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# TRUE WEST

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

## BASS REEVES

FINALLY GETS HIS DUE

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How did Custer Almost Kill Edward S. Curtis?

Chasing Villa: The Apache Scouts' Final Mission

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JUNE 21 - 23, 2024

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Justin Dart's Famous Edward H. Bohlin  
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EX: George Pitman



Documented Colt Single Action  
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Shipment to the Dalton Gang



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Horsehair Bridle



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EX: Ron Gillett



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EX: George Pitman

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**Auction Hours:** Saturday, June 22nd at 5:00 pm PST.



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

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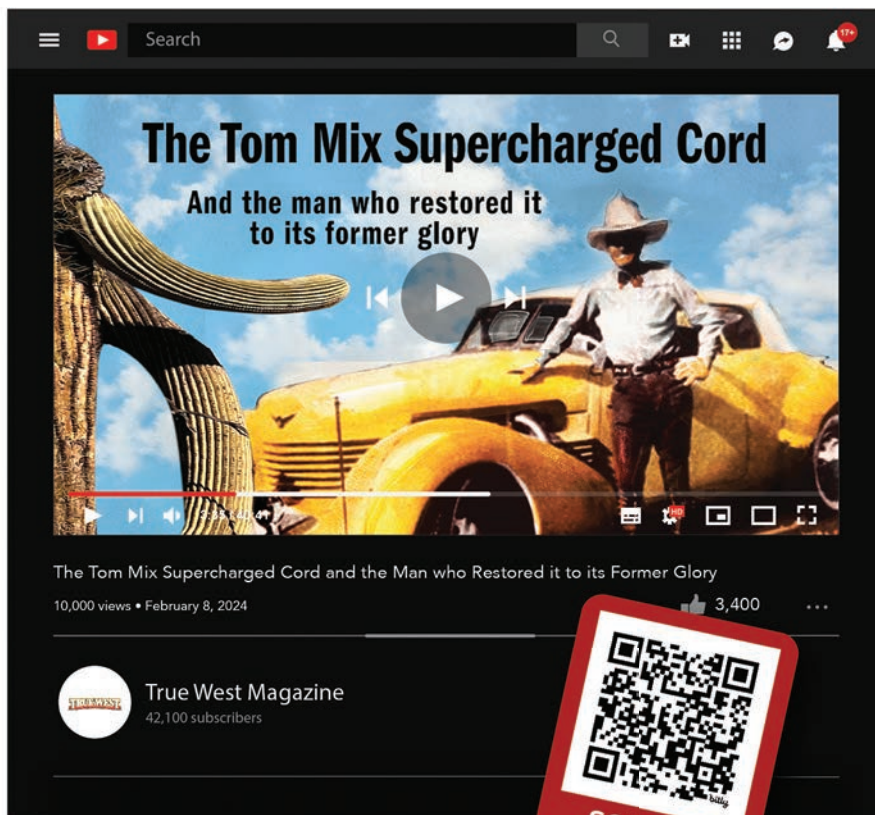
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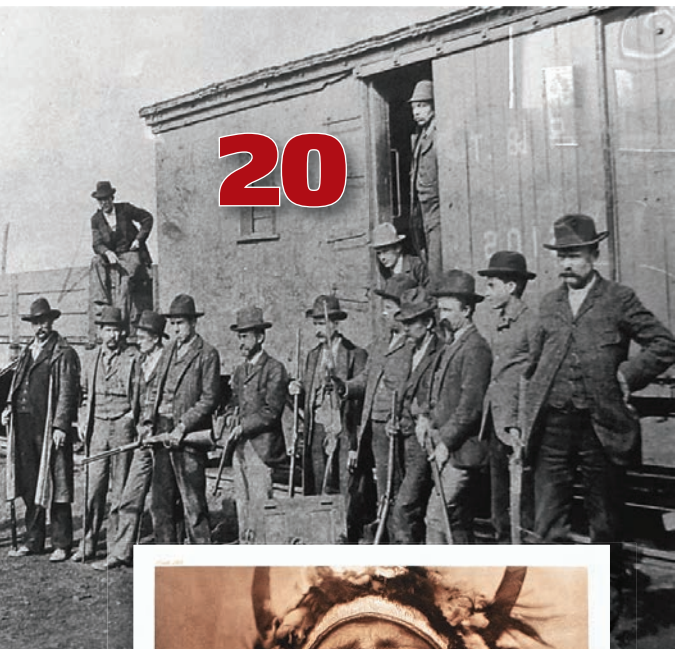
Wild West enthusiasts are going crazy for Bob's videos on the *True West* YouTube Channel.

Check it out now and  
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And, yet, what did they get wrong about him?

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Scenic roads lead to historic Western towns and legendary lodgings and saloons.

—By *Stuart Rosebrook and the Editors of True West*



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Illustration by Bob Boze Bell  
Cover Design by Dan Harshberger



COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*



## Old Vaquero Sayings

*"We die twice; the first time when our hearts cease to beat; the second time when our stories cease to be told."*

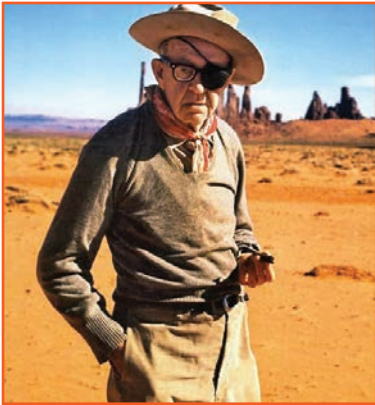
### Quotes

*"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."*

—Henry David Thoreau

*"Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper."*

—George Orwell



Director John Ford, *The Searchers*, on location, Monument Valley, Arizona/Utah, 1955

Courtesy Warner Bros.

**"It is easier to get an actor to be a cowboy than to get a cowboy to be an actor."**

—John Ford

*"Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortune; but great minds rise above it."*

—Washington Irving

*"True artists scorn nothing; they are obliged to understand rather than to judge."*

—Albert Camus

*"Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him, and to let him know you trust him."*

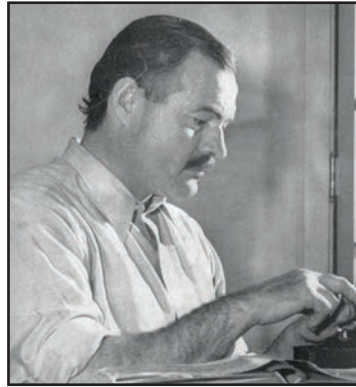
—Booker T. Washington

**"Life is like riding a bicycle—  
in order to keep your balance,  
you must keep moving."**

—Albert Einstein

*"If you hear a voice within you say 'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced."*

—Vincent Van Gogh



Ernest Hemingway, Sun Valley Lodge, Idaho, 1939

Lloyd R. Arnold, Courtesy Library of Congress

*"It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend."*

—William Blake

*"The best people possess a feeling for beauty, the courage to take risks, the discipline to tell the truth, the capacity for sacrifice. Ironically, their virtues make them vulnerable; they are often wounded, sometimes destroyed."*

—Ernest Hemingway



*Grizzly Adams and bear, circa 1859-60*

Courtesy Amon Carter Museum of Art, Fort Worth, Texas, p1989-27\_02\_11



# Brothers From Another Mother

*A shout-out to a couple members of my tribe*

**T**he late, great Ed Mell shows up on almost every page of *True West* magazine because he was my muse and my friend. We shared studio space in the early eighties, and I often tell people that even though I attended the University of Arizona Fine Arts College for five years, my real education in terms of thinking like an artist began with his influence. And the vast majority of it was simply by osmosis. He never taught me a class, or tried to influence me in any overt way (also a good lesson to apply to everything!), he merely threw everything he had into his art and you could clearly see the results. That, my friend, is quite an education by example.

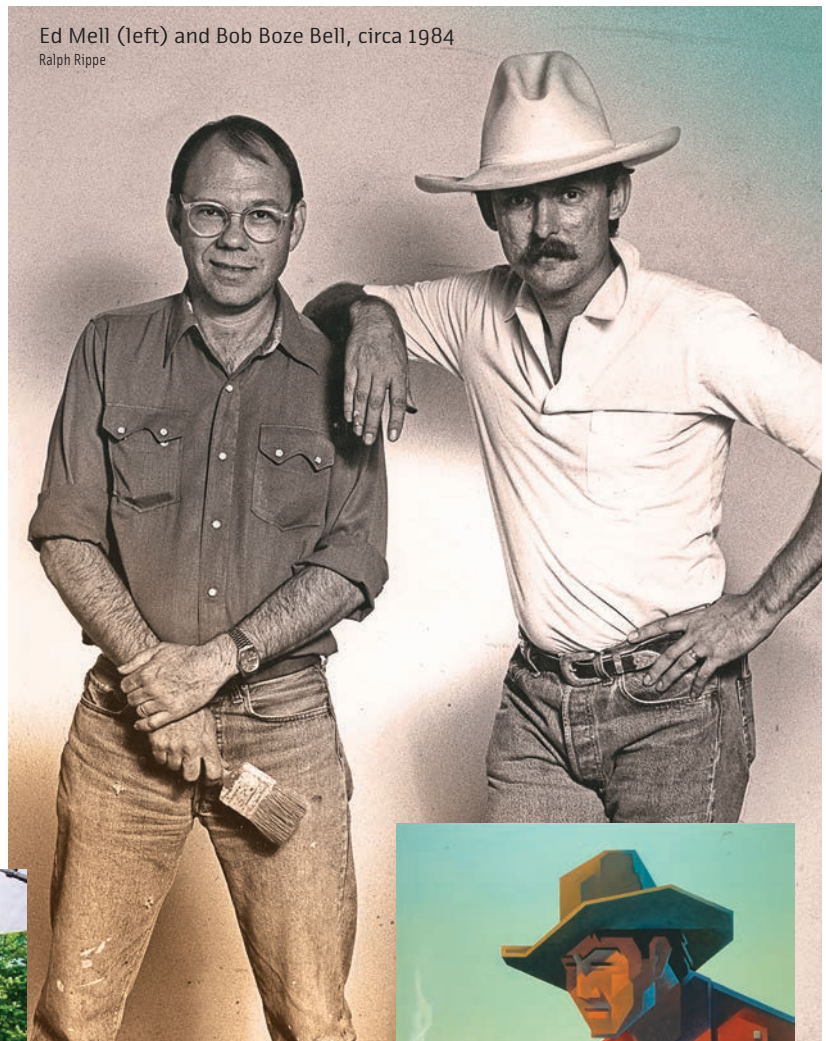
The other thing I learned from “Edmundo Segundo” is to be conservative in your values and manner, but be as outrageous as you can in your art. I have applied this aspect to every page of every issue since we took over the magazine in 1999.

Here is how he put it:

“There are subtle guys and there are guys who like to shout. I like people to see the pictures and be taken aback. I make it theater. I am not dealing conceptually with the subject of landscape. I am not playing a game with my art. I want the drama. I know drama works.”

—Ed Mell II, being interviewed by E.J. Montini for the Arizona Republic, 1984

My other brother from another mother is Art T. Burton, who we are featuring prominently in our cover feature on Bass Reeves getting his proper due (page 20).



Ed Mell (left) and Bob Boze Bell, circa 1984  
Ralph Rippe

### A Drummer Brother from Another Mother

Art T. Burton is a distinguished conga player in addition to being a groundbreaking historian who has almost single-handedly championed and promoted Bass Reeves to his current position in the cultural landscape.

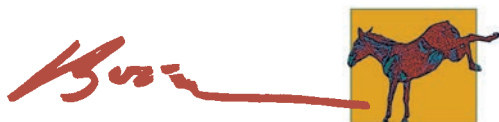
Courtesy Art Burton



True West Archives

### Square Shooter by Ed Mell, 1988

This big oil painting was bought by the actor Arnold Schwarzenegger at Dewey Galleries in Santa Fe, while Arnold was in town filming *Twins*. I seem to remember that the actor paid \$10,000 for the piece.



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

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

## KING OF THE COWBOYS

I am writing to say how I loved the story "The Day Tom Mix Died."

Having only known parts of it, you and the Rosebrooks filled in all the gaps. Your cover image tells the tale so very well. And then your video with Bob White about the restored car was a such a treat to see. I have long been fascinated with this car, what little I knew of it. I had also wondered if the many images of Alice Sisty leaping two horses "Roman style" was over the Cord of Tom Mix. After all, how many can there be? I've attached a photo from *Cowgirl Magazine*. But after your detailed study, it is clear that this is a different Cord.

Mucho gusto!

True West Archives



—Rex Rideout  
Conifer, Colorado

### BRAVO!

Congratulations to Mr. Bell, for the Golden Lariat from the Will Rogers Medallion Awards group. Excellent and well deserved! I'm proud of you for all you do to

keep the American West alive, and your watercolors and inks are just all masterpieces. Very proud.

I wanted to thank you for running the "Lone Star Destiny" article (March/April 2024 issue). I became acquainted with Bill Groneman over 30 years ago when we were both in the Alamo Society. The story on Tom Mix was fascinating, and the article by Henry C. Parke on *Blazing Saddles* was excellent!

—Coy Prather  
Montalba, Texas

## WILD WEST SALOONS

Made a trip to White Oaks, New Mexico, to the No Scum Allowed Saloon. I have frequented this saloon a few times. Included are a couple of pictures showing the *TW* "Last Call!" May 2023 issue. The ONLY drinking establishment in the area. I asked the owner how many residents are in White Oaks. She said, "Counting our two part-times, 11 total." So I suspect total full-time residents would be nine.

I also have been through Tinnie, New Mexico, several times and thought the Silver Dollar (right) was closed. I found that the hours of operation are on the weekends. I had dinner. Menu is limited, pricy, but food was good and the ambiance was excellent. Note, they removed SALOON from their sign.

—Adrian Lane  
Jacksonville, Florida

Adrian Lane shows off his "Last Call!" May 2023 issue of *True West* at the No Scum Allowed Saloon in White Oaks, New Mexico (right, below), and at the Silver Dollar in Tinnie, New Mexico (right, above).

Photos courtesy Adrian Lane

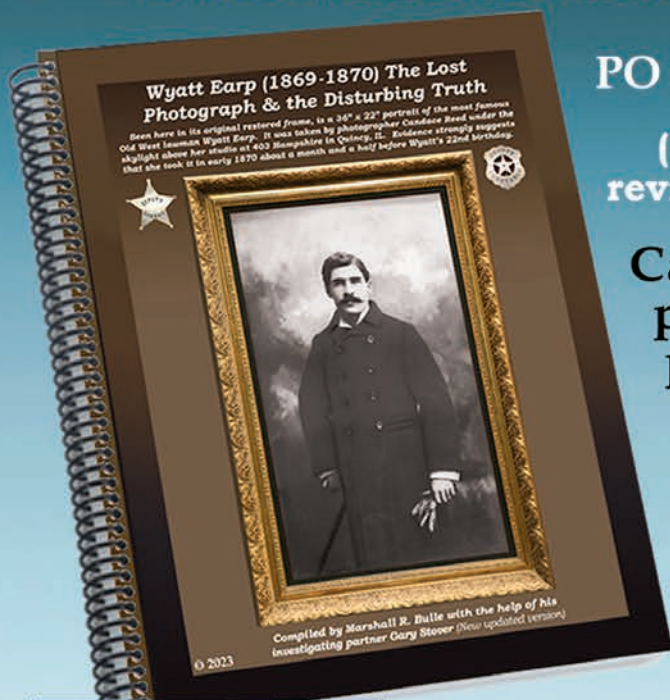
## CORRECTIONS

### "Back in the Saddle Again"

We received a very nice letter from Michael R. Grauer, the Chair of Cowboy Culture and Curator of Cowboy Collections & Western Art of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. He brought to our attention that in the "Silver Screen Buckaroos" article in the January/February 2024 issue we got caught up in the legend of the great Gene Autry and overlooked some of the facts: Gene Autry was not born in Oklahoma. He was born in Tioga, Texas, on a tenant farm, and later grew up on a homestead (versus a ranch) near Ravia, Oklahoma. He was an accomplished horseman, but he learned to ride so he could cowboy in the movies, not as a working cowboy. Before World War II, he had a touring rodeo company near Berywn, Oklahoma, known as the Flying A Ranch Rodeo, later to be known as Gene Autry's World Championship Rodeo and Associates. Berwyn renamed itself Gene Autry, Oklahoma, in 1941.



# Frontiershadows.com

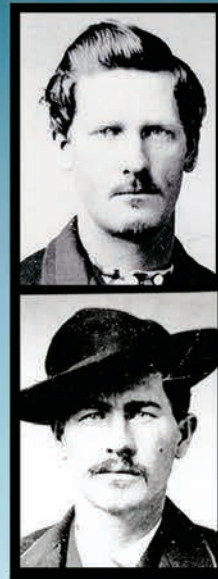


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Call or go online to order this new explosive book that everyone with an interest in the most famous Old West lawman Wyatt Earp is talking about. This book makes claims it backs up. It contains evidence that reveals the disturbing truth that an elite minority hopes you will not read. This new revised addition has upset a few writers who think their published works will be adversely affected by its revelations. Nevertheless, it has convinced a lot of historians, who have read this book in its entirety, that this circa 1870 - 36" x 22" portrait of Wyatt Earp (seen in its original restored frame) is genuinely authentic. It has also persuaded many, or in some cases confirmed suspicions, that the two widely published Charles Dearborn photographs seen above are not Wyatt Earp.

**Order yours today! \$39.00 (includes shipping US only)**  
**Special Offer** (for this issue) If you wish to donate a copy of this book to your local historical society, library or museum we will send you a second copy for that purpose for free. For this offer call or send a check. **Note:** The Barton County Historical Society In Lamar, Missouri (where Wyatt married his first wife) has a full size 36" x 22" framed high resolution copy of the original portrait of Wyatt Earp taken in 1870 if you would like to go by and see it. They also stock copies of this book for sale to their many visitors.

BY STEVE FRIESEN

# Rolling the Dice!

Collectors spent big in Las Vegas at the Brian Lebel Old West Auction.

**B**rian Lebel's Old West Auctions have become known for showcasing, all at one event, the full range of objects available for collectors of the West—saddles, art, firearms, Indian artifacts, spurs, photos, furniture, documents and even clothing. A wide array of Western artifacts including clothing from Western movie stars and other celebrities was once again featured at the Old West Auction (now combined with Morphy Auctions) in Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 26. Lebel opened the auction catalog by stating that the auction had “one of the most impressive selections of merchandise we’ve offered in 36 years.” And the auction bore that out.

The biggest seller at the Las Vegas auction was Edward Bohlin's personal silver-mounted gun belt, holding a pair of Colt Single-Action Army revolvers with silver grips. Praised by Bohlin scholar James Nottage as “the most artistic and richly embellished Western-styled gunbelt and holster set ever made,” it sold for \$307,500. The second-highest selling item at the auction was a pair of silver- and gold-decorated parade chaps worn by Roy Rogers for publicity photos. The chaps sold for \$184,500. Other celebrity-used items sold included Rex Allen's Nudie-designed jacket and pants set, which took \$5,166, and a Lone Ranger outfit worn by Clayton Moore, which collected \$18,450.

Among the horse gear sold at the auction was a stunning Mexican saddle with *piteado* stitching of cactus fiber plus accessories of sword, scabbard and chaps, all of which hammered down at \$15,990. The price for

Edward Bohlin did some of his best work in silver for his own personal collection. Bohlin's silver-mounted gun belt and a pair of Colt Single-Action Army revolvers took top dollar at Brian Lebel's Old West Auction in Las Vegas.

the saddle was exceeded by a flashy bridle made at the Yuma Territorial Prison that went for \$22,140. A 60-foot long rawhide reata made and signed by Luis B. Ortega brought \$5,166. Spurs are always popular at the Old West Auctions; the highest-selling spur set at this

In 1931 Mrs. H.L. Musick commissioned John McCabe to create this pair of silver and gold decorated chaps to wear in the Rose Parade. They were later acquired and worn by Roy Rogers for publicity photographs.



auction was a pair made by G.S. Garcia, which sold for \$41,820.

Several posters were sold at the auction, with a rare Colt advertisement featuring a cowgirl receiving \$20,910 while a large Buffalo Bill's Wild West poster in French brought \$15,375. A poster-sized photograph of three champions of the buffalo, Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill and Buffalo Jones, sold for \$8,610.

This was the first appearance of Lebel's Old West Auction in Las Vegas. Despite the temptations of the flashing slot machines in the casinos and expensive rock shows at The Sphere, collectors of the West spent a total of \$2.3 million on the auction's selections.





*Piteado* is a Mexican decorative technique where cactus fibers are woven into leather. A saddle finely embroidered with *piteado* stitching and decorated with silver mounts was one of several saddles sold in Las Vegas.



Horsehair bit and bridle sets made by inmates in state and territorial prisons in the West are very desirable to collectors. A fancy set made at the Yuma Territorial Prison fetched over \$22,000 at the Lebel auction.

Luis B. Ortega was known for his braided rawhide pieces, which are in museums throughout the West and have become very collectible. This reata, made and signed by him, was among 28 lots associated with Ortega sold at the auction.

Custom silver spurs, with engraved rabbits on either side of each spur, sold for \$41,820. The spurs were made by G.S. Garcia of Elko, Nevada with leather work by R.T. Frazier of Pueblo, Colorado.



This cacti and cowboy jacket was designed by Nudie for Western movie hero and crooner Rex Allen. Immigrant Nudie Cohn's fancy outfits were inspired by the traditional *vyshyvanka* embroidery of his native Ukraine and his love of the American West.



Cowboys on bucking broncos were featured on an oversized three-sheet poster for Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Used to promote the show as it traveled across France in 1905, the poster hammered down at \$15,375.



A smiling cowgirl was featured on a lithograph made by the W. F. Powers Company for Colt. In addition to supplying Colt with advertising, the company also printed patriotic posters during World War I.

## UPCOMING AUCTIONS

**June 21-23, 2024**

Sporting & Collector Firearms Auction #1046  
Rock Island Auction Co. (Bedford, TX)  
[rockislandauction.com](http://rockislandauction.com) • 864-991-5949

**July 25, 2024**

Art of the West  
Heritage Auctions (Dallas, TX)  
[ha.com](http://ha.com) • 877-437-4824

**July 27, 2024**

The 2024 Coeur d'Alene Art Auction  
(Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, NV)  
[cdaartauction.com](http://cdaartauction.com) • 208-772-9009

All Images Courtesy Brian Lebel's  
Old West Auction

**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.

BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

# Rebel Yankees: The McCulloch Colts

*Purchased and delivered after Texas's secession from the Union, these 1860 Army Colts saw plenty of action on behalf of the Confederacy.*

**W**hen we think of Confederate revolvers we generally envision six guns like Leech & Rigdon, Spiller & Burr or the revolvers of the Dance Brothers. Of course, almost any handgun of the period of the War Between the States certainly could qualify, since so many rebel soldiers used whatever guns were available to them. With the exception of battle prizes, Colt's revolvers would not normally be considered as Confederate. Colt was however among several Northern arms companies to sell to the Southern states, including their first 100 1860 models to their agent in Columbus, Georgia, on November 30, 1860, and at least one documented shipment of 1860s to the Confederate States War Department on April 15, 1861—a mere week after Fort Sumter was fired upon.

Known among collectors as the McCulloch 1860 Army Colts, these Hartford-produced .44 caliber percussion six-shooters definitely have a Confederate-linked history. When the 1860 Army, then dubbed the "New Army Model" was introduced in mid-1860, the first 4,000 guns were turned out with fully fluted (non-rebated) cylinders sans roll engraved cylinder scenes. This was done to reduce weight and they were referred to by Colt as "Cavalry" models. Other than their fluted cylinders, these '60 models were just like the standard



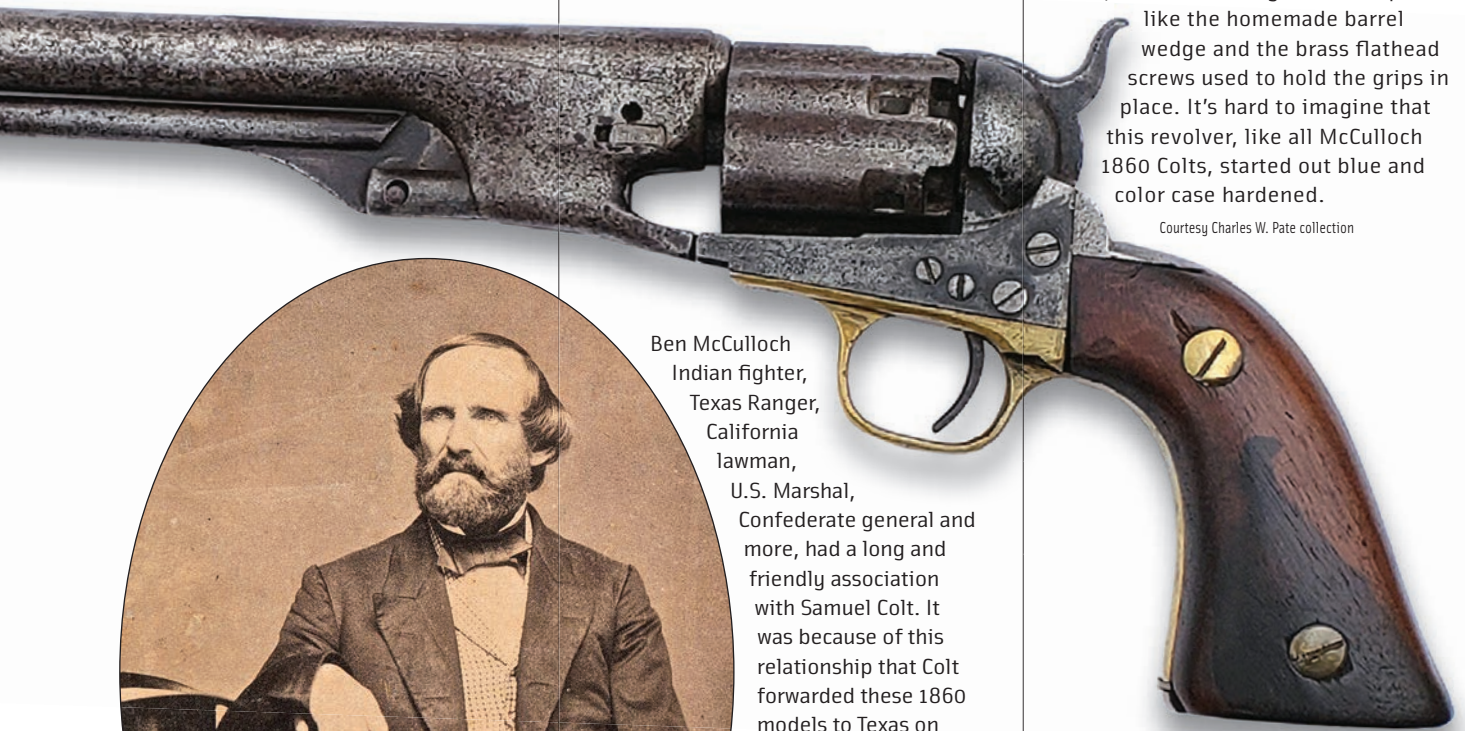
Although Texas's Ben McCulloch wanted 2,000 fluted cylinder 1860 "Cavalry" model Colts, only the first thousand found their way to the Lone Star State. The Union's blockade of southern ports put a stop to about 95 percent of goods getting to the South. This McCulloch Colt, serial no. 4381, was shipped (by land) on April 9, 1861 and arrived in New Orleans on April 16. This example is in better shape than many McCullochs due to the hard usage these guns received in the hands of Texas fighters. The inset reveals the model's brass trigger guard and serial numbering.

Courtesy Charles W. Pate collection



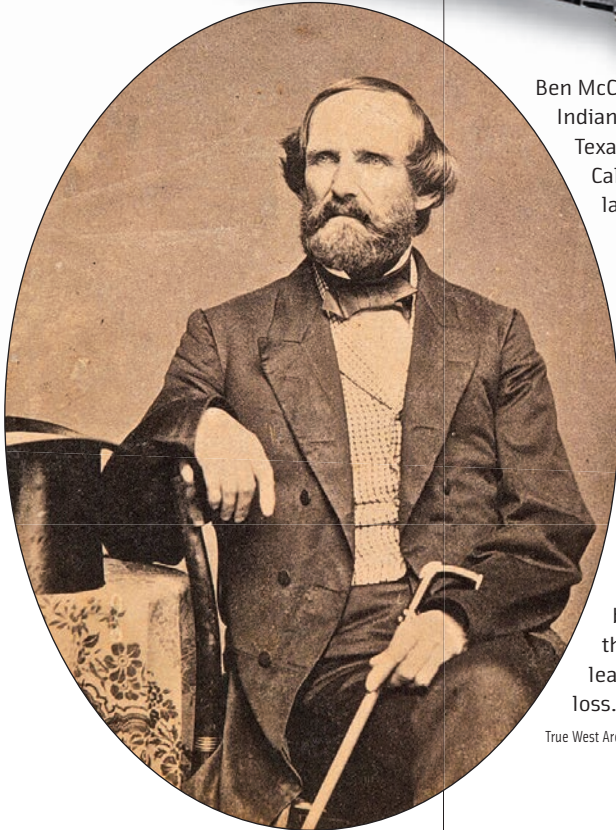
Of the 1,000 guns delivered to Texas, only about 49 original McCulloch 1860 Army Colts are known to still exist. Here, Colt serial no. 2437 is typical of the few surviving revolvers. Most of the guns known are serial numbered above 2000.

Courtesy Cimarron Fire Arms collection



This near-relic condition McCulloch 1860 Colt, serial no. 4454 shows exceptionally severe wear with contemporary repairs crude, but functional gunsmith repairs like the homemade barrel wedge and the brass flathead screws used to hold the grips in place. It's hard to imagine that this revolver, like all McCulloch 1860 Colts, started out blue and color case hardened.

Courtesy Charles W. Pate collection



Ben McCulloch  
Indian fighter,  
Texas Ranger,  
California  
lawman,  
U.S. Marshal,  
Confederate general and  
more, had a long and  
friendly association  
with Samuel Colt. It  
was because of this  
relationship that Colt  
forwarded these 1860  
models to Texas on  
credit. However, due  
to the circumstances of  
the Civil War and General  
McCulloch's death at the  
battle of Pea Ridge in 1862,  
the debt was never resolved  
leaving Colt with a \$25,900  
loss.

