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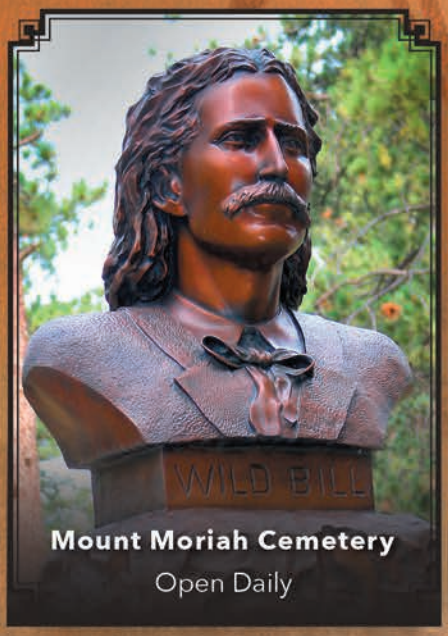

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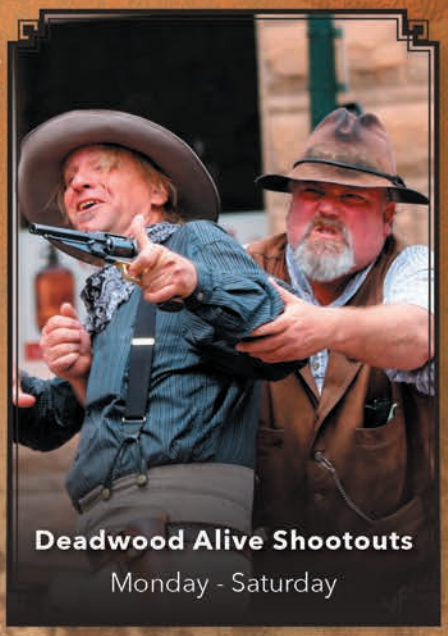

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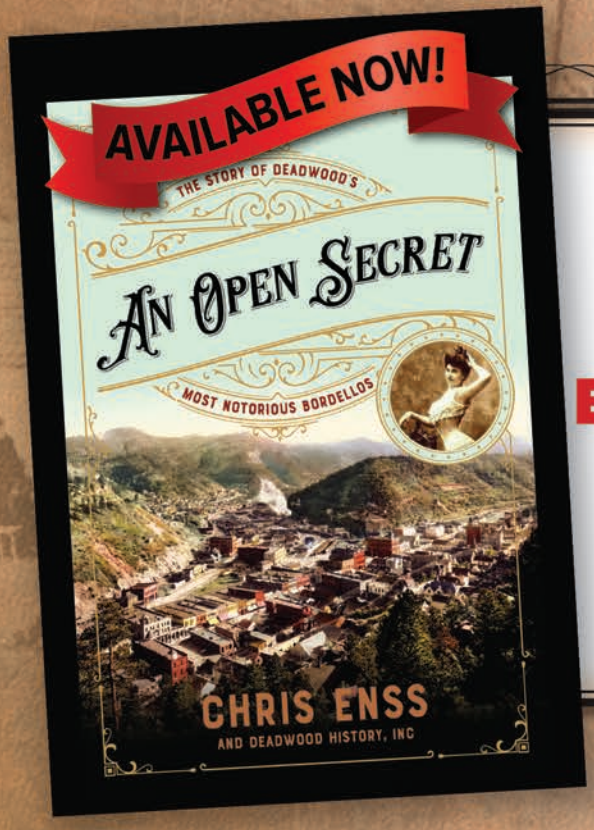

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ON PATROL

Five Texas Rangers of Company A, (l.-r) Howard Cragg, Ira Heard, Sam Chessir, J. B. Brooks and Lloyd David, were mounted and ready for action at the Norias Ranch in southeastern Texas in December 1918.

True West Archives

TRUE WEST
HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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

June 2023 Vol. 70, #5, Whole #634. *True West* (ISSN 0041-3615) is published ten times per year (January, February/March, April, May, June, July/August, September, October, November, December) by *True West* Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327. 480-575-1881. Periodical postage paid at Cave Creek, AZ 85327, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian GST Registration Number R132182866.

Single copies: $6.99. U.S. subscription rate is $39.95 per year (10 issues); $59.95 for two years (20 issues).

POSTMASTER: Please send address change to: *True West*, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327. Printed in the United States of America.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, RENEWALS AND ADDRESS CHANGES
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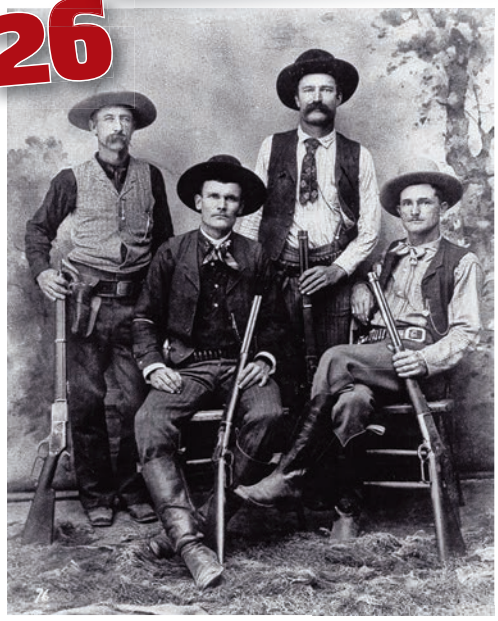

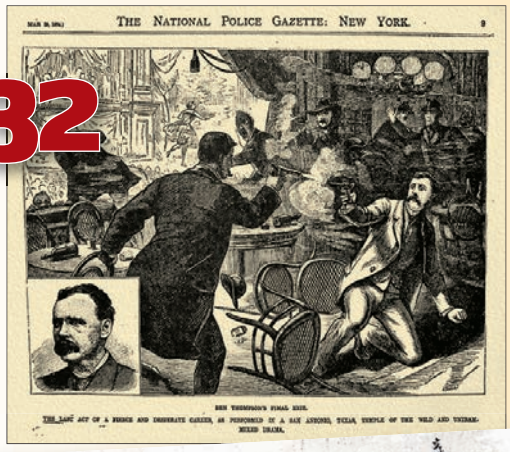

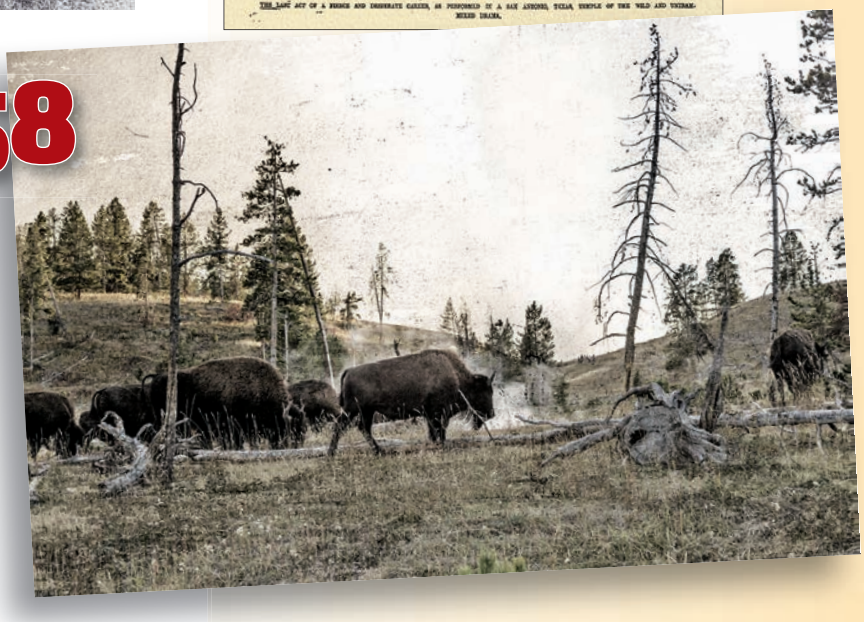

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by Dan Harshberger

Photo Courtesy Chuck Parsons

COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Old Vaquero Sayings

"A little nonsense now and then is cherished by the wisest men."

Quotes

"He that would govern others first should be master of himself."

–Philip Massinger

"Life's Tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late."

–Benjamin Franklin

"Do not dare not to dare."

–C.S. Lewis, *The Horse and His Boy*

"It's hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse."

–Adlai E. Stevenson

"Always laugh when you can; it is cheap medicine."

–Lord Byron

"Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding it still."

–Dorothea Lange

A Texas cattleman is distinguished by the type of boot he wears.

Dorothea Lange, Van Horn, Texas, 1937, Courtesy Library of Congress

"Blame it or praise it, there is no denying the wild horse in us."

–Virginia Woolf

"Make your mistakes, take your chances, look silly, but keep on going. Don't freeze up."

–Thomas Wolfe

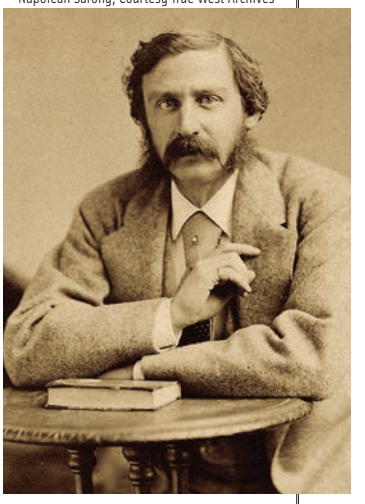
"If, of all words of tongue and pen,
The saddest are, 'It might have been,'

More sad are these we daily see:
'It is, but hadn't ought to be.'"

–Bret Harte

Bret Harte, 1836–1902

Napolean Sarony, Courtesy True West Archives



"No man in the wrong can stand up against a fellow that's in the right and keeps on a-comin'."

–Captain Bill McDonald, Texas Ranger

"You thought I was a lovelorn mistress, and I was really just an expensive prostitute."

–Edith Wharton

"I made partner!"

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BY BOB BOZE BELL

Action Jackson

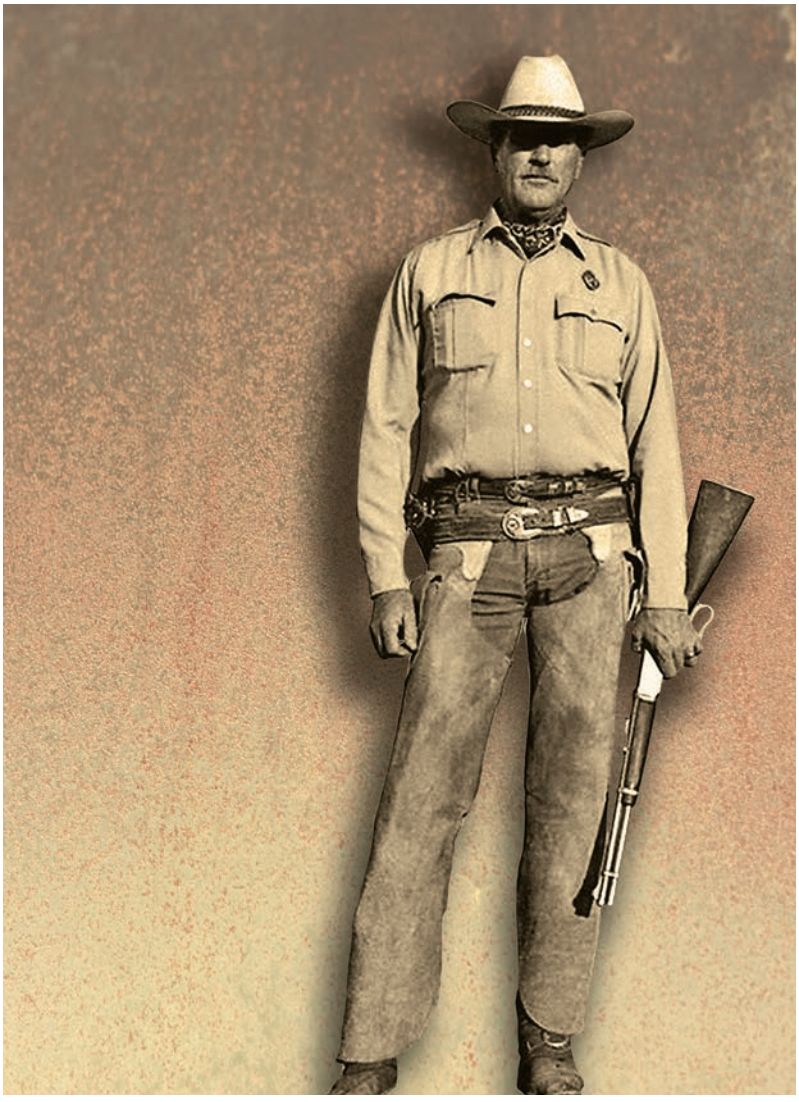
The day I met a living legend

On February 25, 2006, I got to have breakfast with a living legend. Joaquin Jackson, Texas Ranger and best-selling author (his first book *One Ranger: A Memoir* was in its sixth printing at the time). He picked me up at the Museum of the Big Bend on the Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, and took me downtown to the Holland Hotel for breakfast. Joaquin was six-foot-four and quite imposing, and as we walked into the restaurant, you could see the heads turn and hear the whispers.

Nick Nolte played Joaquin in the movie *Extreme Prejudice* and spent several weeks hanging with the Ranger to get down his speech and mannerisms. "He's a damn good mimic," Joaquin said with a laugh. "He had down all of my mannerisms." Joaquin told me plenty of great stories but the one that stopped me short was when I asked him if he ever ran into any old-timers who knew King Fisher (see Chuck Parsons and Thomas C. Bicknell's "Into the Den of Infamy: The Last Hours of the Notorious King Fisher," p. 32). Joaquin smiled and said he was at Uvalde when they dug up King in 1959. He said King Fisher had a glass window coffin and he still had his mustache in place and a nice black suit.

Someone later asked me what it was like to meet Joaquin, and I said it was like meeting Wyatt Earp. At 10 a.m., the local newspaper took a photo of Joaquin and me in front of the museum. I am still trying to track down that photo of the day I met a living legend.

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



Texas Ranger Joaquin Jackson (1935–2016)

All illustrations and photos courtesy True West Archives

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

DID BOB FORD SHOOT JESSE JAMES WITH A COLT .45 OR A SMITH & WESSON .44?

In the February/March 2023 issue, **Mark Lee Gardner** wrote a column titled "The Smoking Gun: Where is Colt #50432?"

Gardner's research led to his straight-up conclusion, based on these facts:

❶ **The Colts:** The *St. Joseph Western News*' edition on the day of the shooting stated that Bob's weapons consisted of "one forty-five caliber Colt's and one forty-one caliber of the same make, but double action." The *St. Joseph Daily Gazette* of April 4 reported that Bob used the .45 Colt to kill Jesse.

❷ **The Jailer:** Former City Marshal Enos Craig turned over the brothers' property on May 2, 1883, The receipt from Craig, published in the *St. Joseph Herald*, listed one Colt .45 and one Colt .41, the same weapons identified as belonging to Bob.

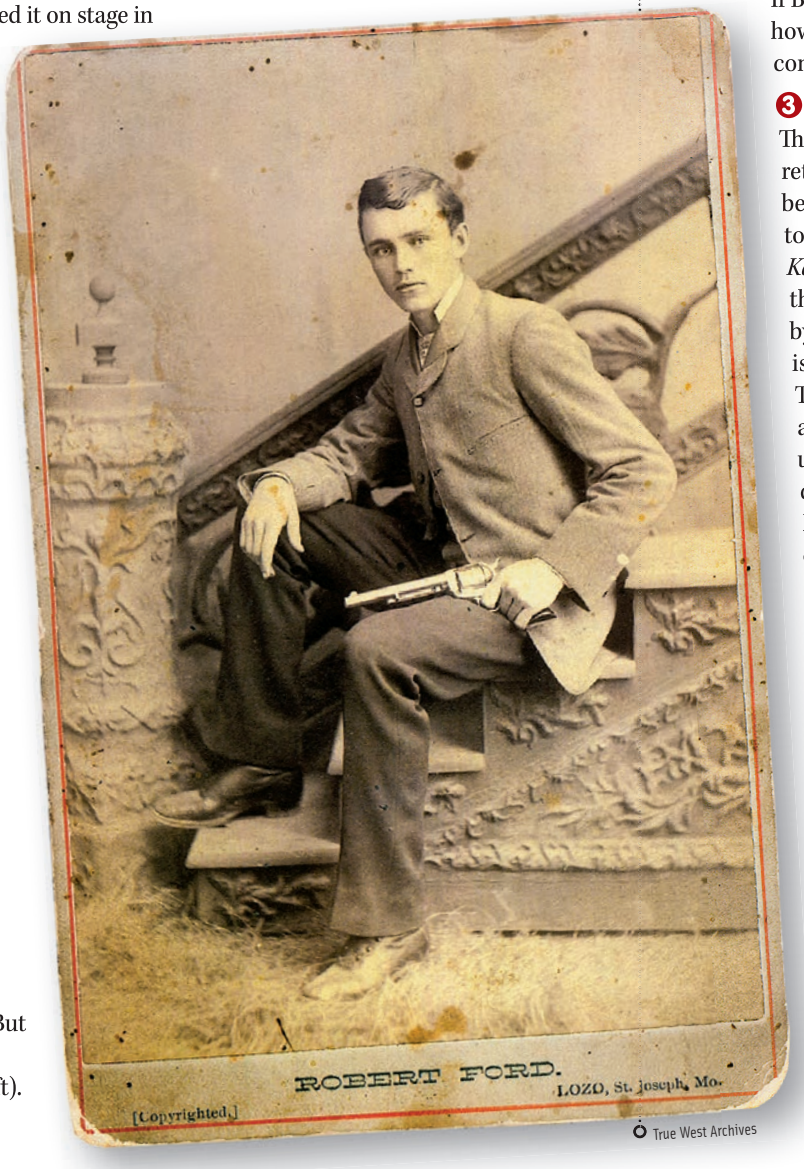
❸ **The Affidavit:** Bob Ford signed an affidavit in front of Jackson County Justice of the Peace J.C. Ranson that he used the Colt .45 to kill Jesse James. Ford's sworn statement was published in the *Kansas City Times* of May 5, 1882, which added that the murder weapon was then on display at C. Blitz's "Famous Loan" office. Bob soon paid off the loan and retrieved his gun, for he used it on stage in the following months when reenacting with his brother their dastardly—or heroic—act.

❹ **The Photo:** The striking photograph of a seated Bob Ford (right) taken by St. Joseph photographer Alex Lozo on April 6 shows Ford holding a Single Action Army Colt, which appears to be nickel-plated.

End of story, right?

Well, according to retired professional forensic investigator **Coy Prather** of Montalba, Texas, Bob Ford shot Jesse James with a Smith & Wesson .44, and here's why—Prather makes the following points:

❶ **Pearl-handled Colt:** In a picture taken on April 6th, Bob is holding a silver-plated Colt revolver. The picture is famous as murderer and death gun. But the pistol is obviously not "pearl-handled" (below, left).



True West Archives

❷ **The Jailer:** Cordyn Craig served as jailer to Bob and Charley Ford while they awaited the grand jury and were held for the murder of Jesse. Craig was kind to the Fords, bringing them good food and cigarettes, and for this kindness, Bob presented him with the gun he used to kill Jesse James. At the time, Bob had no idea the gun would be valuable. Craig is not noted anywhere in his lifetime as a liar. He offered the gun to the Postmaster General of the United States. He turned it down, but his son, an attorney, purchased the gun. Craig signed a sworn statement of provenance. If Bob had used a Colt .45 or Colt .41 double-action revolver, and if he owned two guns, why would he need a gun gifted from Jesse? If Bob was wearing two guns, how did this slight young man conceal them from Jesse?

❸ **The Affidavit:** The article of the affidavit returning the "guns belonging to Bob" back to him on May 5th, in the *Kansas City Times*, even though reportedly signed by a Justice of the Peace is of no consequence. This is also hearsay; the article is of little value unless the original legal document is uncovered. Even then, the signature of Bob Ford would have to be examined. Bob had a known letter written with his signed name, and it could be examined by a forensic handwriting expert. Other than that, it is an advertisement by a loan agency—an agency which possibly bought the Colt for Bob.

❹ **The Colt Serial #:** The best evidence we must examine is the serial number listed in the article. Did anyone think of contacting Colt Firearms to see if this

serial number existed? I did. It was used on 26 different firearms, one an 1879 Colt Peacemaker. Colt charges for a more extensive search, but someone willing to put out the bucks might find out who ordered the revolver. Nickel-plated guns were often specially ordered. It also might reveal where the gun was sold, the area of the nation. Did the Colt 1879 Peacemaker sell in the Kansas City area? Where is the provenance? Without all this, the only firearm with provenance is a Smith & Wesson No. 3 new model, caliber .44, serial number #3766.

True West's esteemed Firearms Editor **Phil Spangenberger** read Mark Lee Gardner's article and Coy Prather's rebuttal; here is his response:

What if the bullet that killed the notorious desperado still exists?

Was the bullet that killed Jesse James saved, and if so, does it still exist? Is it residing in some museum or in a pathology collection somewhere? If the April 6, 1882, edition of the *St. Joseph Western News* can be believed, an autopsy performed on Jesse James' body found the bullet in his skull "under the cranium behind the left ear." When discovered and examined, it was described as flattened-out with tiny splinters of bone in the lead.

To this shooter's mind, the description "flattened-out" does not necessarily mean it was totally flattened like a river stone. Most likely only the projectile's head was flattened, yet much of the remainder of the bullet probably still retained its basic shape, as is so often seen in projectiles recovered from game animals and other similar-type targets. If this death-dealing bullet could be found—and authenticated—it would allow one to measure the diameter of its base, thus quite possibly identifying the caliber. Once the bore size of the firearm used to assassinate the outlaw is identified, I'd say the debate would be over. Here's why. A commercial .45 Colt load as would have been used in Ford's Peacemaker Colt would have a lead bullet that measures .451-inch, while a similarly produced .44 S&W Russian (the most common caliber for the S&W New Model) or a .44-40 bullet (somewhat common in that model) would read .429-inch and .427-inch respectively.

Clinically speaking, fired from such a close range, it is unlikely that Robert Ford's bullet would completely deform in such material as Jesse James' skull bone and brain matter. Admittedly, it's a long shot, but if the retrieved bullet could only be found, the difference in the diameter of the base would certainly tell the tale and end the argument!

But this is a big *if*. Regardless, it's certainly something to think about, and perhaps begin a search for a chunk of lead, and start a totally new argument over the validity of that piece of metal... After all, there's been one heckuva lot of money invested already on the testimonials and other written accounts of which six-gun was the killing weapon...just sayin'.

—Phil Spangenberger

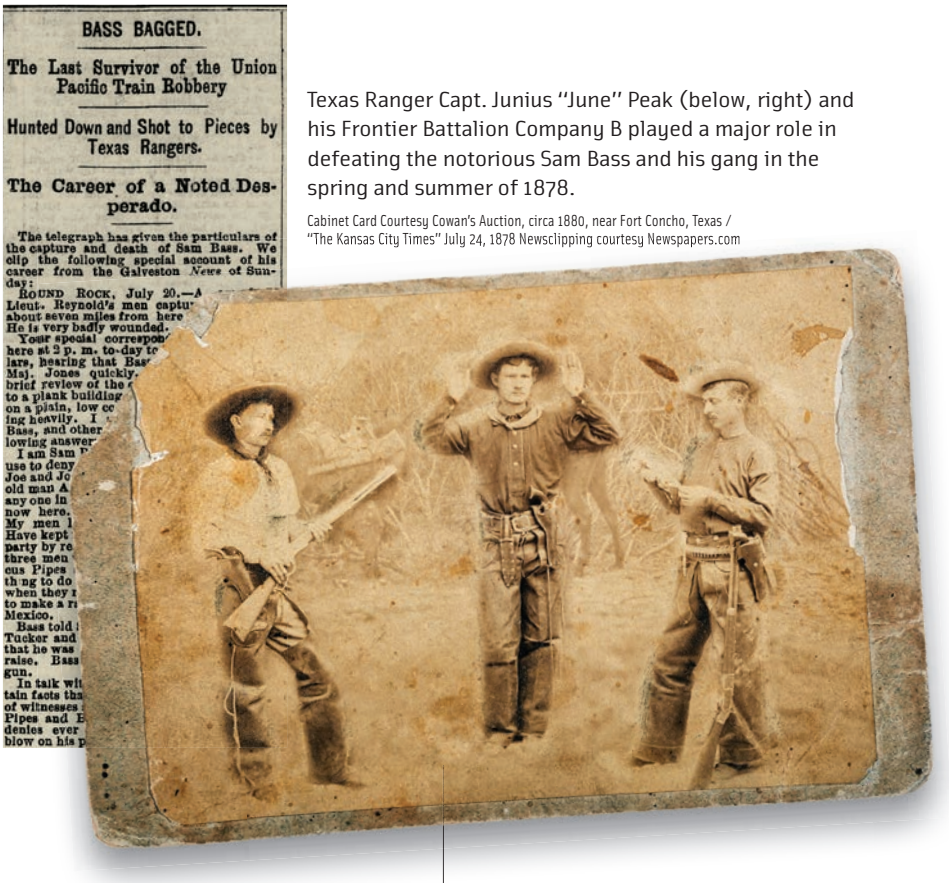
In 2003, the S&W sold at auction for $350,000 as Bob Ford's gun. Ford swore the Colt .45 he posed with for his famous post-assassination portrait was the murder weapon. It has never been found.

Courtesy Little John's Auction Service

BY MARK BOARDMAN

At the Peak of His Powers

Texas Ranger June Peak helped bring down Sam Bass.


BASS BAGGED.

The Last Survivor of the Union Pacific Train Robbery

Hunted Down and Shot to Pieces by Texas Rangers.

The Career of a Noted Desperado.

