joe and Kate Lowe, who has followed her husband into the saloon. (An eyewitness later testifies, "it did not go off.") Before Big Red can fire again, Kate pushes her man out the side door.

Big Red looks around for more targets. He now points his pistol at one of his girls, Josephine "Miss Jo" DeMerritt, and sneers, "Did you put up a job on me?" She assures him she did not. He then demands to know where his shotgun is, and she remarks that maybe he left it in town. With that, Big Red throws her on the floor, cocks his pistol and points it at her. Before he can fire, the bartender and several others jump him, allowing Jo to break loose and flee to the back rooms.

The men finally let Big Red up, and he stands in the center of the dance floor for a minute until finally raising his revolver and firing a shot into the darkened hallway that leads to the back rooms. A scream is heard, and the bartender runs to see who has been hit. Beebe finds Annie Franklin (styled in the newspapers as "Mollie") shot in the stomach. Evidently, Big Red has mistaken her for the object of his wrath—Miss Jo.

At some point, Big Red leaves the saloon, probably bound for town to retrieve his shotgun.

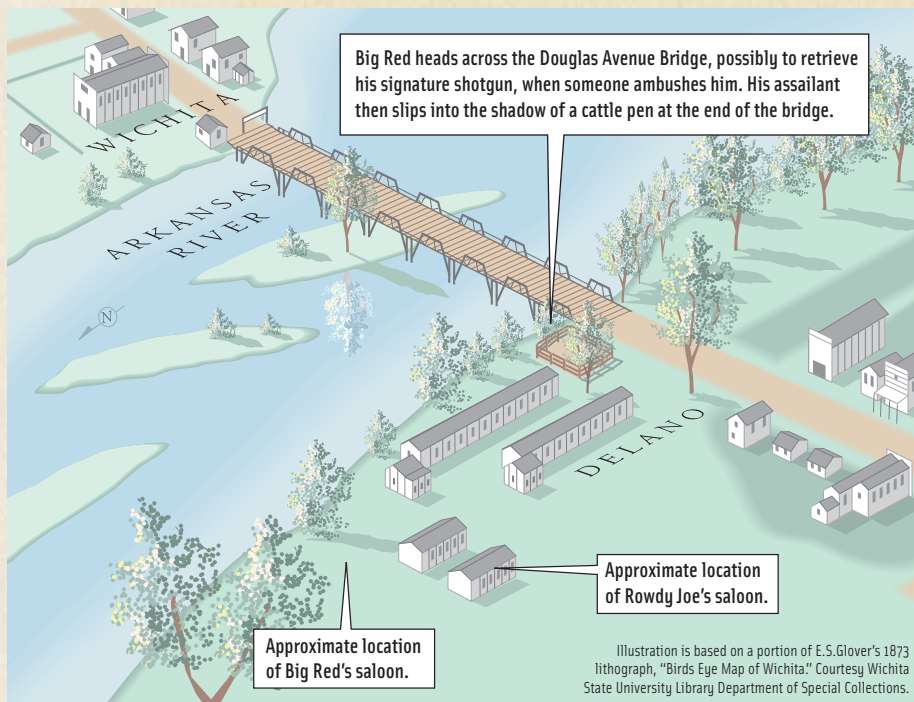
Meanwhile, Rowdy Joe has returned to his saloon and is reloading his shotgun. Kate dresses his wounded neck, all the while trying to dissuade him from any more bloodshed, but Rowdy Joe will not be denied. He slams the breech and steps out into the cold for another go at Big Red.

It isn't long before a shotgun blast reverberates through the night, bringing out everyone from both saloons. Big Red is found prostrate on the Douglas Avenue Bridge, with a shattered arm and a ball lodged in his hip. Not long after, Rowdy Joe crosses the bridge and surrenders to the sheriff.



Big Red (Edward T. Beard), seen here with Miss Jo, is described as six feet tall with “an enormous bulk” and “slovenly in dress...and lazy in his walk.” His shock of red hair and a reddish mustache gives him his name. One Wichita local claims Big Red usually carries a double-barrel shotgun with “the biggest caliber I ever looked into.” Evidently the barrels are loaded with “blue whistlers—three lead balls per barrel.”

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Big Red Beard lingered in agony for two weeks before expiring at 3 a.m. on Tuesday, November 11.

Rowdy Joe Lowe was found not guilty in the death of Big Red, but he was held on another charge of assault for intending to kill Billie Anderson. After losing his sense of smell and sight from the nose wound, Anderson filed suit against Lowe for damages in the sum of \$10,000, but Lowe disappeared. Bartender Beebe was sentenced to three years in prison for aiding Lowe in his escape.

Miss Jo DeMerritt took over Big Red's business, but she forged ownership of Big Red's property on the deed, was found out and sentenced to 10 years in the state penitentiary. In 1876, a judge took pity on her plight and helped her receive a pardon.

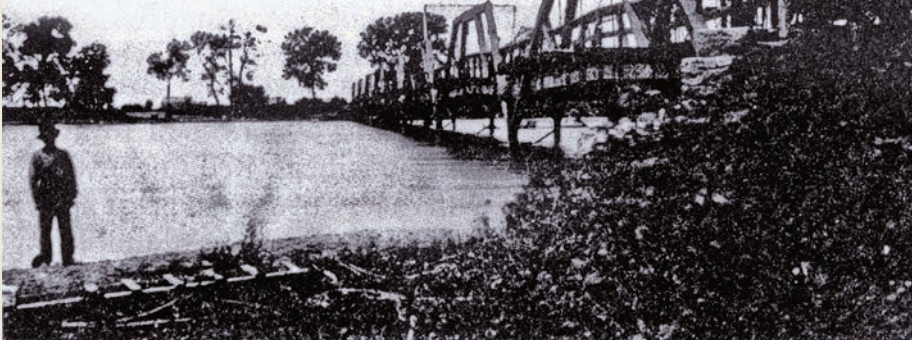
Miss Annie Franklin survived her stomach wound and lived “to dance again.”

After stints in Texas and Colorado, Rowdy Joe settled in Denver, and started a family. He became successful in the saloon business, but his old habits finally caught up with him. Still a big drinker, Rowdy Joe was fatally shot in a Denver saloon in 1899—13 years after he gunned down Big Red.

Recommended: *Rowdy Joe Lowe: Gambler With a Gun* by Joseph G. Rosa and Waldo E. Koop, published by University of Oklahoma Press.

Looking west across the Douglas Avenue Bridge, where Big Red was fatally shot by Rowdy Joe Lowe on the night of October 27, 1873. And after Lowe killed Red Beard, he surrendered to one of the best lawmen in the West: Mike Meagher.

True West Archives



Deadly Reputation

After running from the attempted murder charge in Delano, the Lowes headed to Texas to continue their rowdy ways. Joe and Kate split in 1876. Almost immediately afterward, Joe was married in Fort Worth to Annie Franklin, also known as Mollie, the same woman shot and wounded by Red Beard during that fatal confrontation. For her part, Rowdy Kate—post-Joe—ran dancehalls in Texas.

Rowdy Joe's death was a bit anticlimactic. On February 11, 1899, he was in Denver's Walrus Saloon—drunk, per usual. He began insulting another customer, E.A. Kimmel, who happened to be an off-duty policeman. Kimmel knew of Joe's deadly reputation; he pulled his gun and shot Lowe to death. Rowdy Joe was unarmed. Kimmel successfully argued self-defense.

Author Richard Selcer believes Rowdy Joe actually got along with most folks. It was his drinking that made him mean—and deadly.

—Mark Boardman



CLASSIC TRUE WEST

FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

The late great Western historian Joseph G. Rosa, best known for his biography of Wild Bill Hickok, was a regular contributor to *True West* magazine. His profile of Western scout California Joe was one of two profiles he wrote for the April 2002 issue dedicated to the famed scouts of the Old West. If you'd like to read them and more, please go to TrueWestMagazine.com and subscribe for full access to nearly 67 years' worth of exciting issues of *True West*.

BY JOSEPH ROSA

WILL COMSTOCK

THE MAN THEY CALLED MEDICINE BILL.

Will "Medicine Bill" Comstock was an enigma to many of his contemporaries. Some claimed he was a half-breed Cheyenne, and others that he had been stolen by the Indians as a child, but preferred to live with the whites. However, the *Junction City Weekly Union* of February 9, 1867, reported that he had been born near where Fort Wallace then stood and was "acquainted with all that vast region from the British Possessions south to Texas" and that he had never been farther east than Leavenworth, Kansas.

In truth, Comstock was neither a half-breed, a stolen child or Western-born. Rather, he came from genteel Eastern stock and was a grand nephew of James Fenimore Cooper whose *Leatherstocking Tales* of the revolutionary frontier had inspired an ongoing fascination with the West. Born on January 17, 1842, in Comstock Township, Kalamazoo, Michigan, William Averill Comstock was orphaned at an early age, and he and his sisters were brought up by relatives. By 1860, however, young Will was reported to be an Indian trader in Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska Territory, and by the middle 1860s he was well known as an Indian scout and interpreter.

General George Armstrong Custer in his book *My Life on the Plains* wrote that "No Indian knew the country more thoroughly than did Comstock. He was perfectly familiar with every divide, watercourse, and strip of timber for hundreds of miles in either direction. He knew the dress and peculiarities of every Indian tribe, and spoke the language of many of them." Custer found him to be very

knowledgeable on all manner of subjects and to be the perfect gentleman.

Other Army officers shared Custer's

opinion, and Comstock's services were always in demand. In fact, it was his presence with the command that prevented what could have led to the deaths of Custer, Hancock and many of the troops who accompanied them the summer of 1867 in what was recalled as "Hancock's Indian War." To understand why, we must go back to 1864 and the Sand Creek Massacre when Black Kettle's Cheyenne were massacred at Sand Creek. Black Kettle had escaped as did Edmund Guerrier, the half-breed son of William Guerrier, a French trader, and Tah-tah tois-neh, a full-blooded Cheyenne, and his brother-in-law George Bent.

Guerrier (generally called "Ed Geary") never again trusted the whites. In later years Bent claimed that Ed did his best to lead Custer's troops away from the Indians and warn them in advance, while at the same time he plotted revenge. But once Comstock arrived, with his personal knowledge of Indians and ability to speak their language, Ed realized that it would not be long before Will found out what he was up to and informed Custer.

Comstock was known as "Medicine Bill" among his companions primarily because of his superstitious nature. Even his "evil-looking" dog was said to have had a "medicine collar." The Indians, however, called him "Medicine Bill" because Bill had cut off

"No Indian knew the country more thoroughly than did Comstock . . ."

—General George Armstrong Custer

a man's finger in order to save him from a rattlesnake bite.

Despite his high reputation among fellow scouts and the Army,

there were those who, because of his long association with Indians, regarded Comstock as a renegade. Will, however, dismissed such claims and continued placing himself at risk in the fervent hope that peace could be restored to the plains country.

Many who have compared Will Comstock with the likes of Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill and other well-known scouts and guides, have speculated that with the right kind of publicity he would have achieved similar nationwide notoriety and enduring fame. Perhaps, but apart from a few inaccurate news reports, he managed to avoid too much attention from the press. As for his so-called rivals, it is believed that he and Hickok knew each other—there is a story that they were both at Monument Station, Kansas, when a bunch of Denver thugs got out of hand and Comstock watched in awe as Hickok beat up their leader for insulting the agent's wife.

In so far as Buffalo Bill Cody was concerned, he claimed to have beaten Comstock in a horseback buffalo-hunting contest for the title "Champion Buffalo Killer of the Plains." According to Cody he killed 69 buffalo against Comstock's 46. No contemporary evidence has been found, and we have only Bill's word for it.

Early in 1868 at Fort Wallace, Comstock blighted his impeccable record when he

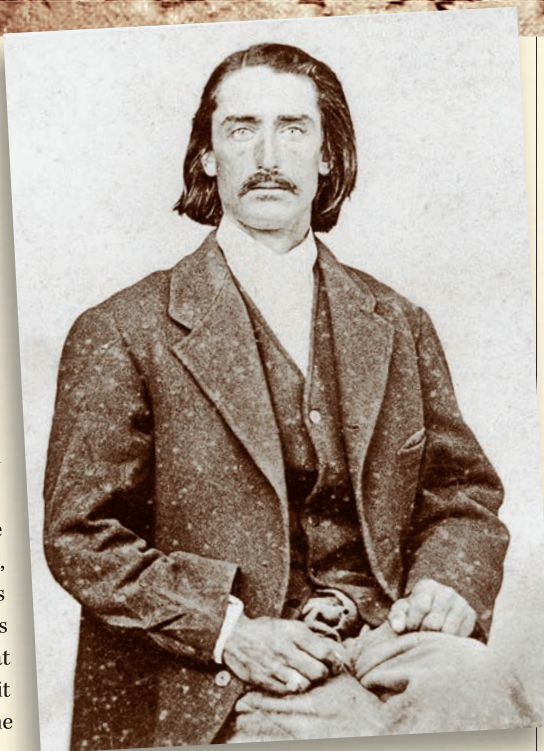
confronted H.P. Wyatt, a wood contractor for the post. Wyatt owed him money and refused to pay. Comstock, who was already incensed by Wyatt's claim to have been with Quantrill when he sacked Lawrence, Kansas, in 1863, is reported to have pulled his pistol and shot him (some reports say in the back) before making his escape to Hays City. M. E. Joyce, justice of the peace, is reported to have let him go for "want of evidence," and by August, Comstock was again scouting for the army.

He and Sharp Grover, another scout, were ordered by Lt. Fred Beecher (of the Battle of Beecher's Island fame) to go to the camp of the Cheyenne chief Turkey Leg to try and persuade him to dissuade his young men from going on the warpath. Both men had lived with the chief and hoped he would cooperate. But the meeting was tense, and though they thought they were being escorted safely from the village, both scouts were shot down and left for dead. Wounded, Grover faked death, and in darkness made his way to the railroad and was picked up. It has been reported that Will's body was never recovered, but it is now believed that it was, and that he was buried at Fort Wallace.

As a scout, courier, interpreter, all-around brave and adventurous individual, William Averill Comstock was in a class of his own, an opinion shared by many of his contemporaries. *The Omaha Daily Herald* (Nebraska) of August 27, 1868, eulogized that he also "had the confidence of his officers, and many warm friends wherever known."



Joseph G. Rosa co-edited our September 2001 Wild Bill Hickok Collector's Edition and wrote the definitive biography, *They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok*.



William "Medicine Bill" Comstock was perhaps the best scout, linguist and trailer of his time. This photograph is credited to Charles T. Smith of Topeka, Kansas, who is believed to have taken it at Fort Wallace late in 1867 or early 1868.

Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society

"Medicine Bill" Comstock (left) served in the Army scouts at Fort Wallace, Kansas, with veteran frontiersmen (l.-r.) Ed Guerrier, possibly Sharp Grover, Richard Parr or William Morrisson, and Moses "California Joe" Milner during Hancock's Indian War, circa 1867.

True West Archives

TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

For the first time ever, every issue of *True West* magazine is now online, including Joseph G. Rosa's original article from our April 2002 issue. To learn more about how you can read all of Rosa's articles and subscribe to

True West Archives, go to TrueWestMagazine.com.

Our past awaits you!

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Elmer Kelton Country

A trip tracking the Texas author across the Lone Star State is sure to create memorable stories.

The frontier town of Mobeetie was taking on some of the appearances of civilization, although not all the realities of it.”

That’s the first description of a Texas town in any novel by Elmer Kelton (1926-2009). The West Texas native had written short fiction for several magazines in the 1950s, but *Hot Iron*, published in 1956, was his first novel. “That crowded and distinguished company of Western story-tellers must make room for a newcomer,” the *Springfield, Missouri News and Leader* wrote. “This is that ‘different’ Western you’ve been waiting for.”

The 30-year-old was just getting started telling those different kinds of Westerns.