True West Archives

fully round, rebated cylinder guns with the roll-engraved naval battle scene, an eight-inch round barrel with the rack, and pinion "creeping" loading lever and the military-style four-screw frame with a cutout on the heel of the grip (for attaching a shoulder stock). Serial numbers of the McCulloch Colts range from 200 to 4700, with most above 2000. They would have had plain walnut stocks, been finished with a blued barrel, cylinder and trigger, a color case hardened frame, lever and hammer and a brass trigger guard and back strap.

When the state of Texas passed their ordinance of secession on the first of February 1861, it joined the Confederate States of America on March 2, 1861. With the withdrawal of federal

troops from the state, Texas's immediate concern was from Indian raids and Mexican incursions, more so than from Union troops. Former Texas Ranger Ben McCulloch wrote to Col. Sam Colt on February 24, 1861, asking that since federal forces were being pulled out of Texas, at least "a thousand or two of your army size pistols" would be needed by the Texas Rangers to guard against Indian attacks along her vast frontier, adding that he felt that Colt's pistol was among the best arms for such mounted service. McCulloch had enjoyed a long and friendly relationship with Samuel Colt and had recently acted as a sales agent for Colt's company. He had also long been a staunch advocate of Colt's revolvers from his days as a Texas

Ranger and throughout his other adventures in the West.

In a letter to Colt, McCulloch asked that as "a favor on the Rangers of my state" the company ship the guns immediately to Texas, via New York to New Orleans, where he'd have them forwarded to Austin. He proposed that the revolvers would be paid for by the State of Texas. Colt could not refuse his old friend, nor miss a hefty sale, and the first shipment of 250 Colts was shipped (in five cases) to Ben McCulloch, care of Colt's agent Kittredge & Folsom of New Orleans, via New York, where they were loaded on the steamer *Bienville*, which sailed on the 1st of April, arriving in New Orleans on April 9th.

A second shipment of 750 revolvers left Colt on April 9th, traveling by land and reaching New Orleans on April 16th. From there the entire 1,000 Colts were transported again by land via Adams Express and once safely in Texas were forwarded to Austin for disbursement. Shortly thereafter on April 19, President Lincoln issued a "Proclamation of Blockade Against Southern Ports," making shipment to and from the South extremely perilous, since the entire 3,500 miles of the Confederacy's Atlantic and

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Ayres

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By the time members of the 1870 Geological Survey stopped at the site, scores of westbound emigrants had already visited the unique natural bridge southwest of Douglas. But it wasn't until 1919 — a century ago — that the son of rancher Alvah Ayres donated the bridge and 150 acres surrounding it to Converse County.

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William Henry Jackson's 1870 photo of Ayres Natural Bridge

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It's unknown if the '60 Colts from McCulloch's order went to the Texas Rangers guarding against Indian depredations along their vast frontier or to that state's volunteer cavalry units fighting against Union forces. In this period photograph, a Confederate trooper, possibly a Texan, proudly brandishes his eight-inch barreled, fluted cylinder 1860 Colt and a massive sword-like Bowie knife. Could he have one of the McCulloch Colts?

True West Archives

Gulf coastline was under constant patrol from Union naval squadrons. Thus, only 1,000 of these McCulloch-ordered Colts were ever shipped.

As of the most recent research, it's unclear which Texas units received these Colts, but it is thought that possibly McCulloch's brother Henry's 1st Regiment Texas Cavalry (also known as the 1st Regiment Mounted Rifles) and possibly Col. John S. "Rip" Ford's 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles may have wound up with a number of them. Coincidentally, by May 1861, as these units were being formed

Confederate President Jefferson Davis appointed Ben McCulloch a brigadier general, in command of a district in the Confederacy's trans-Mississippi area, taking him away from the region. By this time, with Texas desperately needing these weapons, they may well have already been issued to the Rangers serving along the Lone Star State's unguarded frontier.

Although McCulloch had intended for these '60 Colts to be paid for by the State of Texas, that legislature had not had enough time to allocate funds for the sale, so the guns were charged to

Ben McCulloch's personal account. With McCulloch's death less than a year later at the Battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas, the debt was never resolved, leaving the Colt firm with a loss of \$25,900.

Regardless of whether they were used by the Rangers guarding the Texas frontier against Indian depredations, or by the Texas Confederate Cavalry in their defense of the Confederacy, they undoubtedly saw plenty of action. There are only about 49 McCulloch 1860 Colts known to still exist, and most of them show hard usage. Sold after Texas seceded from the Union, these coveted Yankee-manufactured Colts went on to earn lasting fame and battle honors as Rebel six guns. For further reading the excellent volume *The Colt Model 1860 Army Revolver* by Charles W. Pate is recommended and is available from [orders@manatarmsbooks.com](mailto:orders@manatarmsbooks.com).



Photo courtesy of Cimarron Fire Arms

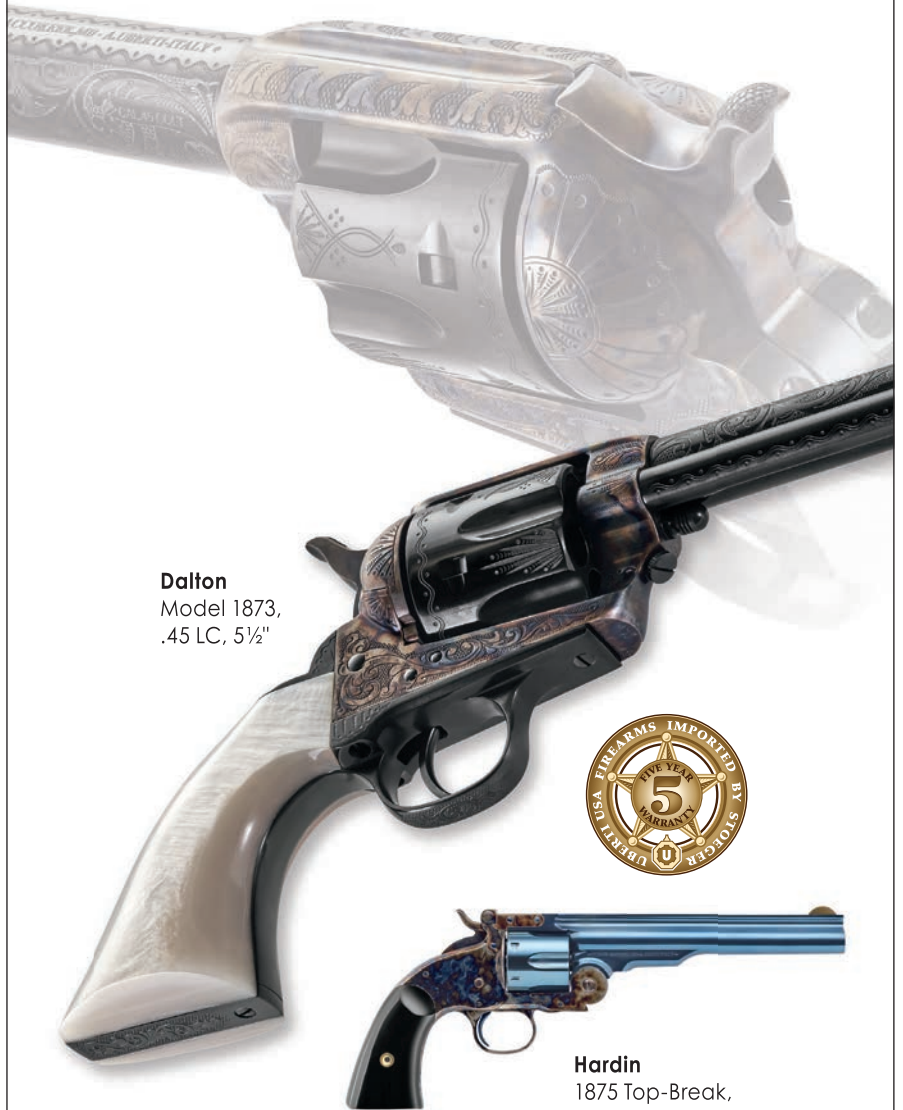
### CIMARRON'S MCCULLOCH REPLICAS REVOLVER

With only a handful of original "McCulloch" 1860 Army Colts still in existence, getting your hands on one is like finding a needle in a hayfield. Thanks to Cimarron Firearms, a handsome, shooting replica of this "Texas Rebel" Colt revolver can be had. For added authenticity, this copy, based on an original McCulloch Colt in their collection, wears

a realistic campaign-worn appearance like those scant few existing 1861-vintage arms. Cimarron offers it in their "original finish" externally, but it's left untouched and new inside the bore and chambers. Complete with one-piece walnut grips, an eight-inch round barrel, brass trigger guard, full-fluted cylinder and the four-screw frame, this .44 caliber percussion revolver will add authentic flavor to any arms collection.

[cimarron-firearms.com](http://cimarron-firearms.com)

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BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

# BASS REEVES FINALLY GETS HIS DUE

AND, YET, WHAT DID THEY GET WRONG ABOUT HIM?

## Who was Bass Reeves?

**H**istorian Art Burton has spent much of his life on the trail of the elusive lawman's life. Reeves's life from slave to deputy U.S. marshal serving the Western District of Arkansas in the Indian and Oklahoma territories in the last decades of the 19th century is extraordinary, but the truth about his life has not been published in detail until the last 30 years. Professor Burton's determination to chronicle the life of Deputy Reeves is comparable to the famed lawman's 32-year career in the U.S. Marshals. Since Burton's *Black, Red, and Deadly: Black and Indian Gunfighters of the Indian Territory, 1870-1907* (1991) and his definitive biography of the Western hero, *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshal Bass Reeves* (2007)



were published, Reeves's life and career have slowly gained the notoriety and honor they deserve, including through novelization and Hollywood dramatization.

In 2021, *True West's* editors worked closely with Burton on the magazine's first in-depth cover story on the legendary life of Bass Reeves, including how Burton's favorite lawman had become a darling of film and television. Three years later, with *Lawmen: Bass Reeves*, a highly rated and well-publicized primetime series streaming on Paramount+, we have asked Burton to recount the extraordinary life of Bass Reeves from his days as a slave to the most storied lawman to serve justice as a deputy U.S. marshal for Judge Isaac Parker.

Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves, Muskogee, Oklahoma, 1907

All Images Courtesy *True West Archives*  
Unless Otherwise Noted



Bass Reeves  
Illustration by  
Bob Boze Bell

# BASS REEVES TIMELINE

**1838** – Bass Reeves is born in Crawford County, Arkansas, as enslaved property of Arkansas politician/farmer William Steele Reeves.

**1846** – Bass moves to frontier Texas with the William Steele Reeves family.

**1850** – Bass is assigned to the son of William Reeves, George, as a body servant (valet). George is elected sheriff of Grayson County, Texas.

**1855** – George Reeves is elected to the Texas House of Representatives for Grayson County.

**1861** – George Reeves is made second in command of the Confederate 11th Texas Cavalry Regiment. Bass accompanies George as his body servant (valet). The 11th Cavalry Regiment fights in the Indian Territory.

**1862** – Colonel George Reeves and the 11th Texas Cavalry Regiment fight at the Battle of Pea Ridge. Sometime after the battle, Bass and George have a fight over a card game, and Bass knocks George out and escapes into the Indian Territory.

**1863 to 1865** – Bass Reeves serves with the Union Army in the Battles of Cabin Creek and Honey Springs, both Union victories. For the rest of the war, Reeves is involved in skirmishes and engagements as a Union irregular and scout in the Indian Territory.

**1866 to 1870** – Bass Reeves is engaged as a scout/interpreter/guide for railroad surveyors in the Indian Territory.

**1870** – Bass Reeves moves his family to Van Buren, Arkansas. Bass serves as a scout and guide for deputy U.S. Marshals of the federal court at Van Buren.

**1875** – Federal court moved to Fort Smith in 1871. Bass is given a commission as deputy U.S. marshal under Judge Isaac C. Parker.

**1880** – Reeves builds a new home inside the city limits of Van Buren. He is the first African American to build in the city; most Blacks live outside of town.

**1883** – Reeves arrests a ranch foreman named Jim Webb for the murder of a Black preacher in the Chickasaw Nation. In making the arrest, Reeves must shoot and kill a Webb ally.

**1884** – Reeves goes after Jim Webb, who was bailed out and didn't appear for trial. Reeves and Webb have a

gunfight in the Chickasaw Nation. Reeves kills Webb with a rifle shot at 500 yards at Bywaters Store. (Read the full story in "Classic Gunfights" on page 44.)

**1884** – Reeves accidentally shoots his cook, William Leach, and kills him.

**1885** – Bass requests the warrant for the arrest of Belle Starr for horse thief. Belle later turns herself in at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

**1886** – In January, Reeves is arrested for the shooting of his camp cook, relieved of duty and incarcerated in the Fort Smith federal jail. In June, Reeves pays bail and is released.

**1887** – Bass stands trial for the murder of Leach. A jury finds him not guilty, and he resumes his job as a deputy U.S. marshal.

**1890** – Reeves arrests a Seminole outlaw, Greenleaf, who has murdered seven people: three Whites and four Indians. Greenleaf has been on the run for 17 years.

Reeves attacks and burns down the cabin of fugitive Cherokee outlaw Ned Christie, but Ned escapes.

**1893** – Reeves begins working for the Eastern District of Texas federal court in Paris. This court has jurisdiction over the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations. Bass is stationed at Calvin, Choctaw Nation.

**1896** – Reeves goes under cover as Jim Underwood in Houston to get a confession from a murder suspect. After spending three months with the suspect, Reeves receives a signed confession.

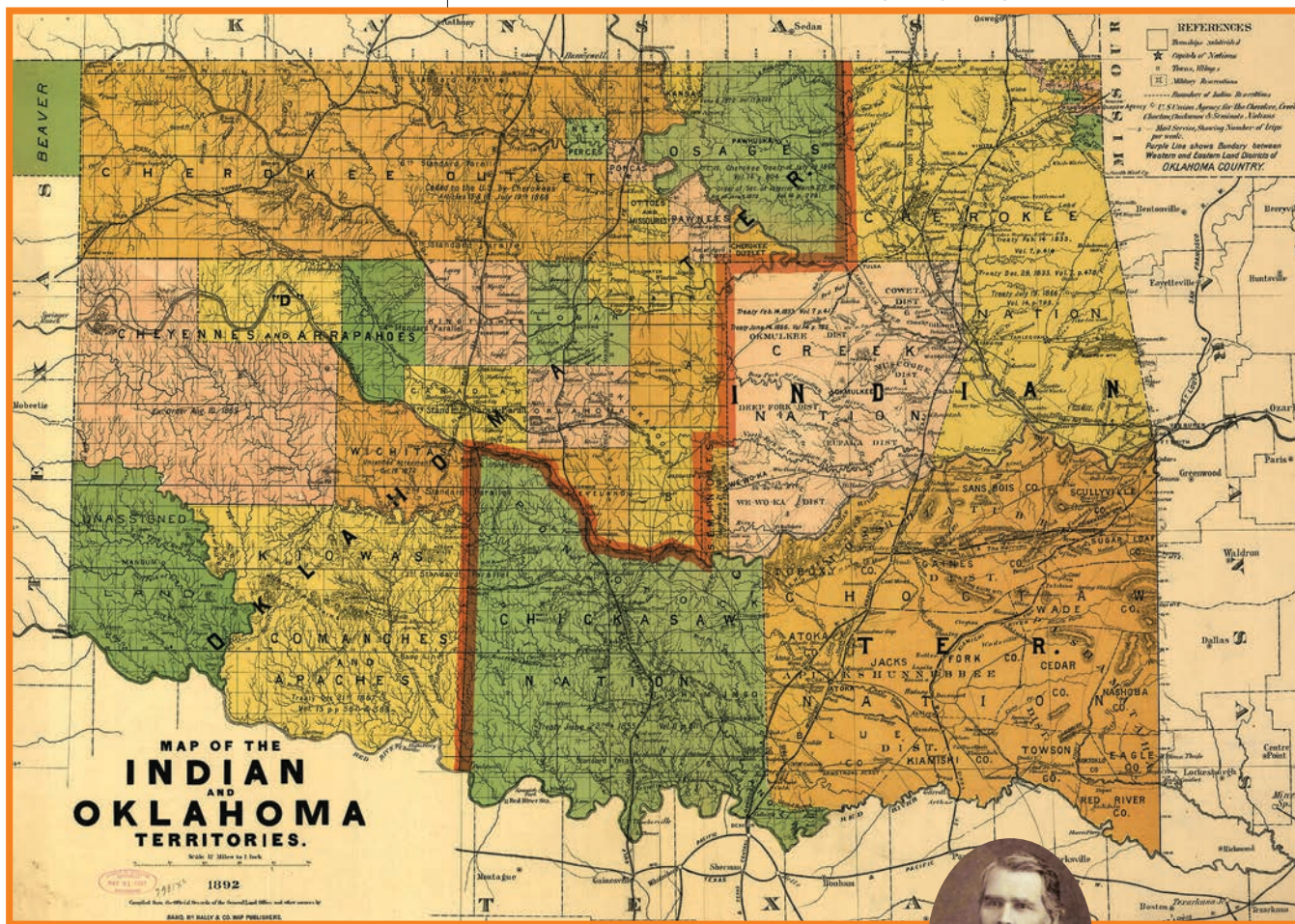
**1896** – In March, Bass's wife, Jennie, dies in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

**1897** – Bass begins work for the Northern District of the Indian Territory, headquartered at Muskogee, Creek Nation. Reeves is stationed at Wetumka, Creek Nation.

**1898** – Reeves is the lead investigator for the slayings of a Black man and White woman living common-law. The case is known as the "Wybark Tragedy." Reeves makes several arrests, but there are no Grand Jury indictments.

**1900** – Bass Reeves is remarried to a Cherokee Freedman named Winnie Sumter. Reeves moves to Muskogee and lives at 4th and Court Streets.

**1903** – Reeves arrests his son, Bennie, for domestic



murder in Muskogee. Bennie is convicted and sent to Leavenworth Federal Prison.

**1906** – Bass escapes an assassination attempt on his life near Wybark, Creek Nation, on the Texas Road.

**1907** – Reeves is involved in the largest gunfight in Muskogee history that involves Black anarchists called The United Socialist Club. Five of the outlaws are killed, two wounded and four surrendered. Bass killed one and wounded another.

**1907** – Bass arrests the minister that baptized him for selling bootleg whiskey.

**1908** – Bass Reeves becomes a member of the Muskogee Police Department at 68 years of age. He is given a beat in downtown Muskogee. Reeves brags, “There was never a crime on my beat!”

**1912** – Bass Reeves dies of Bright’s disease and complications in Muskogee, Oklahoma, on January 12. He was 72 years old.

—Art T. Burton



Speaker of the House of the Texas State Legislature Colonel George Reeves was Bass Reeves’s owner at the onset of the Civil War.

Courtesy DeGolger Library, SMU



Deputy U.S. Marshall Bass Reeves arrested his son Ben “Bennie” Reeves for domestic murder in Muskogee in 1902. The younger Reeves was convicted and sentenced to life in Leavenworth Federal Prison.

Courtesy Art Burton



Western District of Arkansas Federal Court Judge Isaac Parker is responsible for Reeves’s storied career in the U.S. Marshals Service. He served in the office from 1875 to 1896.



Black members of the Muskogee Police Department in 1908 included Bass Reeves (with a cane), R.C. Cotton, Paul Smith and Frank Reed.

BY ART T. BURTON

# BASS REEVES

THE GREATEST DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL

Recently, David Kennedy, historical curator of the U.S. Marshals Museum in Fort Smith, Arkansas, commented about Bass Reeves: "...Most exemplary law enforcement officer the country has ever seen!"

Bass Reeves, the former enslaved African American from Arkansas and Texas reimagined himself and became one of the most legendary heroes in United States history. Reeves was not the first Black deputy for the Western District of Arkansas federal court, and there were many who followed him for that court, but he became the most famous and outstanding, regardless of race, in carrying out his duty to uphold the law.

The Western District of Arkansas had total jurisdiction over federal crimes in western Arkansas and all the Indian Territory, pre-statehood Oklahoma. The area was very diverse with American Indians, European Americans and African Americans. The Five Civilized Tribes had a large population of Black citizens



due to the embrace of chattel slavery before and after their removal from the Southeast to the Indian Territory. After the war, these African Americans were known as Indian Freedmen. Many of the Black deputy U.S. marshals for the Fort Smith federal court were Indian Freedmen.

Reeves was hired in 1875, and the first U.S. marshal he worked under was Daniel Upham, former commander of the Arkansas State Militia that destroyed the Ku Klux Klan in Arkansas in the late 1860s. Reeves started after the arrival of Judge Isaac C. Parker, and

In 1900, Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves was working out of Muskogee, Indian Territory. He is shown standing in the door of a boxcar on the MK&T Railroad. On the left with a Winchester is Bud Ledbetter and lawmen guarding the shipment near Muskogee.

Courtesy Art Burton

worked for the Fort Smith court until 1893, when he transferred to the Eastern District of Texas Federal Court in Paris. Bass spent his last ten years of federal service working for the U.S. federal court at Muskogee, Creek Nation, Indian Territory. He is the only deputy on record who started with Judge Parker

Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves (circled) is seen here astride at the celebration of the laying of the cornerstone for the first federal court building in Muskogee, Indian Territory, in July 1889.

Courtesy Art Burton



Oklahoma Territories, but while he was a deputy for the Eastern District of Texas federal court he went on assignment as far south as Houston, Texas. He was a master of disguise, regularly masquerading as a cowboy, preacher, farmer, tramp or outlaw to get near fugitives he was trying to capture. Reeves was very proud of his detective work. He was highly perceptive, had great observational skills and used deductive reasoning before the fictional character known as Sherlock Holmes did.

At Reeves's death, many newspapers reported that he had killed 14 men in the line of duty. More than a few newspapers stated he had killed more than 20 men in the line of duty. Being that

Reeves was ambidextrous with pistol and rifle, and an expert with either weapon, he would have to be considered one of the top gunfighters in Wild West history. I believe, unequivocally, that Bass Reeves was the greatest federal lawman of the Western frontier!

in 1875 and worked until Oklahoma statehood in November of 1907.

The Indian/Oklahoma Territories were the most dangerous area in the 19th and early 20th centuries for deputy U.S. marshals. Over 130 men lost their lives in those territories, according to the preeminent researcher of men killed in the line of duty for the U.S marshals service, Robert Ernst. Bass Reeves walked into the valley of death every day for 30 years and didn't flinch. Reeves, as a Black man, had to navigate the racial landscape, attitudes and perceptions, of Whites, Blacks and Indians of the territories, which was not always an easy feat.

In 1901, Reeves was interviewed by a newspaper, and he stated he had arrested



For over three decades, Bass Reeves served side by side with White deputy U.S. marshals on manhunts across the Indian Territory, including a failed attempt to arrest Cherokee outlaw Ned Christie in 1890.

Courtesy nps.gov

at that time over 3,000 men and women who had broken federal laws. This was still six years before his retirement from federal service. Reeves worked primarily in the Indian and

# WHO WAS THE REAL BASS REEVES?

Bass Reeves was a Texas gentleman and treated everyone with dignity and respect. Reeves was 6'2" and weighed 190 pounds. It was said he had near super-human strength, and he could whip any two men with his bare hands. Reeves was known to be gregarious, full of life, liked telling jokes and laughing. He was a master of disguise in his detective pursuits. Reeves mastered all weapons of combat and could shoot a pistol or rifle with either hand expertly. In a gunfight he would always sing softly prior to the engagement. He was always very focused on catching the felons he was chasing. Bass got to know a multitude of residents and settlers, a pioneer in community policing. He loved dogs and horses and kept a large dog to guard his camp and watch the prisoners. Reeves always rode large horses, favoring sorrels and grays. A true man of the West!

—A.B.

**Art T. Burton**, musician, author and historian, a retired history professor. Burton has committed the last 35 years researching and writing about African Americans and Native Americans on the Western frontier. Internationally recognized, Burton has appeared in numerous film documentaries on the subject. He is best known for bringing Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves to the public's attention. Burton, a lecturer, has written four books and numerous articles for magazines and journals documenting Wild West history.



## BASS RELIEF

By all accounts Bass Reeves showed different looks throughout his long career, even posing as a farmer to hoodwink outlaws. And whether he rode white, gray or sorrel horses, he always stood tall in the saddle.

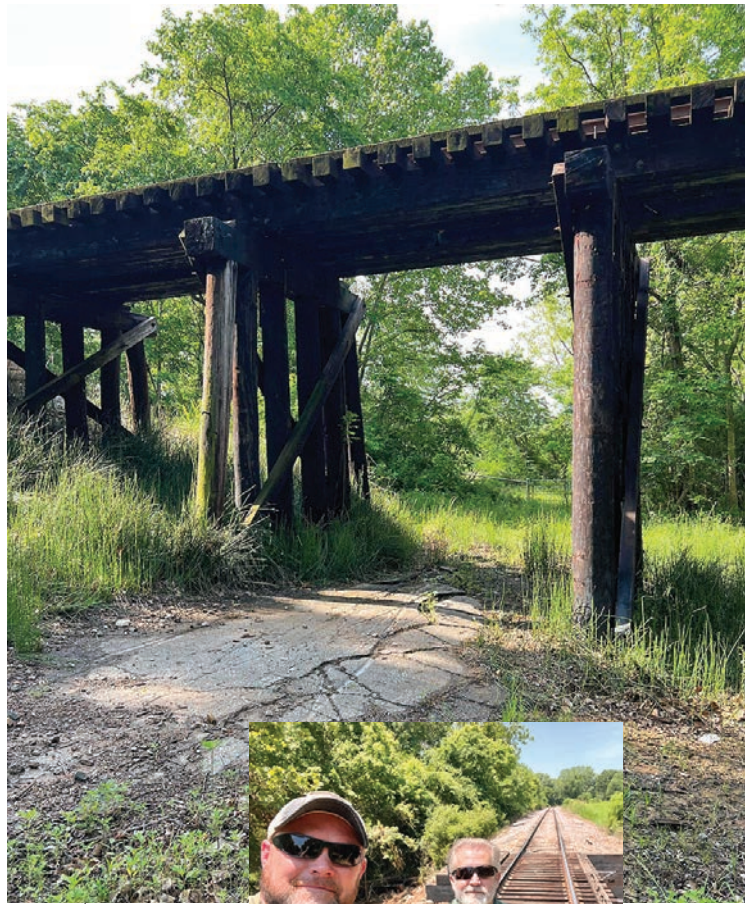
Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

## THE DISCOVERY OF BASS REEVES'S ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION SITE

Deputy U.S. Marshal Jeremy Hammons of the Eastern District of Arkansas office in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Mike Higgs, assistant curator for the Secretary of State Office at the Arkansas State Capitol, located the trestle that Bass Reeves rode under in November of 1906 when he was almost assassinated near Wybark, Creek Nation, Indian Territory. Reeves was fired on in the darkness as he drove his buggy under the trestle and returned fire but didn't hit the culprit.

Higgs took the initiative and started researching old railroad maps of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. He spoke to the curator of history for the Union Pacific Railroad that currently owns the tracks of the fallen flag M.K.&T. railroad line today. Higgs was able to ascertain that the trestle was on a spur line that ran from Muskogee to Tulsa in the Creek Nation, now Oklahoma. The trestle was built in 1902, four years before the Reeves incident. It was near a water spring and crossed over the old Texas Road.

Deputy Hammons was able to take the information and travel from Little Rock and find the exact location north of Muskogee. The Union Pacific Railroad still uses the spur track. The location is now on private property, but Hammons was able to get permission for the search, which turned out successful—a good piece of detective work by Higgs and Hammons.



Jeremy Hammons and Mike Higgs are shown standing on the Wybark Trestle, which they have identified as the site of the Bass Reeves assassination attempt.

Courtesy Jeremy Hammons and Mike Higgs

—A.B.

BY ART T. BURTON

# BASS REEVES

A N D T H E M E D I A

The biggest recent news for Bass Reeves in popular media was the release in 2023 of *Lawmen: Bass Reeves*, an eight-part series produced by Taylor Sheridan and David Oyelowo, who also portrayed Reeves in the production on Paramount+. In 2021, Bass Reeves was portrayed in the BBC production of *Around the World in 80 Days*, shown on PBS in the United States. Reeves was played by British actor Gary Beadle. Reeves was also portrayed in the INSP Western Cable Channel series *Wild West Chronicles* in 2021 and 2023.

On the literary scene, my book, *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshal Bass Reeves* came out with an enlarged revised edition in September of 2022. This book has not been optioned for a movie or a television series yet. TCU Literary Professor Sidney Thompson's fictional trilogy on Bass Reeves was optioned for the *Lawmen: Bass Reeves* series. Thompson's books are *Follow the Angels, Follow the Doves*, 2020; *Hell on The Border*, 2021; and *The Forsaken and The Dead*, 2023. The first two books were used for the miniseries. Other noted fiction books on Bass Reeves include *The Legend of Bass Reeves: Being the True and Fictional Account of the Most Valiant Marshal in the West* by Gary Paulson and *Bad News for Outlaws* by Vaunda Nelson in 2009. A recent fiction book, *Bass Reeves Versus...* by Ben L. Jones, published in 2023. These books were written for young readers. Two fiction books were written about Bass Reeves arresting his son:



British star David Oyelowo portrays the legendary deputy U.S. marshal in the Paramount+ production *Lawmen: Bass Reeves*.

Courtesy Paramount+

*Legacy of a Lawman: A Western Story* by Johnny D. Boggs (2013) and *A Bass Reeves Adventure: Give Me The Warrant* by S.C. Sherman (2023).

The literary rights of my first book *Black, Red, and Deadly: Black and Indian Gunfighters of the Indian Territory, 1870-1907*, with the largest chapter on Bass Reeves, was purchased by Morgan Freeman and his company Revelations Entertainment Inc. and has currently not found a home as a movie or a streamer for a television series. In 2015, two docudramas were made about Bass Reeves for cable television, the first was from FOX Television produced by Bill O'Reilly for his *Legends and Lies* Western series

titled "Bass Reeves: The Real Lone Ranger." Bass Reeves was portrayed by the actor D.L. Hopkins, with onscreen remarks by me. The second docudrama was from the Discovery Channel for their series *Gunslingers*, second season, titled "Bass Reeves: The Real Lone Ranger." Bass was portrayed by actor Joseph Curtis Callender with onscreen remarks by *True West* magazine Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell and me.

