

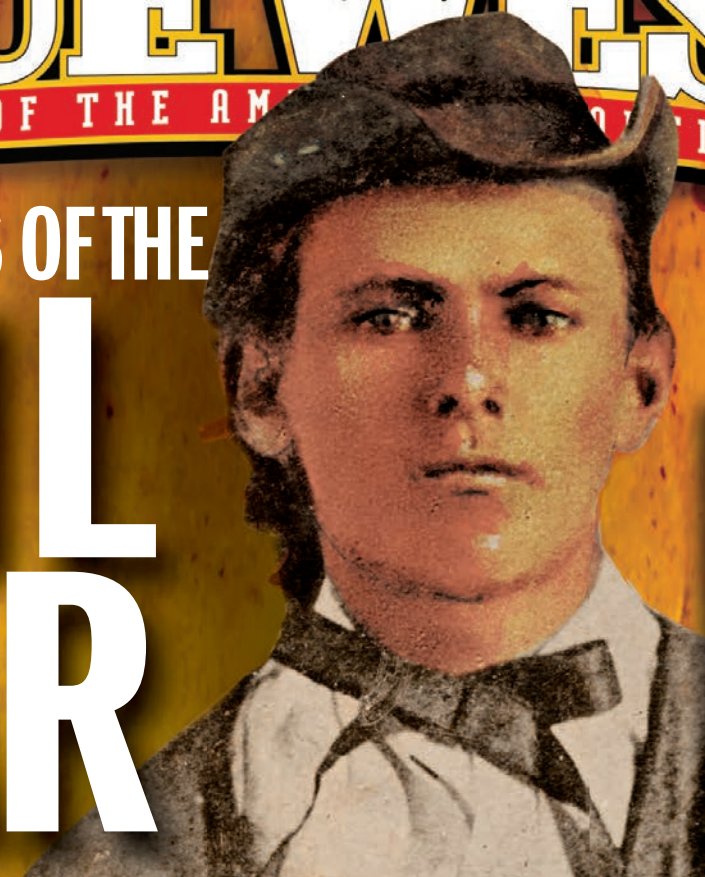
OUR TOP WESTERN MUSEUMS OF 2024

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HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST

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“Who was lawman Bill Tilghman? He did not have the dime novels that made Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill famous, nor Stuart Lake who spun the life of Wyatt Earp into fame. But he was one of the greatest lawmen of all. Tilghman now has history documentarians Chris Enss and Howard Kazanjian to show us details about the man from his own notebooks and from his talented wife Zoe’s own hand.” —**Wayne Tilman**, Bestselling author and Bill Tilghman’s Relative



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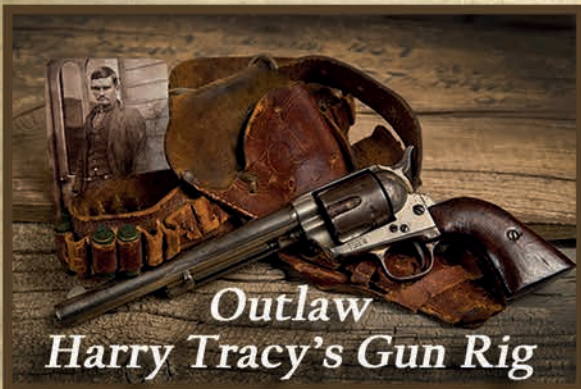
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Briscoe Western Art Museum Permanent Collection  
Gift Courtesy of the Jack and Valerie Guenther Foundation

W. Herbert Dunton, *My Children*, 1920, Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 in. (detail)  
New Mexico Museum of Art Permanent Collection, Taos Society Collection  
Gift courtesy of a friend, 1927

Bert Geer Phillips, *Three Musicians of the Baile*, 1997, Oil on canvas, 39 1/2 x 42 in. (detail)  
New Mexico Museum of Art Permanent Collection  
Gift courtesy of Governor and Mrs. Arthur Seligman, 1929



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Donald F. Montileaux, Oglala Sioux, *Ledger Art, Oglala Lakota*, ©2020

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Thomas Moran, *A Passing Storm* (1920, detail), oil on canvas, DCWM collection, gift of Mr and Mrs. Aiken Fisher. Boot illustration © Tim Zeltner/i2art.com.

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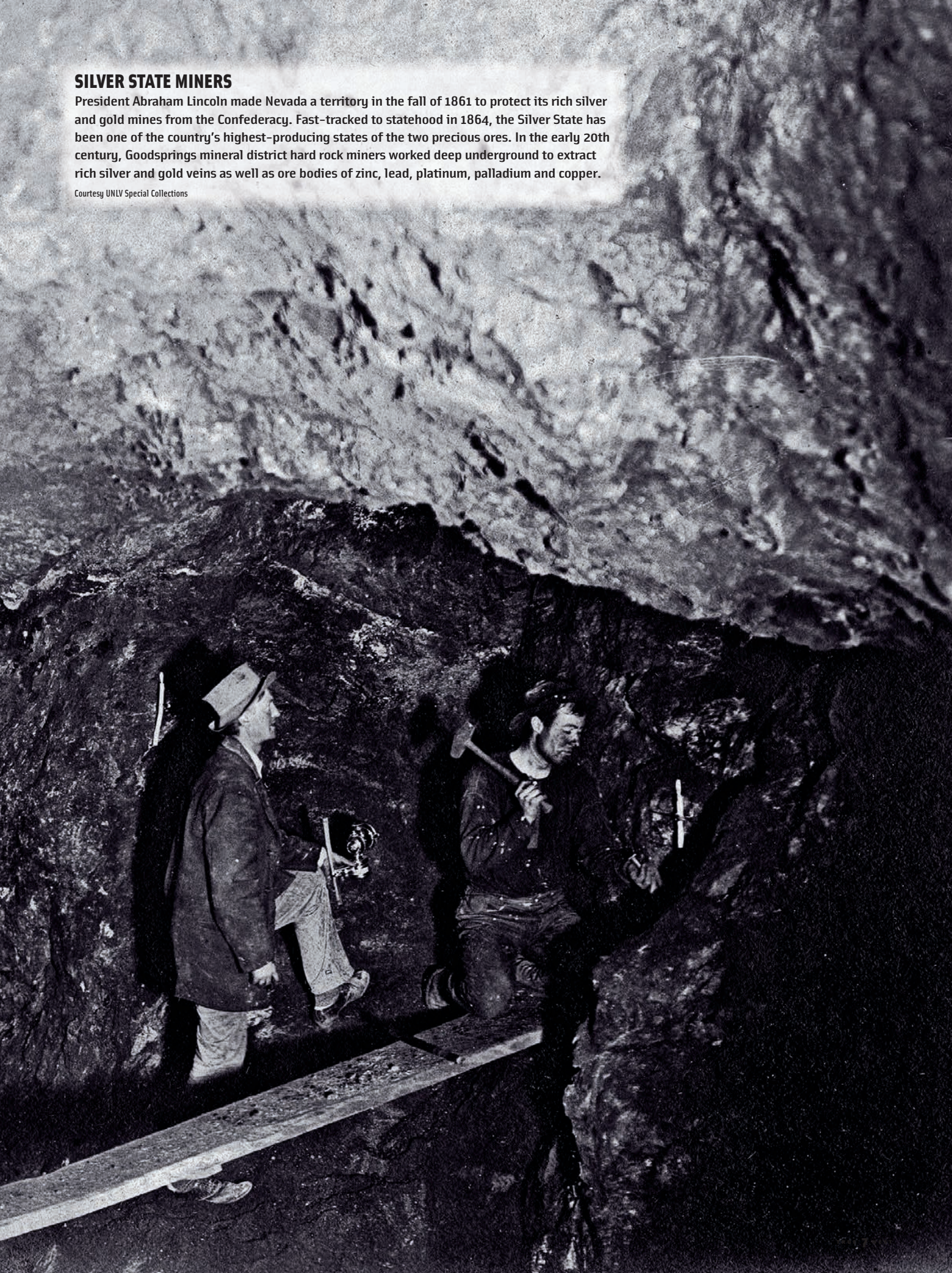
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Courtesy UNLV Special Collections





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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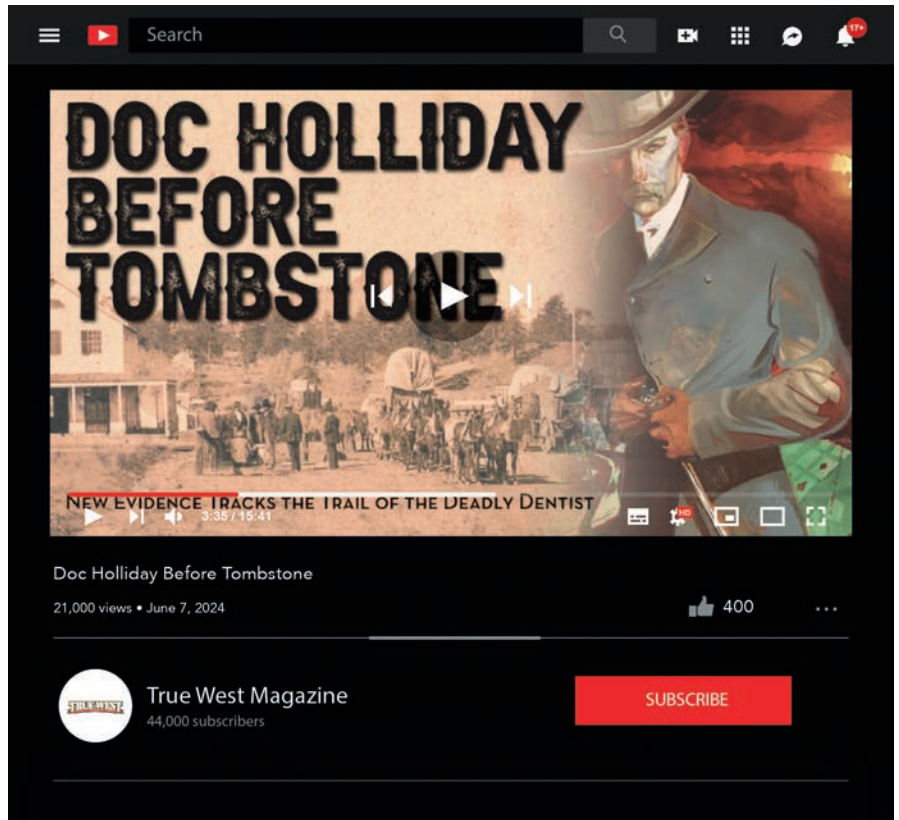
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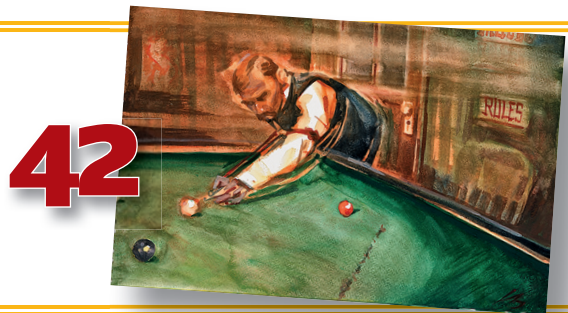


**Bob Boze Bell**  
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How the four-year school of conflagration created the Western gunfighter

—By Bob Boze Bell

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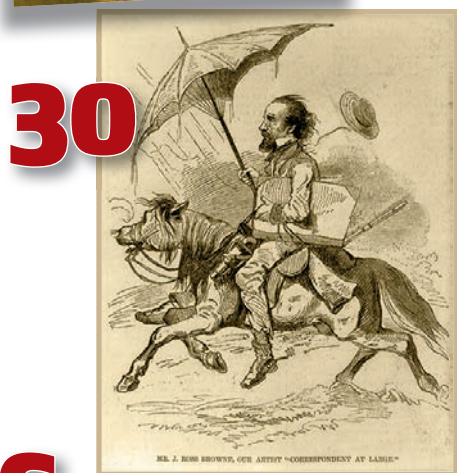
Gila City disintegrated fast. The ruins proved inspiring to some and portentous for others.

—By Tom Zoellner

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Our experts weigh in on the fate of Kevin Costner's four-part film series.

—By Henry C. Parke



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—By Candy Moulton

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—By Johnny D. Boggs



Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell  
Cover Design by Dan Harshberger



COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*



## Old Vaquero Sayings

*“Every family needs that one unstable person who has no fear and is willing to go to war with whoever messes with their tribe.”*

### Quotes

“What a man knows isn’t important. It’s what he is that counts.”

—Jack Schaefer, *Shane*

Jack Schaefer’s novel *Shane* was adapted for the screen by fellow Western novelist A.B. Guthrie Jr., and the 1953 picture is considered one of the greatest films of all time.

Courtesy Paramount Pictures



“Never underestimate how much assistance, how much satisfaction, how much comfort, how much soul and transcendence there might be in a well-made taco and a cold bottle of beer.”

—Tom Robbins, *Jitterbug Perfume*

**“It’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”**

—Abraham Lincoln

“Life is a serious problem to a man over thirty. To a man under thirty it is simply a game.”

—Max Brand, *Riders of the Silences*

**“Fall seven times and stand up eight.”**

—Japanese Proverb

“There is a great independence, and a confident immunity to risk, in all drinks made out of cactus.”

—Alan Le May, *The Searchers*

“Living at risk is jumping off the cliff and building your wings on the way down.”

—Ray Bradbury

“Always seein’ wayoff dreams of silver-blue,  
Always feelin’ thorns that slab and sting.  
Yet stampedin’ never made a dream come true,  
So I ride around myself and sing.”

—Charles Badger Clark, *Sun and Saddle Leather*,  
Including *Grass Grown Trails* and *New Poems*

“Memory is always in art, even when it works involuntarily.”

—Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*

“If there is such a thing as being conditioned by climate and geography, and I think there is, it is the West that has conditioned me.”

—Wallace Stegner, *The American West as Living Space*

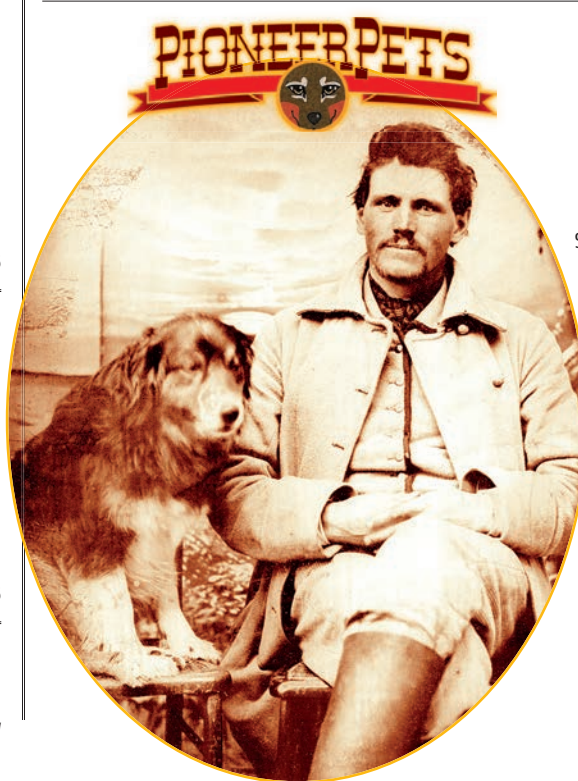


“...in a country like ours, where a woman needs only the courage to enter a profession suitable to her talents and within her powers of accomplishment.”

—Frances Benjamin Johnston,  
*What a Woman Can do with a Camera*

Frances Benjamin Johnston was one of the West’s first female photographers to be recognized for her artistic and professional talents.

Courtesy Frances Benjamin Johnston Collection, Library of Congress



Soldiers north and south, such as this unknown Union trooper, posed with their favorite dog before going off to serve in the Civil War.

Courtesy Library of Congress

# Our Big, Fat History Problem

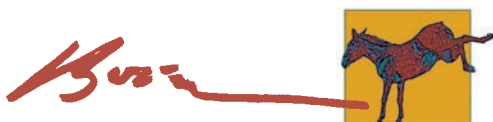
*Apparently, nobody wants to face the facts, but I do.*

**H**ere's a cold, hard fact: Interest in American history has never been lower. Schools are afraid to even teach it, and when they do it's mostly dry facts and dates. Or, worse—political concepts!

On the other hand, this is a magazine I have been reading since the mid-50s. I have always loved the great stories of bravery and drama in our shared history. My original partner, the late, great Bob McCubbin, was a charter subscriber in 1953. (And, it should be noted, he was 12 years old at the time!) Whenever we got together, we would invariably go back to the beginning and wonder, how did *True West* capture us so early and so completely? I believe the answer to that question is the answer to our current problem.

Well, for one thing, it wasn't because of the facts. The truth is not facts lined up. If you don't believe me, go ask Ted Turner who spent \$90 million on *Gods and Generals*. He optioned a great book, hired a fantastic cast, filmed great battles with 8,000 extras, but, as a withering review put it, "It didn't have a point." It made back a piddly \$12 million. And here is the reason: it didn't have a compelling story. We need to tell better stories! Has our history been picked clean? Hardly. Are there new ways into old stories? Yes, read Brad Courtney's groundbreaking research on the many trails Doc Holliday went down before he landed in Tombstone (July/August 2024 *TW*).

So, let's review: how do we fix our history problem? We need to tell better stories. That is the mandate, that is the trick, that is the future. "I'll see you there. Or, will I?" he said, closing on a cliffhanger.



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



(above) Bob McCubbin and BBB, at right, shake hands with the two Steves: that would be Steve Cundiff and Steve Gragert on September 18, 1999 in Stillwater, Oklahoma, when we bought *True West* and brought it to Arizona, where it has been ever since.



This September 18 marks the 25th year of me running *True West* magazine. I have worked with some amazing people, and you know what they all had in common?

They all tell great stories!

All Images Courtesy True West Archives

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

## JANA BOMMERSBACH HAS PASSED

While we were finishing this issue we got word that our beloved columnist, author and friend, Jana Bommersbach passed away on July 17, 2024, at Sanford Hospice House, in Fargo, North Dakota. According to her sister, Judy, Jana had been in failing health after a fall in her Phoenix house several months prior and didn't recover. She was one of my first hires when we bought *True West* magazine 25 years ago, and she was our anchor when it came to discussing, debating and celebrating "Old West Savors," the column which credited the people who keep interest in our history alive.

Jana and I cowrote the 2023 book *Hellraisers & Trailblazers: The Real Women of The Wild West*, and although it was a bumpy ride, our friendship survived. I remember that at one of our first book-signings an audience member asked if we were going to write other books together, and she replied, "I will never write another book with Bob again." It got a huge laugh—even from me!—and that typical comment is one of the reasons we all loved her so much. She told the truth, as she saw it, loud and clear.

We have a dozen *Hellraisers* books that she and I signed together, and they will be offered at a premium with all proceeds going to her favorite charity, The Friends of The Phoenix Library. Go to [truewestmagazine.com](http://truewestmagazine.com) for more details.

In the next issue we will celebrate her life and career with an expanded feature to send her off with the love and admiration she deserves.

—Bob Boze Bell, August 1, 2024

## BEFORE HE WENT TO SPECULATING

In the July/August 2024 issue of *True West* is an article, "Doc Holliday Before He Went to Tombstone." I lost interest in the article. This after reading these words, "It's possible." [Second paragraph after the heading, TOMBSTONE V. PRESCOTT] Alone, I'd probably note the two words and keep reading. However, in the previous two paragraphs were, "Doc might have been doubtful", "...surely Doc sensed...", "Or it might have been...", "Perhaps she was...", and "Another possibility...". Far too much speculation for me to take this article seriously.

*True West* magazine has "History of the American Frontier" as its subtitle. I take HISTORY to mean fact. So I trust *TW* is telling me, "It happened or most likely did." For me, this article needed more verification.

—David Fuller  
Lisbon, Connecticut

Brad Courtney replies:

David, thank you for your complaint, as it has definite merit in the sense that much of the article is indeed speculation. Many history buffs, however, enjoy speculation (and have told me so). But I realize some do not; there are "facts only" people in



Jana Bommersbach  
(1945-2024)

the crowd. Please know that for the sake of my integrity and reputation as a serious historian, the speculative approach was often the only one to take for the sake of honest and academic integrity. I would rather have your type of criticism than the "You are full of s..t" type.

I will respectfully disagree with you that the only purpose for writing history is to present facts. The truth is, many enjoy speculative articles about history. While presenting facts is absolutely key, speculation is also a major part—sometimes "the" major part, partly how we learn from it—in writing history. Words such as "probably" and "most likely" are therefore

necessary. Indeed, speculation is the primary reason we write master's theses and doctoral dissertations and such, based on the available evidence, etc. The *TW* article on Doc in Prescott might be called a "tiny thesis." It was designed to be thought-provoking, not mere fact-giving. When the facts were available (which you may have not gotten to if you, as you say, did not finish the article), such as the address where Doc lived (a new discovery that required heavy-duty research—but I can't say that is very interesting, although now fact), who he lived with, the gambling laws in Prescott, etc., they were presented as fact. But those facts are not necessarily thought-provoking. They just are.

I certainly hope you finish the article with this in mind. If it is not your kind of historical writing, that is fine. Totally understand.



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BY STEVE FRIESEN

# The Masters Capture the West

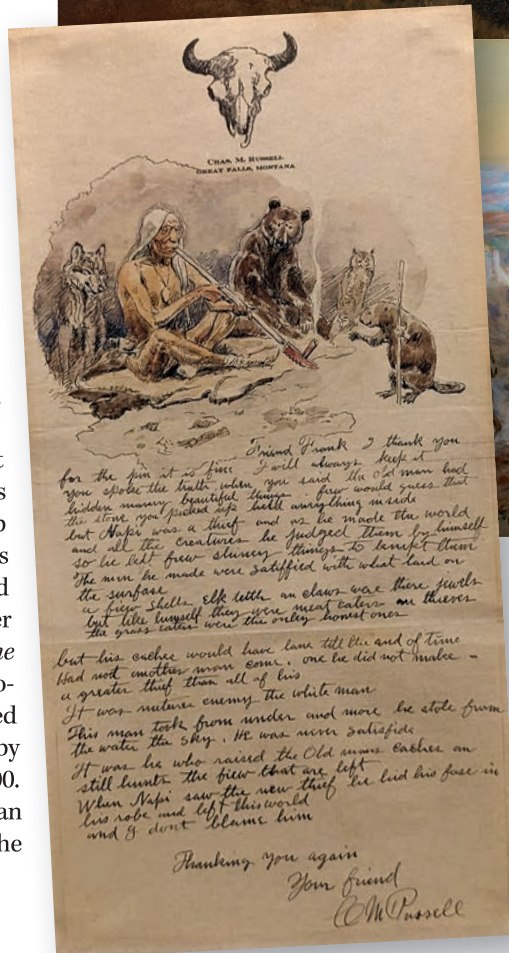
*The Russell and Scottsdale Art auctions gaveled up top dollars from collectors of Western classics.*

One of the best-loved Western painters is Charles Russell, known for his realistic and action-filled depictions. The Great Falls, Montana, museum bearing his name, and where his studio can be seen, held its annual fundraising auction on March 16, 2024. That auction, titled The Russell, garnered the highest bids for works by him. The biggest winner at the auction was Russell's painting *The War Party*, which pulled in a final bid of \$2,570,000. Created in 1886, the painting was based on his experiences with the Blackfeet in Montana. Russell later drew on his time with the Blackfeet for five illustrations he produced for the publication *Indian Why Stories*. That lot sold for \$497,250. Russell's 1906 watercolor *Leading the Circle*, which sold for \$643,500, was inspired by his experience as a cowboy during a roundup in 1887. While Russell is not as well-known as Frederic Remington for his bronzes, a 1914 sculpture of a medicine man, *Smoking with the Spirit of the Buffalo*, sold for \$99,450 at the Russell.

At the Scottsdale Art Auction, held a month later, another Russell bronze, *A Bronc Twister*, brought \$222,300. At that price it exceeded Remington's *The Cheyenne*, which earned a top bid of \$128,700 in Scottsdale. Works by Russell's contemporaries also sold well at the Scottsdale auction. Berger Sandzen's landscape *Summer in the Mountains* sold for \$280,800 and Nicolai Fechin's portrait *Carmelita* pulled in \$292,500. *Kachina Doll Maker*, by Evanger Irving Couse, took \$245,700. Sandzen and Fechin, both European immigrants, quickly fell in love with the

*The War Party* (shown here in detail) was painted by Russell just after his marriage to Nancy Cooper, who deftly managed his career, turning him into an internationally known artist. Over the years, *War Party* was exhibited throughout the United States and Europe.

Courtesy C.M. Russell Museum



Based on Charles Russell's experiences in Montana, *Leading the Circle* illustrates a group of cowboys riding out to sort cattle during a roundup.

Courtesy C.M. Russell Museum

An illustrated letter by Charles Russell shows Napa, a critical figure in Blackfoot origin stories, smoking with the animal people. It was one in a lot of five illustrations by him that were sold at The Russell auction.

Courtesy C.M. Russell Museum



William R. Leigh wrote that hunting in the Rockies “takes knowledge, sure feet and good lungs.” Those qualities are captured in Leigh’s carefully detailed work on the horses and rider in the foreground of *Pack Trip (Rough Going)*.

Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction



Birger Sandzen’s *Summer in the Mountains* illustrates the Swedish immigrant’s affection for the Rocky Mountains, his frequent refuge from the summer heat of his home in Kansas.

Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction



Evanger Irving Couse was inspired to create *Kachina Doll Maker* after visiting the Hopi mesas in Arizona. While the kachinas in the painting are Hopi, the doll maker was a man from the Taos Pueblo who Couse frequently used as a model.

Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction



Russian artist Nicolai Fechin was already known internationally for his portraiture when he immigrated to the United States after the Russian Revolution. He painted this portrait, titled *Carmelita*, after he settled in Taos in 1927.

Courtesy Scottsdale Art Auction

American West. Michigan native Couse was also captivated by the West and its peoples. Couse and Fechin moved to Taos, where their homes are now art museums. Sandzen moved to Lindsborg, Kansas, and taught art at a local college. Today a museum there features his art. Like Russell, Fechin, Couse and Sandzen, William R. Leigh traveled to the American West and was fascinated by it. But, unlike them, he did not move west. Instead he chose to live in New York City. After his death, his studio did end up in the West, now residing at

the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa. Leigh’s *Pack Trip (A Rough Going)*, which took \$225,000 in Scottsdale, illustrates a man toiling through the Rockies on a hunt for bighorn sheep. Both The Russell and the Scottsdale Art Auction had plenty of excellent pieces by living artists. But it was the work by Charles Russell and his contemporaries that commanded the most attention...and much of the money.