The telegraph has given the particulars of the capture and death of Sam Bass. We clip the following special account of his career from the Galveston News of Sunday:

ROUND ROCK, July 20.—A Lieut. Reynold's men captu about seven miles from here He is very badly wounded.

Your special correspon here at 2 p. m. to-day to lare, bearing that Bas Maj. Jones quickly brief review of the to a plank building on a plain, low co ing heavily. I Bass, and other lowing answer

I am Sam use to deny Joe and Jo old man A any one in now here. My men Have kept party by re three men cus Pipes thing to do when they to make a Mexico.

Bass told Tucker and that he was raise. Bass gun.

In talk wit tain facts tha of witnesses Pipes and denies ever blow on his

Texas Ranger Capt. Junius "June" Peak (below, right) and his Frontier Battalion Company B played a major role in defeating the notorious Sam Bass and his gang in the spring and summer of 1878.

Cabinet Card Courtesy Cowan's Auction, circa 1880, near Fort Concho, Texas / "The Kansas City Times" July 24, 1878 Newsclipping courtesy Newspapers.com

Relatively speaking, Junius "June" Peak spent few years in law enforcement. But he accomplished a great deal—especially in the fight against Sam Bass.

Born in Kentucky in 1845, he fought for the Confederacy during the Civil War. Afterward, he ended up in Texas. In the early 1870s, he was appointed a deputy sheriff in Dallas County. Less than a year later, he took a lucrative job in New Mexico, serving as a range detective, tracking down rustlers. In 1874, he was elected marshal of Dallas. Four years later, in April 1878, he was appointed a Texas Ranger lieutenant in charge of Company B.

The following three months helped define his life and legacy.

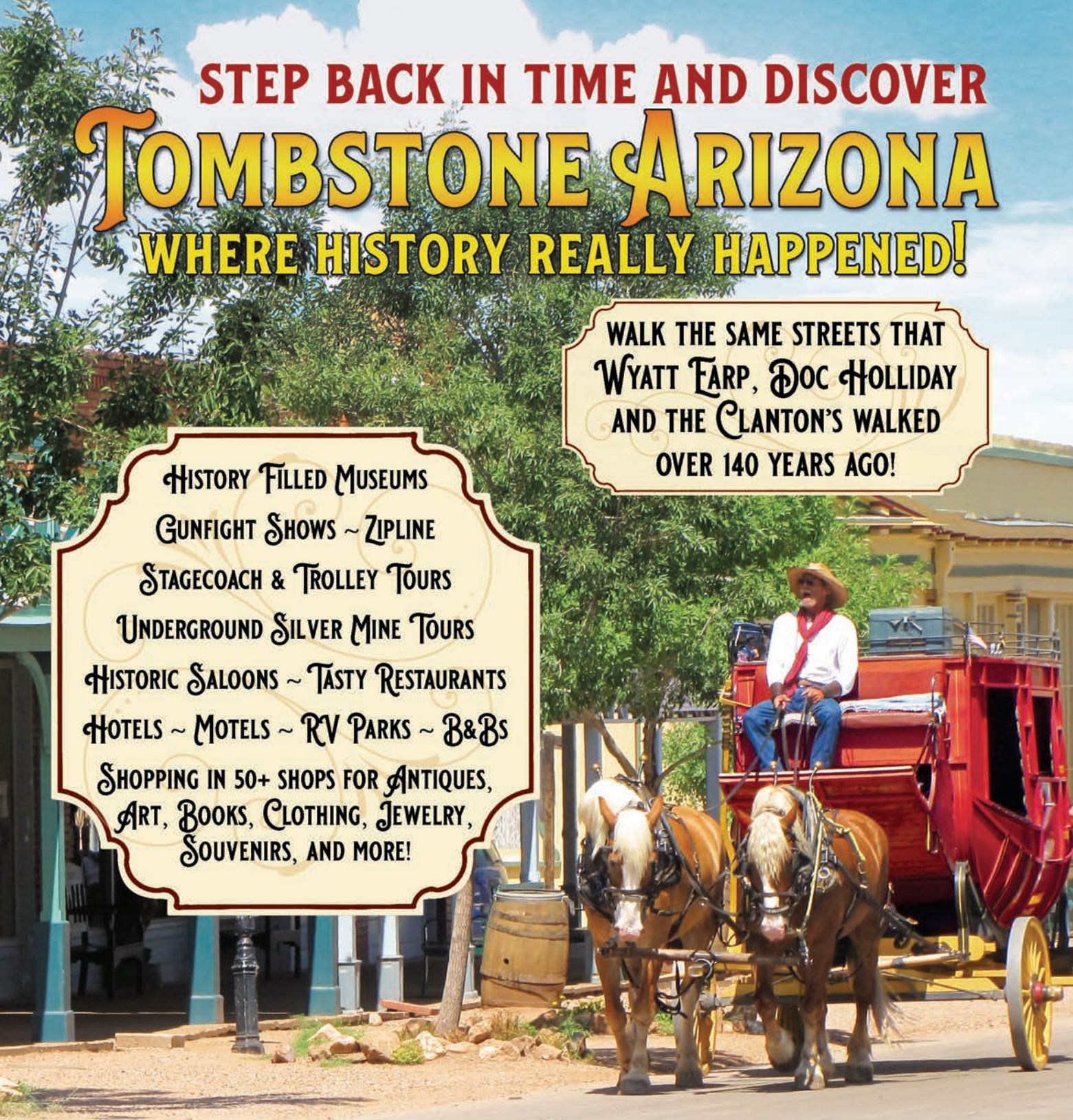
Peak's assignment: raise troops for the company and bring down the Sam Bass gang. He had some success—bringing in about 30 men to the Rangers and seeking Bass around his home base of Denton, north of Fort Worth. Peak's company got into one firefight with the outlaws, but for the most part they just kept the heat on the gang, eliminating hideouts and taking accomplices into custody. He was also promoted to captain of his company.

June Peak was essential in bringing about Sam Bass's demise. In May 1878, he helped negotiate a deal with gang member Jim Murphy. Murphy would turn traitor and inform on Bass. In exchange, Murphy would be cleared of all bad doing and his sick father would be released from custody.

While Peak and Company B stayed in North Texas just in case Bass showed up, the gang moved south with the intent to rob a bank in Round Rock. Murphy sent word about the planned heist. Bass and his men got into a gunfight with lawmen on July 19, 1878. The outlaw leader was mortally wounded and died two days later.

After the Bass situation was resolved, Peak's Ranger career took a big turn. He and Company B were sent to West Texas to protect citizens from renegade Comanches and Kiowas, who'd gone off the reservation. They engaged in a major fight from June 29 to July 2, 1879, losing one Ranger before driving the Indians off. It was one of the last big Indian battles in Texas.

After a while, Peak had enough of law enforcement and Indian fighting. He resigned his commission on April 15, 1880. Over the years, he became a builder, a rancher and a real estate agent. Eventually, he settled in northeast Dallas on land owned and developed by his father, and he became superintendent of White Rock Lake. He died in Dallas in 1934 at the age of 89. June Peak would be remembered mostly for his two years as a Ranger, and mostly for the three months when he helped bring down the Sam Bass gang.



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BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

He Plucked One Paragraph Out of History

Kenneth Thomasma built an entire career telling stories we almost missed.

Lifetime passions can start simply: like when a 30-something Kenneth Thomasma became a counselor at a Montana summer camp in the 1960s.

It was built along the very route that Lewis and Clark had traveled in the early 1800s. As a former teacher, Thomasma did the most natural thing: he read the Lewis and Clark journals.

And that's where he found a story that would make him an author of 11 books in nine languages and find him, in his ninth decade, still thrilled about the "amazing Indian children" he uncovered along the way.

He'll always cherish his first book "because it made me an author," he says. And it tells a story almost forgotten.

The most famous Indian girl from the Lewis and Clark expedition, of course, was Sacajawea. But that's not where Thomasma set his sights. He instead found one paragraph that led him in an entirely different direction—to the other 11-year-old girl who'd been enslaved with Sacajawea and marched 1,000 miles from their Idaho home to Dakota Territory.

The friend—her name was never given—dreamed every day of escaping to return to her Shoshoni people. She begged Sacajawea to run with her, but Sacajawea thought it was fruitless.

But one night, the girl did run. There was a storm. She used it to cover her tracks.

"When she got home, she would have been named after what she'd done," Thomasma says in a phone interview. "So I named her Naya Nuki. In Shoshoni, it means 'the girl who ran'."

Other titles by Kenneth Thomasma include *Kunu: Winnebago Boy Escapes* (listed for $298.92 on Amazon!); *Pathki Nana: Kootenai Girl Solves a Mystery*; *Takini: Lakota Boy Alerts Sitting Bull*; and *Soun Tetoken: Nez Perce Boy Tames a Stallion*.

True West Archives

He reconstructed what she must have encountered from the explorers' journals, noting the waterways she'd encounter; the mineral hot springs along the way; the flora and fauna she'd find for food; the animals she'd have to outsmart.

And we know it's all true because eventually, Sacajawea returned to that home village—as she traveled with Lewis and Clark.

The girls were reunited on August 17, 1805. Captain Lewis noted in his journal: "We drew near to the camp and just as we approached it, a woman made her way through the crowd toward Sacajawea, and recognizing each other, they embraced with most tender affection... They had been companions in childhood...and they had both been taken prisoner in the same battle. They had shared and softened the rigours of their captivity until one of them escaped...."

Thomasma wrote *Naya Nuki: Shoshoni Girl Who Ran* in 1983. It's been reprinted 28 times. It led to an entire career of writing and storytelling, most published by his own firm in Jackson Hole, Grandview Publishing.

His books have helped save precious pieces of Old West history.

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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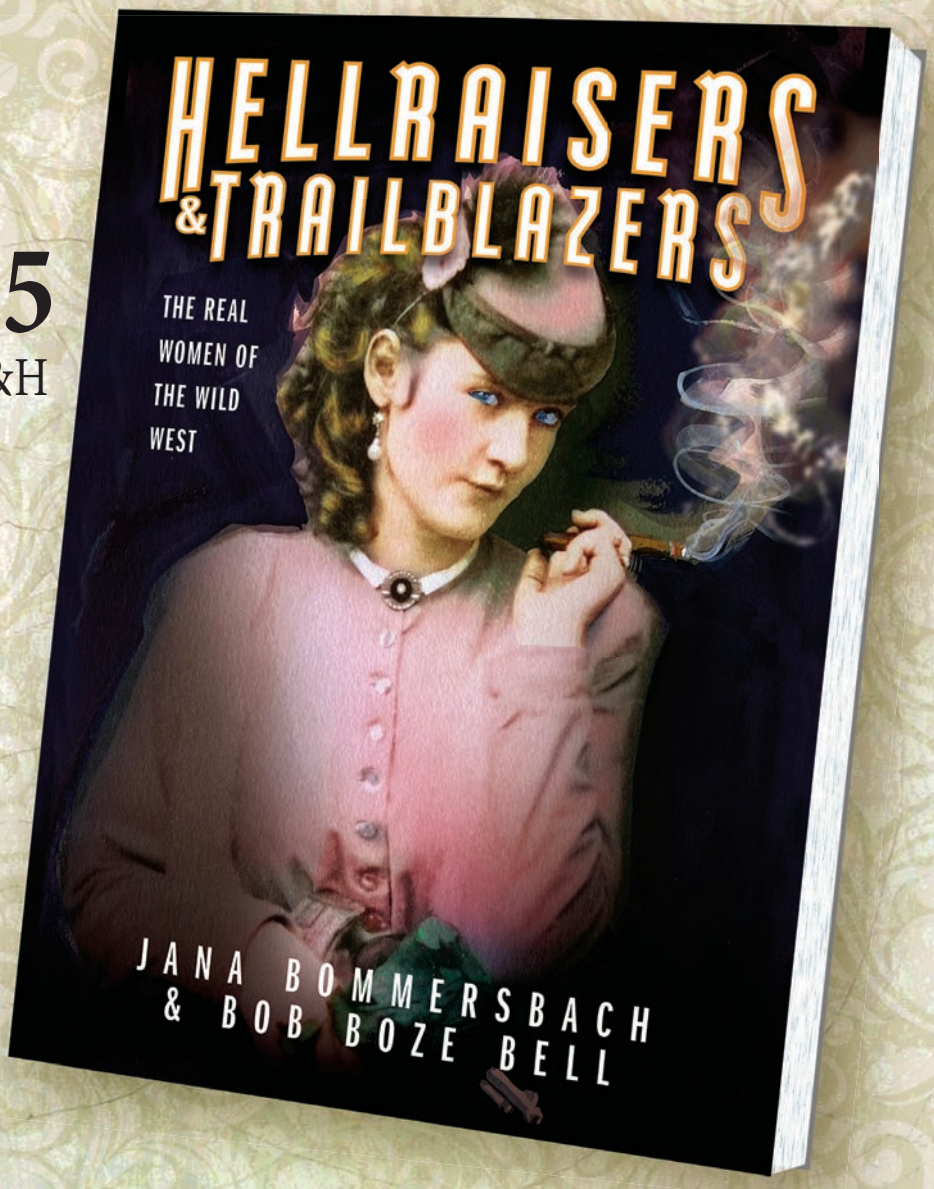

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BY STEVE FRIESEN

Carved in Wood

Western folk art gems were the highlight of Bonhams Skinner's "American History in Wood."

A depiction of the earliest frontier, a bas-relief carving of the arrival of the Vikings in North America, was created by Karl von Rydingsvärd of Portland, Maine, in 1900. It brought $1,530.

America's folk artists were untrained, but often skillful, documenters of American life. Sometimes they recorded everyday occurrences, which can be seen in the paintings of Grandma Moses, and sometimes they recorded historic events, like an unknown artist's wood carving showing a Pony Express rider. Their media ranged from oil paintings and watercolors to wood. Folk art is something that has fascinated me throughout my career, so I was particularly drawn to the Bonhams Skinner online auction held February 12-22, 2023.

Titled "American History in Wood," and featuring the Levine Folk Art Collection, the auction had 397 pieces of hand-carved folk art depicting people and events in American history. The pieces ranged across history, from a bas-relief carving showing the arrival of the Vikings in the late 10th century to a carved relief commemorating the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center. Collected throughout North America, the over 40 pieces depicted characters and events from the American West.

Most of the pieces at the auction were carved by anonymous folk artists, as was often the case. If the piece was signed, revealing the identity of the artist, that often increases the value of a piece. The artistic quality of the art and the age of the piece are also factors by which folk art is evaluated. Among the earliest pieces offered at the auction were three bas-relief carvings of American Indians, all dating from the 19th century, skillfully carved and colorfully decorated. Each sold for over $1,000. A rather crudely carved and painted plaque of a Pony Express rider, while it was interesting subject matter, sold for only $102. That piece was made around the same time that a carving of an American Indian was made. The carving of the Indian, more skillfully carved and identified as to its maker, who lived in Quebec, Canada, brought $1,658.

Most collectors of the West are going to be hard-pressed to find a bargain when it comes to acquiring depictions by Western artists like Charles Russell or Frederic Remington, but one can still find folk art gems for an attainable price. That was the case with the Bonhams Skinner auction of folk carvings, with prices ranging from the low $100 to under $2,000. These artists played their part in portraying both the legendary and the true West.

Abraham Lincoln was frequently featured in folk carvings. A nine-inch-high carved and painted figure of Abraham Lincoln by Fred Lindgren of Chicago in 1945 sold for $408.

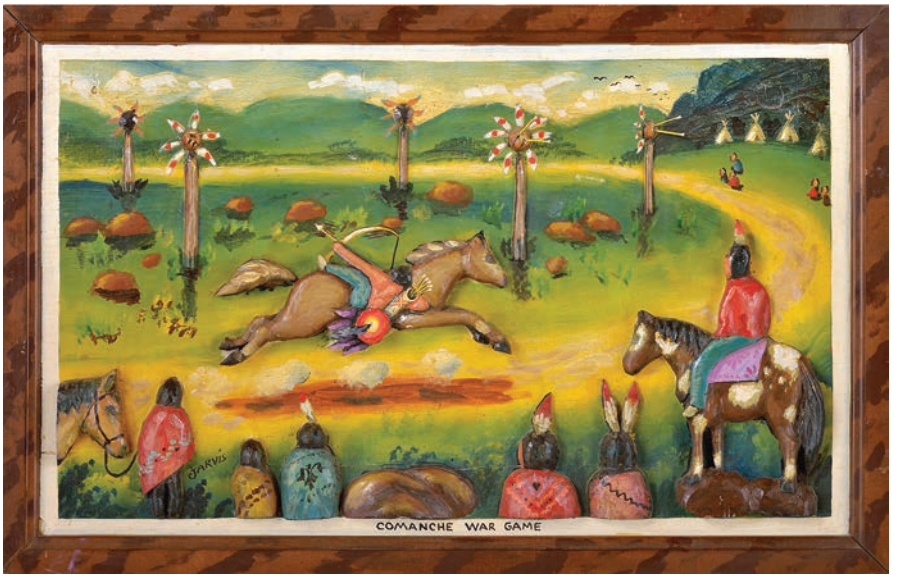
Steve Friesen comes to "Collecting the West" with over 40 years of experience in collecting for museums, including evaluating and acquiring artifacts from the American West.

A painted wooden figure of a cowboy (far left) sold for $765, while a painted figure of a gunslinger sold for $638.

This 16-inch-high painted carving of a modern rancher wearing a hat and quilted vest sold for $638. It was made by an unknown folk artist in 1980.

Made by an unknown artist, ca. 1950, this crudely hand-carved and painted plaque sold for $102. It depicts a Pony Express rider beginning his ride in St. Joseph, Missouri. Note the accurate rendering of the *mochila*, a special saddle bag used to carry the mail to California.

One of three bas-relief carvings of American Indians, this piece sold for $1,530. It may have originally been a decoration in a tobacconist's shop.



Comanche War Game, a bas-relief carving by Paul Jarvis in Oklahoma, ca. 1970, brought $510 at the auction.

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All Images Courtesy Bonhams Skinner

This action-filled carving of two American Indians hunting a buffalo, produced ca. 1910, sold for $638.

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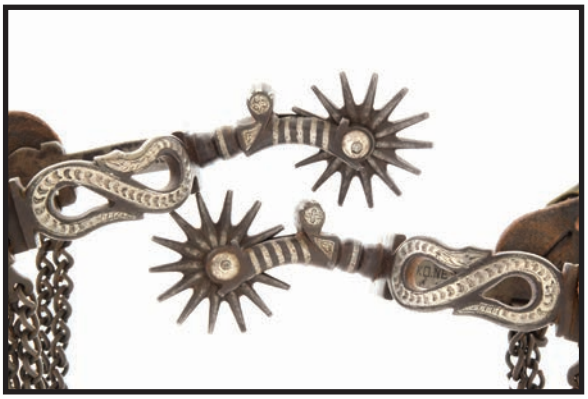

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BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

Remington's New Model Army Revolver

Rugged and accurate, this six-shooter was a mainstay of the Civil War and the American Frontier during the cap-and-ball era.

What today's firearms enthusiasts call the "1858 Remington," is actually the "New Model Army," due to the name given it by the Navy Arms Co. when they first introduced a replica of it in 1960—a modern brand name that stuck with present-day shooters. However, going back to the 1860s, Remington's then-newest .44 caliber six-gun earned an impressive record. Total production of original New Model Army revolvers is estimated at about 122,000 being made from 1863 to 1875.

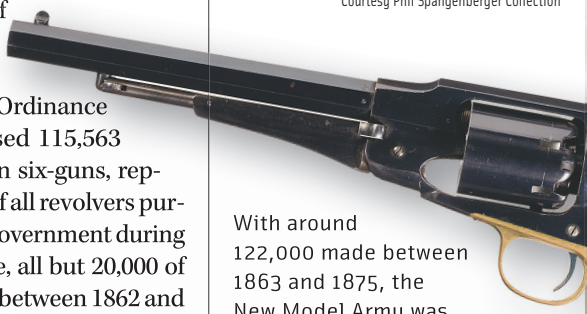
Taking advantage of minor design changes over Remington's 1861 Army model, the U.S. Ordinance Department purchased 115,563 Remington percussion six-guns, representing 31 percent of all revolvers purchased by the federal government during the Civil War. Of these, all but 20,000 of them were purchased between 1862 and 1864—in plenty of time to see lots of fighting. These figures include a small number of the earlier 1861 Army, or "Old Model" Army revolvers. Additionally, many more New Model Remington Army revolvers were purchased by state governments, private soldiers, officers and others who wanted reliable, powerful sidearms, making them the second-most popular six-guns used during the War Between the States.

The top strap design of all Remingtons added strength to the revolvers. Likewise, the problem of exploded percussion caps falling into the arm's internal workings was eliminated because the hammer struck the cap through an opening in the frame. Thus, the frame itself acted to prevent any caps from falling rearward into the gun's innards—a frequent problem with all open-topped percussion revolvers, like the Colts, Manhattans, Coopers and other of that ilk. Another positive aspect of the New Model Army Remington's design is the rear sight groove along the top strap, providing better sighting than that of the simple notched hammer found on other handguns.

If anything could be said against Remington's design, this writer feels it might be the six-shooter's small cylinder base pin, which provides a rather tight fit. It's been this shooter's experience that after just a few shots (using projectiles)

During the age of the caplock revolver, the Remington was held in high esteem by many six-gunners. Although in this 19th-century photo from Green's Denver, Colorado, photographic studio, this man is probably wearing a prop Remington and studio clothing (identical outfits and the Remington have been seen in other photos from the same photographer). It nevertheless illustrates the Remington's presence in the frontier West.

Courtesy Phil Spangenberger Collection

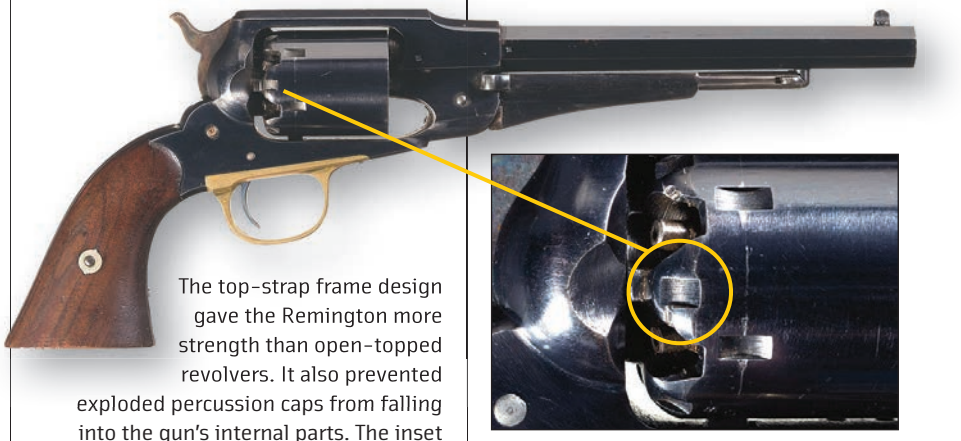


With around 122,000 made between 1863 and 1875, the New Model Army was the second most-used revolver during the Civil War and ranks today as one of the most-favored replicas with modern shooters. This pristine example is a military model, as evidenced by the inspector's cartouche on the walnut stock.

Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

have been fired, cylinder "drag," happens. This makes cocking and removing the cylinder pin somewhat difficult due to the carbon buildup.

In its original percussion system and in those models that were later altered to take metallic cartridges, the Remington remained popular for some time after the Great Rebellion.



The top-strap frame design gave the Remington more strength than open-topped revolvers. It also prevented exploded percussion caps from falling into the gun's internal parts. The inset reveals the squared cutouts between the nipples (also called cones) that acted as a safety to rest the hammer so it wouldn't sit right over the capped nipples.

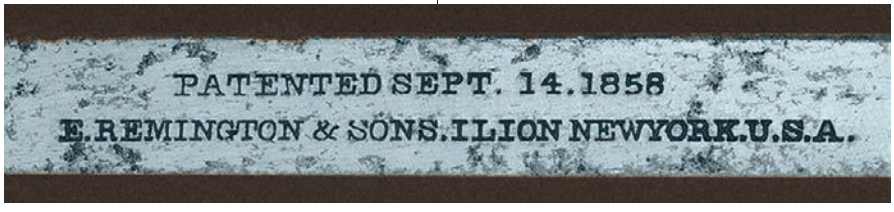
Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

It was often the choice of those hardy characters who headed for the wild American frontier, as well as adventurers who roamed the far corners of the globe. During the 1860s the eight-inch, octagonal barreled Remington was Colt's stiffest competitor, and the New Model Army .44 was a mainstay sidearm of the cap-and-ball era. (Its various models were also available in .36 caliber "Navy" models, and .31 caliber "Pocket" revolvers.)

As proof of these .44-bore Remingtons' popularity in the West, complete specimens and partial guns, in rusted relic condition, have been dug up in the Santa Fe Trail in southwestern Kansas, in Virginia City, Nevada, and at the site of Custer's battle at the Little Bighorn in Montana, to name a few Old West locales. The model is known to have seen use by cavalry units, including the 10th Cavalry "Buffalo Soldiers" and noted westerners like Lt. Col. George A. Custer. General Grenville Dodge, chief engineer for the Union Pacific construction project, owned them, and Remingtons were put to work by several pistoleers including the notorious Frank and Jesse James and Wyoming rustler and highwayman "Big Nose" George Parrott.

Perhaps no greater testimony can be offered than that by famed buffalo hunter, Army scout and Wild West showman William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, who spoke of his Remington New Model Army by claiming, "It never failed me." It's no wonder this caplock six-gun design ranks as one of the most popular black powder sporting handguns with shooters today, just as it did in the mid-19th century.

Phil Spangenberger has written for *Guns & Ammo*, appears on the History Channel and other documentary networks, produces Wild West shows, is a Hollywood gun coach and character actor, and is *True West's* Firearms Editor. He's also *True West's* "True West Westerner of 2022."