Earlier in television, Bass Reeves was intelligently portrayed by actor Colman Domingo and Deputy U.S. Marshal Grant Johnson in the NBC series *Timeless* in the fictional episode titled "The Murder of Jesse James" in 2017. In January 2020,

there was an independent small budget movie released titled *Hell on the Border* filmed in Alabama, which starred David Gyasi as Bass Reeves as the lead character. The movie was not historically accurate and had a weak plot.

*Corsicana*, another independent movie released in 2021 was shot in Texas and was directed by and stars Isaiah Washington as Bass Reeves based on a fictional storyline.

Netflix developed a fictional Black Western movie produced by Jay-Z, a 2021 release titled *The Harder They Fall* which used the names of various African American characters of the real Western frontier. Some of the historic names portrayed in the movie were Stagecoach Mary, Nat Love, Rufus Buck, Jim Beckwourth and Cherokee Bill. The noted British film actor Delroy Lindo portrayed lawman



Ernest Marsh, *The Righteous Twelve*, 2022

Courtesy Avondale Pictures



Was Bass Reeves the inspiration for the fictional Lone Ranger? The Discovery Channel's *Gunslingers* episode "Bass Reeves: The Real Lone Ranger" investigates this hotly debated question.

Courtesy ABC Television



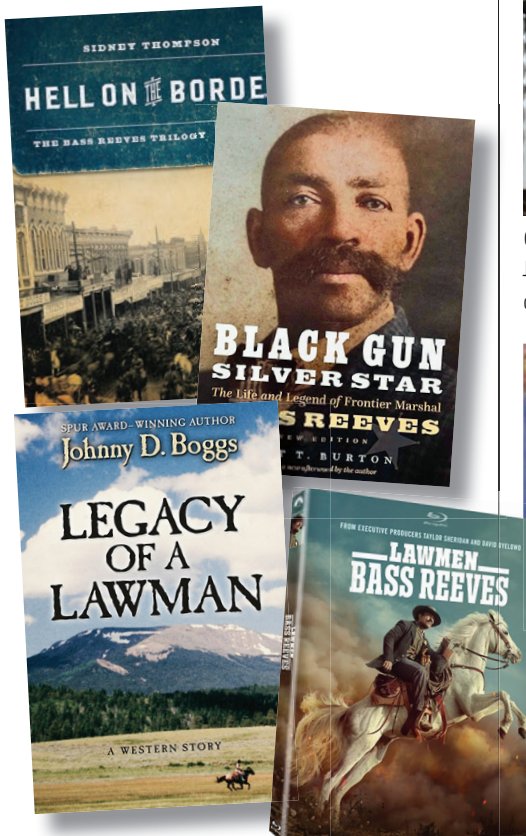
Colman Domingo, "The Murder of Jesse James," *Timeless*, 2017

Courtesy NBC Television



Guy Davis, "Bass Reeves and the Brunter Brothers," *Tales of the Wild West*, 2017

Courtesy Amazon



Bass Reeves. This movie was very popular on Netflix, and they have been greenlit for a sequel.

In documentary film, the French public television network, ARTE, produced a documentary titled *Black Far West*, also known as *The Black West: A Counter History of the Wild West*, which featured Bass Reeves; it was released in 2023. There is also a new documentary titled *In Search of Bass Reeves*, released in 2024 by Knox Robinson Films. Both films will be available to view on Amazon Prime Channel.



How overlooked was Bass Reeves in mainstream popular culture until Art T. Burton began publishing on Reeves in 1991? From 1953 to 1979, Reeves was never mentioned in *True West* magazine.

And what about in mainstream television, where the Western was king through the 1950s and 1960s? The first Black actor to appear in a Western was Raymond St. Jacques as cowboy Simon Blake in *Rawhide's* final season on CBS in 1965, and the first regular role for a Black actor in a Western series was Otis Young in ABC's *The Outcasts* in 1968-69.

In December 1991, Art Burton brought Bass Reeves's life story to the pages of *TW* for the first time with the cover headline story, "Bass Reeves: Deputy U.S. Marshal."

Under the leadership of Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell, Art Burton's research on Bass Reeves began to be shared in *TW*, but it wasn't until February-March 2021 that Reeves was featured on our still-controversial mash-up cover of Bass Reeves as the Lone Ranger. We are grateful to Art Burton for his patience and persistence with *TW*, and we plan to work with the Chicago-based historian in bringing to light many more important minority men and women who helped build the West in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

—Stuart Rosebrook

BY DR. LARRY LEN PETERSON

# Custer ALMOST KILLS Curtis

THE FAMED PHOTOGRAPHER'S OBSESSION  
WITH THE LATE GENERAL ALMOST DERAILS  
EDWARD S. CURTIS'S LIFE AND CAREER.

*The New York Herald* dubbed *The North American Indian (TNAI)* as the “most gigantic undertaking in the making of books since the King James edition of the Bible.” Curtis, the West’s greatest Indian photographer, had a profound effect on how Whites viewed the many Native American cultures. He also instilled a sense of pride for Indians in their heritage. The final volume of *TNAI* was published in 1930. In the end, it required 30 years and over 40,000 photographs of 80 tribes along with 10,000 wax cylinder recordings of Indigenous languages and music to complete his mission. Each of the 20 volume sets contained 2,234 original photogravures (the 20 books contained a total of 1,511 photogravures and the 20 large portfolios a total of 723 photogravures), 2.5 million words of enlightening anthropologic text, and numerous transcriptions of language and music. It would cost over \$30 million in today’s money. Much of the funding would come from the House of Morgan.

There is a moment in time when your dreams and history form a perfect world. For Curtis 1907 would be that moment. An argument could be made that 1907 was the pinnacle of Curtis’s life. Fresh funds from banker J.P. Morgan had not yet been spent, and the High Plains and all it promised unfolded under the big sky. Momentum for hon-

oring the Indigenous people of North America was increasing. For example, in 1907 they were celebrated on a ten-dollar gold piece (Eagle) designed by America’s finest sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The obverse featured an Indian adorned in a full war bonnet. A generation earlier that tribute would have been unthinkable. That same year Charles Lummis founded the Southwest Museum of the American Indian in Los Angeles.

## In Pursuit of Custer

The Shadow Catcher was looking ahead to his future volumes, ones on the Sioux/Cheyenne and Crow (Apsaroke) in Montana and the Dakotas. Yet, as countless others before him, he became obsessed with the Custer stories, declaring, “They got into my brain and I cannot shake it off.” His first visit to the Custer Battlefield as it was known at the time was in 1905. Curtis struck gold when he hired local legend, full-blooded Crow Alexander Upshaw, son of Crazy Pend d’Orielle and his wife, Good Hair. He was born in St. Xavier, Montana, in 1874. Curtis and Upshaw probably first met in 1905 when Upshaw was Curtis’s translator and organizer on his trips to Indian reservations in Montana. Having grown up on the Crow Reservation, Upshaw appeared to have his finger on the pulse

of everything in southeastern Montana. Curtis immortalized him in a portrait with full headdress in Volume IV. Upshaw was a product of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, and one of William Pratt’s success stories. He thrived at the school, heading up the debate team and writing articles in such publications as *Red Man and Helper*, where he urged Indians to travel and learn the white man’s world. After graduating in 1897, he remained an advocate for the values taught at the boarding school.

Upshaw became an outstanding spokesman for the Crow people. For example, in 1909 he joined Curtis on his trip to Washington, D.C., where he met President Theodore Roosevelt and discussed the difficult conditions on the Crow Reservation. Curtis assistant William Phillips wrote that the local Whites called Upshaw “lazy, dishonest, meddlesome, here today and there tomorrow, a regular coyote,” the standard description Whites gave most Indians. Undaunted, Curtis placed Upshaw on the payroll in part to crack the Custer story. Dozens had been given their shot at it, but beaming with hubris, Curtis believed he would be the one to tell the true Western saga. Leaving his reputation in the hands of heavy-drinking Upshaw would prove unwise.

George Armstrong Custer (1839-76) and his wife, Libbie Custer (1842-1933), New York City, Mathew Brady photograph, 1864

Courtesy True West Archives



Upshaw—Apsaroke,  
Curtis photogravure, Vol. IV, 1909



Curtis had been obsessed over the past three years to find out what really happened on the battlefield. Custer was still a national hero at the time. Yet, it was more than a battle, it was a defining moment in American history. His goal was to “form a comprehensive and permanent record” in his *TNAI* text. He was standing at ground zero for the most famous happening in the 19th-century West. No other battle in American history except Gettysburg has had more written about it. In the 19th century, Custer was a genuine national superstar. Curtis’s revelations back East would certainly fetch new subscriptions, so he thought.

Ever since the battle ended in 1876, artists, photographers and writers have added to the myth of Custer’s Last Stand. So too have some of Custer’s Crow scouts—Curley, Goes Ahead, Half Yellow Face, Hairy Moccasin, White Man Runs Him and White Swan—who attempted to warn Custer about the size of the encampment but to no avail. As the years passed, they would all vie for attention as they presented themselves as eyewitness experts on the battle. For a price, they delivered whatever their interviewers wanted to hear. For example, Goes Ahead told his wife Pretty Shield that Custer was shot and fell into the river. He, Hairy Moccasin and White Man Runs Him then fled the battle scene. In reality, Custer didn’t fall into the river, and they had left well before the battle. Pretty

Shield later became famous when Frank Bird Linderman wrote her biography, *Red Mother*, which was published in 1932. In 1931 Linderman had published the classic *American: The Life Story of a Great Indian (Plenty Coups)*. Plenty Coups was the chief of the Crow and one of Curtis’s favorite subjects.

### The Scouts

Upshaw secured the services of three of Custer’s Crow scouts—Goes Ahead, Hairy Moccasin and White Man Runs Him. After leaving Custer, some had found refuge with Reno’s soldiers who had retreated to a safe position on the ridge. The scouts had been paid to find the village, not to fight the Sioux. With shocking information, the three informed Curtis that Custer had passively watched from a high point on the ridge as Reno’s troops were pummeled. To give credence to the idea that he held no grudge against Custer and make his fabrication more believable, White Man Runs Him insisted that Custer “was always very good to us Crow scouts, and we loved him.” This revelation of betrayal of Reno was just the sensational story Curtis needed to sell sets of *TNAI* and enhance his standing as a brilliant researcher. Curtis became convinced that the three Crow scouts were telling the truth. Upshaw most likely thought his reputation would also be elevated nationally by this revelation.



Two Moons—Cheyenne,  
Curtis photogravure, Vol. VI, 1911

Little Bighorn  
Battlefield,  
Montana: (left to  
right) Goes Ahead;  
Hairy Moccasin;  
White Man Runs  
Him; Edward  
S. Curtis; and  
Alexander Upshaw,  
1907



This tale could never hold muster. When attacking Indian villages, Custer went with a multipronged attack, charging from several directions, just like he had done in the Civil War and Washita. Robert M. Utley in *The Lance and the Shield* (1993) brought clarity to

the controversy. He wrote, "From the blufftops he saw the village for the first time and watched Major Reno open the battle at the upper end. Then Custer led his men down a ravine that opened on upper Medicine Tail Coulee." Benteen never showed up, but large numbers of

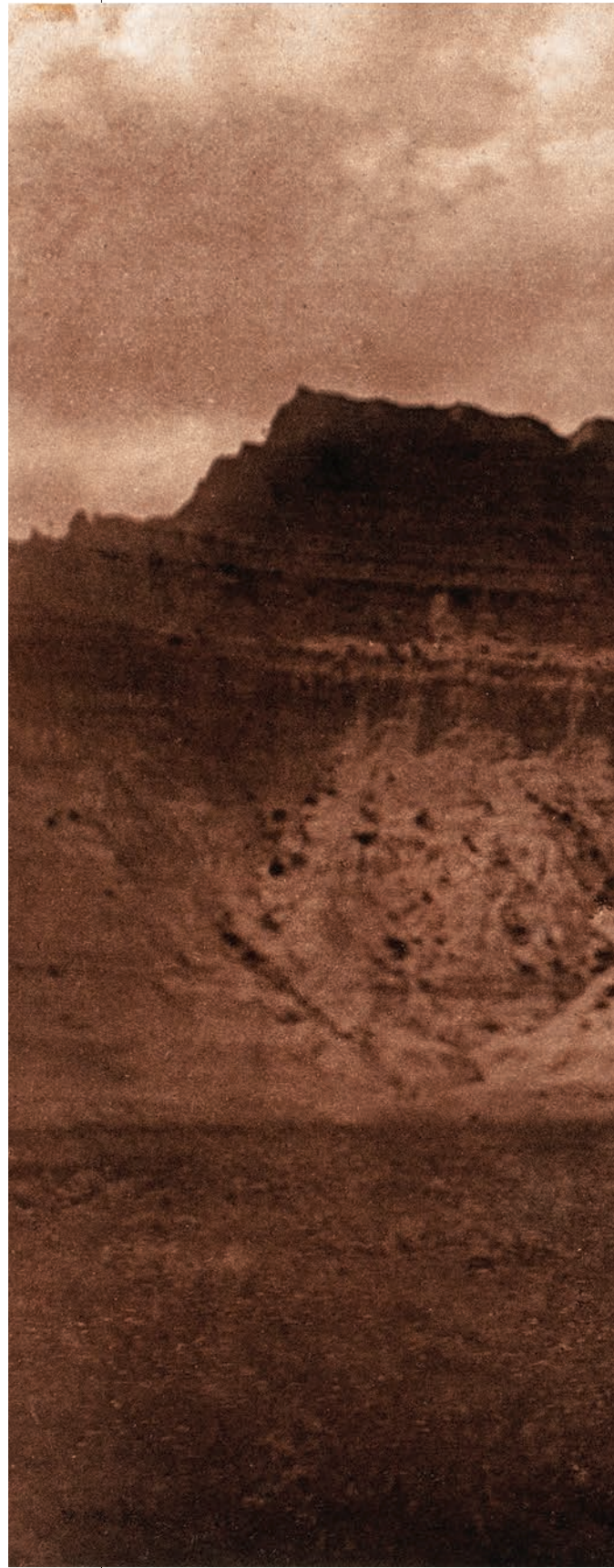
Indian warriors did. In the most detailed account, battle expert Evan S. Connell in *Son of the Morning Star: Custer and the Little Bighorn* (1984) wrote, "The last time any of the survivors saw him alive, with two or three questionable exceptions, was shortly after he turned up into the eastern hills. Reno's men in the valley saw him wave his hat, presumably to encourage them. Then he spurred his horse and rode out of sight." In reality, Custer never lingered.

The three scouts had been seeking publicity ever since the battle because they felt they had never received the notoriety they deserved. Another scout, Curly (Ashishishe), for decades had gained a national reputation as the sole survivor of the Custer massacre, a status the others envied. Curly initially reported that he watched the battle



*The Scout's Report—Atsina,*  
Curtis photographure, Vol. V, 1909

*In the Bad Lands,*  
Curtis photogravure,  
Vol. III, 1908



between the Sioux/Cheyenne and Custer's troops from a distance. Curly, at 19 years old, claimed he stuck with Custer long after the other three scouts had fled. Soon after the battle famed photographer D.F. Barry snapped famous portraits of Curly, adding to his celebrity. In total, over 100 photographs were taken of him by a number of photographers. Later, Curly changed his story and said that he was with Custer at the Last Stand and disguised himself as a Lakota warrior to escape. His family's story was that after Custer fell, he hid inside a gutted horse to avoid detection. In the June 1906 *Scribner's* Curtis wrote, "Among the dozens of Indians I questioned of the fight was Curley [sic] who is so often called the sole survivor of the Custer fight. He has been so bullied, badgered, questioned, cross-questioned, leading-questioned, and called, by mouth and in type, a coward and a liar by an endless horde of the curious and the knowledge-seeking, that I doubt today, if his life depended upon it, he could tell whether he was ever at or near the Custer fight."

Loving the melodramatic, Curtis remained convinced that Custer was a coward and Reno a victim. He wrote in his notes, totaling 100 pages just on the battle, "Custer watched all of this for 45 to 60 minutes, and the whole fight was so close to him that he could have been in the thick of it in five minutes." In the fall of 1907 Curtis's team, including Upshaw and lead assistant William E. Myers, stayed at a cabin on the Crow reservations to finish the writing for Volume III and work on a separate book on the Crow and Hidatsa.

A fold-out map of the battle scene was included on page 44 of Volume III.

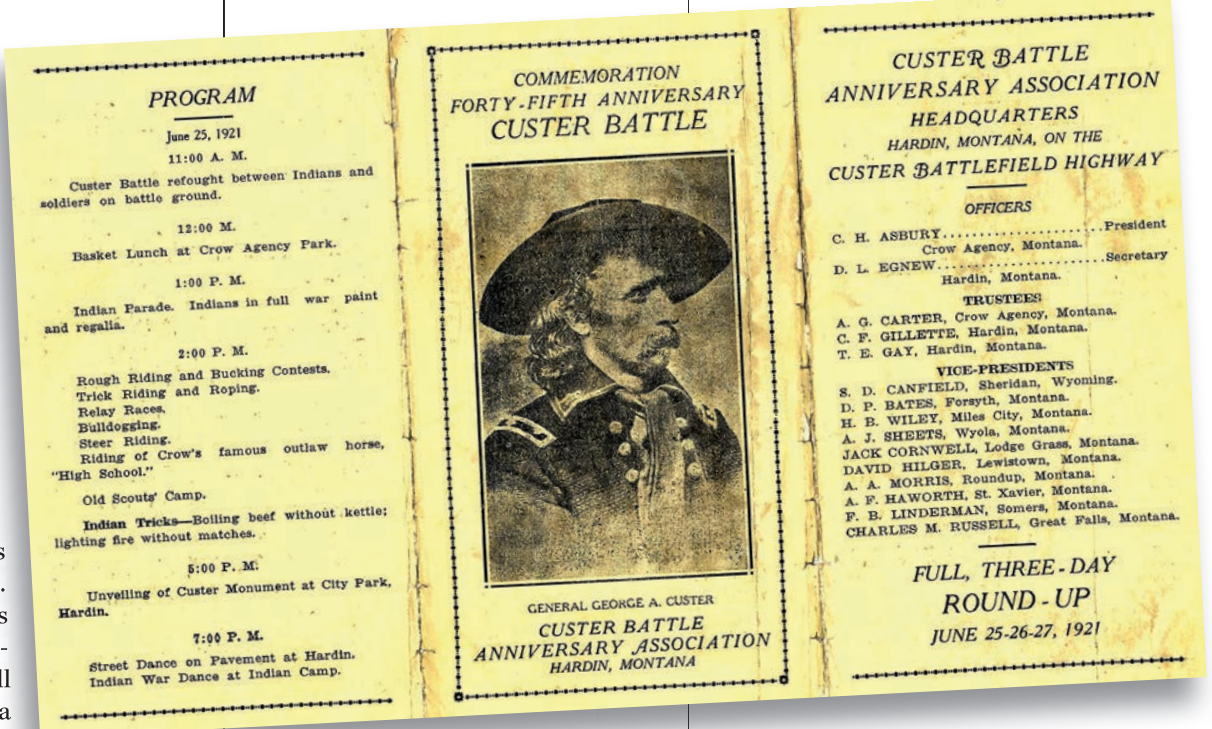
The revelation that Custer had watched Reno's retreat without intervening was first revealed to his friend, professor Edmond S. Meany back in Seattle. Curtis wrote, "Has there been anything published on the fact that Custer, from the highest viewpoint of the region, watched Reno's charge, battle, and defeat?... It puts an entirely new light on the entire Custer fight." Meany wrote back that he was playing with fire. Curtis defensively wrote, "This is not a pipe dream on my part. I have ridden the battlefield from end to end, back and forth from every important point on it, noting carefully the time of such rides." Perhaps, this was another exaggeration.

### **The Crash**

Then, events far away rocked Curtis's world. The Panic of 1907 began over a three-week period in October. Stocks fell 50 percent, and there was a run on the banks as the world's financial system teetered on collapse. After a few months, the economy and markets slowly recovered. Curtis wrote to Charles Lummis, "Confidentially, the fact that the stock market has gone to the bow-wows is making my work a bit difficult." In early 1908 Curtis returned to New York City to give Morgan's librarian Belle da Costa Greene an update for the titan and to solicit



Brochure commemorating the 45th anniversary of the Custer Battle, 1921



new subscriptions but with little success. The big event was Curtis publicly dropping the bombshell about Custer being a coward. Criticism was

sudden and vicious and came from many corners, including Libbie Custer and her supporters. Even though her husband left her in debt, Libbie spent the rest of her life creating his legend in her books and defending his honor.

Wounded by the furor, Curtis sought support from President Theodore Roosevelt. On April 8, 1908, the president gave his terse response:

“My Dear Mr. Curtis: I have read those papers through with great interest, and after reading them, I am uncertain as to what is the best course to advise. I never heard of the three Crow scouts that you mention, and did not know that they were with Custer. I need not say to you that writing over thirty years after an event it is necessary to be exceedingly cautious about relying upon the memory of any man, Indian or white. Such a space of time is a great breeder of myths. Apparently you are inclined to the theory that Custer looked on but a short distance away at the butchery of Reno’s men, and let it take place, hoping to gain great glory for himself afterward. Such a theory is wildly improbable. Of course, human nature is so queer that it is hard to say that anything is impossible, but this theory makes Custer out to be a traitor and a fool. He would have gained just as much glory galloping down to snatch victory from defeat after Reno was thoroughly routed.”

Poof. Three years of work on the story went up in smoke. Discouraged, Curtis

wrote an army colonel, “I am beginning to believe that nothing is quite so uncertain as facts.” Any mention of his theory never ended up in Volume III. Curtis recanted and wrote Meany, “Don’t have a cold chill when I say I brought in my material. I have been very guarded and while giving a great deal of new and interesting information, I have said nothing

that can be considered a criticism of Custer.” He especially didn’t want to upset Chief of the U.S. Forest Service Gifford Pinchot who had just named a national forest after Custer. A sense of risky adventure always entered into Curtis’s efforts, part of his melodramatic personality.

Working on Volume IV, Upshaw was Curtis’s tireless front man as they in-



Standing left to right, Alexander Upshaw, William E. Myers, Edmond Meany, Jack Red Cloud (son of Red Cloud) and seated, Chief Red Cloud, Ogalla Lakota leader  
Fred R. Meyer photograph, 1907



*An Oasis in the Badlands,* Curtis photogravure, Vol. III, 1908

investigated the Apsaroke (Crow) in southern Montana. The summer of 1908 saw Upshaw across the border in western North Dakota building friendships with the Mandan in anticipation of release of Volume V about them in 1909. The next volume was released two years later. Reviews of the first volumes were laudatory. *The Review of Reviews* wrote, “The North American Indian cannot be compared with any publishing venture in the annals of American bookmaking, or indeed in those of any other nation.” His friend Clinton Hart Merriam, now head of the Bureau of Biological Survey, wrote, “Every American who sees the work will be proud that so handsome a piece of book-making has been produced in America; and every intelligent man will rejoice that ethnology and history have been enriched by such faithful and artistic records of the aboriginal inhabitants of our country.”

Accolades were indeed in order. The first five volumes of *TNAI* showcased some of Curtis’s finest photogravures and text: Volume I (1907): *The Vanishing Race—Navaho, Geronimo—Apache, The Chief of the Desert—Navaho, and Cañon de Chelley—Navaho*. While the famous *The Vanishing Race—Navaho* (1904) was picked as the first portfolio image, lesser known is its optimistic opposite, *Out of the Darkness* (1904). Curtis noted where it was shot, “In Tesakod Cañon,

a branch of Cañon de Chelley. At the point where this picture was made the gorge is very narrow;” Volume II (1908): *Mosa—Mohave, Qahatika Girl*; Volume III (1908): *In The Bad Lands, Prayer To The Mystery, and An Oasis In The Bad Lands*; Volume IV (1909): *The Oath, The Spirit Of The Past—Apsaroke, and Crying To The Spirits*; and Volume V (1909): *Bear’s Belly—Arikara, Offering The Buffalo Skull—Mandan, and in The Medicine Lodge—Arikara*. Of the haunting *The Spirit of the Past—Apsaroke* (1908), Curtis wrote, “A particularly striking group of old-time warriors, conveying so much of the feeling of the early days of the chase and the war-path that the picture seems to reflect in an unusual degree ‘the spirit of the past.’” The first two volumes were originally planned to be published at the same time in late 1907, but work on Volume II delayed its release until 1908.

To honor Curtis’s achievement, Roosevelt invited him to the White House in February 1909. Upshaw accompanied him. A reception was held for Curtis that was attended by the president and Vice President Taft. Even though Curtis was able to convince Andrew Carnegie to finally sign up for a subscription, sales continued to be anemic. There was additional bad news later that year. Upshaw was found dead in a jail cell in Billings. He was 38 years old. Apparently,

he had been drinking and was transported to jail to dry out. He died after an episode of vomiting blood in his jail cell. Some of his Crow friends told Curtis that he had gotten into a fight with several White men

who severely beat him. Devastated, Curtis had high praise for his friend in Volume IV. He said he was the most remarkable man he had ever met.

The dean of Western historians, Robert M. Utley, who studied the battle as much as anyone wrote, “Then on June 25, 1876, history merged with legend to award George Armstrong Custer immortality. The Battle of the Little Bighorn cut short a career that would have gained occasional mention in the histories of the Civil War and the western frontier. Instead, it made the slain Custer’s name a household word then and forever after—an icon in the public imagination, at times bright, at times tarnished, but never in danger of decay.” The reflective Utley wrote, “The simplest answer, usually overlooked, is that the army lost largely because the Indians won. To ascribe defeat entirely to military failing is to devalue Indian strength and leadership.” And Custer almost cut short Curtis’s career. ❖

“Custer Almost Kills Curtis” is excerpted from Western American art historian **Dr. Larry Len Peterson’s** latest book, *Edward S. Curtis: Printing the Legends, Looking at Shadows in a West Lit Only by Fire*. The award-winning author lives with his wife LeAnne on their Spirit of Winter Ranch near Sisters, Oregon, in the shadows of the Three Sisters Mountains—Hope, Faith and Charity.

BY LYNDA A. SÁNCHEZ

# THE LAST

THE FINAL MISSION OF THE APACHE SCOUTS IN

General John “Black Jack” Pershing assigned the Apache scouts from the 10th and 11th cavalry the task of tracking Pancho Villa. (*Enjuh!* It is good, they acknowledged.) The taste of new adventure and the hunt for the elusive bandit and his soldiers stirred their warrior souls.

The violence and upheaval of the Apache campaigns of the 1880s were long past. Compared to the dozens of scouts and troops who combed the Southwest and Mexico for renegade Apaches refusing to be confined on reservations, 1916 was pretty quiet. These particular Apache scouts were a band of brothers; they were tough and could track, fight and ride as their predecessors once did, but they were also immobilized in a time warp with tedious, uninspiring duty. That changed dramatically on March 9, 1916, when Pancho Villa and his angry *revolucionarios* had the audacity to wreak havoc on the border community of Columbus, New Mexico.

Sprawled along the border, the small town was a blur of dust devils and no rain. The Mexican Revolution had brought betrayal and bloodshed for six long years to many citizens of both nations. The shock of that brutal assault on U.S. soil would not be tolerated. Villa had badly misjudged the leadership in Washington, and while hoping to jumpstart the purpose of the revolution, which was “*Tierra y Libertad*” (land and freedom), this unfortunately backfired. The angry “bandit” general finally cut ties with President Woodrow Wilson



and all the political chicanery of that administration’s lackadaisical attitude toward Mexico. Fury had overwhelmed Villa when he learned that the U.S. was supplying arms to his bitter rival, Venustiano Carranza. Villa despised Carranza because by Villa’s rough standards the man was a coward and a pompous *rico* who had achieved power without fighting the evil of General Huerta. Thus, the treachery of the United States stung, and Villa did what he knew best—he rode out of nowhere and attacked, killing and maiming citizens of the U.S. and leaving his own war dead strewn across the landscape.

The United States government, usually slow in its reactions, seemed to move like the wind. Within a short time thousands of men were called to duty to capture and punish Villa and his Dorados. Selected to lead this “punitive

expedition” (also known as the Mexican Expedition) was Brig. Gen. “Black Jack” Pershing.

Pershing well remembered his frontier experience and service in New Mexico during the Indian wars. He was a strong disciplinarian and had a gift for organization. Wanting to complete the assignment quickly and efficiently, Pershing submitted a special request for Apache scouts because he was familiar with their ability and expertise in tracking techniques. Now, if Pershing could just get Washington off his back. Unfortunately, President Woodrow Wilson was always trying to second-guess his military commanders.

Little did the scouts realize that the few years they had remaining would pale in comparison to the exciting months chasing Villa, scouting for Gen. Black Jack Pershing and serving their nation.

# HURRAH

MEXICO WAS ONE OF VALOR AND COURAGE



"Shannon's Scouts" still wore traditional items like concho belts. For so many, the scouts represented those who had gone before—a "thread of continuity to a treasured past!"

Courtesy National Archives, The Armory Life

## OLD TRADITIONS DIE HARD

Several of the older scouts had served or had relatives who served during the Geronimo campaigns. Only 24 remained in 1916, however Pershing increased their ranks to 35 during the Punitive Expedition. They would serve their last major assignment yet again in Mexico. Despite 30 years of relative peace along the border, Apache scouts were a little nervous about riding into the land of their traditional enemy, the Mexicans.

Their view of the world did not distinguish between friendly Mexicans and the Carranzistas or Villistas. To their minds, "shoot 'em all" seemed to be the order of the day. Caution was much more a part of the march forward than they anticipated.

Ace Daklugie, nephew of Geronimo, told historian Eve Ball when describing scout activity that an Apache never wanted to be surprised. No surprise equals survival!

Successful commanders, including Capts. John G. Bourke, Emmet Crawford and Lts. Britton Davis, Charles B. Gatewood, James Shannon and H. B. Wharfield, realized the greater leeway they allowed the Apache scouts with regard to their culture and beliefs, the more responsive their attitudes would be toward military life.

U.S. Army Capt. John G. Bourke described the Apache scouts on the campaign in pursuit of Chiricahua Apaches in 1883 as following the ways of the natural environment. The scout knew every nook and cranny, every trail or mark along the way that told a story of people or animals passing by. A scout's value was in their natural skills they were taught from childhood.