**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.

## UPCOMING AUCTIONS

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Buffalo Bill Art Show & Sale  
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**October 4-6, 2024**

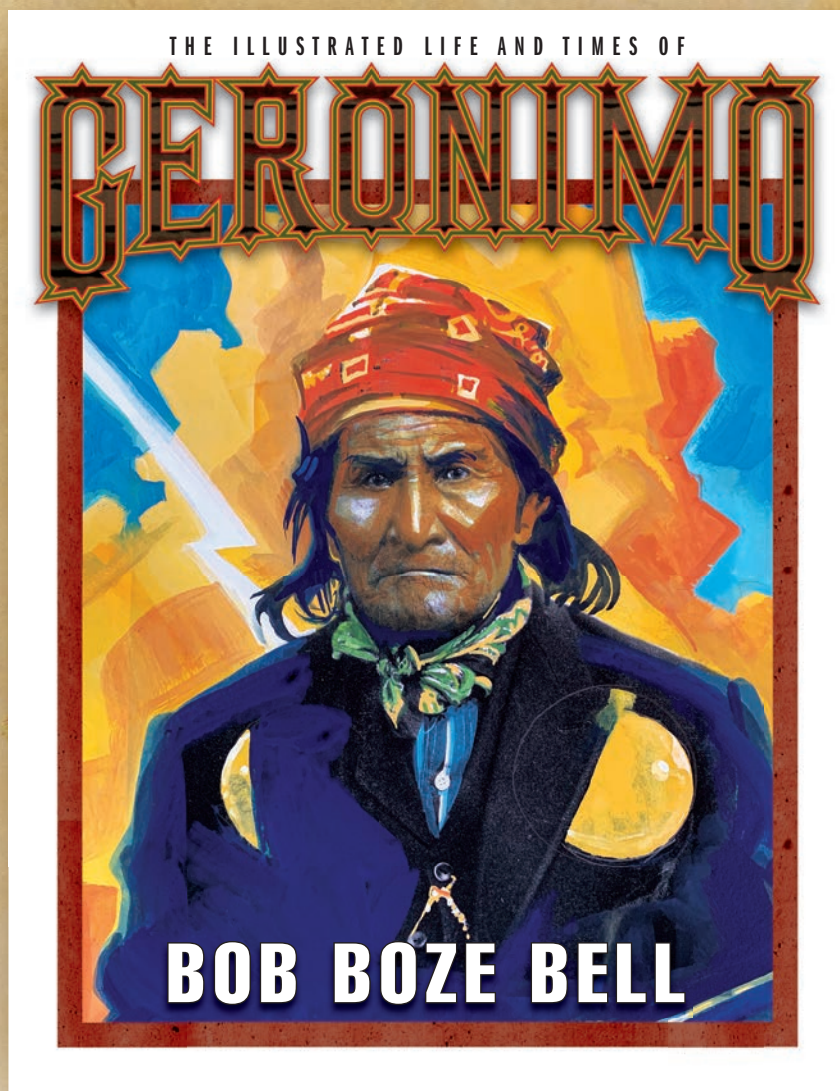
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**October 30, 2024**

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Heritage Auctions (Dallas, TX)  
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**—Paul Andrew Hutton**



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BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

Old-style single-action revolvers (originals or replicas) should be loaded and carried with only five rounds. Load one chamber as shown at left, then skip a chamber (counting it as chamber number two), then place a round in chamber number three (center photo). Finish loading chambers four and five. When chamber five is loaded (right), pull the hammer back to full cock and lower it over the empty chamber by gently depressing the trigger while slowly lowering the hammer with your thumb. Your SAA is now ready to carry safely.

All Photos by Phil Spangenberg Unless Otherwise Noted



**E**xperienced shooters realize that when revolvers like the 1873 Colt Single Action Army (SAA) and other 19th-century-style six-shooters like the Remingtons and Smith & Wessons are loaded with six cartridges, the hammer's firing pin rests on the primer of the cartridge under it. A sharp blow against the hammer, perhaps caused by dropping the gun, could cause it to fire.

After the Paterson and Walker models, Colt's caplock revolvers were equipped with small "safety" pins on the rear of the cylinders, between each chamber, to lower the hammers onto. Remington made squared cuts in the rear of its cylinders for the hammers to safely rest on.

Not everyone in the Old West availed themselves of these safety features. During the 1850s, a dragoon officer stationed in Southern California's Fort Tejon tucked his 1851 Navy Colt into his belt as he mounted his horse. The fully loaded revolver slipped out of his belt, fell to the ground and landed on the hammer, which was resting on a loaded and capped chamber, causing the arm to discharge. The officer suffered a non-lethal wound, to say nothing of what it did to his damaged pride.

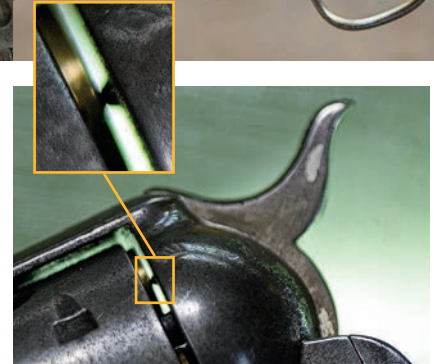
With the introduction of Colt's SAA and other metallic cartridge revolvers of

the day, many men packed their six-shooters loaded with the full half-dozen cartridges. Colt—and the U.S. Army, as printed in the 1874 government manual—considered the first notch of the Peacemaker's hammer to be a safety notch. It proved not very reliable, so those who knew better left the chamber under the hammer empty. This resulted in the frontier colloquialism "five beans in the wheel." If trouble was expected, though, the rule of "load six if your insides tell you" was followed. A good example of that old adage occurred during an encounter with Oglala Sioux at the White Clay Agency. Rancher Edgar B. Bronson recalled, "Acting almost in unison... several of us proceeded to take on a bit of extra insurance by slipping spare cartridges into the 'hammer chamber' of our pistol cylinders, usually carried empty for purposes of better safety against accidental discharge."

In another known instance of loading five rounds in a single-action revolver, cowboy John K. Rollinson recalled his time with the M-Bar Ranch in 1890s Wyoming, saying, "We all carried guns. I remember that each of the six men there had guns almost exactly alike. We all preferred the Colt single-action six-shooter. Some liked the Bisley model

## Five or Six?

*Did frontiersmen of the Old West fully load their single-actions or did they leave an empty chamber under the hammer?*



As this close-up photo shows, when a traditionally styled single-action revolver like the Colt Peacemaker, or any of its clones, are loaded with six cartridges in the cylinder, the hammer rests directly on the primer of the cartridge in the chamber under it. This is an unsafe way of carrying. For safety's sake, knowledgeable gunners only load five rounds in what is referred to as "five beans in the wheel!"

[which Rollinson owned], others the Frontier model... I noticed that these men carried their guns with one empty shell in the cylinder, and five loaded cartridges. This was for safety's sake. The gun was carried with the hammer on the empty shell..."

A few of the better-known names in the Old West may have been a bit slow to pick up on this safe method of carrying a gun, but they quickly became believers. None other than Wyatt Earp

# DOUGLAS & GLENROCK

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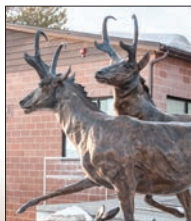
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Visitors to the museum are invited to go inside many of the rail cars, including a day coach, a dining car and a sleeper, as well as a little red caboose! And ask to see the model train on display in the back room. **The Jackalope Junction Gift Shop is located inside the depot.**

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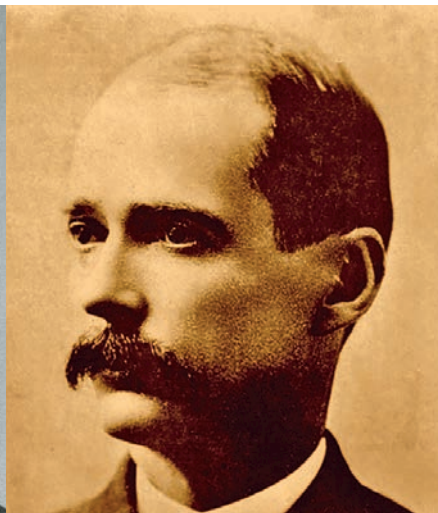
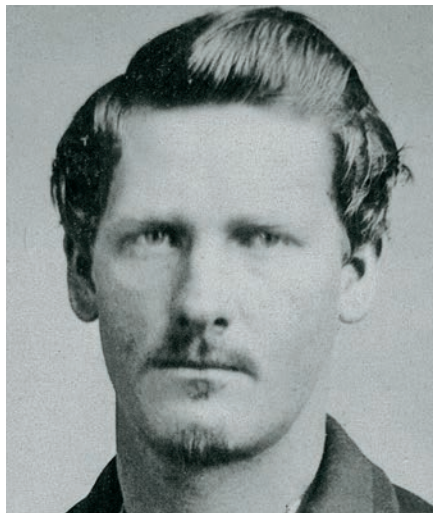
Located on the Wyoming State Fairgrounds in Douglas, the Wyoming Pioneer Museum is a must see for western history enthusiasts.



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Old West icon Wyatt Earp (left) suffered the embarrassment of an accidental discharge in 1876 when his fully loaded revolver slipped out of its holster and landed on the hammer, firing a bullet through his coat before exiting the roof of Wichita's Custom House saloon.

No one was hurt, but Wyatt's pride must have taken a beating, for he was later quoted as saying that only a fool would load six in a Colt revolver. In an 1881 ironic twist of fate, Earp's rival, Tombstone Sheriff John Behan (right) was sitting in his office when his Colt dropped from his belt, discharging the round under the hammer. The bullet barely missed Deputy William Breckenridge's head next to him, although a grain of gunpowder hit him in his head causing some bleeding.

Photos Courtesy True West Archives

suffered the embarrassment of his six-gun's accidental discharge when, according to the January 12, 1876 edition of the *Wichita Beacon*, "...Policeman Earp was sitting with two or three others in the back room of the Custom House saloon, his revolver slipped from his holster and in falling to the floor, the hammer, which rested on the cap, is supposed to have struck the chair, causing a discharge of one of the barrels. The ball passed through his coat, struck the north wall then glanced off and passed out through the ceiling." You can imagine the chagrin ol' Wyatt felt, and he quickly became a disciple for "five beans in the wheel." In fact during a later interview, Earp grudgingly commented that only a fool would load six cartridges in a Colt revolver.

Ironically, an almost fatal incident in 1881 involving Earp's rival, the sheriff of Cochise County, Arizona Territory. Sheriff John Behan and his deputy, William H. Breckenridge, were sitting in their office when a deafening shot rang out and Breckenridge suddenly felt blood running down his temple. Thinking someone outside was attempting to free a prisoner they were holding in the Tombstone jail for robbing a stagecoach, the deputy quickly grabbed a loaded

shotgun by the desk and leaped to the door. Waiting breathlessly for a possible break-in, he discovered that Behan's gun had dropped from his belt and discharged next to Breckenridge so close that a grain of gunpowder had hit him and caused the bleeding. Although the bullet lodged harmlessly in some papers stacked on the desk, Breckenridge later reported: "...I took a cartridge from my pistol and placed the hammer on an empty chamber, and never carried but five shots in it from that time. I was always careful to see that the hammer was on an empty chamber whenever I put the gun on."

Designed as a cavalry sidearm, Colt's SAA was first issued to the U.S. Cavalry. Apparently, per orders, the Colts were generally carried with a full complement of six cartridges, although it's probable some troopers secretly practiced loading just five rounds for safety.

During Custer's Black Hills Expedition in 1874, Pvt. Hoener of Company B, 7th Cavalry, somehow hit the hammer of his holstered Colt while mounting his horse, causing the weapon to discharge, wounding the trooper in the leg. On May 30, 1876, amid Gen. George Crook's Powder River campaign shortly before the Battle of the Rosebud, Pvt. Francis

Tierney of the Cavalry's Company B, was killed when he dropped his holstered revolver on a rock as he prepared to chop firewood. The revolver went off, striking him. The unfortunate trooper lingered for several days, finally succumbing to the gunshot on June 7.

There are several other examples of loading five rounds in those old-time smoke wagons on the frontier, but I think you get the point. Be safe—load five and have fun!



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

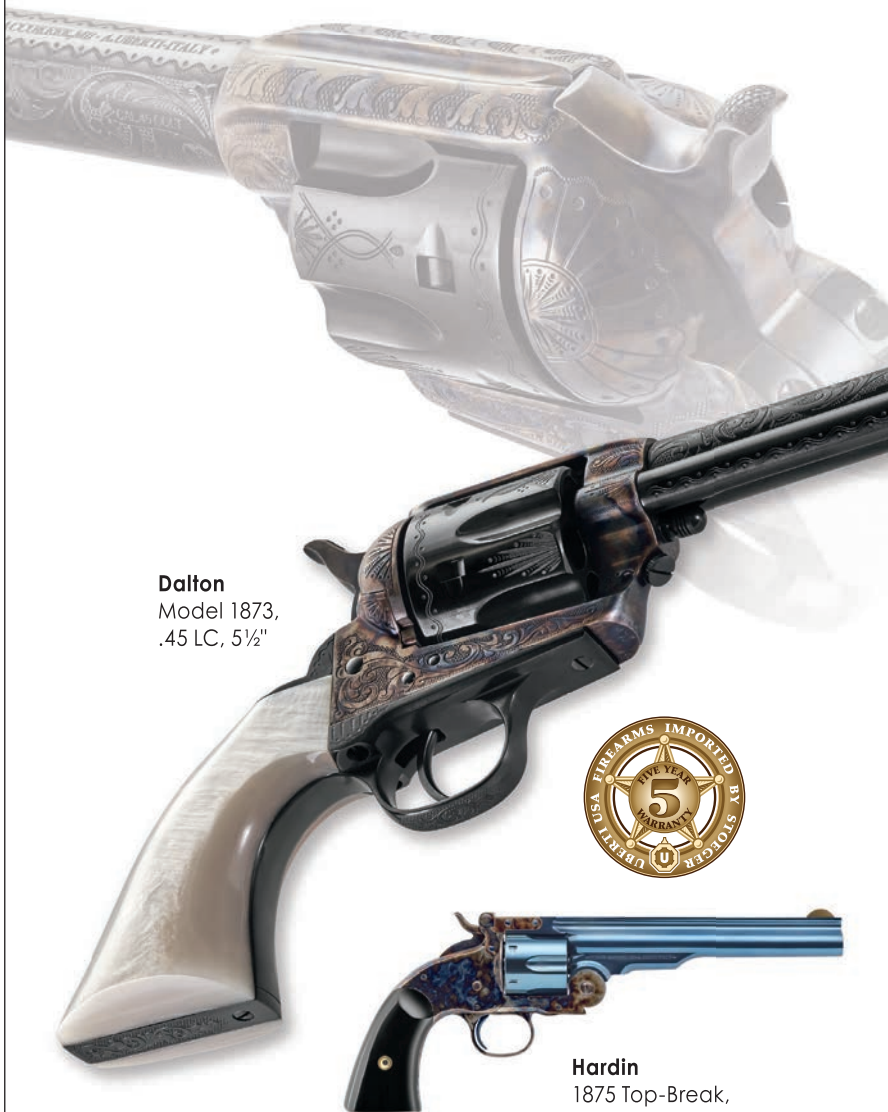


### PEACEMAKER PARTS

For Colt fans who insist on original factory parts, Peacemaker Specialists have been supplying Colt Single Action Army and Bisley model revolver components to collectors and shooters for decades. Offering around 120 various parts for first-, second- and third-generation Colt SAs, Peacemaker Specialists carries those difficult to find parts like original first-generation base pins, bolts, firing pins (cone and concave), stock screws with escutcheons and more. Colt second- and third-generation components include hammers, strap and guard screws and complete screw sets in blue, nickel or fire blued finishes. All implements are exclusively manufactured by Colt with the exception of certain internal parts that are no longer produced. These various components are specifically manufactured in the U.S. to original Colt factory specifications in a durable and easy to work with C12L14 cold finish steel and are offered in blue or nickel finish. Phone orders are accepted at 1-805-238-9100.

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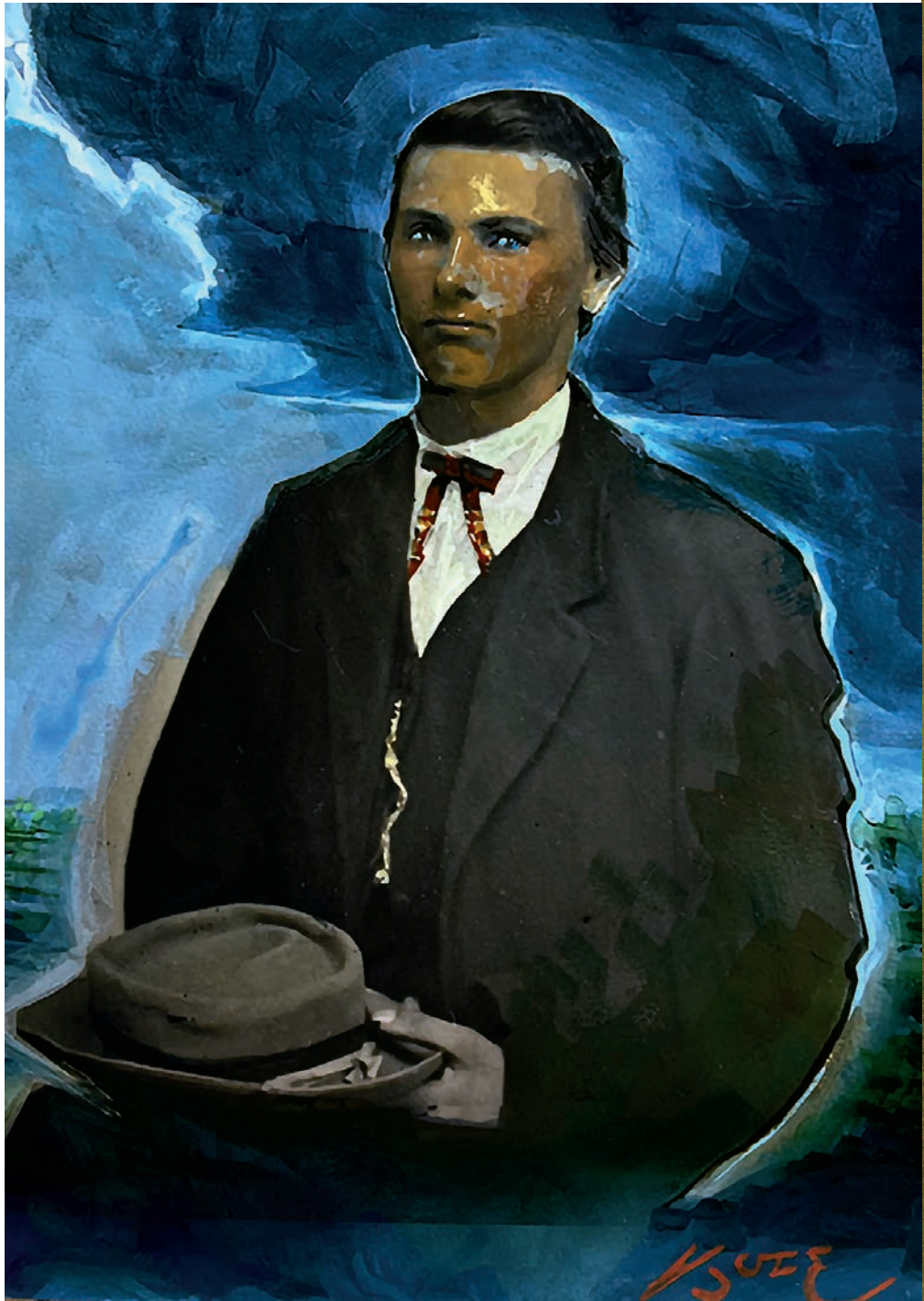
BY BOB BOZE BELL

# Killer Kids OF THE Civil War

HOW THE FOUR-YEAR SCHOOL OF CONFLAGRATION CREATED THE WESTERN GUNFIGHTER

Close to a half million boys under the age of 18 were involved in both the Union and Confederate forces during the Civil War. Some historians believe as many as 100,000 Union soldiers were 15 years of age or younger. Although statistics are not available for the rebel forces, it is believed the South had a similar proportion of underage soldiers.

What is shockingly clear is that the boys who were exposed to the horrors of war in the four years of unbridled bloodshed were hardened and trained to be raiders, which, when you think about it, are the prerequisites for a supreme education in outlawry after the war. And that is why the fighting, especially in Missouri and Kansas, paved the way for the Western gunfighter that followed, as a sort of master's degree from a four-year college of war. This is that story.



A teenage farm boy is about to get a killer education.

## Johnny Clem

The youngest noncommissioned U.S. officer in history. He joined as a nine-year-old drummer boy from Newark, Ohio, and insisted on getting involved during battle. He saw plenty and was captured, and after ultimately shooting a Confederate colonel, he earned his stripes as a sergeant at the age of 10, as seen in this image taken from a photograph. He rose through the ranks, retiring in 1915 as a major general.



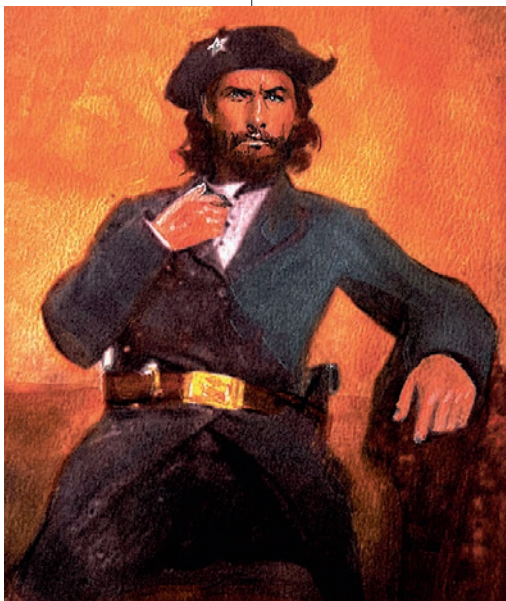
After the battle of Centralia, rebel troops dallied with the dead Union soldiers. According to author T. J. Stiles, “The rebels walked among the dead, crushing faces with rifle butts and shoving bayonets through the bodies, pinning them to the ground. Others slid knives out of their sheaths and knelt down to work. One by one, they cut seventeen scalps loose, then carefully tied them to their saddles and bridles. At least one guerrilla carved a nose off a victim. Others sliced off ears, or sawed off heads and switched their bodies. Someone pulled the trousers off one corpse, cut off the

penis and shoved it in the mouth of the dead man.”

It was a playground of juvenile atrocities.

One 16-year-old bushwhacker was credited with killing the Union commander. The proud killer’s name was Jesse James. His older brother Frank, 17, later remembered, “We rode out of the woods low on our ponies, like Indians.”

They frolicked like this for some time until their commander, “the old man,” told them to stop. They called their leader “The Old Man.” William Anderson, also known as “Bloody Bill,” was 23.



William “Bloody Bill” Anderson, age 23



Killer Kids

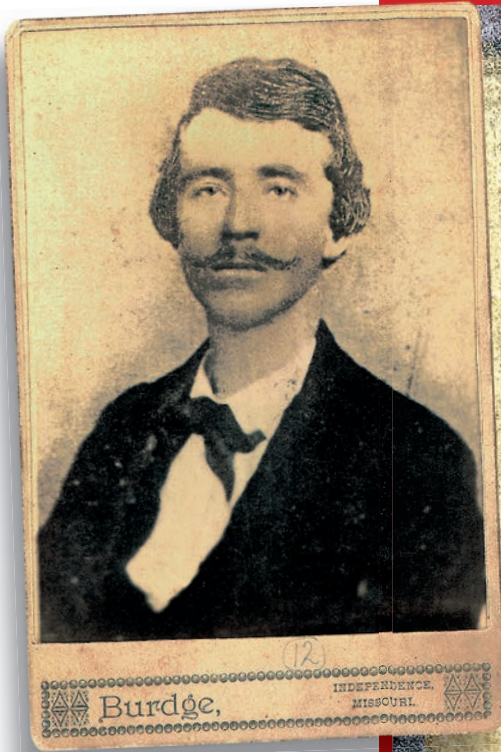
Killer Kids

Killer Kids

Killer Kids

Killer Kids





## A Teacher's Bloody Field Trips

Born in Ohio, the eldest of 12 children, William Quantrill taught school off and on before turning to raiding in the "Bloody Kansas" corridor of the Civil War. His young charges included future outlaws Jesse and Frank James and Cole Younger, not to mention "Bloody Bill" Anderson, among others. He taught them all well.

His biggest raiding lesson came during the predawn hours of August 21, 1863, when some 450 of Quantrill's Raiders rode into Lawrence, Kansas, and slaughtered more than 160 men and boys (some estimates have the bloody total at 190). They also robbed the bank and looted every home. However, their main target, James Henry Lane, the leader of the Free State Party of Kansas, escaped, barely, in his nightclothes by running through a cornfield and hiding.



Quantrill's Bloodiest Field Trip on August 21, 1863





**A Headstrong Boy Heads West**

James Butler Hickok left his Monroe, Michigan, home at the age of 15 and grew up quick on the violent plains of Missouri and Kansas.

**The School of Hard Knocks**

James, 15, confides to a friend that he has seen sights “that would make the wickedest hearts sick.” Tradition claims James gravitated to Gen. James Lane, organizer of the Free State Army of Kansas. For more than a year he follows Lane as a scout and some say, as a bodyguard for Lane as the troops battle against the Missouri Border Ruffians. All sides perpetrate atrocities—lynchings, massacres and all the horrors of guerrilla warfare. It is a rough school, and the boys learn their lessons well.



**James Henry Lane**  
(1814-1866)

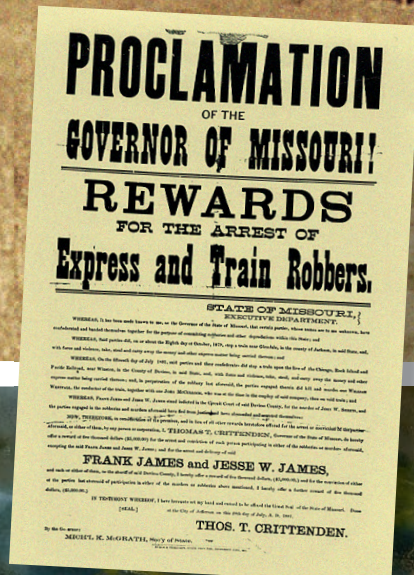
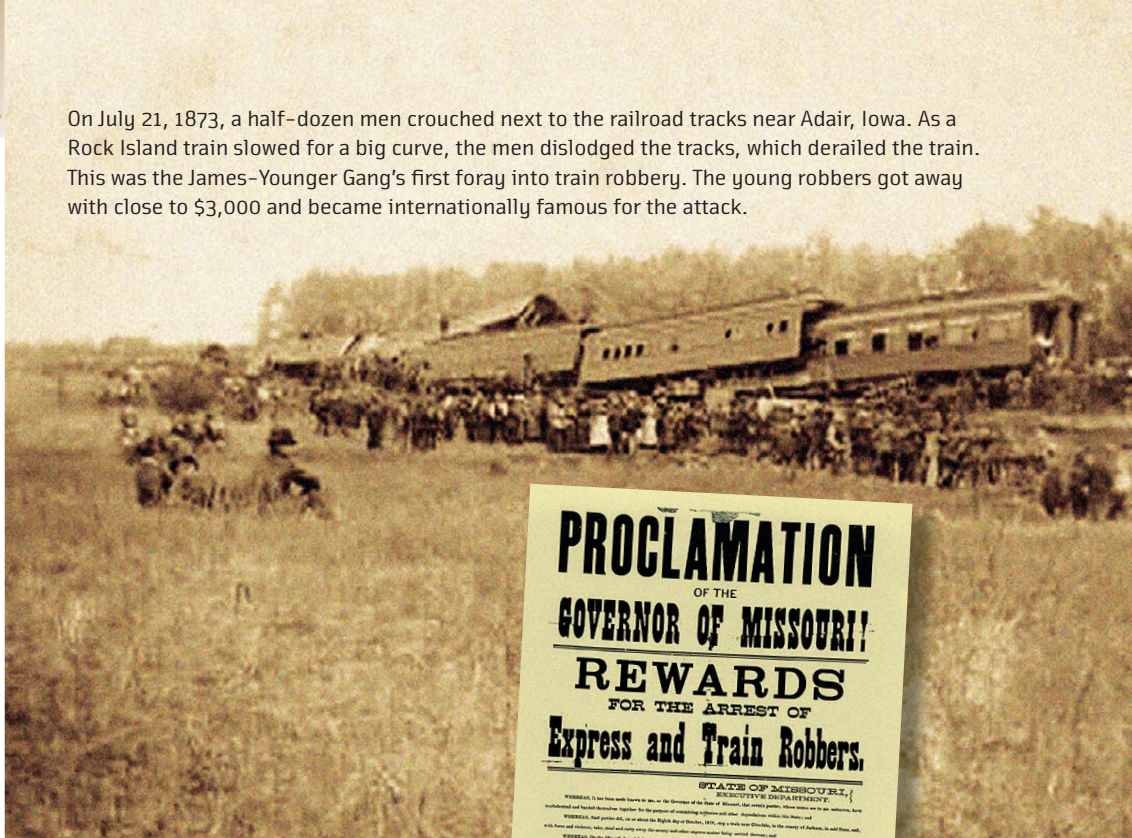
politician and leader of the Free State Party of Kansas

## And It's Off to Graduate School

At the end of the Civil War, a generation of boys looked for a reprieve from the fighting, but some of these kids were too well trained to let all those warfare skills go to waste. Especially when so many people in Missouri—and throughout most of the South—felt oppressed by the banks and the railroads. With a little nudging—not much!—a whole bunch of spunky farm boys began to ply the trade they were trained for: bank robbery and train robbery. Over the course of the next 20 years, a whole bunch of banks and railroads felt the bite, and a whole slew of country outlaws rose to fame and infamy.