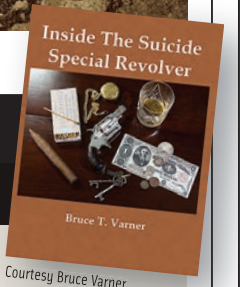


Often mislabeled as the "1858 Model" because of the name the Navy Arms Co. gave its Remington replica when it was first introduced in 1960, the gun's name stuck with present-day shooters. Navy Arms' "1858" designation came from the patent stamping found on the patent date/barrel address of the New Model Remington.

Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

In this circa 1867 image, believed to be the notorious James brothers, Jesse at left holds an 1851 Navy Colt, while his older brother Frank brandishes a Remington revolver, quite likely a New Model Army.

True West Archives



Courtesy Bruce Varner

INSIDE THE SUICIDE SPECIAL REVOLVE

For the growing number of arms collectors interested in small spur trigger revolvers, often known as "Suicide Specials," author Bruce T. Varner's study *Inside the Suicide Special Revolver* should not only be a welcome addition, but a must have for one's library. He's disassembled examples of several revolvers and rated them as to quality in workmanship, materials and their ability to fulfill the purpose for which they were manufactured, along with a discussion of the cartridges designed specifically for these revolvers. Within the 180 pages of this 8½-inch by 11-inch softcover book are painstakingly researched, and heretofore obscure, historical details about the many companies, participants, inventors and their patents for these guns. There are also numerous black-and-white and full-color photographs, and patent drawings of the revolvers and their component parts. In my initial perusal of this work, I learned much new information about such manufacturers as Hopkins & Allen, Hood Firearms Company and other spur trigger makers. Cost: $31.91, available through *Amazon.com*.

BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

THE LEGENDARY TEXAS RANGERS

The Lone Star lawmen have been a favorite of editors and readers of *True West* for seven decades.

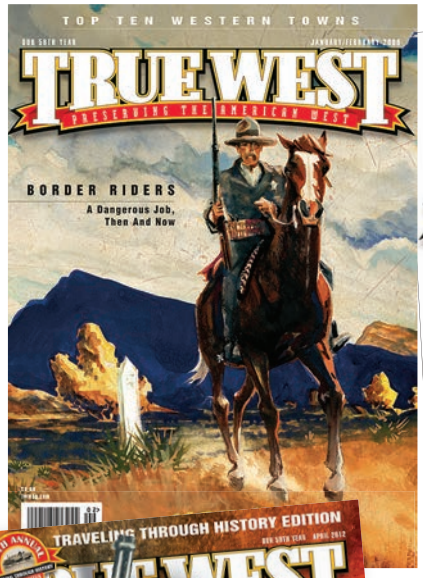
In 1953, the year *True West* magazine was founded, the Texas Rangers celebrated their 130th anniversary as one of America's most storied law enforcement agencies. Seventy years later, *True West's* editors are still riding side-by-side with the Lone Star lawmen and are honored to commemorate the Texas law agency's bicentennial with a look back at our coverage during the past seven decades.

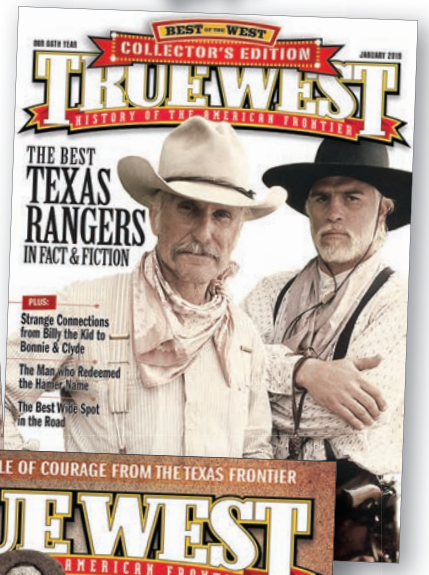
As our founder Joe Small was a Texan, it is no surprise that the Texas Rangers were regularly chronicled in *True West*, as well as in its sister publications *Frontier Times* and *Old West*. But what is surprising is the lack of Ranger covers during Small's tenure as editor versus how often editor Bob Boze Bell has featured the menacing Texans as the face of the publication.

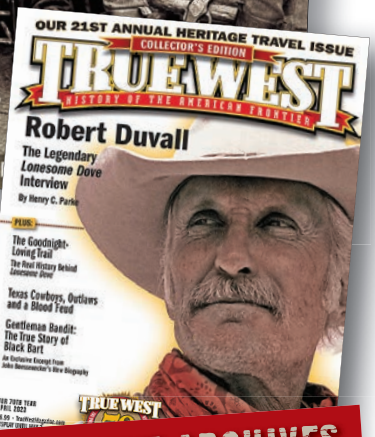
Between 1953 and 1979, Small showed the Texas lawmen on the cover just three times! That's right, you read that correctly. Only three times—in 1954, 1958 and 1975—and not once in the 1960s. Between 1979 and 1999, his successors put the hard-riding Rangers on the cover just twice, once in 1989 and once in 1999.

But then, current owner and Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell took the reins of *True West*, and you might say he launched a Ranger Renaissance. Not including cover stories on the Arizona or California Rangers, the Texas Rangers have graced *True West's* covers 14 times since the year 2000, including the current June 2023 issue.

Why the surge in popularity during the BBB era versus the dearth of Rangers gracing the newsstand during the magazine's first 47 years? The popularity of Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* novel and the subsequent television miniseries are major factors in the rebirth of Ranger lore. So is the resurgence in Ranger scholarship by such authors as Mike Cox (page 26) and Chuck Parsons and Thomas C. Bicknell (page 32). But what of the absence of Ranger covers in the first 47 years? That is a larger sociological question that might have something to do with the political climate of America in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the overwhelming popularity of cowboys and Indians, prospectors and trailblazers, gunslingers and outlaws in American pop culture in the 1950s and 1960s.







TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

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BY MIKE COX

ONE RANGER, ONE RIOT

TEN TEXAS RANGERS WHO NEVER STOOD DOWN

Now riding into their third century, one of the nation's oldest law enforcement agencies carries a double-barreled brand known worldwide—Texas Rangers.

In August 1823, in a settler's cabin on the Colorado River in present Fayette County, Texas, colonizer Stephen F. Austin proposed formation of a 10-man force to serve as "rangers for the common defense." A dozen years passed before the Rangers first became an arm of the Texas government.

For years, men who rode to safeguard the frontier were not always called Rangers. Early descriptors ranged from "mounted gunmen" to "spies" to "minutemen." Nor have the Rangers always been about law and order. For their first half century-plus, they saddled up to protect Texas from hostile Indians, not track outlaws. One absolute is that over their two centuries of history they have been both revered and reviled.

But the Rangers were well regarded by most 19th-century Texans—except American Indians fighting to retain their land, outlaws and penurious state lawmakers. The (Marshall) *Texas Republican* editor wrote in 1855:

"In Texas the name…'Ranger' is a household word…associated with noble deeds. He is the defender of the frontier; the protector of the defenseless; the avenger of…wrongs. He endures privations and hardships; sleeps it may be in the wilderness… knows not what moment a lurking savage may shoot him from his horse and scalp him; yet…he is as well contented as if he had all the luxuries of life around him."

That journalist referred to Rangers in the singular, but while they often worked alone, then as now Rangers operated in organized companies. Still, the attitude and actions of fewer than a score men molded the Rangers' reputation early on. They were men who would not stand down.

While Austin generally is credited with conceptualizing the Rangers, a young, slight man from Tennessee who came to Texas in 1838 as a surveyor soon fathered their reputation.

John C. "Jack" Hays

As a surveyor, John C. "Jack" Hays had several close calls with hostile Indians. He soon mixed his work with service as a volunteer Ranger, but it was not until January 1841 that the new Republic of Texas appointed him as a Ranger captain.

Captain John C. "Jack" Hays

All Photos Courtesy True West Archives Unless Otherwise Noted

On June 8, 1844, near Walker's Creek in Central Texas, Hays and his smaller Ranger contingent tangled with 70 to 80 Comanches and allies.

"After ascertaining that they could not decoy or lead me astray," Hays later wrote, "they came out boldly, formed themselves, and dared us to fight. I then ordered a charge; and, after discharging our rifles, closed in with them, hand to hand, with my five-shooting pistols, which did good

execution. Had it not been for them, I doubt what the consequences would have been."

The Rangers killed 23 warriors, badly wounding another 30. Hays lost one Ranger with three wounded.

This battle changed the history of the American West. For the first time, Rangers had fought Indians with an effective close-range weapon that didn't need reloading after each shot.

Hays didn't do his work single-handedly, but he proved a leader of men, a savvy tactician, and a fierce fighter.

After further adding to his legend during the Mexican War, Hays left Texas for the West Coast during the 1849 California gold rush. There, he served as sheriff of San Francisco. Later he became a successful businessman. He died in 1883 and is buried in his adopted state.

Samuel H. Walker

Samuel H. Walker, born in Maryland, served with the U.S. Army during Florida's Seminole War. After going to Texas in January 1842, he joined a volunteer company that September and fought an invading Mexican military force bent on reclaiming Texas. That December, captured with other Texans during an attack on the Mexican town of Mier, he was imprisoned in Mexico's infamous Perote Castle. He escaped in 1843 and early the following year joined Hays' Ranger company.

That summer of 1844, Walker participated in the Walker's Creek battle. Though clearly disadvantaged

Captain Samuel H. Walker

by the Rangers' new revolvers, the Comanches still proved quite competent with arrow and lance. "In this encounter," *Graham's Magazine* reported, "Walker was wounded by a lance, and left by his adversary pinned to the ground. After remaining in this position for a long time, he was rescued by his companions when the fight was over."

His fellow Rangers took Walker to San Antonio, where he recovered. Despite his close call, Walker stayed with Hays until the company ran out of funding. In 1845, he served in another Ranger company, this one led by "Ad" Gillespie.

With war with Mexico looming, in May 1846, the battle-hardened Walker formed a Ranger company and scouted for Gen. Zachary Taylor. Once Taylor invaded Mexico, Walker joined a Ranger regiment headed by Hays. Later accepting a captaincy in the regular Army, in October 1846 Walker traveled to the northeast to procure weapons and recruit men for his new unit, the First Regiment, Texas Mounted Rifles.

When Samuel Colt learned Walker was in New York, he wrote to invite him to his shop in Patterson, New Jersey: "I have [heard] so much of [Col. Hays] & your [exploits] with the Arms of my invention that I have long desired to know you personally & get from you a true narrative of the [various] instances where my arms have proved of more than ordinary utility."

Soon meeting over brandy, Walker gave Colt feedback on his invention. That led to a new, heavier, larger-caliber revolver that fired six shots instead of five. With those changes and a few other improvements, the firearm was called the Walker Colt.

Before Walker returned to Mexico in the spring of 1847, the Army contracted with Colt for 1,000 of the new weapons. Colt, who had no plant of his own, subcontracted with Eli Whitney to manufacture the revolvers.

In appreciation of his input, Colt shipped Walker two of the new six-guns in early October. But Walker did not carry them long. In a battle on October 9, 1847, a Mexican rifleman dropped Walker with a single shot.

When Walker was later reburied in San Antonio, his eulogist James C. Wilson compared Walker to Ad Gillespie, the late captain's close friend and fellow Ranger: "Gillespie was brave. Walker had no sense of fear. Gillespie did not shun danger.... Walker seemed to seek danger..."

Captain John S. "Rip" Ford

John S. "Rip" Ford

Thanks to newspaper coverage of their exploits before and during the Mexican War, Hays and Walker forged the world's perception of the Rangers in the 1840s. In the following decade, John S. "Rip" Ford—doctor, lawyer, surveyor, newspaper publisher and legislator—furthered the Ranger image.

Born in South Carolina and raised in Tennessee, Ford came to Texas in 1836. While Texas had already won its independence from Mexico, Ford served in a couple of volunteer Ranger-like companies before turning to his medical and legal practices. He also held a seat in the Republic of Texas Congress and later published a newspaper in Austin.

In the Mexican War, he served under Hays as regimental adjutant. One of his duties involved keeping track of Ranger casualties. On each fatality report, he wrote "Rest in Peace." Later shortening that to "R.I.P.," he earned his nickname.

After the war, Ford served as a Ranger captain from 1849 to 1851 and saw numerous Indian fights. He then returned to professional pursuits, but in 1858, when legislators authorized a Ranger force of 150 men, Ford was commissioned as senior Ranger captain.

That spring, Ford and his men splashed across the Red River in pursuit of Comanches who had been raiding in Texas. Less than two weeks later, the captain and his Rangers attacked a Comanche village in the decisive Battle of Antelope Hills.

Beyond his service in the saddle, near the end of his long life, Ford organized an association of former Rangers. Now called the Former Texas Ranger Association, it remains active today. Also, his posthumously published memoir preserved much of early Ranger history. He died in 1897.

Leander McNelly

Never technically a Ranger, battle-tested Civil War veteran Leander McNelly built on Hays's and Ford's exploits. In 1870 he became a captain in the newly created State Police, serving in that unpopular uniformed body until its disbandment in 1873. The following year, due to out-of-control outlawry and feuding in South Texas, he was named captain of the Washington County Volunteers.

Captain Leander McNelly

The outfit soon became known as the Special Force, but McNelly and his men were Rangers in function if not name.

McNelly dealt harshly with outlaws and Mexican bandits, even illegally crossing the Rio Grande to recover stolen stock. But McNelly had "galloping consumption" (tuberculosis) and began spending most of his time in San Antonio. The Adjutant General's office did not like McNeely's paltry paperwork and began to chaff at the cost of his medical expenses, which the state paid.

Captain Jesse Lee Hall

And McNelly seemed almost as put out with the powers that be as they were of him. In an interview with the *San Antonio Herald* in November 1876, the captain complained about "the utter inadequacies of the force at his disposal to the task before him."

While he commanded 50 picked men, he said it would take four times that many Rangers to rid South Texas of its "vermin." With 200 men, he said, he could get the job done.

But McNelly got neither the additional men nor much more time in the Rangers. In early February 1877, the state mustered out McNelly and his command but almost immediately created a 24-man company to replace it. On September 3 that year, he died at age 33.

Jesse Lee Hall

Red-headed Lt. Jesse Lee Hall, who had joined McNelly's command already having a noted reputation as a lawman, became captain following McNelly's death.

"Capt. Hall is energetic and persevering in his efforts to capture the murderers and rogues in Texas or cause them to fly to a country of safety," the *Daily Fort Worth Standard* pronounced on August 23, 1877.

Rangers did not wear uniforms, but Hall set standards. In the summer of 1879, the *San Antonio Herald* reported that Hall "forbid the wearing of sombreros, fancy top boots, and carrying of white-handled revolvers in his command." Why? "All these things are characteristic of the desperado, and he wishes his boys to look like civilized people."

Presumably using wooden-handled six-shooters, that Hall and his men demonstrated their stand-up nature in Atascosa County. Hoping to thwart a planned robbery, the captain and his men staked out a rural store about 20 miles north of Pleasanton. Eventually, five mounted men approached. Two captured the store clerk and three began looting the store.

"Hall then appeared from his concealment and ordered them to surrender, and was answered by a shot," the November 11, 1879, (Marshall Texas) *Tri-Weekly Herald* reported. The Rangers returned fire. When the shooting stopped, one badman lay dead with two others wounded. The remaining two bandits escaped.

After numerous other successful operations involving Hall's Rangers, including Lt. John B. Armstrong's sensational capture of killer John Wesley Hardin in Florida, Hall resigned in 1880 to pursue business interests. He died in 1911.

John B. Jones

If Hays and his men spurred on the Ranger legend, John B. Jones hog-tied the Rangers' reputation as an efficient law enforcement body.

In 1874, legislators created the Frontier Battalion, a force charged with frontier protection. The measure also vested Rangers with law enforcement authority for the first time. The battalion would be under state Adjutant General William Steele with Jones as major in command. Both men had served together during the Civil War.

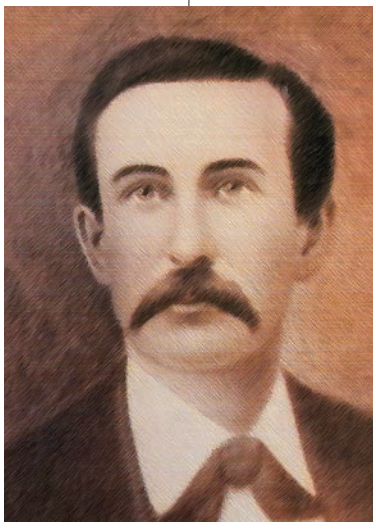
The *Houston Telegram*, in December 1877 described Jones as "...the peer of Walker, Hayes [sic], [Ben] McCulloch, and the men whose names are in history and whose exploits have illustrated the romance and daring of life on the Texas border."

The unknown journalist continued: "By birth and education a gentleman...this daring chief...is a small man scarcely of medium height and stature, whose conventional dress of black broadcloth, spotless linen, and dainty boot on a small foot, would not distinguish him from any other citizen."

The newspaper writer went on to say that "it would require a good deal of penetration to see in this quiet, affable gentleman the leader of the celebrated Texas Rangers and the hero of many a daring assault and wild melee, and the bulwark of the border and the terror of frontier forayers."

Despite Jones' leadership, the Frontier Battalion was always short-staffed and hamstrung with smaller-than-needed appropriations. But despite the problems they faced, the Rangers stayed in the stirrups and continued to build their renown.

Having survived a bloody encounter with hostile Indians in North Texas in 1875 and the 1878 shootout with Sam Bass's train-robbing gang in Round Rock, Texas, Jones died at 47 in 1881 of complications following surgery.



Major John B. Jones

Courtesy the Author

John R. Hughes

John R. Hughes first exhibited moxie as a teenager. Born in Illinois and raised in Kansas, at 15 Hughes hired on with a cattle outfit in Indian Territory. When a would-be rustler tried to cull some stock from Hughes' herd, the youngster took his first stand. It ended

with a funeral for the cow thief and a bullet in Hughes' right arm. After that, he never had full use of the limb, but before long he could draw as fast with his left hand as he originally could with his right.

Hughes continued cowboying until 1878, when with the trail-driving earnings he'd saved he and his brother bought a ranch in Central Texas.

Now 30, Hughes preferred poetry and reading his Bible to any of the easily available vices on the frontier. His pistol stayed in its holster, hanging on the ranch house wall. Unlike many men of his time, Hughes viewed the weapon as a tool for use when needed, not an item of ornamental apparel.

As a rancher, Hughes specialized in horses, building his remuda from herds of wild mustangs still roaming to the west. He was a contented man until one morning in 1886 when he discovered that outlaws had ridden off with 16 of his best animals, including his favorite stallion. Another 54 horses had vanished from neighboring ranches.

"I followed them to New Mexico, got all my horses back and a lot of my neighbors' horses," Hughes later modestly related. "Two of [the horse thieves] were...sent to the New Mexico penitentiary." Hughes forgot to mention that he'd killed three of the horse thieves, leaving only two survivors to stand trial.

Meanwhile, a friend of the thieves came to Texas to settle accounts. But when the would-be assassin arrived at Hughes' ranch, he happened not to be there. Hughes did not know someone was gunning for him, nor that a Texas Ranger already was on the outlaw's trail with a murder warrant stemming from a robbery-homicide in Fredericksburg, Texas. Ranger Ira Aten located the gunman before the outlaw could get to Hughes.

Texas Rangers, standing (l.–r.): Robert "Bob" Speaks and Jim Putnam; seated (l.–r): Alonzo Van "Lon" Oden and Capt. John R. Hughes

"They exchanged shots," Hughes recalled. "The Ranger shot the pistol out of his hand, but the man got away.... The Ranger asked me to help catch the man."

Three weeks later, Hughes and Aten found the outlaw. "Unfortunately," Hughes later put it, "he would not surrender and was killed. His friends then were so annoying to me that I could not go without arms, so the Ranger persuaded me to enlist in the company with him."

In August 1887, in Georgetown, Texas, Hughes began a Ranger career he expected to last only a few months. But months turned into years. By spring 1890 he'd been promoted to sergeant. Three years later, when Capt. Frank Jones died in a gunbattle with Mexican bandits near El Paso, Hughes rose to captain.

When he retired in 1915, Hughes humbly summarized his Ranger career: "Unfortunately, I have been in several engagements where desperate criminals were killed. I have never lost a battle that I was in personally, and never let a prisoner escape."

Hughes was 92 before a bullet finally ended his long and rich life. On June 3, 1947, the old Ranger's body, his .45 nearby, was found in a garage behind a relative's home in Austin. The captain's health had been failing, and he did not want to burden his family.

William J. McDonald

With a background in business, ranching and county law enforcement, William J. McDonald was commissioned a Ranger captain in 1890. He's the Ranger generally credited with first uttering a line that morphed into the slogan "One Ranger, one riot," but it's never been definitely established that any Ranger ever said that.

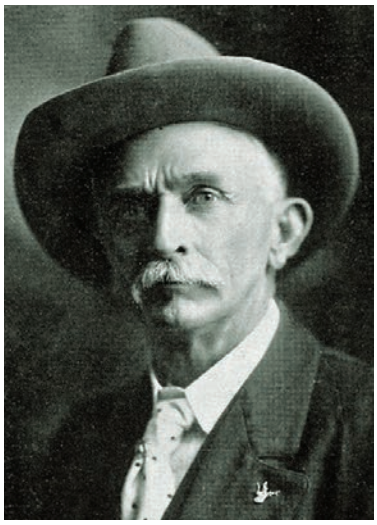
McDonald was both big-headed and bull-headed, but he had sand. He usually got his man and was a pioneer in using forensics—crude as scientific evidence analysis was in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

As much as he welcomed publicity, McDonald knew when to keep his mouth shut. "The captain is known to the newspapermen as 'the squirrel hunter,'" the *Austin Statesman* noted on June 1, 1903. "It matters not what is happening throughout the state, the newspapermen can only find out from this veteran that he is going squirrel hunting."

His gutsiest moment came in 1906, when a Black soldier stationed at Fort Brown in Brownsville was accused of attempting to rape a White woman. McDonald and two of his men took the train to the Valley with the captain determined to arrest the trooper. The captain also got arrest warrants for another 11 soldiers suspected of taking part in a riot that had erupted later on the night of the alleged sexual assault. The military would not release the

men, and a battle of words ensued that came close to being a real battle between the Rangers and the Army.

The captain did not prevail, and it's generally accepted that he was overreaching his authority. Still, the so-called Brownsville affair led one Army officer to opine that McDonald would "charge hell with a bucket of water."



Captain Bill McDonald

No matter McDonald's reputation for fearlessness, the captain never killed anyone. He did once get into a bad shooting scape in the Valley, but either his rifle jammed, or he wasn't able to get off a shot. The Rangers with him, however, did kill several of the parties who'd been firing on them.

McDonald left the Rangers in 1907 for another state job and died in 1918. State lawmakers had done away with the Frontier Battalion in 1901, but the Ranger service continued under a new law.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the old West was mostly a memory. But in the less-settled regions of Texas, the transition from wild and woolly to stable society, took an extra 20 years. For one thing, the Mexican Revolution, which began in 1910 and continued for a decade, occasionally spilled across the Rio Grande into Texas. Then, with prohibition came bootlegging. Finally, Rangers had to contend with wide-open oil boomtowns.

The Rangers continued to build on their image, and 166 of them still serve Texas today.

Longtime Texas writer **Mike Cox**, an elected member of the Texas Institute of Letters, has written 40 nonfiction books, including five volumes on Texas Ranger history. He is the Former Texas Ranger Association's historian.

TWO TOP RANGERS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Captain W. L. Wright

Joining the Rangers on the cusp of the 20th century, William L. Wright quickly established his stand-your-ground character. He proved that on Oct. 25, 1900, when a known killer took a shot at him. The gunman missed; Wright did not. Leaving the Rangers in 1902, he served 15 years as sheriff of his native Wilson County. In 1917, he received a gubernatorial appointment as Ranger captain. Not counting two politically related interruptions, Wright served until 1939. He died at age 74 in 1942.

Captain Frank Hamer

One younger Ranger who Will Wright rubbed shoulders with was another Wilson County boy—Francis Augustus Hamer. While he had his critics, most considered him the epitome of the Texas Ranger. Joining in 1906, with some interruptions, he served until 1932. Though best known for his 1934 takeout of the outlaws Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow, Hamer's entire career was a series of events in which he never stood down. He died at 71 in 1955, just after telling his son he'd killed 52 men, all justifiable.

Captain W. L. Wright, above, front row wearing glasses

Captain Frank Hamer

BY CHUCK PARSONS AND THOMAS C. BICKNELL

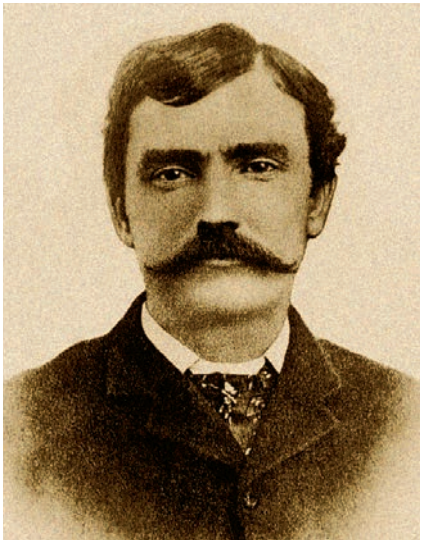
Into the Den of Infamy

The Last Hours of the Notorious King Fisher

The hack delivered King Fisher and Ben Thompson to the Vaudeville Theatre within a few minutes, as it was not far from Turner's Opera House. It would probably have been quicker to walk, but they had chosen to ride. They could not have realized it would be their last visit to the Vaudeville, where tragedy awaited them.