More than 30 years later, Capt. James Shannon, commanding officer of scouts, wrote:

*"In order to get results, he must be allowed to play that game in his own way... This extreme caution...is one of the qualities that makes him a perfect scout. It would be almost impossible to surprise an outfit that had a detachment of Apache scouts in its front."*

Although raised in the East, Lieutenant Shannon had developed a true appreciation for his Apache scouts. He praised them for their keeping an orderly camp, care of their horses and especially their traditional Apache religious rites. He found that they used the sweat lodge almost daily and each man carried several sacred objects of power in the pockets of their uniforms such as *hod-dentin*, the sacred pollen they all valued and used for daily prayers. These were the men following the trail of Villa and his "gang of cutthroats" as the American press now described them.

## BATTLES AT RANCHO OJOS AZULES AND LAS VARAS PASS

Though there were many skirmishes and incidents, two major encounters during which the Apache scouts rode point and relished the battle experience as well as the scouting phase of their duties, occurred in May and June of 1916.

## RANCHO OJOS AZULES

Historian Friedrich Katz called the action at Rancho Ojos Azules the "greatest victory that the Punitive Expedition would achieve!" It also improved morale among the troops. The Apache scouts

Geronimo campaign scout Peaches (Tzoe) was a well-respected scout of his era. Sadly, he was not selected to go with Pershing in 1916 and was one of four left behind for general duties. Note the difference in scout attire from 1886 to 1916.

Courtesy W. Michael Farmer

enjoyed every minute of this encounter. It allowed them to prove they could fight as well as track.

On May 5 after a forced march of 35 miles, a group of scouts and members of the 11th Cavalry came to El Rancho Ojos Azules. (Blue Springs). Many Villistas were known to be in the area. It could be a great opportunity to actually engage the enemy that had attacked the United States and possibly corner Villa himself. Julio Acosta led some 150 or more seasoned soldiers loyal to Villa. Maj. Robert L. Howze hastily assembled six troops of the 11th Cavalry, a machine gun troop, a pack train loaded with four days' rations, and the Apache scouts who fanned out as an advance guard for the main column. A handful of American officers and about 140 enlisted men fought against the Villistas. Incredibly, not one American was wounded in battle, but over 50 of the Villistas were reported as killed in action with at least that many captured. Major Howze, eager to field a victory, had continued his forced night march in an effort to achieve total surprise the next morning. Exactly a month earlier he had been forced to give up a pursuit of Villa himself, due to a lack of Apache scouts to follow the trail. His Apache scouts had been accused of committing "atrocities," thus he had to temporarily suspend their operations. This put the men at a distinct disadvantage without scouts to follow the clever and evasive Dorados. It was very frustrating for all involved.

This time Howze sensed that the trap was closing with the aid of his Apaches and the two civilian guides. At sunrise the combined forces deployed and the Ojos Azules charge began.



According to some reports, Ojos Azules is remembered as the last American cavalry campaign fought in the frontier way. It was clean and near perfect as dozens of Villistas were caught in the cross fire, and this cavalry charge was typical of the *americanos'* classic fighting style. Major Howze, with Troop A, was to act as a mounted advance guard for the 11th Cavalry troops. The original plan for the scouts was to find the Villistas and prevent them from escaping. However, the Apaches, unable to resist once they located the enemy, dismounted in their traditional style and fought until the remainder of Howze's troops arrived. It was reported that they fought well side by side with regular cavalry troops. A charge with pistols through the ranch

made in columns of four ended with the enemies fleeing for their lives. Other troops deployed to either side of the ranch house blocked escape by use of the machine gun brigade. Apache scouts eagerly led the way against their traditional Mexican enemies. This was an unusual move in that scouts were supposed to locate the enemy and then get the hell out of the way.

First Lieutenant S. M. Williams, adjutant and quartermaster for the expedition, later wrote in an article for the *US Cavalry Journal* about his experiences at the Ojos Azules fight describing that this battle lasted for at least 20-25 minutes of furious fighting accompanied by Apache scouts shrieking shrill war hoops. Additionally, they also returned to camp with their



Mules were often preferred as can be seen in this lineup of Apache scouts sent with Pershing.

Courtesy N.A.R.A.—the Armory Life

booty: saddles, bridles, captured horses and mules, ammo, blankets, rifles and pistols. Afterwards, 1st Sgt. Chicken (EskehnaDestah) is recorded as saying: “*Huli!* Damn fine fight.” His men agreed.

It was a stunning feat for scouts and troopers because the forced all-night march with horses and mules carrying extra heavy loads was difficult for man and beast, and they were war-weary upon arrival at Ojos Azules. Courage and spontaneity carried the day as scouts and soldiers fought together well, carefully and with lightning speed when necessary.

## LAS VARAS PASS

About a month later on June 2, Lieutenant Shannon and his 20 Apache scouts fought with some of Candelario Cervantes’ men. They had stolen horses from the 5th Cavalry. Stealing horses and mules became a game and a hard-fought one in some cases. Though the Villistas’ trail was over a week old, the scouts tracked the men to Las Varas Pass. Captain Shannon noted that his

scouts took a short time to re-locate the trail after a rocky stretch caused them to slow. The Apaches circled out and soon one motioned for the others and then the rest started off again using the same technique. Within the hour they quickly dispersed the *ladrones* (thieves) as they scattered into the mountains. There were no losses of men, but once again, no Villa.

The Ojos Azules and Las Varas Pass battles did not go unnoticed in Carranza’s Mexico City, even though the casualties had been entirely Villistas. Villistas at Ojos Azules later admitted that fighting against the feared Apaches was an unnerving experience. On June 28, 1916, Mexico’s representative to the United States, Eliseo Arredondo, sent a harsh note to Secretary of State Lansing contending again that Pershing’s officers and Apaches had committed atrocities that would not be forgotten. Pershing responded that these rumors had persisted for some time, but that investigations showed the charges to be unjustified. General Pershing’s findings have satisfied historians ever since then. Unfortunately, it slowed down the

progress in finding Villa for several months. Remarkably, the military reports of their commanders indicate the officers all believed that with better usage of the scouts, Villa himself would have been apprehended! That was the purpose, after all, of the Punitive Expedition. Mexico City was as inept as Washington was when it came to understanding field conditions—lucky for Villa but not for Carranza and his autocrats in the capital.

During the seven months of waiting to “placate” Carranza, the Apaches spent a significant amount of their Mexican service tracking down American deserters and general scouting or hunting forays and repairing telegraph wires cut by the enemy. Shannon took his scouts out for hunts just to prevent boredom and returned with a changed attitude when it came to his men’s tracking abilities. They not only found the animals’ tracks, but also relied on their knowledge of wildlife habits to supply camp with fresh meat, whereas the white soldiers assigned to bring in fresh meat failed to do so in the same general area.

Scouts tracking deserters always got their man. After three soldiers disappeared without a trace, the Apaches located the “invisible trail” because an observant scout found that a fast-moving horse had stumbled in a prairie dog hole and a piece of cactus had been



Troops plowed through the dust storms that raged throughout the borderlands during April. Sometimes high-country snow plagued the troops as well.

Courtesy Lynda A. Sánchez collection



General John "Black Jack" Pershing (above, center) crossing the Río Grande near El Paso, Texas. He and his troops were often in the saddle more than 17 hours a day as they pursued Villa over rough and inhospitable terrain.

True West Archives



Ever the patient *campesinos* (peasants) watched and were ready to hide Pancho Villa and his men from Pershing during the Mexican Punitive Expedition.

broken off in an unnatural manner on down the trail. The scouts moved silently and quickly using only hand signals. Within 24 hours they had caught up with the deserters. This technique was repeated many times.



*True West* contributing editor **Lynda Sánchez**, an award-winning author and historian of Southwest and borderland history, has written six books and over 400 articles. Living in historic Lincoln, New Mexico, has allowed her access to the Mescalero Apache reservation and Apache history for four decades.



Apache scout "First Sgt." on left was described as "able to track any man across any terrain."

Courtesy N.A.R.A.

## VILLA HAS THE LAST LAUGH

Mexico was an untamed, desolate land, especially in the vast wilderness *cordillera* known as the Sierra Madre. Villa knew the countryside. Pershing's troops did not. The *campesinos* loved Villa and his Dorados. They hated the gringo. Mexicans did not want *Americanos* on their soil. Thus, the only real edge Pershing had were Apache Scouts recruited much as they had been in tracking down renegades during the Apache Wars of the last century. It was a wise decision.

The Punitive Expedition was possibly the final military operation to enter combat in the old frontier style of warfare and emerge as a different force with truck convoys and men on mule or horseback riding side by side into a new "modern" era. That was unless they had to follow dim trails of outlaws and Villistas into the rugged Sierra Madre. There were few roads. Mostly, there were dangerous paths following the terrain of canyon and gorge. Pershing knew it was important to use every resource and method to be successful in such terrain. These were not just trails into town plazas. They could be traps for his men. Villa, Fierro and others might be hiding in the nearby hills. In some cases that was true because the Apache Scouts located caves along with stored supplies, ammunition and arms. Nevertheless, despite using all resources available, Pershing was continually outfoxed by the clever revolutionaries. Some bloody incidents gained a few prisoners as well as the anger of the Mexican residents of tiny pueblos, and this carried over into the large city of Chihuahua that was Pershing's headquarters. And, of course, the city was also Villa's old stomping grounds. It was embarrassing to admit, but after more than 11 months in field and town, *no había ni un señal* (there was not even a sign) of the "Centaur of the North." There were lots of rumors, and lightning-fast ambushes or raids for supplies and horses, but no Villa. The *campesinos* composed many *corridos* (folk songs). They serenaded: *Maybe they have guns and cannons, /Maybe they are a lot stronger, /We have only rocks and mountains—/But we know how to last longer ...*

It must have been a bitter pill to accept that if it had not been for the Apache Scouts, they would have never even gotten close to José Doroteo Arango Arámbula aka the bandit general, Pancho Villa!



Pancho Villa test-fired a Hotchkiss machine gun after practice sessions with his men.

True West Archives

The Apache scouts of the Geronimo campaigns dressed and acted in a different manner than the scouts who served under General Pershing. Almost 30 years separated the old scouts and their traditions from the ones who wore the cavalry uniforms of the United States.

Several from the old guard made the transition, but mostly after the Punitive Expedition the twilight of Apache scouts was recognized and their last years, other than those in Mexico, were routine, mundane types of duty.

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



## APACHE TWILIGHT

After the Punitive Expedition ended in February 1917, the army disbanded about half of the force, leaving 22 Apache scouts for active duty at Fort Huachuca. Their wartime service was not yet over though. Conflict between the United States and Mexican armies continued until 1920, and Apache renegades from the Sierra Madre harassed ranchers until the 1930s. They also formed borderland patrols and saw that cattle did not stray into Mexico. Nevertheless, service under General Pershing and the Punitive Expedition could be considered the "last hurrah" for the Apache scouts.

TRUE WEST  
EXCLUSIVE

# CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

## A DEADLY DUEL AT 500 YARDS

BASS REEVES  
VS  
JIM WEBB

THE MASTER OF THE  
LONG SHOT, INDEED



Bass Reeves was also a master of surprise and disguise.

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Based on the research of Art Burton

JUNE 15, 1884



On his forays into the Indian Territory, Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves and his crew often rounded up as many as 17 fugitives and criminals, they then had to guard every night on the return trip to Fort Smith. When they stopped to camp, the prisoners were shackled to the wagon tongue of the chuck wagon and had to be guarded all night.

Out on the Whiskey Trail in Oklahoma Territory, Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves is hot on the trail of a murderer named Jim Webb, who the lawman had previously arrested and brought to justice in 1883. After a year in jail in Fort Smith, Webb got out on a \$17,000 bond and skipped. Now, Reeves got word that Webb had drifted back into the Chickasaw Nation and was hiding out at Jim Bywater's general store on the south side of the Arbuckle Mountains.

Riding with Reeves is Deputy John Cantrell, who Bass sends ahead to see if Webb is around. Sure enough, Cantrell spots Webb in the store and signals Reeves to come ahead. An eyewitness, D.C. Gideon, describes what happens next:

"As he went dashing up, Webb espied him, and jumping through the open window armed with both revolver and Winchester, ran for his horse that stood about one hundred yards away. Reeves cut him off from his horse and Webb turned toward a clump of bushes, ran about six hundred yards, turned and fired. The first shot grazed the horn of Reeves's saddle; the second cut a button from his coat, and the third cut off both bridle reins below his hand, allowing them to fall to the ground. As Reeves jumped from his horse another bullet...cut the brim from his hat. Reeves then fired his first shot, and before Webb could fall had sent two Winchester balls through his body.

"By this time Reeves's posse and Messrs. Bywaters and Smith came running up. Webb lay on the ground with his revolver in his hand, calling Reeves to come to him. Reeves advanced, but while keeping his gun trained on him told Webb to throw the revolver away. He flung it into the grass out of his reach and the whole party walked up to the dying man.

"Give me your hand, Bass," said Webb, as he extended his own with an effort to grasp it. "You are a brave man. I want you to accept my revolver and scabbard as a present and you must accept them. Take it, for with it I have killed eleven men, four of them in Indian Territory, and I expected you to make the twelfth." Bass accepted the present, and has it now carefully stored away. The dying declaration of Webb was taken in writing by Mr. Bywaters, and thus ended the career of another 'bad' man."



**“He could shoot the left hind leg off of a contented fly sitting on a mule’s ear at a hundred yards and never ruffle a hair.”**

—Oklahoma yarn about the shooting prowess of Bass Reeves



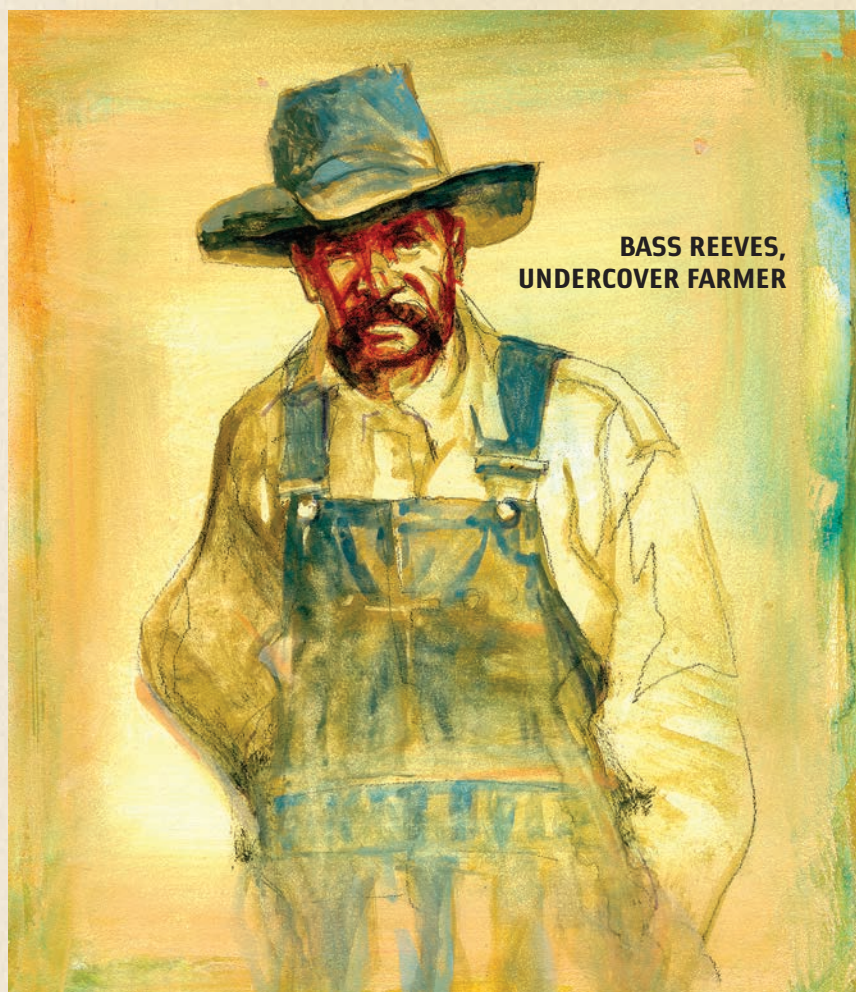
## Aftermath: Odds & Ends

During Judge Parker’s 20-year tenure on the bench in Fort Smith, some 75 to 100 deputies died in the line of duty. Bass Reeves made, on average, \$400 a trip, and his biggest haul was bringing in 17 prisoners with a fee of \$900.



## The Master of Surprise and Disguise

Bass Reeves preferred to arrest bad men by surprise to cut down the likelihood they might fire on him. According to Reeves biographer Art Burton, Bass “did this in many different ways—from riding up on felons before they woke up in the morning, to using his many disguises and totally catching them off guard.” Supposedly, one of Reeves’s effective undercover disguises was to dress as a dirt poor farmer and pretend to be harmless. Literally shuffling into an armed camp with his hands in his pockets, Bass invariably got the drop on his unsuspecting prey—sometimes more than one! With over 3,000 arrests to his credit, his achievements in using surprise and disguise are unparalleled and unmatched. Later in his career, Reeves trained many young deputies who worked the Indian Territory.



The U.S. attorney general estimated that of the 20,000 Whites living in the Indian Territory during the time Reeves was active, only 5,000 were law-abiding. Judge Parker, known as “The Hanging Judge” actually hanged 30 Whites, 26 Indians and 23 Blacks.

While being interviewed by a newspaper in 1907, Reeves made the following remarks about the Webb shootout:

“The bravest man I ever saw,” said Reeves, “was Jim Webb, a Mexican that I killed in 1884 near Sacred Heart Mission. He was a murderer; I got in between him and his horse. He stepped out into the open 500 yards away and commenced shooting with his Winchester. Before I could drop off my horse, his first bullet cut a button off my coat and [the] second cut my bridle rein in two. I shifted my six-shooter and grabbed my Winchester and shot twice. He dropped, and when I picked him up I found that my two bullets had struck within a half-inch of each other. He shot four times, and every time he shot he kept running closer to me. He was 500 yards away from me when I killed him.”

Recommended: *Black Gun, Silver Star: The Life and Legend of Frontier Marshall Bass Reeves* by Art T. Burton (Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press)



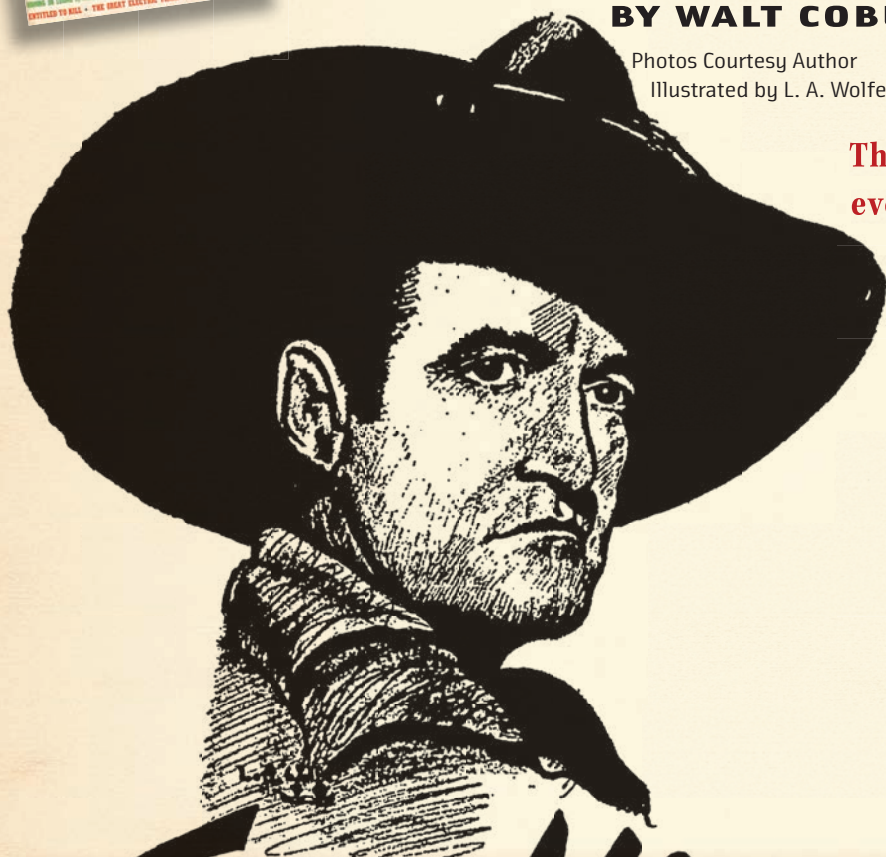
## CLASSIC TRUE WEST

### FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

**Editor's Note:** In 1955, *True West*'s founder Joe Small bought J. Marvin Hunter's *Frontier Times* magazine. The son of a Montana rancher, Walt Coburn (1889-1971) was one of the most prolific Western writers of his era. He was a regular contributor to *Frontier Times* and *True West*. If you'd like to read more of Walt Coburn's articles in *True West*, please go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com) and subscribe for full access to over 70 years' worth of exciting issues of *True West*.

**BY WALT COBURN**

Photos Courtesy Author  
Illustrated by L. A. Wolfe



# Tom Mix's LAST SUNDOWN

I WAS SHORE RIDING the old gray train writing Western stories for the pulp paper magazines, getting high rates per word and averaging two and three thousand words a day, keeping my blunt nose to the grindstone six days a week, getting up at sunrise and working four or five hours before calling it a day, and never missing a deadline. A far cry from

punching cows for 40 dollars a month and beans.

I was living high on the hog, spending money like a cowboy in town, always bearing in mind the trite old saying that there're no pockets in a shroud. Most mebbe I had a mild case of what the cowboys call Stetson Fever. Buying drinks for the house and enjoying life to the hilt.

**This idol of millions spent his last evening on earth with old friends, old memories—but new hopes. And no Hollywood premiere was ever more dazzling than the Arizona sky which was his final backdrop...**

As the feller says, spending my money on houses and lots. The houses being saloons and lots of booze.

It was my thrifty wife who saved enough money to buy a tract of land in the Catalina Foothills Estates in Tucson, Arizona. Sixteen acres on a hill that commanded a view from all compass points of five mountain ranges, the Santa Catalinas, the Rincons, the Tucson Mountains, the Santa Ritas and the Tortillas, and on a clear day you could see plumb into Old Mexico. We contracted for the building of a Spanish-type house constructed of burnt adobe, and by the time it was completed by builder John W. Murphey and architect Joseph Jossler, it was really a showplace. The glassed and screened front porch was 66 feet long, with the master bedroom on the east end and a guest room on the west. The living room, game room and den were in between, with servants quarters and laundry and storeroom in the rear.

We furnished the entire house with black walnut furniture, handmade and hand-carved by a master craftsman, E. Garrett Anderson of California. Each piece of furniture was made separately, and it took almost five years to complete the furnishings. The switch plates throughout the house were made of hand-hammered Arizona copper; the

doors were all hand-carved by a Mexican wood carver and decorated with antique iron hinges and locks. The floors were of polished tile from Mexico, the drapes hand-woven and hand-painted by local artists. The patio in the rear was flagstone with a large sunken firepit and a three-foot burnt adobe wall around it. Giant saguaros and other cacti and native shrubbery covered the 16 acres, and below and out of sight from the main house, was my one-roomed adobe workshop with a large picture window that offered a view of the Santa Catalina Mountains to the north.

There was a corner fireplace, flagstone floor, and a small porch facing south, and the door was a divided stable type, so that during warm weather the top part of the door could be opened to let the sun in. There were no electric lights, no bothersome telephone, thus affording the privacy I needed. Plumb out of sight and beyond earshot of any visitors who might drive up of a morning. Anyone who tried to reach me by telephone could leave a message for me to call back when I came up to the house for lunch, the day's work done and the stable door of my shack closed. The word "studio" I never used in connection with my workshop. I called it my shack and that went as she laid. All this gives the

reader a sort of background for the story that follows.

THAT warm sunny day in October 1940 when I closed the stable-type door of my shack and came up to the house about noon was destined to remain branded in my memory for all time.

My wife had gone to town and had left a message on the telephone pad in the den. The message was from Sheriff Ed Echols saying that he was bringing Tom Mix out that afternoon for a drink. As a rule when I'd finished work and had lunch I headed for Bill Coleman's barn where I kept the buckskin cowpony Tex that Bill had given me. I would saddle up and ride until suppertime. Once I rode into the foothills I could relax and forget the story I carried inside my boneheaded skull. Tex was strictly a one-man horse and always those yellow eyes were watching for something to spook at, with his short black ears cocked forward to listen. When a flock of quail winged off with a whirring sound a few feet ahead, Tex would whirl and jump sideways and charge off through the mesquite and catclaw brush. You shore as hell had to keep awake when you forked old Tex. It had gotten to be a game we played, me'n Tex, and both of us enjoyed every minute of

it. Tex had a keen eye and if he saw a bunch of stray cattle grazing he'd head for them, expecting me to rope a calf just for the hell of it.

But with company due to show up I would have to miss that afternoon ride. I took a shower and shaved and got dressed in my town gabardine riding pants and new pair of alligator boots, and then went to the kitchen to grab a ham sandwich.

I had just finished eating when the front doorbell rang, and when I got out on the screen porch there stood Sheriff Ed Echols and Tom Mix, and the sheriff's car was parked on the gravel driveway in front of the long hitchrack.

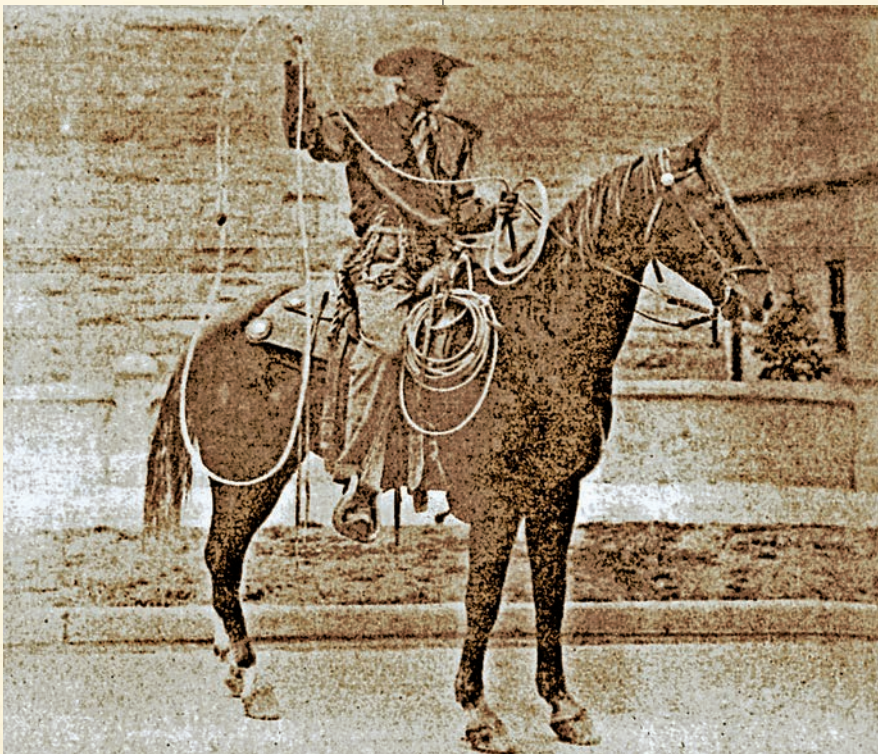
The bell was originally an altar bell from some old mission in Mexico, and it was attached to a coiled spring with a rawhide rope for a pull. Tom kept giving the rope a little yank and listening to the deep tone of the bell and its soft echo. He'd cock his head sideways, his white Stetson at a jackdeuce angle, a sort of half smile on his lips as he kept ringing the bell. Years of erosion had almost obliterated the date of 1780 on the rough bronze casting.

"If you ever take a notion to sell that old bell," Tom said as I opened the door and let them in, "I'd like to have it. Where the hell did you ever get it?"

"My wife brought it back from Sonora, Mexico," I explained. "When all Catholic churches and missions in Mexico were closed and the priests and nuns were run out, some of the faithful Mexicans took all the santos and priest's robes, all bells and bronze baptismal fonts, and buried them in the ground. My wife gave it to me as an anniversary present, so it isn't for sale, Tom, for sentimental reasons. Or I'd give it to you."

"When a man's been married half a dozen times," Tom Mix smiled sardonically, "any sentiment about wedding anniversaries is cold as the ashes of last year's campfire. Payin' all them alimonies sorta drowns out the romance."

I led the way into the bar, and the three of us had a drink. Again Tom Mix's attention was fixed on a genuine old oxbow complete with wooden hoops that once fitted over the necks of oxen. I explained that it was a present from Tex Wheeler, the sculptor and artist. Wheeler was born and raised on his father's ranch in Florida, and he and our



Ed Echols rode his roping horse "Ribbon" at Calgary Stampede in 1912.

neighbor, Rubin Jelks, who bred racing quarter horses, had gone to Florida for a visit and had brought the oxbow back tied to the front bumper of their car. I'd had the electrician convert a couple of old railroad lanterns to electric lights and they now hung from the oxbow over the pool table in the game room.

Tom was also interested in the small disappearing bar behind doors which were covered with cowhide and studded with hand-hammered Arizona copper nails. He insisted on a guided tour of the whole house and my shack, which took about an hour.

Back on the porch we made ourselves comfortable, with our drinks resting on the broad arms of rawhide-laced and cushioned chairs. We rolled our own cigarettes, not with Bull Durham but from a caddy of English Three Castles tobacco I ordered from the London Pipe Shop in Los Angeles.

WITH cigarettes lit—and warmed by good whiskey—Tom Mix and Sheriff Ed Echols began swapping yarns. Ed had the cowpuncher brand of dry humor that had won fame and big monied glory for the one and only Will Rogers, an old-time friend of the three of us. Ed Echols had operated a cow outfit in Arizona before he became sheriff of Pima County. Both Mix and Ed had worked as cowhands, and Mix had won the bulldogging at the Seattle, Washington, rodeo in 1909, and Ed had won the steer roping at the Calgary Stampede in 1912.

Ed and Tom got to telling about traveling with the Zach Miller 101 Wild West Show, and about all the cowhands who rode broncs and roped steers and bulldogged—men such as Bill Pickett, Neal Hart and Henry Grammer.