Buffalo Wagons, published a year later, won him his first Spur Award from Western Writers of America. Six Spurs followed, plus four Western Heritage Wrangler Awards, including one for *The Art of Howard Terpning* for Outstanding Art Book, the Owen Wister Award for lifetime contributions to Western literature, induction into the Western Writers Hall of Fame and praise as the greatest Western novelist of all time.

“None of his works fit exactly into the stereotypical Western genre,” *The New York Times* observed in 1986.

Kelton usually wrote under his own name, but used pseudonyms, Alex Hawk, Tom Early and Lee McElroy, and while some novels strayed outside of Texas, he set most in the Texas he knew best.

Panhandle Tales

Mobeetie (Mobeetie Jail Museum) was established in 1874 as a buffalo hunters camp, Hidetown, and grew with the establishment of Fort Elliott and the Jones and Plummer Trail for those buffalo hunters. In *Hot Iron*, Espy

Very few Western writers have ever captured the day-to-day life of the West Texas cowboy, such as this JA Ranch Panhandle cowhand, as Elmer Kelton did in his award-winning novels about his native Lone Star State.

Photo by Edwin Smith, 1907, Courtesy Library of Congress



Born in 1926 on the Five Wells Ranch in Andrews County near the Texas–New Mexico line, Elmer Kelton grew up in the Panhandle during the worst of the 1930s Dust Bowl (above, Randall County, Texas, April 1936) and his experiences with drought and the hard life of ranching on the Southern Plains influenced his novels, including *The Time It Never Rained* (1973).

Photo by Arthur Rothstein, Courtesy Library of Congress

Norwood is sent to manage a Panhandle ranch and brings his 11-year-old son into a range war.

Kelton returned to the Panhandle with *Buffalo Wagons*, about the slaughter of buffalo

herds by white hunters in the 1870s, and Kelton revisited hide hunters in the Spur-winning *Slaughter*, 1992, which fictionalizes the 1874 attack on the Adobe Walls trading post



Harold Dow Bugbee's 1956 mural *Hide Hunters* is featured in an exhibition on the buffalo and the hide hunting trade at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas.

Courtesy The Lyda Hill Texas Collection of Photographs in Carol M. Highsmith's America Project, Library of Congress

northeast of Stinnett in Hutchinson County. "Though crude," Kelton wrote in *Slaughter*, "the little village had a certain straight-line symmetry. It was not a place that would impress a man who had spent most of his life in and around the mannered villages of England. ... Give it a hundred years and it might come up to civilized standards."

Kelton created most of his towns, or rather transformed towns that he knew well as a journalist for the *San Angelo Standard-Times* and livestock periodicals, giving them names like Catclaw, Dry Fork, Piedras and Rio Seco. You won't find Caprock, his 1920s oil boomtown depicted in *Honor at Daybreak* (1991) on any Texas map, but it existed in Crane, where Kelton was born. "My father's family were ranch people," Kelton wrote, "while my mother's were tied to the oilfields." The Panhandle town of Borger (Hutchinson County Museum) or West Texas's Midland (Permian Basin Petroleum Museum) could also have passed for Caprock, "our little Sodom in the Sandhills."

Another Spur winner, *The Day the Cowboys Quit*, 1971, was based on an 1883 cowboy strike around Tascosa, near Amarillo and home to Cal Farley's Boys Ranch for at-risk children ages 5 to 18. Talk about a different Western. "Nobody got shot to death in the story," Kelton told the *New York Times*. "There wasn't any big gunfight. One man died in the whole book, and he died offstage."

Kelton enjoyed writing about the Panhandle, from Amarillo (American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame) to Canyon (Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum). Palo Duro Canyon State Park served as the inspiration for Kelton's *The Far Canyon*, 1994, a sequel to *Slaughter*. And Kelton was a top draw at the annual Cowboy Symposium in Lubbock (National Ranching Heritage Center). But he covered most of Texas.

Expanding the Western

The 1970s saw an increased depth in Kelton's prose—the Black cowboy's fight against prejudice in *Wagontongue*, 1971; the 1950s drought in *The Time It Never Rained*, 1973; a fictionalized version of the Gregorio Cortez legend in *Manhunters*, 1974; and the seriocomic story of a turn-of-the-century cowboy in *The Good Old Boys*, 1978, adapted as a made-for-TV movie for TNT in 1995.

When he wrote about actual events, Kelton had a gift of making a point without exaggeration or gore. *Massacre at Goliad*, 1965, told of a young Texan's brush with death during the Texas Revolution, when Mexican soldiers shot to death prisoners at Goliad (Presidio Nuestra Señora de Loreto de la Bahía).

"Jimson gave voice to the sudden horrible realization that swept over us all. 'My God, boys, they're goin' to kill us.'"

"I heard someone cry out. Men began to pray. One man dropped to his knees, his head bowed. Someone shouted, 'Rush them, boys! It's our only chance!'"

Or the recollection by Frank Claymore, a thinly disguised Charles Goodnight, of the massacre of Kickapoo Indians in 1865 at Dove Creek near present-day Mertzon in *Stand Proud*, 1984.

"He saw an older man, an overseer of sorts, waving a white cloth, shouting something that was lost in the rush and the wind. The man went down, his horse bolting away. The white cloth caught on a bush and continued to flutter its lost message in silence."

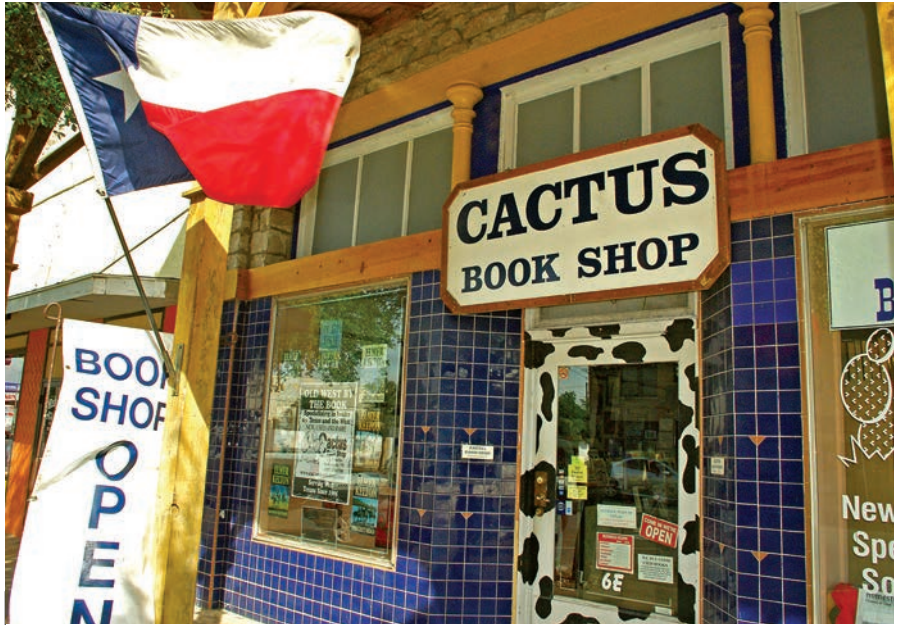


A gunfight in 1886 reportedly sent four victims—three cowboys and a restaurant owner—to the "Boot Hill" cemetery during Tascosa's run as the "Cowboy Capital of the Plains."

Unless Otherwise Noted All Images Courtesy Johnny D. Boggs



Rancher Jeff Layne is starting a ranch in a Panhandle canyon at the end of Elmer Kelton's *The Far Canyon*, much as Texas cattleman Charles Goodnight did in Palo Duro Canyon in 1876. "A dugout," Layne's wife says, "is snug and warm." Goodnight's dugout has been restored at the state park.



When on a Texas-sized tour of Elmer Kelton's Lone Star State, a must stop for fans is the Cactus Book Shop in the author's adopted hometown of San Angelo.

At Home in West Texas

Kelton specialized in West Texas, "never an easy, benevolent land," he wrote in *The Good Old Boys*. "For whatever it yielded up, it exacted a price."

Most of his fiction was set around San Angelo, where he lived most of his life, and where he is buried at Lawnhaven Memorial Gardens. "It's a handy town," a soldier says in *The Wolf and the Buffalo*, only to be corrected:

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A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

"It's more like a boil on a soldier's butt."

The buffalo soldiers from *The Wolf and the Buffalo* were stationed here, and visitors can learn their true stories at Fort Concho National Historic Landmark. It's not hard to imagine *The Good Old Boys'* Hewey Calloway eating at Miss Hattie's Restaurant & Cathouse Lounge or getting into trouble at Miss Hattie's Bordello Museum.

Kelton's presence remains large in San Angelo, including Raul Ruiz's sculpture at the central library, Styllle Read's downtown mural and Kelton's books for sale at Cactus Book Shop.

Kelton's funeral at San Angelo's First United Methodist Church concluded with the playing of "Happy Trails." "Very Western," historian Paul Andrew Hutton told the *New York Times*, "all the way." 

Johnny D. Boggs knew Elmer Kelton for 12 years. Boggs's favorite Kelton novel is *The Time It Never Rained*.

FORT GRIFFIN STATE HISTORIC SITE

Since 1948, Fort Griffin State Historic Site has been the primary home to what the state Legislature recognized as the "Official State of Texas Longhorn Herd" in 1969. *Official* longhorns also graze at San Angelo, Copper Breaks, Abilene and Palo Duro Canyon state parks. Part of Elmer Kelton's 2002 novel *Ranger's Trail* was set around Fort Griffin, and the region the fort protected from 1867-81 was territory Kelton often covered in his prose. The parasite town that grew up around the military post was a mecca for buffalo hunters. Historical figures, including Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Bat Masterson, John Selman, Kate Elder and Lottie Deno, reportedly hung out there. Ruins of the fort can be seen today, along with *Settling the Plains: The Story of Fort Griffin*, an informative documentary at the visitors' center. More than 30 campsites are available, or lodging can be found in nearby Albany.

THC.Texas.gov

Elmer Kelton's cowboys worked many longhorns and other cattle breeds in his novels. Fort Griffin State Historic Site is home base for the "Official State of Texas Longhorn Herd!"

GOOD EATS AND SLEEPS

GOOD GRUB: *Coyote Bluff Café, Amarillo;* *The Funky Door Bistro & Wine Room, Lubbock;* *The Taylor County Taphouse, Abilene;* *Roxie's Diner, San Angelo*

GOOD LODGING: *Historic Starlight Canyon Bed & Breakfast, Amarillo;* *Hotel Turkey, Turkey;* *Antlers Inn, Goliad;* *Old Central Firehouse Bed & Brew, San Angelo*



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Ho! Ho! Ho!

Sweet treats were greatly anticipated and appreciated at Christmastime on the American frontier.



In 1910, customers in Los Angeles could count on their neighborhood market having candy throughout the year, including Park & Tilford's chocolate and bonbons. Park & Tilford, a grocery chain founded in Manhattan, New York, in 1840, was well-known for its nationally distributed candy selections.

Courtesy USC Digital Collections

Allie Earp recalled how much her husband, Virgil, loved candy at Christmastime. She recalled, "We'd had a right good Christmas dinner. We still had some nuts left over and some of the peppermint candy Virge liked." She recalled that fond memory from when they lived in Tombstone, Arizona Territory, in the early 1880s. It's hard to imagine Virgil Earp, Annie Oakley or Jesse James sitting down to a plate of peppermint candy during the Christmas season, but many a pioneer did.

Nebraska resident Ella Oblinger penned a letter to her grandparents in 1880 and she wrote, "I must tell you how I spent Christmas eve we all went to see a Christmas tree on Christmas eve. I got a new red oil calico dress I will send you a piece of them [and] each one of us girls got a doll and uncle Giles put a book on for Sabra and me & each one of us girls a string with candy and raisins on it."

St. Louis, Missouri, native Ellinor Dale Runcie went to live with her Aunt Ellie and cousin Ellinor in San Francisco and remembered the 1900 Christmas fondly. She wrote

Yaples' Pioneer Candy Factory was founded in 1883, after Virgil Earp left Tombstone, Arizona Territory, in 1882, and was a popular proprietor of Christmas candy and toys in the Cochise County town for many years. But it is possible Virgil may have visited Charles Shutz's candy shop in 1879-80 to satisfy his sweet tooth while in Tombstone.

home to her mother, "My darling Mother... But now for our Christmas. Monday morning, I ran to the grocers, for cranberries and popcorn, which I proceeded to pop, string etc., and was busily occupied all morning, Ellinor being gone to deliver presents, and other matters. After lunch, I got all the trimmings together and began my very enjoyable task of decking the little tree, while [cousin] Ellinor rested up in my room on the reclining chair, in her warm, crimson dressing gown, and strung popcorn and berries with lightning rapidity. I gave Miss M. a heart-shaped fancy box of candy."

Candy, nuts, popcorn and fruits were sold by mercantile stores, bakeries, confectionery shops and other locales. A store called John Jeffries & Company in Ottawa, Kansas, advertised that it had fine mixed Christmas candy at 10 cents per pound. It even offered discounts to Christmas tree committees, teachers and others who wanted 20 pounds or more. It also sold fancy "paper sacks" to hold the candy, nuts, oranges, lemons, popcorn or other treats. The Kandy Kitchen in El Dorado,

Kansas, advertised itself as “the place where Old Santa Claus suggests at which to buy pure Christmas candies.” They offered creams, chocolates, caramel, peanut and coconut bars, taffies, butterscotch, horehound, peppermint drops, nuts and sugar-coated popcorn.

The Dragon Drug Store in Los Angeles, California, offered “all kinds, from old-fashioned taffys to the finest French chocolates.” In 1899, the French Drug Co. in Tacoma, Washington, offered a fine assortment of tasty holiday treats including glazed fruits, assorted creams and chocolates, bonbons, chocolate almonds, peppermint chocolate, Italian walnut cream bars, handmade wafers and a variety of nut brittles.

Candy canes, considered a real treat, were often given to children by Santa Claus and were hung on Christmas trees. They were sometimes given as prizes in contests like the popcorn string one in Salt Lake City, Utah. A couple threw an informal party and challenged attendees to make popcorn strings to decorate the tree. The person with the longest string won a candy cane. In 1882 the mining town of Chloride, New Mexico, had a Christmas ball at the Monte Christo. The building was decorated with evergreens and Merry Christmas signs. Twenty-five ladies attended and they sold lottery tickets for 25 cents. Mr. Jim Blain held ticket #17 which entitled him to a candy cane, and lesser prizes included sacks of flour.

We don't know what kind of peppermint Christmas candy Virgil Earp enjoyed, but give this historic recipe a try. ❏

PEPPERMINT CREAMS


2 cups sugar • ½ cup water
6 drops of peppermint extract or oil

Place the sugar and water into a pan and stir until sugar dissolves. Boil until thick. Boil until it thickens and the mixture can be spun like a thread—about 10 minutes. Do not stir again. Beat the mixture rapidly, until it becomes a white, creamy consistency. Immediately set the pan into cold water and add peppermint. Squeeze through a pastry bag or shape by hand into quarter-sized balls. Place on wax paper and allow to cool.




Recipe courtesy of *The Topeka Daily Press*, December 9, 1893.

Sherry Monahan kicked off her journey into Old West cuisine, spirits and places by authoring *Taste of Tombstone*. Visit SherryMonahan.com to learn more about her books, awards and TV appearances.



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America's Trailblazer

Jerry Enzler's new biography of Jim Bridger, and new histories of Lewis and Clark, the grand masters of Western art, war on the central plains and Max McCoy's latest Western.

In my earliest days of reading American history, biography was a staple of my education. A bio of a teenage Bridger inspired my interest in mountain men and trailblazer history. Since then, I have had a great curiosity in the fur-trade era, but it has been many years since I enjoyed such an excellent profile of my first fur trapping hero. Jerry Enzler's *Jim Bridger: The Trailblazer of the American West* (University of Oklahoma Press, \$29.95) is an outstanding biography, one of the best in Western history in the past year and should be on the reading list of everyone who is curious about learning more about the men and women—and processes—that built the United States in its first 100 years.