What neither King Fisher nor Thompson knew was that word of their arrival in San Antonio had been telegraphed to the proprietors of the Vaudeville, alerting the owners of their approaching visit. This telegram forewarned Joseph C. Foster and William H. Simms of their arrival. And United States Marshal Hal Gosling had ridden the same train as Fisher and Thompson and promptly after exiting the train, went to the Vaudeville, where he personally informed a theatre employee that Thompson had come down on the train and that they could expect trouble, as "there seemed to be h-ll in his neck." Simms, now fully aware of the impending danger, chose to alert City Marshal Phillip Shardein, who stated that he would send over six police officers to prevent any difficulties.

Having descended from their hack, Thompson and Fisher entered the Vaudeville. Ben, and possibly King as well, stopped at the bar for a drink. It is easy to imagine that Ben may have used this "opportunity" to let everyone know that he was back in town, he was not afraid to enter into the "den of infamy," and he was ready for whatever fate could befall him. Before long, rather than staying at the bar, the pair went upstairs where a variety show was in progress.



Uvalde County Deputy Sheriff King Fisher was considered reformed from his outlaw ways when he was killed alongside gambler and former Austin City Marshal Ben Thompson in a hail of bullets in San Antonio's Vaudeville Theatre on March 11, 1884.

All Photos Courtesy True West Archives Unless Otherwise Noted

San Antonio historian Elton R. Cude wrote that Simms invited waitresses, or "girls in short skirts and red stockings," to wait on them. Thompson consumed yet another drink while Fisher called for a cigar.

Later, at the coroner's inquest, Simms and Vaudeville house policeman Jacobo Santos Coy testified that as soon as the pair entered, Thompson made a threatening remark about Joe Foster, against whom he held an old grudge. Coy claimed he warned Ben to keep quiet. Then Joe Foster and William Simms came into the gallery, and Ben asked them to have a drink with him and Fisher. Drinks were ordered and in the ensuing conversation Ben made more threatening remarks against Foster, including calling him a thief. Foster told him to keep quiet, that he didn't want a fuss. Thompson stated to his old enemy: "Foster, come downstairs." Foster answered: "There is no need; I don't want to have any difficulty with you."

By now all had risen from their seats. Foster, Simms and Coy were standing near the door, with Thompson and Fisher to their right, about four feet apart. Coy interfered and told them to quiet down. Ben again called Foster a thief, adding, as the *Austin Statesman* wrote, an "opprobrious epithet" as he struck at him and tried to draw his pistol. Coy interfered, knocking the pistol down, which was a dangerous move as he could have easily been killed as a consequence. Then the shooting began.

"It is impossible to say who fired the fatal bullets," reported the *Statesman*. With the first shot, patrons rushed the doors, and several jumped out of the windows. A subsequent examination of King Fisher's pistol found that, unlike the other guns, all of its chambers were still loaded,

Friends of former Vaudeville Theatre owner Jack Harris, who was killed by Ben Thompson in a gunfight in the theater two years earlier, may have been behind the assassination of Ben Thompson and King Fisher.

Ben Thompson inscribed and gave this photo to his friend King Fisher on March 11, 1884, just hours before they violently—and ironically—met their fate in the crowded, upstairs gallery while enjoying the evening's Vaudeville Theatre variety show *Assassination, or The Night Owls of Alamo Plaza*.

Courtesy True West Archives

A rare image of San Antonio's "Fatal Corner" where Ben Thompson killed Vaudeville Theatre owner Jack Harris and was later gunned down alongside John King Fisher.

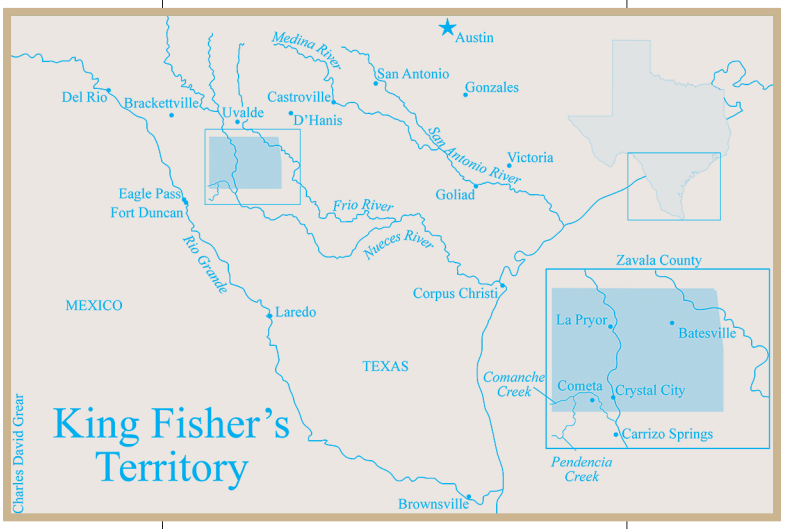
which means that he must have been shot first. "Thompson died shooting. Both he and Fisher died side by side, and the floor was flooded with their gore." Foster was shot through the right leg, just below the knee, "and bled profusely."

When the shooting stopped, people wanted to see the victims and tried to gain entrance to the building they had just vacated so hurriedly, but the doors were closed to all except officers and reporters. Justice Anton Adams was notified and quickly summoned a jury of inquest. J.M. Emerson was chosen as foreman of the jury and, after searching the bodies for wounds, presented the following conclusions: Ben Thompson had been shot once over the left eye, once in the left temple, with the ball coming out under the chin, and also through the abdomen and another spent ball inflicted a second wound over the left eye. King Fisher had been shot in the heart, the head just over his left eye and the right leg a few inches above the knee. According to the inquest, two of the deadliest gunfighters in Texas had been gunned down without taking a single adversary with them.

Officer Coy had received "only a slight wound in the calf of his right leg." Joe Foster had received a dangerous wound in his leg, which was self-inflicted when he attempted to pull his pistol. He was taken to his home, where he received medical attention.

City of Rumors

On the morning of March 12, the only conversation on the streets of San Antonio was the double killing at the Vaudeville. Many people believed that the killing of Ben Thompson and King Fisher was an act of premeditated murder, arguing that their deaths could only be accomplished by a carefully planned ambush. No one was arrested, although everyone knew who had been involved in the shooting. The idea was clearly expressed that some person, or persons, had laid a trap for Thompson



At one time King Fisher was described in a speech by A.J. Evans as being in charge of 20 counties in south Texas, as if he were a "robber baron" (*Austin Daily Democratic Statesman*, June 27, 1876).

Map Courtesy of Charles David Grear

and that a number of men had fired from ambush—that not only Simms, Coy and Foster were the shootists but there had been others as well. Rumors of all sorts were floated about the city. Joe Foster was suffering greatly from his wound, and the odds of surviving it were "as much against as in favor of his recovery."

The coroner's findings were reported in the *Statesman* and later in other major newspapers: "That Ben Thompson and J. K. Fisher both came to their deaths on the 11th day of March, A.D. 1884, while at the Vaudeville theatre, in San Antonio, Texas, from the effects of pistol shot wounds from pistols held in and fired from the hands of J. C. Foster and Jacob S. Coy, and we further find that the said killing was justifiable and done in self-defense in the immediate danger of life." This verdict, as reported in San Antonio's *Daily Express*, was generally accepted in San Antonio, but in Austin, where people were shocked at the death of Thompson, many reacted differently, including the *Statesman* reporter himself. He clearly did not accept the findings of the coroner's report and explained why: Thompson had ruled Austin, and the San Antonio police were determined that he would not rule their city as well; Thompson was of reckless courage and careless of human life when under the influence of alcohol, as he was that night; Thompson had killed Jack Harris, suggesting the possibility of revenge-seeking Vaudeville workers; the people in the Vaudeville did not like Thompson, and from the moment he entered the Vaudeville he was a doomed man. King Fisher, who perished with Thompson, was merely in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Wrong Place, Wrong Time

The shooting happened because Thompson had become involved in an altercation with the three men named: Foster, Simms and Coy. In the struggle Thompson and Coy went down together, with Coy holding Thompson's pistol. For this reason, no one could possibly say who fired the shots. "It is believed that Thompson was killed by his own pistol in the hands of Coy," concluded the reporter, going on to state that "Coy's pistol was fully loaded and Fisher's was found in the scabbard." Thus the remaining pistols were those of Simms and Foster, not Coy.

Due to the seriousness of Foster's leg wound, he submitted to amputation, and it was reported that "he will in all probability die." A bit of sympathy was also expressed for Thompson's compatriot: "When the smoke cleared away Fisher was lying across his companion." However, at least one reporter ignored the fact that Fisher was at the time of his death the acting sheriff of Uvalde County and identified him as "the incarnation of desperadoism." Many, on the other hand, regretted Fisher's death, as it was known that he had led a reformed life for the last two years "and hopes were entertained for his future." The reporter from the *Austin Weekly Statesman* must have been among the latter, as he finished his lengthy report philosophically: "It is the irony of fate that men with the reputation for personal prowess possessed by the departed should be shot like dogs and butchered like sheep in the shambles, without one life in exchange for their own."

The bodies of King Fisher and Ben Thompson remained on the floor of the upper stairs of the Vaudeville, bloodied from multiple bullet wounds, not only from pistols which Foster, Coy and Simms claimed were the cause of their deaths, but yet-to-be revealed bullets from Winchester rifles as well as additional pistols. The inquest performed in San Antonio, determined by many to have been perfunctory, would soon be challenged by the results of an inquest on the body of Thompson, which was performed in his own residence. The forensic evidence proved Thompson was not shot by the men standing before him, instead he was riddled by bullets that originated from above and from slightly behind him.

The actress Miss Ada Gray, immensely popular during the 1880s, was the first woman to star in the extremely popular play *East Lynn* in the United States. Prior to going to the Variety Theatre, Ben Thompson and King Fisher attended her performance at Turner's Opera House the night of March 11, 1884.

Courtesy of Thomas C. Bicknell

Ben Thompson's brother Billy was in San Antonio the night Ben was killed but was prevented from getting involved by City Marshal Philip Shardein.

Courtesy of Thomas C. Bicknell

A dramatic but highly inaccurate engraving depicts the death of Ben Thompson and King Fisher. Despite numerous errors, it realistically expresses the confusion during the shooting. Note the men "escaping" over the railing with one of the "drink girls" in the background. None of the figures are identified, but the man shooting at left is perhaps meant to be Simms, Coy or Foster. Thompson is at right facing the shooter, while a figure perhaps intended as King Fisher is represented farther back, despite the fact that Fisher never drew his pistol.

March 20, 1884, "National Police Gazette," Courtesy of Thomas C. Bicknell

Thompson never saw the men who cut him down.

No inquest was performed on the body of King Fisher. His body was placed on the 6:40 Sunset train by Deputy U.S. Marshal Fred Niggli, who, with several other friends, accompanied the body to Uvalde, where it arrived the night of March 12. Details regarding the transportation of the remains from the depot to the Fisher home remain unclear. Perhaps it is true that Marvin Powe, a young boy, was sent on horseback to the Fisher home to inform Sarah that she was now a widow. Among the letters in the Hobart Papers is one written by Powell Roberts of Santa Rita, New Mexico, to J. Marvin Hunter. "Mr. Marvin Powe," Roberts wrote, "the present City Marshal of Silver City, New Mexico, was an eleven-year-old boy living in Uvalde when Ben Thompson and King Fisher were killed in San Antonio, and Powe carried the telegram several miles out to Fisher's wife informing her of his death." The body lay in state at his home where it was viewed by a great many of his friends and general citizens. The funeral took place at 4:00 p.m. on March 13, the largest ever held in Uvalde. Rev. J. W. Stovall of the Methodist Episcopal Church conducted the services.

Epilogue

Since it was boldly stated that Fisher and Thompson had been murdered, it would make sense to wonder whether any vigilantes attempted to deliver frontier justice to avenge their deaths. Lynch law was not a thing of the past, as every citizen and law officer knew. A brief item in the Austin *Daily Statesman* suggested that these concerns were a reality: It is said by parties from San Antonio, that letters have been received from King Fisher's friends to the effect that unless the law is permitted to deal out justice to King Fisher's murderers, they will be taken care of. Parties in Austin who knew Fisher's followers are certain the murder of him and Thompson is but the beginning of serious tragedies sure to follow.

But there were no such "serious tragedies" following the Vaudeville killings. It is doubtful that any friend of Fisher seriously intended to determine who these murderers were and then deliver mob law justice to them. Enough good citizens of Uvalde did meet and sign a testimonial to King Fisher, suggesting what most people believed that King Fisher had "accomplished as much for law and order within the last two and a half years as any man in Western Texas, and this assertion will be verified by all officers who may have been thrown in contact with him." This testimonial, which was printed in full in the *San Antonio Daily Express*, was in reaction to how the *Express* had earlier sullied the good name of Fisher. The *Express* had described both Fisher and Thompson as "desperate men, a terror in the neighborhood in which each resided, and if they are regretted at all it will not be by the law-abiding element of the state." These were the *Express* editor's true feelings, and of course he had a perfect right to say so. Fortunately for him and the newspaper, the good citizens of Uvalde did not storm the *Express* offices to wreck or burn but thoughtfully prepared their reaction to what they felt was unfair and gathered citizens to sign it. The memorial was signed by 271 citizens of Uvalde and vicinity.

Editor's Note: Chuck Parsons and Thomas C. Bicknell's "Into the Den of Infamy: The Last Hours of the Notorious King Fisher" is an exclusive excerpt from their book, *King Fisher: The Short Life and Elusive Legend of a Texas Desperado* (University of North Texas Press).

Chuck Parsons, a retired high school principal, has loved the Old West since boyhood. His biographies of Texas Ranger L.H. McNelly, gambler Phil Coe, John Wesley Hardin, Jack Helm and now King Fisher provide a true gallery of gunfighters.

Thomas C. Bicknell, born and raised in Chicago, developed a love of America's Wild West at an early age. With co-author Chuck Parsons, *King Fisher* is his second biography published by University of North Texas Press.

True West Exclusive

Classic Gunfights

The Battle of Battle Flat

Five Prospectors vs 50 Yavapais

The five prospectors, with three pack horses, head southeast from Walnut Creek. Little do they know that they are being followed closely by a major force of Yapavais.

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

Based on the research of John Langellier and Jack McPhee

JUNE 2, 1864

Five American prospectors set up camp near the junction of Turkey Creek and Tuscumbia Creek in the rough Bradshaw Mountains, about 30 miles southeast of Prescott, Arizona Territory. Although warned of hostile Indians in the region, the gold seekers—Frank Binkley, Samuel Herron, Stewart Wall, Fred Henry and D.M. Scott—are all veterans of Indian fighting and confident of their ability to ward off any attackers.

Eight horses (including three pack animals) are picketed away from the camp where there is good grass for feed. A deer killed during the day is skinned and cooked on the campfire.

Heading off on a twilight scout, Wall and Herron ride in a wide circle and turn up no sign of Indians.

After supper, the men turn in early to escape a swarm of mosquitos. The horses exhibit "some uneasiness about nine o'clock," but the men ignore the disturbance.

An hour before dawn, a barrage of arrows rains on the camp, waking up the men who spring into action. One of the prospectors grabs a rifle, which, being wet, misfires; he takes out his revolver and begins to blaze away. The fight is on.

The Yavapais (estimated at 30-50 strong) open up a steady barrage of bullets, arrows and rocks as the prospectors fire back and dig in at the same time, with their sheath knives and a small shovel. They pile up saddles, packs and rocks to hide behind.

By the time daylight streaks the eastern hills, all the White men are wounded except Herron. A bullet has torn through Binkley's nose and knocked out one of his eyes. Wall suffers a bullet wound through the body, and Henry is hit in the arm and the breast. Two horses are dead; another, full of arrows, staggers around the flat howling in pain. Binkley lays still in the brush and is presumed dead.

As the Yavapais press the attack, two of the prospectors, Scott and Herron, move higher up the ridge to avoid being flanked by the attackers. Wall and Henry attempt to hold the camp and the provisions, but Wall becomes too weak and can no longer hold up his gun. Henry stays, while Wall staggers up to the higher position. Wall then calls down for Henry to join them. As Henry stumbles up the ravine, the Indians, sensing he is too weak to fire, rush him, but he wields two pistols and drives them back.

With the camp abandoned, the marauders descend upon the plunder, gathering up everything and hauling it up a hill about 400 yards away. They cut up the dead horses, build several big fires and start roasting horse meat.

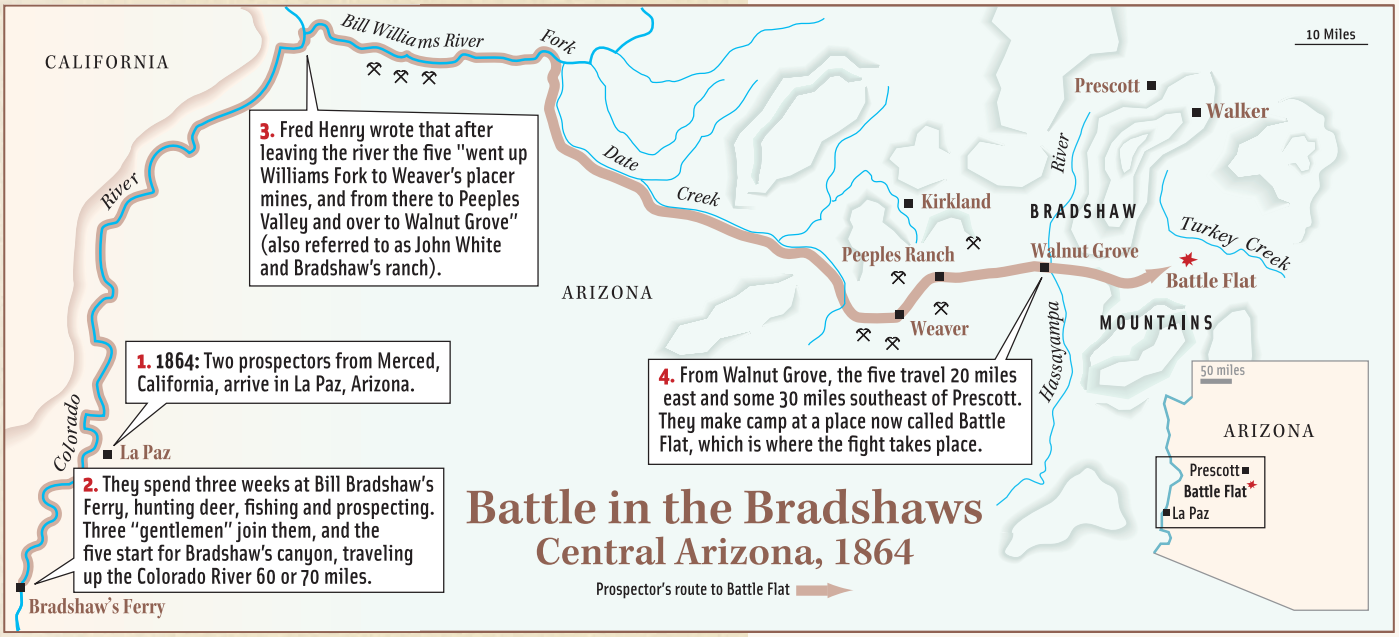
Fearing that the Indians will attack them and try to wipe them out after feasting, the prospectors retreat higher up the draw, looking for a better defensive position. Neither Herron nor Wall can walk without help. Binkley is almost blind, and Scott only has one good hand.

Some 70 yards up the draw, Herron gives out and can't continue. He implores his pards to leave him and save themselves, but they refuse, setting up a last stand under the shade of a large juniper tree.

As the men watch the Indians feasting on their horses, they decide Henry should make a run for it and take along Binkley. The two men crawl up the draw at about 11 a.m., but the Indians quickly spot them and head them off. Trying another direction, they are also denied that route and try a third.

As they make their way down a ravine, a Yavapai rises from behind them and says in Spanish and English "Where are you going, friends?" Henry points silently in one direction and walks the other way. The Indian let them go!

Walking all night, Henry and Binkley reach Walnut Grove at about 8 a.m. and sound the alarm. Ten men, led by the intrepid Jack Swilling, leave immediately. Arriving back at the scene by 2 p.m., they find the Indians long gone, but, incredibly, their three pards are still alive.



Armed to the Teeth

"According to the custom of the time in that country, every man was armed with a good rifle, and a pair of Colt's revolvers. Although cap-and-ball weapons, these were powerful arms using a round ball of .44 caliber, backed by a heavy charge of black powder. Forty-four grains of powder could be used, but 40 was the common load at that time. Fred Henry had a Hawken rifle of .53 caliber which used a round ball weighing 32 to the pound. Wall's Harper's Ferry rifle was a percussion-lock arm using the same caliber ball with a charge of 70 grains of black powder; this load delivered at least 1,700 foot-seconds velocity. In the group was at least one double-barreled shotgun. Everybody had plenty of ammunition, and felt able to stand off any attack."

– From "Indian Fight at Battle Flat" by Jack McPhee in the May 1967 issue of *Frontier Times*

This is the only known photograph of Jack Swilling, the founder of Phoenix and the man who came to the aid of the prospectors (date of the photo is unknown). Notice that he holds a pistol over his shoulder; being armed is typical of Old West era portraits. If this is how they armed themselves to sit for a picture, imagine how they looked when going into dangerous country.

True West Archives

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

The wounded men were taken back to Walnut Creek, but Samuel Herron never regained consciousness and died on the ninth day after the fight. He was buried at Walnut Grove.

The rescuers claimed to have found 14 dead Yavapais at the scene of the fight; thereafter the location was known as Battle Flat.

Stewart M. Wall, who had some 14 wounds from the fight, traveled to his home in San Bernardino County, California, where he became the first city marshal and lived out his life.

D.M. Scott remained in Arizona and recovered full use of his crippled hand. He continued prospecting and hit it rich.

Frank Binkley also returned to San Bernardino. He and his wife became freighters, making several trips to Prescott, Arizona. Binkley fought the same band of Yavapais in the 1864 Skull Valley fight, in which 40 Yavapais were killed. Binkley told friends he felt he had avenged the loss of his eye.

Fred Henry stayed on in Arizona, with a brief respite in Colorado. He worked for the Copper Queen Mining Company and died in Bisbee in 1899.

Recommended: *Chronicles of War: Apache & Yavapai Resistance in the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico, 1821-1937* by Berndt Kuhn; *Surviving Conquest: A History of the Yavapai Peoples* by Timothy Braatz

Editor's Note: Mark Boardman, *True West*'s features editor and Investigating History columnist, has been a regular contributor to the magazine for over two decades. If you'd like to read more of Mark's articles, like "Captain of All Rangers for Life" from the January/February 2006 issue, please go to *TrueWestMagazine.com* and subscribe for full access to 70 years' worth of exciting issues of *True West*.

BY MARK BOARDMAN

Captain of All Rangers for Life

Texas Ranger Jim Gillett writes himself into fame.

Jim Gillett was just 20 years old when he decided to join the Texas Rangers in 1875.

But young didn't mean inexperienced—Gillett was a native of the state and had spent years on the frontier, punching cattle, bustin' broncs and battling Indians. But he wanted more; he wanted to be a Ranger.

Between his 1875 enlistment and resignation in late 1881, Gillett had a distinguished career. He helped capture outlaw Sam Bass just outside Round Rock in 1878. He was part of the effort to end some of the notorious Texas feuds, from the Mason County War to the Horrell-Higgins dust-up to the El Paso Salt War. And he participated in some of the last Indian fights in Texas history. His service was acknowledged by his superiors, who promoted Gillett to sergeant by the end of his Ranger tenure.

But Gillett's life proved that the pen was mightier than the sword (or Colt). He gained his greatest recognition from writing a book about his experiences, *Six Years with the Texas Rangers*, a rare first-person account of the law enforcement agency in the 19th century. He self-published a small number of copies in 1921. By 1925—the 50th anniversary of his becoming a Ranger—the Yale University Press had picked up the book and given it a greater distribution, furnishing Gillett a prominence beyond what he had during his law enforcement days.

These never-before-published photos, which likely came from a Gillett family photo album, were taken around that same year. They provide a portrait of a man still active and vital at the age of 69 (and who still had 12 years of life ahead of him). The pictures also confirm that Jim Gillett was comfortable with revisiting his past.

Mark Boardman is the features editor at *True West*, the managing editor of *The Tombstone Epitaph* and the pastor of Poplar Grove United Methodist Church in Monrovia, Indiana. In his spare time, he writes reviews and interviews of progressive rock bands.

ROUND ROCK REMEMBRANCE

James B. Gillett with his hand on the grave marker of outlaw Sam Bass, at the Round Rock, Texas, cemetery. Gillett and a company of Rangers were sent to Round Rock in 1878 to head off a robbery by the Bass Gang. But they got there after the lawmen and robbers' fight was finished. Gillett, however, was among the officers who found the mortally wounded Bass lying under a tree, just outside Round Rock, the day after the shoot-out. This marker was the victim of vandals and souvenir hunters, and it eventually was replaced.