"I worked on the spring roundup," Tom Mix said, "up in your part of the Montana cow country, Walt. Punched cows for forty-a-month for the Circle Diamond when Johnny Survant was the wagon boss, along about 1904-1905. Me'n Henry Grammer hired out to work for the outfit." Tom sloshed some whiskey into his tall glass to cover the ice cubes. You recollect the time Grammer shot that sheepshearer in a saloon ruckus in Malta?" He asked me.

I said I was at the Circle C ranch at the time and had heard the story from Jake Myers, the Circle C wagon boss who had

been born and raised in Oklahoma where Grammer came from. Jake claimed Henry Grammer was a good cowhand and one of the best ropers in any man's cow country—that Grammer was on the wild side and tough as a boot. Jake said that the spring roundup was just over with and the Circle Diamond outfit had just pulled in at the home ranch. Henry Grammer had gone to Malta and had killed some sheepshearer who had been bothering some old sheepherder. The sheepshearer, tough in his own right, had pulled a knife and made a pass or two at Grammer. Grammer was unarmed, having left his six-shooter on his bed at the ranch on Milk River. The sheepshearer's knife had slashed the front of Grammer's shirt across the and he had cussed out the Oklahoma cowpuncher, telling him that he was going to spill his guts out. Henry Grammer then jumped over the bar and grabbed the bartender's gun and killed the sheepshearer.

Grammer, still armed with the bartender's six-shooter, was buying drinks for the house when the constable at Malta came in to arrest him. Grammer told the deputy that nobody but Sheriff Puck Powell was going to put him under arrest. (At that time Puck Powell was sheriff of Velly County and stationed at Glasgow, the county seat.) Grammer told the constable to get in touch with Powell and tell him that he (Henry Grammer) would be at the Circle Diamond ranch on Milk River, a few miles from Malta, where he would give himself up without any trouble. And that's what happened.

Johnny Servant, the Circle Diamond wagon boss, foreman and ramrod for the Bloom Cattle Company who owned the Circle Diamond outfit, hired the best criminal attorney in Montana and laid cash on the line for bail bond money. At the trial Henry Grammer's plea was self-defense, and he was sentenced to three years in the state penitentiary at Deer Lodge. He served out his sentence, with time off for good behavior.

So I was familiar with the story of that shooting scrape of Grammer's, although I was a kid at the time. I remembered there had been many different versions of the killing. One was that instead of a knife, the sheepshearer packed a heavy railroad spike sharpened to razor's edge on a grindstone—

that the husky, tough sheepshearer had cut and slashed the unarmed Oklahoma cowpuncher until he had hollered quits. "I'm going out to get my gun," Grammer was said to have told the sheepshearer. "I'll be back directly and you'd better have a gun in your hand, because I aim to gut shoot you."

As the three of us sat on the porch I told them of the different versions I had heard. Tom Mix said he wasn't there when Henry Grammer killed the sheepshearer who had abused an old sheepherder and Grammer had played out the old man's hand with a six-shooter. Mix said that when Grammer had served his time in the pen he had headed south to Oklahoma to join his roping pardner. Clay McGonigal—that at one time or another both these men had held steer roping records, as well as team tying records, at all the big rodeos.

I WAS CONTENT to just sit back and listen while Tom and Ed talked about rodeos, with humorous anecdotes about different bronc riders, ropers and bulldoggers who had hired out to the Wild West Show. Then they went on to talk about the big rodeos and the Calgary Stampede, from the time of the first cowboy contest, claimed by Prescott, Arizona, in 1888, up to the present era.

One of Tom Mix's daughters had married Harry Knight from Calgary, Alberta, one of the top bronc riders of all time. Harry Knight was then living at Florence, Arizona, where he was in the cattle ranching business with Twain and Bill Clemens (descendants of Mark Twain). Despite the fact that the champion bronc rider and Mix's daughter had agreed to split the blankets, Tom Mix and Harry Knight were close friends, and Tom said that he was going to stop at Florence to see Harry on his way to California.

Tom had presented me with a small paperbound book he had written about himself. It was titled *Ropin' A Million* and there was a head-and-shoulders sketch of Mix on the cover, with his long rope outlined around the sketch and fastened to a sack marked \$1,000,000. The story had been reprinted from *Photoplay Magazine*. I still have in my possession the book he autographed on that October day in 1940.

Tom said he had had it made to make a million, and he'd got the job done and

had had a hell of a good time spending a lot of the money.

In the book Tom said he had made over 370 moving pictures. Never used a double or stand-in for the dangerous stunts he performed. As a result he had over 150 stitches taken in his hide, plus suffering 23 broken bones and cracked ribs.

"I never claimed to be an actor," Tom said. "But some newspaper writer claimed I was the best showman on earth, even better than Buffalo Bill Cody who never made a movie in his life. From the start when I made my first starring picture for Fox, I made it a rule to never smoke a cigarette, take a drink, or gamble in any picture I ever made. A lot of youngsters made up a big part of the audience and I aimed to set a good example for them. Instead of using a six-shooter and doing a lot of shooting, I used my fists or a ketch rope, and I kept my pictures clean." His pictures had made more than five million bucks.

Tom Mix changed the subject to Hollywood script writers. "You'd never believe some of the scripts those white-collared screen writers handed me. Some of the scenes were plumb ridiculous. The motion picture studio conferences were a big joke. All those dude writers ever did was to increase the overhead of the five-reel pictures."

The following is taken from Tom Mix's *Ropin' A Million*.

"These story conferences are usually run off somethin' like thisaway:

"Around a long mahogany table, a heap better than Napoleon ever ate off'n, an' in a room with more furniture than John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford have got in their offices, gather the star, the chief scenarist and three or four of his assistants: This head bird is likely to be drawin' \$1,000 a week; first assistant gettin' not less than \$660 an' the remainin' three \$500, \$360 and \$200.

"The \$500 an' \$360 a week birds probably were former song an' dance men, and the \$200 man a young chap who wrote an' achieved doubtful fame as an author of that popular melody 'Missouri Blues' or 'A Lonesome Bird in a Cottonwood Tree.' Personal, these here scenario writers ain't never been much help to me because I don't read music. "But to get back to the story

conference. Any conference lastin' less than three hours ain't no good. Not that anythin' is decided upon that gets in the picture but it fills in the day until time to go out and shoot a few holes of golf, the latter bein' a by-product of the movin' picture business.

"At these here story conferences all of 'em talk an' talk an' talk, but none of 'em says anything. They seem to get nowhere. Any suggestions that I may make an' me a-knowin' the West, is properly squelched as bein' out of order. Anytime I talk I am a-speakin' out of my turn. About the second hour I give up, fix myself comfortable in the big overstuffed leather chair an' snooze it out, leavin' them to themselves an' their own vacuum."

SO TOM MIX finally decided to write his own script, direct his own pictures, and furnish his own horse for \$1,000 a week. Then came the day when the era of silent pictures was out like Nellie's eye. Replaced by talking pictures, Tom Mix, the King of Western movie stars, was over and done with. And for Tom Mix, the cowboy hero of clean, silent pictures, it was a heavy blow.

Tom Mix had spent the million dollars he'd made with the same reckless, carefree prodigality of a 40-a-month cowpuncher on a town drunk.

In a sort of roundabout, lesser manner, the career of Tom Mix, star of the silent Westerns, and my own career as a writer of pulp Western yarns had something in common. Both of us had come up the hard way from a common cowhand, and at that time I was making more money than I could spend. Tom Mix had pointed out when he was getting a guided tour of the house, that it was a mighty fancy bunkhouse for a cowhand.

It was Sheriff Ed Echols who made the comparison, telling Tom that a month or two before there had been in a local newspaper a picture of me and my horse Tex at the hitchrack in front of our house in the Catalina Foothills Estates, declaring me the King of Western Story Writers.

"There's times when this young feller goes hawg wild," Sheriff Ed told Tom Mix. "When him and cowhands like Roy Adams and Buckshot Sorrels and some others take the notion to head for Nogales across the border, it's always

up to me to ride herd on him. Walt and me has made a deal. When he's likkered up he calls me up and I dispatch a sheriff's car and a deputy to take him in tow. In a lot of ways you two are alike, Tom, wild and careless."

All the time Sheriff Ed Echols was talking in his habitual soft tone of voice, there was a sort of grin on his face and a twinkle in his eyes.

"There was a time, Ed," Tom Mix reminded the sheriff, "when you sowed a goodly crop of wild oats yourself. When you were wild and reckless and didn't give a damn."

Sheriff Ed chuckled softly. "Shore thing, Tom. But wearin' a sheriff's badge saw'ed my horns off. I had to slow down. But a cowpuncher wearin' a sheriff's badge takes care of his own kind, regardless."

That summed it up in a nutshell, and in my book and Tom Mix's book Ed Echols was the best sheriff Tucson ever had, and we so declared ourselves and it called for another drink.

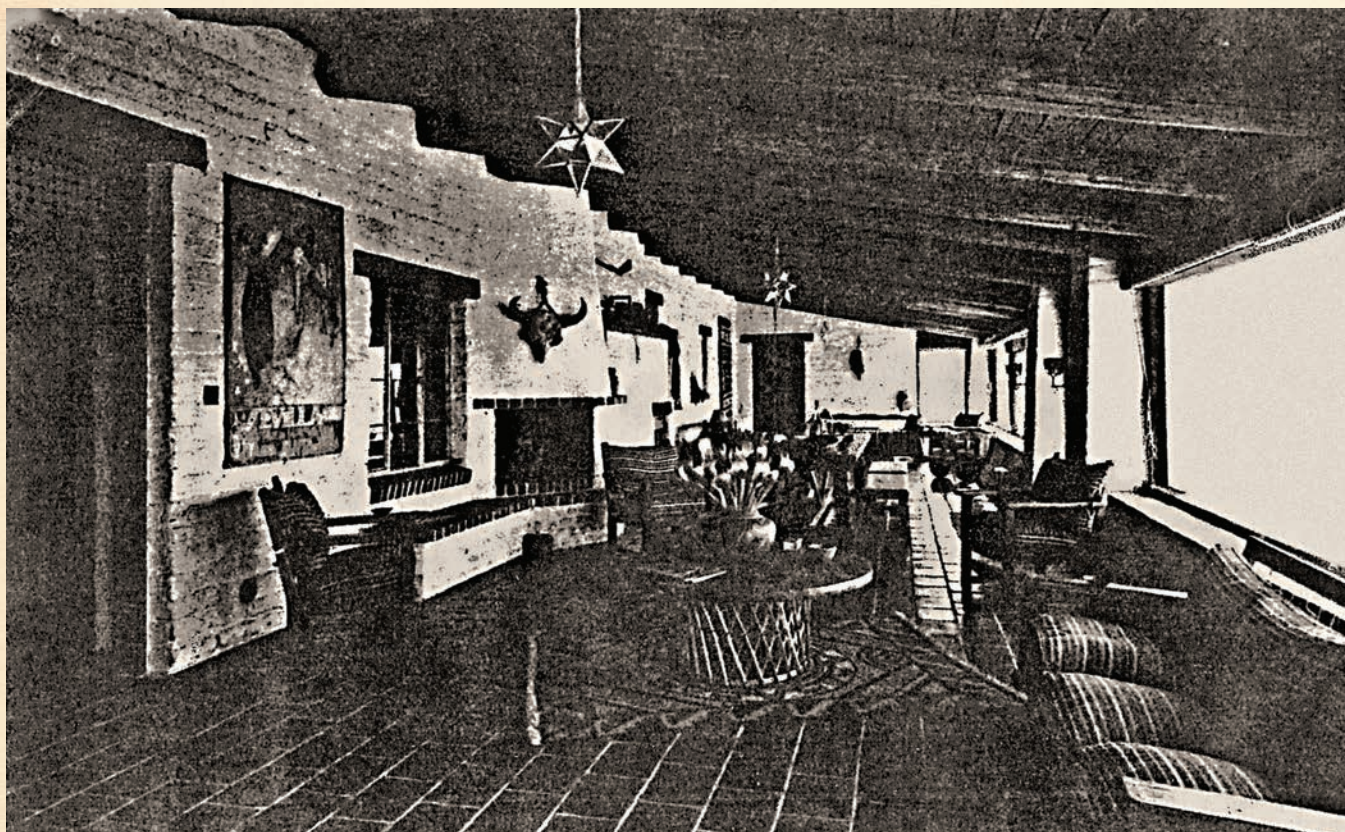
After we were again comfortably settled in our chairs on the porch, Ed Echols told us that in April 1907, he had hired out to Miller Brothers 101 Wild West Show. Tom Mix was with the show at the time. It was there that Ed met Will Rogers and they got to be mighty good friends. It was years afterwards when Will Rogers was making pictures in Hollywood and Ed was running the first time for sheriff of Pima County, that Will wired Ed that he'd take a day off and fly over to Arizona to do a little stump-speeching in Ed's behalf. Which he did.

Will had his pilot set him down in what he thought was a likely town to gather votes for Ed and he made the kind of speech that only Will Rogers knew how to make. Then he flew back to Hollywood where he was in the middle of a picture.

Ed wrote and thanked Will. "But the hell of it was, Will," Ed wound up his letter, "they threwed out all them votes you corralled for me. You landed in Cochise County instead of Pima!"

We all got a chuckle out of Ed's story, and after fixing another drink, we were back on the porch talking this and that.

Tom said that he had for a while vanished from the familiar stomping ground of Hollywood to put on his own Wild West Show. For three years *Tom Mix's*



The enclosed porch where Coburn, Echols and Mix sat and talked of the days of bulldogging, the Zack Miller 101 Wild West Show, the Circle Diamond outfit and silent movies.

*Wild Animal Show* had been a smash hit. He had played 220 stands throughout the country in ten months, still doing his own riding. Now he was returning to Hollywood and the movies. Tom said that during those same years he had been involved in expensive lawsuits. Zack Miller of 101 fame was suing him for a breach of contract. He was also involved in lawsuits over alimony. And as Tom talked, a note of bitterness crept into his rambling. Once a man was beset by troubles, some men he had once called friends were trying to tromp his guts out. But Tom Mix was never a man to call quits. The image Tom Mix had built up throughout the years as a cowboy hero was still intact.

THAT MEMORABLE late afternoon of October 11, 1940 was destined to have one of those rare southwest sundowns that artists depict on canvas. The setting sun was a fire colored crimson in a war painted sky. The distant mountain ranges were a deep purple, the desert haze lingering with the last heat waves stretching

into Old Mexico. There was a hushed silence except for the call of the quail as they came from the brush to feed on the grain I had scattered on the feeding ground. Mourning doves crone to feed, and cottontail and jackrabbits came to join the quail and doves. Kit foxes would soon appear at the feeding grounds, as well as chipmunks who chirped and chased one another. The birds would come for their evening meal. The kit foxes, timid by nature, seemed to sense that all animals and birds were protected on our land and they would eat their fill of scraps thrown out, drink at the scattered Mexican clay dishes, then stretch out in the cool shade of the mesquites before they left for their den in the foothills.

The three of us sat for the most part in the hushed silence of the sunset—three cowpunchers who knew how to enjoy the quiet, each man lost in his own thoughts and dreams of yesterdays. I was the youngest in years, but we were all young at heart. Big, soft-spoken Ed Echols, with a generous

sprinkling of gray in his hair. The black-haired Tom Mix, who had retained his prideful youth.

It was late dusk when my two visitors finally took their departure. The last drink, one for the road, had been drunk. Ed Echols had promised to bring Tom out the next day for lunch, so because we were to meet the following day there were no handshakes or words of farewell.

“So long, Walt. See you tomorrow.” Tom Mix called back as they drove away.

I stood there at the hitchrack and answered, “So long, until tomorrow.”

I’m glad I didn’t know at that moment that I would never see my good friend Tom Mix again.

THE FOLLOWING DAY I quit work early and came up to the house to put the mesquite charcoal in the outside patio fireplace and set the grill in place. We were to have thick tenderloin steaks, and I had a case of Mexican Carta Blanca cerveza that was rated better than American beer.

I had invited the jovial Nick Hall, manager of the Santa Rita Hotel, an oldtime friend of Tom's, to join us for lunch. One o'clock came and went and no sign of Sheriff Ed or Tom Mix. Nary a sign of Nick Hall. Two o'clock went by. It was along about three when the telephone rang. It was Nick and I could tell by the tone of his voice that perhaps Tom Mix had suddenly decided to head for Florence to see his former son-in-law before going on to Hollywood. And I was right. Tom had done just that, leaving word with the day clerk on duty at the hotel to telephone me that he couldn't make it for lunch, but the clerk had forgotten to give me the message. I was disappointed, naturally, and I decided to head for Coleman's barn, saddle up and ride into the hills.

I was just going out the door when the telephone began ringing. It was Nick Hall again, informing me that news had just come in that Tom Mix had been killed in his car. It was later that I got the whole story.

Tom Mix owned a flashy looking Cord that he drove with the top down. The rear seat held his luggage, including a locker trunk. A highway crew was working on the Florence highway and they had put up a barrier with a detour sign. Tom Mix, traveling eighty miles an hour, had smashed through the barrier, turning the Cord over in a dry wash. The heavy trunk had been dislodged with the sudden impact, striking Tom on the back of the head and breaking his neck. He was killed instantly.

Sheriff Ed Echols had immediately gone to the scene of the wreck, midway between Oracle Junction and Florence. A coroner and an ambulance followed Ed. Nick Hall had been busy on the long distance telephone to Hollywood, to notify Mix's daughters and the studios.

When we were finished talking and I'd hung up, I went into the game room. The folding bar had long since been set up. I poured a big shot of Bushmill's Irish whiskey and took my drink out on the porch where we had sat the day before. The shock of Tom's sudden death left me sort of numb and bewildered, and I wanted to be alone for awhile. My wife had already left for town, so I was alone with my grief.

The October afternoon was warm and a few scattered clouds were in the sky,

but the sun had lost something of its warmth as I took my drink outside to the long hitchrack. My thoughts were of yesterday when Tom Mix was alive. So very much alive.

There was a strange magnetism about Tom, hero of countless Western movies, which had endeared him to youths throughout the nation. Knowing him as I did in real life, I'd been proud to claim his friendship. Now there was an aching lump in my throat that no amount of good whiskey could dissolve. When I rolled and lit a cigarette, the good tobacco smoke had an acrid taste. I took another drag and stubbed out the halfsmoked stub on the hitchrack. Then I got in the car and headed for Coleman's barn. I saddled Tex and rode off into the foothills.

I remembered a bit of the conversation of the day before. I'd said that I always rode Tex of an afternoon, regardless of the weather, to get rid of the nervous tension left from my morning's work. And Tom Mix had said he felt the same way when he rode Old Blue or Tony. Ride off alone and an hour or so in the saddle and our worries were gone.

There is a strange sort of understanding between an old-time cowhand and his favorite horse. That understanding was there between me and Tex. It was as if that yellow-tiger-eyed buckskin cowpony had an instinctive understanding of the grief that was in my heart. Maybe it had been in the tone of my voice as I talked while I was saddling him. Because that day Tex wasn't looking for something to spook at. When a jack-rabbit jumped from the brush a few feet ahead on the trail he kept on traveling at his fast running walk, keeping steady along the winding trail through the mesquite and catclaw and cholla cactus.

I kept talking to Tex, low toned, as I untangled a witch's knot in the long black mane, telling him how my old friend Tom Mix had died a tragic death that day. I figured Tom was crowding sixty and was past the prime of his life. His career as a star of Western movies was over and done with. Far worse things could have happened to Tom Mix than sudden death. Old age and being broke would have been his ultimate future, and the prideful man could not possibly have taken in his stride old age and its infirmities and uselessness.

Tom had roped his million and squandered the money like a cowpuncher in town. Tomorrow morning his tragic death would be in big black headlines in every newspaper in the United States and other countries. It was a spectacular end to the greatest Western cowboy star that was ever known on the silver screen. If Tom Mix had deliberately planned the manner of his passing it could never have been more fitting.

Tom Mix had seen his last sunset in the welcome companionship of his old and true friend, Ed Echols. A crimson sunset in a spectacular sky, with a panoramic view of the desert and mountain ranges and Old Mexico. He had heard the sound of the quail and mourning doves blending into the bushed twilight of that last sundown.

All men are born to die. But it is given to few men that though they are long dead, they shall never die in the nostalgic memories of at least two generations of Americans who hero-worshipped the image Tom Mix left behind when he crossed the Big Divide. He lived his own legend in real life and on the silver screen, and that legend is destined to live on forevermore.

On the edge of Florence, Arizona, at Tom Mix Wash in the middle of the desert, there stands a rock monument with the statue of a riderless horse. It bears the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF TOM MIX,  
WHOSE SPIRIT LEFT HIS BODY  
ON THIS SPOT AND WHOSE  
CHARACTERIZATIONS AND  
PORTRAYALS IN LIFE SERVED  
BETTER TO FIX MEMORIES OF  
THE OLD WEST IN THE MINDS  
OF LIVING MAN.



## TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

For the first time ever, every issue of *True West* magazine is now online. To read more of Walt Coburn's articles in *True West Archives*, go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com).  
**Our past awaits you!**

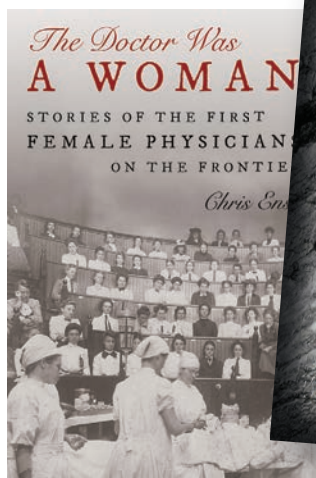
## Grit and Grace

New history books on women in the West by Chris Enss and Linda Wommack, plus a fresh history of Sonora, Mexico, and three classic Western novels.

**A**cross the past 150 years of Western American history scholarship, dozens of authors have been inspired to research and write about mining in the West, but few have written about the role of women miners and their contributions to the settlement of the West. Now, with Linda Wommack's groundbreaking *Women of the Colorado Mines* (Farcountry Press, \$18.95) we have one of the first efforts to chronicle the role of women in the mining districts of the boom and bust gold and silver towns of Colorado. As she states in her introduction, "Women, too, came to the Rocky Mountain West in search of gold. Most, however, made their living supplying the miners' many needs. But a few adventurous, courageous women dug in deep."

Wommack's *Women of the Colorado Mines* is well illustrated and includes the few photos she could find of women miners, such as Angeline Munn, who billed herself as the "Gold Woman of Colorado." For scholars interested in her research, her endnotes are published at the conclusion of each chapter and her bibliography is especially useful. I also liked the fact that she did not leave the history sitting in the last century. Wommack informs us that women are still mining in Colorado and supporting the "industry as scientists, biologists and chemists."

Conversely, the study and research of medicine and physicians in the West is still a minor area of scholarship in comparison to the well-established and popular category of Western mining history. Scholarly research about frontier female doctors is a nascent arena for Western historians, which is exactly why



author Chris Enss has applied herself to studying the courageous women who challenged the status quo of America's medical industry. Enss's latest Western women's history, *The Doctor Was a Woman: Stories of the First Female Physicians on the Frontier* (TwoDot, \$26.95), is another trailblazing effort by the California author.

Enss is at her best when writing about women who would not take no for an answer and pushed their passions forward in pursuit of their professional and personal goals. From the first page to the last, readers of *The Doctor Was a Woman* will discover again and again female doctors who did not blanch at the challenges to succeeding in the nearly all male profession of medicine. "Women physicians' love for humanity and zest for pioneering were strong," Enss writes in her introduction. "Where doctors were few in the regions beyond the Mississippi, prejudices against women in the profession weren't as often acute."

What's next for Enss and Wommack? My guess is we won't have to wait too long for new books from either of them, as they are both at the top of their game



and out in front of the trail on Western women's history. If their efforts do not inspire a boom in the publishing of women's mining and medical history, then their peers are not paying attention to the paths they have blazed for them to follow.

—Stuart Rosebrook

### Violence South of the Border

In the wake of the deadly Mexican Revolution in the first part of the 20th century, Mexico was in a state of pure political upheaval. Two Revolutionary generals from the northwestern state of Sonora emerged, and their power and influence began to dominate the region between 1920 and 1934. In *The Sonoran Dynasty in Mexico: Revolution, Reform, and Repression* (University of Nebraska Press, \$35), Jürgen Buchenau, Dowd Term Chair of Capitalism Studies and a professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, unravels this dynastic cobweb who sought to unify a new Mexico while rejecting the Indigenous and Catholic traditions of Mexico while embracing the rich American and other foreign capitalists. What emerged was a second bloody conflict for control of Sonora after a decade of warfare over similar principles.

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

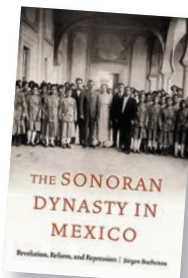




Photo by Robert Rey

Every winter and spring, history publishers release their new lists for half the year, and Old West history fans have some great new titles to choose from in 2024. Here are 11 I highly recommend:

***The Bower Atmosphere: A Biography of B.M. Bower*** by Victoria Lamont (Bison Books, \$24.95)

***Buffalo Bill and the Mormons*** by Brent M. Rogers (Bison Books, \$29.95)

***"That Fiend in Hell" Soapy Smith in Legend*** by Catherine Holder Spude (University of Oklahoma Press, \$26.95)

***Killing over Land: Murder and Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier*** by Robert M. Owens (University of Oklahoma Press, \$45)

***The Cowboy Ike Rude: Riding into the Wind*** by Sammie Rude Compton with a contribution by Michael R. Grauer; foreword by Charles R. Townsend (Texas A&M University Press, \$32)

***The Oceanside History of Alaska*** by Mike Coppock (Epicenter Press, \$19.95)

***The German Texas Frontier in 1853: Ferdinand Lindheimer's Newspaper Accounts of the Environment, Gold, and Indians*** by Daniel J. Gelo and Christopher J. Wickham (University of North Texas Press, \$34.95)

***King of the Gunrunners: How a Philadelphia Fruit Importer Inspired a Revolution and Provoked the Spanish-American War*** by James W. Miller (University of Mississippi Press, \$35)

***Ride the High Country*** by Robert Nott (University of New Mexico Press, \$19.95)

***Cowboy Cocktails: 60 Recipes Inspired by the American West*** by Andre Darlington (Epic Ink, \$19.99)

***Last Paper Standing: A Century of Competition between the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News*** by Ken J. Ward (University of Colorado Press, \$51)

—Stuart Rosebrook

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## A Hero's Journey

*Emigrant Trail* is the sixth entry in B.N. Rundell's McCain Chronicles (Wolfpack Publishing, \$12.99), and the clean, straightforward tale offers its old protagonist some grace, allowing him to finally catch up to the errant twin sons he's been trailing since book one. Reunited with his boys, Jubal and Joshua, McCain makes up a plan to drive 800-plus cattle east across the Rockies and Great Plains from California to Fort Hayes, Kansas. Through side draws and canyons, errant trials and a rough country full of snakes, grizzlies and Cheyenne dog soldiers, Eli charts a course that's not guaranteed, but never without hope. A classy tale that foregoes anti-hero grit and tiresome tough-guy language for family-friendly characters, this one delivers plenty of action and thrills for readers eager for traditional Western fare.

—Richard Prosch,  
author of *Seven Devils Road:*  
*Hellbenders Book 2*



## With Deadly Force

Deputy U.S. Marshal Jeremy Halstead commented, "It would be nice to go a day without shooting someone." His days seldom go nicely. In Terrence McCauley's *Born to Hang: A Jeremiah Halstead Western* (Kensington, \$8.99), Halstead's enemies have convinced a judge to swear out warrants on trumped up murder charges. An army of mercenaries and half-baked bounty hunters are out to kill him, and even the Montana winter weather is cooperating as he runs for the high and lonely. His friends rally to clear his name, but it remains unclear that they will have any success against overwhelming political strength. A woman with surprising powers to cloud men's minds increases the drama as only Halstead seems impervious to her wiles. The story left me wanting to read the other books in this series.

—Doug Hocking, author of  
*Southwest Train Robberies:*  
*Hijacking the Tracks Along the*  
*Southern Corridor*



## On the Hunt

Johnny Gunn's *Trouble at Buzzard Pass: A Snake and the Dog-Man Classic Western* (Wolfpack Publishing, \$10.99) is full of action as Snake and Dog-Man prepare and drive their cattle to San Bernadino. Before they start their drive, two men try to kill them and burn their ranch. On the drive, four men try to take wagons traveling with the herd and want to kill Snake and Dog-Man. When three of the men get killed, the remaining man is driven by revenge. The story will keep you wondering what will happen next. I recommend it.

—Lowell F. Volk,  
author of  
Luke Taylor and  
Trevor Lane series



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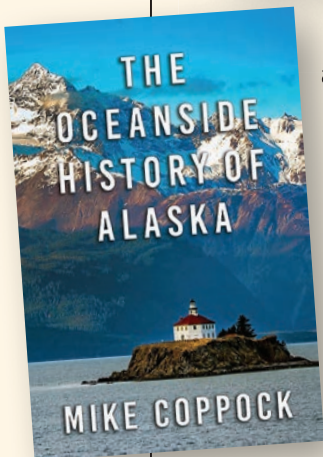
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## ALASKAN AUTHOR SHARES FAVORITES

**Mike Coppock** grew up dreaming of the frontier and finding it in today's Alaska. He traveled north in 1985 and ended up working everything from canneries to teaching school and flight service for the FAA in the Alaska Bush. He wrote two books on Alaska, *Terror in the Klondike* and the just-released *The Oceanside History of Alaska*.



- 1 **Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land** by Walter Borneman (Harper): Borneman does an excellent job walking the reader through Alaska's history from the arrival of the Russians to the oil boom and the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill
- 2 **The Klondike Fever** by Pierre Berton (Basic Books): Berton grew up in Dawson after the Klondike Gold Rush. His book puts a very human face on the triumphs

and tragedies of one of the most famous gold rushes in history.

- 3 **Alaska: Federal Writer's Project** by Merle Colby (MacMillan): Colby was a struggling writer when he signed up for FDR's Federal Writers program in 1938. He was assigned to Alaska. His work became a snapshot of the Territory of Alaska just before Pearl Harbor. It was a lifestyle like no other with stamps used for currency.
- 4 **To Build a Fire and Tales of the North** by Jack London (SeaWolf Press): London's *Call of the Wild* and *White Fang* have spawned movies, but in the title short story of this collection London demonstrates he was a master wordsmith. You sense the horror and



Courtesy Mike Coppock

smell fear as a cocky traveler is caught unprepared during a winter's journey.