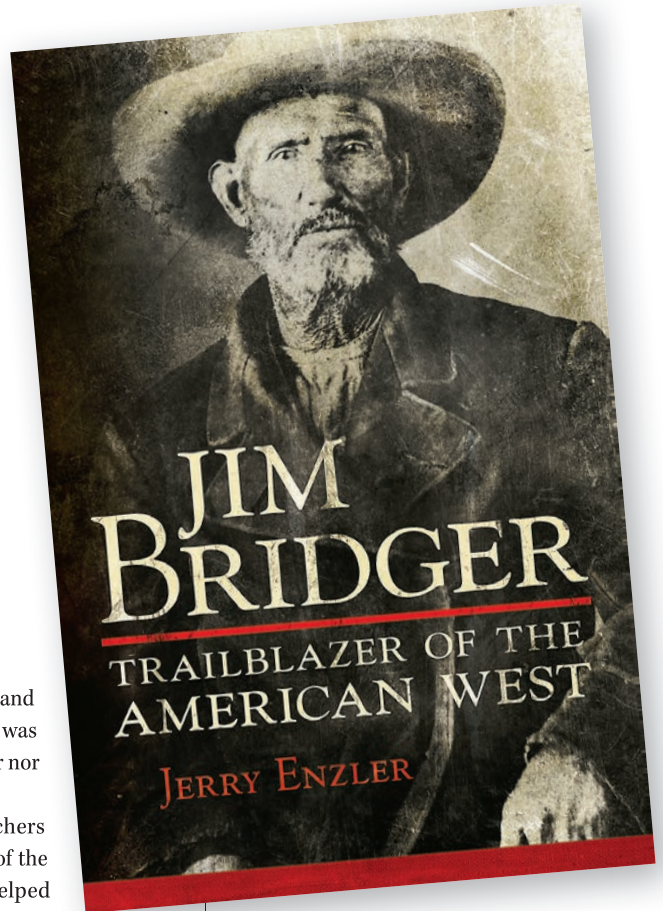
In 2021, maybe more so than ever, biographies of 19th-century Americans such as Jim Bridger are needed for more informed context on our shared heritage, especially of the men and women who shaped pre-antebellum America. For many decades, the best-known historymakers of America's first century have received regular revision and reflection. The reasons for this are numerous, and include the profit margins for publishers, marketability and national and international recognition. But it is biographies like *Jim Bridger* by Iowa historian Enzler that we need more of on our shelves and in the university catalogues. In his lifetime, Bridger, the great trailblazer, was a well-known figure in the pantheon of early Western dime-novel heroes, but unlike Davy Crockett, Kit Carson, George Armstrong

Custer, Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill Cody, Bridger was neither showman, martyr nor soldier.

For scholars, researchers and buffs of the history of the mountain men who helped shape the West, Enzler's *Jim Bridger* is one of best biographies published in recent years. His literary style is highly readable, he provides a clear and detailed path to understanding his research and conclusions through his annotated endnotes and a thorough bibliography. Enzler's conclusions on Bridger provide context to many facets in a long life that spanned the United States expansion from Thomas Jefferson's era of exploration to the final, violent throes of Manifest Destiny. What is remarkable about the trailblazer's life is well-concluded by Enzler: "By 1860, Jim Bridger had become the most able scout and guide of his era and certainly one of America's greatest frontier heroes. He embodied the skill, bravery and individualism that the nation treasured."

Will this be Enzler's only foray into mountain man history? Let's hope not. He is an excellent biographer and historian, and we would all benefit from more books from the Iowa author.

—Stuart Rosebrook

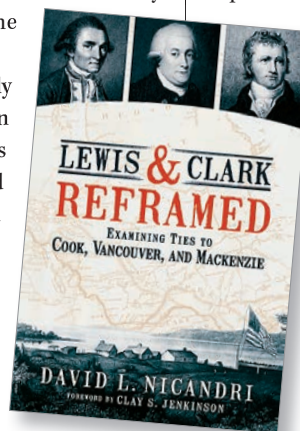


Explorers Reframed

The story of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, intrepid explorers of the American West, never fails to elicit fascination from history buffs and schoolchildren around the world. Historian and former Washington State Historical Society director David L. Nicandri takes an interesting new approach to the Lewis and Clark story in his book *Lewis & Clark Reframed: Examining Ties to Cook, Vancouver and Mackenzie* (Washington State University Press, \$32.95) in which he examines their story in a fresh light. Nicandri has concluded that Lewis and Clark relied heavily on earlier explorers of the far Western regions like James

Cook, George Vancouver and Alexander Mackenzie. And, in a careful analysis of the Lewis and Clark journals, Nicandri shows readers how these early explorers influenced the famous duo as well as how their travels helped to guide them across the Western expanses of the new country.

—Erik J. Wright, assistant editor of *The Tombstone Epitaph*



ROUGH DRAFTS

Photo by Johnny D. Boggs



On September 28, 2021, our greater community of historians lost one of its most enigmatic leaders in the field of Western history. Will Bagley, who died suddenly from a stroke in Salt Lake City at the age of 71, was known for his great sense of humor, encyclopedic knowledge of Western trail history, his determined research methodology and superior writing skills.

Executive director of Western Writers of America Candy Moulton remembers her fellow historian and good friend Bagley as a man who had "the most generous spirit imaginable. He was a master of the archives and saw part of his historical contribution as one that furthered the historical record." Moulton adds, "Will was the expert on Western trails, and he helped me and countless others expand our own knowledge by willingly looking up a detail, sending a quote or even sharing voluminous pages of information he had gathered during his career. I am forever indebted to him."

Bagley, who wrote or edited 25 books on overland emigration, frontier violence, railroads, mining and the Mormons, also contributed from 2000 to 2004 more than 225 history columns to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. He rafted down the Mississippi River in 1969, performed country music from Wyoming to Nevada, and worked as a journeyman carpenter. In 1991, Bagley, who was awarded most of the major awards a modern Western historian could receive, including three WWA Spurs for Best Western Nonfiction Historical book, said his favorite was the Western Writers of America's Owen Wister Award.

—Stuart Rosebrook

Editor's Note: For more on Will Bagley's top books, read Terry Del Bene's "Build Your Western Library" on page 61.

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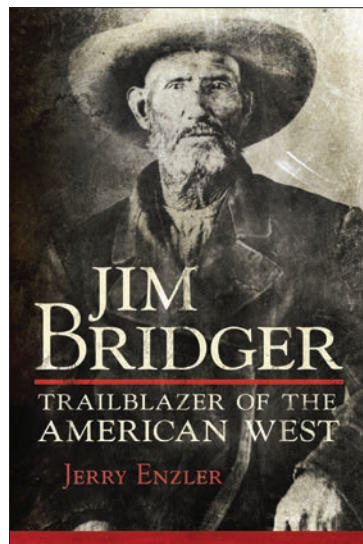
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Robert M. Utley

author of *After Lewis and Clark: Mountain Men and the Paths to the Pacific*

Jerry Enzler's *Jim Bridger* represents the most reliable, well-researched, and comprehensive biography of this western trailblazer, mountain man, army guide, and fort operator. Enzler offers readers a valuable reinterpretation of Bridger's remarkable life.

Jay H. Buckley

Brigham Young University, author of *William Clark: Indian Diplomat*

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In Awe of Western Grandeur

If you've ever stood mesmerized before a canvas by Bierstadt, Russell, Remington or another fine Western artist, this book is for you. In her deeply researched study of European and American artists' depictions of Native peoples of North America, Kate Elliott finds it important to consider not only "who tells your story," but who paints it, as well. *Framing First Contact, From Catlin to Russell* (University of Oklahoma Press, \$39.95) examines the "visual imagery" that whites create when they encounter American Indians, from "First Contact" paintings such as those of John Vanderlyn and George Catlin to works of the early 20th century. While most of these images were accepted in their time as straight documentary history, Elliott shows that they are better understood as the lens through which the dominant Euro-American culture sees the "Other." Richly illustrated in color, this work shines a light on the space between cultures and how it is revealed in art.

—Nancy Plain, author of *Sagebrush and Paintbrush—The Story of Charlie Russell, the Cowboy Artist*

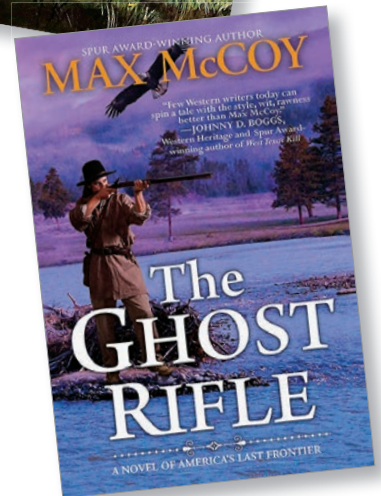
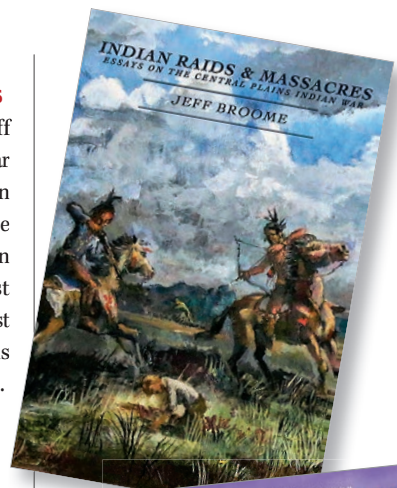


War on the Central Plains

Historian Jeff Broome, a familiar name to those in the trenches of the American Indian Wars, has just released his latest book, and it is impressive.

Indian Raids and Massacres: Essays on the Central Plains Indian War (Caxton Press, \$24.95) clocks in at 520 pages and presents an extensive collection of research from the author of *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War* (2003) and *Cheyenne War: Indian Raids on the Roads to Denver, 1864-1898* (2013). *Indian Raids and Massacres* is not a narrative history, but rather a hefty collection of independent essays on the subject. Broome is careful to present perspectives from the Anglo settlers as well as those of the Native people in his book which is thoroughly sourced and illustrated.

—Erik J. Wright, assistant editor of *The Tombstone Epitaph*

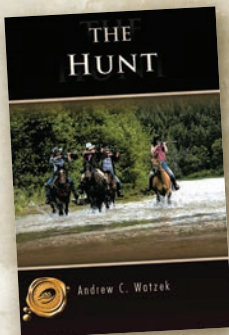


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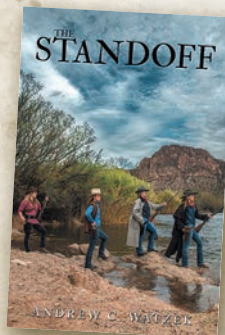
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Watzek has written an outstanding debut novel. The Hunt is a straightforward story with a beginning, a middle, and an end that will keep the reader fascinated to the very last word.



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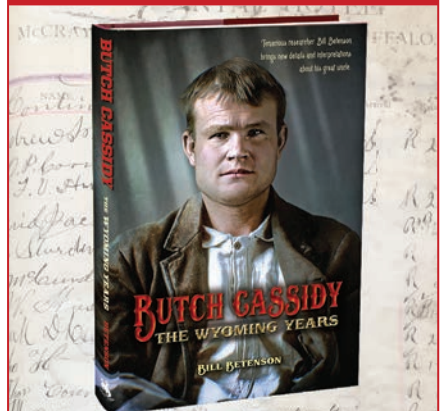
For those drawn to the heart, soul, and drama of the American West, Watzek brings the frontier to life, and does not disappoint with this fine rendering of this classic genre.



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Courtesy Western Writers of America

Winchester '73 With a Twist

Director Anthony Mann's *Winchester '73* (1950) is a classic revenge Western film that transformed actor James Stewart into a tough, borderline psychotic Western hero. But don't think three-time Spur Award-winning writer Max McCoy is stealing from Hollywood. Sure, Jacques Aguirre, an apprentice gunsmith and Basque adventurer, spends most of his time in *The Ghost Rifle* (Pinnacle, \$8.99) trying to get his stolen rifle back, but McCoy renders a highly engaging 1820s adventure—wild, romantic and bloody. McCoy, who teaches journalism at Emporia (Kansas) State University, kicks off an exciting series (the sequel, *American Odyssey*, is scheduled for publication in February) with a bloody, character-driven, wonderfully crafted novel.

—Johnny D. Boggs, author of
A Thousand Texas Longhorns



AMERICAN MYTH BUSTER — WILL BAGLEY—A TRIBUTE

Terry A. Del Bene is the author of *The Donner Party Cookbook*, *A Guide to Survival on the Hastings Cutoff*. With the death of Will Bagley, we lost one of the genuine giants among Western historians. The hallmark of Will's work was his dedication to detail, his clear writing style and portrayal of the participants in history as they really were. He taught me that we can do better in our use of historic documents. Here are five titles to look for.

- 1 **Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and Massacre at Mountain Meadows** (University of Oklahoma Press, 2004): This work is a masterpiece, receiving six book awards. Despite well-funded attempts to refute Will's work, this remains the definitive study of the massacre.
- 2 **South Pass: Gateway to a Continent** (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014): Will's research weaves the stories of a *Who's Who* of the Westward expansion. This is a fine introduction to the complexities of the opening of the West.
- 3 **Overland West: The Story of the Oregon and California Trails** (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010 & 2012): These two volumes are the best available

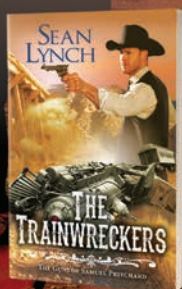
concerning the Oregon and California Trails. They are easy to read with meticulous footnotes.

- 4 **The Whites Want Every Thing: Indian-Mormon Relations 1847-1877** (The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2019): This is Volume XVI in the outstanding *Kingdom in the West* series of books edited by Will Bagley, and an excellent discussion of an underexamined topic.
- 5 **Always a Cowboy: Judge Wilson McCarthy and the Rescue of the Denver & Rio Grand Western Railroad** (Utah State University Press, 2008): The book is a biography of the man who transformed the railroad from receivership to a mid-20th-century powerhouse.

EPIC American ADVENTURES TO Give & Receive THIS Christmas

THE GUNS OF SAMUEL PRITCHARD SERIES

Gunfighting legend Samuel Pritchard who came of age in the Civil War, now rides tall with the Texas Rangers—until he nearly goes off the rails tracking down a notorious train saboteur.



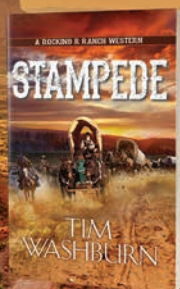
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Dern'd If You Do

Some of the most memorable roles in Western cinema history were portrayed by Bruce Dern during his long and storied career.



Bruce Dern costarred in *Hang 'Em High* (1968) as gang member Miller who tried to hang Clint Eastwood's character, Marshal Jed Cooper (near left). Dern first worked with Eastwood in 1965 on "Walk into Terror," an episode of *Rawhide* in its final season.

Courtesy United Artists

It's no surprise that INSP, a TV network specializing in Westerns, has occasional John Wayne festivals. But when, this June, they celebrated Bruce Dern's birthday with a "That Dern Villain" marathon, it gave one pause. Has any other screen villain received such an honor? Of course, Dern hasn't only played villains. He's been Oscar-nominated twice, as a troubled officer returned from Vietnam in *Coming Home* (1978), and as an addle-brained senior who believes he's won a sweepstakes in *Nebraska* (2013).

Despite the down-at-the-heels characters he often plays, Dern was perfect casting in *The Great Gatsby* as Gatsby's rival, because "I am Tom Buchanan." Dern grew up in Illinois, a scion of two prestigious families: "My great-uncle Archibald MacLeish won Pulitzer Prizes as a poet and playwright." Dern's father was a very successful lawyer, "and partner of Adlai Stevenson." Bruce had no interest in law; his passion was running. "I was national high school champion at 800 meters. I went to Penn for two years, basically because my dad had gone there. My sophomore year, 1956, was an Olympic year.

And I was very discouraged that I did not qualify for the Olympic team. So I quit college."

He'd never thought about acting before, but he started going to a lot of movies, "and they were touching me. I said, I'd like to be able to do that. So I looked for a dramatics school."