A couple of them rose damn close to immortality. And you know who that would include.

On July 21, 1873, a half-dozen men crouched next to the railroad tracks near Adair, Iowa. As a Rock Island train slowed for a big curve, the men dislodged the tracks, which derailed the train. This was the James-Younger Gang's first foray into train robbery. The young robbers got away with close to \$3,000 and became internationally famous for the attack.



**ROBBED OF \$50,000.**  
**A Santa Fe Train Held Up By A Masked Gang**

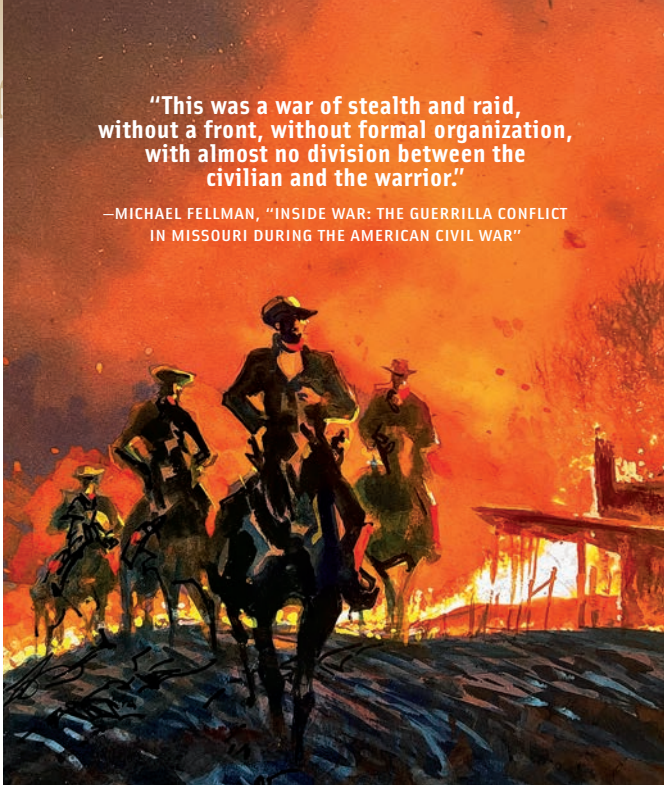
War Among Ranchmen Imminent. Damaging Rains. Heard At Minneapolis.

RED ROCK, O. T., June 2.—The Chicago and Galveston express train No. 403 was held up and robbed of \$50,000 a short distance from this station yesterday morning. Six masked men got aboard and compelled fireman Rogers at the muzzle of winchesters to break open the door of the express car with his pick, enter the car and smash the safe with a sledge hammer. Messenger Riehl fired several shots at the robbers, some of which came close to Rogers' head. The safe was opened, its contents taken by the visitors, who after seeing the train force back to their posts fled in haste.

When the James-Younger Gang took their act to Minnesota, they got a warmer welcome as the locals in Northfield put up a stiff resistance to the bank robbers, who barely got away with their lives. Eyewitnesses said on their escape, "They took the whole road."

**"This was a war of stealth and raid, without a front, without formal organization, with almost no division between the civilian and the warrior."**

—MICHAEL FELLMAN, "INSIDE WAR: THE GUERRILLA CONFLICT IN MISSOURI DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR"



Civilians were caught in the middle. They often were attacked by troops who were sent to protect them and then again by pro-Southern guerillas. The Union troops from Kansas were no better. In addition to "casual freebooting," these blue-capped soldiers engaged in extortion and felt justified because they believed Missourians should be punished for their secessionist, slaveholding sins, and they subsequently raided, plundered and murdered with a special zeal.



After the war, the killer kids cashed in on their education. "Their exploits all partook of a semi-military character, and could only have resulted from experience."

— THE KANSAS CITY JOURNAL OF COMMERCE —



JESSE JAMES



FRANK JAMES

## THE JAMES GANG BY THE NUMBERS

24 robberies • 11 banks

7 trains • 3 stagecoaches • 1 town looted

1 fairgrounds gate receipts robbery

1 steamboat robbery

19-year career of committing "crimes"

\$323,000: estimated dollars stolen (gang member "Doc" Miller claimed the actual take was much higher because of under-reporting by railroads: \$1,038,000)

17: number of killings (not all can be attributed to Jesse, and some were done in wartime)

0: minutes spent behind bars.

Jesse was never arrested or captured.

27,000: the estimated number of Missourian deaths from guerrilla violence during the Civil War

37: number of movies about Jesse, so far

Do any of these stats change the way we think about Jesse? Not really, because. . .

*"There are lies, damn lies and then there are statistics."*

— OLD VAQUERO SAYING —

## The First Gunfighter

On July 21, 1865, James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok warns Dave Tutt not to “pack that watch across the square at noon unless dead men can walk.” The square is in Springfield, Missouri, and the watch in question is simply a final push to fight it out man-to-man. They do, facing off at 100 paces with Tutt allegedly firing first and missing, while Hickok’s shot hits Tutt in the heart, killing him almost instantly. This becomes the prototype for almost every Hollywood gunfight ever filmed.

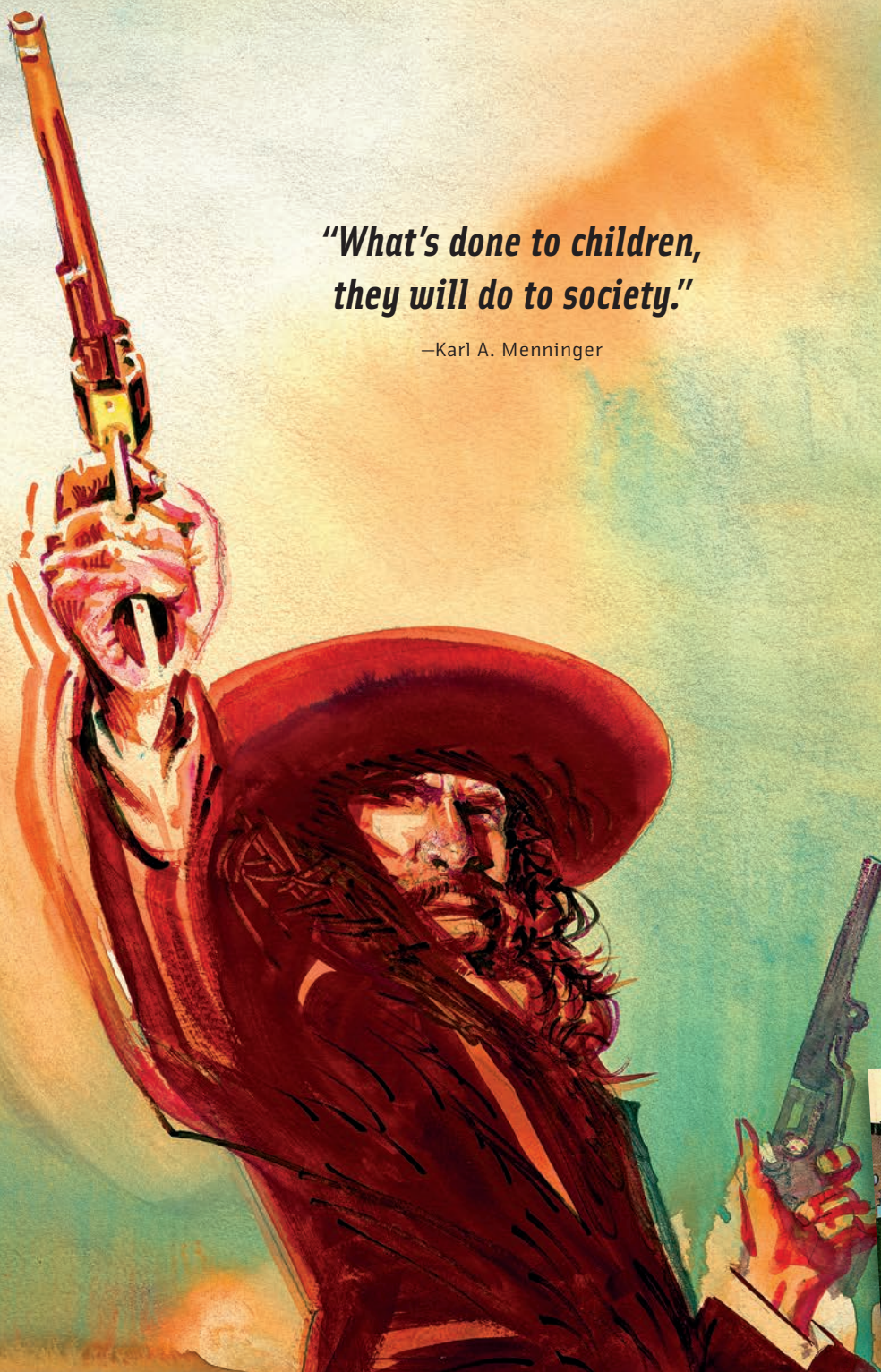


***"What's done to children,  
they will do to society."***

—Karl A. Menninger

## **An Iconic Myth Is Born**

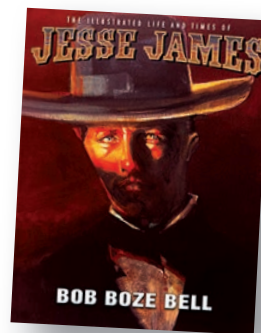
Out of all this terror and confusion and guerrilla warfare came a generation of young men who were schooled in the arts of deadly tactics. As they approached manhood, more than a few of them wandered west and encountered a broader and more significant conflict between three preexisting cultures: Indigenous, Spanish and Mexican. It is little wonder that a mythic story would be born out of the ensuing conflict and that a Caucasian gunfighter would rise out of this turmoil and take his place in the pantheon of worldwide myths. Some historians claim the gunfighter myth ruled from about 1948 to 1973, and that it has since devolved into parody.



## **"Are you satisfied?"**

James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok allegedly turned on the gathered crowd and said these words to them. The utterance has added meaning because this lone event became the prototype for the stand up gunfight that became a staple in hundreds of Western movies.

The is is an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *The Illustrated Life & Times of Jesse James*. For details and preorders, go to [truwestmagazine.com](http://truwestmagazine.com)



BY TOM ZOELLNER

# ARIZONA'S FIRST BOOMTOWN

**Gila City disintegrated fast. The ruins proved inspiring to some and portentous for others.**

Shortly after Christmas in 1863, a party of approximately 109 men made camp along the banks of the Gila River amidst a melancholy scene. They were lying atop the ruins of what was, barely 10 years earlier, supposed to have become the most fabulous city of the interior Southwest. But all that was left, according to one member of their party, was “three chimneys and a coyote.”

On that winter evening, amid the rubble and desolation, J. Ross Browne looked out at what he described as “a very pretty place, encircled in the rear by volcanic hills and mountains, and pleasantly

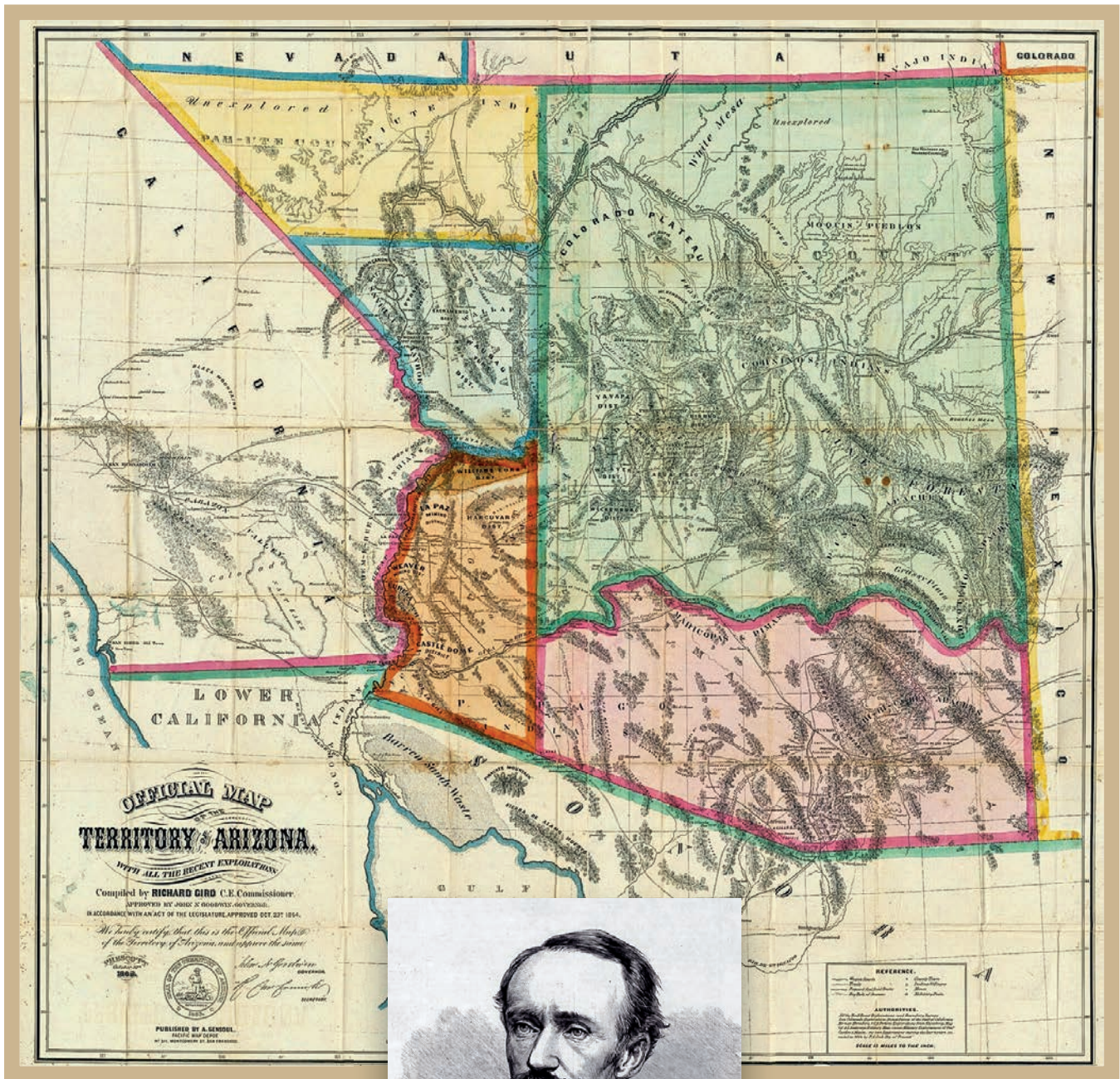


MR. J. ROSS BROWNE, OUR ARTIST "CORRESPONDENT AT LARGE."



J. Ross Browne's articles in the October and November 1864 issues of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* shocked and inspired Eastern readers with their illustrations and vivid descriptions of Arizona.

All Images Courtesy True West Archives Unless Otherwise Noted



J. Ross Browne's vivid style of journalism and illustrations of the lightly populated Arizona Territory in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1864—including his stories of rich mineralization, the violent conflict between settlers and the Apaches and the exotic nature of its land and people—would influence the settlement of the region during and after the war.

overlooking the bend of the river, with its sand-flats, arrow-weeds, and cottonwoods in front.”

The town of Gila City, whose ruins Browne was now contemplating, had already foreseen the oncoming rush and provided a warning of sorts. It blossomed, flourished and died in the



Irish-born John Ross Browne was 12 years old when his family moved to the United States. The Gold Rush inspired him to move to northern California in 1849. His adventure writings influenced Herman Melville and Mark Twain. He died at the age of 54 in Oakland in 1875.

space of 10 years, and became Arizona's first real boomtown and Arizona's first true ghost town almost in the same breath. This hopeful gold mining settlement had succumbed to the fatal combination of mineral exhaustion and natural disaster—a common twin punch that provided knockout blows to hundreds of would-be Shangri-las across the Southwest in the coming years, leaving only scattered wood beams and empty brick shells where once dozens and dozens of gamblers, merchants, miners and barmen had plied their trade. But Gila City beat them all in the chronology of abandonment, setting the Darwinist pattern for the hurry-hurry settlement of

Charles D. Poston established mining operations before the Civil War south of Tubac, in what was then New Mexico Territory, near the Mexican border. He fled the area during the Apache Wars of 1861, relocated to Washington, D.C., and successfully lobbied President Abraham Lincoln to create the Arizona Territory in 1863. Poston invited Browne to go with him back to Arizona in December 1863.



what was shortly to become the Territory of Arizona.

“At one time over a thousand hardy adventurers were prospecting the gulches and canons in this vicinity,” Browne wrote later in his book *Adventures in the Apache Country*. “The earth was turned inside out. Rumors of extraordinary discoveries flew on the wings of the wind in every direction. Enterprising men hurried to the spot with barrels of whiskey and billiard tables; Jews came with ready-made clothing and fancy wares;

traders crowded in with wagon-loads of pork and beans; gamblers with cards and monte tables. There was everything in Gila City except a church and a jail which were accounted barbarisms by the mass of the population. When the city was built, bar rooms and billiard saloons opened, Monte tables were es-

tablished and all accommodations for civilized society placed upon a firm basis.”

By this time, Browne was a writer of some national renown. The son of an irascible politician from the Irish town of Beggarsbush, he had immigrated to Kentucky in 1841 after his father found himself on the wrong side of the British authorities. Browne had spent his youth making journeys down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and after a job writing about politics for *Congressional Report* got too dull, he accepted a job investigating the desertion of U.S. Navy sailors in San Francisco who had lit out for the goldfields rather than spend another day swabbing decks. Browne earned enough money recording the debates of California’s constitutional convention to send himself around the world on reporting trips and contributing to the prestigious *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*.

*Etchings of a Whaling Cruise*, his short 1846 book, was praised by the young travel writer Her-

Michael J. Goldwater’s first trading post was in what would become the Arizona Territory was in Gila City. It did not survive the 1862 flood, but that did not deter him from starting over. The grandfather of Senator Barry Goldwater eventually found success in Arizona’s territorial capital of Prescott.



J. Ross Browne's travels up the Gila River from Yuma past Gila City in late 1863 and early 1864 brought him face-to-face with the remnants of the 1851 Oatman Massacre. The story of the attack, kidnapping of Olive Oatman and her return to White society in 1854 had been sensationalized nationally.





J. Ross Browne's eyewitness illustrations of depredations against the Apache people were reflective of the violence prevalent across the country during and after the Civil War.

man Melville as “a faithful picture” of what life was like aboard a commercial vessel. Later scholars concluded it certainly influenced the subject—if not the atmosphere—of Melville’s novel *Moby-Dick*. And if a reader detects a familiar note of dry humor and gentle Western hyperbole in Browne’s description of Gila City, it is generally agreed that his sage observational voice provided inspiration to another frontier writer who gave himself the pen name Mark Twain.

## Arizona or Bust!

Browne was looking at the remnants of Gila City that night because of an accident. He had just gotten back to San Francisco from a trip to Europe when he ran into an old friend on the street—the promoter, entrepreneur and raconteur Charles Debrille Poston, who had just been appointed the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for what was shortly to become Arizona and hadn’t the slightest doubt that it was “the grand diamond” of all the unexplored places on the continent. He was leaving at 4 p.m. that very day. Would Browne like to join him?

“Poston, consider me in,” said Browne, sensing a colorful story and a new book. “Should the Apaches get my scalp, you, my venerable friend and you alone, are responsible to my family and to mankind.”

Browne rushed to his home in Oakland, packed a few shirts and a plug

of tobacco, kissed his startled wife, Lucy, goodbye, hugged his children and immediately sailed to Los Angeles on board the steamer *Senator* in the company of Poston, an Indian agent, three Pima Indians and two Catholic priests who had been commissioned by the archbishop of San Francisco to resume the masses at San Xavier del Bac south of Tucson.

Accompanied by a U.S. Army detachment, Browne, Poston and the padres bumped their way across the Mojave from L.A. to Fort Yuma, California, where they arrived in December 1863. There, Browne watched Poston distribute federal gifts to the Indians, and marveled at the mild desert temperatures.

“The climate in winter is finer than that of Italy,” he wrote. “Perhaps fastidious people might object to the temperature in summer, when the rays of the sun attain their maximum force, and the hot winds sweep in from the desert. It is said that a wicked soldier died here, and was consigned to the fiery regions below for his manifold sins; but unable to stand the rigors of the climate, sent back for his blankets.” (Twain was so amused by this

local fable that he ripped it off from Browne for his later book *Roughing It*). The party left Fort Yuma on December 31, and soon made camp at the site of Gila City, where they found that most classic of Western landmarks: a ghost town.

## Busted Bonanza

What happened? Gila City started out promisingly enough. In 1858, a veteran of the Texas War of Independence named Jacob Snively fetched up in Fort Yuma after having spent the previous nine years prospecting for gold near Mazatlán in Mexico. He led an expedition up the Gila and found placer gold near the riverbed, and more in the bluffs nearby. News spread fast. Hundreds of good-luck seekers filed claims, and they were as much an aggregate as the soil itself. As historian Jim Turner would write about early Arizona mining camps in general: “From California and all points of the globe came emigrant Frenchmen, Germans, Swiss, Irish Serbian, Jews, and every combination imaginable. History calls them Anglos, or Americans, because they came from the United States to Arizona, but the accents, clothing and customs gave the territory a cosmopolitan atmosphere.”

One of those strivers who kitted up a wagon and set out for Gila City was Michael “Big Mike” Goldwater, who had been born into a Jewish family in Russian-speaking Poland in 1821. He

Upon visiting Tucson in January 1864, J. Ross Browne wrote, "It is confidently believed, therefore, that as long as the troops are kept within the precincts of the ancient Pueblo of Tucson, they will not be molested by any enemy of a more deadly character than mescal...."

Quoted from the December 1864 issue of "Harper's Monthly Review"



worked as a tailor in Paris and London before emigrating to San Francisco during the rush of 1849. Goldwater found a living supplying dry goods and beer to the miners in the Sierra. When he heard of the fabulous diggings at Gila City, he rode in from Los Angeles with a wagon full of groceries and clothes.

But a shipment of another kind spelled disaster for Gila City after the placer ore disappeared. The newer deposits in the bluffs were too far away from the river for easy hand-washing, and the muckers needed a steam pump to get the water over to the inland troughs. They pooled capital and bought this expensive piece of equipment, which had to be shipped up the Sea of Cortez. But before it could even be loaded onto a wagon at Yuma, the schooner carrying the pump sank on March 17, 1859. With it went the future of Gila City.

The settlers drifted away, looking for the next big thing. Big Mike opened a new store in Prescott, where he got rich and later became the grandfather of U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater. A Confederate veteran named Jack Swilling also had enough and tried to become a farmer in the Salt River Valley by digging out old canals.

A few diehards stayed behind to dry-wash the pulverized ore by tossing it up in the air over a blanket—a crude method of making at least some of the waste rock blow away while

leaving the heavier gold-bearing minerals. But without water, it was dirty and inefficient. The Gila River, always temperamental, flooded the dying town in 1862. By the time Browne and Poston got there the following year, there was almost nothing left. An irrigation canal now flows through the site today, even though the Gila's water has long since disappeared, a victim of upstream dams.

## Luck and Lincoln

History sometimes serves up odd coincidences. Just a few days before Browne's arrival in the remnants of Gila City, an appointee of Abraham Lincoln named John N. Goodwin had signed the paperwork that established the Territory of Arizona, not far from the site of present-day Holbrook.

He was traveling with an entourage from Santa Fe over the new Beale Wagon Road and nobody was quite sure when they had crossed the newly established border drawn by Congress that carved off the new territory from New Mexico. The party camped at a meadow called Navajo Spring on December 29, 1863, only when everyone felt sure they must have crossed the invisible line on the map. They raised a flag and sent scouts looking for wood for a fire. Goodwin took an oath as governor, signed a proclamation constituting the legislature, and everyone dined on antelope steaks before moving on the next morning.

That official act at Navajo Spring readied the way for a flood of immigrants to come into a rough new American territory already populated by a complex social mix of Native people and Mexican pioneers, along with a staggering bonanza of silver timber, copper, gold and grazing lands for those who were ruthless or lucky enough to stake a first claim or jump in on somebody else's.

All those young men in a hurry to get to Arizona and cash in might have looked to Gila City for a lesson in temporality. Before Browne and Poston themselves moved on the next morning for a journey "across a series of gravely deserts" through a thicket of exotic-looking "suaro" cactus, Browne paused to offer a verdict on the fate of Arizona's first boomtown. His words might have served as a warning to hundreds of other fast-buck Southwest metropolises soon on the way.

"There was 'pay dirt' in the hills, but it didn't pay to carry it down to the river and wash it out by any ordinary process," he wrote. "Gila City collapsed. In about the space of a week it existed only in the memory of disappointed speculators."



**Tom Zoellner, PhD**, a fifth-generation Arizonan, is the author of multiple books, including *Rim to River: Looking into the Heart of Arizona*.

BY HENRY C. PARKE

# IS *HORIZON* THE END OF THE EPIC WESTERN?

OUR EXPERTS WEIGH IN  
ON THE FATE OF  
KEVIN COSTNER'S  
FOUR-PART FILM SERIES.

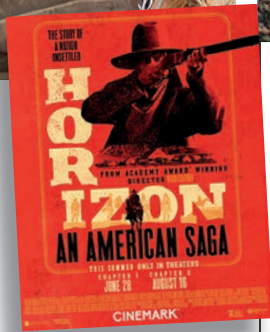
Oscar-winning actor, director, producer Kevin Costner blinked back grateful tears at the Cannes Film Festival in May, after an 11-minute standing ovation following the premiere screening of *Horizon—An American Saga—Part 1*. “I’ll never forget this,” he told the audience. “I made this [movie]... it’s not mine anymore; this is yours, and I knew that the minute it was over.” *Deadline: Hollywood’s* takeaway was, “an impressive beginning for Costner, who is just trying to keep the American Western alive. But he may, with this innovative roll of the dice, also be trying to keep theaters alive at the same time, that is, if there is still an appetite for Westerns. Hopefully there is.” But surprisingly, the members of the Cannes audience were not representative of the critics: the reviews coming out of Cannes were lukewarm.

Things went further awry when *Horizon* opened stateside. To understand why the film’s box office has fallen so short of expectations, rushing *Part 1* to streaming services, and indefinitely postponing the theatrical release of *Part 2*, with *Part 3* in production and



With a dramatic Western backdrop of snow-covered peaks, Kevin Costner’s character Hayes Ellison makes a dramatic entrance onto the screen in the second act of part one of the four-part movie series, *Horizon*.