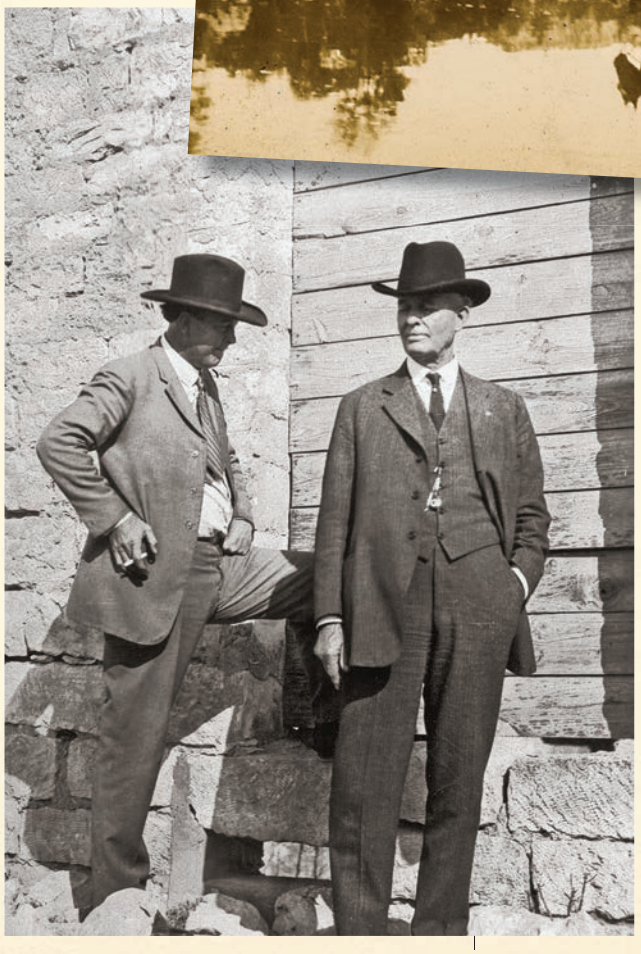
All photos courtesy Mark Boardman Collection

SIGHT-SEEING IN SOCORRO

The ex-Ranger appears to be sitting on the hood of a car in the downtown area in Socorro, New Mexico. The two men in the right background are unidentified. It's not clear what Gillett was doing in Socorro. After his Ranger run, he served as deputy and then marshal of El Paso. In 1885, he moved into the cattle business near Marfa, where he enjoyed great success over the next several decades. By the mid-1920s, when these photos were taken, Gillett was retired and living in Marfa. He died of heart failure in Temple on June 11, 1937, and he is buried in the Marfa cemetery.

CAPTAIN GILLETT ON HORSEBACK

The photo's caption states "Capt. Gillett—on Beaver Dam—in N.M." It's not clear just where in New Mexico this shot was taken. The writer was sort of right and wrong: Gillett was never a Ranger captain during his service, reaching the rank of sergeant before he resigned in 1881. Texas Gov. Ross Sterling, however, did name him "Captain of All Rangers for Life" in the early 1930s, the only time such an honor was given.



TWO LEGENDARY RANGERS

This photo of Frank Hamer (far left) and James B. Gillett was taken in Round Rock, probably around the same time as the picture at Bass' grave (note that Gillett is wearing the exact same outfit). Hamer was still nine years away from his greatest fame—the killing of Bonnie and Clyde in Louisiana in 1934. The book *I'm Frank Hamer: The Life of a Texas Peace Officer* features a slightly different shot taken at the same time—Gillett and Hamer switch positions.

BY CANDY MOULTON

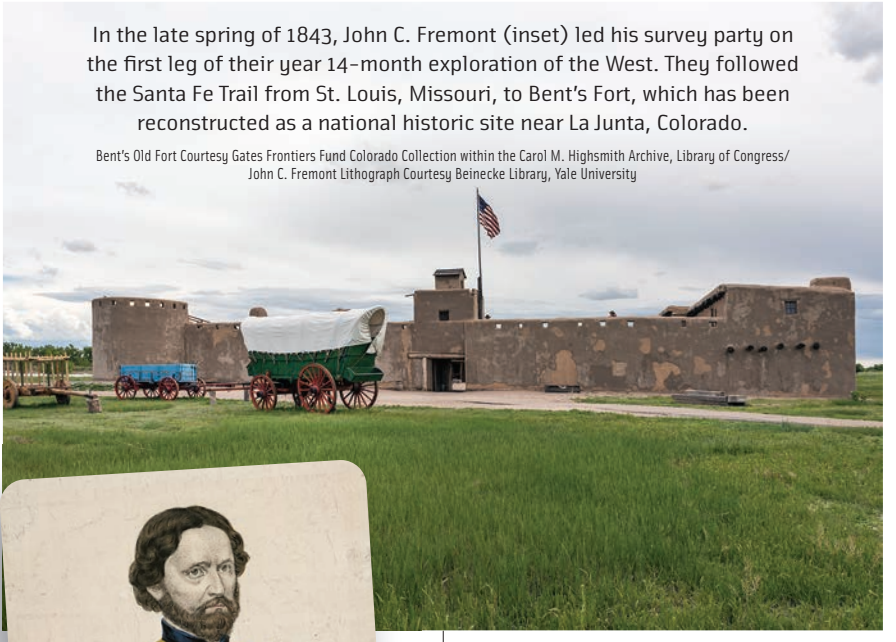
Following Fremont

The Pathfinder's 1843 expedition across the West is still a grand route for adventurous travelers.

John C. Fremont, known as The Pathfinder, had a guide on every trip he made into the West. In 1842 Kit Carson led him west, and in 1843 Carson and Thomas "Broken Hand" Fitzpatrick journeyed with Fremont. Carson and Fitzpatrick had long experience traveling in the West, earned during their years in the fur trade. The 1843 Fremont Expedition departed from St. Louis, crossing Kansas by following the Arkansas River to Bent's Fort, an important trading post on the Santa Fe Trail that has been rebuilt and is now operating as a National Historic Site. From Bent's Fort, present-day travelers should continue to Pueblo, Colorado, before turning north to the area of today's Fort Collins, Colorado, and then travel north and west to the Medicine Bow Mountains of southern Wyoming.

Fremont's exploration allowed members of his parties to collect plant specimens, make topographical sketches and undertake other scientific study. In early August of 1843, Fremont was in Carbon County, Wyoming, traveling west and camping on the principal fork of the Medicine Bow River near "an isolated mountain called the Medicine Butte" known today as Elk Mountain. On August 3, 1843, Fremont's group saw "bands of buffalo," and that evening Kit Carson "brought into the camp a cow which had the fat on the fleece two inches thick." Fremont wrote that this "was the first good buffalo meat we had obtained." Learn more about this region at the Carbon County Museum in Rawlins.

Fremont camped at the North Platte River, where Fort Steele would eventually be built, and his men were drying the buffalo meat when they were "thrown into sudden tumult, by a charge from about 70 mounted Indians," who had come over the low hills. The attack ended abruptly when the charging Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians saw the small cannon Fremont had with him. Fremont later wrote the "display of our little howitzer, and our favorable position in the grove certainly saved our horses, and probably ourselves, from their marauding intentions."



In the late spring of 1843, John C. Fremont (inset) led his survey party on the first leg of their year 14-month exploration of the West. They followed the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis, Missouri, to Bent's Fort, which has been reconstructed as a national historic site near La Junta, Colorado.

Bent's Old Fort Courtesy Gates Frontiers Fund Colorado Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress/ John C. Fremont Lithograph Courtesy Beinecke Library, Yale University

From their campsite near the North Platte, Fremont's party turned north through Muddy Gap to the Sweetwater River, which they followed over South Pass taking "the road to Oregon."

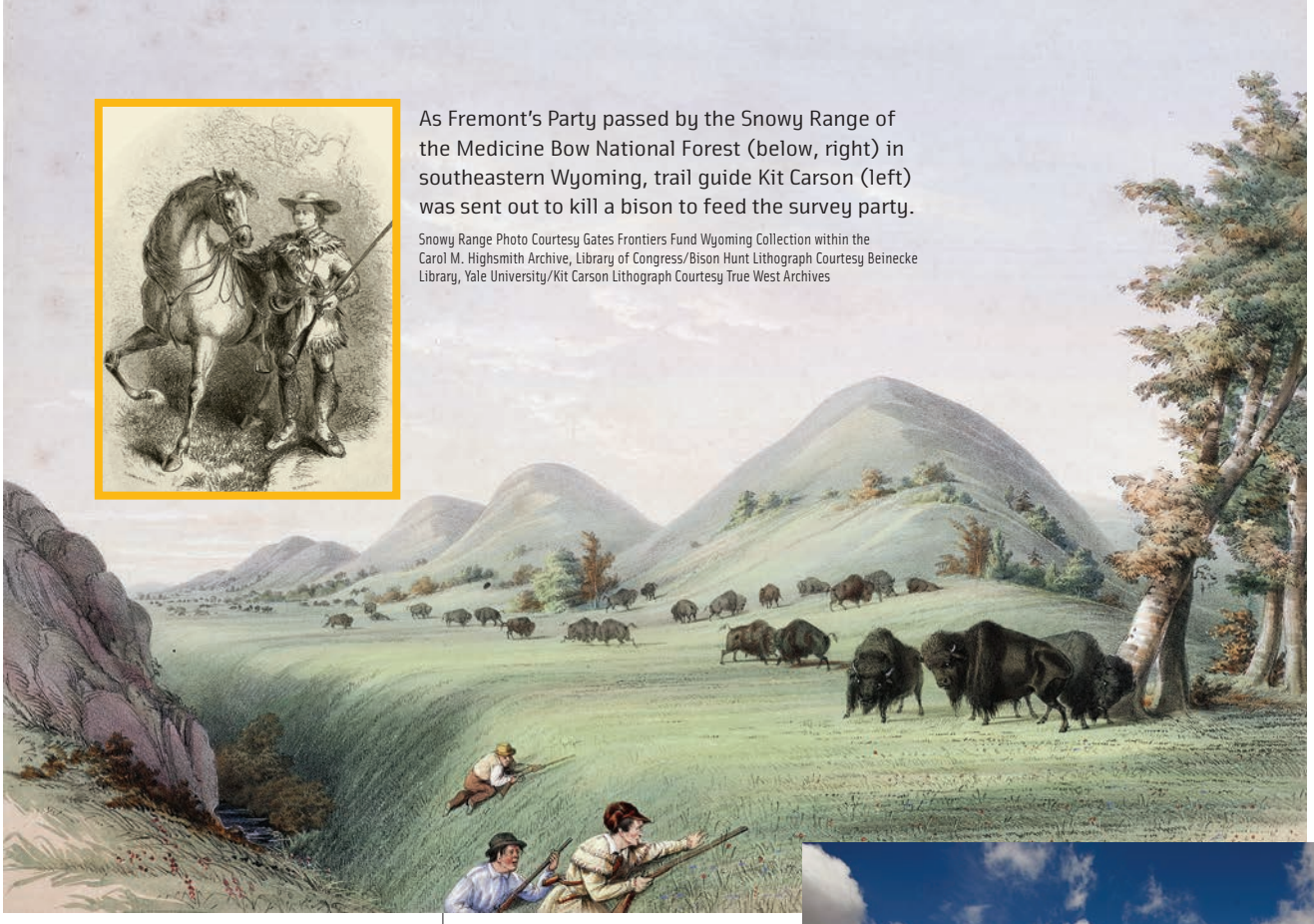
Now on the trail that Indians and mountain men had used for decades, Fremont traveled though the Green River Valley to Bear River, and then turned south to the Great Salt Lake, where he collected plants and rocks as he explored the "waters of the inland sea, stretching in still and solitary grandeur far beyond the limit of our vision."

Jim Bridger and his partner Louis Vasquez started a trading post in 1842 in the lower Green River Valley, at a place Bridger knew overland travelers would visit. He was well acquainted with the region of southwest Wyoming, having trapped and traded there for nearly 20 years. The location of his post is now the site of Fort Bridger State Historic Site, which hosts one of the largest mountain man rendezvous in the Rocky Mountains each year over Labor Day Weekend.

The Great Salt Lake had been seen by trappers—Bridger saw it in 1825—who wandered through the country in search

As Fremont's Party passed by the Snowy Range of the Medicine Bow National Forest (below, right) in southeastern Wyoming, trail guide Kit Carson (left) was sent out to kill a bison to feed the survey party.

Snowy Range Photo Courtesy Gates Frontiers Fund Wyoming Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress/Bison Hunt Lithograph Courtesy Beinecke Library, Yale University/Kit Carson Lithograph Courtesy True West Archives



of new beaver streams. But Fremont noted they cared little about the geography, and islands in the lake had not been explored by any American expedition, so that became one of his objectives. "It was generally supposed that it had no visible outlet; but among trappers, including those in my own camp, were many who believed that somewhere on its surface was a terrible whirlpool, through which its waters found their way to the ocean by some subterranean communication. All these things had made a frequent subject of discussion in our desultory conversations around the fires at night; and my own mind had become tolerably well filled with their indefinite pictures, and insensibly colored with their romantic descriptions, which, in the pleasure of excitement, I was well disposed to believe. And half expected to realize."

Fremont spent nearly a month exploring the Great Salt Lake, its islands and the general area before his party headed north, reuniting with Fitzpatrick at the Hudson's Bay Company post of Fort Hall in eastern Idaho. A recreation of this post is in Pocatello, Idaho. Fitzpatrick then took Fremont west following the Snake River toward Fort Boise on an ill-defined trail that was just beginning to see the great influx of travelers headed to Oregon Country. The Oregon Trail later became the first major emigrant route across the West, in use until the late 1860s by families who loaded their wagons with household goods, food, farm implements, supplies and kids and set out to claim land in Oregon.

At the Grande Ronde River in northeast Oregon near La Grande, Fremont began following an Indian trail to find a "more direct and better road across the Blue mountains." He reached the Whitman Mission on October 24 and soon saw the Columbia River, which he followed along the south bank to The Dalles, where he took a canoe to float down the Columbia to Fort Vancouver (which was just north of the river). Hudson's Bay Company Chief Factor Dr. John McLoughlin, manager at Fort Vancouver, supplied Fremont with provisions so he could continue his travels. Fremont returned to The Dalles then traveled south through the Tygh Valley and around Klamath Lake before continuing into California.

Traversing northern California and the Sierra Nevada in the winter challenged the expedition, but in March 1844 they reached Sutter's Fort, which can still be visited in Sacramento, California. After a time to recuperate from their survey, Fremont's party journeyed south into the San Joaquin Valley. There Fremont met the Old Spanish Trail—a route that linked southern California with Santa Fe. He followed that trail northeast into the Great Basin, striking the Virgin River and entering the area of St. George, Utah, by early May 1844.

There Fremont found "an extensive meadow, rich in bunch grass, and fresh with numerous springs of clear water, all refreshing and delightful to look

In late August 1843, John C. Fremont arrived near Soda Springs, Idaho. He split his survey team into two teams: one went to Fort Hall, Idaho, while Fremont and seven men went south to the Great Salt Lake area, which they surveyed for almost a month.

Thomas Moran's "The Great Salt Lake of Utah"
Courtesy Beinecke Library, Yale University

upon." Fremont said this "was a very suitable place to recover from the fatigue and exhaustion of a month's suffering in the hot and sterile desert. The meadow was about a mile wide, and some ten miles long, bordered by grassy hills and mountains."

This meadow where Fremont found respite, became the site of an atrocious attack on a wagon train in September 1857, when Mormons surrounded and eventually murdered 119 wagon train travelers from Arkansas in the Mountain Meadows Massacre, allowing only some children to survive, believing they were too young to remember the siege and subsequent killing of their families.

The Fremont Expedition continued along the Old Spanish Trail route to Brown's Park, Colorado, and then swung north. On June 11, 1844, Fremont was back in Carbon County, Wyoming, traveling into the Little Snake River Valley. He described the country as "sandy and poor, scantily wooded with cedars, but the river bottoms afforded good pasture." The men killed three antelope in the afternoon and camped downstream from the point where Henry Fraeb had engaged in a fight with Indians three years earlier. This was the site of the fight along the Little Snake River with the Arapaho and Lakota Indians that gave Battle Mountain and Battle Pass their names. You can learn more about this fighting during a visit to the Little Snake River Valley Museum in Savery.

On June 13, 1844, Fremont moved deeper into the Sierra Madre range crossing the Continental Divide at midday where he noted, "With joy and exultation we saw ourselves once more

on the top of the Rocky mountains, and beheld a little stream taking its course towards the rising sun." Wyoming Highway 70, open from late May to mid-October, crosses the Sierra Madre from Savery to Encampment and keeps today's adventurers relatively close to Fremont's route.

Once on the east face of the Sierra Madre, Fremont turned south toward "objects worthy to be explored," namely the North, Middle and South parks of Colorado. His route took him near today's towns of Walden, Kremmling, Leadville and Buena Vista. His party again began following the Arkansas River, this time headed downstream through Pueblo, and once again to Bent's Fort, where he picked up the Santa Fe Trail, which took him back east, reaching St. Louis on August 6, 1844, and concluding a 14-month reconnaissance of the West.

Candy Moulton, recipient of the 2023 True Westerner Award, is a road warrior and writer. Her newest book, *Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth and Legend*, is forthcoming in June from the South Dakota Historical Society Press.

A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

The Old Carissa Gold Mine, South Pass City State Historical Site, Wyoming

Courtesy Carole M. Highsmith Archives, Library of Congress

SOUTH PASS CITY STATE HISTORICAL SITE

Fremont's expedition in 1842 penetrated the Wind River Mountain Range where in mid-August Fremont along with Charles Preuss and Johnny Janisse climbed the highest peak in Wyoming. They named it Fremont Peak. The explorer didn't return to that site on his 1843 journey, but he did cross South Pass, as would hundreds of thousands of people who followed the Oregon, California, Mormon and Pony Express Trails. Some of those travelers noted the presence of gold in the South Pass region, later returning to begin explorations and successfully finding gold in 1866. This led to the establishment of South Pass City, which became an important economic and political site when Wyoming Territory was established in 1868. It was here that woman suffrage got its start in the West, thanks to the efforts of Esther Hobart Morris and men who lived in the boomtown.

SouthPassCity.org

GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

GOOD GRUB: Elk Mountain Hotel, Elk Mountain, WY; **Hotel Wolf,** Saratoga, WY; **Su Casa**, Sinclair, WY; **The Red Iguana**, Salt Lake City, UT; **Cousins**, The Dalles, OR; **Carol's Corner Café**, Vancouver, WA; **Café Bernardo**, Sacramento, CA

GOOD LODGING: Kimpton Hotel Monaco, Salt Lake City, UT; **Hotel 43**, Boise, ID; **The Heathman Lodge**, Vancouver, WA; **Spirit West River Lodge**, Riverside, WY; **Antlers Inn**, Walden, CO

BY SHERRY MONAHAN

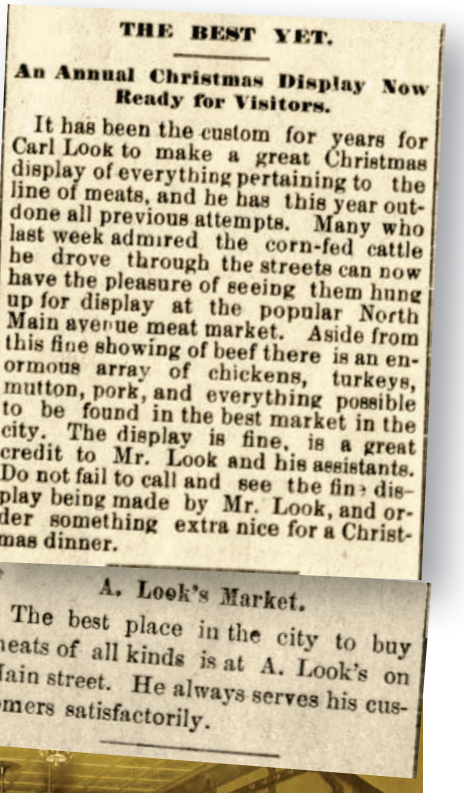
Look's Market

After 140 years, a legendary South Dakota butcher shop is still in business.

It was 1883 when Carl Look, an apprenticed German butcher, and his brother, August, opened their butcher shop in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Some of the meats they sold included spring chickens, lamb and veal cutlets. Pork sausage was their specialty, but they also carried staples like ketchup, beans and sauerkraut. In 1891, Carl and his brother parted ways and he started his own butcher shop in town.

Carl's son, Charles LeRoy "Roy," apprenticed with his father after school and recalled not only learning butchering, but also acting as his dad's bill collector. He eventually became an integral part of the daily operations of the meat market. When Carl died in 1941, he left the business to his children, and Roy took charge.

By the 1950s, Look's moved away from the butchering business and focused on selling groceries and some meats. Roy recalled they made the move when people started eating better, so they added more grocery items. Despite changes over the years, Roy said they offered high quality products like in-house cured bacon, bologna and liver



THE BEST YET.

An Annual Christmas Display Now Ready for Visitors.

It has been the custom for years for Carl Look to make a great Christmas display of everything pertaining to the line of meats, and he has this year outdone all previous attempts. Many who last week admired the corn-fed cattle he drove through the streets can now have the pleasure of seeing them hung up for display at the popular North Main avenue meat market. Aside from this fine showing of beef there is an enormous array of chickens, turkeys, mutton, pork, and everything possible to be found in the best market in the city. The display is fine, is a great credit to Mr. Look and his assistants. Do not fail to call and see the fine display being made by Mr. Look, and order something extra nice for a Christmas dinner.

A. Look's Market.

The best place in the city to buy meats of all kinds is at A. Look's on Main street. He always serves his customers satisfactorily.

Choice Meats

Of all kinds can always be had at A Look's meat market, Main avenue. Orders by telephone promptly attended to.

After three years of operation, Look's Market of Sioux City, South Dakota, began to receive regular accolades in the local *Argus Leader*, including its telephone service for direct orders and its notable Christmas window displays of the finest available meats.

Historic Photo of Look's Market Courtesy True West Archives/
October 30, 1886, July 9, 1887 and December 22, 1891 "Argus Leader," Sioux City, South Dakota Newsclippings Courtesy Newspapers.com

and pork sausage, which were the same items that his father offered. He credited their sausage quality to Robert Reitz, who was with the business for 50 years, starting in 1909. They used Carl's same recipes, but the seasoning was different. Roy noted that back in the day they had to grind their own black pepper and coriander seeds and mix that with salt in 100-pound paper bags. In the 1950s, they found a Chicago company to do it for them. When Carl owned the business, they did their own slaughtering, but when John Morrell & Co. opened in 1909, Look's had them do it for them.

When Roy took time off, one of his pastimes was fishing. He and his wife headed to Battle Lake, Minnesota, in the late 1940s, and she caught a six-pound Northern. He caught a walleye and claimed it was also six pounds. She didn't agree, so she weighed it and it turned out that his fish was only four pounds. The newspaper reported, "Mr. Look is still trying."

Roy retired in the 1960s, and D.C. "Bud" Doer, who started with them as a driver in 1938, purchased the business. Doer was a favorite among the customers and ran Look's for decades. He continued to offer all the traditional Look's products they had become known for, including bologna, homemade sausages and beefsteaks. Today, Look's still offers prime cuts of meat and house-made sausages, smokes their own bacon, and has a bakery, deli and restaurant.

BACON AND EGGS

6 2-inch pieces of bacon
6 eggs
Salt and pepper to taste

Cut bacon into 2-inch squares and fry over medium heat until tender, but not crispy.

Remove the pieces and leave some of the bacon fat. Drain bacon on paper towels.

Return pan to the heat and add 2 or 3 squares back into the pan (as many as you want to cook) and gently drop an egg onto each bacon square. Repeat as you like. Cook the eggs until desired.

You can splash some bacon fat over the top of the eggs to cook the top if you like.

Recipe adapted from Big Stone City, Dakota Territory's, *The Herald*, April 2, 1886.

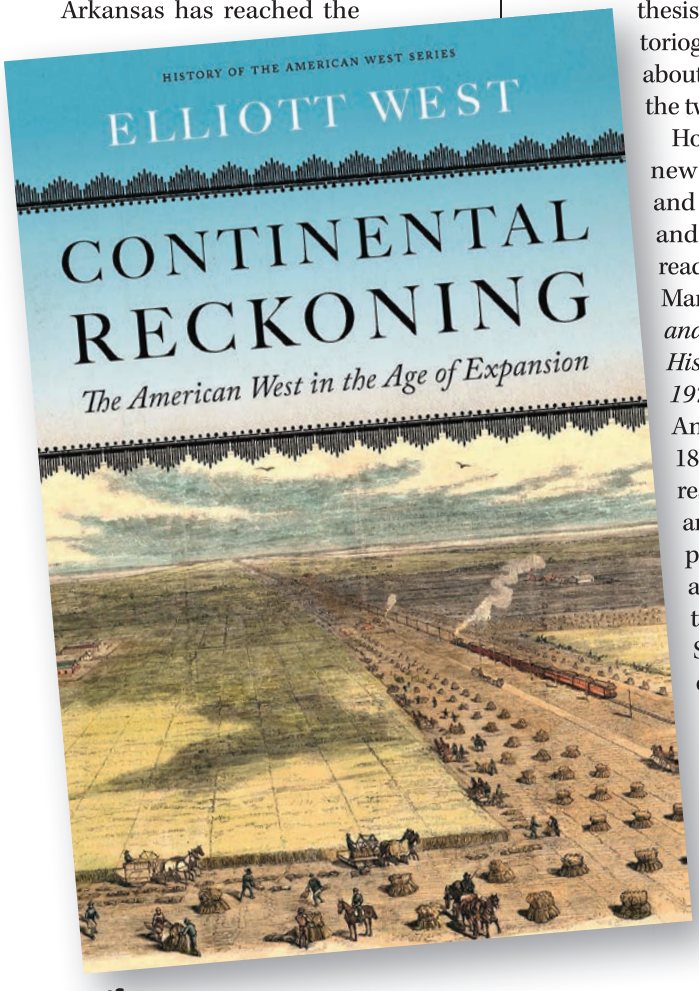
Sherry Monahan kicked off her journey into Old West cuisine, spirits and places by authoring *Taste of Tombstone*. Visit *SherryMonahan.com* to learn more about her books, awards and TV appearances.

BOOK REVIEWS EDITOR: STUART ROSEBROOK

Expanding Horizon

Elliott West's Continental Reckoning, *plus a Texas Ranger history, a dual biography of Cody and Hickok, a novel of the Mississippi frontier and a Californio biography.*

I first became aware of Elliott West's scholarship while in graduate school in the 1990s. West's *Growing Up With the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (1989), *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (1995) and *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (1998) were all required reading for young scholars of Western history. Three decades later, the Alumni Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Arkansas has reached the pinnacle of his academic life. Elliott West's latest, *Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion* (University of Nebraska Press, $39.95), is one of the most important books published on the subject in the past 50 years. As Nebraska Press's "History of the American West" series editor Richard Etulain writes in his introduction, "the most important contribution of West's extensive and invaluable study is its illustration of his Greater Reconstruction thesis, the most notable historiographical idea advanced about the American West in the twenty-first century."