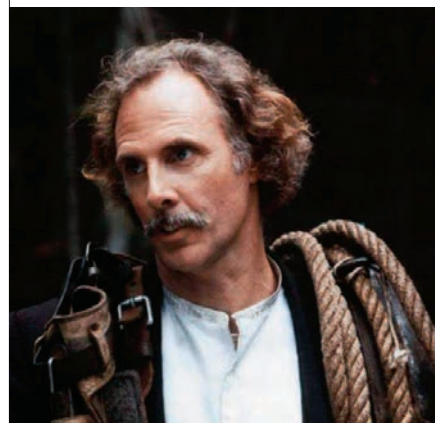
He was admitted to The Actor's Studio, and under the tutelage of "Gadj" Kazan and Lee Strasberg, they finally deemed him ready for Hollywood. "In the limo on the way to the airport, Gadj said, 'When you get out there, nobody's going to know who the hell you are, so your roles are going to be the fifth cowboy from the right. Just make sure you're the most honest, unique fifth cowboy from the right, because you're an original.'"

After Dern guested in 10 different series, in 1962 he sidekicked for Jack Lord in *Stoney Burke*. He had greater success when he formed a secret alliance with fellow strugglers Jack Nicholson, Warren Oates and Harry Dean Stanton. "If I read a *Gunsmoke* script and Jack would be perfect for it, my agent would call his agent, then Harry Dean's agent, saying these guys could play brothers in this episode."



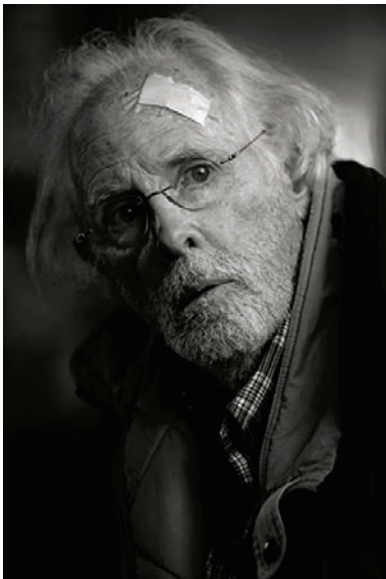
After plying his craft as a guest actor in multiple television series for three years, Bruce Dern (front, kneeling) was cast in 1962 in his first regular series role as rodeo cowboy E.J. Stocker in ABC's modern Western *Stoney Burke*. Dern costarred with (l.-r.) Robert Dowdell, Jack Lord (in the title role) and Warren Oates.

Courtesy ABC Television



Since he began his Hollywood career in 1960, casting agents and producers have cast Dern in supporting and leading roles in classic and modern Westerns, including the overlooked *Harry Tracy: The Last of the Wild Bunch* (1982).

Courtesy Castle Hill Productions



In 2013, at the age of 77, Bruce Dern received his second Oscar nomination for acting for his role of aging Montanan Woody Grant who believes he has won a sweepstakes and must go to Omaha in the modern Western, *Nebraska*.

Courtesy Paramount Vantage

Dern appeared on all the major Western series, hoping to get killed. "If you were killed in an episode, you could come back the next year and play another character. If you were not killed, they couldn't have you back, because the residual had just come in, and they didn't want to pay you for showing that episode and continuing you for another year." About shooting one memorable *Gunsmoke* episode he said, "I look over and sitting there is Bette Davis, playing my mother." In those days, a star doing episodic TV meant their career was over. "Honestly, I cried. She sees the tears, and she said, 'Bruce, what's the matter with you?' I said, 'Bette, it's a *Gunsmoke*.' She said, 'Who's going to pay for my cigarettes? That's why I'm here.'"

"In one episode of *The Big Valley*, Barbara Stanwyck slapped me as hard as I've ever been slapped in my life. I knew it was coming, but I said a 60-year-old woman is not going to clean my clock! She hit me, I went, 'Ow, that hurt!'" The director called Cut! That's not in the script. Stanwyck said, "Keep it—that's just what he'd say. I slapped the shit out of him!"

Dern is famous for saying and doing things that are not in the script, lines or gestures that are startlingly real. Jack Nicholson calls them "Dernsies." For *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Tarantino wrote the part of George Spahn for Dern because

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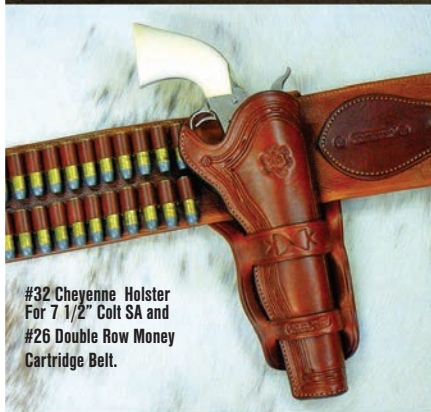
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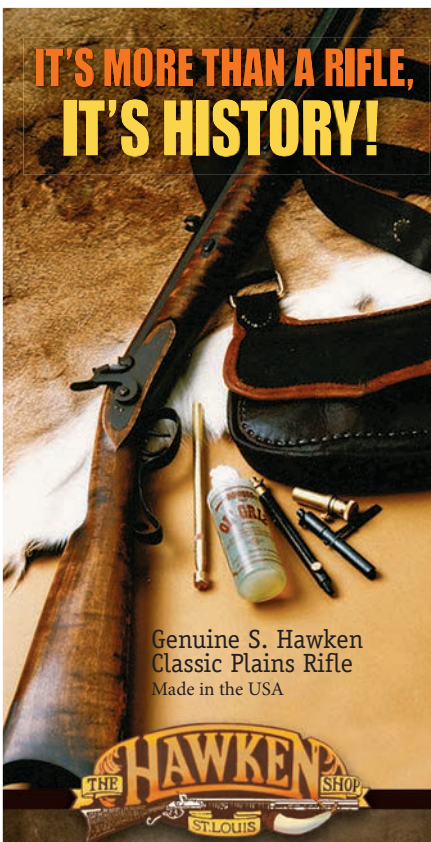
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In 1967, Bruce Dern (center) was cast as Hammond with Chuck Roberson as Brown (left) to support Kirk Douglas's Lomax (right) and John Wayne's Taw Jackson (off-camera) in a gold heist in *The War Wagon*. Dern would later costar in with Wayne in *The Cowboys* (1972) and Douglas in *Posse* (1975).

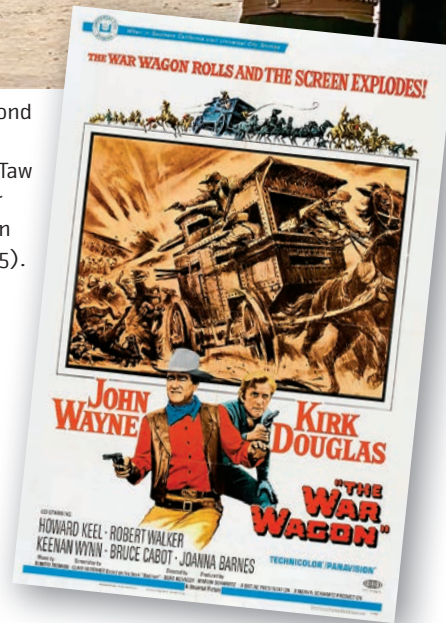
he knew George Spahn. "I shot at least five episodes out at the ranch," Dern said. In the pre-Manson days, he and Robert Conrad visited blind and largely deaf Spahn. When Brad Pitt's character comes to check on Spahn, after confronting the Manson "family," Spahn doesn't know who Pitt is, but he says, "But you did something very nice for me today. You touched me, because you came to see me." Not in the script. Nor is Spahn's response when Pitt wants to be sure Squeaky Frome is not abusing him, and Spahn says Squeaky loves him. "So suck on that!"

Over the years, Dern has worked with most of the important Western filmmakers of his time: *Hang 'Em High* with Clint Eastwood; *Support Your Local Sheriff* for Burt Kennedy; *Posse* for Kirk Douglas; unforgettably for Mark Rydell in *The Cowboys*, in which he kills John Wayne. "And he insisted on me. They'd cast Vince Edwards, and John Wayne said, 'No, I don't want a damned TV doctor to be the guy killing a legend.'"



In 1972, Bruce Dern (left) was cast opposite John Wayne and 10 young actors, including Nicolas Beauvy (right) as crazed outlaw Long Hair/Asa Watts in *The Cowboys*. Half a decade later, many remember Dern as the man who killed John Wayne on screen.

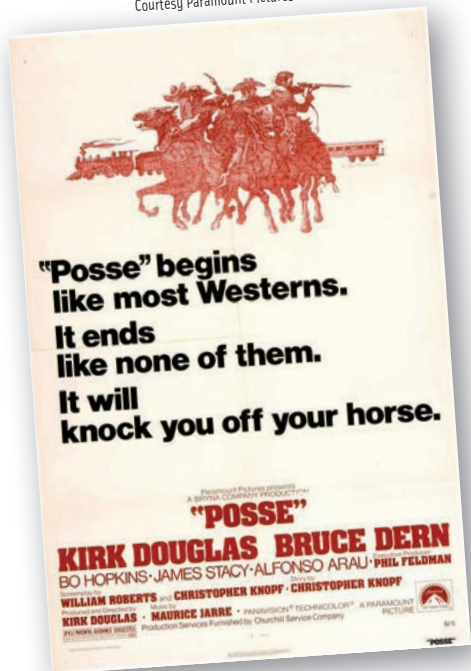
Poster and Still Courtesy Warner Bros.



There were disappointments. Dern didn't get to star in the series about Western painter Frederic Remington for Dick Powell. The Michael Cimino film about the Donner Party never happened. But Dern remains optimistic, and busy. He's made several Westerns this year. And he still runs. "I'm 85. There were nine of us last Saturday, 800 meters, and I was second in that race for people over 75."



Courtesy Paramount Pictures



BRUCE DERN'S DIRTY HALF DOZEN— HIS BEST WESTERNS

All of these films are available on DVD or from various streaming services.

The Cowboys (1972)—Dern set a hateful high-watermark in this classic Western, terrifying small boys and murdering John Wayne.

Harry Tracy: The Last of the Wild Bunch (1982)—Dern finally gets a romantic lead, opposite Helen Shaver, in this turn-of-the-century story of the last member of the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang.

Posse (1975)—Ruthless lawman-turned-politician Kirk Douglas stakes his career on the promise to bring in outlaw Dern.

Hang 'Em High (1968)—Dern is part of a posse that makes the mistake of lynching Clint Eastwood, but not killing him.

Support Your Local Sheriff (1969)—Dern does a great comic turn as an outlaw flummoxed by clever James Garner.

Wild Bill (1995)—Just a cameo, but a beauty, with Dern as a crippled man with a grudge against Hickok (Jeff Bridges).



Henry C. Parke, Western Films Editor for *True West*, is a screenwriter, and blogs at HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com. Parke first profiled Dern for *True West* in the July 2017 Western Movies column titled "I Killed John Wayne."

Concordia Cemetery

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Exciting Monthly night time Ghost Tours held Saturday nights, 8-10pm. Check website or Facebook for dates:

www.ConcordiaCemetery.com, www.Facebook/ConcordiaCemetery

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Kent McCain, *The Crimson Blanket*, oil, 20.5 x 27

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BY LEO W. BANKS

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The Sooner State capital city welcomes visitors to discover its rich history and heritage.

With the boom of a cannon at Fort Reno at noon on April 22, 1889, more than 50,000 settlers rushed into the former Indian Territory of Oklahoma. They came in wagons, on horseback and on foot to stake their claims to two million acres of land.

The state's present-day capital grew to 10,000 people in a single day, and Oklahoma City, the so-called Big Friendly, was born.

"Oklahoma City has a welcoming spirit with so many new places to explore," said Lindsay Vidrine, vice president of destination marketing at OKC Convention and Visitors Bureau. "We embrace our roots and offer fresh experiences and flavors that embody the Modern Frontier."

Through its collection of art and exhibits, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum explains all aspects of Oklahoma City's history, and the frontier West in general. Walk through an 8,000-square-foot gallery of cowboy artifacts like saddles and bits and spurs, from Spanish Colonial times to today.

The firearms gallery has beautiful displays of rare and historic weapons like the Colt 1860 Army revolver or a breech-loading 1866 Winchester rifle.

Another gallery explores the influence of performers like Roy Rogers and John Wayne on our perception of the West and includes a narration by actor Sam Elliott.

Don't miss a brand-new attraction called *Liichokoshkomo'*—Chickasaw for "Let's play"—a hands-on interactive exhibit to teach kids about the Old West.

Head next to the Oklahoma History Center to see the *Trail of Tears* mural by Elizabeth James, created in 1939, or a replica sod house. *Unconquered*, a bronze by eminent Indian artist Allan Houser, depicts two Chiricahua Apache warriors armed and prepared to fight.



The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City has an outdoor sculpture garden that includes Herb Mignery's dramatic bronze, *Code of the West*.

Carol M. Highsmith's America Project in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

Oklahoma's vibrant art scene comes alive once a week during First Friday, when 25 galleries and businesses in the Paseo Arts District stay open late to greet visitors. The 45th annual Paseo Arts Festival takes place over Labor Day weekend 2022.

Oh, that 197-foot sculpture over I-40? It's the Sky Dance pedestrian bridge, named one of America's 50 best public art projects. It resembles the scissor-tailed flycatcher, the state bird.

Stop at Bricktown, the former warehouse district now hopping with restaurants, clubs and the popular Bricktown Brewery. Don't be put off by their web page declaration: "Brewers are ham-fisted weasels that live in caves."

Jokes like that don't matter when you can sip a Single String Stout made with a hint of roasted chocolate and coffee. Yum! Take a narrated tour in a water taxi along the mile-long Bricktown canal or see a show at Michael Murphy's Dueling Pianos.

Downtown in December features stage performances, including *Lyric's A Christmas Carol* at Lyric Theatre, romantic carriage rides and a can't miss display of Christmas lights. "Automobile Alley drapes eight blocks in holiday lights, creating a festive and beautiful experience," says Vidrine.

An architectural masterpiece, the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City opened in September 2021 and is being heralded as one of the finest museums opened in the United States in recent years.

Photo by James Pepper Harvey



In September, a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrated the opening of the Oklahoma State Capitol Visitor Entrance and a seven-year, \$275 million renovation of the state Capitol building. Schedule a tour to see its beautiful interior, historic paintings and murals.

At historic Stockyards City, visitors can watch a real cattle auction every Monday or get fitted for a handmade beaver hat at Shorty's Caboy Hattery. Shorty Koger operates the country's only female-owned custom hattery, and she's a character.

The Cattlemen's Steakhouse has been the place to go since 1910. Feeling mischievous? Order the lamb fries for a friend and don't say what they are until they slide down the hatch. They're lamb testicles. Double yum!

If the kids feel adventurous, spend the night in a Conestoga wagon or teepee at Orr Family Farm. If they're downright brave, visit the OKC Rattlesnake & Venom Museum. Say hello to a 25-foot, 260-pound python. His name is Jakarta.

On September 18, 2021, the First Americans Museum (the name was changed from American Indian Cultural Center & Museum) opened after decades of planning and is considered one of the world's premier museums dedicated to America's Indigenous People.

FUN FACT: Combos Snack Foods once named OKC the manliest city in America. ✖

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

WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY



OKC Convention Center and Skyline-Scissortail Park

Courtesy OKC CVB

FIRST STOP

To plan your visit, stop at Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 123 Park Ave. VisitOKC.com

OVERHOLSER MANSION

Tour this 11,700-square-foot home built by Henry Overholser, father of Oklahoma City. See original furniture and remarkable architectural design. A year after its 1903 opening, the *Daily Oklahoman* called it an ennobling work of art. OverholserMansion.org

END OF THE TRAIL

This magnificent statue depicts a weary Indian slouched on a horse. He holds a spear to show the fight still in him. Artist James Earle Fraser, whose father was among the men sent to recover the bodies of Custer's men, said it represented Indians being pushed off their land all the way to the Pacific. NationalCowboyMuseum.org

FOOTSTEPS OF THE BOOMERS

On the 89er Trail, read 28 historical markers describing downtown's growth after the Land Run. During the town's first winter in 1889, the tallest building was a five-story grain elevator. 89erTrail.com

MUSEUMS GALORE

The American Banjo Museum displays 400 instruments, the world's largest collection. Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum remembers the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building. Ride an historic coach at Oklahoma Railway Museum. Discover the history of the people who define the Sooner State's history from its first days and its Native people to the present at the Oklahoma Historical Society's Oklahoma History Center. VisitOKC.com



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THE ROADS LESS

Adventures await along the West's



TRAVELED

BY STUART ROSEBROOK

byways and highways to history.