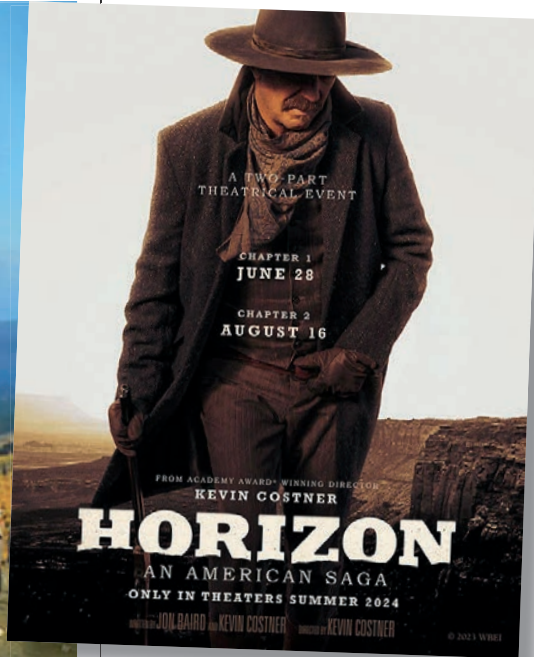
All Images Courtesy Warner Bros.



Kevin Costner shot *Horizon* on location in Southern Utah, from Moab to St. George. His vision was an homage to the greatest Western director of all time, John Ford.

*Death of a Gunfighter*, and costarred with Robert Mitchum and Kirk Douglas—and married Sally Field—in the 1967 Western epic *The Way West*. “As a big fan of Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* and *Open Range*, I was thrilled

difficult to follow, attempt[ing] to weave together four different narratives. The thing I loved most about the film was its scope, but it may be too big and too ambitious for today’s marketplace. It’s a unique hybrid—a miniseries that



In an ode to Warren Oates’s villain in Sam Peckinpah’s *Ride the High Country*, Jamie Campbell Bower portrays the sadistic killer Caleb Sykes opposite Kevin Costner’s reluctant hero, Hayes Ellison.

Part 4 in limbo, *True West* spoke to several people with experience in previous Western epics and miniseries.

As a child, then a teenager, Michael McGreevey acted in *Day of the Outlaw*,

that he’d managed to make a big-screen Western epic when nobody else would even try.” When McGreevey and his wife caught the first show on opening day in Valencia, California, he says, “we were joined by about 50 other people, and I did take note that the audience demographic was in the 55 to 70 age range. The film is very intricate and, at times,

wants to be on the big screen and viewed as four separate films, but still accepted as one unified film in the end.”

Film historian Michael F. Blake, author of the new John Ford book, *The Cavalry Trilogy*, saw the film in a half-empty theatre in Goodyear, Arizona. “No teenagers, no early twenties. I loved the film.” Early on, there is a breathtakingly convincing nighttime assault on a cabin. “The Apache attack was phenomenal, not just from the way it was shot, which was beautiful, but from a historical point of view.



"I always thought what Kevin was doing was admirable but dangerous because the first [movie] came out in June, and then the second one would come out in August," says Blake, "which was a shorter time compared to *Back to the Future 2* and 3. But you had characters that were already established [in *1*]. One of the faults of bringing it out like this is you better hope that people remember what the hell was going on in the first chapter."

"I'm a huge Kevin Costner fan," Bruce Boxleitner says. The actor who starred in the epic Western series *How the West was Won* adds, "I met him doing *The Gambler* [when Boxleitner was starring with Kenny Rogers], when Kevin was just a young stagehand. Every time I've ever seen the guy, I always thank him [for] trying to keep the Westerns going; Kevin's the last man standing."

"That hundred million was all on the screen. The cast is great across the board: Will Patton, Sam Worthington, Sienna Miller—on YouTube, all the actors describe their experiences, and the Brits were really challenged by it," notes Boxleitner. "But old Will, Jeff Fahey and those guys, they're Western veterans. Is it that the general public isn't

interested in Westerns anymore? Or that they don't want to invest themselves? Because you have to invest yourself, because there's not going to be an end to the story at the end of three hours."

"Like all maverick artists, Kevin Costner took a risk. He rolled the dice with stakes in excess of \$100 million on the table," says writer Kirk Ellis,

The running wagon gunfight in *Horizon* will remind fans of the classic running stage battles between settlers and Indians in John Ford's Westerns.

double Emmy-winner for *John Adams*, and author of this year's Apple+ mini-series *Franklin*. "And he lost his bet. Having spent five years in the Taylor



Kevin Costner's Westering man, muleskinner Hayes Ellison, becomes entangled in a Montana mining town with Abbey Lee, who portrays the grifter-prostitute Marigold.



Sheridan-verse on the highest-rated premium cable show in history, Costner likely expected the *Yellowstone* audience to drive the initial box office. Problem being: that demographic has been slow to return to theaters post-COVID, and likely never will; in addition, they prefer to consume their ‘content’ in bite-sized chunks, sometimes pausing in the middle and resuming viewing the next day or days after.”

In *Horizon*, Luke Wilson costars as Matthew Van Weyden, the wagon master of a wagon train of settlers crossing east to west on the Santa Fe Trail to the promised-land destination of Horizon.

Ellis adds, “I don’t doubt that Costner and cowriter Jon Baird have the full story in their heads but a three-hour film that leaves nothing but loose ends? That ain’t a movie.”

“After watching the first three hours, I am mightily impressed with the visuals

of the production,” says John Wilder, who adapted and produced the landmark 26-hour miniseries *Centennial*, based on James A. Michener’s novel. “Filming our production on distant locations in five states over eight months, I know the demands and difficulties his company confronted in however many sites and whatever time frame he had. Four directors shared the load of directing our film. It is very impressive that Mr. Costner could stay in the saddle for

whatever length of time he did. I was also impressed with the uniformly strong performances, which I attribute to his deft hand and eye behind the camera as well as in front of it. But I am wondering what his vision of the hugely important era in the country’s history is; why he made the film, what he wants an audience to learn from it.

“Very talented filmmakers can sometimes forget they are, first and foremost, storytellers,” says Wilder. “Good stories are told through engaging characters. After investing three hours in the film where all the tropes of



In Kevin Costner’s four-part movie series *Horizon*, the fictional boomtown of Horizon in the center of Apache Territory, is both the actual and metaphorical dramatic crossroads of the epic saga.



In part one of *Horizon*, Kevin Costner places nearly half of the action in the fictional town of Horizon, which naïve settlers found—and re-found—in the middle of Apache Territory in the years leading up to and during the Civil War.

lawlessness, violence, revenge and savagery are on full display, I am not feeling invested in any of the replications of character types we have seen in these situations many times before. So far, I am feeling this 'American Saga' may be more

a telling of the Western movement as portrayed in elements of classic Western films."

"I think the film is a hell of an accomplishment; sometimes just visually stunning," says novelist, screenwriter, director and author of the essential film interview book *The Westerners*, C. Courtney Joyner. "I loved John Denby's score, just majestic. And Costner doesn't shy from emotions—the little girl saying goodbye to the soldiers killed me—and Costner's more support here than leading man, and that's interesting.

"Some great performances, from Michael Rooker in a sympathetic part, and it wouldn't be Costner without James Russo [a corrupt lawman in *Open Range*, a corrupt trading-post operator in *Horizon*]," Courtney adds. "If the cutting between multiple stories had been done in a more 'traditional' way—use of dissolves rather than straight cuts—it might have hit audiences without the confusion we've read about. I think *Horizon* will do great on streaming, and that's where people are going to find it, and search



out *Part 2*; the idea of *Part 1* being so big on streaming that people will run to the theater for the next installment is pure PR nonsense.”



Actor Michael Rooker is considered a member of Kevin Costner's film company. In *Horizon*, he costars as Sgt. Major Thomas Riordan, the quintessential, veteran Irish-American Army sergeant.

Henry C. Parke is *True West's* Western Film and TV editor. His column on page 60 takes a critical look back at the 30th anniversary of Kevin Costner's 1994 epic Western, *Wyatt Earp*.



In *Horizon*, Sienna Miller plays Frances Kittredge, the courageous frontier mother in the town of Horizon who will do anything she can to protect her family.

TRUE WEST  
EXCLUSIVE

# CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

## BEHIND THE EIGHT BALL

### MORGAN EARP VS FRANK STILWELL, PETE SPENCE AND OTHERS



By March 1882, Tombstone needed some laughs. Wyatt and Morgan Earp attend a three-hour comedy and yuck it up, although some in the audience don't look too happy. Sadie Marcus (at right) looks irritated that Wyatt is paying more attention to the play than to her. In the back row, some believe the gentleman in the hat is Frederick Bode.

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

Based on the research of John Langelier and Jack McPhee

MARCH 18, 1882

**A** one-night showing of the play *Stolen Kisses* is being staged at the Turnverein Hall, north of Schieffelin Hall. It has been two and a half months since Virgil Earp was shot, and, after a flurry of posses, raids, charges and counter-charges over the cow-boy killings, things are once again quiet in Tombstone.

Wyatt agrees to go out with his brother Morgan, even though the previous night, a local, Briggs Goodrich (whose lawyer brother Ben represents many cowboys), warned Wyatt that there are "some strangers here that I think are after you." Goodrich also had a message from one cowboy in particular: "By the way, John Ringo wanted me to say to you, that if any fight came up between you all, he wanted you to understand that he would have nothing to do with it; that he was going to take care of himself, and everybody else could do the same."

After the play, Morgan insists on a game of pool. Wyatt joins his younger brother as the two, along with Dan Tipton and Sherm McMasters, drop in at Campbell and Hatch's saloon for a game.

Ten minutes before 11 p.m., Morgan walks around the pool table to line up a shot. As he leans over, a pane of

glass in the back door explodes as a bullet catches Morgan in the middle of the back, goes through his body and lodges in the leg of a bystander. As Morgan falls against the table, a second shot is fired through the gaping hole. The bullet thuds against the far wall, near the ceiling, just above Wyatt's head. As patrons dive for cover, Morgan slides off the table and collapses in a pool of blood.

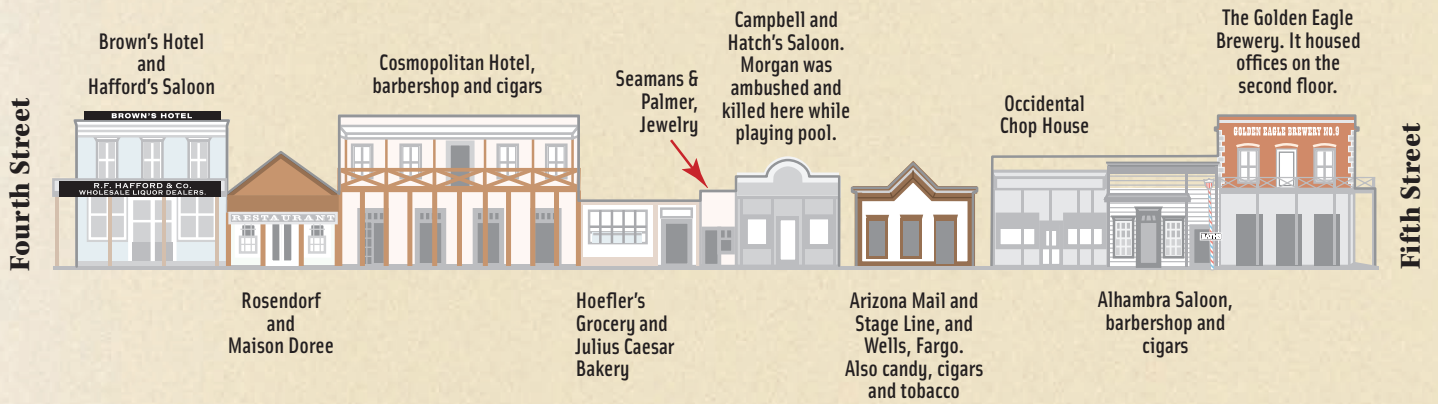
Perhaps fearing another attack, Wyatt, McMasters and Tipton lift Morgan and move him about 10 feet away from the rear door, and near a door to the card room. Three doctors are summoned (Mathews, Goodfellow and Millar). After a brief consultation, they pronounce the wound mortal.

Morgan's brother and friends then move him into the card room and place him on a lounge, as Morgan's other brothers Virgil, James and Warren are summoned, along with Virgil's wife, Allie and James' wife, Bessie.

The *Epitaph* reports, "Notwithstanding the intensity of his mortal agony, not a word of complaint escaped his lips, and all that was heard, except those whispered into the ears of his brother and known only to him were, "Don't, I can't stand it. This is the last game of pool I'll ever play."



Morgan's Last Shot: Alley snakes slither into position outside the back door of Campbell and Hatch's saloon as Morgan lines up his last shot.



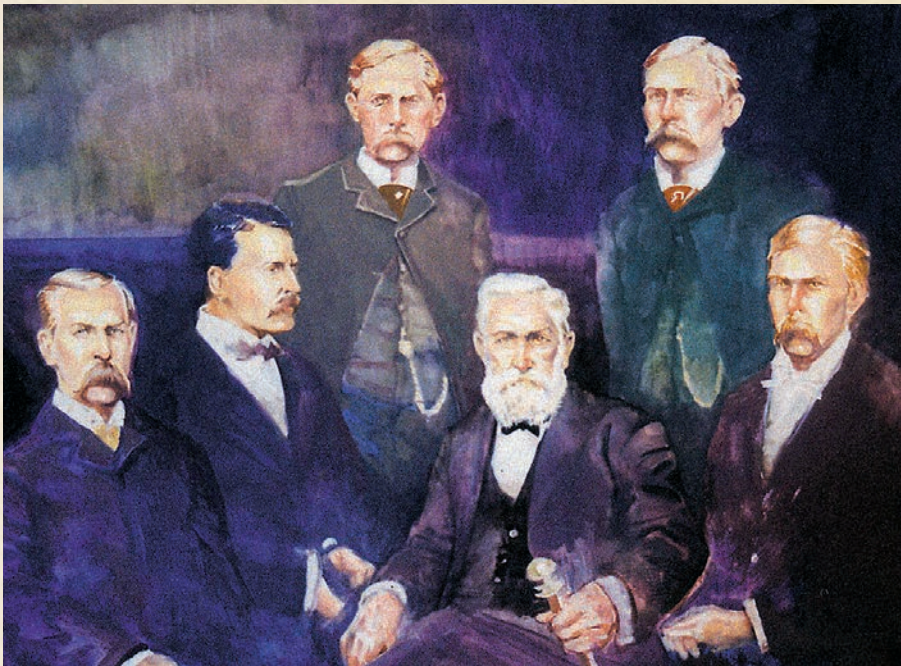
The heart of the business district in Tombstone is on Allen Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets. By the time of Morgan's assassination, the Earps are living in the Cosmopolitan Hotel. George W. Parsons is staying in Dr. Goodfellow's office upstairs in the Golden Eagle Brewery building. All of these buildings will be destroyed in the 1882 fire.

## From the Man Who Was There

**March 19, 1882**

"Another assassination last night about eleven o'clock. I heard the shots, two in number, but hearing so many after dark was not particularly startled, though I remarked to [Joseph L.] Redfern about it. Poor Morgan Earp was shot through by an unknown party—probably 2 or 3 in number in Campbell and Hatch's [billiard parlor], while playing pool with [Bob] Hatch. The shots, 2, came through the ground window leading into alley running to Fremont St—on east side of Otis & Co's store. Geo Berry received the spent ball in his thigh, sustaining a flesh wound. The second shot was fired apparently at Wyatt Earp. Murderers got away of course, but it was and is quite evident who committed the deed. The man was Stilwell in all probability. For two cowardly, sneaking attempts at murder, this and the shots at Virgil E when I came nearly getting a dose, rank at the head. Morg lived about 40 minutes after being shot and died without a murmur. Bad times ahead now."

—George W. Parsons



The Fighting Earps, as they were called, are a rough bunch. Old Man Nicholas Earp (seated center, with cane) is surrounded by his handsome, but deadly, brood. Morgan is seated on the far right. Standing is Wyatt (left) and Virgil. James, the oldest, sits at left, and Warren, the only dark-haired Earp, sits beside him.

## What Were Morgan's Last Words to Wyatt?

*The Epitaph* noted in the March 20, 1882, edition that before he died, Morgan whispered something into his brother Wyatt's ear.

Several versions of what he may have said gained popularity over the years. In one, Morgan asks, "Do you know who did it?" and Wyatt responds, "Yes, and I'll get them." "That's all I ask," Morgan whispers. "But Wyatt, be careful."

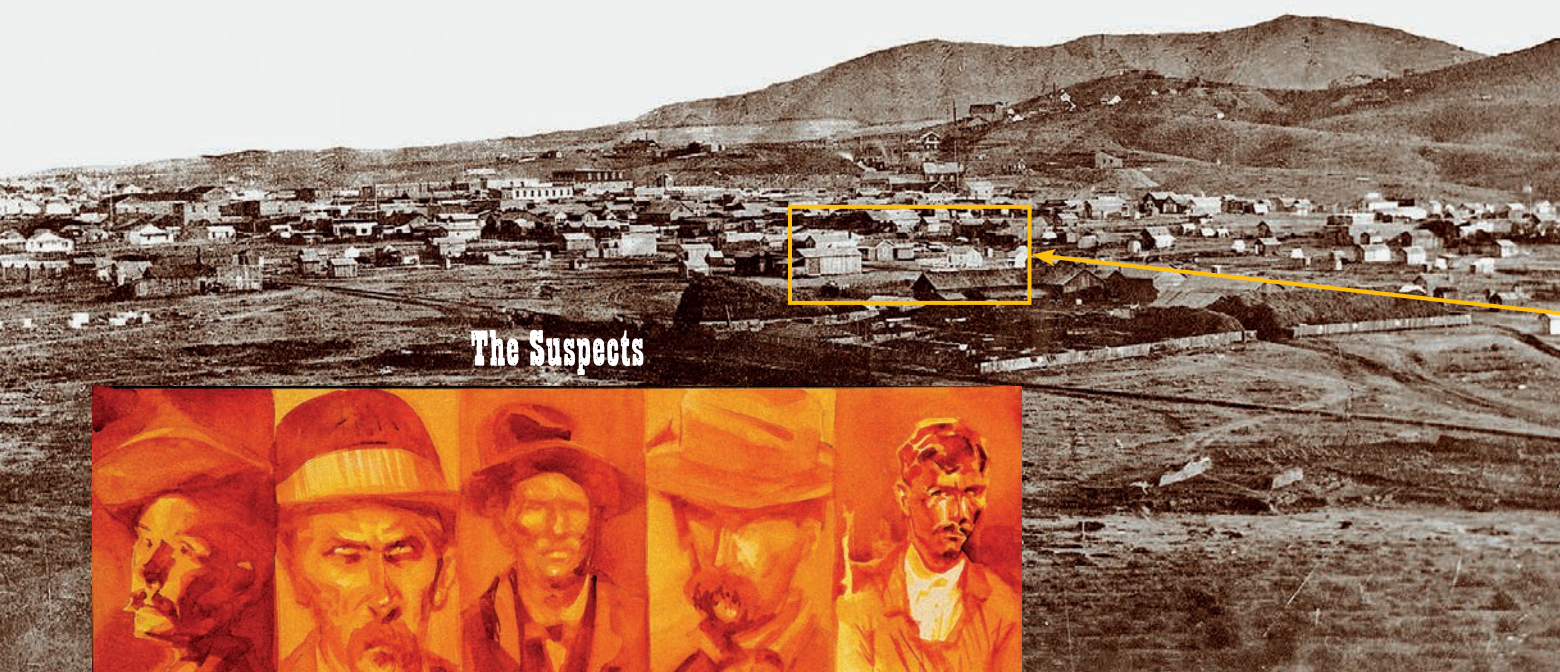
Two months after the events in Tombstone, Wyatt would say: "When they shot him he said the only thing he regretted was that he wouldn't have a chance to get even. I told him I'd attend to it for him."

In the last years of his life, Wyatt allegedly told this version to author Stuart Lake, "I've never told anyone what Morgan said to me then, not even Virgil.... Morgan had a boyish curiosity which I never knew to be satisfied.

"Morg got me to read one of his books [reporting experiences of persons who had visions of heaven when close to death]. I told him I thought the yarns were overdrawn, but at his suggestion we promised each other that, when the time came for one of us to go, that one would try to leave for the other some actual line on the truth of the book.... He was sensitive to the fun others might poke at such notions, so, in the last few seconds of his life, when he knew he was going, he asked me to bend close.

"I guess you were right, Wyatt," he whispered. "I can't see a damn thing."

Most historians today think Lake made up the story.



## The Suspects



**FRANK  
STILWELL**

**PETE  
SPENCE**

**HANK  
SWILLING**

**FREDERICK  
BODE**

**FLORENTINO  
CRUZ**

## Mrs. Marietta Spence Drops a Bombshell

At the murder inquest on the killing of Morgan Earp, Marietta Spence gave damning testimony against her husband of eight months: "Reside in Tombstone, and am the wife of Peter Spence; on last Saturday night, the 18th of March, was in my house on Fremont Street; for two days my husband was not home, but in Charleston, but came home about [noon on] Saturday. He came with two parties, one named Fries, a German [Frederick Bode]; I don't know the other's name [believed to be Florentino Cruz]. Each had a rifle.... They then entered the front room and began to converse with Frank Stilwell...there was an Indian with Stilwell called Charley [Hank Swilling]. He was armed with a pistol and carbine.... Both Charley and Stilwell were armed with pistols and carbines when they returned to the house Saturday night. The conversation between Spence and Stilwell and the others was carried on in a low tone. They appeared to be talking some secret. When they came in I got out of bed to receive them, and noticed they were excited. Why, I don't know. Stilwell came in the house about an hour before Spence, and the other two.

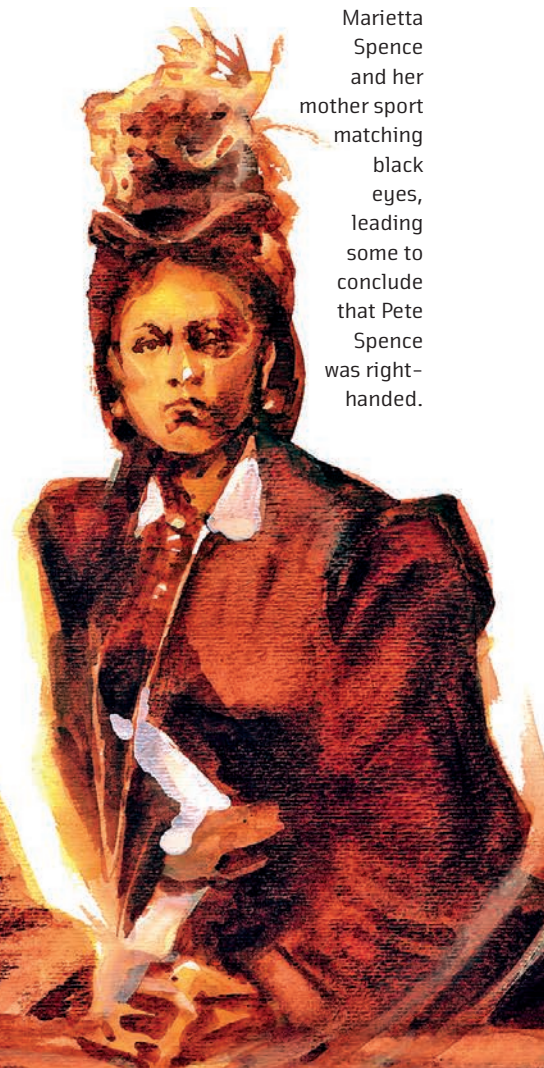
On Sunday morning Spence told me to get breakfast about 6 o'clock, which I did—after we had a quarrel, during which he struck me and

my mother, and during which he threatened to shoot me, when my mother told him he would have to shoot her too. His expression was, that if I said a word about something I knew about he would kill me; that he was going to Sonora and would leave my dead body behind him. Spence didn't tell me so, but I know he killed Morgan Earp; I think he did it, because he arrived at the house all of a tremble, and both the others who came with him.... Myself and mother heard the shots, and it was a little after when Stilwell and the Indian, Charley, came in.... I judged they had been doing wrong from the condition, white and trembling, in which they arrived."

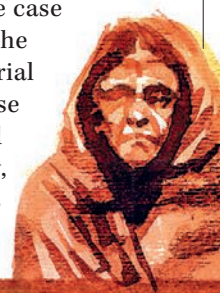
Marietta also testified that four days prior to the murder, her husband had been talking to an "Indian" as Morgan Earp walked by (see map, opposite page). "Spence nudged the Indian and said, 'That's him, that's him.' The Indian then started down the street, so as to get a good look at him."

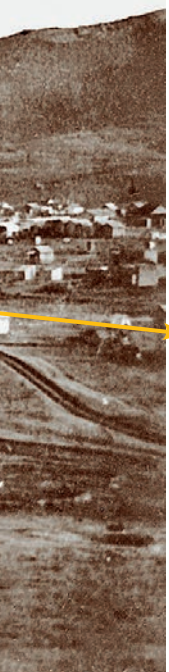
However, when the case against Spence and the others came up for trial on April 2, the defense successfully blocked Marietta's testimony, probably on grounds that wives cannot

testify against their husbands. The prosecution quietly dropped the case.

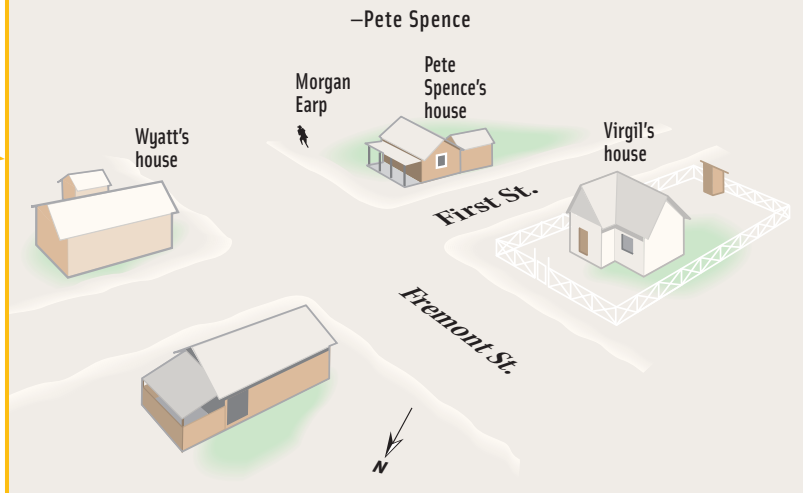


Marietta Spence and her mother sport matching black eyes, leading some to conclude that Pete Spence was right-handed.





## “That’s him, that’s him.”



The Earps and their extended families have houses near each other at the corner of First and Fremont in Tombstone, but ever since Virgil's shooting, they have taken up residence at the Cosmopolitan Hotel. Pete Spence and his new wife live on the southeast corner of the same intersection as the Earps. It's believed Pete spotted Morgan Earp walking by here, while checking on the Earps' houses, and said to Indian Charley, "That's him, that's him!" Today, the Earp homes are gone (Virgil's house burned in the early 1990s). The Spence home still stands.

Frank Stilwell hightails it up past Mescal Springs on his midnight ride to Tucson. That's Contention in the middle distance, while the twinkling lights of Tombstone shine from up the hill.



## A Midnight Ride

According to Tucson's *Arizona Daily Star*, Frank Stilwell was spotted in Tucson early on Sunday morning, six or seven hours after the Morgan shooting. This gave him a pretty solid alibi. Some argue that a 70-mile run on horseback is not out of the question.

## A Surprising Admission

In spite of the damning accusations by Marietta Spence, Wyatt Earp never believed her husband was involved in Morgan's murder. Late in life, he wrote to author Walter Noble Burns, "I am satisfied that Spence had nothing to do with the assassination of Morgan, although he was against us." Wyatt believed Swilling, Stilwell and Cruz were joined by John Ringo and Curly Bill Brocius.

## Aftermath: Odds & Ends

According to the *Epitaph*, Morgan was shot at 10:50 on Saturday night and his body was placed in a casket and sent to Colton, California (the Earps' home base). It was guarded "to Contention by his brothers and two or three of his most intimate friends. The funeral cortege started away from the Cosmopolitan hotel about 12:30 yesterday [Sunday, March 19]." Many writers have mistakenly assumed that Virgil and his wife accompanied Morgan's body, but they left Tombstone the following day.