- 5 **Coming Into the Country** by John McPhee (Farrar, Straus and Giroux): McPhee portrays Alaska just before oil money transformed the land through traveling with people looking for a new state capital site, young men going into the wilderness to test themselves and prospector Joe Vogler going from cabin to cabin preaching Alaskan independence.

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# Tucson Book Festival

**O**n Saturday morning, March 9, 2024, the sun rose over Tucson, Arizona, after two days of overcast skies and rain. Fifteen years since the first Tucson Book Festival was held on the University of Arizona Mall, the book fest is one of the largest and best attended in the United States. *True West* and Western Writers of America have been a part of the festival from the beginning and have a long tradition of sharing a booth. This year Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell and Editor Stuart Rosebrook went to Tucson to represent the magazine and joined *True West* contributor and WWA's Roundup Editor Johnny D. Boggs in managing the festive and very active booth, which was conveniently across from the Women Writing the West and Wolfpack Publishing tents.

On Saturday, Bell, Boggs and Rosebrook hosted a sold-out workshop, "Western Publishing Today." While the trio and the audience didn't necessarily determine the current state of publishing, everyone agreed that whether people are analog or digital readers—or many times both—good stories—nonfiction or fiction—always win the day. The team encouraged the participants to keep researching, writing, pursuing their passion for writing, adapt to the new formats, learn to write in many different genres and, most importantly, not to give up their day jobs.

I am thankful to all the volunteers who helped us with the booth, including Bunker de France, Tom Van Dyke, Venetia Hobson Lewis, Micki Fuhrman Milom and Robert Mathiasch.

Until next year, keep writing, keep reading and share your love of the West wherever you go!



The *True West*/Western Writers of America booth at the 2024 Tucson Book Festival was a crossroads of writers and friends of the magazine, including Rob Mathiasch, Bunker de France, Johnny D. Boggs, Venetia Hobson Lewis, Stuart Rosebrook and Bob Boze Bell.

Sue Ritchie

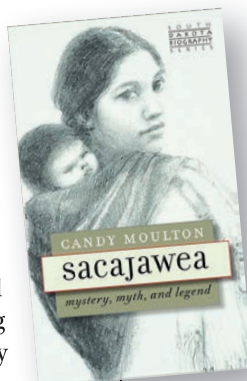
## Spur Awards

As is the tradition, the Western Writers of America announced the annual Spur Award winners and finalists. Congratulations to all Spur winners including *True West*'s contributors Candy Moulton for Best Biography, W. Michael Gear for Short Fiction and Craig Johnson for Best Contemporary Western Novel.

According to Spur Awards Chair R.G. Yoho, "This was certainly a good year for Western literature, song, documentary and poetry."

**Biography:** *Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth, and Legend* by Candy Moulton (South Dakota Historical Society Press).

**Contemporary Nonfiction Book:** *The Lost Cowboy* by J.B. Zielke (independently published).



**First Nonfiction Book:** *The Lost Cowboy* by J.B. Zielke (independently published).

**First Novel:** *The Last Man: A Novel of the 1927 Santa Claus Bank Robbery* by Thomas Goodman (Mainsail Media).

**Historical Nonfiction Book:** *Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion* by Elliott West (University of Nebraska Press).

**Historical Novel:** *Death in Tall Grass: A Young Man's Journey Through the Western Frontier* by Donald Willerton (independently published).

**Original Mass-Market Paperback Novel:** *Gunmetal Mountain* by John Shirley (Pinnacle Books/Kensington Publishing).

**Traditional Novel:** *Aesop's Travels: A Crackerjack Tale of the Old West* by Daniel Boyd (Montag Press).

**Contemporary Western Novel:** *The Longmire Defense* by Craig Johnson (Viking).

**Short Fiction:** “Bad Choices: A Wyoming Chronicles Story” by W. Michael Gear, published in *Ridin’ with the Pack: A Western Short Story Collection* (Wolfpack Publishing).

**Short Nonfiction:** “Those invaluable but greatly abused members of the community’: Dogs and the Difference on the Great Plains in the Fur Trade Era” by David C. Beyreis (*South Dakota History*, Spring 2023).

**Western Documentary Script:** *The American Buffalo* by Dayton Duncan (PBS).

**Song:** “High Country Trail” by Syd Masters, released on the CD *Cabin Songs* (Deer Pine).

**Poem:** “Counting Cattle with the Fathers” by Shelley Armitage, published in *A Habit of Landscape* (Finishing Line Press).

For the full list of winners and finalists, please go to:  
[westernwritersofamerica.wildapricot.org](http://westernwritersofamerica.wildapricot.org).

## True Westerner Award Ceremony

On Saturday night, March 9, 2024, *True West*'s Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell and Editor Stuart Rosebrook presented Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad owner Al Harper with the 11th Annual True Westerner Award. The well-attended event was held at Old Tucson Studios in Tucson, Arizona, in conjunction with the Tucson Book Festival. Thanks to Al Harper for hosting the wonderful evening in the Grand Palace Saloon, which included drinks and a delicious buffet dinner.

*True West* magazine was honored to name Al Harper the 2024 True Westerner of the Year for his three decades of dedication to the promotion and preservation of the West, his service to educating generations of guests at his historic railroads—and now Old Tucson Studios—and his determination to keep the Old West alive and entertaining for all ages, now and for years to come.

According to Bell, “Al Harper has done more to preserve our Western heritage this past year than anyone, with his crew taking on the herculean task of bringing



Al Harper received the 2024 True Westerner award to a standing ovation in the Grand Palace Saloon at Old Tucson Studios on March 9, 2024.

Natalie Eleftheriadis

back Old Tucson from the near-dead. The park had fallen on rough times, then when the pandemic hit, the movie location sat dormant for two years and the desert took its toll. It's a very tough situation, but I believe Al is the man to bring it back to life.”

The inaugural True Westerner award went to Oscar-winning screenwriters Larry McMurtry and Diana Osana at the Tucson Festival of Books in March 2013. Since the first award, recipients have included Forrest Fenn (2014), Marshall Trimble, (2015), Abe Hayes (2016), Brian Lebel (2017), Robert G. McCubbin (2018), John Fusco (2019), Mike Fox (2020), Paul Andrew Hutton (2021), Phil Spangenberg (2022) and Candy Moulton (2023).

## The Ballad of Billy

Following the True Westerner presentation in the Grand Palace, Al Harper, the director of Old Tucson, surprised the audience by having the Old Tucson stock company entertain the crowd with the Ken Korpi original musical, *The Ballad of Bonney Will*.

Playwright Ken Korpi also directed and shared credit for the music with the musical's arranger David Kirk Grant. The songs of the fast-paced, high-action musical tell the story of Billy the Kid, and the five-member cast keeps the audience on the edge of their seats as

the story of the outlaw's life unfolds before them on stage.

When asked how he was inspired to write a musical about the legendary outlaw, Korpi said, “It's the injustice of it all that inspired me, really. I felt morally compelled to tell his story. My aim was never to paint him as a perfect hero, because he wasn't. But he was a good person. He felt pain, empathy, regret...he did not want to kill most of the people he killed, but did so out of necessity. As I wrote at the end of the show, ‘History tends to cast memories in black and white, but Billy, he was a lot of gray area.’”

*The Ballad of Bonney Will* stars Daniel Gilmore as Billy the Kid, Benny James as Pat Garrett/Sheriff Brady, Braden Cooley as John Tunstall/Bob Ollinger/Charles Bowdre, Kevin Orduno as Dick Brewer and Lydia Chandler as JH Koogler/Middleton/George Coe/Paulita.

For information on visiting Old Tucson Studios and the schedule of performances of *The Ballad of Bonney Will*, go to [oldtucson.com](http://oldtucson.com) or call 520-883-0100.

After the True Westerner Award ceremony, Old Tucson's Grand Palace Theater Company surprised the audience with a performance of Ken Korpi's *The Ballad of Bonney Will*, starring Daniel Gilmore (below) as Billy the Kid.

Natalie Eleftheriadis



## In Search of the Real Bass Reeves

Filmmaker Dana Celeste Robinson's documentary reveals the truth behind the legend of the famous lawman.

For a century, slave-turned-Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves was legendary among history buffs, but with the general public, he couldn't get arrested. That changed in 2006, when historian Art T. Burton published his biography of Reeves: *Black Gun, Silver Star*. Then came the deluge: Reeves was portrayed in over a dozen Westerns, sci-fi and superhero shows like *Timeless*, *Wynonna Earp*, *Hell on the Border*, *Watchmen*, *The Harder They Fall*, *DC's Legends of Tomorrow*, *Corsicana*, and the one everyone has actually seen, Taylor Sheridan's *Lawmen: Bass Reeves*. In a handful of years, Reeves went from obscurity to Wyatt Earp-like fame, and like Earp, much of that fame is based on misinformation and downright fantasy.

Dana Celeste Robinson's new documentary, *In Search of Bass Reeves*, is an invigorating, fact-based telling of the highs and lows of Reeves's life and career, and clarifies and corrects many misconceptions.

With a BA in English Literature from Clemson, and a University of London Ph.D. in Medieval Studies, Robinson might not seem a likely choice to document Reeves's life. "The pivot toward documentary filmmaking came...when I spent a weekend in the Welsh countryside visiting with my best friend who is a renowned documentarian. While we explored the great castles of King Edward I, my friend



The founder of Atlanta, Georgia-based Knox Robinson films, documentary filmmaker Dana Celeste Robinson, Ph.D., is the writer and producer of *In Search of Bass Reeves*. Robinson's first Western documentary was *In Search of Doc Holliday* (2016), and she is currently in production for *In Search of the U.S. Marshals*.

All Images Courtesy Knox Robinson Productions  
Unless Otherwise Noted



Actor TJ Trueth is the narrator of Dana Celeste Robinson's second documentary film, *In Search of Bass Reeves*.

taught me how to use a camera instead of a pen to tell a story. I realized that I was not limited to teaching history in a classroom."

And this is not her first rodeo, although about making *In Search of Doc Holliday*, she says, "I was not confident that I was asking the right questions. But when I made *Bass Reeves*, I knew exactly what questions to ask to tell his story with context."

She asked many of those questions of Art Burton, who appears throughout the film. "I am not an authority on Bass Reeves," she explains. "I write scripts based on the research of others, and if I am lucky, I convince those scholars and authors to sit down with me and share their life's work. I defer to the true expert on Bass Reeves, Art Burton."

Burton had seen the *Doc Holliday* film and "was impressed by the scholarship that went into that." He was happy to be asked to take part. "There are very few documentaries on African-Americans on the Western Frontier. And a lot of people aren't going to read books, and so a documentary film can help."

No one plays Reeves in Robinson's film. "I mentally check out of a documentary that heavily relies on actor reenactments," she says. "They feel too much like movies. [They] unnecessarily blur the line between fiction and fact. I am far more interested in archival photos, newspaper clips and images or video clips of the land upon which they lived."

One fascinating aspect of the story, untangled in the film, are the complications of jurisdiction in Indian Territory. Burton says, "The Five Civilized Tribes had sovereign governments. They had a legislature, their own courts, their own police. Deputy Marshals could arrest Native Americans for selling whiskey, which was a federal crime. They could arrest them for crimes against non-Natives. They could arrest White men or Black men who committed crimes against Native Americans. But there were many occasions in which Deputy Marshals arrested Native Americans, got to Fort Smith and found out that the crime was under Native American jurisdiction."

And rules kept changing. "Reconstruction after the Civil War witnessed the rise of Blacks in law enforcement, government and other areas," Robinson explains. But with the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision permitting segregation, "the Supreme Court finished off most of the progress that Blacks had

*The Tombstone Epitaph* editor and *True West's* features editor Mark Boardman is one of the historians featured in *In Search of Bass Reeves*.

Courtesy Mark Boardman



Bass Reeves biographer Art T. Burton was both an advisor to the producer and a featured expert commentator for *In Search of Bass Reeves*.

Courtesy Art Burton

achieved after the Civil War. I do not like to make windows into people's souls, but Bass had to have felt some sense of betrayal. To think that he had faithfully worked to enforce the laws of the government for so many years, only to have the government in essence tell him that while he had dutifully cleared the saloons and towns of outlaws, he could no longer enjoy a drink in those establishments or stay comfortably in those towns. That would be a difficult betrayal for anyone to overcome, but Bass did just that and he continued working in law enforcement."



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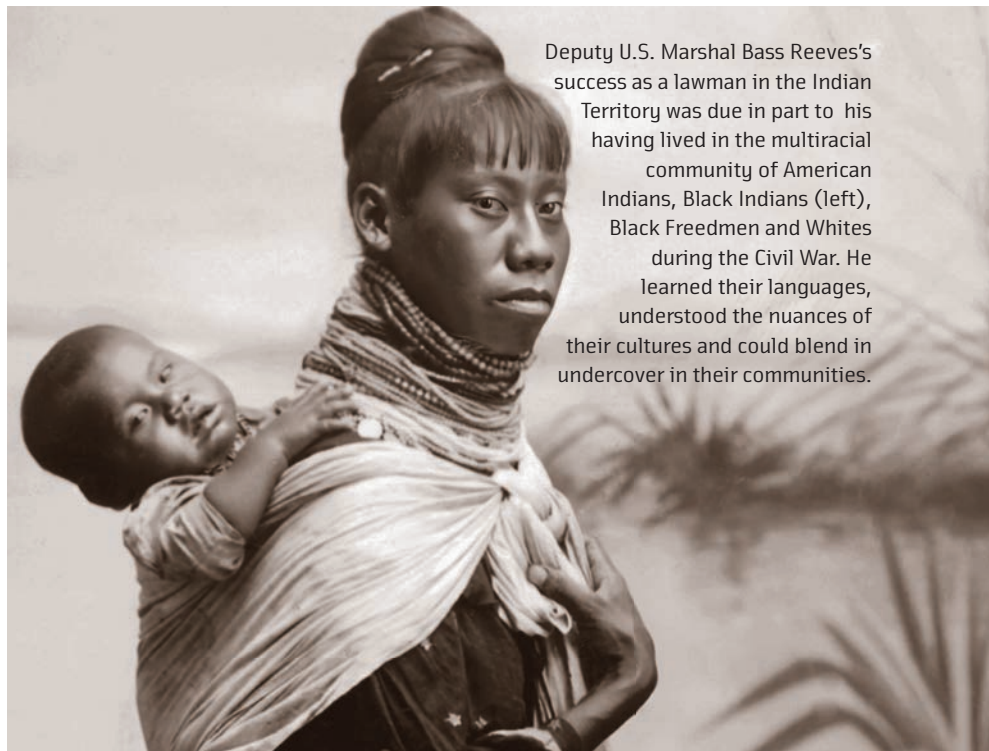


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After the Civil War, Black cowboys (above) became a major part of the labor force that drove cattle from Texas to the Kansas railheads, as well as an important part of the ranching and farm culture of the Indian and Oklahoma territories.



Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves's success as a lawman in the Indian Territory was due in part to his having lived in the multiracial community of American Indians, Black Indians (left), Black Freedmen and Whites during the Civil War. He learned their languages, understood the nuances of their cultures and could blend in undercover in their communities.



Filmmaker Dana Celeste Robinson investigated one of the lesser-known stories of Indian Territory and Civil War history: American Indian Confederates (above), who were both slave owners and combatants against the Union during the War Between the States.

Robinson had another very personal reason for wanting to tell Bass Reeves's story. "I grew up on a small animal farm in rural South Carolina; my father is very what we call 'country.' [He] has watched just about every Western that Hollywood ever produced, yet he knew nothing about Bass Reeves; he didn't know that there were Black deputy U.S. Marshals in the Old West. I was able to take the film to my father and show him that there were Black Old West heroes, lawmen, homesteaders and outlaws that Hollywood has not portrayed on screen."

## BLU-RAY REVIEW

### McCABE & MRS. MILLER

(Criterion, Blu-Ray \$39.95, 4K + Blu-Ray \$49.95, DVD (two disks) \$29.95) In the 1960s, Robert Altman directed TV westerns from *Bronco* to *Bonanza*, but watching the endearing *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (Warner Bros. 1971), you'd suspect he'd never even seen a Western—Vilmos Zsigmond's cinematography makes the exteriors cold and blue, snowy or rainy; his interiors are filthy and disheveled as a homeless camp. A slow-moving story not told but overheard, McCabe (Warren Beatty), a dapper operator, arrives in a frontier town with just a deck of cards, and is soon partners with the saloon owner. Lovely, hard-nosed madam Mrs. Miller (Julie Christie) appears, ambitious to upgrade McCabe's cathouse to a bordello. It's not a match made in heaven—at first. Things go awry when their success leads to mining interests wanting to buy them out. Keith Carradine's brief role is heartbreaking.



Courtesy Warner Bros

**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](http://HenrysWesternRoundup.blogspot.com). A book based on his *True West* columns, *The Greatest Westerns Ever Made*, was recently published by TwoDot.

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1877-SIXGUN1 [www.cimarron-firearms.com](http://www.cimarron-firearms.com)

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BY PETER CORBETT

## Jerome, Arizona

*'The wickedest town' has reformed into a thriving outpost of art, history and wine.*

**W**hen you dig deep into Jerome's history you find so many layers—so many stories of boom and bust, of bordellos, opium dens, gambling and bootleg liquor, labor strife and striking miners deported from town on cattle cars.

At the tail end of the 19th century, three fires leveled the hillside town in less than two years. That brought a

Founded 125 years ago, the once infamous mining town of Jerome clings tenaciously to Cleopatra Hill a mile-high above Arizona's Verde Valley.

All Images Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress Unless Otherwise Noted

do-gooder—Mrs. Thomas of the Salvation Army—who observed that the destructive fires were “an object lesson, a visitation of God's wrath upon the sinful camp.”

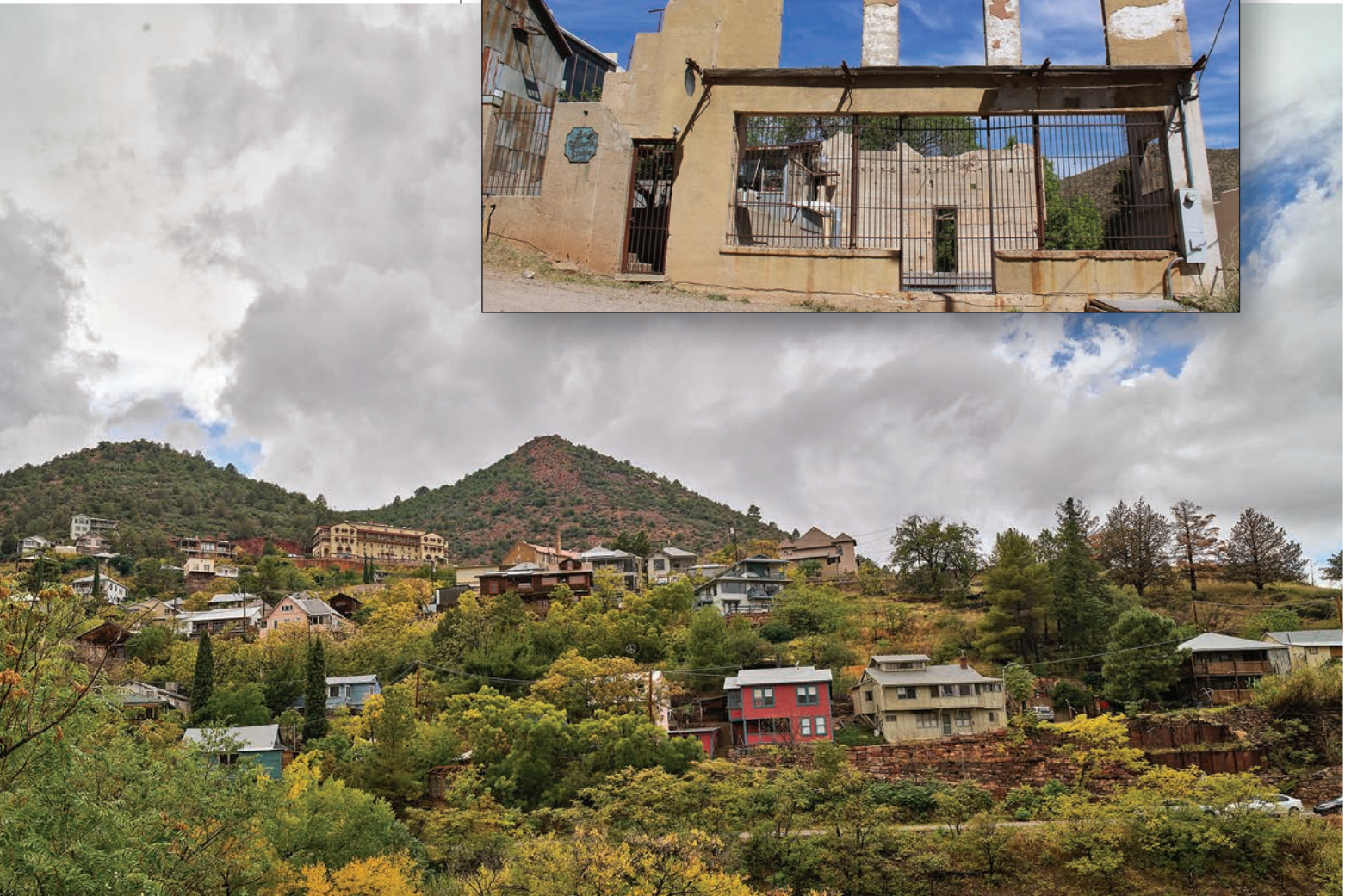
*The Weekly Journal Miner* in May 1899 reported that Thomas “stood in the

street and prayed for the Sodom and Gomorrah of Arizona and said she was pained to see that the fire had not purified the place.”

Thomas predicted the Lord wasn't done with Jerome yet. “God will burn it

An old building facade fronts the La Victoria glassblowing studio on a Jerome back street.

Peter Corbett



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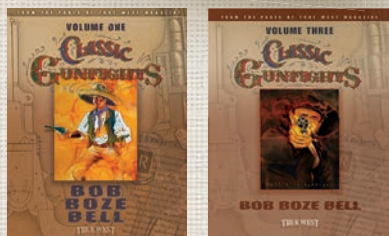
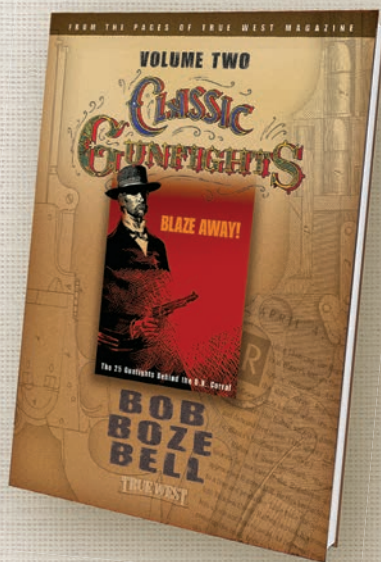
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Jerome's Spook Hall was once the town's J.C. Penney store.

Peter Corbett



up a dozen times to make it a Christian town or nothing."

Newspapers across the nation called Jerome "the Wickedest Town in America," eclipsing hell-raising places like Dodge City, Deadwood, Tombstone, Leadville and Cripple Creek.

Jerome has come a long way since then as it celebrates its 125th anniversary as a town this year. It has become a popular destination for desert dwellers and others for its arts and music scene, wine tasting, colorful history and milder climate.

"We're a mile high in Jerome. We're cooler than Phoenix, and our temperatures are better too," joked Tom Pitts, a Jerome chamber of commerce board member. "Plus, the views up here are spectacular."

In 1899, Yavapai County voted to create a town government for the rowdy mining camp. That led to a Jerome building code requiring brick or masonry construction to thwart another town-leveling fire.

As a result, countless buildings in Jerome today are at least a century old. "Many date back to a rebuilding phase that started in 1899," Pitts said.

It's quite remarkable what the town has become since mining ceased in 1953, 71 years ago.

Jerome was left for dead. Miners fled, businesses shuttered, and movers

trucked houses down the mountain to nearby Verde Valley communities.

Jerome's population dwindled from 12,682 in the 1920 census to 243 hardy souls in 1960. Today's population is just under 500 people living in a town designated a National Historic District. The town's economy is sustained by close to a million visitors each year.

Jerome State Historic Park, a good first stop for history buffs, is in the elegant 1916 mansion of copper baron James S. Douglas. Nearby is the Audrey Headframe Park, where visitors can look into a mineshaft 1,900 feet deep.

The Jerome Historical Society Mine Museum on Main Street has a collection of mining and gaming artifacts, and historic photos.

A mile west of the main business block, the Gold King Mine Ghost Town features mining equipment, a stamp mill, miners' shacks, vintage vehicles, a sawmill and blacksmith shop.

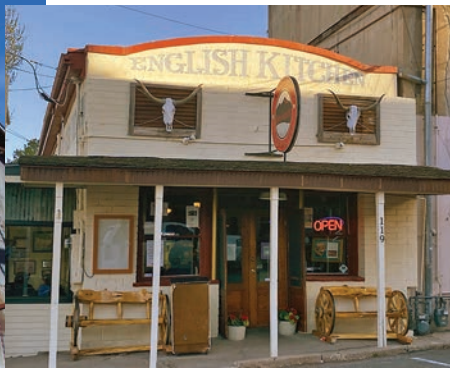
"It's the real history, not the myths," Pitts said. "We've got the real thing."

History and the arts have long been Jerome's drawing cards.

An influx of artists, many from the West Coast, discovered Jerome after the mines closed. They moved to town for cheap housing and studios, Pitts explained.

Today there are more than 30 art studios. The Jerome Artist Cooperative

*Continued on page 72*



Bobby D's BBQ is located in the historic English Kitchen, which at one time was Arizona's oldest operating restaurant, open from 1899 to 2007.

Stuart Rosebrook

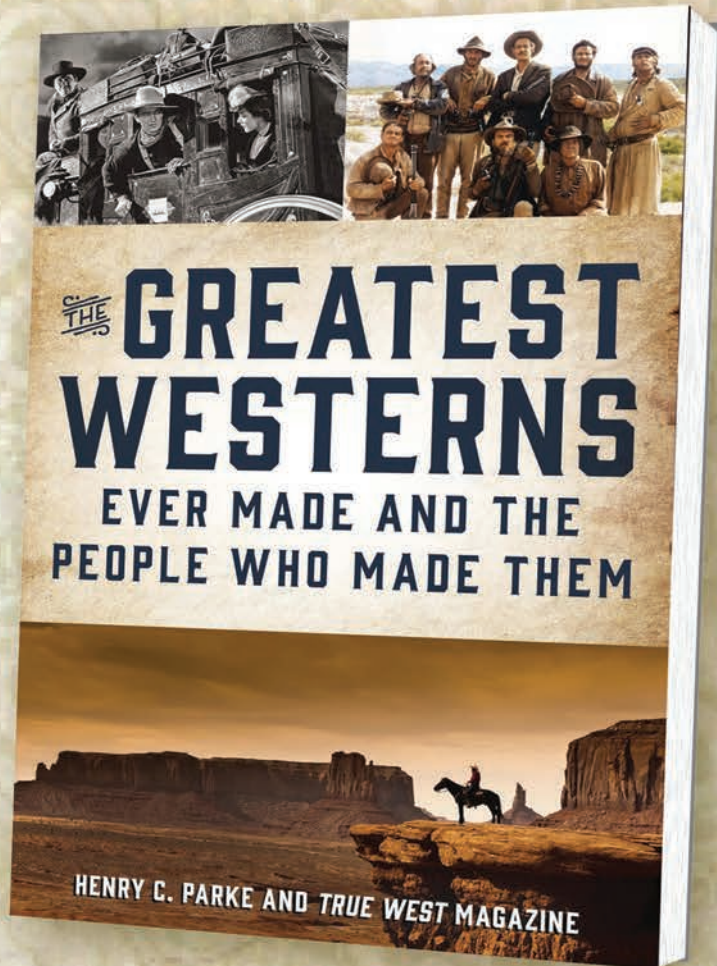


Visitors to Jerome's shopping district will discover a kaleidoscope of arts, crafts and eclectic collectibles for sale.



A tour of the Jerome Historical Society's Mine Museum is a great introduction to the town's past.

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# WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY



The Spirit Room is a wonderful place to spend an afternoon with its colorful mural behind the bar and a Jerome miner sculpture.

Peter Corbett

## FIRST STOP

Jerome Visitor Center  
310 Hull Avenue  
[jeromechamber.com](http://jeromechamber.com)

## COPPER BARON MANSION

Jerome State Historic Park is in the 1916 mansion of copper baron James S. Douglas. Exhibits include a 3-D model of Jerome's underground mine tunnels.  
[azstateparks.com](http://azstateparks.com)

## DIGGING DEEP INTO MINE HISTORY

Jerome Historical Society Mine Museum displays include miners' tools, gaming devices and stories of the melting pot of miners.

[jeromehistoricalsociety.com](http://jeromehistoricalsociety.com)

## GHOST TOWN GRUB

Hungry? Walk up a steep stairwell to the Haunted Hamburger for burgers, beverages and Verde Valley views.

[thehauntedhamburger.com](http://thehauntedhamburger.com)

## HOTEL ON A HILL

Jerome Grand Hotel, built as a mining company hospital in 1926, overlooks the town from its perch on Cleopatra Hill. The hotel's Asylum Restaurant serves breakfast and dinner.

[jeromegrandhotel.net](http://jeromegrandhotel.net)

## MUSIC AND SPIRITS

The Spirit Room bar sits at Jerome's main intersection, and music from rock and blues bands spills out onto Main Street. Upstairs is the Connor Hotel in this 1898 building.

[spiritroom.com](http://spiritroom.com)



The Audrey headframe stands as a historic testament to Jerome's copper mining history.



*Continued from page 70*

Gallery shows their work in the refurbished Hotel Jerome, which opened in 1917. The gallery is a focal point on the first Saturday of each month for the Jerome Art and Wine Walk.

The first mining claims on Cleopatra Hill were recorded in 1876. Jerome was incorporated in 1899, and a decade later it was considered one of the nation's richest copper camps.

Courtesy Library of Congress

Jerome has seven wine-tasting rooms, part of the growing Verde Valley wine enterprise

Wine and spirits are also available on Main Street at the Clinkscale Hotel, the Spirit Room and Paul & Jerry's Saloon, one of Arizona's oldest watering holes.

The Spirit Room is the hub of Jerome's music scene. The corner bar in the Connor Hotel hosts rock and blues bands regularly on weekend afternoons and Friday evenings.