As the first rays of the morning sun greet us just over the horizon as we head west on a two-lane blacktop, the anticipation of the day's adventures and roads ahead fill our minds with curiosity, excitement and joy. The morning might have started on a major interstate, but soon the route has taken us off the super highway into the heart of the West. We'll travel along scenic roads to historic sites, welcoming small towns and regional museums that showcase local history, artifacts and art that can only be enjoyed along the roads less traveled.

***So what are you waiting for?
Pack your bags, load your car and hit the road!
You're burning daylight!***

Route 66, Mohave County, Arizona

Courtesy the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress



Tumalo Falls, Deschutes National Forest, Bend, Oregon

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archives, Library of Congress

The Pacific Coast

Oregon Trail Country

Escape the big city and experience the beauty of the Beaver State east of the Cascades.

Oregon is one of the most diverse and beautiful Western states, and its highways and byways are perfect in all seasons for the adventurous traveler. Oregonians will tell you that “if you don’t like the weather now, wait an hour and it will change,” which is the truth. Whether traveling in the summer or winter, spring or fall, driving the scenic roads of the Beaver State will lead the Oregon road tripper to quickly discover that it is an amazing state to drive with some of the most scenic vistas, geography and byways in the Pacific Northwest.

Many will start the tour in the city’s largest metropolis, Portland. This is ideal because the

Historic Columbia River Highway from Portland immediately takes you off the interstate and allows the driver a slow, beautiful drive through one of North America’s natural wonders, the Columbia River Gorge, to The Dalles.

Take your time and enjoy Oregon’s heritage and scenic beauty on this round trip from Portland to Oregon east of the Cascades.

KEY STOPS:

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 visit the Oregon Historical Society and Powell’s Books before heading south to tour the capital city, Salem.

Oregon City: A great side trip on the way to or from Portland, The Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City is the official Western end point of the Oregon Trail.

Hood River: At this wonderful destination city on the banks of the Columbia River, visitors enjoy the arts, food, wine, brewpubs and the scenic beauty of the foothills of Mount Hood. Don’t miss a ride on the Mount Hood Railroad.

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.

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.

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 Old Chief Joseph Monument.

Baker City: A charming, historic Oregon Trail city invites visitors to 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.

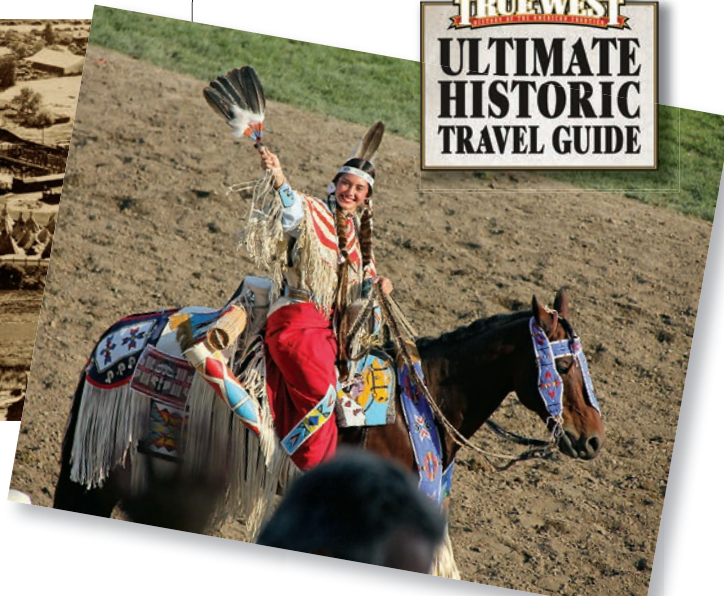
Bend: At this gateway city to recreation in the Cascades and the Deschutes River, don’t miss a tour of the High Desert Museum and the Deschutes Historical Museum.

Websites: TravelOregon.com, NPS.com and FS.USDA.gov



Pendleton Round-Up

Round-Up photo courtesy Pendleton CVB/Historic Photo of Pendleton Round-Up Courtesy OSU Special Collections, c. 1915



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The Silver Trail

Explore Nevada on its back country roads to its historic mining towns.

Anyone who has dreamed of traveling to Nevada beyond the bright lights of the Las Vegas strip and the casinos of Reno, will discover the scenic byways and highways of the Silver State lead the traveler down long, lonely high-desert highways with the greatest vistas to some of the most historic mining towns in the West.

Carson City is the perfect place to start an adventurous round trip of historic silver camps. The state capital is just a short drive from Reno, which has a major airport that is crowded with skiers going to the Nevada-California ski resorts near Lake Tahoe, California.

The museums of Carson City provide an excellent introduction to the state's history and heritage and a long weekend in the nation's smallest capital city gives the visitor time to visit the nearby historic towns of Virginia City, Genoa and Dayton.

The Nevada adventurer should be prepared for extremes in weather depending on the season, and be aware of the long distances between communities on U.S. Highways 50, 6 and 95.

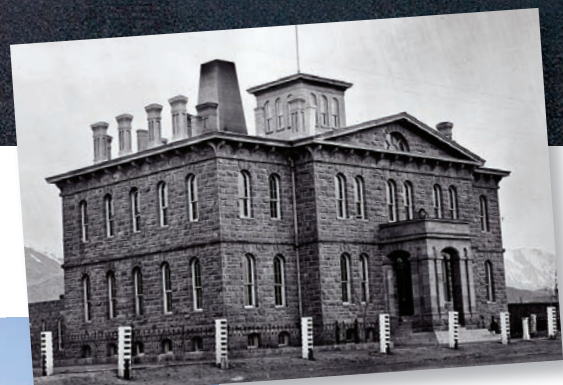
KEY STOPS:

Carson City: The historic capital city of Nevada is the perfect place to kick off a road trip across the Silver State. Don't miss a tour of the Nevada State Museum in the old U.S. Mint building, the Nevada State Railroad Museum and the state capitol grounds.

Virginia City: Stay and visit the historic, mother-lode boomtown of the Comstock Lode. With extra time, take a tour of nearby towns Genoa, Dayton and Fort Churchill State Historic Park.

U.S. Highway 50, "The Loneliest Highway in America," Nevada

Courtesy TravelNevada



Nevada State Museum in U.S. Mint Building, Carson City, Nevada

Modern Photo Courtesy TravelNevada/Historic Image Inset Courtesy Library of Congress, c. 1930s

Fallon: At this gateway to historic U.S. 50, visit the Churchill County History Museum, Fort Churchill and the Pony Express sites between Fallon and Austin, home of Stokes Castle.

Eureka: Known as the "Friendliest Town on the Loneliest Road in America" the former mining boomtown's 19th-century historic district is worth the stop. Make time to visit the Eureka Opera House, Raine's Market and Wildlife Museum, the Jackson House Hotel and the Eureka Sentinel Museum.

Ely: A National Historic Landmark, the Nevada Northern Railway is one of the finest in the United States. Passengers can sign up for a special hands-on "Be the Engineer" program in which they drive the heritage train for two hours through Robinson Canyon toward the Old Ruth Mining district.

Lunar Crater Volcanic Field National Natural Landmark: Astronauts trained here in preparation for the moon landing; beware of high summer temperatures when on a tour along the Lunar Crater Backcountry Byway.



Comstock Museum, Virginia City, Nevada

Modern Photo Courtesy TravelNevada/
Historic Image Courtesy NVPL Digital Collection

Tonopah: The great silver strike that fueled the growth of this mining camp over a century ago makes this town a history-lovers paradise with the fully restored Mizpah and Belveda Hotels, the Tonopah Mining Museum and a walkable historic downtown.

Websites: TravelNevada.com, NPS.gov and FS.USDA.gov

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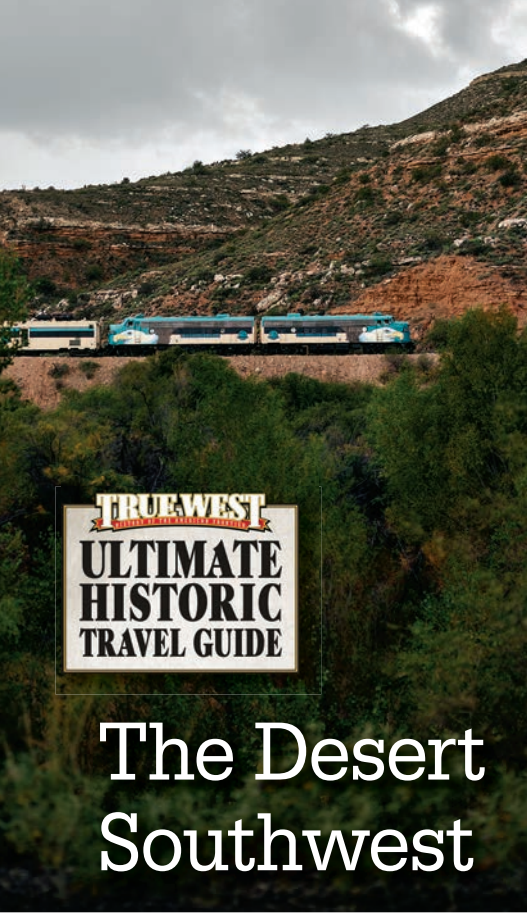


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The Desert Southwest

Verde River Train, Clarkdale, Arizona

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

Explore Historic Northern Arizona *Small towns, scenic highways and historic sites await the adventurous traveler.*

Arizona is a world-renowned destination for scenic road trips, and the options are many for the adventurous explorers looking to enjoy beautiful byways that lead to historic sites, great museums, small towns and national parks.

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 to enjoy the scenic state routes, like 89A, which switchbacks up and over the mountains through Jerome, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon.

Cottonwood's downtown district with boutique hotels, restaurants, bars and antique shops is a great overnight or weekend getaway. Go fishing at Deadhorse State Park or canoeing on the Verde River.

Check in with the Prescott, Coconino and Kaibab National forest ranger stations on the forests' back roads and campgrounds.

Once in Flagstaff, enjoy the walkable historic downtown with its local shops, restaurants and bars. Spend a day or two before heading west on I-40 to Williams, one of the great railway and Route 66 towns in America.

To return to Prescott, continue west on I-40 to Ash Fork and a beautiful drive south on Arizona 89 to the mile-high city known best as "everyone's hometown."

KEY STOPS:

Wickenburg: Don't miss a tour of Desert Caballeros Museum and the Hassayampa River Preserve.

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.



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Governor's Mansion, Sharlot Hall
Museum, Prescott, Arizona

Photo by Stuart Rosebrook



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 spectacular San Francisco Peaks rise above the city, which is home to Northern Arizona University, Museum of Northern Arizona, Lowell Observatory, Walnut Canyon, Sunset Crater and Wupatki national monuments.
Williams: The historic gateway to the Grand Canyon, Williams is a perfect place to enjoy a weekend along old Route 66. Take the Grand Canyon Railway to the South Rim and tour Bearizona, a unique wildlife park. Browse the local shops and try the restaurants on Main Street and then take a hike on nearby Bill Williams Mountain on the Kaibab National Forest.



Historic Hassayampa Inn, Prescott, Arizona
Hassayampa Hotel Courtesy Prescott CVB/Historic Prescott Courtesy True West Archives

Sidetrip: Route 66, Seligman to Kingman: 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 (and filling up the gas tank) before following 66 to Peach Springs, Hackberry, Valentine and the Mohave County Seat, Kingman. If driving from Las Vegas via Kingman, check in with the Kingman Visitor Center before heading out on Route 66.
Websites: VisitArizona.com, NPS.gov, FS.USDA.gov

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Fort Union National Monument, Watrous, New Mexico

Courtesy NPS.gov



The Goodnight-Loving Trail

From Texas to New Mexico, discover the heritage of one of the greatest cattle trails.

Travelers to Texas and New Mexico quickly learn that the vistas and the roads go on forever in the two Southwestern states. The Lone Star State and the Land of Enchantment share a great deal of history and heritage (combined they are the size of some small European countries or four or five New England states), and for lovers of the American West they are destinations to return to again and again. A great way to discover Texas and New Mexico from the ground up is to retrace one of the great trails that helped build the two states after the Civil War, one of which is the Goodnight-Loving Trail from Texas to New Mexico.

The Goodnight-Loving Trail was founded in 1866 by Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving and started in Young County west of Fort Worth. The two entrepreneurial cattlemen seized the opportunity to drive cattle from north-central Texas to New Mexico's Pecos River Valley. Soon the Texans discovered a need for cattle farther north in Colorado and beyond and drove herds north all the way to Cheyenne, Wyoming. (Larry McMurtry loosely based *Lonesome Dove* on these two Texans.)

Following the Goodnight-Loving Trail is definitely not a day trip, unless you do segments of it from where you live, so make sure to schedule at least a week to 10 days to explore the many historic towns and sites along the highways and byways between Fort Worth, Texas, and Raton, New Mexico.

The Charles and Mary Ann Goodnight Historical Center, Claude, Texas (below)

Courtesy Goodnight Historical Center



KEY STOPS:

TEXAS

Fort Worth: The Historic Fort Worth Stockyards is a great place to start a tour across Texas and New Mexico visiting the historic sites of the Goodnight-Loving Cattle Trail.

Fort Belknap: Built in 1851, and rebuilt near its original foundations in the 1930s, the fort is maintained as a museum near Newcastle. The isolated Army base was home to the 2nd Cavalry when the stage line was in operation between 1858 and 1861.

Abilene: In 1881, the city was founded at a new railhead and became a major shipping point for cattle. Don't miss a tour of Frontier Texas!, one of the premier Western heritage museums in the Lone Star State.

Fort Chadbourne: The Army opened the post in 1852 to protect travelers and citizens living on the Texas frontier, and it served as a station for the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. Today, the fort is a Texas State Historical Site, with a visitor center, museum and six restored buildings.

Claude: Take a side trip to Claude to visit the Charles and Mary Goodnight Ranch State Historic Site.

Bandera: Don't miss a chance to visit the self-declared "Cowboy Capital of the World" located in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.

San Angelo: This town is home to Fort Concho National Historic Landmark and the long-term home of Western writer Elmer Kelton. Don't miss a day walking through historic downtown and a visit to the Cactus Bookshop.

Fort Stockton: Established in the spring of 1859 adjacent to Comanche Springs, Fort Stockton became a key post on the southern plains of West Texas. Schedule time to tour Historic Fort Stockton, the Annie Riggs Memorial Museum and the Mesa Vineyard & Tasting Room.

Horsehead Crossing: A historic marker tells the story of the key crossing of the unpredictable river 17 miles north of Girvin, via U.S. 385/67 to FM 11 W toward Imperial to Horse Head Road, which dead-ends at the marker and the river.

Pecos: The historic West Texas town on the Goodnight-Loving Trail is located on the west bank of the Pecos River and has one of the best local history museums in the region. Pecos is also home to the West of the Pecos Rodeo, first held in 1883.

Fort Davis: Fort Davis National Historic Site, southwest of Pecos and Fort Stockton, is the best-preserved Texas frontier fort in the Lone Star State and offers living history events throughout the year.



Regional Cavalry Competition,
Fort Concho, Texas

Courtesy San Angelo CVB

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NEW MEXICO

Carlsbad: Staying on U.S. 285 north from Pecos, take a side trip to Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

Lincoln: Staying on U.S. 285 north through Artesia and Roswell, take a side trip to Lincoln on U.S. 380. Explore the historic sites in the town that Billy the Kid made famous in the Lincoln County Cattle War.