How does West deliver his new synthesis of America and the West in a literary and dramatic style to his readers? Similar to William Manchester's style in *Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972*, West's narrative of American history from 1848 to 1890 provides the reader with both a broad and detailed sweep of the political, social, racial and cultural upheavals that define the United States in the middle decades of the 19th century. He divides his narrative into two parts: "Unsettling America" and "Things Come Together." Narratively, West uses the Civil War as his fulcrum between the two halves of *Continental Reckoning*. He begins with the continental expansion following the Mexican-American War and ends with the tumultuous American decade of the 1880s. He does not use the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee as a Turnerian endpoint, but as a bridge that leads forward into the social, cultural, diplomatic and economic complexities that will define American history—nationally and internationally—in the 20th century.

What readers should appreciate most about West's scholarship is his ability to tell such a grand story of America with depth, detail and literary style. His volume is a magnanimous history of America during the nation's era of greatest expansion. The author's conclusions will expand your consideration of the magnitude of change and upheaval that occurred in the United States between 1848 and 1890. The professor's Greater Reconstruction thesis amalgamates 19th-century American history into a whole, rather than separating the national story by region.

By the final chapter of *Continental Reckoning*, the reader should pause and realize they have read one of the most important contributions to the American historiography published in the past half-century. Historians of America and the West will recognize that Elliott West, one of the most respected scholars in his field the past 40 years, has accomplished a great deal in his career, but will remember *Continental Reckoning* as his master work, truly a magnum opus of his highly lauded scholarly career.

—Stuart Rosebrook

Photo by Robert Ray

2023 SPUR AWARD WINNERS

The WWA Spur winners and finalists are scheduled to be honored June 22-25 in Rapid City, South Dakota. Congratulations to this year's winners in the following categories:

Historical Nonfiction Book: *Saving Yellowstone: Exploration and Preservation in Reconstruction America* by Megan Kate Nelson (Scribner)

Biography: *Before Billy the Kid: The Boy Behind the Legendary Outlaw* by Melody Groves (TwoDot)

First Nonfiction Book: *American Hero, Kansas Heritage: Frederick Funston's Early Years, 1865-1890* by Clyde W. Toland (Flint Hills Publishing)

Short Nonfiction: "Texas Jack Takes an Encore" by Matthew Ross Kerns (*Wild West*)

Historical Novel: *Properties of Thirst* by Marianne Wiggins (Simon & Schuster)

Traditional Novel: *The Secret in the Wall: A Silver Rush Mystery* by Ann Parker (Poisoned Pen Press/Sourcebooks)

Original Mass-Market Paperback Novel: *This Dead Man's Trail: A Carson Stone Western* by Nate Morgan (Pinnacle/Kensington)

Romance Novel: *Proving Her Claim: On the Dakota Frontier* by CK Van Dam (Pasque Publishing)

First Novel: *Proving Her Claim: On the Dakota Frontier* by CK Van Dam (Pasque Publishing)

Short Fiction: "No Quarter" by Kathleen O'Neal Gear, published in *Rebel Hearts Anthology* (Wolfpack Publishing)

Drama Script: *Dead for a Dollar* by Walter Hill (CHAOS a Film Company/Polaris Pictures)

For a complete list of winners and finalists in all categories, visit *WesternWriters.org*.

—Stuart Rosebrook

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Joseph Sadeeh

GERMAN AUTHOR SHARES HER LOVE OF WESTERN BOOKS

Manuela Schneider has written four Western mystery novels that feature female heroines, famous Western towns and historical characters. Her composition as a co-songwriter of 2021's "Miner's Candle" song has achieved recognition in seven countries worldwide. Her first short movie won numerous awards in the U.S. and Europe. Currently she is working on four historical novels and recently finished a Western movie script. The authors and books which influenced her writing:

❶ ***Winnetou 1-3*** by Karl May (Independent): After discovering that May made up everything, I decided at age 10 to visit the Southwest myself to learn the truth about the Apache people. I have been visiting since 1996.

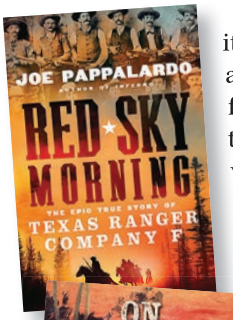
❷ ***Lonesome Dove*** by Larry McMurty (Scribner): The first Western I read in English was given to me by a true cowboy and spur maker. The novel will always remind me of my first year at a dude ranch and the greatest friendship we shared.

❸ ***Little House on The Prairie*** by Laura Ingalls Wilder (HarperCollins): So important that the story of a family and their hardship during pioneer days was written down in a way that still warms my heart. Even today I read these books and daydream about Walnut Grove.

❹ ***True Grit*** by Charles Portis (Simon & Schuster): I love the toughness of the girl and that she wins against all odds. *True Grit* was the inspiration for my first novel. I would have done the same for my father.

❺ ***According to Kate*** by Chris Enss (TwoDot): The character of Big Nose Kate has always fascinated me. Amazing research and new insights about Doc Holliday´s European gal.

Rangers Extraordinaire



Joe Pappalardo's *Red Sky Morning: The Epic True Story of Texas Ranger Company F* (St. Martin's Press, $29.99) begins with a positive idea: present the history of Company F of the Frontier Battalion, but in presenting that idea other elements weaken that idea, and *Red Sky Morning* becomes several books in one. In so doing, embarrassing errors creep in: Bass was killed not in *Red* Rock [p.113] but in Round Rock; the Adjutant General was John B. Jones, not *Tom* Jones; gang member Seaborn Barnes was killed by a head shot from Ranger Richard Ware's *pistol*, not his rifle. These are simple errors, but a knowledgeable peer review would certainly have caught them. The book has a great title, and it would be a better book if the author had concentrated on editing and annotating the unpublished manuscript by Mark Dugan detailing the history of the Conner Gang and its ultimate feud with the Texas Rangers.

—Chuck Parsons, author with Thomas C. Bicknell of King Fisher: The Short Life and Elusive Legend of a Texas Desperado

Fightin' Frontiersmen

Dueling and pirates and Indians, oh my! Greg Hunt's *On Savage Ground: A Mississippi Valley Novel* (Five Star, $25.95) is a wonderfully exciting tale of 1720s New Orleans on the edge of savage wilderness and at the mercy of the weather and the river. There is plenty of love, lust, depravity, deception, corruption and deadly violence as Marc Lafitte makes a new life for himself and his true love. Hunt makes us feel the fear, grit and suffering that was life on a very wild frontier while giving insight into the conflicted emotions and decisions involved in what it's like to be owned as a slave and to be a slave owner. The concluding duel will have readers on the edge of their seats knowing that something just isn't right.

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

Legends of the West

Chock-full of interesting tidbits, *Wild Bill Hickok and Buffalo Bill Cody: Plainsmen of the Legendary West* by Bill Markley (TwoDot, $24.95) is a treasure trove of all things "Bill." For example—both Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill were soldiers, scouts, lawmen, expert horsemen, gunslingers, gamblers and showmen. They fought in the Civil War together and became friends who worked and played together often. Dotted with tons of information throughout, Markley's awe-inspiring research leaves no doubt as to accuracy. And where there are questions, he makes no attempt to second-guess. He simply states what he thinks happened. Anyone interested in the Old West should have Markley's book on their shelf. It's not a quick read, but it's remarkably well written and worth the time ingesting facts. I highly recommend this book as well as his other well-researched books.

—Melody Groves, author of Before Billy the Kid

A Legendary Californio

Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz tackle the life of an early California pioneer in *Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo: Life in Spanish, Mexican, and American California* (University of Oklahoma Press, $45). The biography presents a compelling and readable narrative about the life of a man generally forgotten outside of California's history, but who helped shape the region's identity before, during and after the Gold Rush days of the 1840s and 1850s. Perhaps the most important element of the book is the acknowledgment of Vallejo's published observations of early California history up to 1849, which give a rare view into the cultural life of Mexican-Americans in California during that era.

—Erik Wright, assistant editor of The Tombstone Epitaph

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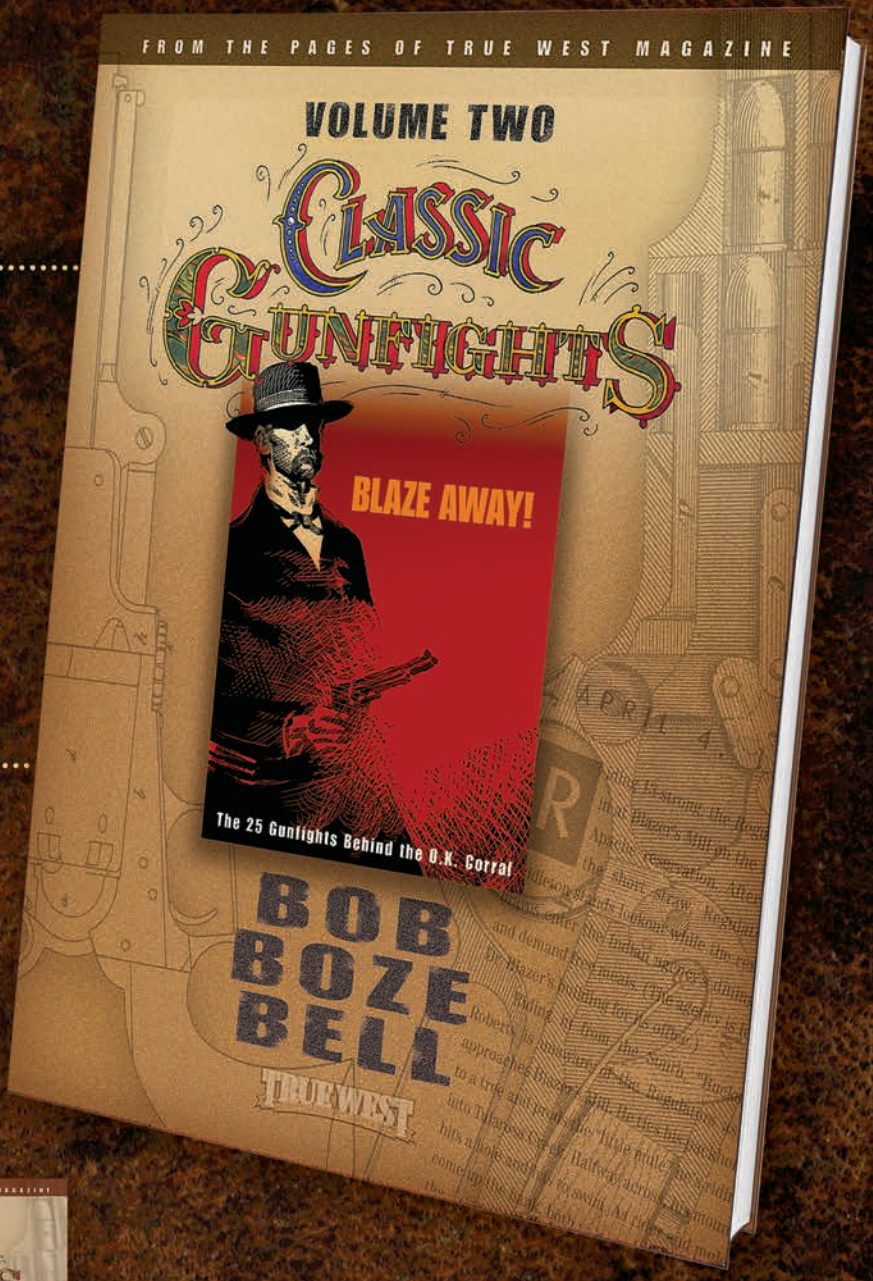

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TRUE WEST

By Henry C. Parke

Walter Hill Returns

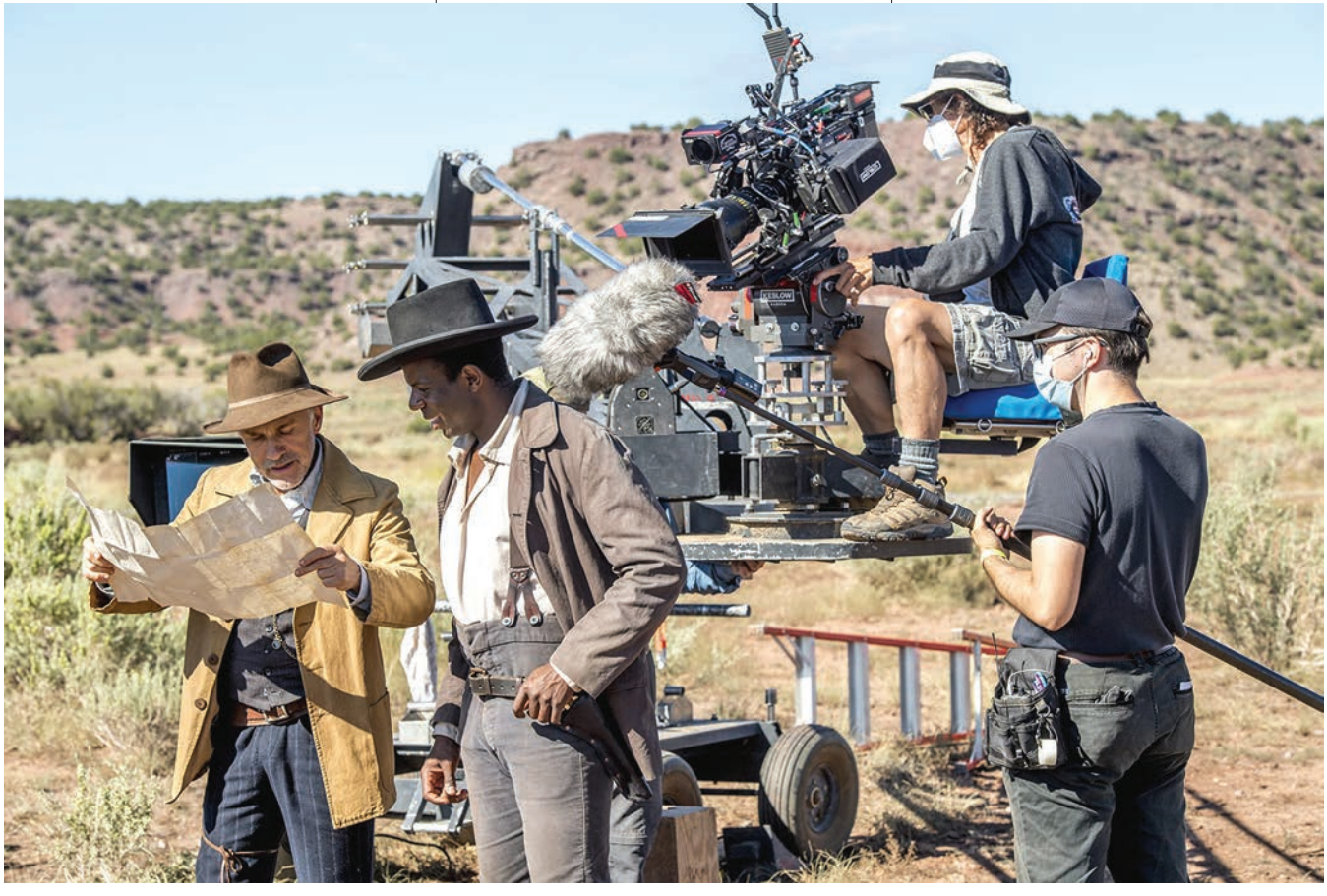
The award-winning Hollywood icon saddles back up for Dead for a Dollar, *a new Western.*

Having not directed a Western since 2006's *Broken Trail*, Walter Hill is happy to be back in the saddle again. "Oh, it's very good. I like making Westerns. I think I've made more of them than anybody else that's still working except for Eastwood. You're out in beautiful country, and I like working with the actors and the crew. This shoot was done very quickly, in 25 days, outside of Santa Fe. We shot digital. Other than that, I wouldn't say things have changed much. Lloyd Ahern, the cameraman on *Dead for a Dollar*—he and I first worked together in 1966 on *Gunsmoke*. I was a production assistant, and Lloyd was a camera assistant."

Many who've seen *Dead* have commented on the dedication at the end, "In Memory of Budd Boetticher," a fine action director best remembered for his 1960s collaborations with Randolph Scott. "Budd and I were certainly friends, but that really wasn't the reason. I went out and I shot this movie." He was watching a cut. "When it ended, I looked over to the film editor, Phil Norden, and I said, you know, Budd Boetticher would've liked this movie. It's kind of like his. It's a bunch of people out in the middle of nowhere. It's obviously made quickly. It's about codes, values, ethics, what is proper behavior. It's a Western in the purest form, which I think Budd was really a master at. And, I thought, Budd doesn't get enough credit. And I ought

Director-screenwriter Walter Hill digitally filmed the 114-minute *Dead for a Dollar* entirely on location in New Mexico under a tight budget and shooting schedule of just 25 days. In the foreground, costars Christoph Waltz and Warren Burke prepare for a scene.

All Images Courtesy Myriad Pictures Unless Otherwise Noted



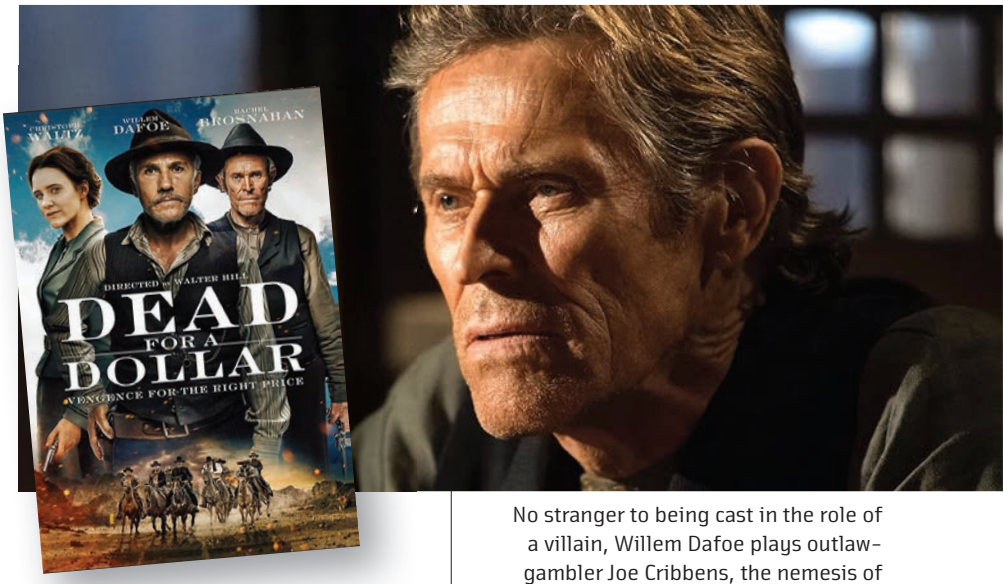
L.-r.: Rachel Brosnahan, Christoph Waltz and Warren Burke costar as kidnap victim Rachel Kidd, bounty hunter Max Borlund and buffalo soldier Sgt. Alonzo Poe in Walter Hill's classic ensemble Western *Dead for a Dollar*.

to say this: of the seven (Randolph Scotts) that he did, the four best ones were all written by Burt Kennedy. Kennedy was a wonderful screenwriter, and later on, a good director."

Christoph Waltz plays bounty-man Max Borlund, hired to rescue the allegedly kidnapped Rachel Brosnahan. "Rachel was a rather accomplished horse-backer. Christoph rides very well in a European style that was correct for the character."

Dead for a Dollar director Walter Hill wrote the screenplay and shares story credit with Matt Harris. Hill's first screenwriting credit for a Western was the modern classic *The Getaway* (1972).

Walter Hill Photo Courtesy Myriad Pictures/The Getaway Poster Courtesy National General Pictures



No stranger to being cast in the role of a villain, Willem Dafoe plays outlaw-gambler Joe Cribbens, the nemesis of bounty hunter Christoph Waltz's Max Borlund in *Dead for a Dollar*.

Instead of bright colors, the world of *Dead for a Dollar* is practically sepia tone. "The dominant color is really kind of tan, bleached out. These are not Mexican towns, and 90 percent of the movie takes place in Mexico. One thing about northern Mexico, the sun is constantly with you. We're kind of a scavenger movie. We can't even build any sets. These are all standing towns, and sets that have been built for other movies. We could alter the sets to our needs—we had enough capital for that—but we couldn't build anything."

"Like every director, I wished I had another week to make the film, but we had just enough. I was very, very pleased with the cast we put together, of very distinguished actors. I wanted a movie that was more than touching the bases of traditional Westerns. I also thought we had to have more contemporary issues, something not just frozen in amber, in a movie that could have been made in 1940 or '60. So, I introduced the race elements and the feminist element, and tried to keep it all in a balance. The hardest part was to keep the dialogue in the context of 1897, and not just echo current attitudes."

While *Dead* had a limited theatrical run in the U.S., Hill says, "It will be a theatrical release in most of Europe and Asia and Latin America." He is optimistic as to the future of Westerns. "You know, the biggest fans of Westerns is an older crowd. And the older people get, the less they want to go to movie theaters, but it doesn't mean they don't wanna watch what they wanna watch. And now the delivery systems, streaming services, are really getting so good. So potentially the hidden audience for the Western will come out through streaming, video on demand."

His favorite character, Max Borlund, was inspired by a real Western legend, "Chris Madsen, who was mainly in the old Oklahoma Indian Territory. He was born in Denmark. He fought against the Prussians, he joined the French Foreign Legion, did a tour of duty in North Africa, went to Marseilles, got on a boat to New York, went West, joined the Army, was a scout for the Army. And then he drifted into law work, worked as a sheriff, and a town marshal. So many of the people of the West of this period were immigrants. Wouldn't it be interesting to have your bounty-man,

In *Dead for a Dollar*, Benjamin Bratt, center, costars as Tiberio Vargas, a Chihuahua, Mexico, landowner who has made his wealth through intimidation and banditry.

instead of the classic kind of Anglo, represent a European sensibility, reflecting their attitudes and education? But at the same time, Americanized."

Christoph said his favorite line in the movie was where he and Poe (Warren Burke) were talking. Poe is trying to find out what his origins are and what he is. And the scene ends with Christoph saying, "'I'm an American.' And that's the kind of guy Christoph is. It was a good moment."

REVIEW

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE WILD BUNCH (TUBI ORIGINAL)

Courtesy TUBI

Screenwriter Geoff Mead (*6 Guns*) and director Anthony C. Ferrante (*Sharknado*) have imbued their Butch/Bunch 2023 prequel with an unexpected amount of near-history. Bruce Dern and Dee Wallace play the cattle-rustling couple who took Butch in as a teen, and whose last name he takes. Jeffrey Combs (*Re-Animator*) plays Charlie Siringo, and Anthony Palermo plays Tom Horn—the brain and the brute sent after Cassidy by the Pinkerton Agency—and it's a bloody path they hew. Ross Jirgl not only resembles Butch, but is effective as a likable outlaw who is crushed when an innocent man is killed by psychotic Kid Curry (Mead). They make the most of their restrictive budget with strong art direction, location photography and performances, including Jilon Vanover as Sundance and Nikki Leigh as Etta.

Henry C. Parke, Western Film and TV Editor for *True West*, is a screenwriter, and blogs for the INSP Channel, and at *HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com*. A book based on his *True West* columns, *The Greatest Westerns Ever Made*, will be published by TwoDot in spring 2024.

BY PETER CORBETT

Bozeman, Montana

Plan a trip to the eclectic Big Sky college town and relax in its great Western vibe.

After statehood in 1889, Montana towns fought bitterly over landing the state capital. Anaconda, Bozeman, Butte, Helena and others staked a claim.

Three years later, Montana voters settled on Helena. But all was not lost for Bozeman. It was awarded the state land grant college, Montana Agriculture College, which became Montana State University.

Helena ended up with a statehouse full of politicians and bureaucrats, while Bozeman got students, scholars and professors. They make up nearly 30 percent of Bozeman's population of 60,000 people.

Bozeman is a college town, but it's still in touch with its Western roots. That includes outdoor adventures—fishing, hiking, mountain biking, climbing, rafting and skiing. When snow flies at the nearby Bridger Bowl ski area, a blue light flashes atop the historic Baxter Hotel.

Rodeo is big on campus. The Montana State men's and women's rodeo teams have won nine national championships between them in the past 50 years. The university has also hosted the American Indian Council Powwow each spring for close to a half century.

In August 1864, Montana Territory pioneer and trail builder John Bozeman (right) partnered with Daniel Rouse and Thomas Beall and platted out the town of Bozeman. The frontier entrepreneur did not get to witness the growth of the town named after him because he was killed under mysterious circumstances on April 20, 1867.

Photos Courtesy True West Archives

TOP TO BOTTOM

Bozeman is just 90 minutes from Yellowstone National Park's north entrance and the spectacular Mammoth Hot Springs.

Courtesy Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development

The Museum of the Rockies' Living History Farm programs educate visitors on life in southwestern Montana from 1890 to 1910. In 2023 the farm is open May 29 to September 3.

Courtesy Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development

The 13th Annual Bozeman Stampede is one of the top Western events in the Montana town. In 2023, the three-day PRCA rodeo will be held at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds August 11–13.

Courtesy OnlyInBozeman

"There's definitely a Western vibe here," said Michael Fox, Museum of the Rockies history curator. "We grew out of being just a cowtown and agricultural town."

The Museum of the Rockies, Gallatin History Museum and Extreme History Project tell the stories of Bozeman's history.

The town was named for John Bozeman, who with mountain man John Jacobs, blazed a northern route off the Oregon Trail to the Virginia City goldfields in 1863. They settled in the Gallatin Valley and laid out a townsite a year later.