Pete Spence turned himself in to Sheriff Behan and was allowed to keep a pistol in his cell as protection against a possible attack by the Earps, which never came. Although acquitted in the Morgan Earp murder, Spence later served time in Yuma Territorial Prison for assault. Pardoned after serving a year, Spence, now going by the name E.L. Ferguson, married the widow of Phin Clanton.

**Recommended:** *Classic Gunfights Volume II* by Bob Boze Bell, published by Two Roads West.



## CLASSIC TRUE WEST

FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

*True West's* "Old West Savivors" columnist Jana Bommersbach has been a regular contributor to the magazine for nearly 25 years. If you'd like to read more of Jana Bommerbach'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.

BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

# THE BIGGEST LEG IN MEXICO

**Nobody messed with Sarah Bowman,  
"The Great Western."**

She was a giant among women—hell, she was a giant among most men—this "Amazon of the Border" who was a military hero in the Mexican War, a groundbreaking businesswoman, a "good specimen of the frontier woman" and, as some put it, the prototype for "the whore with a heart of gold."

They called Sarah Bowman "The Great Western," borrowing the name of the world's largest steamship. It fit the woman who was at least six feet tall, maybe six-two, who weighed over 200

pounds, had enormous breasts and an hourglass figure.

The nickname was applied because of her size, but it stuck because of her grit. This was a woman of uncommon courage and determination who didn't, frankly, take guff from no one.

She was born Sarah Knight in 1812 or 1813 in Tennessee or Missouri—she was never clear about her early days (she also used the surname Borginnis and Bourjette). Along the way, she accumulated several husbands (not

always with the benefit of clergy, which spoke to both her nature and the necessity of the times) and came into her own as she traveled with Gen. Zachary Taylor's Army in the Mexican War from 1846-48. She had a sense of self assurance that stunned both men and women.

One historian noted she "had the reputation of being something of the roughest fighter on the Rio Grande and was approached in a polite, if not humble, manner."

And woe to those who didn't understand that, as shown in the following story, recounted in an article by Mercedes Graf in *Minerva: Quarterly Report on Women and the Military*:

One day a trooper let out a wolf whistle and muttered under his



Samuel Chamberlain, author of *My Confession: Recollections of a Rogue*, painted the only known likeness of "The Great Western."

Courtesy West Point Museum Collection, United States Military Academy

breath as Sarah walked by: “The Amazon whirled with the litheness of a panther. ...Before the startled heckler knew what was happening, she had hoisted him like a sack of feathers and pinned him. . . . Effortlessly she held him there with one hand; her grayish-green eyes boring straight into his. Finally, the astonished soldier found his tongue... he apologized. Suddenly, she dropped her hand and the unhappy trooper plummeted back to earth. The woman turned abruptly and stalked away—she had not uttered a single word during the entire incident.”

What drew her to the Mexican War was never explained, but drawn she was. It was honorable in those days for wives of enlisted men to become “camp followers” (before that phrase was dirtied to mean loose women). The wives enrolled in the Army as cooks, laundresses, nurses and seamstresses. (The most famous camp follower was “Lady Washington,” who spent most of the Revolutionary War camped with her husband, Gen. George Washington.) Sarah did all those jobs and more, sometimes picking up a weapon, often using her strength to drag or carry men off the battlefield.

A history project from the University of Texas at Austin reports that Sarah first distinguished herself as a fighter in March 1846 at the crossing of the Arroyo Colorado, “when she offered to wade the river and whip the enemy single-handedly if Gen. William Jenkins Worth would lend her a stout pair of tongs.”

Two months later during the bombardment of Fort Brown, she refused to seek safety with the other women and

### Did you know?

Army wives—whether they traveled with the soldiers or stayed behind in established forts—had to be made of stern stuff. It’s reported that Libbie Custer was particularly strong. Judy Alter’s *Extraordinary Women of the America West* reports: “When word was brought to her of Custer’s death [at the Battle of the Little Bighorn], she threw a wrap over her dressing gown and accompanied the captain to the twenty-five other widows of that battle to offer them consolation.”

continued to operate the officers’ mess for a week while under siege. She didn’t stop even when a tray was shot from her hands or when a shell fragment pierced her sunbonnet.

“Her fearlessness during the siege earned her another nickname, the Heroine of Fort Brown,” the university’s *Handbook of Texas* notes. At a celebratory dinner after the battle, a special toast was offered for her, reports Graf in *Minerva*: “To The Great Western—one of the bravest and most patriotic soldiers at the Siege of Brown.”

During the Battle of Buena Vista, she distinguished herself again by loading cartridges and carrying wounded soldiers to safety from the battlefield.

Sarah “was acclaimed in General Zachary Taylor’s Army, from the highest general to the lowliest drummer boy, for her consistent courage in the front line of battle,” Graf notes.

Sarah went to Mexico with the Army, opened a “hotel” in Saltillo that provided drink and women, and stayed until after the war. But in July 1848, she wanted to accompany the Army to California. Her husband was gone by then and only married women were allowed to travel with the Army. In a scene that sounds straight out of Hollywood, she rode along the line of men yelling, “Who wants a wife with fifteen thousand dollars and the biggest leg in Mexico? Come, my beauties, don’t all speak at once. Who is the lucky man?” A dragoon named Davis finally stepped forward and the Great Western was marching with the Army yet again.

She landed in El Paso, where she became the first female in the town to run a business. Her hotel and restaurant—she reportedly was an incredible cook—catered to gold diggers on the way to California, who stopped for room, board and “entertainment.” Historians allude to her as a madam, but give no real details on her “hotel brothels,” except to report that “business was good” and nobody had anything but kind words for her. (One biographer insists she operated only one brothel and that all the rest of her businesses were legitimate hotels and restaurants. Others note she was a prostitute now and then to support herself, but hasten to add that hardly defined her life.)

Eventually she married a German upholsterer named Albert J. Bowman and they settled in Fort Yuma in the Arizona Territory. Sarah opened yet another restaurant and made a real home in Yuma. She couldn’t have children, but she adopted several orphans (some of whom may have been Mexican).

A tarantula bite killed her. She was buried with full military honors in the Fort Yuma post cemetery on December 23, 1866—reportedly the only woman to be so honored. In 1890, the Department of Army exhumed 159 bodies from that resting place and moved them to the national cemetery at the Presidio in San Francisco. Sarah Bowman, the Great Western, was among them.

Her legend lives to this day. A recent historical novel by Lucia St. Clair Robson is appropriately titled *Fearless: A Novel of Sarah Bowman*.

The author tells *True West* she used the Great Western as her heroine because “I was intrigued by a woman who could cold-cock a man and inform him he was a son-of-a-bitch as he went down.”

Somewhere, you can bet Sarah Bowman is smiling.



Jana Bommersbach has earned recognition as Arizona’s Journalist of the Year and won an Emmy and two Lifetime Achievement Awards. She cowrote the Emmy-winning *Outrageous Arizona* and has written three true crime books, a children’s book and with Bob Boze Bell, *Helldrainers & Trailblazers: The Real Women of the Wild West*.

## TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

For the first time ever, every issue of *True West* magazine is now online, including Jana Bommersbach’s original, unabridged article as it appeared in the October 2004 issue. To learn more about how you can read all of Bommersbach’s articles and subscribe to *True West Archives*, go to [TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com).

**Our past awaits you!**

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

# On the Trail to Bloody Newton

*Adventure awaits the traveler on great cattle drive routes from Texas to Kansas.*

In 1871, Newton, Kansas, had 27 saloons, eight gambling halls. The city's cattle business centered around its stockyards and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe station and yard office.

True West Archives



**A**mong Kansas cattle towns, 1871 is probably best remembered for Wild Bill Hickok's gunfight with Phil Coe in Abilene. But there was another violent shootout that year that's often overlooked, even though it was bloodier than the one in Abilene later that year.

The Chisholm Trail was entering its fifth year in '71, when an estimated 600,000 longhorns would come north from Texas, but Abilene would have competition from Ellsworth and Newton. Joseph G. McCoy, who had made Abilene by building the Drovers Cottage and Great Western stockyards, oversaw construction of Newton's stockyards.

## Rollin', rollin', rollin'

While trader Jesse Chisholm's trail went from present-day Oklahoma and into southern Kansas, the cattlemen's version of the trail began in southern Texas, moving to San Antonio (Briscoe Western Art Museum) and Waco (Helen Marie Taylor Museum of Waco History), where a suspension bridge, the longest single-span type west of the Mississippi, had opened in 1870.

From there, cowboys pushed herds through Fort Worth (Sid Richardson Museum), which was slowly growing. "New buildings are going up all over town," the *Fort Worth Democrat* proclaimed, "improvements are being made in every direction, in spite of

'hard times, hard times come again no more.'"

Herds crossed the Red River near Burlington (renamed Spanish Fort in 1879, when H.J. Justin—recognize that name, boot-wearers?—started making boots for cowboys). The trail continued through present-day Oklahoma, which preserves its cattle-drive legacy at Duncan's Chisholm Trail Heritage Center and Kingfisher's The Chisholm. Trail crews entered Kansas near the emerging cowtown of Caldwell (Border Queen Museum) and pushed through Wellington (Chisholm Trail Museum) and Wichita (Old Cowtown), which would take over Newton's cattle market in 1872.



## On to Newton

Newton was just up the road in Harvey County. With the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe in July—and with McCoy's stockyards able to hold 4,000 longhorns—the town was ready. In fact, some herds had stopped before the first train arrived.

"Several thousand head of Texas cattle are now grazing in this vicinity...and thousands more are coming in every day," Topeka's *Kansas Daily Commonwealth* reported May 30. A small part of town south and west of the railroad tracks became known as Hide Park because "girls showed off so much hide." While some newspapers in 1871 spelled it H-y-d-e, the story goes that Newton changed Hide to Hyde, Harvey County Historical Museum & Archives curator Kristine Schmucker tells me, to make it sound respectable.

It wasn't.

The *Kansas Daily Commonwealth* said "good and even honorable men" could be found in Hide Park, but most "drink, swear and fight, and life with them is a round of boisterous gayety and indulgence in sensual pleasure. Of course where such characters prevail, abandoned women congregate, and Newton is liberally represented by the latter class."

Law was haphazard—*The Wichita Tribune* reporting in August that "Rogues, gamblers, and lewd men and women run the town"—but policemen were hired for a special railroad bond election on August 11. Two men who signed up for that job, Mike McCluskie and a Texas gambler named Billy Bailey, got into an argument, which turned

Fort Worth, Texas, celebrates its Chisholm Trail heritage at the 55,000-square-foot Sundance Square Plaza downtown.

All Photos by Johnny D. Boggs Unless Otherwise Noted

into a fistfight, and then a gunfight in which Bailey was mortally wounded. McCluskie fled town but returned after a week. On Saturday, August 19, he entered Perry Tuttle's dance hall to gamble.

Filmmaker Walter Hill points out some key elements in his book/CD *The Cowboy Iliad*:

*Back then, Newton was like Abilene,*

*Dodge or Wichita –*

*A railroad town and cattle town stuck*

*At the far end of the Chisholm Trail ...*

*Most ways, these places were about the same.*

*Loose money.*

*Not much law and order.*

*Everybody wearing a gun.*

*Everybody drinking whiskey.*

## Massacre time

By 1 a.m., Tuttle was getting nervous. The band left, but many customers didn't, even when Tuttle said he was closing. McCluskie kept playing faro. Cowboy Hugh Anderson, one of Bailey's friends and the son of a prominent Texas rancher, came in at 2 a.m. "with murder in his eye, and foul mouth filled with oaths and epithets," the *Emporia News* reported.

The gunfight began. McCluskie's pistol misfired. Anderson's didn't, and the gambler fell with a bullet in his neck.

What happened next is mostly conjecture.

A second man, possibly a McCluskie friend commonly called Jim Riley,



Caldwell and Newton, Kansas, were both founded in 1871. Caldwell would become known as "The Border Queen City" as a cattle town from 1879 to 1885.



Cattle herds often bedded down along the Chisholm Trail outside of Wichita in what's now part of North Newton's Chisholm Trail Park near the Kauffman Museum.



Cattle drives continue for tourists in the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District. The Union Stockyards were built in 1887, years after the Chisholm Trail had closed.



A statue of Jesse Chisholm stands in front of The Chisholm, formerly the Chisholm Trail Museum, which has started a \$6 million fundraising campaign to renovate the 60-year-old museum and grounds.

opened fire, shooting Jim Martin in the neck. Martin, who had been trying to calm everyone down, ran outside and died in front of a saloon. Anderson was severely wounded but would survive

and escape prosecution when his father arrived and managed to sneak his son out of town. Five other men were shot—a brakeman and two Texans eventually dying from their wounds, and two others surviving.

“Newton has been designated as the wickedest place in Kansas,” the *North Topeka Times* reported on September 28, 1871, “and has received a name abroad which makes her famous as a wild town.” But the correspondent went on to say that “while we condemn we should also remember the few virtues it maintains...,” pointing out “that there are many good men there who have the best interests of the present and future prosperity of the town at heart, and are laboring for its advancement.”

A year later and no longer a cowtown, Newton had changed. *The Newton Kansan* reprinted an item from *Ross’s Paper* on August 22, 1872, that pointed out that “This young city, so lately famous for its Texas cattle trade and cattle men’s brawls” had transformed into “a thriving, orderly place, and really a most desirable locality, in



Newton had its Hide Park, and Wichita had Delano, then a bordering town that gained a reputation for saloons, gambling halls and brothels. Now part of Wichita, Delano is home to shops, art galleries and restaurants.

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the character of its people for sobriety, morality and enterprise....”

## Gone but not forgotten

While Newton’s Harvey County Historical Museum documents what became known as “Newton’s General Massacre” and a few historical markers can be found in town, Newton doesn’t celebrate its cowtown history the way Abilene, Dodge City and others do. It hasn’t forgotten that history, but prefers being a quiet, friendly town.

Which *The Kansas Daily Commonwealth* had predicted shortly after the General Massacre:

“Newton, with all its faults and wickedness, will some day outgrow them and become one of the most important towns in southwestern Kansas.... We trust all those who may have occasion to visit this interesting locality may have as good luck in receiving courtesies and kindness as we did.”



Published by Kensington Books in July, **Johnny D. Boggs’s** *Bloody Newton* is a fictional account of the founding of Newton and the events leading up to and after the “General Massacre.”

## OLD FORT PARKER

About 45 minutes east of Waco near Groesbeck, Texas, sits a reconstructed site of one of the legendary events in Texas history. Silas M. and James W. Parker built a log palisade fort in 1834 or 1835 for settlers’ protection, but on May 19, 1836, Comanches and Caddos attacked the fort, killing Silas and four others and abducting five captives, including 9-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker, who would become the mother of Comanche leader Quanah. In the 1930s, a replica of the fort was constructed, then rebuilt in 1967 and operated by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Since 1992, the fort has been run by the City of Groesbeck and Fort Parker Historical Society. The fort, which includes a visitors center, is typically open 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Wednesday–Sunday. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children. The fort also holds special events, including Single Action Shooting Society competitions. [oldfortparker.com](http://oldfortparker.com)

Reconstructed Old Fort Parker preserves the legacy and heritage of the families who settled near present-day Groesbeck, Texas, in 1833.

## GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

**GOOD GRUB:** **One Thirty-Five Prime**, Waco, TX; **Nic’s Grill**, Oklahoma City, OK; **Public**, Wichita, KS; **Mojo’s Coffee Bar**, Newton, KS

**GOOD LODGING:** **Crockett Hotel**, San Antonio, TX; **Stockyards Hotel**, Fort Worth, TX; **The Lindley House Garden Cottages**, Duncan, OK; **Delano Bed & Breakfast**, Wichita, KS



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## A Floating Feast

*The Mississippi River steamboat lines feted passengers with gourmet menus while ferrying them up and down the great riverway.*

**D**ining options on the frontier included all the usual places like restaurants, hotels, around a campfire and other traditional locales. However, dining on moving transportation like riverboats was a different experience. Before the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, people traversed the rivers and waterways to head west and visit various locations.

Mark Twain worked his way up to pilot a Mississippi River boat he dubbed, an “ancient tub.” He recalled a trip to St. Louis on the *Paul Jones*: “She was not a creature to attract the eye of wiser travelers.” While working as an upstream steersman they pulled into St. Louis where a large New Orleans boat was docked. He and his chief went aboard and Twain was impressed, “She was a grand affair. I wondered how I could have ever considered the little *Paul Jones* a large craft.” He went on to say that white-aproned “Texas tenders” brought up tarts, ices and coffees during the mid-watch, day and night to the pilot house.

He wrote, “She was as clean and as dainty as a drawing room; when I looked down her long, gilded saloon, it was like gazing through a splendid tunnel. The bar was marvelous and the bar keeper

had been barbered and upholstered at incredible cost.”

Cookhouses were the boats’ kitchens, the center of social life and the source for all the news on the boat. Rumors were branded, “cookhouse talk,” which meant something was about to happen. An old custom of steamboat men having coffee promptly at 4 o’clock, that started on ocean vessels, continued on the Mississippi River boats. The captains were often heard asking, “Have you had your coffee?” Steamboat coffee was different than the coffee served on land; it was taken black because it wasn’t practical to carry cows on board. They drank it from great ironstone cups, which held about a quart, and they said it helped keep malaria away.

Menus on these great ships included items often found in restaurants and hotels. An 1866 dinner menu from the steamer *St. Charles* included over 100 items from soup to nuts. Some of the offerings were oyster soup, salmon à la Victoria, haddock à la royal, boiled sugar-cured ham and leg of mutton, roasted ribs of beef, venison, turkey, chicken, pork and veal. Cold dishes included duck, chicken, sardine, lobster, oyster and ham à la *St. Charles* salads. Passengers chose



Paddle steamers were the main form of public and freight transportation on the Mississippi River from their introduction in the early 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century.

Courtesy Library of Congress

from 17 hot side dishes, some of which were, breast of lamb, macaroni with cream, sweet breads, giblets, flank steak, rabbit, pork and kraut, German-style. Desserts included coconut, mince, lemon, peach and blackberry pies, jelly, caraway, fruit and lady cakes, ice cream and a variety of candies.

Many of the chefs who ran frontier kitchens had worked on riverboats. Alvin Snow Young was one of them and was hired as a chef by Aristotle Petro, who owned the Occidental Chop House in Tombstone, Arizona. Young was an experienced Mississippi River steamboat cook, which, according to *The Epitaph*, was sufficient guarantee of his culinary skills. This is one of the many pastries served on these ships.



Mark Twain made steamboat travel famous in his book *Life on the Mississippi*. Tourist lines still ferry passengers on the mighty Mississippi today.

Courtesy NYPL Digital Collections

### BLACKBERRY PIE

1 ½ cups flour

1 cup butter, cut into pieces

½-cup water, 2 to 3 cups blackberries

2 to 3 tablespoons sugar

Rub the butter into the flour, then add the sugar and the water. Mix well until the dough comes together. Roll it out and fold it over; do this three times. Divide the dough in half and chill for 1 hour.

Roll out the dough for a bottom and top crust to about ¼-inch.

Place crust in the pie pan and place the berries on it and sprinkle with sugar. Cover with the second crust and press a fork around the edges to seal and make a pattern. Sprinkle additional sugar over the top of the crust and bake at 375°F for 25 to 30 minutes until golden.



Recipe adapted from the *Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition Souvenir Cookbook*, 1909.

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

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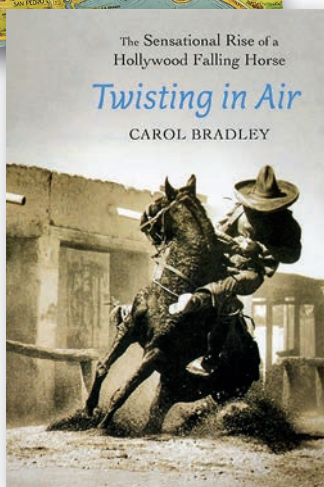
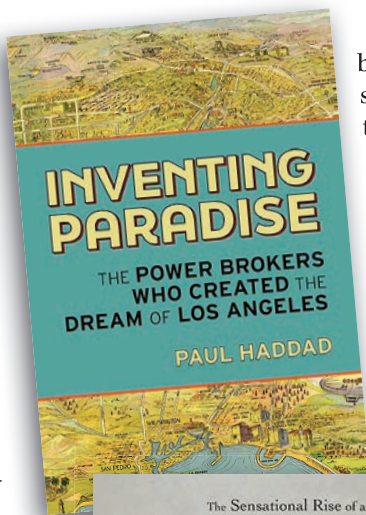
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## California Dreaming

Two new books about the rise of Los Angeles and Hollywood, plus an overlooked story of slavery in Nebraska, a Western detective novel, the real and imagined Bonanza and a Montana adventure story.

I like to call Los Angeles “The West’s Most Western Town.” I was born and raised in the city, growing up in one of the great reclamation projects of the United States, the San Fernando Valley. The inland desert valley became lush with agricultural, suburban and industrial growth—including the film and aerospace industries—after the power brokers of Los Angeles County brought water from the Owens River Valley to the arid coastal city. William Mulholland’s dream and the engineering marvel known as the Los Angeles Aqueduct transformed the former Spanish mission city into a modern metropolis.

In *Inventing Paradise: The Power Brokers who Created the Dream of Los Angeles* (Santa Monica Press, \$29.95), award-winning author Paul Haddad expertly tells the story of L.A. with a dream cast of outrageous characters—the Gang of Six—Phineas Banning, Harrison Gray Otis, Henry Huntington, Harry Chandler, Moses Sherman and William Mulholland—that Hollywood’s best screenwriters could not have imagined. Haddad weaves the lives and actions of these six visionary urban boosters, industrialists and water



barons, telling their stories and showing how their dreams of a Southern California paradise became a reality with the delivery of water. The native Angeleno notes in his introduction, “It was water—the most precious of all utilities—that formed the lifeblood for all development in Los Angeles.”

The 233-mile Los Angeles Aqueduct, from the Owens River Valley east of the Sierra Nevada to the Southern California city, was dedicated on November 5, 1913. In less than two years, the San Fernando Valley was

annexed, and within three years Los Angeles had tripled in size. The water-fueled growth also nurtured a nascent business that found paradise in the sun-filled days of the Southland—the film industry. Movie-makers from across the country and around the world flocked to L.A.’s lightly developed Westside and San Fernando Valley. They built their studios, and Tinseltown was born. Hollywood and Studio City became the

epicenters of L.A.’s entertainment business. The West’s most Western town’s film business—which doubled every Western state with SoCal locations—attracted cowboys and cowgirls from across the country to star and stunt in its movies.

Those expert riders brought their skills and horses to Hollywood, and Carol Bradley’s *Twisting in Air: The Sensational Rise of a Hollywood Falling Horse* (Bison Books, \$24.95) investigates the roles of the cowboy, horse trainer and movie horses on the growth of the film industry and the stunt training and protection of horses in filmmaking. Montana-based Bradley eloquently notes, “The negligent treatment of horses saddened many of the veteran stunt performers. ‘So many horses contributed to a film industry that did not reward them,’ stunt-woman Martha Crawford Canarini wrote... ‘So much credit for the success of the Westerns belongs to the horses.’”

Readers of Haddad’s *Inventing Paradise* and Bradley’s *Twisting in Air* will discover that the research and conclusions of the two authors intersect intellectually and historically with the dreams of Los Angeles’s Gang of Six and the dream makers of Hollywood. Ironically, one of the most famous and beloved stunt horses chronicled by Bradley was named Cocaine. It will be up to us to decide if the paradise imagined can still be found—or reimagined once again—in the West’s most Western town.

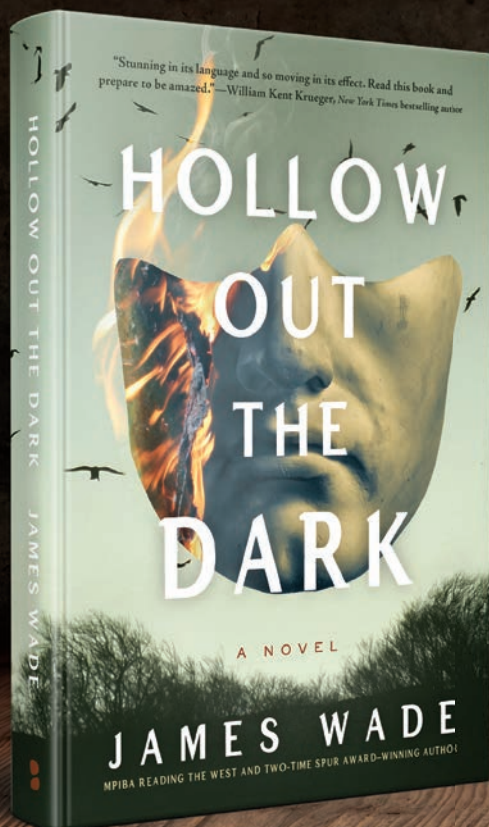
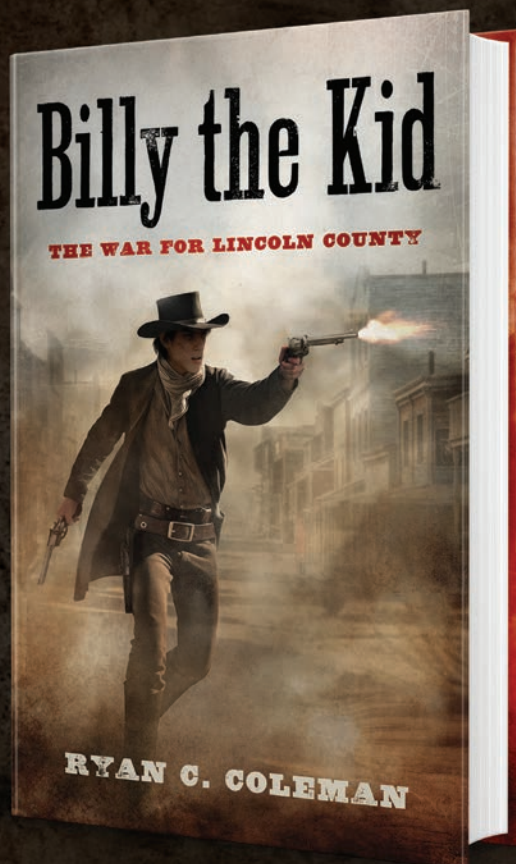
—Stuart Rosebrook

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## Seeking Liberty

In *Journey to Freedom: Uncovering the Grayson Sisters' Escape from Nebraska Territory* (Bison Books,

\$34.95), historian Gail Shaffer Blankenau has shed considerable light on a chapter on Nebraska's history that has, until now, been overlooked by professional and amateur historians.

In the fall of 1858 enslaved sisters Celia and Eliza Grayson escaped from their master's property in southeast Nebraska with the help of a mixed Black and Cherokee man and found freedom along the Underground Railroad in Iowa. Using the sisters' harrowing journey as a springboard, Blankenau works to unravel the story of slavery in Nebraska Territory in the age of the frontier when most of the country's attention was focused on westward expansion. *Journey to Freedom* is equally fascinating and important to the larger contextual history of what was occurring in the Western territories and the mindset of those who lived there during the frontier period.

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

## Western Sleuths

It's 1894, and in Wamsutter, a spartan settlement on the Wyoming horizon, an archaeological dig for dinosaur fossils turns up the bones of somebody all too human—and all too recently murdered. Once again Steve Hockensmith

pens a breezy, enjoyable read with the seventh installment in his best-selling Holmes on the Range series, *Hunters of the Dead* (Rough Edges Press,

\$14.99). This time around Big Red and Old Red, the sleuthing brothers of the A.A. Western Detective Agency, are joined by a diverse cast of likable associates and cunning foes as they face dueling paleontologists and hired guns, Apache and Shoshone warriors, and a boring security job that turns all too harrowing. With his spot-on timing

for puns and turns-of-phrase, Hockensmith delivers an entertaining blend of good humor, high spirits and swift—sometimes deadly—danger.