Fort Sumner: The Army needed beef to feed the Navajos at Bosque Redondo, and Oliver Loving and Charles Goodnight drove their herd of 2,000 head of cattle to Fort Sumner in the summer of 1866. Don't miss the grave of Billy the Kid and the Fort Sumner Historic Site.

Historic Courthouse, Lincoln, New Mexico

Courtesy New Mexico Office of Tourism

Las Vegas: In 1866, Oliver Loving pushed the trail north from Fort Sumner and followed the Pecos north to Las Vegas. The Historic Plaza Hotel is an excellent place to stay while enjoying the city's history and heritage.

Fort Union National Monument: The Goodnight-Loving Trail went north to the fort and would have been a good way-stop as it was built at the crossroads of the Mountain and Cimmaron Cutoff branches of the Santa Fe Trail.

Historic Las Vegas Plaza Hotel

Courtesy New Mexico Office of Tourism


Raton: A key Santa Fe Trail town, Raton is the gateway city to Raton Pass and the mountain branch of the famous transcontinental trail, which in 2021-22 is being celebrated in communities along the route from Missouri to New Mexico.

Websites: VisitTexas.com, TPWD.Texas.gov, NewMexico.org, NPS.gov and FS.USDA.gov

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Colorado conjures up romantic visions of the Rocky Mountains, snowcapped peaks on the horizon, Western mining towns, high country parklands and endless plains and valleys with unmatched vistas. Many spend a lifetime exploring the mountainous state, driving its scenic roads, visiting its historic towns, hiking its peaks and fishing its world-class trout streams. For the Western tourist seeking a new way to see Colorado, a great route begins in the southwestern

corner of the San Juan Mountains and crisscrosses the state on scenic highways over numerous high-elevation mountain passes to the state's capital city of Denver.

While the route from Durango to Denver can be driven in a day, a week to 10 days will allow time to savor the historic sites (and sights) and stay overnight or for a weekend in some of Colorado's most picturesque communities along the way. And, if you like combining your love of scenic byways with mining and railroad history, then the mountainous drive from the alpine San Juans across the Continental Divide to Rocky Mountain National Park will never be forgotten.

U.S. 550, the Million Dollar Highway, Silverton to Ouray, Colorado

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

KEY STOPS:

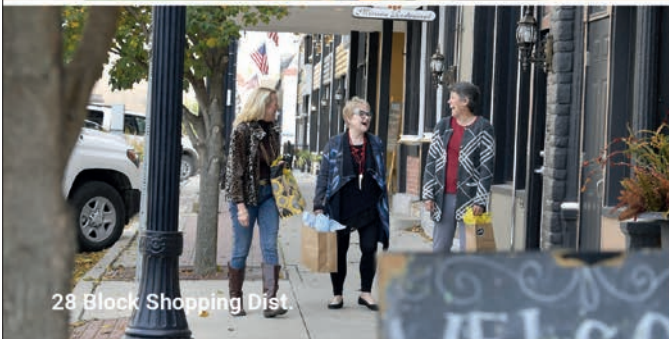
Durango: Book a room at the historic Strater Hotel and immerse yourself in the lively downtown atmosphere of the mountain town. Book in advance a round trip on the Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad for an unforgettable experience.

Silverton: Whether arriving by train or car (or on foot if an adventurous backpacker), Silverton never disappoints. Stroll the historic mining town and spend the weekend at an elevation of 9,318 feet.

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Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad near Silverton, Colorado

Modern Image Courtesy DSNRR/Historic Image Courtesy Library of Congress, c. 1899

Ouray: Enjoy the historic downtown, local mine tours and then a soak in the famous hot springs.
Lake City: If you like high mountain passes and narrow scenic roads, then don't miss a chance to drive (carefully) the backroads from Silverton or Ouray to Lake City and its National Historic District. Ask locally about road conditions and closures, especially in winter.
Gunnison: From this gateway to recreation in the Rockies, take the back roads to Crested Butte and the Ruby Range. To reach Lake City from Gunnison take state highway 149 south.

Leadville: In the highest city in America at 10,151 feet, enjoy the historic downtown and a spectacular ride on the Leadville, Colorado & Southern Railroad.
Georgetown: If you love picturesque Colorado mountain towns and railroads, book a stay in town and take a ride on the historic Georgetown Loop Railroad.
Rocky Mountain National Park: A highlight of the cross-state tour, the popular national park has created a reservation system for visitors. Check with the park for current restrictions.

Golden: This town is home to the Colorado School of Mines, Coors Beer, the Colorado State Railroad Museum and Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave.
Denver: The state capital is home to the Colorado History Center, Denver Art Museum and the great archives at the Denver Library. Denver is a great place to start or end a trip to the Rocky Mountain State.
Websites: Colorado.com, NPS.gov and FS.USDA.gov

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Cody Stampede Rodeo, Cody, Wyoming (left)

Courtesy Wyoming Tourism

Mountain states, visitors will discover pioneer and Indian culture, endless vistas of snowcapped mountains and scenic byways. Visitors who immerse themselves in the communities they tour will quickly discover the two states' 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.

A hallmark of Wyoming and Montana travel are the long, beautiful drives with scenic byways in almost every direction off the interstates.

KEY STOPS:

WYOMING

Buffalo: The historic community is home to the famous Occidental Hotel, a favorite of many famous and infamous guests, including Owen Wister and Butch Cassidy. Tour the Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum and take a picnic up the scenic Crazy Woman Canyon Road.

Kaycee: If time allows, take a side trip south from Buffalo to visit the TA Ranch and eat at the

High Lonesome

A dramatic tour of northern Wyoming and southern Montana makes an unforgettable trip.

Internationally, Wyoming and Montana are synonymous with the Wild West. From their historic towns of Buffalo, Sheridan and Cody,

Wyoming, to Montana's Red Lodge, Billings and Little Bighorn to the natural wonders of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks, the Cowboy and Big Sky states offer a firsthand Western experience.

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Beartooth All-American Road, U.S. Highway 212, Montana

Courtesy Donnie Sexton, Montana Office of Tourism



Invasion Bar and Restaurant. Ask locally for directions to Hole-in-the-Wall on BLM lands.

Big Horn Mountains: From Buffalo, take scenic U.S. 16 via Ten Sleep to Worland, a crossroads community on U.S. 16-20/S.R. that leads north to Greybull or south to Thermopolis.

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.

Sheridan: The largest city near the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Sheridan is a perfect headquarters at the end of the two-state tour in which to relax and enjoy the historic Sheridan Inn, downtown's shopping district, including King's Ropes and the Mint Bar, the Brinton Museum in Big Horn and Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site.

MONTANA

Beartooth All-American Highway: From Cody, Wyoming, take state 296 toward Yellowstone

National Park's northeast entrance at Silver Gate (closed in winter) to U.S. 212, the Beartooth Highway. The spectacular mountain route is considered the most beautiful highway in America.

Red Lodge: The Montana gateway to the Beartooth Highway, the quaint downtown is a great place to spend a day exploring. Don't miss the Carbon County Historical Society & Museum.

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.

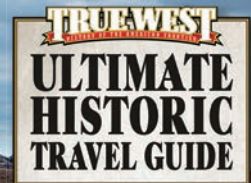
Little Bighorn National Historic Battlefield, Crow Agency: Schedule enough time to visit the most significant battlefield in the Western United States, including its museum, cemetery, cavalry and Indian monuments and to take a self-guided driving tour of the solemn park.

Garryowen: The Custer Battlefield Museum is a must stop on a tour of southeastern Montana.

Rosebud Battlefield State Park: Go east from the Crow Agency on U.S. 212 to Busby, and south on county 314, to the site of the key battle that preceded Little Bighorn.

Websites: TravelWyoming.com, VisitMT.com, NPS.com and FS.USDA.gov

Northern Prairie and Plains



The Wondrous Western Lands of the Dakotas

A tour of the mountains, badlands and parks of the two states is a natural road trip.

An extended tour of South and North Dakota's western quarters is breathtaking from the Black Hills and Badlands National Park in the south to the Little Missouri River Badlands and Theodore Roosevelt National Park in the north. U.S. Highway 85 is your main highway between the two scenic destinations with beautiful, lightly populated high plains—and unique historic destinations—between them. Don't miss a

chance to visit the geographic center of all 50 American states, just 20 miles north of Belle Fourche

Once joined together as the Dakota Territory, South Dakota and North Dakota, two distinctive states, have many historic sites, communities and natural wonders. Travelers crossing the high plains west of Minnesota will traverse the two sister states on one of the major interstates that bisect them east to west. But a tour of the western quarter of each state, beginning in South Dakota's Black Hills and Badlands north to North Dakota's Badlands and Theodore



Elkhorn Ranch Unit, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, North Dakota

TRNP Photo Courtesy Laura Thomas, NPS.gov/T. Roosevelt, True West Archives, c. 1885



Main Street Square, Rapid City, South Dakota
 Courtesy South Dakota Tourism

Roosevelt National Park, will prove to be one of the most enjoyable and revealing road trips across the Dakotas.

Travelers who choose to make the trip north from the Black Hills should schedule two weeks for their tour—at a minimum—and possibly more, if after reaching the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, the Big Sky country of Montana harkens a lengthier trip.

KEY STOPS:

SOUTH DAKOTA

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.

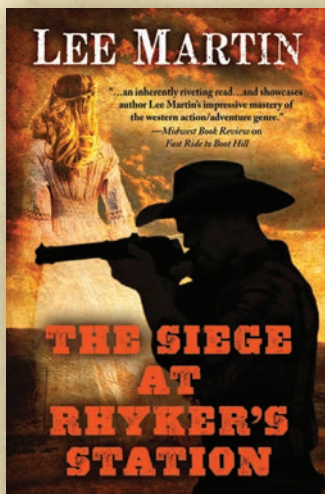
Lead: Looking for a little less crowded atmosphere than Deadwood, but still in a historic city in the North Hills? Try Lead, just south on U.S. 85 from the famous boomtown. Enjoy downtown and its Black Hills Mining Museum adjacent to the Homestake Mine.

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—the High Plains Western Heritage Center. When returning to Deadwood, take the long way on U.S. 14A up Spearfish Canyon to experience

LEE MARTIN

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



LAST SHOOT OUT (new title for movie version of Lee's novel *The Siege at Rhyker's Station*) has a release date of 12/3/2021. "Bruce Dern's Last Shoot Out trailer" at etonline.com

It was filmed in the mountains of Southern California. in November of 2020. Stars include Brock Harris, Skylar Witte, 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."

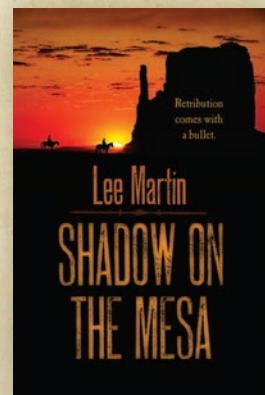
THE DESPERATE RIDERS, which Michael Feifer filmed in Tennessee, will follow. Stars include Vanessa Evigan, Drew Waters, Sam Ashby, Cowboy Troy, Victoria Pratt, Rob Mayes, and with Trace Adkins and Tom Berenger.

"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."

The novel for this film will soon be published.

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 26 Westerns at **AMAZON** or wherever books are sold. Many are on audio with **BOOKS IN MOTION**.



Main Street, Deadwood, South Dakota

Courtesy South Dakota Tourism

one of the most beautiful scenic highways (take your time) in the Black Hills.

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 and has a beautiful monument dedicated to the geographic center of the U.S.

Custer: A gateway city to the South Hills, the town is a great place to stay while touring the scenic region, Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial and Custer State Park, 14 miles east on U.S. 16A. While in the South Hills, don't miss a drive on spectacular State Route 87, the Needles Highway.

Slim Buttes Battlefield Monument: East of Buffalo near Reva on State Route 20, a monument at the site commemorates the U.S. Army's battle with the Sioux on September 9, 1876.

NORTH DAKOTA

Bowman: Schedule time to tour the Pioneer Trails Regional Museum, just across the border from South Dakota.

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 and 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.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park: The vast and wild park protects the badlands of the Little Missouri River. Home to wild horses and bison, the park is divided into three units, with the most developed visitor sites at the South Unit. Fans of the cowboy president should take the time to visit his ranch site on the Elkhorn Ranch Unit.

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.

Websites: TravelSD.com, NDTourism.com, NPS.gov and FS.USDA.gov

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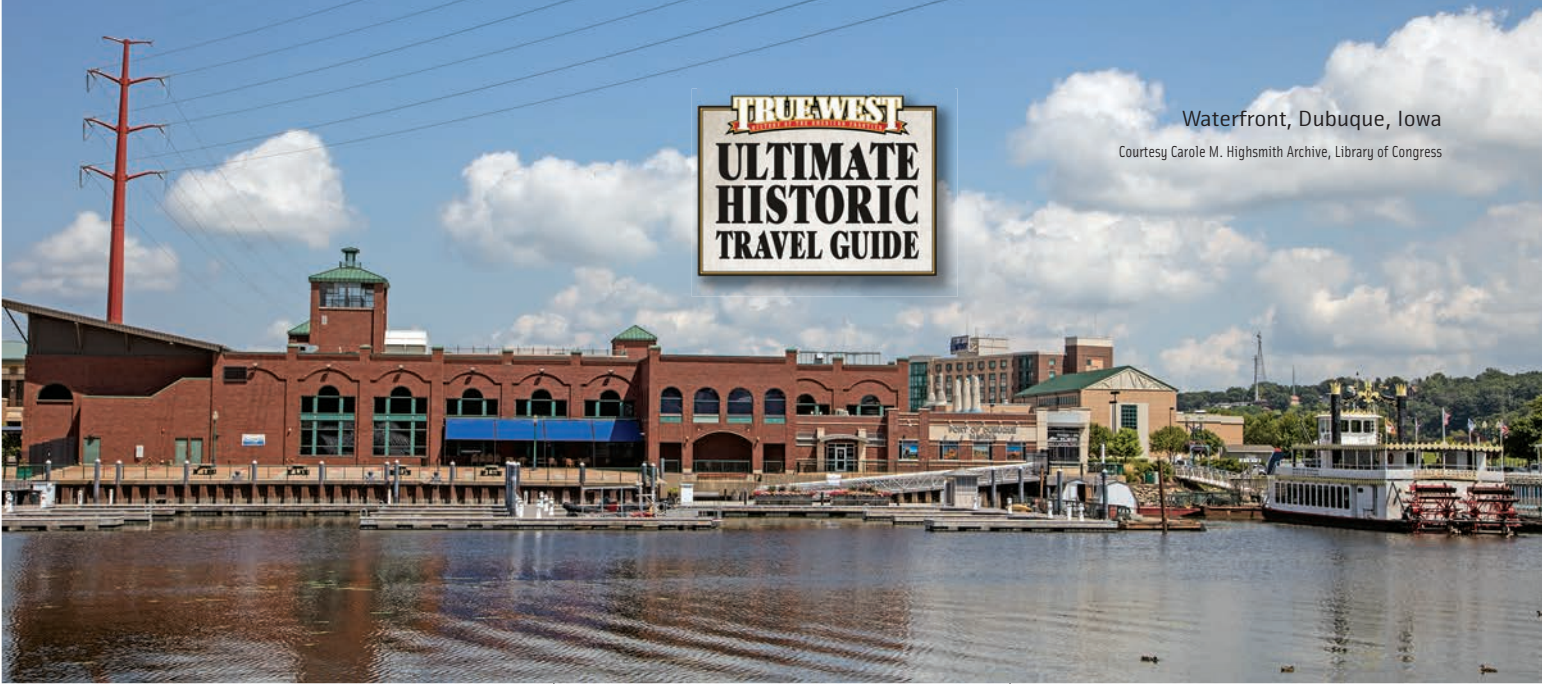
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TRUWEST
ULTIMATE
HISTORIC
TRAVEL GUIDE

Waterfront, Dubuque, Iowa
 Courtesy Carole M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress



The Mississippi's Great River Road
Travel from St. Louis to Minneapolis-St. Paul and discover the heritage of America's greatest river.