High above the Verde Valley, Jerome State Historic Park is located in the former mansion of James "Rawhide" Douglas, the maverick and innovative mine owner and engineer.

Stuart Rosebrook



The Jerome Music & Arts Festival is June 8-9. Other events are planned for Jerome's 125th anniversary celebration.

Some of the town's unique shops include the Miners Pick & Rock Shop, Rickeldoris Candy and Nelly Bly, which boasts of having the world's largest gallery of kaleidoscopes.



A longtime Arizona journalist, **Peter Corbett** lived in the Verde Valley below Jerome and has spent a lot of time in the town over the past half century.

The Connor Hotel was built in 1898 and was well known as the town's best overnight accommodation. The historic inn has been restored and is a favorite of visitors who want to stay right in the downtown business district.

Stuart Rosebrook



BY STUART ROSEBROOK AND  
THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

# DISCOVER THE

Scenic roads lead to historic Western towns and  
legendary lodgings and saloons.



The early 20th-century T.A. Moulton Barn has been preserved as part of the Mormon Row Historic District in Grand Teton National Park near Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

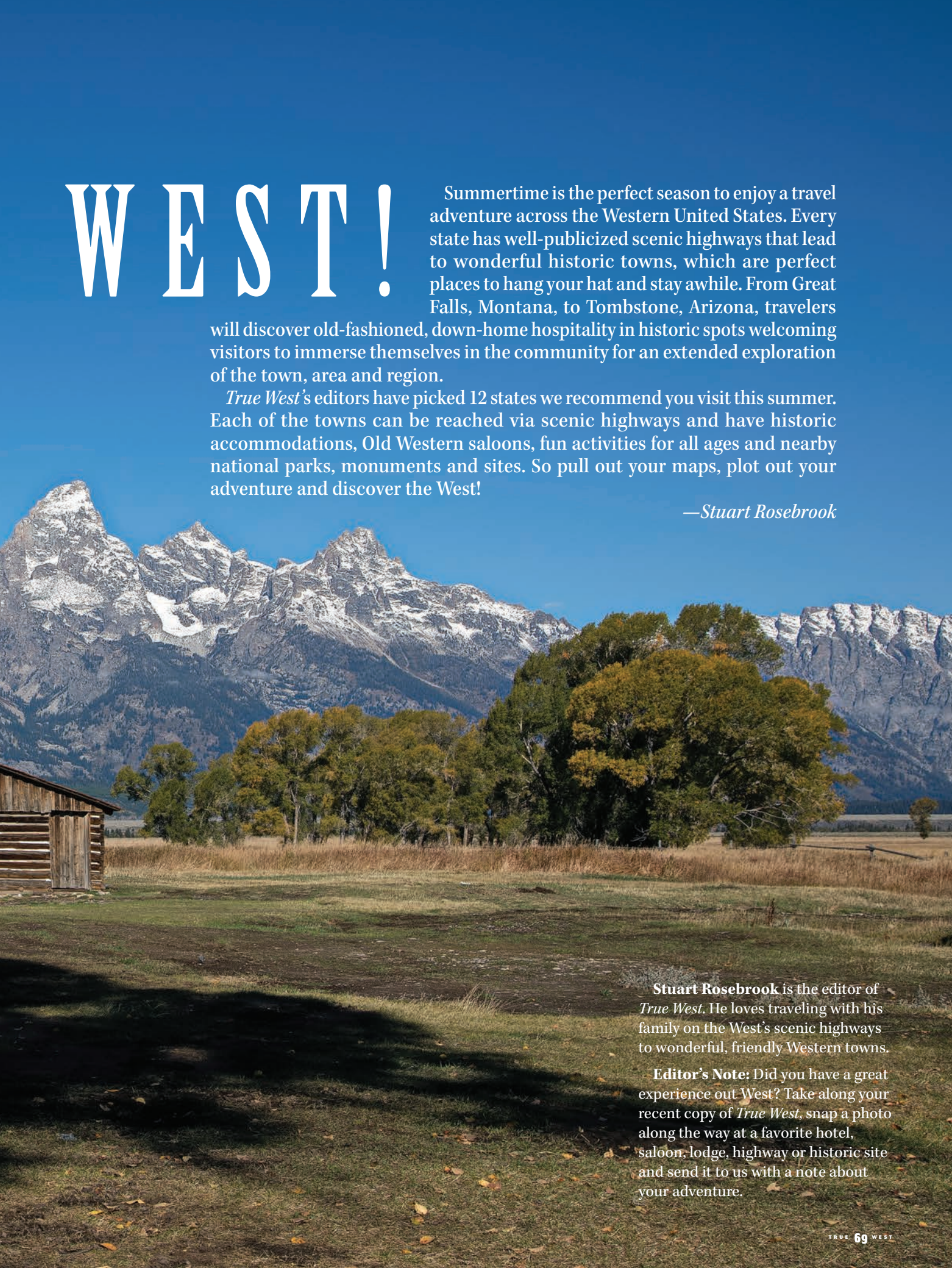
Courtesy Gates Frontiers Fund Wyoming Collection within the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress

# WEST!

Summertime is the perfect season to enjoy a travel adventure across the Western United States. Every state has well-publicized scenic highways that lead to wonderful historic towns, which are perfect places to hang your hat and stay awhile. From Great Falls, Montana, to Tombstone, Arizona, travelers will discover old-fashioned, down-home hospitality in historic spots welcoming visitors to immerse themselves in the community for an extended exploration of the town, area and region.

*True West's* editors have picked 12 states we recommend you visit this summer. Each of the towns can be reached via scenic highways and have historic accommodations, Old Western saloons, fun activities for all ages and nearby national parks, monuments and sites. So pull out your maps, plot out your adventure and discover the West!

—Stuart Rosebrook



**Stuart Rosebrook** is the editor of *True West*. He loves traveling with his family on the West's scenic highways to wonderful, friendly Western towns.

**Editor's Note:** Did you have a great experience out West? Take along your recent copy of *True West*, snap a photo along the way at a favorite hotel, saloon, lodge, highway or historic site and send it to us with a note about your adventure.

# ARIZONA

The Grand Canyon State is a four-season destination state, but your tolerance for the summer heat in the lower deserts will determine how long you stay in Sonoran Desert locales before heading to cooler temperatures in Arizona's higher elevations.

Visitors to the 48th state will find many of its historic towns perfect to make as their vacation headquarters for a weekend or more. Arizona's diverse natural beauty, historic sites and welcoming small towns are three reasons so many visit the Southwestern state in the summer. If you love to drive out West, Arizona's 27 scenic highways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the landscape from the deserts to the mountains ([azdot.gov](http://azdot.gov)).

To help you plan your Arizona adventure, the state's tourism office has designated five travel regions: Northern, West Coast, North Central, Phoenix and Tucson & Southern. Each of Arizona's travel districts can be enjoyed throughout the year and include scenic highways, historic towns and unique natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Grand Canyon State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Arizona.

## Gadsden Hotel

With pink marble pillars, stained-glass windows, gold leaf and an Italian marble staircase, the four-story Gadsden Hotel opened at a cost of \$200,000 in 1907. The luxurious hotel was named for Ambassador James Gadsden, who negotiated the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. Today, the hotel's



Hassayampa Inn  
Prescott, Arizona  
Courtesy Prescott CVB

owners are dedicated to restoring one of Arizona's "Grand Dame" hotels to its elegant past, and rooms can be booked on the mezzanine level. Don't miss a chance to dine and have a drink in the 333 Cafe, Restaurant & Bar and the historic Saddle & Spur Tavern.

1046 G Ave, Douglas, AZ 85607  
520-364-4481 • [TheGadsdenHotel.com](http://TheGadsdenHotel.com)

## Hassayampa Inn

With Spanish Colonial Revival and Italianate features, Hassayampa Inn in the historic district of Prescott offers comforting small-town charm while being closely situated near the sights and sounds of Prescott. This prime location is walking distance to the Courthouse Square, art galleries and unique one-of-a-kind shops, eateries and antique stores. Designed by Southwest architect Henry Trost, it was built as a luxury hotel in 1927 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

122 E Gurley St, Prescott, AZ 86301  
800-322-1927 • [HassayampaInn.com](http://HassayampaInn.com)

## La Posada Hotel

In 1927 the Santa Fe Railway decided to build a major hotel in the center of Northern Arizona. La Posada was to be the finest in the Southwest and they chose Mary Jane Colter to design it for Winslow. It was the finest hotel on Route 66 until it closed in 1957. In 1997, after being closed for 40 years, a new ownership group began renovations on the hotel, and today La Posada has again become an icon of the Southwest and a story of redemption and rediscovery.

303 E 2nd St, Winslow, AZ 86047  
928-289-4366 • [LaPosada.org](http://LaPosada.org)

## Monument Ranch

Monument Ranch, a short ride northwest of Tombstone, is on the former Trappman Ranch, founded in 1880. Materials from the old ranch buildings have been reused to create comfortable accommodations with a rustic look. Guests are served three meals per day in the Schieffelin Restaurant, named for Tombstone's founder, and Trappman's Saloon offers nightly entertainment.

There's even a working-ranch option where guests help out with moving cattle, mending fences and checking water tanks. The Monument Ranch is part of the True Ranch Collection in Arizona, which also includes the White Stallion Ranch in Tucson, Rancho de la Osa in Sasabe and the Kay El Bar in Wickenburg.

895 W Monument Rd  
Tombstone, AZ 85638  
520-457-7299  
TombstoneMonumentRanch.com

## Palace Restaurant and Saloon

The Palace is Arizona's oldest frontier saloon and restaurant. Prescott's famous Palace Restaurant and Saloon opened on Montezuma Street in 1874 as the Cabinet Saloon, where Doc Holliday may have been a patron. The Palace was destroyed in the Whiskey Row Fire of 1900. Patrons supposedly moved the bar across the street and drank and watched Whiskey Row burn to the ground. It was rebuilt in 1901. Today, the Palace maintains its history, grandeur and old Wild West atmosphere with its famous bar, a full dining room and regularly scheduled live music.

120 S Montezuma St  
Prescott, AZ 86303  
928-541-1996  
WhiskeyRowPalace.com

## Big Nose Kate's Saloon

Tombstone's Big Nose Kate's Saloon was once the Grand Hotel, originally built in 1881. On October 25, 1881, the night before the Gunfight Behind the O.K. Corral, the Clantons and the McLaurys were guests there. Nowadays, a number of changes have been made to the structure since it burned down



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and has been rebuilt. The bar area, housed in the basement of the old hotel, is now located on the main level. In the basement is a gift shop, but the tunnel leading to the mineshafts still exists. The saloon holds the Grand Hotel's original long bar, the only one that survived the fire of 1882 and is still serving thirsty patrons.

17 E Allen St, Tombstone, AZ 85638  
520-457-3107 • BigNoseKates.info

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Grand Canyon State, contact the Arizona Office of Tourism at [Arizonaguide.com](http://Arizonaguide.com) or 866-275-5816.

## ARKANSAS

Since the late 19th century, Arkansas' Ozarks Mountains and its famous hot springs have been a popular retreat for summer travelers seeking respite from the hot and humid season. Frontier and Western history lovers of the region will discover that Arkansas is a state filled



1886 Crescent Hotel & Spa, Eureka Springs, Arkansas

Courtesy Arkansas Office of Tourism

# ROAM.

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with wonderful small towns, scenic country roads, historic sites, welcoming retreats and big city charm.

Visitors to the crossroads state find many of its historic towns perfect for their vacation headquarters for a weekend or more. Arkansas' natural beauty, historic sites and welcoming small towns are just three reasons to visit the state in the summer. If you love to drive, Arkansas' 12 scenic byways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the mountains to the rivers (ardot.gov).

To help you plan your Natural State adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into six travel regions: Northwest, North Central, Upper Delta, Central, Lower Delta and Southwest. Each of Arkansas' travel districts can be enjoyed throughout the year and include scenic highways, historic towns and unique natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Natural State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Arkansas.

## 1886 Crescent Hotel & Spa

Perched high on a crest of the Ozark Mountains, the four-story Crescent Hotel stands like a storybook castle. The Frisco Railroad and the Eureka Springs Improvement Company joined forces to build the "Grand Ol' Lady of the Ozarks." The hotel presently offers 72 rooms and four cottages, set amid 15 acres of manicured gardens and lovely woods laced with hiking trails. Guests at the Crescent may dine at the 1886 Steakhouse in the Crystal Ballroom, an elegant space featuring high ceilings, walnut walls and crystal chandeliers.

75 Prospect Ave,  
Eureka Springs, AR 72632  
855-725-5720 • Crescent-Hotel.com

## Capital Hotel

A weekend in the capital city at the Capital Hotel is a perfect way to finish a tour of Arkansas. Known as the "Grand Dame" of Little Rock, the historic property opened in 1876 and is

considered one of the finest hotels in the state.

111 W Markham St  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501-370-1502 • CapitalHotel.com

## Inn at Carnall Hall

Built in 1905, the Inn at Carnall Hall is located on the University of Arkansas campus and has been fully restored as a luxury boutique hotel. Originally a dormitory, the inn also has served as a fraternity and an academic building. Today, the inn is a great place to relax while visiting the university and historic Fayetteville.

465 Arkansas Ave  
Fayetteville, AR 72701  
479-582-0400 • InnAtCarnallHall.com

## The Ohio Club

The oldest bar in Arkansas was founded in 1905. A famous blues and jazz bar, the Ohio Club stands as a testament to time, its customers—including Al



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Capone—and its founders. The Hot Springs nightspot survived Prohibition as a speakeasy known as the Ohio Cigar Store. Today, the Ohio Club still is the place for entertainment, with live music Thursday through Sunday night.

335 Central Ave  
Hot Springs, AR 71901  
501-627-0702 • TheOhioClub.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Natural State, contact the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism at [Arkansas.com](http://Arkansas.com) or 800-628-8725.

# COLORADO

In the summer, Colorado is one of the most popular destinations in the Western United States. From the Front

Range to the Swiss-like peaks of the San Juan Mountains, Colorado welcomes visitors from around the world to enjoy its cool mountain climate, gorgeous vistas, popular parks and historic small towns.

Many of the Rocky Mountain State's historic towns are perfect to make your vacation headquarters for a weekend or more. Colorado's stunning natural beauty, national parks, historic sites and welcoming small towns are just four reasons to visit the state in the summer. If you love to drive, Colorado's 26 scenic highways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the eastern plains to the high mountain passes and valleys ([colorado.com](http://colorado.com)).

To help you plan your Colorado adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into eight travel regions: the Great West, Denver City &



the Rockies, Pikes Peak Wonders, Mystic San Luis Valley, Canyons & Plains, Pioneering Plains, Mountains & Mesas, and Rockies Playground. Each of Colorado's travel districts can be

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Narrow Gauge Railroad  
Durango, Colorado

Courtesy D&S NGRR

## The Cliff House at Pikes Peak

The Rocky Mountain retreat with 54 rooms decorated in a late-1800s motif opened in 1873 at the base of Pikes Peak. The original 20-room boardinghouse started as a stage stop, and in the ensuing decades it was expanded to 200 rooms. With the nearby mineral springs and spring water, the luxury hotel became a popular destination for the rich and famous, including U.S. presidents and European royalty. After the hotel suffered a series of fires, ownership dedicated itself to restoring the historic property in the 1990s, and today the Cliff House at Pikes Peak is one of the finest, most luxurious mountain resorts in the Rockies.

306 Cañon Ave,  
Manitou Springs, CO 80829  
719-785-1000 • TheCliffHouse.com

enjoyed throughout the year and all include scenic highways, historic towns and unique natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Rocky Mountain

State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Colorado.

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## Delaware Hotel

During the mining boom of Leadville, the Calloway Brothers of Delaware built and opened the luxurious Delaware Hotel in 1886. Today, 135 years later, The Delaware is the city's only remaining grand dame from Leadville's glory days. The Victorian-era hotel, which describes itself as "part museum, part gallery, and part country inn" is considered the social center of the high-elevation city. All of the 40 rooms and suites are well appointed with antiques, as are the common areas, and most of the historic items are for sale.

700 Harrison Ave  
Leadville, CO 80461  
800-748-2004 • [DelawareHotel.com](http://DelawareHotel.com)

## The Strater Hotel

Walk inside the doors of The Strater Hotel in Durango, Colorado, and open a world of living history that becomes part of every visitor's personal story. The Strater is a complete experience where guests tour through pristine, interesting halls and stay in rooms restored to their 1887 glory. Every detail—from amazing antique Victorian furniture to meticulous Bradbury wallpapers—holds Southwest stories, which begin in 1887 and continue today. A founding member of Historic Hotels of America, The Strater is Durango's living history museum with 93 unique storied rooms, the Henry Strater Theatre, The Mahogany Grille, famous for live music, and the Diamond Belle which brings

The Hotel Colorado  
Glenwood Springs, Colorado

Courtesy Hotel Colorado

saloon girls and Victorian-era bartenders together with guests as they belly up to the historic bar.

699 Main Ave, Durango, CO 81301  
970-945-6511 • [Strater.com](http://Strater.com)

## The Hotel Colorado

The Grand Lobby and Baron's Restaurant were restored to reflect their original charm. Guests dine beside an interior waterfall or enjoy beverages near the original grand fireplace. During the summer, guests dine in the scenic courtyard, or warm themselves by fire pits while enjoying stunning views of Mt. Sopris. For 125 years, timeless secrets of extensive journeys have been held within the hotel's walls. The Hotel Colorado welcomes guests into oversized rooms and suites, all with high ceilings, spacious closets, and some with balconies and scenic views.

526 Pine St  
Glenwood Springs, CO 81601  
970-945-6511 • [HotelColorado.com](http://HotelColorado.com)

## The Buckhorn Exchange Restaurant

Denver's most historic eating and drinking establishment, The Buckhorn Exchange, is now in its second century of operation. A city and county historic

landmark, the restaurant has liquor license Number One in the State of Colorado. Henry H. "Shorty Scout" Zietz, easily recognized as one of the most colorful figures of the Old West, founded the famous restaurant on November 17, 1893. The Buckhorn Exchange brims with a 125-piece Old West gun collection, historic artifacts and a rare 575-piece collection of taxidermy.

10th Ave, Denver, CO 80204  
303-534-9505 • Buckhorn.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Rocky Mountain State, contact the Colorado Office of Tourism office at Colorado.com or 800-265-6723.

## KANSAS

In the summer, Kansas is one of the most popular destinations for lovers of the American West. Whether retracing the Santa Fe National Historic Trail, following the Guidon of the frontier cavalry across Western Kansas or discovering the Sunflower State's key role in the nation's Civil War, the prairie and plains state has something for everyone and all ages.

Many historic towns in the Sunflower State are perfect to make your vacation headquarters for a weekend or more. Kansas's natural beauty, national grasslands, historic sites and friendly towns are just four reasons to visit the state in the summer. If you love to drive, Kansas's 12 scenic highways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the Western plains and Flint Hills to the Eastern prairie and woodlands (travelks.com).

To help you plan your Kansas adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into six travel regions: Northwest, North Central, South Central, Northeast, Southeast and Southwest. An enjoyable way to see Kansas, relax in its small towns and visit historic sites is to follow the Santa Fe National Historic Trail across the state.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Sunflower State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Kansas.

## 38th Annual TRAPPINGS OF TEXAS

Opening Weekend: September 12-14, 2024



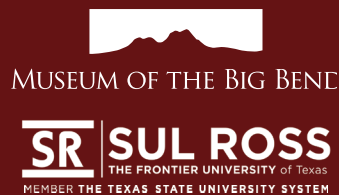
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Show closes November 2, 2024.

\* Voted Best Small Town Museum by USA Today's Readers' Choice 2024

\* Won 2024 Texas Travel Award for best museum in a small market for the 4th time in a row

*A Swing and a Miss, Trophy Style Buckle by Wayne Franklin, 2024 Trappings of Texas Premier Artist*



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Scott Tallman Powers, *Babysitters*, Oil, 21 x 30 in.

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Fort Larned National Historic Site  
Santa Fe National Historic Trail  
Larned, Kansas  
Courtesy NPS.gov

## Abilene's Victorian Inn

The highly rated bed-and-breakfast has been a landmark home in Abilene since 1877. From its construction until 1992, the stately home was a family residence or apartments. In the 1990s, the Victorian home was restored into a B&B, and the current owners, Adrian and Jay Potter, have maintained it as a popular bed-and-breakfast destination in historic Abilene. Enjoy a delicious breakfast every morning while staying in one of their six well-appointed suites or rooms.

820 NW 3rd St, Abilene, KS 67410  
785-263-7774  
AbilenesVictorianInn.com

## Historic Elgin Hotel

Built in 1886, the Elgin Hotel has been fully restored and is considered the most luxurious historical accommodation in the Flint Hills of Kansas. Guests can enjoy one of 12 suites at the boutique hotel and dine in the highly rated restaurant that is open nightly for dinner. Relax in the Elgin while enjoying the small town of Marion and the sights and attractions of the Flint Hills and Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

115 N 3rd St, Marion, KS 66861  
620-382-3200 • HistoricElginHotel.com

## Hays House

Seth Hays, Daniel Boone's grandson, was the first White settler in Council Grove in 1847. In 1857, Hays built a

two-story wood-frame building. The site served as a trading post, restaurant, hotel, courthouse, post office, printing office, and a meeting and social hall, and offered weary traders journeying between New Mexico and Missouri supplies, meals and rooms. Jesse James and Gen. George Armstrong Custer were a few famous patrons of the Hays House. Today, the Hays House Tavern and Restaurant is famous as the oldest continuously operated restaurant west of the Mississippi.

112 W Main St  
Council Grove, KS 66846  
620-767-5911 • HaysHouse.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Sunflower State, contact the Kansas Travel & Tourism Office at TravelKS.com or 785-296-2009.

# MONTANA

Montana is a glorious place to visit in the summer, and its natural wonders, wide-open spaces and national parks bring visitors from around the world from June to August. From Glacier and Yellowstone national parks to the Little Bighorn National Historic Battlefield and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Treasure State offers

tourists some of the nation's most spectacular sites and natural wonders.

Many of Montana's historic towns are perfect to make your vacation headquarters for a weekend or more when on tour of the state. Montana's natural beauty, national parks, historic sites and small towns are just four reasons to visit the state in the summer. If you love to drive, Montana's nine scenic and backcountry byways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the Northern Rocky Mountains to the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers to the vast eastern plains of the Missouri Breaks and Big Horn country (scenic.org).

To help you plan your Montana adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into seven travel regions: Southeast, Missouri River Country, Central Montana, Glacier Country, Southwest Montana, Yellowstone Country and Indian Country. The latter encompasses a dozen tribal nations and seven reservations located across the state of Montana. Each region has its own natural wonders and encompasses large swaths of the country's fourth largest state. Map out your trip to Montana well and plan to immerse yourself in just one or two regions per visit to really soak up the beauty and ambience of the big sky state.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Treasure State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Montana.

## Grand Union Hotel

At the zenith of steamboat traffic on the Upper Missouri, the Grand Union Hotel in Fort Benton, Montana, was opened in 1882. Closed in the 1980s, the grand dame was reopened in 1999 after preservation efforts restored the hotel to its 19th-century splendor. Patrons of the Grand Union will be transformed from the present back to the 1880s when they stay at the elegantly appointed, three-story brick hotel. A legendary landmark of Fort Benton, the Grand Union



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SCAN TO PLAN



Glacier National Park  
West Glacier, Montana

Courtesy Carol M. Highsmith's America,  
Library of Congress

has 26 rooms and suites, a gourmet, farm-to-table restaurant and a popular saloon for drinks and casual dining.

1 Grand Union Sq  
Fort Benton, MT 59442  
888-838-1882 • GrandUnionHotel.com

## Hotel Arvon

Montana mining and ranching pioneer Robert “The Celtic Cowboy” Vaughn opened the Hotel Arvon and an adjacent livery in Great Falls in 1890. The town’s founder named the inn for his daughter Arvon. The Hotel Arvon is in the city’s oldest commercial building on Great Falls’ Arvon block. The luxurious and lovingly restored inn has 11 suites and 22 luxurious guest rooms. The Celtic Cowboy, an Irish pub named after Vaughan, is next door, and guests and

locals equally enjoy the good food and festive atmosphere.

118 1st Ave S, Great Falls, MT 59401  
406-952-1101 • HotelArvon.com

## The Bale of Hay Saloon

Hoist a cold one at the rustic Bale of Hay Saloon from mid-May to late September. Step into the character of the West in Montana’s oldest established bar in Virginia City, a historic mining town. Known for handmade hamburgers, brats and its beer selection, many from Montana breweries, The Bale offers free pool and shuffleboard. Inside is an antique entertainment equipment collection, old pictures and memorabilia on the walls and a big potbelly stove, perfect for warming yourself on a cold-weather day.

344 W Wallace St  
Virginia City, MT 59755  
406-843-5700 • BaleOfHaySaloon.com

## Circle Bar Guest Ranch

Operated by the True Ranch Collection, the 520-acre Circle Bar Guest Ranch is located on a 19th-century cattle ranch along the Judith River. Famous for its horseback riding and Western ambience, the ranch is adjacent to the Helena Lewis & Clark National Forest and the Little Belt Mountains. All-inclusive activities include family-style meals, hiking, riding, fishing, archery, shooting and UTV tours.

206 Porcupine Ridge Rd  
Hobson, MT 59452  
406 272-3403 • CircleBarRanch.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Treasure State, contact the Travel Montana office at VisitMt.com or 800-847-4868.



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# NEW MEXICO

The Land of Enchantment is popular year round and invites visitors to enjoy its seasons whatever month brings them to New Mexico. From its high deserts to its beautiful mountains, woodlands and prairies to its Southern Plains and Panhandle regions, New Mexico has something for everyone who loves the natural beauty of the Southwest, national parks and historic sites, Hispanic and Indian culture, Route 66 and welcoming communities of all sizes that make a road trip to the state memorable.

Many historic towns in New Mexico are perfect to make your vacation headquarters for a weekend or more when on tour of the state. If you love to drive out West, New Mexico's 25 scenic byways and historic Route 66 allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the prairie to the plains ([newmexico.org](http://newmexico.org)).



To help you plan your New Mexico adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into six travel regions: Northwest, Southwest, North Central, Central, Northeast and Southeast. Each of New Mexico's travel districts can be enjoyed throughout the year and include

scenic highways, historic towns and cultural sites.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Land of Enchantment? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of New Mexico.



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- Tourism Bureau
- Desert Foothills Library
- And so much more!



**For more information visit [CaveCreekAZ.gov](http://CaveCreekAZ.gov)**

Rio Chama River, Carson National Forest North of Abiquiú, New Mexico Old Spanish National Historic Trail

Courtesy NPS.gov

## Historic Plaza Hotel

The beautifully restored Plaza Hotel in Las Vegas, New Mexico, anchors the city's historic downtown. Known as "The Belle of the Southwest" since it opened in 1882, the Plaza Hotel has undergone a masterful restoration of its 70 rooms, lobby, dining room and saloon. Nineteen of the well-appointed rooms overlook the Plaza Park, which fans of the television series *Longmire* will recognize as downtown "Durant." The Plaza's proprietors have also restored and manage Las Vegas's Castañeda Hotel, and Winslow, Arizona's, La Posada, both former Fred Harvey hotels that served the passengers of the Santa Fe Railway.

230 Plaza Park, Las Vegas, NM 87701  
505-425-3591 • PlazaHotelLVNM.com

## St. James Hotel

St. James Hotel is an enigma. Cimarron is a sleepy little town an hour east of Taos, but the hotel's frontier history is replete with tales of outlaws, gunplay and bloodshed. Founded as a saloon circa 1872 by French chef Henry Lambert, it added rooms and the St. James Hotel name some years later. Various accounts claim a list of notable Westerners slept here, including Buffalo Bill Cody, Annie Oakley, Jesse James, Doc Holliday, the Earp brothers, Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid. Historians are skeptical.

617 S Collison Ave  
Cimarron, NM 87714  
575-376-2664 • ExStJames.com

## Geronimo Trail Guest Ranch

As the name implies, this guest ranch surrounded by the Gila National Forest north of Silver City is within the historic range of Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches. Trail rides take guests to archaeological sites of the Mimbres people who lived in this region circa 200 to 1150 A.D. Geronimo Trail Guest Ranch got its start as a hunting lodge in the 1980s and became a guest ranch 20 years ago. Meals are served in a dining hall or outdoors for barbecues. There are three cabins with multiple bunking options. The ranch takes just 12 guests at any one time.

1 Wall Lake Rd, Winston, NM 87943  
575-772-5157 • GeronimoRanch.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Land of Enchantment, contact the New Mexico Department of Tourism at [NewMexico.org](http://NewMexico.org) or 505-827-7400.



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Rough Riders Hotel  
 Medora, North Dakota  
 Courtesy North Dakota Office of Tourism

# NORTH DAKOTA

If you have ever been to North Dakota, you immediately have it on your list for a return trip. From the eastern plains and the Missouri River Valley to the Western Badlands and Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the Northern Plains state has something for everyone.

Many of North Dakota's historic towns are perfect to make as your vacation headquarters for a weekend or more. The Peace Garden State's natural beauty, historic sites and welcoming small towns are three reasons so many visit the Great Plains state in the summer. If you love to drive out West, North Dakota's 13 scenic highways and byways



allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the Western Badlands, the Missouri River Country and the Eastern Plains (ndtourism.com).