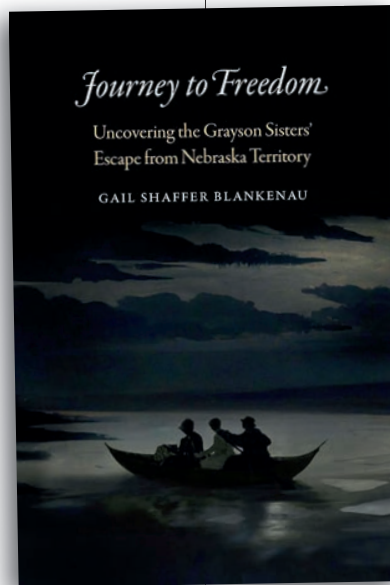
—Richard Prosch, author of *A Gentleman Detective and Other Western Stories*

## Ponderosa vs. Ponderosa

In 1959, one hundred years after the bonanza silver strike in Virginia City, Nevada, the television series *Bonanza* made its debut and brought the small city to the forefront of households around the world. The richest city in the world at the time of the Comstock Lode,

Virginia City today would likely be a ghost town if not for the fame brought on by *Bonanza*.

In *Virginia City vs Bonanza: A Tale of Merging Histories* (Rowan & Littlefield, \$40), Monette Bebow-Reinhard explores select history from the show's legendary storylines and compares it to the real history of 19th-century Virginia City.



# ROUGH DRAFTS



Photo by Robert Ray

The annual Western Writers of America Convention was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, this past June and it was a lively and informative gathering of writers from around the country. WWA President Melody Groves presided over the convention which had over 150 attendees. New board members seated were Natalie Brightman and Secretary-Treasurer Max McCoy, and I was named vice president.

I moderated a panel with Johnny D. Boggs, Natalie Bright and Bill Markley that addressed the current state of writing Western fiction and nonfiction, which drew a large audience and good commentary. *True West* contributor Art Burton spoke eloquently on his four decades of research on Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves.

A highlight of the four-day convention was the 2024 Owen Wister Award recipient Dr. Quintard Taylor's keynote address on the history of Blacks in the West. The acclaimed American historian is the nation's leader on the history of the Blacks in the American West and the author of dozens of scholarly articles and 10 books, including the Pulitzer Prize-nominated book, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528-1990*. Dr. Taylor is also the founder of BlackPast.org, the most comprehensive website dedicated to international and national Black history. Over 1,000 contributors have provided more than 10,000 pages of content. The Scott and Dorothy Bullitt Emeritus Professor of American History at the University of Washington was also inducted into the Western Writers Hall of Fame.

At the ceremony during which Dr. Taylor received the Wister Award for lifetime achievement in Western history and literature, the 2024 Spur Awards were presented. Congratulations to all the winners, including *True West* contributing editor Candy Moulton for best biography, *Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth and Legend* (South Dakota Historical Society Press).

—Stuart Rosebrook

## Concordia Cemetery HISTORY TO DIE FOR...



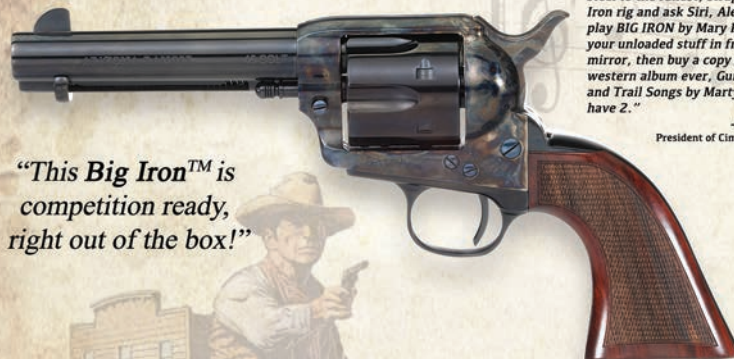
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- **AUGUST 17, 2024 AT 6 PM:** Join the Secret Society of John Wesley Hardin
- **OCTOBER 5, 2024 AT 5 PM:** Sundown Walk With the Spirits of Concordia Cemetery.
- **NOVEMBER 2, 2024 AT 2:00 PM:** Dia De Los Muertos first Saturday in November.
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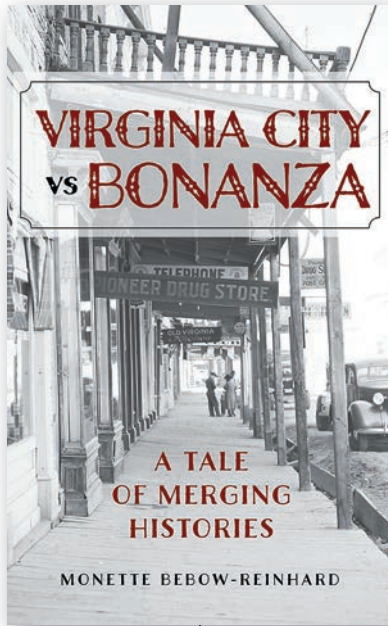
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Through her analysis of history versus fiction, Bebow-Reinhard emphasizes the impact television had on shaping how we remember the Old West. A must-read for fans of television and history alike.

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

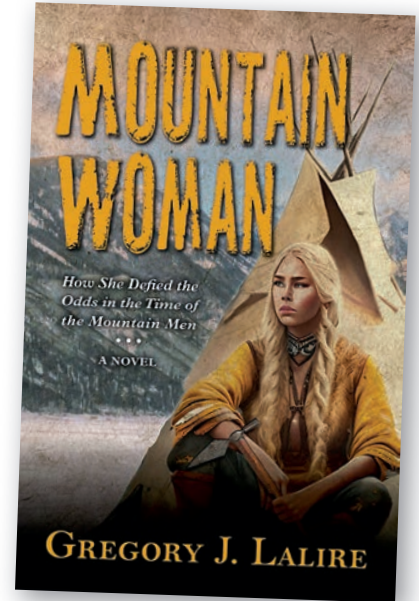


(Thorndike, \$26.99). Born of the Kentucky backwoods, Bet Hex endures the rough ways of fur traders, Arapaho and Pawnee captors, and a Frenchman who teaches her to “hunt and trap, gamble and survive” to become a unique female counterpart to bearded 19th-century explorers. A true mountain woman, she flourishes in the Montana wilderness like the

nourishing roots of the namesake pink flowering plants around her. By herself in this Bitterroot Valley, she is rarely alone as she encounters Catholic Iroquois, Blackfoot warriors, European adventurers—both vile and virtuous—and Schweeleh, the Salish

man she loves like no other. Lush with authenticity, *Mountain Woman* leads readers on an intimate tour of a life well-lived in the harsh wilds of the past.

—Richard Prosch,  
author of Pony Boys



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“Corey Recko has given us a fast-paced and insightful study of a frequently overlooked but remarkably fascinating conflict of New Mexico frontier history.”—James B. Mills, author of *Billy the Kid: El Bandido Simpático*

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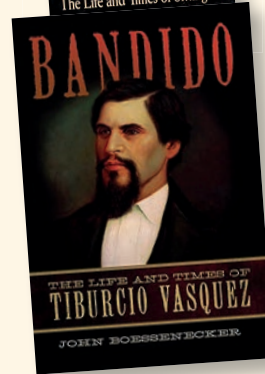
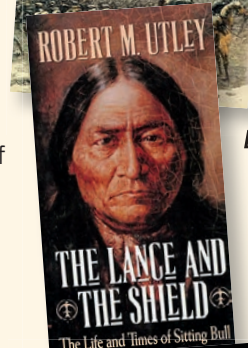
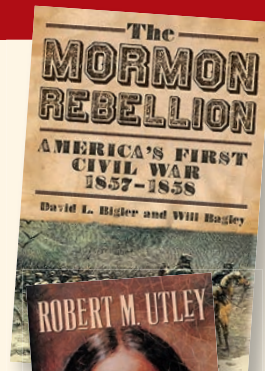
### TEXAS AUTHOR SHARES FIVE ESSENTIAL WESTERN HISTORY BOOKS

For decades, **Chuck Parsons** has been at the forefront of researching, writing and promoting Western American history. The highly respected and award-winning author is a well-known authority on Texas and Texas Ranger history. We asked him to share from publishers' backlists five must-reads for Old West historians.

❶ **The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War 1857-1858** by David L. Bigler and Will Bagley (University of Oklahoma Press): This history of the long-forgotten conflict between Brigham Young's theocracy and James Buchanan's presidency resulted in famous battles but foreshadowed the greater conflict of Civil War.

❷ **The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull** by Robert M. Utley (Henry Holt and Company): Utley provides a masterful biography of a people against the U.S. government's attempt to eradicate an Indigenous people. This biography is a superb example of America's shameful treatment.

❸ **The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History** by Frederick Nolan (University of Oklahoma Press): Fred Nolan began his search to determine



what the "H" stood in John H. Tunstall's name. Once found, he continued his research for all the answers in the life of Billy the Kid and then the Lincoln County War.

❹ **They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok** by Joseph G. Rosa (University of Oklahoma Press, Second edition): First published in 1964, he provided more quality history with the revised edition in 1974; his work on Hickok has proven him to be the authority on Wild Bill.

❺ **Bandido: The Life and Times of Tiburcio Vasquez** by John Boessenecker (University of Oklahoma Press): Tiburcio Vasquez remains the best-known Hispanic bandit, and historian Boessenecker has put his detective skills to work producing a definitive biography of the notorious *bandido*.

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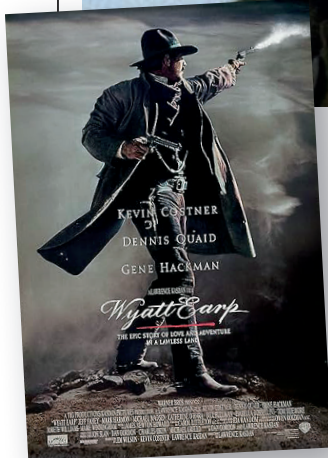
## Wyatt Earp at 30

Screenwriter Dan Gordon reveals the real story behind the making of the blockbuster biopic.

**W**hen it comes to the events in Tombstone on October 26, 1881, if any question is more open to debate than whether the Earps or the Clantons were the villains, it is the question of whether *Wyatt Earp* or *Tombstone* is the definitive telling. Warring factions are still debating who actually directed *Tombstone*, but few are aware of the convoluted path that led to the film *Wyatt Earp* and what was lost along the way.

But Dan Gordon, a screenwriter with 35 credits—including three features in the last year—knows. While the film is often referred to as “written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan,” a glance at the titles shows it was actually written by Dan Gordon and Kasdan, with Gordon getting top billing. Before we had our interview, his only request was that I first read the movie tie-in version, which he wrote. As he said in his email, “It is a novelization of my original screenplay. Not the one Kasdan bastardized.”

Gordon’s love of the West started in the Northwest, where he spent much of his youth. “Dad was foreman of [his brother’s] ranch. My uncle was one of the biggest cattle ranchers in Western Canada: he supplied all the bucking stock to the Calgary Stampede. My brother and I got to see the rodeos from the chutes: it was every boy’s dream. That certainly instilled in me a love for the [Western] genre.” He spent much of his teen years on a kibbutz in Israel, and, he says, “My dad finally got tired of the Canadian winters and we moved down to California.



Originally written for Kevin Costner to star as Wyatt Earp in a television miniseries, Dan Gordon’s original teleplay of *Wyatt Earp* was adapted into a two-hour screenplay. Costner’s subsequent hiring of director Lawrence Kasdan led to rewrites from Kasdan and the production of *Wyatt Earp* as an epic star vehicle for Costner versus an ensemble Western like the earlier released *Tombstone*.

All Images Courtesy Warner Bros.  
Unless Otherwise Noted

“I had wanted to be a writer for as long as I can remember.” He started working seriously at it in Israel, studied film at UCLA and got an early break as a screenwriter. “The vice president of Universal said, ‘How old are you?’ I said, ‘I’m 20.’ He said, ‘Call your mother. You’re too young to sign a contract.’”

Gordon’s interest in Earp began in his childhood. “When I was a kid in Bell Gardens, California, there was a guy who was around 90 years old who had actually been a deputy in Tombstone

under Virgil Earp. He knew Wyatt Earp, and he told us ‘tall tales.’ That’s when the Hugh O’Brian series [*The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*] was on TV, and here you’re talking to the real thing; it certainly made an impression on me.” Before he started writing his own script about Earp, he “spent close to a year researching [him]. I was in the basement of the Cochise County Hall of Records, in the Pima County Hall of Records.”

Gordon became convinced that while earlier films about the O.K. Corral had



The famous walk-down prior to the shootout with the Cowboys near the O.K. Corral is a high point in the action of the epic-length *Wyatt Earp*, but unlike *Tombstone*, it is not the dramatic catalyst of the three-hour-eleven-minute biopic. L.-r.: Dennis Quaid as Doc Holliday, Linden Ashby as Morgan Earp, Kevin Costner as Wyatt Earp and Michael Madsen as Virgil Earp.



Kevin Costner had made a lasting friendship with writer-director Lawrence Kasdan on three earlier films, *The Big Chill*, *The Bodyguard* and *Silverado*, and hired his friend to helm *Wyatt Earp*.



been entertaining, “the real story was not lawmen versus grubby rustlers. I thought, what I really have here is a Western *Godfather*, the story of two families: one is a crime family, and the other is a law-enforcement family. And behind it was a very sophisticated land grab worth about \$20 million in 1880 dollars.” Never referenced in previous O.K. Corral films was the fact that Tombstone was a community of squatters, the land belonging to the U.S. government. The Tombstone Townsite Company was formed to sell worthless land deeds and take control of property. The villains of Gordon’s screenplay were two criminal associates, family patriarch Newman Clanton, heretofore dismissed as Old Man Clanton, and the remarkable Mike Gray, a former Texas Ranger-turned-TTC principal owner.

In *Tombstone*, it’s a throwaway line when Sheriff Behan introduces himself as, “Captain of the Fire Brigade and Chairman of the Nonpartisan Anti-Chinese League,” but in fact, Gordon notes, “Mike Gray was brilliant enough to use racism to pull off his land grab,” and to promote the burning of the Chinese quarter, so TTC could claim the lots. “He knew they would say, ‘Who cares? They’re just Chinese.’ It was evil and smart.” Gordon’s script also included the real-life China Mary. “One third of Tombstone was Chinese, and China Mary held the contract on every Chinese who was in Tombstone. She was an incredibly powerful woman.”

Gordon knew who he wanted to bring the script to. “Kevin [Costner] was in the final process of editing *Dances with Wolves*. I pitched it, and Kevin on the spot said, ‘Let’s do it.’ The only note I ever got from Kevin was, ‘Give me more.’ He just was a real joy to work with. We developed it for almost three years, because during that period he did *Bodyguard* and *Robin Hood* and the Clint Eastwood movie, *A Perfect World*.

“It was originally developed as a six-hour miniseries. The first idea was to do what Kevin is doing now with

Veteran actor Gene Hackman (second from left), cast as Nicholas Earp, the patriarch of the Earp family, poses with the Cowboys in *Wyatt Earp*.



Italian actress Isabella Rossellini (left) was cast as Big Nose Kate, the volatile love interest of Dennis Quaid's Doc Holliday in *Wyatt Earp*.



Many Western film critics favor Dennis Quaid's portrayal of Doc Holliday in *Wyatt Earp* over Val Kilmer's interpretation in *Tombstone* because of Quaid's acting style and self-starvation to appear as if emancipated from the effects of tuberculosis.



*Horizon*, a series of three movies: we were going to do the summer of *Wyatt Earp*. Warners didn't like the idea, and so I wrote it as a two-hour. We had talked about Marty Scorsese directing it in black and white. The original idea for Mike Gray was Clint Eastwood—Kevin could have gotten Clint easily because of *Perfect World*. For Old Man Clanton, we were talking about Jack Nicholson. And Kevin could've gotten them, because he was the biggest star in the world. And then Kevin did something which I didn't expect: he gave the project to Larry Kasdan. If Kevin has a flaw, it's that sometimes he's too good a friend to his friends. Kasdan started his career when Kevin played the corpse in the coffin in *The Big Chill*. That was his first role. Then he did *Silverado* with Kasdan. I think it was more of a favor to Kasdan than thinking Kasdan was the right director, which I certainly don't think he was."

He liked Kasdan's rewrite even less. "It's the only Western I've ever seen where someone cut out the villains! You had two great parts, Mike Gray and Newman Clanton. He took what should have been a great Western and turned it into a pretty boring Western that had some moments that were really wonderful."



After the film's release, publicity for *Wyatt Earp* doubled down on the romantic relationship between Kevin Costner's Wyatt Earp and Joanna Going's Josie Earp.

What were the wonderful parts? “Kevin’s performance was really spot on. I thought Dennis Quaid as Doc Holliday—I know everybody is enamored with Val Kilmer’s interpretation because it was so flamboyant, but Dennis went on a starvation diet to become a tubercular Doc Holliday, and he gave the most uncompromising, truly heroic performance. Michael Madsen, who played Virgil—I thought he was good. I always like Marty Kove. I love anything Gene Hackman does, but they gave him some really stupid lines to say. I thought Isabella Rossellini, who I adore as an actress, was horribly miscast. I mean, playing Big Nose Kate, and she has a rather small nose. It was so absurd that Kasden had to stick in a line saying, ‘They call me Big Nose Kate, but I don’t have a big nose. You know how people give you a name,’ blah, blah, blah. Well, why didn’t you just hire Angelica Huston?”

Of course, maybe the problem was fate; maybe opening up that Tombstone can of worms was like opening King Tut’s tomb. “Glenn Boyer was the premier Earp researcher. He’s the only one who actually knew Josie Earp, and he knew Virgil’s wife.\* Glenn had told me there was an Earp curse. He said, ‘Don’t

do this movie. It’ll ruin your life.’” Kind of like Kevin Jarre on *Tombstone*. “Kevin Jarre was a very good writer,” Gordon confirms. “He wrote *Glory*.” He wouldn’t sell his *Tombstone* script to Disney unless they hired him to direct. “And he was naive enough, he was sort of boasting that he made Disney eat it. I’ve been in this business for 57 years. You don’t make Disney eat it: Disney eats you. They have 1,000,001 ways to make sure you’ll go over budget. All they have to do is say to the first A.D. or production manager, slow this guy down. And lo and behold, Kevin Jarre was replaced because he was over budget. George Cosmatos came in to direct, and I knew Crazy George. He was overweight, he smoked a lot, he had other bad habits. I sort of knew Sam Elliot; Sam said to me, ‘Well George just kept passing out. But he kept getting back up.’ I heard it was really Kurt Russell who directed the picture. And I believe that. I think Kurt Russell is a consummate actor and a consummate filmmaker. And it was a very entertaining movie.”

Currently, Dan Gordon is producing *October 7th*, a documentary series about the Hamas attack on Israel for Trinity Broadcasting. And he’s looking forward to *Horizon*. “I can’t wait to see

the movie. I think the trailers just look wonderful. And Kevin, when you think of how long he has been doing it, at the level at which he plays the game, it’s extraordinary. There’s a handful of people in the world that you can say that about, in their professions. He’s one of ‘em.”

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## BLU-RAY REVIEW

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### LONE STAR



Courtesy Columbia Pictures

(Criterion Blu-Ray \$31.96; 4K + Blu-Ray \$39.96) On the eve of the dedication of a monument honoring a late Rio, Texas, sheriff, an unearthed skeleton suggests the honoree may have been a murderer. Investigating with bitter gusto is the current sheriff (Chris Cooper) who, being the son of the honoree, presumes the worst. An indie film written, directed and edited by John Sayles, with the most elegant flashback transitions since *Citizen Kane*, it flows between 1957 and 1996, examining fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, and the evolving status of the three generations of Texans, Tejanos and Black Seminoles that the neo-Western mystery envelops. There are no stock characters, and the cast is ideal, with memorable performances by unfamiliar faces, with Kris Kristofferson, Frances McDormand and the youngest Matthew McConaughey you’ve ever seen.



**\*Editor’s Note:** Since 1994, many of Glenn Boyer’s claims have been openly questioned.

**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.

BY PETER CORBETT

# Durango, Colorado

*October's Cowboy Gathering rounds up poets, pickers and train lovers.*

**D**urango is an active four-season town.

Each year starts with winter sports—skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing—at Purgatory Resort, which also has 75 miles of snowmobile trails. Fat biking on wide-tire bicycles is also popular on snowy trails in and around Durango.

Winter gives way to the Bluegrass Meltdown in April and then the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic in late spring. Cyclists race 50 miles on U.S. 550 to beat the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad on its run between the two towns.

The scenic railroad is Durango's most popular year-round attraction, and summer is its busiest season.

In fact, Durango at an elevation of 6,500 feet is an ideal summer hub for a pack of outdoor adventures—hiking, mountain biking, riding horses, kayaking the Animas River or exploring nearby Mesa Verde National Park.

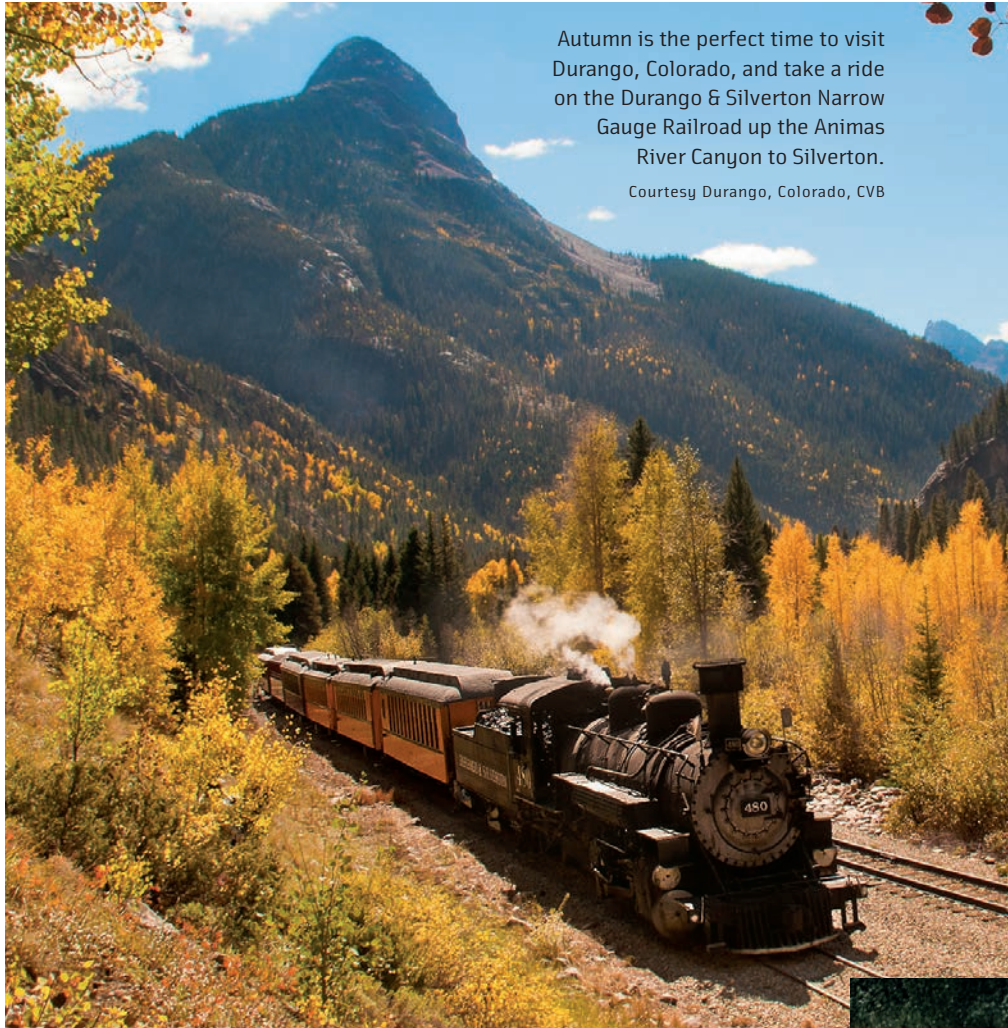
As the season changes, the San Juan Mountains are brilliant with fall colors and aspen leaves turning golden, by mid-September and well into October.

Fall is also time for kicking it at the 36th annual Durango Cowboy Gathering.

"We are the oldest gathering in Colorado," said Sue McWilliams, president of the Durango Cowboy Gathering. It was previously tagged the Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

Elko, Nevada, held the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering in 1985. Durango hat-maker Kevin O'Farrell attended and suggested that Durango put on its own cowboy poetry festival. It launched in 1988, McWilliams said.

Now it's grown to more than 30 events over five days. Western musicians and cowboy poets entertain mostly at indoor venues from October 2 through 6. This year's musical lineup



Autumn is the perfect time to visit Durango, Colorado, and take a ride on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad up the Animas River Canyon to Silverton.

Courtesy Durango, Colorado, CVB

includes Kristyn Harris and Hailey Sandoz, two Texans with their own brand of Western swing music.

Local favorites, the Bar D Wranglers, will get the boot-tapping music started for the Cowboy Gathering.

Poetry and storytelling events include Chuckwagon Tales, Cowboy Lore and Stories of the Range.

The D&SNGR also has a special Cowboy Poetry and Music Train that entertains passengers on the trip to Silverton and back.

The big event October 5 is a horse-drawn parade along Main Avenue. This year it will be preceded by a two-hour Horseback Social, allowing cowgirls and cowboys to gather, ride and socialize along six blocks of downtown. Children ages 12 and under will also have a chance to ride horses under the supervision of professional wranglers.

The parade attracted an estimated 6,800 people in 2023, and this



On October 5, 2024, the annual Durango Cowboy Poetry Gathering Parade will entertain visitors with one of the largest horse-drawn parades in the country.

Courtesy Carol Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress



Rafting on the Animas River is a favorite activity when visiting Durango in the summer.

Courtesy Durango, Colorado, CVB

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- Cascade Canyon Winter Train excursions select dates November 23-May 2



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Photo: Anthony D'Amato



36th Annual Celebration

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Whether arriving in Silverton, Colorado, by car or train, the natural beauty of the San Juan Mountains is awe-inspiring.

Stuart Rosebrook

year's event could bring 10,000 people to downtown, McWilliams said.

Event organizers keep their fingers crossed for good parade weather.

"Some years it's beautiful, and at that time of year the (leaf) colors are gorgeous," she said. "Sometimes it's 70 degrees and sometimes it's snowing."

Al Harper, D&SNGR owner and CEO, said riders on the scenic railroad have to be prepared for fast-changing weather on the run to Silverton.

"It's funny, that first couple of weeks of September up to about the third week of October, you can have summer, fall and winter all in one ride," he said.

"At the lower altitude it's still summer. Then you start to see the beautiful leaves and aspens as you get to 8,500 feet. Then you get to 9,500 feet in Silverton and the leaves are gone and you might have snow flurries."

The steam train run from Durango to Silverton is seasonal. This year's schedule was from May 6 to October 26. Heavy snowfall makes it risky to run in the winter.

In fact, the (Grand Junction) *Daily Sentinel* reported on an ill-fated trip stalled by a snow slide four miles shy of Silverton on February 12, 1947. The train crew handed shovels to Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Lombard, the trip's only passengers, to help them shovel out the locomotive. It took nine hours. The train never made it to Silverton and returned to Durango, arriving at 3:30 a.m. The newspaper told its readers: "The Lombards were refunded the money they had paid for tickets."

Of course, a light snowfall would enhance the popular Polar Express train that runs from November 22 to January 1.



Mesa Verde National Park is a fascinating and fun daytrip for visitors staying in Durango.