For many the West begins at the Mississippi River, but while national trail tours focus mostly on routes that go east to west (or vice versa), the intrepid traveler curious about the history of the great Mississippi will want to schedule a tour from St. Louis to Minneapolis-St. Paul.

The northern half of the great river will inspire rereading of Mark Twain's classics and establish a greater understanding of the importance of the river to North American history from ancient history to the present.

The Great River Road National Scenic Byway from St. Louis weaves back and forth between Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, but most of this tour will

remain on the western bank of the river in Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota. For many, driving the scenic byway is a lifetime dream, but doing it in segments, state by state or north and south, makes it more manageable as there are so many stops and towns along the way to visit on the legendary river, the longest and largest continental river system of North America.

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Reenactment of Northfield Bank Raid, Northfield, Minnesota
 Courtesy Northfield Historical Society



MARK TWAIN - STEAMBOAT PILOT

In 1857 young SAMUEL CLEMENS began to learn the trade of steambot pilot. In 1859 he became a licensed pilot on the Lower Mississippi River. When the piloting career ended with the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Clemens went west to Nevada Territory where he first met the boy named MARK TWAIN. In 1863 while serving on the Historical Enterprise in Virginia City, Clemens took the name "Mark Twain" from the river sounding that indicated 12 feet of water which was safe for navigation.

This statue was given to the City of Hannibal by the Sherman Family
 Fort Hannibal, Illinois, May 4, 2019

KEY STOPS:

MISSOURI

St. Louis: The Gateway Arch National Park is a bucket list item for anyone who visits the historical city at the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. Stay a long weekend and enjoy the food, culture, music and history of the Western gateway city.

Hannibal: Mark Twain's hometown, what more can be said? Stay a couple days and explore the river and the sites that inspired the writer's greatest works.

IOWA

Fort Madison: Just north of the Missouri border, the 1808 Army outpost was the first fort on the Upper Mississippi River and the northernmost defense during the War of 1812.

Quad Cities: Bettendorf and Davenport, Iowa, and Rock Island and Moline, Illinois, make up the famous four river towns. Spend a long weekend exploring; the Rock Island Arsenal Museum is closed for renovations until the summer of 2022.

LeClaire: The Mississippi River port city was home to the best riverboat captains who could guide steamboats through the area's treacherous rapids.

Dubuque: Once one of the largest industrial cities on the Upper Mississippi, the crossroads port city is now home to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. Dyersville and the "Field of Dreams" is a short drive west on U.S. 20.

Guttenberg to New Albin: Take your time exploring the small river towns and communities of Iowa's Mississippi River Bluff Country, including Guttenberg, Marquette, McGregor, Effigy Mounds National Monument, Harper's Ferry, Lansing and New Albin.

MINNESOTA

Winona: In this beautiful river town, visit the Minnesota Marine Art Museum before driving north to the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge and National Eagle Center in Wabasha.

Hastings: Relax and enjoy the river town where the St. Croix meets the Mississippi River.

Northfield: Every September the historical society celebrates the town's defeat of the James and Younger Gang. For Western history enthusiasts, a side trip to the town should not be missed.

Minneapolis-St. Paul: Like St. Louis, one of the major port cities of the Mississippi, the Twin Cities' cultural sites, museums, natural wonders and state capitol in St. Paul make it a great place to conclude a tour of the Upper Mississippi River.

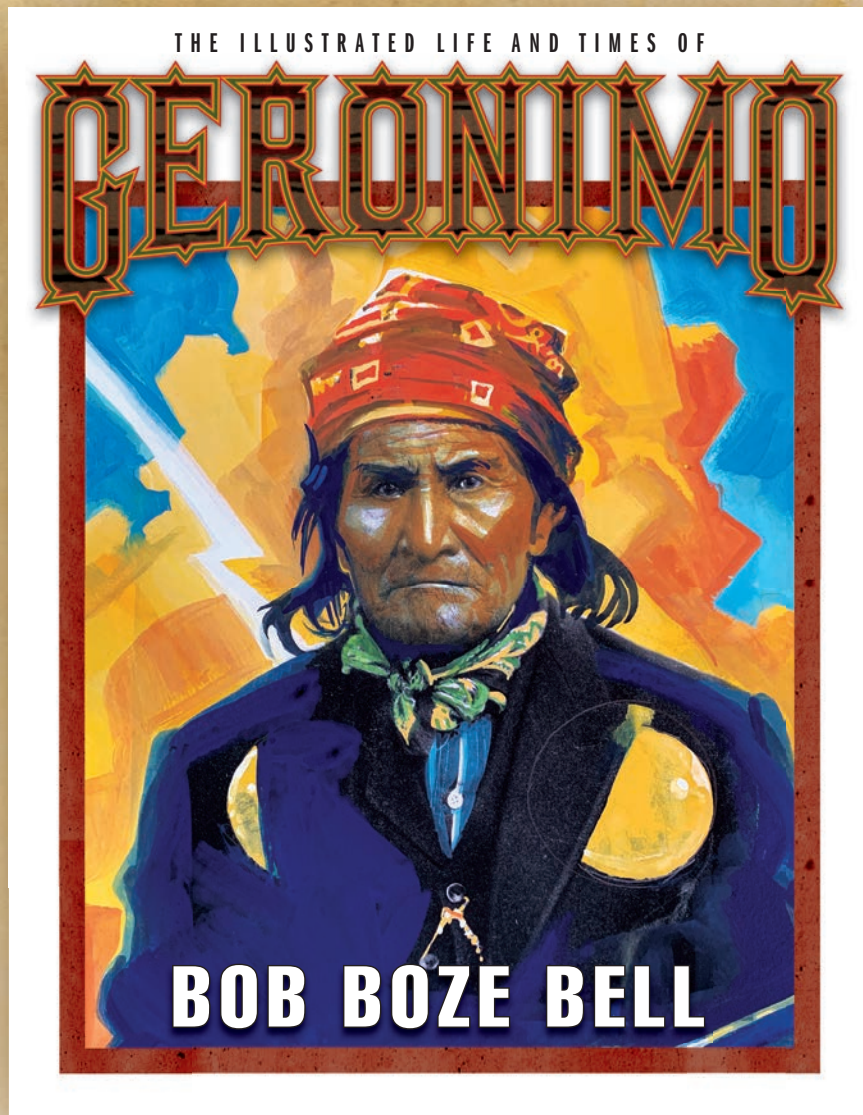
Websites: VisitMo.com, Travellowa.com, ExploreMinnesota.com, NPS.gov, FS.USDA.gov, FHWA.dot.gov, ExperienceMississippiRiver.com

Mark Twain Monument, Hannibal, Missouri

Photos Courtesy Library of Congress

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Southern Prairie and Plains

Following the Guidon

Discover the history of frontier Army life in Kansas on a border-to-border tour.

The first settlements across the Missouri River began in the Kansas Territory in 1827 with the founding of Fort Leavenworth, which will celebrate its 195th anniversary in 2022. Leavenworth was the first stop across the river from Missouri on the Santa Fe Trail, and after the Civil War it remained a key crossroads for travelers in all directions. With the development of railroads and homesteading in the Sunflower State after 1865, the Army began building key outposts and military roads across the state to protect railroaders, settlers and stage lines. In addition to Leavenworth, Fort Riley, adjacent to Manhattan, is still an active Army base.

Today, intrepid travelers can follow the guidon west from Leavenworth and tour a

series of historic military sites that are maintained as living history centers, museums and in some cases, such as Fort Dodge, as a Veterans' Home. During the bicentennial year of the Santa Fe Trail, a tour of the national trail while following the Army's trail across the state will be double the fun.

Travelers unfamiliar with Kansas should know the state's geography changes from Eastern woodlands and prairie through the Flint Hills to the Great Plains as you travel west. Weather can be harsh in the winter and unpredictable in the spring and summer, but the unending vistas of undulating plains and fields and quaint, welcoming Kansas towns will bring visitors back to the state again and again.

KEY STOPS:

Leavenworth: The historic city grew around the

Kansas Plains, Baxter County, Great Bend

Courtesy Kansas Tourism

fort which was America's key outpost on the Missouri frontier when it was established in 1827. The thriving Missouri River city is a jumping-off place to start multiple tours of the Sunflower State, but make sure to spend a few days to enjoy the city's culture and tour Fort Leavenworth's museum and Buffalo Soldier Monument.

Lecompton: Founded in 1854, the political birthplace of the Civil War is a Kansas and national landmark. Tour the historic sites, including the Territorial Capital Museum and discover the town's importance to American history.

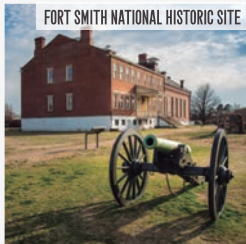
Topeka: The state capital is a city made for museum-lovers; don't miss a tour of the Kansas Museum of History.

Manhattan: Fort Riley—the Citadel of the Frontier

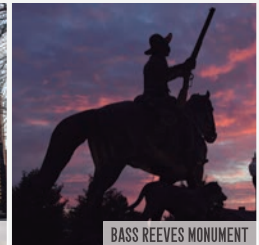
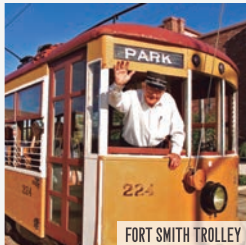
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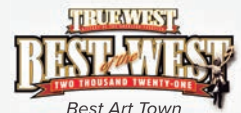
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Buffalo Soldier Commemorative Area,
Fort Leavenworth

Courtesy Kansas Tourism

West—was founded in 1853. Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry was organized at the fort in 1866. The fort has three history sites open to the public: the Custer House, the Cavalry and First Infantry Division museums.

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.

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 on 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. Learn about the short-lived Fort Zarah at the local Barton County Historical Society Museum and Village.

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

Fort Wallace: The fort is the westernmost Army

outpost of post-Civil War frontier Kansas. A historic cemetery is maintained at the Fort Wallace Museum on U.S. 40 east of Sharon Springs.

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 Cowntowns" is a great place to stay for a long vacation and enjoy all the local historical attractions, including the acclaimed Boot Hill Museum.

Websites: TravelKS.com, NPS.gov

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A Sea of Grass

Discover the wonders of Nebraska in a tour
across the Cornhusker state.

For the adventurous traveler a drive across Nebraska's Sand Hills promises endless vistas and lots of Old West history.

From Omaha to Grand Island, the landscape will begin to change along the Platte River, but rather than continue west on the traditional route across the state on I-80/U.S. 30—which parallels the original Overland Trail (Oregon, California, Mormon Pioneer, Pony Express and Transcontinental Railroad)—take Nebraska's State Highway 2 for 370 miles across the heart of the Cornhusker State's awe-inspiring Sand Hills to the northwest corner community of Crawford and its neighbor Chadron. Along the way, the Great Plains route will inspire the driver with magnificent vistas, long, quiet stretches of highway and inviting, small ranching and farming communities.

Enjoy the beauty of Nebraska's heartland, and you will fall in love forever with the Sand Hills, the Great Plains and the small towns along the way.

KEY STOPS:

Omaha: Nebraska's largest city is a great destination for a long weekend. Schedule time to tour the Durham and Joslyn Art museums. A perfect place to start a tour of the Cornhusker State.

Lincoln: Here you'll find University of Nebraska and the Nebraska Historical Society.

Grand Island: Don't miss a tour of Grand Island's exceptional Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer and a tour of its living history center. The Platte River city is a great overnight before heading west on Nebraska's Highway 2.

Broken Bow: Schedule time to tour the historic town, the largest city between Omaha and Crawford, and kick off your drive on the Sandhills Journey National Scenic Byway at the highway's visitor center. Also, don't miss the Custer County Museum.

Scott Tower: This unique roadside rest has a tower that overlooks the Nebraska National Forest and grasslands.

Alliance: At this ranching community, learn about local history at the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center.

Nebraska National Forest, Bessey Ranger
District, Halsey, Nebraska

Courtesy Nebraska Tourism



Durham Museum, Omaha, Nebraska

Courtesy Nebraska Tourism

Crawford: At this town, home to Fort Robinson Museum and History Center, book a room or camp and explore the history of the largest state park in northwestern Nebraska. Take time to enjoy a trail ride into the nearby hills.

Chadron: In this gateway city to South Dakota's Black Hills at the crossroads of US 20/385, the Museum of the Fur Trade should not be missed.

Websites: VisitNebraska.com, NPS.gov, FS.USDA.gov

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The editors of *True West* magazine and *True West Ultimate Historic Travel Guide* are dedicated to providing the most recent information on the roads and sites we recommend visiting, but we highly recommend contacting the local chambers, visitors' bureaus and state transportation departments for the latest information on openings, closures and local COVID mask mandates.

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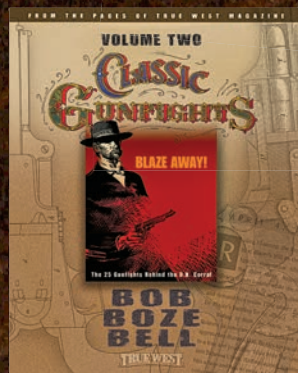
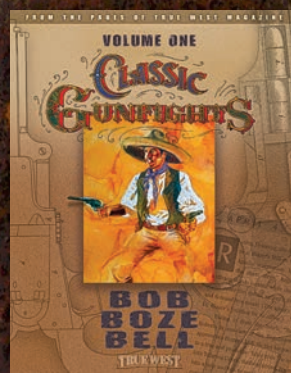
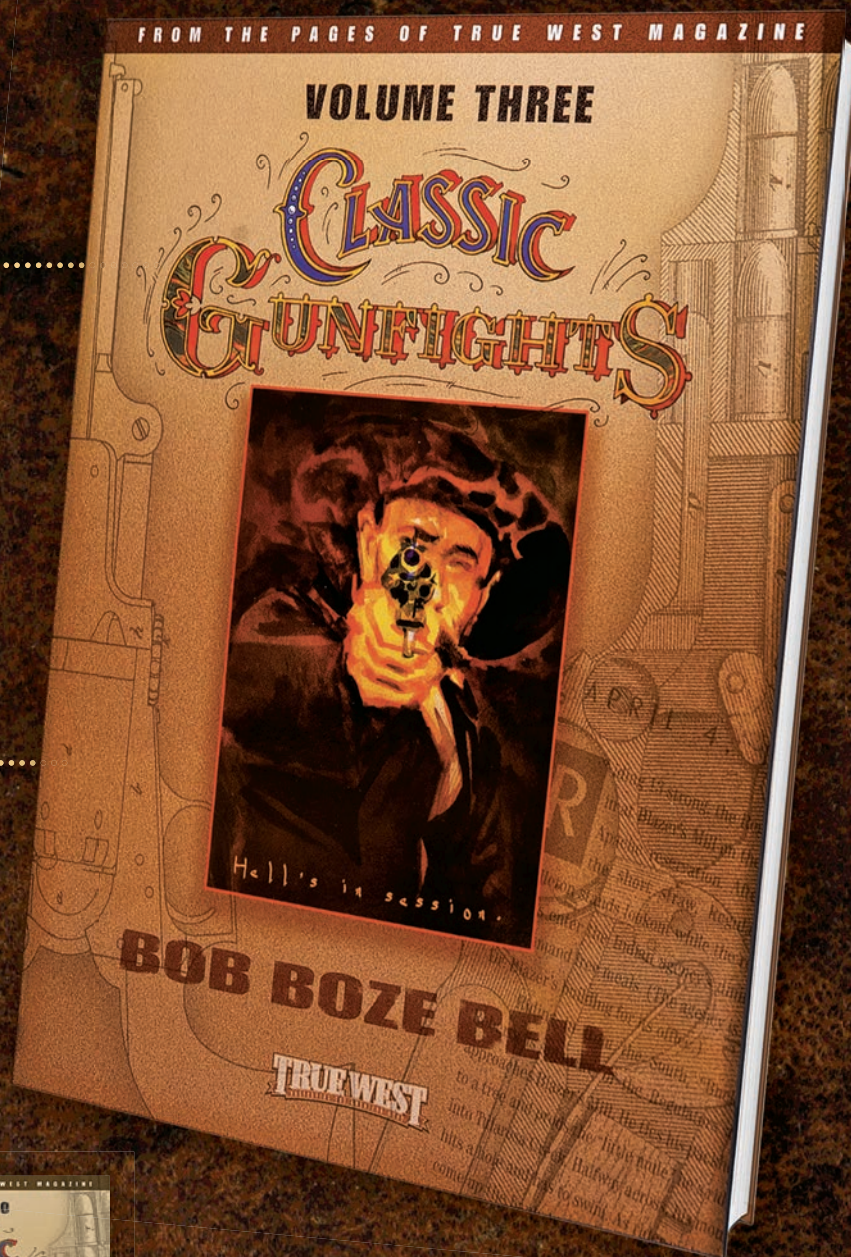
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GUN SHOWS