To help you plan your North Dakota adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into three regions based on cities: Eastern Cities, Central Cities and Western Cities. Each regional section guides visitors into a area of the state

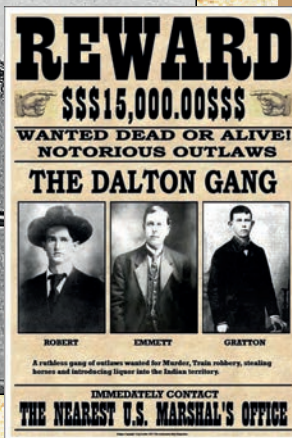
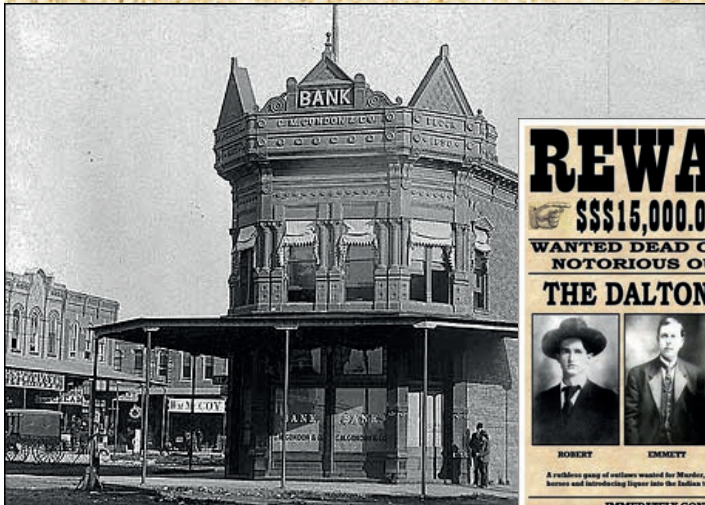
and into and through its many wonderfully welcoming communities. North Dakota's emphasis on connecting your travel by its communities versus geography is unique in the West and reflects the state's philosophy of tourism. Summer and fall are the best times to visit the high plains state, and a successful road trip to North Dakota should include scenic highways, historic towns and a visit to the Western Badlands, Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Medora.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Peace Garden State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of North Dakota.

## Buffalo Gap Guest Ranch

Just five miles west of historic Medora, the Buffalo Gap Guest Ranch has something for everyone who loves horses, trail riding, rodeo, great steaks

## The Daltons Tried in 1892...



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[visitcoffeyville.com](http://visitcoffeyville.com)



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and comfortable rooms. Book a night in the log cabin lodge, hook up your RV or camp on the property. They can even accommodate your stock if you are traveling with horses or cattle; they have corrals, barns, pens, an arena and feed available. Activities include trail riding, hiking, fishing and hunting.

3100 Buffalo Gap Rd  
Medora, ND 58645  
701-623-4200  
BuffaloGapGuestRanch.com

## The Rough Riders Hotel

The perfect place to stay in historic Medora is located just outside the entrance of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The hotel's accommodations are perfect for all ages and in walking distance of the shopping, restaurant and entertainment district of the visitor-friendly town.

301 3rd Ave, Medora, ND 58645  
701-623-4444 • Medora.com

## Peacock Alley American Grill & Bar

A Bismarck landmark, Peacock Alley has been serving up great food and memories since it opened after the end of Prohibition in 1933. Located in the former lobby of the Patterson Hotel, the highly rated and award-winning restaurant proudly serves the best North Dakota beef.

422 E Main Ave, Bismarck, ND 58501  
701-221-2333 • Peacock-Alley.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Peace Garden State, contact the North Dakota Tourism Division at [NDTourism.com](http://NDTourism.com) or 800-435-5663.

# OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma is a Western state that can be visited year round and invites travelers to enjoy its seasons whatever month brings them to the Sooner State. From its Eastern woodlands and prairies

to its Southern Plains and Panhandle regions, Oklahoma has something for everyone who loves the natural beauty, historic sites, Route 66 and welcoming communities that make a road trip to the state memorable.

Many historic towns in the Sooner State are perfect to make as your vacation headquarters for a weekend or longer. If you love to drive out West, Oklahoma's four scenic byways and historic Route 66 allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the prairie to the plains ([traveloka.com](http://traveloka.com)).

To help you plan your Oklahoma adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into six travel regions: Northwest, Southwest, North Central, South Central, Northeast and Southeast. Each of Oklahoma's travel districts can be enjoyed throughout the year and include scenic highways, historic towns and local and regional museums, including the Three Rivers Museum in Muskogee. Three Rivers has one of the most comprehensive exhibits on Bass Reeves in the country. (For more on Bass Reeves's extraordinary life, see page 20.)

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scott Christiansen



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quang HO



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Route 66 Museum, Clinton, Oklahoma

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

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Sooner State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Oklahoma.

### Cattlemen's Steakhouse

Known to have the best steak in the Sooner State, the Cattlemen's Steakhouse is located in the historic Oklahoma City Stockyards. Founded in 1910, the landmark restaurant has been a favorite of ranchers, cowboys, movie stars and presidents since its doors opened. Ask the wait staff about the famous 33 brand and learn how the restaurant was gambled away in a dice game.

1309 S Agnew  
Oklahoma City, OK 73108  
405-236-0416  
CattlemensRestaurant.com

### The Davis Flying W Guest Ranch

You want to be a cowboy? Come on out and stay at the Davis Flying W Guest Ranch, where guests can enjoy trail rides, cattle roundups, good food and great cabin accommodations for the whole family. The Flying W also has a full rodeo arena for roping, including bucking chutes and a barn with corrals. *CMT's Cowboy U* actually filmed its fifth season at the Flying W.

10874 N 1920 Rd, Sayre, OK 73662  
580-277-1304 • DavisFlyingW.com

### The Stone Lion Inn B&B

Step back to a simpler time and stay in one of the Stone Lion Inn's well-appointed suites. Built in 1907, the Victorian home is the perfect getaway for relaxing in comfort while staying in and touring historic Guthrie, the first capital of the Oklahoma Territory.

1016 W Warner Ave  
Guthrie, OK 73044  
405-282-0012 • StoneLionInn.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Sooner State, contact the Oklahoma Tourism & Recreation Department at [TravelOK.com](http://TravelOK.com) or 800-652-6552.

## OREGON

The Beaver State is one of the most beautiful in the nation and has something for everyone who loves escaping the pace of the interstate and slowing down on a long and winding scenic highway. Whether driving over and through the Cascade and Coastal Ranges, up or down the rugged Pacific Coast, the Columbia River Gorge or one of the scenic highways of central and eastern Oregon, you will discover the charm of small towns, historic sites and natural wonders around every turn.

A summer vacation in Oregon is one to be relished and enjoyed. Don't try to

do the whole state in one road trip but consider at least a loop vacation that immerses you in one or two of the state's regions. Where you go may depend on whether you arrive by car or plane. Portland has the state's largest airport and is a great jumping off place to visit Oregon's Columbia Gorge, the Oregon coast or a scenic loop east to The Dalles, south to Klamath Falls and back north past Crater Lake National Park and Mount Hood National Forest. If you love to drive out West, Oregon's 29 designated scenic byways and tour routes allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the ocean to the mountains to the eastern plains (traveloregon.com).

To help you plan your Oregon adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into seven travel regions: Central, Eastern, Mt. Hood & Columbia River Gorge, Oregon Coast, Portland Region, Southern Oregon and Willamette Valley. Each of Oregon's travel sectors can be enjoyed throughout the year—although many will tell you that summer and fall are the best seasons—and all include scenic highways, historic towns and unique natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Beaver State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Oregon.

## Long Hollow Ranch

Founded in 1890, the historic ranch property is the perfect place to step away from the technology of today and relax in the beauty of rural, central Oregon. Twenty miles outside Sisters and Bend, the Long Hollow Ranch offers guests a tranquil Western experience on a sustainable, working cattle ranch.

71105 Holmes Rd, Sisters, OR 97759  
541-923-1901 • LHRanch.com

## The Dalles Inn

Perfectly situated in the historic downtown of The Dalles, the popular inn is in walking distance of the entertainment and restaurant district as well as the Columbia River. Well



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www.trueranchcollection.com 520-365-0305





Oregon Trail Wagon Train Reenactors  
The Dalles, Oregon

Courtesy The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce

known for its hospitality, The Dalles Inn is a wonderful place to stay for a long weekend while on tour of the Columbia River Gorge. The staff are well versed in activities to enjoy in The Dalles area, including local museums, award-winning winery tours and outdoor adventures.

112 W 2nd St, The Dalles, OR 97508  
541-296-9107 • TheDallesInn.com

## Hamley Steakhouse & Saloon

Located in the heart of Pendleton, the Hamley Saloon & Steakhouse, open Tuesday to Saturday, has the region's most authentic Old West 100-year-old mahogany bar which features oak woodwork and is watched over by "Tex," a massive longhorn steer. Stained-glass chandeliers complete the decor. The restaurant specializes in prime rib and traditional ranch cooking. Hamley Café, open Monday to Saturday, offers a quiet relaxing breakfast and lunch.

8 SE Court Ave, Pendleton, OR 97801  
541-278-1100 • Hamley.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Beaver State, contact the Oregon Tourism Commission at [TravelOregon.com](http://TravelOregon.com) or 800-547-7842.

# SOUTH DAKOTA

The Mount Rushmore State welcomes tourists throughout the year, but summer and fall are the most popular seasons to enjoy everything South Dakota has to offer its visitors.

Many of the Northern Plains state's historic towns, especially in the Black Hills, are perfect to make as your vacation headquarters for a weekend or longer. South Dakota's natural beauty, historic sites, national parks and interesting small towns are just four reasons so many come to visit the plains state in the summer. If you love to drive out West, South Dakota's five scenic byways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from the Black Hills to the Missouri River country and the eastern plains and prairie ([travelsouthdakota.com](http://travelsouthdakota.com)).

To help you plan your South Dakota adventure, the state's tourism office has divided the state into four travel regions: Black Hills & Badlands, South Dakota Missouri River, Glacial Lakes & Prairies and Southeast South Dakota. Each of South Dakota's travel districts can be enjoyed through the summer and fall, and include scenic highways, historic towns, national parks and unique natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Mount Rushmore State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of South Dakota.

## Deadwood Social Club-Saloon #10

Step back into history at the historic Saloon #10 on Deadwood's Main Street. For over 100 years, the #10 has served locals and visitors with an Old West style and ambience that hearkens back to the wild and woolly territorial days of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. The saloon is a virtual museum with artifacts everywhere you look and daily entertainment in the bar. The famous "Shooting of Wild Bill" reenactment starts every Monday through Saturday, on May 31.

637 Main St, Deadwood, SD 57732  
800-952-9368 • Saloon#10.com

## Historic Bullock Hotel

In 1894, local sheriff and entrepreneur Seth Bullock built with his partner, Sol Star, the three-story Bullock Hotel after another downtown fire in Deadwood. The brick building took two years to complete but was quickly known as the city's finest and convenient to the Grand Island and Wyoming Central train station, which had been operating passenger service to the town since 1891. Today, the three-story Bullock is the "Jewel of Downtown" Deadwood with 63 rooms and suites. Bully, the hotel's restaurant is named in honor of Bullock's good friend, Theodore Roosevelt.

633 Main St, Deadwood, SD 57732  
806-336-1876 • [HistoricBullock.com](http://HistoricBullock.com)

## Spearfish Canyon Lodge

Located in stunning Spearfish Canyon, the lodge is open year-round. Visitors have a choice between 44

rooms, 10 suites and one private cabin. Guests can choose from a variety of “stay & play” packages, including fly-fishing, hiking and biking and a winter snowshoe adventure. The century-old lodge dining room, the Latchstring Restaurant, is known throughout the Black Hills as one of the finest dining experiences in the region.

10619 Roughlock Falls Rd  
Lead, SD 57732  
877-975-6343 • SFFCanyon.com

## Circle View Guest Ranch

Philip and Amy Kruse manage the Circle View Guest Ranch, a family-run operation on their 2,800-acre cattle ranch four miles west of Interior, southwest of the Badlands National Park Visitors Center. Guests stay in seven guest rooms or the original 1880 Hamm Homestead Cabin. Relax and enjoy the family ambience and morning chores, hearty breakfasts and ranch life while on a tour of the Badlands and Black Hills.

20055 E Highway 44  
Interior, SD 57780  
605-433-5582 • CircleViewRanch.com

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Mount Rushmore State, contact the South Dakota Office of Tourism at [TravelSouthDakota.com](http://TravelSouthDakota.com) or 800-952-3625.



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# TEXAS

Is everything big in the Lone Star State? You bet, and you better make sure to give yourself plenty of time to enjoy your visit to Texas and all its big cities, small towns, natural wonders and historic sites.

So how do you immerse yourself in the beauty and culture of the largest state south of Alaska and not spend all your time driving? The key is to pick a region (or two) and pick a great place to stay as your headquarters from which to explore and enjoy the local sites, food, fun and people.

To help you plan your visit in the vast state, Texas's tourism office has divided the state into seven travel regions: Big Bend Country, Hill Country, South Texas Plains, Panhandle Plains, Gulf Coast, Piney Woods and Prairies & Lakes. Each is almost like a state unto itself, and you will thank yourself if you decide to visit them just one at a time. Each region has its own set of scenic highways and byways, which are an ideal way to tour

Pedernales River, Texas Hill Country  
Gillespie County, Texas

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



the area and explore the local small towns and cultural sites.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Lone Star State? Here is a short list of *True West's* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Texas.

## Crockett Hotel

Built in 1909 just behind the Alamo, the Crockett is within walking distance of many of San Antonio's most popular sites, including the Shrine of Liberty and the River Walk. The building's seven-story west wing was added in 1927. The hotel and its 138 guest rooms



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were completely renovated in 2007. One of the most striking features of the Crockett today is its six-story-high atrium, created when the hotel enclosed its outdoor courtyard in the 1980s. It's a perfect place to stay while exploring the historic city and the nearby Hill Country, the city's many museums, historic district and River Walk.

320 Bonham, San Antonio, TX 78205  
210-225-6500 • CrockettHotel.com

## Rancho Cortez Dude Ranch

This ranch, in the Texas Hill Country and near San Antonio, offers cowboy experiences for everyone. Escape urban life for a half or full day, or much longer. The ranch offers meals, horse-back riding, swimming, hayrides, barrel racing and fitness programs. Or stay overnight in Western-themed lodging. Large porches, a refreshing outdoor pool, indoor pool, children's play area and deck and hot tub complement a large dining and lodge room. A girls' horse summer camp, for riders 8-16, teaches good horsemanship. A

boys' cowboy camp, for ages 8-18, teaches riding and roping skills, caring for livestock and camping.

872 Hay Hollar Rd, Bandera, TX 78003  
830-796-9339 • RanchoCortez.com

## Old Central Firehouse Bed & Brew

Centrally located in downtown San Angelo, Old Central Firehouse was built in 1929. One of the first firehouses in San Angelo, the stately building remained in service as a firehouse until 1976. Newly renovated into a bed and brew, it is near the city's dining and entertainment district, as well as many local historic sites including Fort Concho. Old Central Firehouse provides a unique, relaxing getaway within walking distance of many of the things that make San Angelo so great.

200 S Magdalen St  
San Angelo, TX 76903  
325-703-2029  
OCFBedAndBrew.com

## Y.O. Ranch Hotel

The Y.O. Ranch Hotel is the perfect place to make your headquarters for a long weekend or more when on a tour of the Texas Hill Country. Whatever season you visit, including winter (many suites have wood-burning fireplaces), the Y.O. is a relaxing place to kick back and enjoy the beauty of the region and the many wonderful places to visit while in the Hill Country. When in Kerrville, don't miss a chance to tour the nearby Museum of Western Art, which has one of the finest collections of cowboy art in the state.

2033 Sidney Baker St  
Kerrville, TX 78028  
830-257-4440  
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**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Lone Star State, contact Texas Tourism at [TravelTexas.com](http://TravelTexas.com) or 800-452-9292.

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# WYOMING

The Cowboy State is one of the great summertime destinations in the American West. True, Wyoming can be considered a four-season state by those who enjoy winter sports and tourism, but the summer is the most popular for tourists from both home and abroad.

The Rocky Mountain-Great Plains state's natural beauty, historic sites and welcoming small towns are three reasons so many visit Wyoming in the summer. If you love to drive out West, Wyoming's seven scenic byways allow you to slow down and enjoy the beauty of the state from east to west and north to south ([dot.state.wy.us](http://dot.state.wy.us)).

To help you plan your visit, Wyoming's tourism office has divided the state into five travel zones: National Parks, Black to Yellow, Park to Park, Rockies to Tetons and Salt to Stone, which actually starts in Salt Lake City, Utah, which has the closest major airport to Yellowstone National Park. Each zone has something for everyone, including scenic highways, welcoming historic towns and natural wonders.

Where should you stay, eat and drink when visiting the Cowboy State? Here is a short list of *True West* favorites where you can immerse yourself in the local history and discover the beauty and culture of Wyoming.

## Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel

Visit the Irma Hotel—a place that Buffalo Bill Cody called “a gem”—just outside of Yellowstone National Park. Cody built the hotel in 1902 and named it for his daughter, Irma. Today, you can stay in historic rooms that housed some of the most famous Western personalities the world has ever known, including Frederic Remington, Annie Oakley and Calamity Jane. You can even stay in Buffalo Bill's private suite. Enjoy a drink and friendly camaraderie in the Silver Saddle Saloon. Or sit on the porch where Buffalo Bill and Irma sat, and enjoy a



meal while you experience the sights of Cody. Fancy enough for royalty and comfortable enough for cowboys and cowgirls, the Irma Hotel is the heart and spirit of Cody, Wyoming.

1192 Sheridan Ave, Cody, WY 82414  
307-587-4221 • [IrmaHotel.com](http://IrmaHotel.com)

## Occidental Hotel

The Occidental Hotel was founded in 1879 in a tent before the log structure was constructed in 1880. The hotel hosted many of the most famous people of the Old West. Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, frequented the region and based his characters on gunslingers and cowboys he'd met in the Occidental Saloon. The current hotel, built between 1903 and 1908, guarantees today's visitors an Old West experience at its historic Occidental Saloon, Busy Bee Cafe and The Virginian Restaurant.

10 Main St, Buffalo, WY 82834  
307-684-0451  
[OccidentalWyoming.com](http://OccidentalWyoming.com)

## Sheridan Inn

The end of the Johnson County War opened the door to the expansion of tourism in Wyoming, including the opening of the Sheridan Inn in 1893. A gathering place for travelers for decades, the inn was completely restored and reopened in 2013. The Sheridan Inn is the perfect headquarters for an exploration of the Big Horn region of Wyoming and Montana, with 22 fully restored rooms and a popular banquet facility for weddings and reunions. Also, ask

about the inn's five-bedroom Mountain Lodge, available to rent with a three-day minimum.

856 Broadway St, Sheridan, WY 82801  
307-655-7861 • [SheridanInn.com](http://SheridanInn.com)

## Miners and Stockman's Steakhouse & Spirits

Wyoming's oldest bar is open Thursday to Sunday. Housed in the last remaining remnants of the old Fort Laramie trading post, the Steakhouse in Hartville, population 64, is adjacent to Guernsey State Park. Hartville was founded as a mining town. The bar visitors see today, was carved in 1862 in Germany, shipped to New York, sent by train to Cheyenne and then to Fort Laramie for the officers' club. In the 1880s, it was brought by wagon to Hartville. Step back into history and enjoy a cold libation and great steak.

608 Main St, Hartville, WY 82215  
307-836-2008  
[WyomingsOldestBar.com](http://WyomingsOldestBar.com)

**FYI:** For more information on travel in the Cowboy State, contact the Wyoming Travel and Tourism office at [WyomingTourism.org](http://WyomingTourism.org) or 800-225-5996.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Want more details about heritage travel in all 22 Western states in the U.S.? Order your copy of the *True West Ultimate Historic Travel Guide* from [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com) and use it to plan your next adventure out West. And don't forget to take it with you as a handy guide to where to stay, eat, drink and visit while on your Old West tour.



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**Ask The Marshall**

BY MARSHALL TRIMBLE

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

# Doc Holliday, Reward Money and Fast-Draw

**After a gunfight or Indian attack, what happened to the weapons of the fallen?**

*Edward Presken  
Mobile, Alabama*

To the victor go the spoils. If Indians won a battle, and if time permitted, they could gather in the loot, clothes, firearms and ammunition to stock their needs. When the Army collected non-military firearms after a battle, such as repeating rifles, ammo, etc., the arms were sent back to the Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. From there they would likely be sold as surplus. And the winner of a gunfight could claim the weapons of his opponent, if he chose to.

**What happened when Doc Holliday was in Prescott, Arizona?**

*Bill Jenkins  
Shreveport, Louisiana*

Prescott Historian Brad Courtney informed me "Doc and Kate left Las Vegas, New Mexico, in October 1879 bound for Prescott with Wyatt and James Earp and their families. The Earps headed for Tombstone in December, but Doc and Kate remained through the winter. Wyatt kept urging him to join them in Tombstone, but rather he headed back to Las Vegas that spring to pay off some debts while Kate went to Globe. According to the 1880 census, Doc was

back in Prescott before June and remained until August before heading to Tombstone."

**Were lawmen able to collect reward money?**

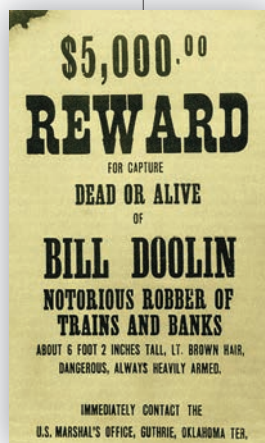
*Roger Tinklenberg  
Westminster, Colorado*

Yes. Most lawmen—federal and local—could collect rewards in addition to regular pay. For some, that money was necessary to get by. And he could also put in for expenses, like travel, food for the animals, housing, etc.

**When Indians attacked wagon trains, did they really ride around the wagons in a circle like they show in the movies?**

*Ed Dickens  
Joplin, Missouri*

Attacks on large wagon trains were rare if ever, especially if an experienced wagon boss was in charge. He demanded discipline and always had a defense plan in case of an attack. Indians might attack a small train of two or three wagons, but it was usually an ambush. Occasionally



Indian and Oklahoma territories outlaw Bill Doolin had a \$5,000 price on his head, dead or alive. In spite of posted rewards for the bandit, when it came time to pay up after Doolin was shot and killed on August 25, 1896, Deputy U.S. Marshal Heck Thomas got just \$1,425, which he split among the posse members.

True West Archives

they would pay a social visit to the wagon train just to probe for weakness or lack of discipline. If they found it was well-defended, they'd go looking for another prey. And their tactics depended on the situation they faced.

**Who was John "Portugee" Phillips?**

*Joe Manriquez  
Whittier, California*

Early in 1866, John "Portugee" Phillips joined a party that was coming to the Big Horn Mountains to prospect for gold. His group arrived at Fort Phil Kearny on September 14, and he was at the fort during the Fetterman Fight on December 21.

After Fetterman was killed, Col. Henry Carrington felt the fort might fall into the hands of the Sioux. He asked for volunteers to venture out into the blizzard and below-zero temperatures and ride to Fort Laramie to bring a relief force. Phillips and another man



The last known photograph taken of Holliday was taken when he was in Prescott, Arizona Territory, circa 1880.

D.M. Mitchell, True West Archives



took the best two horses at the fort, including Carrington's personal mount.

The faithful horse that carried Phillips the 236 miles through -20-degree temperatures, high winds, blowing snow and deep drifts, died soon after the ride was completed.

For some reason the government refused to pay Phillips and the other rider. Phillips died in 1883.

In 1900, the government paid his widow Hattie \$5,000. She used some of the money to erect an elaborate monument in his honor in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

### Were fast-draw artists a common thing in the Old West, or are they largely an invention of pulp fiction and Hollywood?

*Shawn Cote  
Fort Fairfield, Maine*

Hollywood invented the fast draw. In reality, it was a factor in only a handful of gunfights. What really mattered was accuracy. The most dangerous man in a fight was a man willing to kill, who had no hesitation to pull his pistol and fire.

Wyatt Earp allegedly put it plain and simple "Take your time...in a hurry." Even if he didn't say that exactly, the point still holds.



In the 1952 Western classic *High Noon*, leading man Gary Cooper as Marshal Will Kane had to face down his fears of the fast-draw gunfight against his most notorious enemies.

*Courtesy United Artists*



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# What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

**It was the summer** of my ninth year when we headed west down Highway 54 across Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle down to Tucumcari, New Mexico, where we met Route 66 and headed West to California. That trip is indelibly etched into my psyche. The hillbilly music playing on the radio, the big sky and wide-open spaces, the deserts, the intense heat and then we are at the base of Cajon Pass, where it all changed abruptly: we were soon passing through Cucamonga with its eucalyptus trees, citrus groves—we had arrived—the Promised Land!

**We settled** in Claremont, California, off Foothill Boulevard, on the edge of a navel orange grove. I soon got my first camera, a Kodak Retina. I was influenced by two neighbors, one who was a shutterbug and the other who was a documentary filmmaker; I knew then that I wanted to be a photographer and document life.

**We** now had a TV, and in those days, all I wanted to watch was Westerns and all the heroes from that era were my heroes, including Spade Cooley and the Collins Kids.

**My high school** was built in 1911 and was on Route 66, and I bought my first car, a '32 Ford Victoria on 66 in Fontana.

**The road** is a part of my soul all these years and has remained there until this day.

**My stepfather** liked to drive, and we went all over the West on U.S. highways and back roads, never on an interstate.

**My first real solo adventure was** when I graduated from high school at 18 and spent the summer in Guadalajara. I was always intrigued by Mexico and that led me to experience every state in Mexico over the years, doing a wonderful book on Baja California and living in the town of Alamos in the state of Sonora for a number of years. I also took a trip with my best friend around most of the USA when I was 19, which led to me experiencing all 50 states over the years.

**Now I am dreaming** about driving a new Electric VW bus called the Buzz from Chicago to Los Angeles! The centennial of all U.S. highways is coming up in 2026. I can't wait to make the trip West (in practical silence) without burning gas! I have done it in vintage VWs, Porsches and many old Fords, including my '41 Ford Woody and with a '59 Cadillac.



Holly Roberts

## TERRENCE MOORE, PHOTOGRAPHER

"I was raised in my early years in Duluth, Minnesota, and at the time loved the cold weather and especially the snow. My father was a ski jumper among other things, which encouraged outdoor activities year round without video games or television. My father was also a musician, and my mother was an actress, and to make ends meet in those early days, they ran a neighborhood market where my job as a young lad was organizing and putting all the bottles (everything was refilled) in their proper containers—life was really good. Unfortunately, my father died suddenly and a few years later my mother remarried and we were off to California where my stepfather lived.

"I suppose that is where my fascination for road travel and the open road began."

Schaffner Press will release Moore's next book, *Route 66: A Celebration of Photos and Stories from the Mother Road*, in 2025.

**I have had amazing** experiences over the years working with incredible people and writers. Most of the projects were collaborations between many of my wild ideas and talented writers who bought into them.

**Edward Abbey** was a friend who was supposed to write the book on Baja California but passed away before we could do it, but fortunately our close friend writer Doug Peacock and our mutual acquaintance Peter Matthiessen managed to pull our concept together perfectly in Ed's honor.

**Being a late-bloomer** means my wife, Linette, and I have two relatively young sons who seem to share a similar passion for the environment, interesting people and places and celebrating and respecting our Earth and all that lives from it. What could be better than that!

**As a photographer**, my life could not have been more diverse or interesting. It just fell together, and most of the experience has been a dream come true.



# Discover Where History Happened in the Old West

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

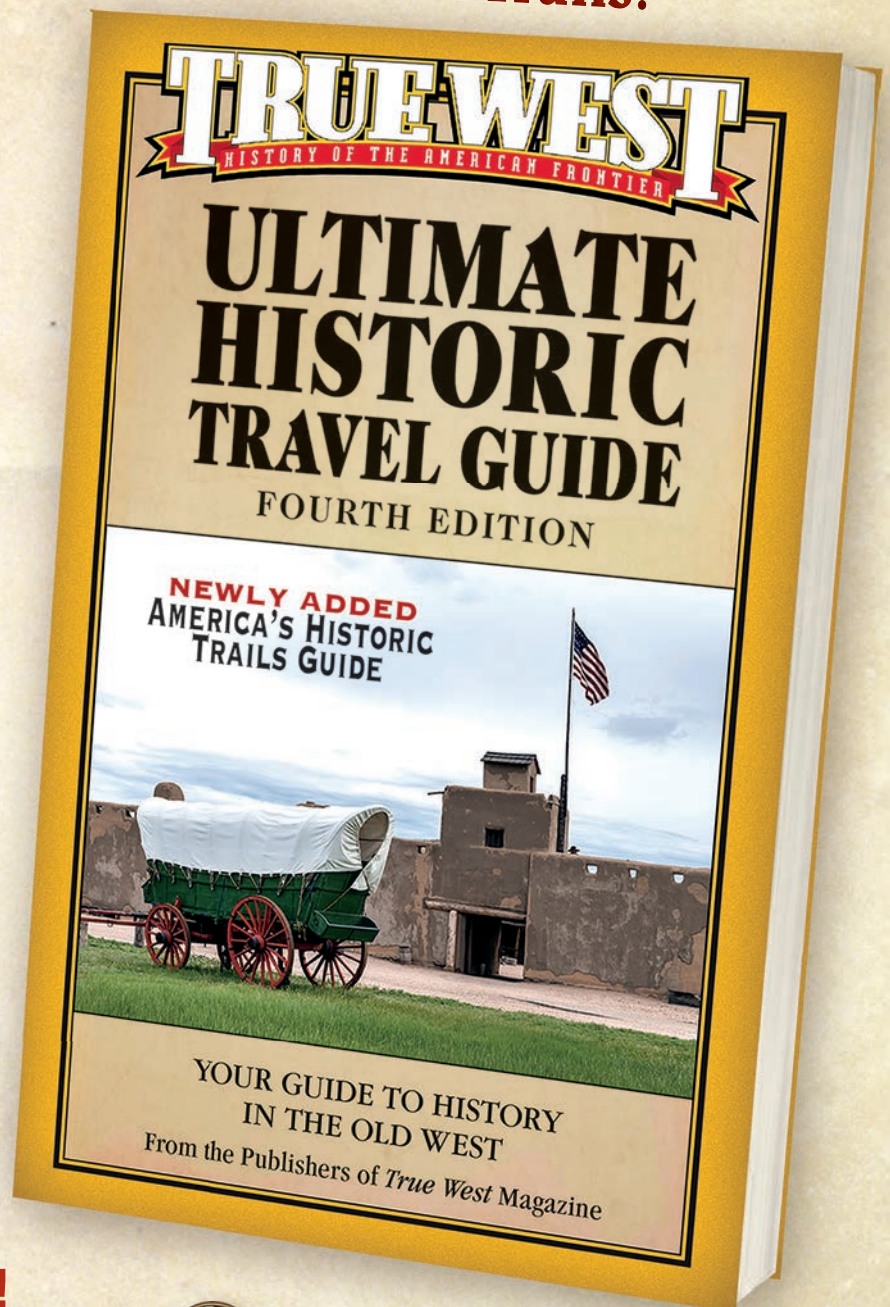
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