Courtesy Durango, Colorado, CVB

The D&SNGR also has a Cascade Canyon Winter Train with heated coaches. It runs on select days from November to May and covers 26 miles—halfway to Silverton. Imagine stunning scenes of the steam locomotive's plume against a backdrop of snow-flocked trees in the mountains.

The Cascade train is also spectacular during spring snowmelt, said Rachel Welsh of Discover Durango. "It's really beautiful because it's when the waterfalls are really flowing."



**Peter Corbett** has been exploring the West for the past half century and spent 35 years as an Arizona journalist.

## WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY

### FIRST STOP

Visitor Information Center  
802 Main Avenue  
[durango.org](http://durango.org)

### BONE UP ON IRON HORSE HISTORY

The Roundhouse Museum tells the tales of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, with roots going back to 1882. It's free.  
479 Main Avenue  
[durangotrains.com](http://durangotrains.com)

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Diamond Belle Saloon, Strater Hotel  
Durango, Colorado

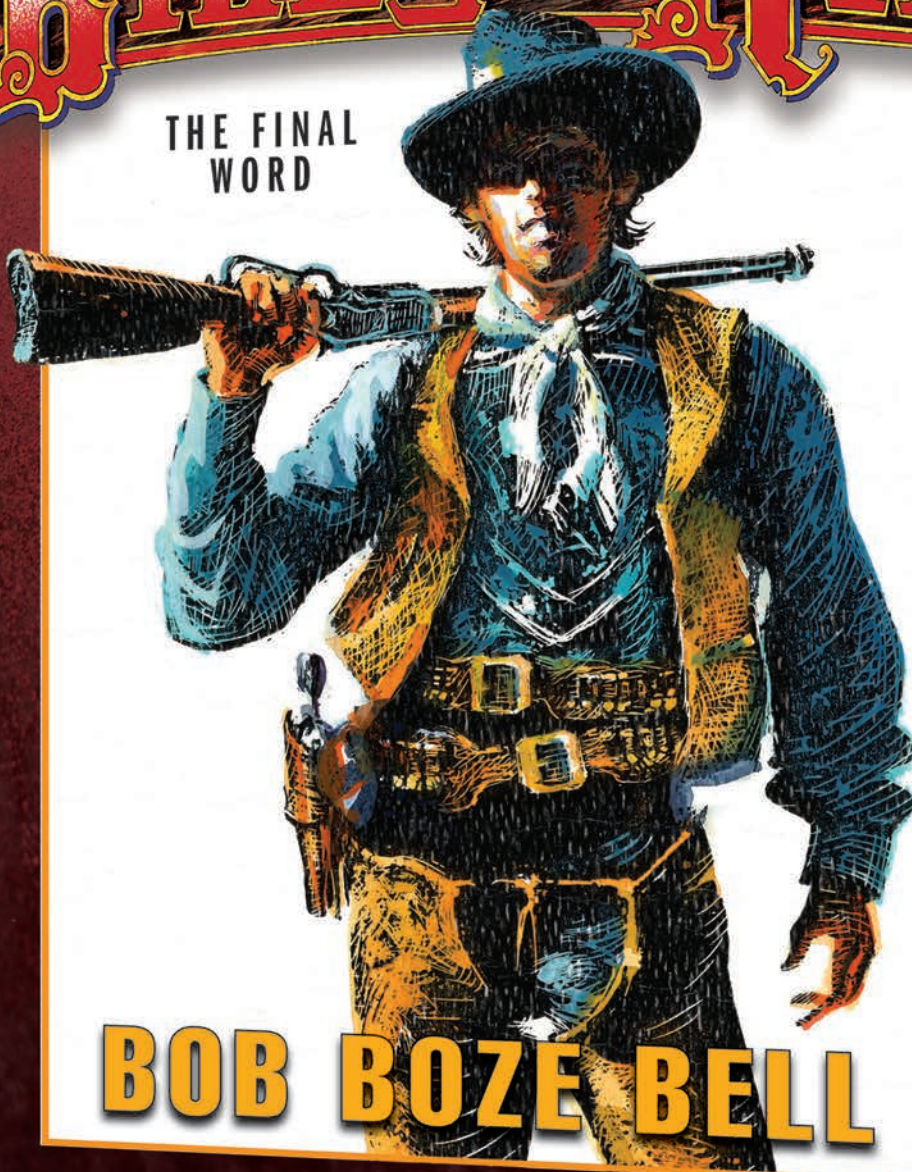
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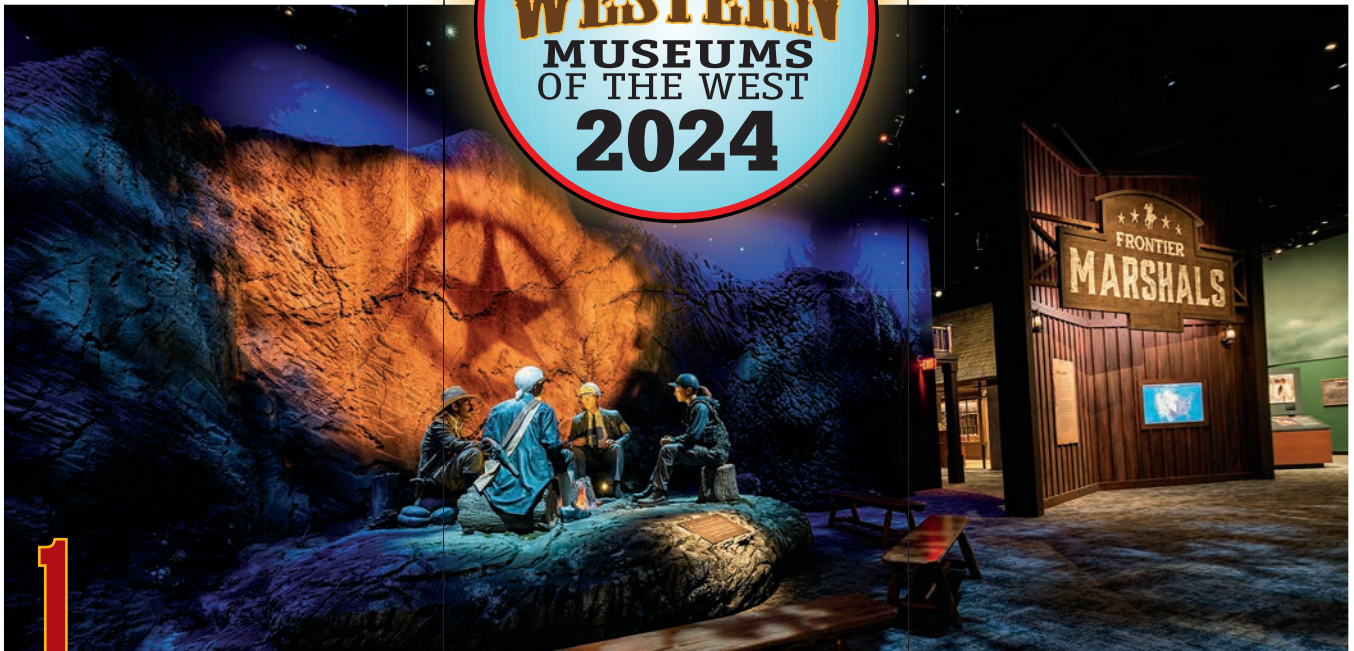
[TrueWestMagazine.com](http://TrueWestMagazine.com)



BY CANDY MOULTON

# Discover the Grandeur of the West

WESTERN MUSEUMS BRING OUR PAST ALIVE FOR TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S GENERATIONS.



1

## United States Marshals Museum

(Fort Smith, AR)

“We are Cherokee: Cherokee Freedman and the Right to Citizenship” is on display this year at the museum. It explains the story of people who were enslaved by Cherokees and were forced into Cherokee Removal along with tribal members. Those enslaved individuals were to be freed after the Cherokee National Council voted in February 1863 to release them, but their emancipation was not acted upon until the Cherokee Treaty of 1866. The presentation includes family stories, photographs and artwork.

[MarshalsMuseum.org](http://MarshalsMuseum.org)

The United States Marshals Museum’s interactive exhibits on the history of the law enforcement agency are entertaining and informative for all generations.

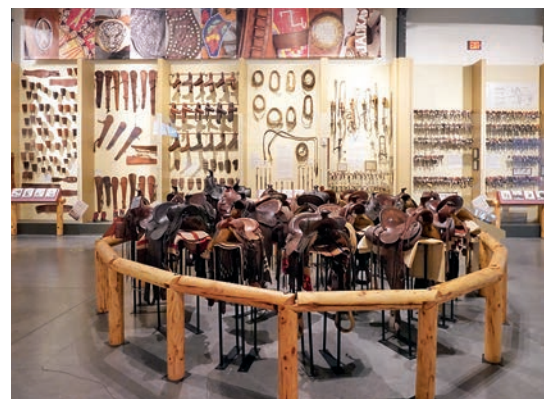
Courtesy U.S. Marshals Museum

## Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West

(Scottsdale, AZ)

Among the special exhibitions this year are “William Matthews: Decades” featuring the art of the Colorado painter, and “Veryl Goodnight: Sled Dogs in America: Alaska & Beyond.” Opening in October is an exhibition of John Ford Clymer paintings that are part of the Eddie Basha Collection. Ongoing presentations include native

2



Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West

Courtesy Western Spirit: Scottsdale’s Museum of the West

American jewelry from the Richard A. Gates Collection and “Canvas of Clay: Hopi Pottery Masterworks.”  
[ScottsdaleMuseumWest.org](http://ScottsdaleMuseumWest.org)



History Colorado Center  
Denver, Colorado  
Courtesy History Colorado Center

Buffalo Bill Center of the West  
Cody, Wyoming  
Courtesy BBCW



## History Colorado Center

(Denver, CO)

In addition to its signature exhibit “The Sand Creek Massacre: The Betrayal that Changed Cheyenne and Arapaho People Forever,” History Colorado this year featured “Winter Warriors: the 10th Mountain Division in World War II.” This show provides details about the U.S. Army training at Camp Hale in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, and how those Army soldiers played a pivotal role in the war against the Nazi German Army in the mountains of Italy.

[historycolorado.org/](http://historycolorado.org/)  
[history-colorado-center](http://history-colorado-center)

## Booth Western Art Museum

(Cartersville, GA)

The museum presented work of five generations of pottery from Kha’poo Owinge or Santa Clara Pueblo in a special exhibition this year, including the work of Rose Naranjo, Jody, Polly Rose, Susan, Kaa and Tonka Folwell. Another special exhibit was “We the People: Portraits of Veterans in America,” a presentation of large-scale watercolors by Mary Whyte. The veterans represented are from all 50 states.

[BoothMuseum.org](http://BoothMuseum.org)

Booth Western Art Museum  
Cartersville, Georgia

Courtesy Booth Western Art Museum



## Buffalo Bill Center of the West

(Cody, WY)

Chuckwagon dinners cooked in Dutch ovens, live raptor programs and summer youth workshops mean there is something for the whole family. Of course, you can’t go wrong with five museums under one roof! Explore the stories of Buffalo Bill, firearms, Plains Indians, natural history and Western Art. Special retrospectives this year are “Advertising the Frontier Myth: Poster Art of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West,” the photographs of James Bama, and the guns of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West performers. [CenteroftheWest.org](http://CenteroftheWest.org)

## C.M. Russell Museum

(Great Falls, MT)

The artwork of Karl Bodmer is on display in “Expedition West: A Journey on the Upper Missouri 1832-1834.” Other exhibits include “Capturing the West: Joseph Henry Sharp” and “Discovering Russell,” a temporary loan from the Montana Historical Society that highlights the friendship between Russell and Malcom Mackay. [CMRussell.org](http://CMRussell.org)

C.M. Russell Museum  
Great Falls, Montana

Courtesy Montana Office of Tourism





## National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

(Oklahoma City, OK)

The 150th anniversary of the Western cattle trail is celebrated in a special showcase that opens in mid-September and will be in place through January. At the same time, the museum features artwork by Cheyenne warrior artists who were imprisoned at Fort Marion, Florida, in an exhibition titled “Imprisoned but Empowered.” This shows the diverse nature of exhibits at this stellar location.

[NationalCowboyMuseum.org](http://NationalCowboyMuseum.org)

## Autry Museum of the American West

(Los Angeles, CA)

The innovative presentation “Stirs Up the Dust” features work by Wendy Red Star that show images of powwow regalia and how it has evolved from buckskin, feathers and beads to more modern elements like sequins and satin. Other exhibitions this year include “KYDOIMOS: The Din of Battle,” a display from more than 50,000 aerial photographs of the Dugway Proving Ground, located in a remote area of the Great Salt Lake Desert in Utah. A related display is “Out of Site: Survey Science and the Hidden West” that shows how new technology, from drone photography to satellite images, have captured images of military installations and other secretive sites. They are presented with contemporary video and photographic works by Steven Yazzie, David Maisel and Michael Light.

[TheAutry.org](http://TheAutry.org)

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Courtesy National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum

Museum of the Big Bend  
Alpine, Texas

Courtesy Museum of the Big Bend



## Museum of the Big Bend

(Alpine, TX)

“FotoTexas III: People, Places & Culture” presents 50 images juried by E. Dan Klepper. The museum, which recently expanded, also features “Western Beef Cattle,” an exhibition that highlights the history of cattle in the United States through the paintings of El Paso artist Tom Lea. They are on long-term loan from the Dallas Museum of Art and hosted by the Tom Lea Institute. The show and the museum connect the regional histories of 19 communities in Texas, New Mexico and Mexico.

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

Boot Hill Museum  
Dodge City, Kansas

Courtesy Boot Hill Museum



## Boot Hill Museum

(Dodge City, KS)

The Kansas Cowboy Hall of Fame, the TV show *Gunsmoke*, and the cattle history of western Kansas are all featured at this museum. Among the *Gunsmoke* memorabilia are dresses worn by Amanda Blake in her role as Miss Kitty. You can also visit the Boot Hill Cemetery and take in a show at the Long Branch Saloon.

[Boothill.org](http://Boothill.org)



Autry Museum of the American West  
Los Angeles, California

Courtesy Autry Museum of the American West

# The Museum of Western Art

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1550 Bandera Highway, Kerrville, TX  
830-896-2553 [museumofwesternart.com](http://museumofwesternart.com)



# Cowboys, Indians, Lawmen, Mountain Men and Outlaws

## Jesse James Bank Museum

(Northfield, MN): The James gang rode into town, robbed a bank and took off. But the story of their actions still lives on in the collections and interpretation at this museum.  
[visitclaymo.com/business/jesse-james-bank-museum](http://visitclaymo.com/business/jesse-james-bank-museum)

## Wyoming Frontier Prison Museum

(Rawlins, WY): There is a creepy factor to this prison museum, a place I remember visiting when it was still a prison. The annual Halloween tours are good for those who like fright! Learn about the prisoners who played baseball and other aspects of prison life.  
[WyomingFrontierPrison.org](http://WyomingFrontierPrison.org)

## Billy the Kid Museum

(Hico, TX): The Kid is the story here, and as we all know, some folks can never get enough of him.

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

## Gunfighter Hall of Fame Museum

(Tombstone, AZ): The weapons, memorabilia and photos of well-known gunfighters are the core of this museum experience.

## Dalton Defender and Coffeyville History Museum

(Coffeyville, KS): When the Daltons rode into town, Coffeyville put up a defense. Learn about it and other local history at this museum.  
[Coffeyville.com](http://Coffeyville.com)

## Chiricahua Desert Museum/ Apache Museum

(Rodeo, NM): This museum has living exhibits that include more than 30 species of rattlesnakes. It also displays objects connected to the Mimbres, Apache and Casas Grande tribes.  
[chiricahuadesertmuseum.com](http://chiricahuadesertmuseum.com)

## Will Rogers Memorial Museum

(Claremore, OK): This museum has clothing from Will Rogers's film career, hosts annual events to celebrate his birthday and has regular movie nights.  
[WillRogers.com](http://WillRogers.com)

## Kwahadi Museum of the American Indian

(Amarillo, TX): Comanche clothing, painted buffalo hides and art are on display here.  
[Kwahadi.com](http://Kwahadi.com)



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Ben Johnson  
Cowboy Museum  
Pawhuska,  
Oklahoma  
Courtesy Ben Johnson  
Cowboy Museum

### **Pawnee Bill Ranch & Museum**

(Ponca, OK): The Wild West show experience lives on in the 14-room mansion of Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" and Mary Lillie. And you can see bison, longhorn cattle and horses, too.  
[okhistory.org/sites/pawneebill.php](http://okhistory.org/sites/pawneebill.php)

### **Texas Ranger Hall of Fame & Museum**

(Waco, TX): This museum is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. It encourages young people to learn about the legacy of the Rangers with a new family reading room and a resurgence in school tours.  
[TexasRanger.org](http://TexasRanger.org)

### **Ben Johnson Cowboy Museum**

(Pawhuska, OK): Rodeo and film star Ben Johnson is the focus of this museum, which has an evolving display of his ranch, rodeo and film activities.  
[BenJohnsonCowboyMuseum.com](http://BenJohnsonCowboyMuseum.com)

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for more information

# Favorite Western Regional Museums

## Museum of the Mountain West

(Montrose, CO): This museum started with one man's collection and now has 28 historical buildings from Montrose, Delta, Ouray, Telluride and Ridgway.

[MuseumoftheMountainWest.org](http://MuseumoftheMountainWest.org)

## Museum of the Old West dba Old Trail Town

(Cody, WY): Liver Eatin' Johnson is buried here, and there are buildings from across the Bighorn Basin that are as rustic as they get. [OldTrailTown.org](http://OldTrailTown.org)



## Grand Encampment Museum

(Encampment, WY): Seventeen historic structures, including a stage station, fire lookout tower and two-story outhouse, are part of the collection. New exhibits include dioramas of the 16-mile-long aerial tramway and copper smelter.

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

## Pony Express Museum

(St. Joseph, MO): The Pony Express may have run only for 18 months, but the legacy of the mail delivery services is alive and well.

Stop in to see where it all started.

[PonyExpress.org](http://PonyExpress.org)

## Legacy of the Plains Museum

(Gering, NE): Located beside the Oregon Trail, this museum includes

both trail era artifacts and other historic memorabilia from western Nebraska.

[LegacyofthePlains.org](http://LegacyofthePlains.org)

## Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum

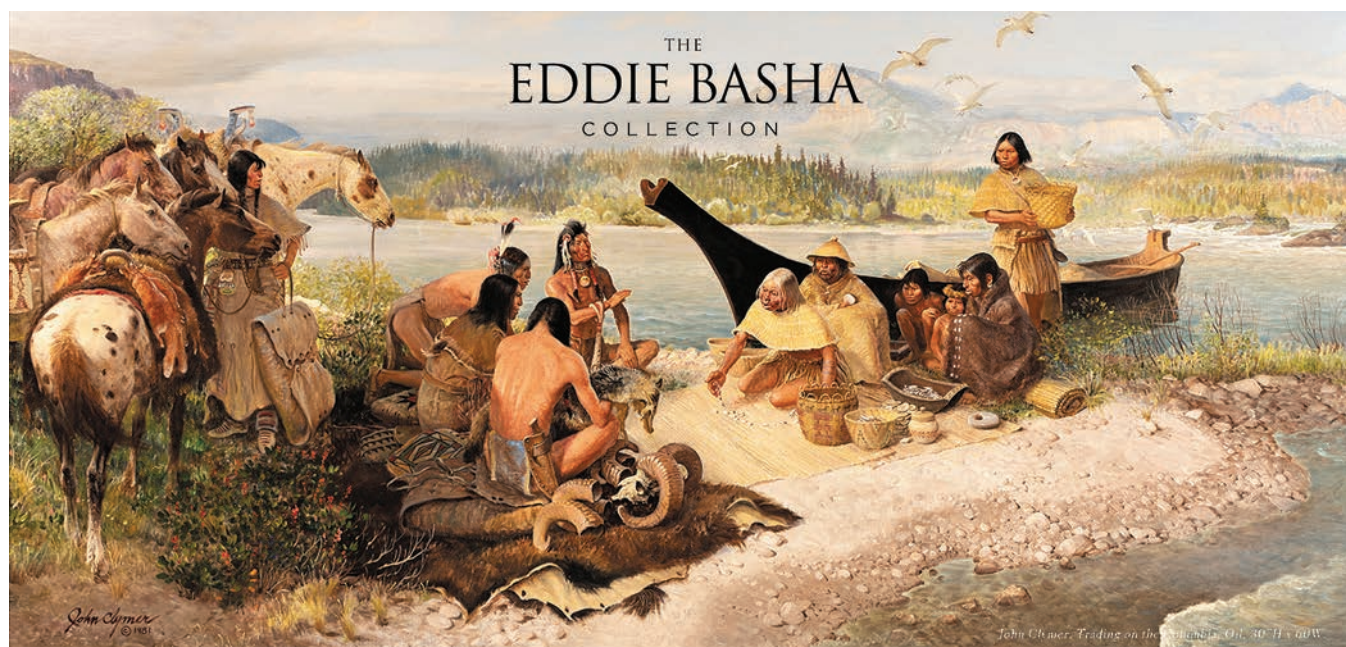
(The Dalles, OR): You may not believe it, but in the Pacific Northwest, Bigfoot is the real deal. To highlight the story "We Believe: Sasquatch in the Columbia River Gorge" is on display through the end of this year.

[GorgeDiscovery.org](http://GorgeDiscovery.org)

## North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame and Center of Western Heritage and Cultures

(Medora, ND): The cowboys of North Dakota are highlighted in this hall of fame, but you will also learn history of American Indians, rodeo, and ranching.

[NorthDakotaCowboy.org](http://NorthDakotaCowboy.org)



## People, Places, Predicaments: John Clymer's West

On View October 8, 2024

Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West



**Western Spirit**

3830 N. Marshall Way | Scottsdale, AZ | [Westernspirit.org](http://Westernspirit.org)

## National Historic Trails Museum

(Casper, WY): History camps and treks for kids, special events at the center and exhibits including “The Battle of Red Buttes” and “Footsteps to the West” are all good reasons to visit this interpretive center, positioned adjacent to the overland trails.

[Nhtcf.org](http://Nhtcf.org)

## Northeastern Nevada Museum

(Elko, NV): Check out the Bob Chow firearms collection, wildlife dioramas, the art of Will James, Ansel Adams, Edward Borien, William Matthews and other special art exhibits. Big expansion plans are starting for this museum, so keep an eye on it.

[museumelko.org](http://museumelko.org)



This church is one of just a few buildings to survive a fire at the Apache Land movie studio now resting at the Superstition Mountain Museum.

Courtesy Superstition Mountain Museum

## Superstition Mountain Museum

(Apache Junction, AZ): Explore the history of Jacob Waltz and the Lost Dutchman Mine.

[superstitionmountainlostdutchmanmuseum.org](http://superstitionmountainlostdutchmanmuseum.org)



## Finney County Historic Museum

(Garden City, KS): Agricultural development and livestock production are stories told at this museum, along with interpretation about the Santa Fe Trail.

[finneycounty.org/170/](http://finneycounty.org/170/)

Historical-Museum

## Kern Valley Museum

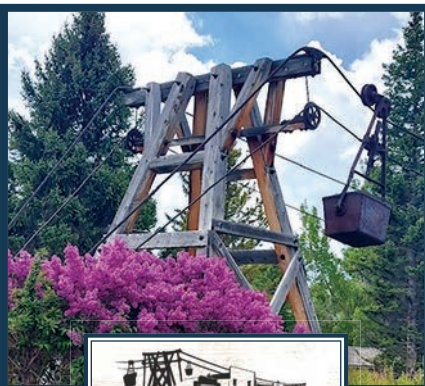
(Kernville, CA): See artifacts from the area ranches, as well as fossils and geological exhibits.

[kernvalleymuseum.org](http://kernvalleymuseum.org)

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GEMuseum.com

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## Museum of the Yellowstone

(West Yellowstone, MT): Transportation in Yellowstone National Park, the place known as Wonderland, is on display here, along with history of the Hebgen Lake Earthquake of 1959 and the Yellowstone Fires of 1988.  
[museumoftheyellowstone.org](http://museumoftheyellowstone.org)

## World Museum of Mining

(Butte, MT): See the facilities of the Orphan Girl mine, overlook the pit of one of the world's largest mining enterprises, and explore buildings related to the mines and the Chinese population of Butte.  
[MiningMuseum.org](http://MiningMuseum.org)

## Santa Fe Trail Center

(Larned, KS): The Santa Fe Trail is one of the oldest trails of commerce in the nation and this center is a good place to learn about the route that opened in 1821. There are horse-drawn vehicles, artifacts and photographs. A new exhibit this year is "Cowboys of the Silver Screen" which features many of the early Western actors of silent movies.  
[SantaFeTrailCenter.org](http://SantaFeTrailCenter.org)

## Museum of Idaho

(Idaho Falls, ID): The kids can enter an Indian tipi and a settler's home, while the whole family can learn about the human and environmental story of Idaho here.  
[MuseumOfIdaho.org](http://MuseumOfIdaho.org)

**Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site** (Alberta, CA):  
[HeadSmashedIn.ca](http://HeadSmashedIn.ca)

**Fort Dalles Museum and Anderson Homestead** (The Dalles, OR):  
[FortDallesMuseum.org](http://FortDallesMuseum.org)

**Fort Concho National Historic Landmark** (San Angelo, TX):  
[FortConcho.com](http://FortConcho.com)

**Fort Caspar Museum** (Casper, WY):  
[FortCasperWyoming.com](http://FortCasperWyoming.com)

**Fort Scott National Historic Site** (Fort Scott, KS): [NPS.gov](http://NPS.gov)

**National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum** (Leadville, CO):  
[MiningHallOfFame.org](http://MiningHallOfFame.org)

**Wyoming Territorial Prison** (Laramie, WY): [WyoParks.Wyo.gov](http://WyoParks.Wyo.gov)

**Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm Historic Site** (Olathe, KS):  
[Mahaffie.org](http://Mahaffie.org)

**Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** (Crow Agency, MT):  
[NPS.org/libi](http://NPS.org/libi)

**California Trail Interpretive Center** (Elko, NV):  
[CaliforniaTrailCenter.org](http://CaliforniaTrailCenter.org)

**Donner Memorial State Historic Park Museum** (Truckee, CA):  
[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**Old Cowtown Museum** (Wichita, KS): [OldCowtown.org](http://OldCowtown.org)

**The New Mexico History Museum and the Palace of the Governors National Historic Landmark** (Santa Fe, NM): [NMHistoryMuseum.org](http://NMHistoryMuseum.org)

**OK Corral Historic Complex** (Tombstone, AZ): [ok-corral.com](http://ok-corral.com)

**Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park** (Coloma, CA): [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**Gold Bug Park & Mine** (Placerville, CA):  
[cityofplacerville.org](http://cityofplacerville.org)

## Living History Museums

**Strater Hotel Tours** (Durango, CO): [Strater.com](http://Strater.com)

**Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer** (Grand Island, NE):  
[StuhrMuseum.org](http://StuhrMuseum.org)



**Tubac Presidio State Historic Park Museum** ( Tubac, AZ):

*TubacPresidio.org*

**Tonopah Historic Mining Park**

(Tonopah, NV):

*TonopahMiningPark.com*

**Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum** (Carson City, NV):

*StewartIndianSchool.com*

**New Mexico Farm & Ranch**

**Heritage Museum** (Las Cruces, NM):

*nmfarmandranchmuseum.org*

**Kaw Mission and Last Chance Store Museums on the Santa Fe Trail** (Council Grove, KS):

*nps.gov/places/kaw-mission-state-historic-site.htm*

*nps.gov/places/kaw-mission-state-historic-site.htm*

## Firearms Museums

**Cody Firearms Museum** (Buffalo

Bill Center of the West, Cody, WY):

*CenterOfTheWest.org*

**Museum of the Fur Trade** (Chadron,

NE): *FurTrade.org*

**J.M. Davis Arms and Historical**

**Museum** (Claremore, OK):

*TheGunMuseum.com*

**Woolaroc Museum** (Bartlesville,

OK): *Woolaroc.org*

**Collector's Firearms** (Houston, TX):

*CollectorsFirearms.com*

**Museum of Northwest Colorado**

(Craig, CO): *MuseumNWCo.org*

**The Firearms Experience** (Cody,

WY): *CodyFirearmsExperience.com*

**The John Browning Firearms**

**Museum** (Ogden, UT):

*OgdenCity.com*

**The Charleston Museum**

(Charleston, SC):

*CharlestonMuseum.org*



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Sharlot Hall Museum, Prescott, Arizona

Courtesy Stuart Rosebrook

## Editor's Picks-Museums Not to Miss

### PAWNEE BILL RANCH & MUSEUM



Maj. Gordon W. Lillie

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**Doss Heritage and Cultural Center**  
(Weatherford, TX): [DossCenter.org](http://DossCenter.org)

**West Texas Trail Museum**  
(Moorcroft, WY): [devilstowercountry.com/museums-culture/the-west-texas-trail-museum](http://devilstowercountry.com/museums-culture/the-west-texas-trail-museum)

**Tales 'N' Trails Museum** (Nocono, TX): [TalesnTrails.org](http://TalesnTrails.org)

**West of the Pecos Museum** (Pecos, TX): [WestofthePecosmuseum.org](http://WestofthePecosmuseum.org)

**Hutchinson County Historical Museum** (Borger, TX): [HutchisonCountyMuseum.org](http://HutchisonCountyMuseum.org)

**Fort Smith Museum of History**  
(Fort Smith, AR): [FortSmithMuseum.org](http://FortSmithMuseum.org)

**Campbell County Rockpile Museum** (Gillette, WY): [campbellcountywy.gov/2169/Rockpile-Museum](http://campbellcountywy.gov/2169/Rockpile-Museum)

**Three Rivers Museum** (Muskogee, OK): [3riversmuseum.com](http://3riversmuseum.com)

**Days of 76 Museum** (Deadwood, SD): [DeadwoodHistory.com](http://DeadwoodHistory.com)

**Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum** (Bisbee, AZ): [bisbeemuseum.org](http://bisbeemuseum.org)

**Nevada Northern Railway Museum**  
(Ely, NV): [NNRY.com](http://NNRY.com)

**Bishop Museum** (Bishop, CA): [BishopMuseum.org](http://BishopMuseum.org)

**Yuma Territorial Prison State Park**  
(Yuma, AZ): [azstateparks.com/yuma-territorial](http://azstateparks.com/yuma-territorial)

**Sharlot Hall Museum** (Prescott, AZ): [SharlotHallMuseum.org](http://SharlotHallMuseum.org)

**Territorial Capital Museum & Library** (Lecompton, KS): [lecomptonkansas.com](http://lecomptonkansas.com)

**Wheels Museum**  
(Albuquerque, NM): [WheelsMuseum.org](http://WheelsMuseum.org)



Candy Moulton is a four-time Spur Award-winner for biographies and documentary films. She was also named True Westerner in 2023. She makes her home in Encampment, Wyoming.