Bozeman was well regarded in the town, but his personal life was troubling. Six years earlier, Bozeman had left behind three girls and a wife in Georgia. Bozeman wrote a letter to his mother asking her to get him a divorce, according to Crystal Alegria, director of the Extreme History Project, a nonprofit group that leads tours and shares Bozeman's history through lectures and other programs.

"We had a lot of scalawags back then," Alegria said. "I guess Bozeman was one of the scalawags."

"History isn't pretty" is how the Extreme History Project frames it.

Bozeman was killed in April 1867 while traveling on the Bozeman Trail near the Yellowstone River. A business partner, Thomas Cover, said he and Bozeman were attacked by Indians. Cover survived

but inconsistencies in his story have led historians to wonder whether he murdered Bozeman.

The Extreme History Project, operating out of a former bordello, offers tours of Bozeman's red light district, the Sunset Hills Cemetery, where John Bozeman is buried, and historic Main Street, which includes two restored theaters—the Ellen and Rialto, a music venue.

The Gallatin History Museum at the west end of Main Street is in the 1913 Gallatin County Jail.

The historic district downtown also houses shops, boutiques, restaurants, coffeehouses and craft breweries. One of the oldest shops is Powder Horn Outfitters, established in 1946.

The impressive Museum of the Rockies is known for its paleontology and extensive collection of dinosaur fossils. It also has exhibits on the Indigenous People of the northern plains.

The Paugh History Hall focuses on the region's fur trade, Bozeman's frontier era and the founding of nearby Yellowstone National Park in 1872. A photo exhibit details the arrival in 1883 of the Northern Pacific Railway to Bozeman, Fox said.

The museum's Living History Farm simulates what a Montana homestead was like in the 1890s. It features a two-story log home that was moved from Willow Creek, Montana. The farm also has a blacksmith shop, chicken coop, root cellar, milking barn, orchards and a vegetable garden.

If that's not enough, the Museum of the Rockies also has one of the few mounted Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons in the country.

Born in Omaha, **Peter Corbett** has lived and traveled in the West for 50 years. He graduated from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and had a 35-year career in Arizona journalism.

WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY

FIRST STOP
Bozeman Convention and Visitors Bureau
2000 Commerce Way
VisitBozeman.com

WHEN DINOSAURS ROAMED THE WEST
Museum of the Rockies focuses on the history of the Northern Rockies and is a hot spot for dinosaur fossils.
MuseumOfTheRockies.org

GRAB A COLD ONE AT ALE WORKS
Montana Ale Works is a fun spot in a restored Northern Pacific Railway freight depot.
MontanaAleWorks.com

ROCK OUT AT THE R BAR
The Rocking R Bar, with an eye-catching neon sign, has been a downtown hangout since 1947. It was leveled by a 2009 explosion but rose from the ashes in a new building.
RockingRBar.com

CHECK OUT THE BAXTER
The 1929 Baxter Hotel no longer hosts overnight guests, but its Bacchus Pub and Ted's Montana Grill are popular spots for the evening. Ted Turner is cofounder of Ted's Montana Grill.
TheBaxterHotel.com

Courtesy Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development

TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE
The Extreme History Project, a nonprofit group, leads tours of Bozeman's former red light district, historic Main Street and the cemetery where John Bozeman is buried.
ExtremeHistoryProject.org


Yellowstone is more than a park.
In Montana, it's an entire country.
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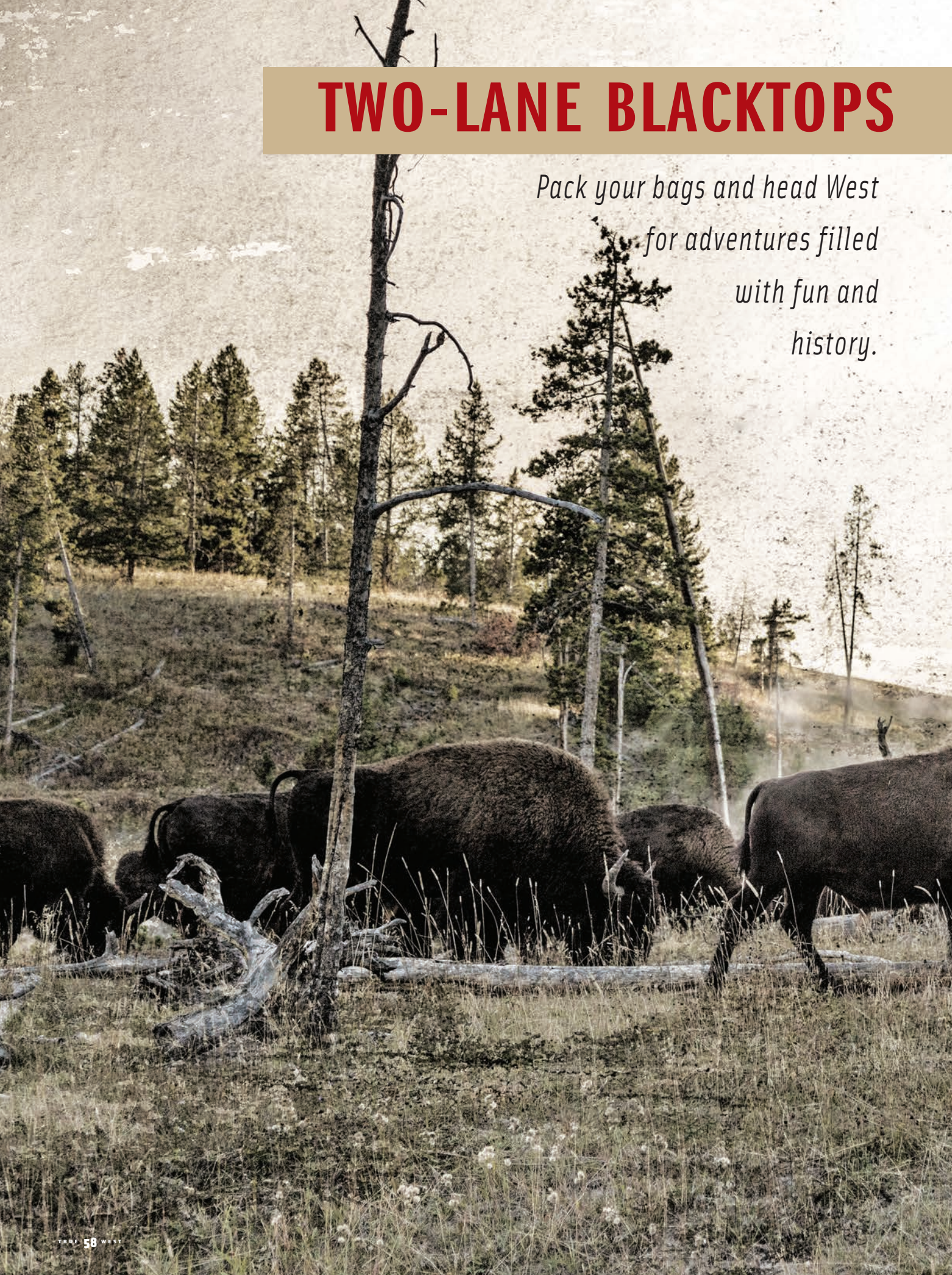
MONTANA'S YELLOWSTONE COUNTRY
LIVINGSTON ROUNDUP RODEO

TWO-LANE BLACKTOPS

Pack your bags and head West for adventures filled with fun and history.



AND RED DIRT HIGHWAYS

BY STUART ROSEBROOK

Road tripping across the West has come a long way from the four-to six-month do-or-die Conestoga wagon trains that crossed the country from Missouri to Oregon in the 1840s. But don't get me wrong; the West is still a vast place with thousands of miles of backroads, byways, scenic routes and yes, dirt roads, to explore. Here travelers can rewind and renew themselves in the majesty and history of the region.

Now, if you have four to six months to explore the West, good for you! We know that most travelers might have a week to two weeks for a summer adventure, so for 2023 we have created eight trips across different regions of the Western U.S. Each of these can be done all at once or those who live in the area might divide the trip into several long weekends.

So get out your maps and *True West Travel Guide*; pack your bags and make some reservations. It is time to explore the small towns, historic sites and natural wonders along the West's byways and highways and experience firsthand where history happened.

A highlight of a scenic road trip to Yellowstone National Park is seeing the diverse wildlife of the park, including the bison herd.

Courtesy Gates Frontiers Fund Wyoming Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

Grand Canyon Railway
Williams, Arizona

Courtesy Grand Canyon Railway

Arizona Adventures

Discover the historic towns of the Grand Canyon State on its scenic back roads.

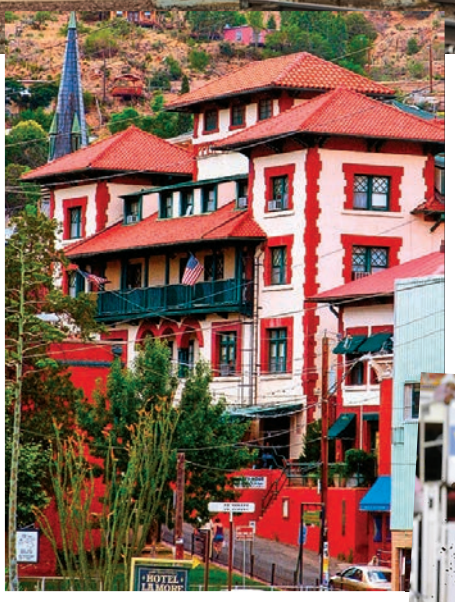
Summertime is a wonderful time to explore Arizona. The Grand Canyon State's small towns, historic sites, natural wonders and scenic highways provide endless travel opportunities.

The first tour, from the mountains of Prescott to Flagstaff to Williams to the Grand Canyon, travels some of the most beautiful highways in the state.

Once in Prescott, slow down and enjoy the pace of the historic city and its access to scenic routes, like 89A which switchbacks up and over the mountains through Jerome, Cottonwood, Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon. Book a weekend in a historic hotel or cabin and enjoy the mountains and the Verde Valley.

In southern Arizona, milehigh Bisbee offers the cool climes of the Mule Mountains with a historic central district that makes the old mining town a perfect place to call home for a week while exploring the diverse environs of Cochise County.

Arizona also has some of the best back roads in the West, but check with the local U.S. Forest Service office for rules, road conditions and access due to weather and fire restrictions.



Copper Queen Hotel
Bisbee, Arizona

Courtesy Bisbee Visitor Center

BUCKET LIST

Prescott: This is a great city from which to start a tour of northern Arizona. Book a room at the historic Hassayampa Inn within walking distance of the shopping district around the Courthouse Plaza, Whiskey Row and Sharlot Hall Museum. Ask the Chamber for directions to the old mining town of Crown King.

Jerome: At the end of a beautiful drive on State Route 89A from Prescott over Mingus Mountain, Jerome is a spectacularly located historic mining town. Today its narrow streets are packed with art galleries, unique restaurants, hotels and inns.

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

Flagstaff: The mountain city is home to Northern Arizona University, Museum of Northern Arizona, Lowell Observatory and the spectacular San Francisco Peaks.

Prescott Frontier Days
World's Oldest Rodeo, Prescott, Arizona

Courtesy Miller Photography

Sedona: In the heart of Red Rock country, drive scenic 89A through Oak Creek Canyon.

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. Schedule time to explore the historic "Mother Road" from Williams to Ash Fork, Seligman, Peach Springs and Kingman.

Sheridan

COUNTY, WYOMING, USA.

HISTORY. HERITAGE. CRAFT CULTURE. THE GREAT OUTDOORS. THE NATURE OF THE WEST.















1.1

million acres of pristine wildland in the Bighorn National Forest, encompassing 1,200 miles of trails, 30 campgrounds, 10 picnic areas, 6 mountain lodges, legendary dude ranches, and hundreds of miles of waterways. The Bighorns offer limitless outdoor recreation opportunities.

101

restaurants, bars, food trucks, lounges, breweries, distilleries, tap rooms, saloons, and holes in the wall are spread across Sheridan County. That's 101 different ways to apres adventure in the craft capital of Wyoming. We are also home to more than 40 hotels, motels, RV parks, and B&Bs.

4

seasons in which to get WYO'd. If you're a skijoring savant, you'll want to check out the Winter Rodeo in February. July features the beloved Sheridan WYO Rodeo. Spring and fall are the perfect time to chase cool mountain streams or epic backcountry lines.

∞

Sheridan features a thriving, historic downtown district, with western allure, hospitality and good graces to spare; a vibrant arts scene; bombastic craft culture; a robust festival and events calendar; and living history from one corner of the county to the next.

Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center, Salmon, Idaho

Courtesy Idaho Tourism

Bisbee: The county seat, Bisbee was once one of Arizona's largest copper camps. Today, it has become a year-round tourist destination. Whether with an overnight at the Copper Queen Hotel or at the Shady Dell Vintage Trailer Court, Bisbee is a fun town to use as a home base while exploring all of the natural wonders and territorial towns of Cochise County, including Tombstone, Douglas, Benson and Willcox.

Benson: A gateway city to Cochise County, the town is a popular stop for visitors to Kartchner Caverns State Park.

Douglas: Book a night at the historic Gadsden Hotel and take a tour of the Slaughter Ranch at the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge.

Tombstone: The state's most infamous Territorial mining camp is known internationally for the Earp-Clanton gunfight behind the O.K. Corral. Tour the Tombstone County Courthouse State Historic Park, Boothill Graveyard, historic Allen Street, the Birdcage Theatre and the Gunfighter Hall of Fame.

Best Websites: *VisitArizona.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Boise Basin Museum
Idaho City, Idaho

Courtesy Boise Basin Museum

The Heart of Idaho

Discover the beauty and history of the Gem State from its capital city to the Bitterroot Mountains.

The vistas and natural beauty along the scenic highways of central and eastern Idaho are stunning and awe inspiring. From the high desert valley of the state capital of Boise, the trip northeast to Salmon is on an interconnected route of some of Idaho's most beloved byways. Along sections of the Lewis and Clark, Ponderosa Pine, Salmon River and Sawtooth scenic byways, the traveler will discover history and hospitality in small towns plus natural wonders and outdoor adventures from day hikes to horseback riding, from flyfishing to river rafting.

BUCKET LIST

Boise: Relax in the state's capital city and tour some of the state's best museums, including the Idaho State Museum, the Basque Museum and Cultural Center and the Museum of Mining and Geology.

Hailey/Ketchum/Sun Valley: Known for its world-class skiing in Sun Valley, historic Hailey and Ketchum welcome summer visitors to enjoy the beauty of their mountain towns. Ketchum's Trailing the Sheep Festival will celebrate its 27th year October 4-8, 2023.

Idaho City: At what was once Idaho's "Queen of the Gold Camps," visitors can walk the boardwalks and tour the Boise Basin Historical Museum housed in the original post office built in 1867.

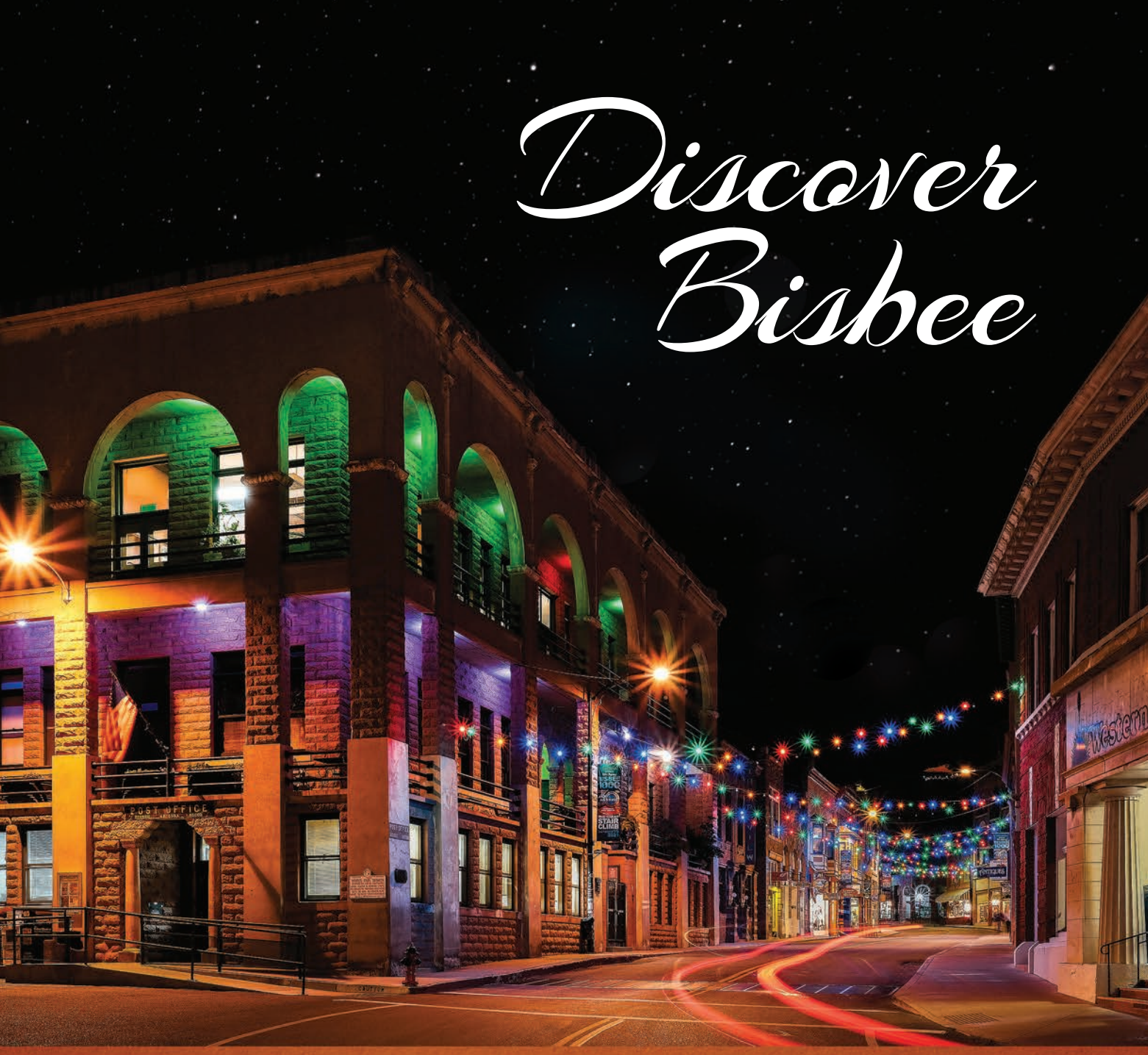
Land of Yankee Fork State Park: The park is just outside Challis at the crossroads of Idaho 75 and U.S. 93 and is home to three ghost towns, Bayhorse, Bonanza and Custer, plus the Yankee Fork Gold Dredge.

Old Fort Boise: A small monument in the Fort Boise Wildlife Management Area marks the site of the old fort, originally a Hudson's Bay outpost at the confluence of the Boise and Snake rivers.

Salmon: The mountain town sits near the confluence of the Salmon and Lehmi rivers along the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail on U.S. 93. Salmon is home to the Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center, which is dedicated to the heritage and history of the region.

Stanley: The crown jewel of the Sawtooth Valley, the year-round destination for nature and outdoor enthusiasts sits at the crossroads of Idaho's scenic highways 21 and 75.

Best Websites: *VisitIdaho.org*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*



Discover Bisbee

Bisbee, Arizona is a mile high in the scenic Mule Mountains. Just a scenic drive away from Tucson and Phoenix. Bisbee offers the best year-round climate you'll find anywhere. Come enjoy our rich history and Discover Bisbee.

Mine Tours • Electric Bike tours and rentals • Jeep and Golf Cart tours
Dining Options • Entertainment • Museums and MORE

DiscoverBisbee.com

United States Marshals Museum
Fort Smith, Arkansas
Courtesy U.S. Marshals Museum

Missouri and Arkansas

Discover the Gateway to the West states from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Many travelers who vacation in Missouri and Arkansas in the summer head to the ever-popular resort communities of Lake of the Ozarks and Branson in Missouri and Hot Springs and Lake Ouachita in Arkansas. But summer is also a fun time to discover the history and heritage of the two Western gateway states.

In Missouri, the big cities of St. Louis and Kansas City have a lot to offer. From Gateway National Park near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers to the Trailside Center in Kansas City, travelers can follow the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail across the state.

North of Kansas City, St. Joseph sits on the banks of the Missouri River and welcomes summer visitors to immerse themselves in the town's history. Independence and Kearney are part of the greater Kansas City metro area and should not be missed while vacationing in the area.

Bass Reeves Statue
Fort Smith, Arkansas
Courtesy Fort Smith CVB

Driving south from KC to Arkansas, take Interstate 49 to Carthage and Joplin, Missouri, before crossing the state line to Bentonville, Arkansas, and the summer resort community of Rogers and Beaver Lake.

Continue south on Arkansas Scenic Highway 71 through the Ozark Highlands, the Boston Mountains and Ozark National Forest to history-rich Fort Smith.

BUCKET LIST

St. Joseph: Known best as the trailhead for the Pony Express, St. Joseph boasts an historic district that will inspire the imagination and remind visitors of the importance of Missouri's Western frontier towns to American history. Start a tour at the Pony Express Museum, then take time to visit the St. Joseph Museum, Patee House Museum and Jesse James Home, Robidoux Row Museum, Wyeth-Tootle Mansion and Kemper Museum of Art. Book a room at the Whiskey Mansion Inn and stay for a long weekend.

Jesse James Farm Museum
Kearney, Missouri

Courtesy Missouri Tourism

Kearney: At this wonderful community just northeast of Kansas City, don't miss the chance to visit the Jesse James Farm & Museum.

Independence: In one of the great Missouri cities that launched thousands of emigrants westward on the Oregon, Santa Fe and California trails, visitors tour a historic district and the National Frontier Trail Museum.

Kansas City: The western Missouri city has something for everyone, but Western history fans shouldn't miss Westport Landing, the Arabia Steamboat Museum, the Kansas City Museum and Nelson-Atkins Art Museum.

St. Louis: Western history aficionados must visit St. Louis's Gateway to the West National Park, the iconic Gateway Arch and the Park's Museum of Westward Expansion.

Carthage: America's "Maple Leaf City" is a popular stop for cross-country Route 66 cruisers. Learn about the hometown outlaw legend Belle Starr at the Carthage Civil War Museum.

Bentonville: The northeastern Arkansas city is known for the Bentonville History Museum, Museum of Native American History and the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Trail Riding, OTO Pop Up Ranch

Scott Baxter, OTO Ranch, Courtesy TrueRanchCollection.com

Lower Falls, Yellowstone River
Yellowstone National Park

Courtesy OnlyInBozeman.com

Fort Smith: Enjoy a long weekend in the historic city touring the Fort Smith National Historic Site, including the barracks and Judge Isaac Parker's famous courtroom. The United States Marshals Museum is one of the most important museums to open in the U.S. in the past decade.

Best Websites: *VisitMo.com*; *Arkansas.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Montana's Yellowstone Country

Explore Montana's Yellowstone Country and historic and mountainous southwestern Montana.

The historic towns and peaks of the southwestern part of the Big Sky State have something for everyone. Hallmarks of Montana travel are the long, beautiful drives across the nation's fourth-largest state, with scenic byways leading off in almost every direction from interstates I-15, I-90 and I-94.

Bozeman is a lively city to make your first headquarters for a tour of Montana, especially if you are arriving in the state via Yellowstone National Park. From Bozeman, the Montana visitor will quickly discover that southwestern and northwestern Montana offer a lifetime's worth of adventure and historic sites to tour. A scenic loop from Bozeman goes as far west as Wisdom, just outside Big Hole Battlefield National Monument, along scenic highways State 84, 287, 41, 278 and 43.

Driving to the northwest from Bozeman, visit Butte, the state capital of Helena and Great Falls, home to the world-class C.M. Russell Museum

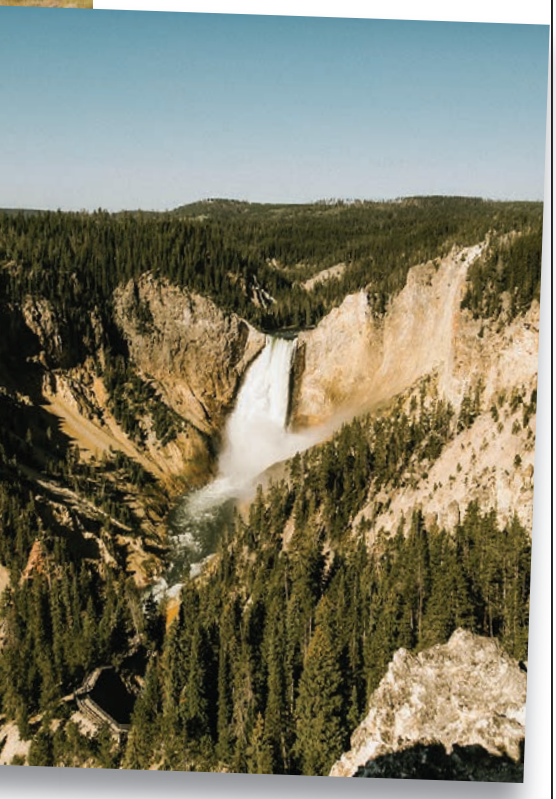
BUCKET LIST

Bozeman: Home to Montana State University, Bozeman has a walkable downtown entertainment district and plenty of lodging, making it a good headquarters for visiting the western part of the state. Don't miss the Museum of the Rockies.

Livingston: The Northern Pacific Railway city has a lively historic downtown with good restaurants. Like Bozeman, it is a popular gateway town to Yellowstone. Don't miss the Livingston Depot Center in the former NPRR station.

Emigrant: In Paradise Valley, adjacent to the Yellowstone River and surrounded by the Gallatin National Forest, don't miss a chance to visit the Old Saloon and Chico Hot Springs Resort & Day Spa.

Gallatin: The gateway to the northwest entrance to Yellowstone, Gallatin offers summertime rafting, a very popular activity for visitors to the national park.