WACO GUN SHOW

Waco, TX, December 18-19: With more than 600 tables, this show has what you are looking for. The public is invited to buy, sell or trade. 817-732-1194 • PremierGunShows.com

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

Minden, NE, December 1-12: Minden celebrates "106 Years of Lights" with 15,000 lights strung throughout downtown. 308-832-1811 • MindenNE.org

CHRISTMAS IN DODGE CITY: PARADE OF LIGHTS, CHILI COOK-OFF AND MORE

Dodge City, KS, December 1-31: Christmastime is celebrated with several wonderful events. From holiday concerts, tree-lighting ceremonies, light parades, decorating contests and several visits from ol' Saint Nick, there is always something to do during the holiday season in Dodge City. 800-OLD-WEST • VisitDodgeCity.org

CHRISTMAS AT OLD FORT CONCHO

San Angelo, TX, December 3-5: This 1867 fort celebrates the different cultures of Texas with three days full of Christmas cheer, including shopping, living history and much more. 325-481-2646 • FortConcho.com

CHRISTMAS PAST AND PRESENT

Grand Island, NE, December 4-5 & 10-11: This lamp-lit tour of Railroad Town offers live music in a festive celebration of the spirit of Christmas. 308-385-5316 • StuhrMuseum.org

HIGH PLAINS CHRISTMAS

Gering, NE, December 4: The High Plains holiday gathering features hayrides, marshmallow roasts and bonfire cowboy coffee. 308-436-1989 • LegacyOfThePlains.org

PRESCOTT PARADE & COURTHOUSE LIGHTING

Prescott, AZ, December 4: Festive and fun for the entire family, the parade begins at 1 p.m., and the lighting of the courthouse plaza ceremonies begin at 6 p.m. 928-777-1100 • Visit-Prescott.com

WICKENBURG COWBOY CHRISTMAS POETRY GATHERING

Wickenburg, AZ, December 3-4: Visit the Western community for this special heritage event and enjoy poetry, songs and music from some of the best cowboy poets in the Southwest. The Cowboy Reception is on Friday, December 3, and includes beer/wine and appetizers at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum. 928-684-5479 • WickenburgChamber.com

CHRISTMAS LIGHT PARADE & LIGHTING OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE LUMINARIES

Tombstone, AZ, December 11: Enjoy the sound of caroling in the streets, the glow of a thousand twinkling lights and the "Ho-Ho-Ho" of Santa on his sleigh at this great Old West event offering fun for the entire family. 520-457-9317 • TombstoneChamber.com

A FRONTIER ARMY CHRISTMAS AT FORT LARNED

Larned, KS, December 11: The fort's annual Christmas Past celebration features pictures with Santa in the North Officers' quarters, 1860s holiday food in the Barracks Mess Hall, carriage rides around the fort grounds and 19th-century crafts and games for the children. 620-285-6911 • NPS.gov

SANTA'S LIGHTED FOREST AND NORTH POLE ADVENTURE

Georgetown, CO, Through December 24: Enjoy hot cocoa, cookies and candy canes from Santa and his helpers aboard decorated train coaches. 888-456-6777 • GeorgetownLoopRR.com

WICKENBURG CHRISTMAS PARADE OF LIGHTS

Wickenburg, AZ, December 10: Enjoy the beauty of the holiday season amid the glittering lights of the 27th Annual Christmas Parade of Lights "Out Wickenburg Way." Visitors are encouraged to drive through neighborhoods to see the festive Christmas light displays that adorn local homes each year. Floats will fill the streets of downtown on December 10 starting at 6:30 p.m. 928-684-5479 • WickenburgChamber.com

CHRISTMAS AT THE CODY'S

North Platte, NE, December 17-21: Celebrate the holidays in Buffalo Bill Cody's 1886 mansion with caroling and horse-drawn rides. 308-535-0835 • VisitNorthPlatte.com

RODEOS

WRANGLER NATIONAL FINALS RODEO & COUNTRY CHRISTMAS

Las Vegas, NV, December 1-11: The Wrangler NFR is the richest and most prestigious rodeo in the world. It is the culmination of the rodeo season where the top 15 contestants in bareback riding, steer wrestling, team roping, saddle bronc riding, tie-down roping, barrel racing and bull riding compete to take home top honors and their share of a multimillion-dollar purse. 702-260-8605 • NFRExperience.com

TWMag.com:

View Western events on our website.





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. Please always include your name, city and state.

The O.K. Corral, 40-Rod Whiskey and Geronimo

I live and work in Tombstone. I was asked by a visitor, "What is the cultural significance of the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral—other than everyone seems to know about it?" What would you tell them?

*Amy O'Shaughnessy
Tombstone, Arizona*

The meeting of the two factions near the O.K. Corral was to settle an issue of control. Did the citizens of Tombstone and Cochise County want to follow the rule of law or did they prefer a laissez-faire or "hands off" style of government? Some of the factors—Democrats vs. Republicans. Town versus rural. And to a lesser extent, there were Civil War overtones as well. But in a very real sense, the greatest significance of the fight has been in popular culture—movies, TV, articles, books—that have not only kept the incident alive but have made it well known around the world.

During the battle of the Alamo, in March 1836, what flag was flown by the defenders?

*Roberto S. DeLeon
Morgantown, West Virginia*

If you want to believe the many movies Hollywood and others have produced about the Alamo, it was the Mexican tricolor of red, white and green modified by having "1824" sewn into the white stripe. There is no evidence such a flag ever flew over the Alamo. In fact, if there was a Texan battle flag at the Alamo, none of those who survived had any memory of it.

What was 40-rod whiskey?

*James Kraemer
Gary, Indiana*

Forty-rod whiskey is a facetious allusion to whiskey so strong it supposedly can kill at that distance! It was also known as Taos Lightning or by other local colloquialisms.



While there is no known record of what flag was flown at the Battle of the Alamo, artists and filmmakers have perpetuated many options, including a Mexican flag or an Alamo battle flag with 1824, as suggested (above, top left) in *Fall of the Alamo* by Robert Jenkins Onderdonk.

True West Archives

There were various recipes for making the stuff: grain alcohol, a twist of tobacco, red chilis, a bar of soap, a rattlesnake's head and a little Gila River water. They'd mix up a barrel, and when they thought it was ready, they'd drop a horseshoe in it. If the horseshoe sank, they'd stir in more alcohol until the horseshoe rose to the top.

I was watching the old television series *Johnny Yuma*, and the lyrics of the theme song sung by Johnny Cash say "Where the only law is a hook and a draw." What does that mean?

*Art Graham
Rapid City, South Dakota*

Jim Dunham, president of the Wild West History Association and one of the nation's best fast-draw artists says that the "hook" refers to "hooking" the trigger guard as you draw the revolver from the holster. He says,



The 1993 Western film *Tombstone* reinforced the legend of the famous walk down that preceded the gunfight on Allen Street, aka the "shootout at the O.K. Corral."

Courtesy Cinergi Pictures Ent./Buena Vista

What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

I grew up in Orlando, Florida. Providentially, there were acres of piney woods behind our home that became my own Dark and Bloody Ground.

My parents were Frank, a World War II vet, a fisherman, hunter and mailman beset with PTSD who wrote articles, played mandolin and died when I was 16; and Myra, a school secretary who endured father-son duets and Teddy's sister, Diana, blasting Elvis 45s.

An early hero was and is Earl Scruggs, who split the atom on the five-string banjo by weaving three-finger rolls into eight-beat measures.

The mountains made me tremble when I saw my first one at 13, Lookout Mountain.

Bluegrass is hillbilly jazz created by a terse, intransigent Kentuckian, Bill Monroe.

The banjo is Africa's wild child, its twang and thrum delighting the world.

Appalachia is our own Misty Mountains edging a blue-ridged realm west of Bilbo's Shire.

Kentucky was the first Far West. Its Long Hunters were America's first fists in the wilderness.

If I could meet Daniel Boone, I'd ask how he lost two sons and a brother in the Indian Wars but never lost his humanity and spiritual values. And, if he trapped the Yellowstone.

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Black powder is an addictive inhalant composed of ash, saltpeter and sulphur that ruled the world for 500 years.

A musician I love is T. Bone Walker: Godfather of electric blues guitar and the first Jimi Hendrix.

Living history offers hands-on, graduate curricula in authenticity, skills and material culture.

An author like Hemingway is the Scruggs of prose: direct, original and unadorned but timeless.

A fur trapper who haunts me is Edward "Five-Scalps" Rose, a Black-Cherokee mountain man who turned Crow chieftain and, with Hugh Glass, was killed by Rees. Best left alone.

An Indian leader I admire is Osceola, who led his people against our government until being seized under a white flag during our longest military conflict, the Seminole Wars (1816-58).

My favorite Westerns are *Jeremiah Johnson* and *Dead Man*, which both combine evocative music with brilliant portrayals of American Indians in worlds existentially bleak but weirdly beautiful. Bravo Robert Redford and Johnny Depp!

My favorite Easterns are *Black Robe* and Michael Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans*—both of which are reasonably faithful portrayals of their eras—with firearms that actually shoot.

A mentor like artist David Wright, both by precept and example, sets the bar high.



Photo by J. David Wright

TED FRANKLIN BELUE, MUSICIAN AND WRITER

A Western Writers of America's Spur Award-winner, Ted Franklin Belue solved Boone's "lost grave" mystery in *Finding Daniel Boone* and wrote *The Hunters of Kentucky* and *The Long Hunt*. He has edited two biographies, including Lyman Draper's *Life of Daniel Boone*, published many articles and retired from Murray State University's history department. Ted is featured on *MeatEater* podcasts, writes for *Muzzleloader*, and is an on-air commentator for the INSP Network, Outdoor Channel, History Channel, NBC and NPR. He survived being a *Last of the Mohicans* (1992) extra and lives in Kentucky.

BBQ to me is man's original no-carb path of gustatory Nirvana, a savory gift bequeathed us from Carib natives and Hispaniola's swashbuckling French *boucaniers*.

I'm still in search of the right word, *le mot juste*, in writing. In music, the right note.

A good piece of cornbread consists of cast-iron skillet-baked stoneground cornmeal flipped for a double-crust, no sugar, buttered and smeared with sorghum or crammed into a glass of buttermilk.

Teaching history is best done portraying it as a spectacular soap opera. Show, don't tell.

The craft of writing is a perennial challenge. Words left out are as vital as words left in. A blank page and pencils take a toll but the rewards are many. Ernest Hemingway, Edward Abbey and Peter Matthiessen are my literary gurus. And Mark Twain and Win Blevins.

Marriage centered me. Lavina, my wife for 43 years (who has the same name as Daniel Boone's third born daughter) remains the steadfast metronomic backbeat of my world. She also makes the world's greatest cornbread. (See above.)

The West with its opportunities, real and imagined, defined America.

What history has taught me is humility. Man's life song, from pre-Sumer to now, teaches us how fragile we are, how little we know and how connected we are.



Discover Where History Happened in the Old West

True West magazine has inspired travelers to take the road less traveled and explore the historic sites and towns of the American West. The Third Edition of the *True West* Ultimate Historic Travel Guide has been carefully updated with recommendations on the essential museums of the Old West. Anyone who wants to discover a region from the ground up—and immerse in its local history—will be inspired to visit a Western museum and experience the dynamic, enthralling history of the American West.

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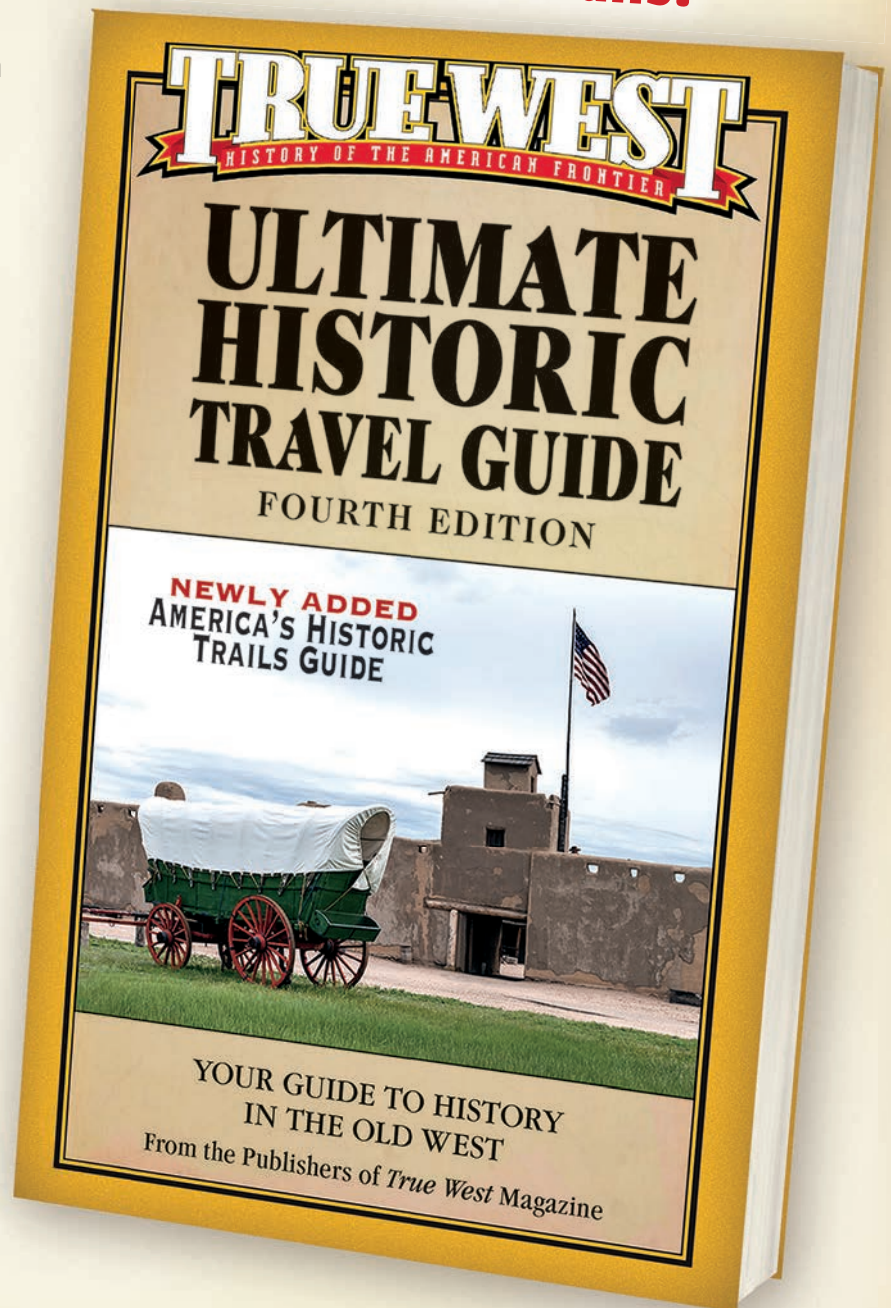
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