Ennis: The quaint town is well-known for fly-fishing, its summer music in the park series and a Fourth of July parade and rodeo.

Wisdom: At this gateway town to Big Hole National Battlefield, don't miss a chance to visit Conover's Trading Post on Highway 43.

Virginia City: In the summer, book a room in the historic mining boomtown and immerse yourself in early Montana history.

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

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

North Dakota State Historical Museum

Courtesy North Dakota Tourism

North Dakota's Trailblazers

Experience the history of the Lewis & Clark Expedition in the Great Plains State.

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

Before hitting the road west to North Dakota's Badlands and Upper Missouri

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

Best Websites: *VisitMT.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Theodore Roosevelt Cabin
Theodore Roosevelt National Park
Medora, North Dakota
Courtesy NPS.gov

River Country, prime yourself on the state's history at Bismarck's North Dakota Heritage Center and Mandan's Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.

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

BUCKET LIST

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

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

Dickinson: West of Bismarck on Interstate 94, is the gateway city to North Dakota's Badlands. Spend a weekend there and take a tour of the Dickinson Museum Center.

Medora: A centerpiece of summer tourism in North Dakota, 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, Medora, 1885
Photo Courtesy True West Archives

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 while exploring 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 the Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center, Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site and Fort Buford State Historic Site.

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

Lake Sakakawea: The towns of Garrison, New Town, Riverdale and Pick City are all great places to visit while enjoying the 180-mile-long lake.

Best Websites: *NDTourism.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Texas to Oklahoma

Follow the Quanah Parker Trail across the Southern Plains of Texas and Oklahoma.

In 2014, a leadership team in Borden County, Texas, that included members of the Comanche Tribe dedicated the first 22-foot, 700-pound metal arrow to mark the Quanah Parker Trail across 52 Texas Plains and Panhandle counties. The 88 majestic waypoints thread together the history of the region, the Comanche people and the Texas frontier communities of the Plains region. The *QuanahParkerTrail.com* website is the best place to start before embarking on a tour, but check locally for access to the arrows, as some are on private property.

A good place to start the tour is in Lubbock, home of Texas Tech University. Stay at the Cotton Court Hotel and enjoy local restaurants, museums, the arts district and live entertainment.

Interstate 27 is the quickest way north to Amarillo, but why not slow it down and drive east on U.S. 62/82 to Crosbyton, Dickens and Guthrie, home of the famous 6666 Ranch and the popular Four Sixes Supply Shop? North from Dickens, Texas Highway 70 is a scenic route north to Caprock Canyons and Palo Duro Canyon state parks.

Palo Duro Canyon State Park Canyon, Texas

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

Canyon, Texas, is home to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, the largest museum dedicated to the history and culture of the region. Nearby Amarillo is a must stop when visiting the Texas Panhandle, with good restaurants and museums.

From Amarillo, I-40 leads east to Shamrock, Texas, a great old Route 66 town, and U.S. 83. Go south on U.S. 62 to Lawton, home of Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center.

Visitors who would like to learn first-hand about Oklahoma's Indian heritage and complex territorial and state history should tour Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma History Center and the First Americans Museum.

A traveler on the Quanah Parker Trail from Texas to Oklahoma will soon

discover the hospitality and small-town charm that make the states favorite destinations for Old West visitors.

BUCKET LIST

TEXAS

Lubbock: "The Hub City" is an enjoyable place to call home for a few days while exploring the region's history. Great restaurants, entertainment, an arts district and world-class museums—including the National Ranching Heritage Center, the American Windmill Museum, the Museum of Texas Tech University, the FiberMax Center for Discovery and the Buddy Holly Center—are all worth a tour.

Crosbyton: Take time to drive east of Lubbock to the town of Crosbyton and tour the Crosby County Memorial Museum's exhibits on the cultural history of the region.

Amarillo: The Panhandle City is a perfect place to stay while exploring the heritage of the region. Schedule time to visit the American Quarterhorse Museum, Battle of Adobe Walls historic site, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon and Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

OKLAHOMA

Cache: In Comanche County west of Lawton, Quanah Parker's final home, the Star House, is on the National Register of Historic Places and is undergoing major renovation to save it for posterity.

Lawton: When following the trail of Quanah Parker north from Texas to Oklahoma, schedule a tour of the Comanche National Museum and Cultural Center in Lawton.

Oklahoma City: The state's economic, cultural and political hub is a great place to start a week-long tour of the Sooner State.

Duncan: Don't miss a tour of the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center north of the Red River off State Highway 7.

Delicate Arch, Arches National Park
Moab, Utah
Courtesy NPS.gov

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

Best Website: *TravelTexas.com*; *TravelOk.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Utah the Beautiful

Discover the natural wonders, national parks and historic towns of the Beehive State.

Southern Utah is a wonderful place to slow down and enjoy the small towns, historic sites and local, state and national parks and monuments which are around every curve of the highways that wind and twist through the mountains, canyons and valleys of the region. Heed the signs of bad weather: many of the best roads in the area are red dirt roads and you don't want to get stuck in the mud or a flash flood in a canyon or creek.

National park and monument enthusiasts who have the time, can check off the following on an extended trip to the region: Zion, Cedar Breaks, Bryce, Grand Staircase Escalante, Capitol Reef, Bears Ears, Natural Bridges, Canyonlands and

Arches. Don't forget to schedule extra time for extraordinary hikes, beautiful sunsets and photo opportunities. Southern Utah is definitely a majestic land you will want to return to and experience in all seasons.

BUCKET LIST

St. George: A relaxing place to visit and tour on the way to Zion National Park, the southwestern Utah town is well-known for its enjoyable climate and outdoor recreational amenities.

Cedar City: Over a mile high, the city is one of the largest in southern Utah and for decades has been known as the "Gateway to the National Parks." Schedule time to tour the historic Union Pacific Depot, Cedar Breaks National Monument and Brian Head Resort.

Mt. Carmel: Don't miss a chance to visit the Maynard Dixon Living History Museum between March and November; winter hours are very limited.

Trail Riding, Red Cliffs Lodge
Moab, Utah
Courtesy Utah Tourism

Kanab: Once a popular location for Hollywood Westerns, Kanab is on U.S. 89, just north of the Arizona border, and is a cool place to stay while exploring the area.

Escalante: Enjoy driving Scenic Utah Highway 12 from near Panguitch to Escalante and then take the hike to nearby Calf Creek Falls.

Blanding: If you are looking to get away from big crowds and enjoy the outdoors, this is your town. It's a jumping-off place from which to enjoy the Bears Ears and Natural Bridges national monuments, Goosenecks State Park and backcountry driving, hiking and backpacking.

Moab: Tour the Museum of Moab before venturing out to drive three scenic byways and visit Canyonlands and Arches national parks and Dead Horse State Park.

Best Website: *VisitUtah.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

Gateways to the Wonders of Wyoming

Discover the West from Cheyenne to Yellowstone Country.

Visitors travel to the Cowboy State for its real Western pioneer and Indian culture, endless vistas of snow-capped mountains, historic towns with charming hotels and Western bars, natural wonders such as Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks and scenic byways and highways. Summertime also means fun-filled local celebrations with prestigious rodeos and Western parades.

BUCKET LIST

Big Horn Mountains: A circle tour of the mountain and valley region should start in the eastern slope town of Buffalo. After a tour and overnight stay at the historic Occidental Hotel, drive west on scenic U.S. Highway 16 to Worland then north on U.S. 16/20 to Greybull. From Greybull you can go north to Lovell and take scenic U.S. 14A across the Big Horns, or turn east on scenic U.S. 14 through Shell Canyon to historic Sheridan on the east.

Devil's Tower: Located in the northeastern corner of Wyoming, the national monument is a very popular destination for visitors to the nearby towns of Sundance, Hulett, Moorcroft and Gillette.

Cheyenne: The capital city is a great place to stay while exploring the nearby beautiful Medicine Bow National Forest and historic towns of Saratoga, Encampment and Rawlins.

Cody Stampede Parade, Cody, Wyoming
Courtesy Wyoming Tourism

Lake Marie, Snowy Range
Carbon County, Wyoming

Courtesy Gates Frontiers Fund Wyoming Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

Every summer the city hosts the largest outdoor rodeo in the world, Cheyenne Frontier Days.

Laramie: Built along the banks of the Laramie River, the city is home to the University of Wyoming, the American Heritage Center and the Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site.

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

Cody: See the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a Smithsonian style complex of five museums; book a room downtown at Buffalo Bill's Historic Irma Hotel; and relax for a long weekend touring the local natural wonders and museums.

Jackson: From this world-renowned Western destination enjoy the beauty of Grand Teton National Park and the neighboring communities of Moran and Dubois.

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

Dubois: Immerse yourself in the Old West in downtown Dubois. Book a room at one of the town's hotels as your headquarters for adventure, within short driving distance of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks.

Lander: Start a tour of the historic city at Museum of the American West. Also take time to visit nearby Fort Washakie, home of Sacajawea's gravesite, and explore the region on the "Circle the Continental Divide" Driving Loop.

Pinedale: Don't miss a chance to visit the Museum of the Mountain Man at this gateway town to the Wind River country.

Best Websites: *TravelWyoming.com*; *NPS.gov*; *FS.USDA.gov*

TRADING POST

Western Roundup

FOR JUNE 2023

ART SHOWS

PRIX DE WEST INVITATIONAL ART EXHIBITION & SALE
Oklahoma City, OK, June 2-August 6: Prix de West is the nation's premier Western art exhibition and sale showcasing original works ranging from historical depictions of the American West to more contemporary and impressionistic pieces.
405-478-2250
NationalCowboyMuseum.org

AMERICAN PLAINS ARTISTS SPECIAL SHOW
San Angelo, TX, June 22-30: An 1867 fort along the Concho River showcases nearly 100 Western paintings and a dozen sculptures.
325-481-2646 • *FortConcho.com*

AUCTIONS

BRIAN LEBEL'S OLD WEST SHOW & AUCTION
Santa Fe, NM, June 23-25: Consisting of a weekend dealer show and sale, along with exciting live evening auctions, the events showcase the best authentic cowboy, Indian and Western art, antiques and artifacts available for public sale. This June event is known worldwide as the premiere show and auction in the Western Americana collecting industry.
480-779-9378 • *OldWestEvents.com*

FILM FESTIVALS

LONE PINE FILM HISTORY MUSEUM CONCERT IN THE ROCKS
Lone Pine, CA, June 12-14: Every June, the magnificent Lone Ranger Canyon in the Alabama Hills is transformed into an "under the stars" venue for hosting the annual Lone Pine Concert in the Rocks, this year featuring a tribute to Frank Sinatra.
760-876-9909
MuseumOfWesternFilmHistory.org

HERITAGE FESTIVALS

NEBRASKALAND DAYS
North Platte, NE, June 14-24: Nebraska's premier music festival and rodeo will feature Jason Aldean among the performers along with a rodeo, parades and concerts.
308-532-7939 • *NebraskalandDays.com*

HOPS & HOPS FEST
The Dalles, OR, June 15: Choose from more than 50 beers from 25+ breweries from Oregon and beyond in a taproom experience.
541.296.2231 • *BeerFestTheDalles.com*

COWGIRL ROUNDUP
Loveland, CO, June 18-23: Discover your inner cowgirl at Sylvan Dale's Cowgirl Roundup. Come alone or with a friend. Making friendships with other "cowgirls" and bonding with your Sylvan Dale horse make this adventure a top-of-the-bucket list experience.
970-667-3915 • *SylvanDale.com*

Courtesy Bishop Mule Days

GOLD RUSH DAYS
Sidney, NE, June 9-11: Experience the Black Hills gold rush of 1876 through skits, reenactments and cowboy lore about the town's freighting days.
866-545-4030 • *SidneyGoldRush.com*

MUSIC

TEXAS! OUTDOOR MUSICAL DRAMA
Palo Duro Canyon, TX, June 8-August 5: This outdoor musical recreates the stories of Texas Panhandle settlers.
806-655-2181 • *Texas-Show.com*

POWWOWS

RED EARTH FESTIVAL
Oklahoma City, OK, June 1-July 3: Experience the traditions of American Indian arts and cultures through dance, an art market and powwow.
405-427-5228 • *RedEarth.org*

RODEOS

SISTERS RODEO
Sisters, OR, June 7-11: Rodeo stars head to Sisters to show off their goods in this self-proclaimed "Biggest Little Show in the World!"
800-827-7522 • *SistersRodeo.com*

RENO RODEO
Reno, NV, June 15-24: The Reno Rodeo, the "Wildest, Richest Rodeo in the West," is celebrating 104 years of Wild West family fun.
778-329-3877 • *RenoRodeo.com*

WEST OF THE PECOS RODEO
Pecos, TX, June 21-24: West of the Pecos, known as Home of the World's First Rodeo, is a top 40 prize money rodeo that originated in 1883.
432-445-2406 • *PecosRodeo.com*

GREELEY STAMPEDE
Greeley, CO, June 22-July 4: Get bull riding and steer wrestling rodeo action, plus take in Western art and an Independence Day parade.
970-356-7787 • *GreeleyStampede.org*

CROOKED RIVER ROUNDUP
Prineville, OR, June 22-July 17: This PRCA rodeo includes steer wrestling, roping, bronc riding, barrel racing, bull riding and more.
541-447-4479 • *CrookedRiverRoundup.com*

PRESCOTT FRONTIER DAYS WORLD'S OLDEST RODEO
Prescott, AZ, June 28-July 4: The 136th annual rodeo kicks off on Wednesday the 28th and concludes on the Fourth of July. Don't miss one of the nation's greatest rodeo parades on Saturday, July 1.
928-445-4320 • *WorldsOldestRodeo.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.

Long Johns, Dirty Dave and the Bird Cage

What did cowboys wear as underwear?

Ethan Cooperrider
Coulee City, Washington

Long johns were first introduced into England in the 17th century, but they did not become popular as sleepwear and underwear until the 18th century. They were named long johns in the 19th century after American boxing champion John L. Sullivan wore them in the ring. Cowboys were among those who wore them. Long johns helped them deal with the cold winters; as for the summer heat, folks just endured.

Arizona's Yuma Territorial Prison was established in the early 1870s. Where were convicted felons incarcerated before then?

Colin Ferrill
Silverhill, Alabama

According to the Arizona Territorial Prison Museum at Yuma, criminals were confined at the various local jails around the territory.

I didn't watch much television while growing up. So now that I am retired, I have discovered there are quite a few Westerns on the telly. Some channels are devoted to only Westerns. I know many were filmed in California and used fire trails, dirt roads, etc. What did the Old West roads actually look like?

Greg Williams
Apache Junction, Arizona

The Western film industry began in 1913 when Jesse Lasky and Cecil B. DeMille packed up their movie studio and moved from New York to California. The popularity of the first motion picture with a story, 1903's *The Great Train Robbery*, filmed in the wilds of New Jersey, inspired them to go West. There they took advantage of lots of land and good weather. The filmmakers generally used dirt roads that were already in place, but some were rutted. Sometimes, they'd create new ones to take advantage of the natural surroundings.

Most Old West roads were just dirt roads, not much wider than one way (which sometimes made things a bit awkward), and dusty in dry times and mudholes in the wet ones. Many were later improved and paved for the modern country roads.

Cowboys wore their long johns seven days a week unless they took them off to take a bath in a river or a tub.

True West Archives

What was the Dodge City Gang?

Hugo Waverley
Kansas City, Kansas

The real Dodge City Gang was a bunch of hard cases including "Dirty" Dave Rudabaugh, "Mysterious" Dave Mather and leader Hyman Neil, better known as Hoodoo Brown. All had spent time in Dodge before they headed for lawless Las Vegas, New Mexico. During 1879-80, they attempted to dominate the political and economic life there. Hoodoo and the gang murdered, stole

"Dirty" Dave Rudabaugh was a notorious leader of the Dodge City Gang in 1879–80. There are no confirmed photos of Rudabaugh, and this one is disputed.

True West Archives

and robbed trains and stages. Other than that, they were upstanding members of society.

Finally, the citizens tired of their shenanigans and with the help of vigilantes started tossing them in jail. The gang's demise after a few months was caused mostly by greed and open defiance of the law.

What was the world's longest poker game?

"Second Chance Charlie"
Tucson, Arizona

Tombstone's Bird Cage Theater boasts the world's longest poker game, which was played in the building's basement. To play, gamblers had to pay $1,000 up front. The poker game was played continuously for 24 hours a day, seven days a week from 1881 until 1889, a total of eight years. It is estimated that $10 million changed hands during the game; the Bird Cage retained 10 percent of that money. Among the notable people who played in this particular game at one time or another were Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Bat Masterson, George Hearst, Adolphus Busch and Diamond Jim Brady.

However, according to *Ripley's Believe It or Not*, the Dunglen Hotel in the coal mining town of Thurmond, West Virginia, has a claim for the longest game of poker ever played. This card game started in 1910 and is said to have lasted 14 years. The Dunglen was torched by arsonists in 1930; Thurmond is basically a ghost town.

What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

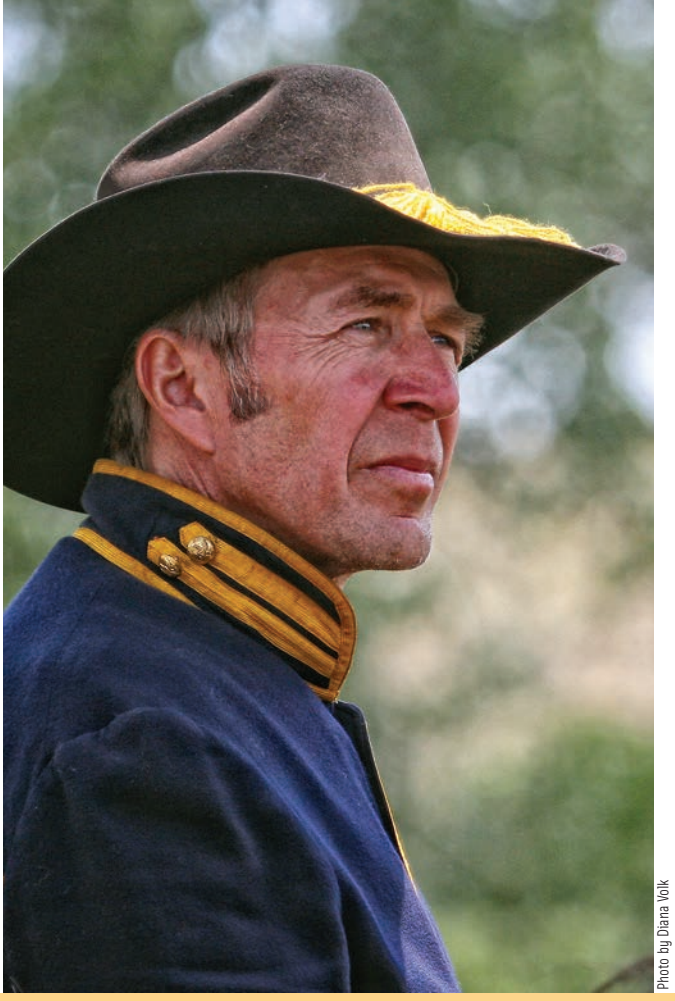


Photo by Diana Volk

MARK BEDOR, AUTHOR AND FILM MAKER

Mark Bedor is the creator and host of *Today's Wild West*, an award-winning documentary-style TV series on all things Western, airing on PBS stations, YouTube, My Home TV and other platforms. *Today's Wild West* is a two-time winner of the National Cowboy Museum's Western Heritage Award for Outstanding Western Lifestyle TV Show. Bedor is also a freelance magazine writer-photographer, whose work has been published in *True West* and many other publications. He's also the author of two Western coffee table photography books, and spent a career in local TV news before focusing on the Great American West.

Growing up I always wanted to be a cowboy. I was in third grade when *How the West Was Won* came out. I was hooked. Growing up in Minnesota, the only place I ever wanted to go was out West. I still haven't been to New York. I don't think I'm missing much.

My parents bought me a toy Winchester for Christmas that shot plastic bullets. Coolest gift I ever received! I can remember my mom ironing in the basement, while I turned the picnic table we brought in for the winter into a covered wagon.

A teacher—Roger Paskvan—was the head of the TV Production Department at Bemidji State University. It was his encouragement that led to a career as a local TV news reporter, then freelance magazine writing and photography about the West, and *Today's Wild West*, the TV series I'm doing today.

My first time skiing in Jackson Hole was truly awesome. Shoulda stayed.

My favorite Western is *How the West Was Won*. I can almost recite it. It has all the elements of the Old West, the greatest actors of our time, and the Indian attack on the wagon train still puts me on the edge of my seat!

John Wayne set the standard, rode for the brand, and there's never been anyone like the Duke.

I've ridden so many great horses on cattle drives, horseback adventures and dude ranches. I have a 16 by 20 riding Tracker while team penning at the White Stallion Ranch. And I rode a palomino named Trigger for years in L.A.'s 4,600-acre Griffith Park. Galloping flat-out on the last run up to Mount Hollywood was always a rush!

Riding the Custer Battlefield in Montana at U.S. Cavalry School is a unique adventure, and provides an unmatched understanding of what happened there.

TV news gave me a great foundation for what I do today, both for print and TV stories. And being in the media can give you a front row seat to some very cool stuff. Despite its flaws, there are still many good, honest people working in TV news. I ignore those who are not.

If I don't have great pictures, I don't have a story. I appreciate those who are true artists with a camera. I'm always working to get better. I never regret taking pictures. And it's fun when people appreciate my work.

There's no place like the American West. I love everything about it—especially the people—who make all the rest of it so much fun! The horses, history, the land, wildlife, ranches, culture—it goes on and on, and it never gets old.

I love Western ranches. The White Stallion in Tucson was one of the first I ever visited and remains a special place.

Dutch oven cooking—nothing better on a pack trip!

Nothing like a guitar around the fire after a great day on horseback.

The Chief Joseph Trail Ride with the Appaloosa Horse Club was an unforgettable experience. Great people, beautiful country, but tragic history.

What history has taught me—People in every age are flawed human beings who usually do the best they can. We need to think twice before we judge those who lived in an often harsh and difficult time and place. And we all need a Savior.

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—willbe inspired to visit a Western museum and experience the dynamic, enthralling history of the American West.

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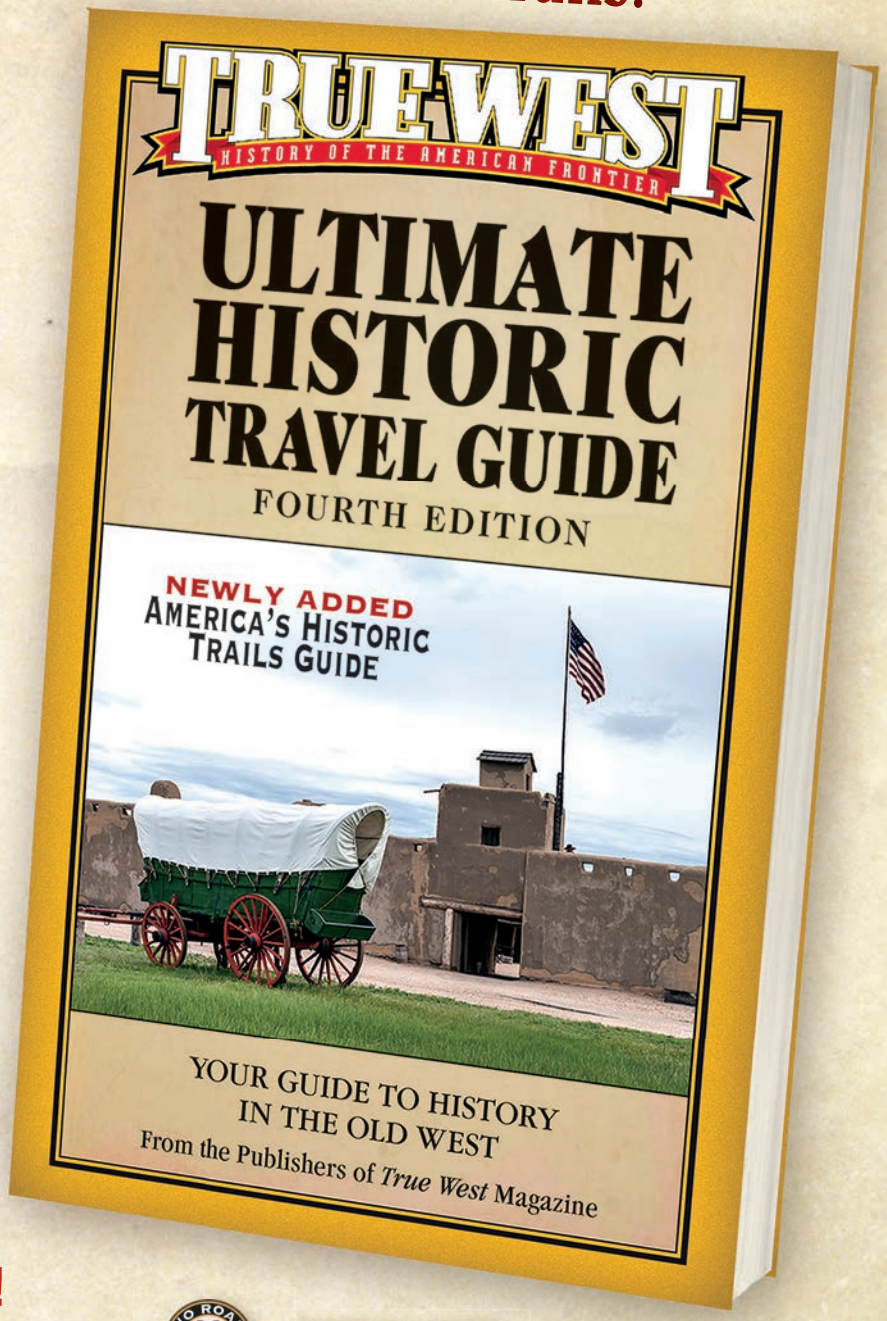

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