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

## Q&A with U.S. Marshals Museum Curator David Kennedy



David Kennedy

Hired as the U.S. Marshals Museum curator of collections and exhibits in 2015, David Kennedy waited eight years before the Fort Smith, Arkansas, museum opened in July 2023. “I would be lying if I did not say there was one

point or another at which I was thinking about polishing my resumé,” he says.

But he has settled into the job at the 53,000-square-foot, \$50 million facility and took time to talk to *True West*.

### How important is Bass Reeves?

Bass is very important. Did he arrest 3,000 people? No. Did he serve for more than 30 years? No. These are some of the misconceptions we try to push back against when we tell his story. That said, Bass has an amazing story, and his success as a deputy is inspirational.

### Why is it important for museums to bring in new exhibits or special events?

There are quite a few people in any zip code who will only ever go to a museum one time.

About one-third in any community will never go. If nothing changes, or if there is no event which they see as a draw, these visitors do not see a need to return.

### What are the biggest changes you’ve seen in Western history museums since you started out—for good or bad?

Most of the changes have been good. I would put almost any new—1990s or later—museum exhibit up against those from my youth or earlier. The willingness and understanding to tell stories and acknowledge there was more to the West than a man with a gun has been a welcome change.

### How much did *True Grit* get right?

Charles Portis’s novel got a lot right. The movies...well...they’re entertaining, but this area doesn’t look like Colorado or New Mexico.



An advertisement for the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum (PPHM). The top left features a logo for 'TRUE WEST TOP ART MUSEUMS OF THE WEST 2024'. The main text reads '26,000 SQUARE MILES + 500 MILLION YEARS' and 'DISCOVER TEXAS' LARGEST history MUSEUM'. Below this is the large red 'PPHM' logo, followed by 'PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM', 'CANYON, TEXAS', and the website 'panhandleplains.org'. A red windmill icon is on the right. The bottom of the ad is a collage of three images: the museum's exterior building, a young girl sitting on a wooden saddle in a museum exhibit, and a large dinosaur skeleton on display in a museum gallery.

# The West is Alive!

THE NATION'S TOP WESTERN ART MUSEUMS PROVIDE A WINDOW INTO OUR PAST THAT INSPIRES OUR PRESENT.



Art of the American West from old favorites like Frederic Remington and Charlie Russell to today's men and women still attracts fans. Museums and galleries proved that during the past year with a wide range of artists new and old.

And 2024-25 looks just as good with the opening of the [re]Frame: Haub Family Collection of Western American Art project, a four-exhibit view that opened in May at the Tacoma (Washington) Art Museum, and Imprisoned but Empowered: Cheyenne Warrior Artists from Fort Marion at Oklahoma City's National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum (September 13-January).

Here are this year's top 10:

## 1 Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art

(Indianapolis, IN)

Always a favorite, and always thinking outside the box, the Eiteljorg amazed with *Acts of Faith: Religion and the American West*, a look at how religion shaped and influenced the West, which closed August 4. But the magically mythical *Preston Singletary: Raven and the Box of Daylight*, the Tlingit-American artist's story of Raven (the creator-trickster in Tlingit culture), opens November 8 and runs through March 9. This exhibit was organized by Singletary and the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington.



Don't forget the Eiteljorg's annual Indian Market, June 22-23.

[Eiteljorg.org](http://Eiteljorg.org)



The Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art is one of the premier Western museums east of the Mississippi River.

Images Courtesy Eiteljorg Museum

## 2 The Museum of Western Art

(Kerrville, TX)

The former Cowboy Artists of America Museum continues to showcase all things Western. Case in point: Scott Christensen & Quang Ho, which ends September 21, displays Western landscapes as seen by Christensen, who grew up in Lander, Wyoming, and whose works have been shown at Russia's Ilya Repin St. Petersburg State Academic Institute, and Ho, a Vietnamese-American who can be realistic or abstract or a bit of both.

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



The Museum of the Western Art  
Kerrville, Texas

Courtesy The Museum of Western Art

Heard Museum  
Phoenix, Arizona  
Courtesy Heard Museum

## 3 Heard Museum

(Phoenix, AZ)

At this premier museum for American Indian artwork and home to the annual Indian Fair & Market (March 1-2), we recommend Harry Fonseca: Transformations, which closes April 20, and Art & Sole—sneakers as art!—running through January 5. As always, Home: Native People in the Southwest is a must, no matter how many times you've seen it.

[Heard.org](http://Heard.org)



## 4 The Brinton Museum

(Big Horn, WY)

Hurry! Wyoming's Artist: Harry Jackson, featuring paintings and bronze sculptures curated by Cody artist Gerald A. Shippen, closes September 2. But admirers of Western and American Indian artwork always have plenty to see. Besides, the ranch, buildings and surrounding countryside are works of art.

[TheBrintonMuseum.org](http://TheBrintonMuseum.org)



Taos Art Museum  
Taos, New Mexico

Courtesy Taos Art Museum

## 5 Taos Art Museum

(Taos, NM)

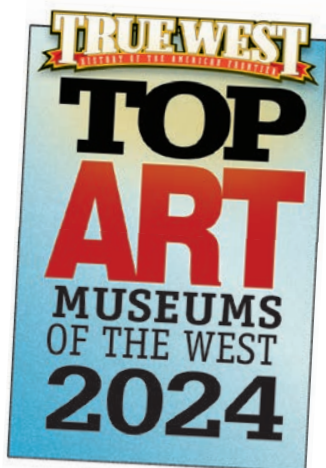
Taos photographer Zoë Zimmerman has been taking pictures for years, and *Forsaken Objects and Untold Stories*, on display in the museum's Fechin House till January 12, showcases Zimmerman's photographs of items found in the house's basement as well as some Nicolai Fechin landscapes and portraits.

[TaosArtMuseum.org](http://TaosArtMuseum.org)





The Brinton Museum  
Big Horn, Wyoming  
Courtesy The Brinton Museum



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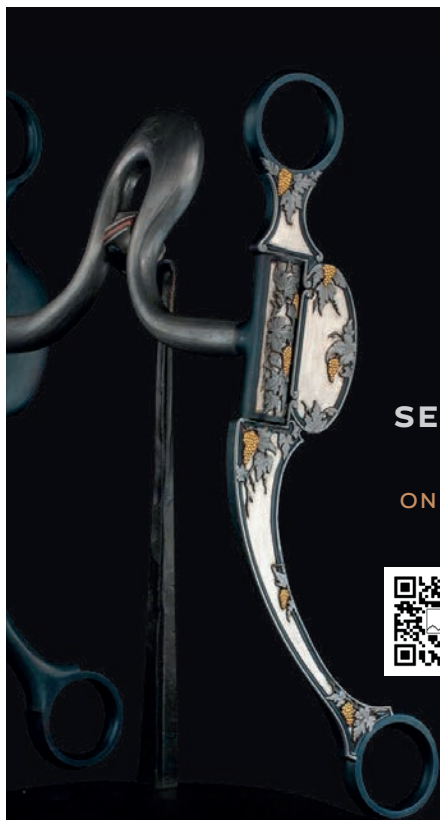
*A Swing and a Miss, Trophy Style Buckle by Wayne Franklin, 2024 Trappings of Texas Premier Artist*



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Denver Art Museum  
Denver, Colorado  
Courtesy Denver Art Museum

## 6: Denver Art Museum

(Denver, CO)

We're sad to see The Russells in Denver, 1921 (showing his works from a solo art show at the Brown Palace Hotel) close, but Wild Things: The Art of Maurice Sendak, opening October 13, might not be all that Western, but it'll sure make you smile. And there's plenty to see in the Western American Art Galleries.

[DenverArtMuseum.org](http://DenverArtMuseum.org)



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Desert Caballeros Western Museum  
Wickenburg, Arizona  
Courtesy Library of Congress

# 7

## Desert Caballeros Western Museum

(Wickenburg, AZ)

After Howard Post: Western Perspectives

closed in February, The Horse in Art opened in July and runs through June 8, and Werner Segarra: Vaqueros de la Cruz del Diablo is up September 28 through March 2. A longtime favorite, the Cowgirl Up! exhibition and sale celebrates its 20th anniversary March 28-May 25.

[WesternMuseum.org](http://WesternMuseum.org)



# 8


## The Wittliff Collections

(San Marcos, TX)

This unique museum owes a lot to its namesake, Bill Wittliff (of *Lonesome Dove* miniseries fame) with a focus on


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[DeadwoodHistory.com](http://DeadwoodHistory.com)  
[CityOfDeadwood.com](http://CityOfDeadwood.com)  
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 www.visitmuskogee.com



North American Reciprocal



Southwestern literature, art, photography, music and, of course, *Lonesome Dove*. Witness to War, focusing on the United States' 1914 invasion and occupation of Veracruz, closed in July, but Edward Curtis: Treasures of The North American Indian rotates the renowned photographer's works, and the Lonesome Dove Collection is always a fixture.

TheWittliffCollections.txst.edu

The Wittliff Collections  
 San Marcos, Texas  
 Courtesy The Wittliff Collections

Crocker Art Museum  
 Sacramento, California  
 Courtesy Crocker Art Museum



## 9 Crocker Art Museum

(Sacramento, CA)

With three stories of art that constantly changes, this museum is always worth

visiting. American Indian art has long been exhibited here. Pueblo Pottery: Native American Pottery and Sculpture runs through December 3, 2028.

CrockerArt.org

Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum  
Canyon, Texas  
Courtesy PPHM



# 10 Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum

(Canyon, TX)

The PPHM's roughly 8,000 art pieces continue to amaze in galleries dedicated to Western illustrators, Texas Panhandle favorite H.D. Bugbee and Dallas Art Society founder Frank Reaugh. The art isn't all Western. Dali's Wonderland revealed Salvador Dali's take on *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in a special exhibit earlier this year.

[PanhandlePlains.org](http://PanhandlePlains.org)



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[www.taosartmuseum.org](http://www.taosartmuseum.org)



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## Favorite Western Regional Art Museums

### Phippen Museum

(Prescott, AZ)

The annual Hold Your Horses! Invitational Exhibition & Sale runs through September 29, but there's always something to see in the Phippen's permanent collection, including works by Solon H. Borglum and, of course, its namesake, George Phippen (1915-66), cofounder and first president of the Cowboy Artists of America.

[PhippenArtMuseum.org](http://PhippenArtMuseum.org)

### Legacy Gallery

(Scottsdale, AZ)

A who's who of great Western artists can be found in this must-see Scottsdale gallery, including Rick Terry's offbeat looks at the West, Scott Rogers's detailed sculptures and wonderful paintings by Tom Browning, Grant Redden and others.

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

### Tucson Museum of Art

(Tucson, AZ)

The museum covers just about every kind of art imaginable. Popol Vuh and the Maya Art of Storytelling closes September 22. But visitors can spend hours admiring the ongoing Southwest Art:



"Western Heroes of Pulp Fiction: Dime Novel to Pulp Fiction" at the Tucson Museum of Art includes Aaron Riley's, 2014 Deathly Drifter.

Courtesy ©Pinnacle Entertainment Group of Chandler, AZ Tucson Museum of Art

Contemporary Conversations, Art of the American West and People of the West: A Rethinking of "Westerners."

[TucsonMuseumOfArt.org](http://TucsonMuseumOfArt.org)

### Olaf Wieghorst Museum

(El Cajon, CA)

Olaf Wieghorst's story remains inspirational. Danish kid, not out of his teens, arrives in America in 1918 broke and knowing three English words. Joins the Army, then becomes a cowboy, teaches himself to paint and becomes one of the wealthiest painters of his time.

[WieghorstMuseum.org](http://WieghorstMuseum.org)



## A.R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art

(Trinidad, CO)

Don't think this museum is solely dedicated to its name-sake whose works adorned the covers of myriad magazines back in that Golden Era. You'll also find works from noted illustrators Harvey Dunn and Harold Von Schmidt, even Native American pieces Mitchell collected and Hispanic Colonial Art.

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

## Stark Museum of Art

(Orange, TX)

Black Pioneers: Legacy in the American West, which told Black Western history through pictorial quilts, closed in August. But with a gallery that includes artwork by John James Audubon, Georgia O'Keeffe, Frederic Remington and Charlie Russell, there's plenty to see.

[StarkMuseum.org](http://StarkMuseum.org)



Frederic Remington's 1901 *Halt-Dismount!* Is a 30.25 x 51.25-inch oil on canvas, and one of the most significant pieces in the Western art collection of the Stark Museum of Art in Orange, Texas.

Courtesy Stark Museum of Art, Orange, Texas, 31.10.5.

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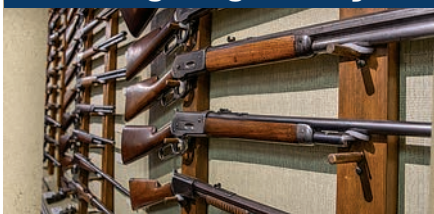


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## Yellowstone Art Museum

(Billings, MT)

Emphasizing artists and art from Montana and the northwest, YAM continues to impress. Celebrating Complexities: Across Native American Fellowship Artists, featuring works from four Native nations with different styles and backgrounds whose works include painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture, runs through October 6.

[ArtMuseum.org](http://ArtMuseum.org)

## Joslyn Art Museum

(Omaha, NE)

The moment we've been waiting for arrives September 10, when the Joslyn, which first opened its doors in 1931, reopens after two years of reconstruction and renovation. We can't wait to see how the museum will display its outstanding permanent collection, new works and a stunning new building.

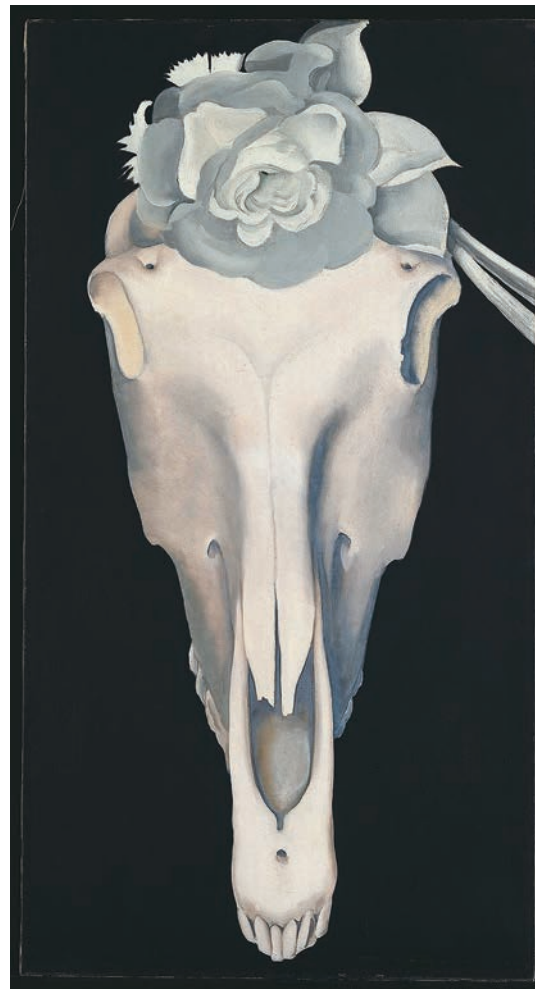
[Joslyn.org](http://Joslyn.org)

## Georgia O'Keeffe Museum

(Santa Fe, NM)

Visiting this museum always feels intimate. Rooted in Place, which focused on O'Keeffe's fascination with trees, ended in August, but the phenomenal Georgia O'Keeffe: Making a Life, which focuses on how she lived, or curated, her own life, runs through November 2, 2025.

[OKeeffeMuseum.org](http://OKeeffeMuseum.org)



*Horse's Skull with White Rose, 1931*  
by Georgia O'Keeffe.

Courtesy Georgia O'Keeffe Museum (Santa Fe)

## New Mexico Museum of Art

(Santa Fe, NM)

Selections from the 20th Century Collection runs through the end of this year at this museum just off the Plaza, while contemporary art fans will admire Off-Center: New Mexico Art, 1970-2000, through May 4, at the museum's Vladez Contemporary in Santa Fe's Railyard Arts District, about a 15-minute walk from the Plaza.

[NMArtMuseum.org](http://NMArtMuseum.org)



## Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum

(Cuero, TX)

Known for its extraordinary collections of spurs and Edward S. Curtis photographs, this museum, about 90 miles southeast of San Antonio, amazed art lovers with Spectacular Stitches: Works by Master Textile Artists from The Frank Klein Collection, which closed February 10.

ChisholmTrailMuseum.org



A display inside the Kenedy Ranch Museum.

Courtesy Kenedy Ranch Museum

## Kenedy Ranch Museum

(Sarita, TX)

In what once was the Kenedy Pasture Company building, the story of Mifflin Kenedy and his family—three generations’

worth—is told in a grand building through murals and Kim Crowley’s sculptures. And the surrounding Wild Horse Desert is beautiful, too.

Kenedy.org

## Nelson Museum of the West

(Cheyenne, WY)

An old favorite, the Nelson tells the story of many Western cultures through artifacts, books and art, from custom

saddles to handmade spurs to many paintings—even painter Burt Procter’s studio—to Native works to a humorous Bud Odell wood carving.

NelsonMuseum.org

## Hulett Museum & Art Gallery

(Hulett, WY)

Specializing in eastern Wyoming’s history and culture, this small museum often tells its history through art, and its art through history. Quilt lovers shouldn’t miss the Hulett’s fourth annual quilt show September 20-22.

HulettMuseum.com

Johnny D. Boggs has been writing about art for more than 25 years, or, basically, since he moved to art mecca Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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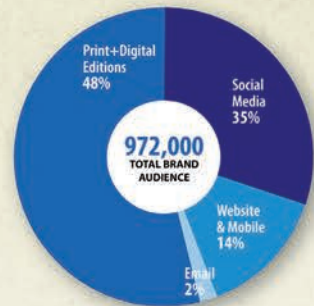
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# Little Joe, Boot Hill and Doc Holliday

## Are Billy Clanton and the McLaury brothers really buried where the markers are placed at Tombstone's Boothill Graveyard?

James Carroll  
San Antonio, Texas

Boothill Graveyard became Tombstone's final resting place in 1878 and lasted until 1884 when the new cemetery opened west of town. The site was allowed to return to its natural state until 1929; by then, the grave markers were gone. To make the best of a bad situation, new markers were created and planted in the same general area. So, the markers for Billy Clanton and the McLaury brothers may or may not be where they were originally buried.

## A few years back, I visited a site called "Little House on the Prairie." Is this place for real?

Jake Smelser  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Yep, that was one of the Ingalls homes. An annual Prairie Days Festival is held at the "Little House on the Prairie," 13 miles southwest of Independence, Kansas, and a little northwest of Coffeyville. The reconstructed house sits on the original site where Laura Ingalls Wilder and her family lived from 1869 to 1871.

Did Jack Thorp's 1898 song "Little Joe the Wrangler" inspire Frederic Remington to paint his masterpiece *The Stampede* (1908)? Hard to know, but if Jack Thorp's song provided some inspiration, Remington's masterpiece captures the poignancy of Thorp's lyrics.

Courtesy The Gilcrease Museum, 0172-2329



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.



Visitors to Tombstone's Boothill Graveyard can pay their respects to Billy Clanton and the McLaury brothers, even though their markers are not resting above or near their original grave sites.

Chad Coppers

## Can you tell me about the cowboy song, "Little Joe the Wrangler?"

Charlie Thorne  
Newton, Kansas

A cowboy named Jack Thorp wrote "Little Joe the Wrangler" in 1898 while helping trail a herd from Chimney Lake, New Mexico, to Higgins, Texas. He scribbled the words about a wrangler he knew on an old paper bag one night, while sitting at a campfire. It was sung to the tune of "Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane." It began to circulate around the cattle camps after he sang it at a saloon in Weed, New Mexico. The song was first published in 1908 in Thorp's book, *Songs of the Cowboys*.

## Who invented the first reliable self-contained cartridges?

Rufus Anderson  
San Francisco, CA

The first reliable centerfire cartridge was invented in 1845 by Frenchman Louis-Nicolas Flobert. He constructed the first rimfire metallic using a bullet fit into a percussion cap. The search for a self-contained cartridge began in the early 1850s, but they didn't gain acceptance until the 1860s. Ironically, an employee of Colt, Rollin White, came up with the idea of boring through the cylinder to accept metallic cartridges, but Sam Colt vetoed the innovation. So White went to work for Smith and Wesson, which licensed a patent that didn't expire until 1870.





Doc Holliday had his last known photo made in Prescott sometime between November 1879 and August 1880.

D.F. Mitchell,  
True West Archives

**In many TV and movie Western shootouts, somebody will duck being a overturned table to get cover from an opponent's bullets. Would a well-made table actually be able to do that, or is this something Hollywood made up?**

Howard Weinstein  
Elkridge, Maryland

It would depend on the weapon caliber and the thickness of the table. Most firearms use rounds with more than enough force to rip through common wooden tables. Even so, hiding behind a table is a Hollywood staple.

**Did Doc Holliday spend much time in Prescott, Arizona?**

Richard Stoneman  
Ft. Worth, Texas

Doc and Kate left Las Vegas, New Mexico, in the fall of 1879. They traveled with the Earps to Prescott. The Earps headed for Tombstone a month later, but Doc and Kate remained through the winter. Wyatt kept urging him to join them in Tombstone. Sometime in early 1880, Kate and Doc split in Gillett; Kate went to Globe, and Doc went back to Prescott. In March, Doc went back to Las Vegas. According to the 1880 census, he returned to Prescott in June and probably remained until August, when he went to Tucson. He arrived in Tombstone in September.

That seems to be the extent of his time in the territorial capital of Arizona. Incidentally, while in Prescott, he stayed in the same boardinghouse as John Gosper, who was acting territorial governor at the time.\*

\*For more on Doc's travels to and from New Mexico and Arizona, read Brad Courtney's feature "Doc Holliday— Before He Went to Tombstone" in the July-August 2024 issue of True West.



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# What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

**I was born** in Clearwater, Florida, when it was still a small town, and grew up playing cowboy with neighborhood kids. It was a wonderful place to grow up, friendly and safe.

**My parents** were the best. Community and church leaders. Dad's business allowed him to take us on six-week summer vacations; a 1949 Ford pulling an Airstream trailer, instilling in me a love of the outdoors, adventure and Westerns.

**My first Western movie** memories are of Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, Alan Ladd in *Shane* and James Stewart in anything! If Dad saw a Western film location he liked, that's where we would vacation.

**Visiting Monument Valley** one summer, we observed John Ford directing *The Searchers*. Got to meet and have my photo taken with Duke, too. I was eight. Memories don't get much better, or more influential, than that!

**During my first semester** at Stetson University, I auditioned for and got the lead in a play. I changed majors from Business to Theater, did many more plays, two seasons of summer stock, shot student films and have been following my dreams ever since.

**Before graduation**, I applied to the ABC affiliate in Orlando and took a job in news because I got to shoot and edit 16mm film every single day. I learned more about filmmaking in six months than I thought possible.

**I hosted** late movies in Orlando and Tampa. When celebrities would roll through town, I'd invite them to join me on the show, honing my interview skills. I also hosted a Monday through Friday entertainment radio show and wrote a syndicated newspaper column on movies and TV.

**Moving to Los Angeles** in late 1978 without a job seemed like good idea. Luck has so much to do with success.

**The Golden Boot Awards** was an annual charity gala hosted by Pat Buttram benefiting the Motion Picture Hospital. For 25 years we bestowed tributes to Western performers. Everybody came! It was Cowboy Heaven.

**My favorite Westerns** are *The Wild Bunch* and *The Searchers*. Both are impactful classics that I watch repeatedly.

**I was** SrVP of marketing at Quintex when we made *Lonesome Dove*. I never went on location but watching the dailies was thrilling. We knew we had a winner!

**Wyatt Earp: Return to Tombstone** is still the only Wyatt Earp movie ever filmed in Tombstone. I brought back TV's Hugh O'Brian, loaded the cast with friends and had Johnny Cash sing the theme song.

**The Hole in the Wall Gang Ride** takes place annually in



Courtesy "Word on Westerns" Archives

## ROB WORD, WESTERN FILMMAKER AND HISTORIAN

As one of the founding fathers and producer of the Motion Picture and Television Fund's prestigious Golden Boot Awards (1983-2007), Emmy-nominated writer/producer **Rob Word** loves the West. His Western credits include: hosting/producing and directing YouTube's long running interview series *A Word on Westerns*, which was filmed at the Autry Museum and is now done on location. He is the coauthor of *Fridays with Art* and *52 Weeks—52 TV Westerns*.

Wyoming. Thanks to Marty Kove, I've been a member since 1986.

**Riding** in the Ben Johnson and Dean Smith Celebrity Rodeos was always exciting. I was honored to be asked.

**I always pushed** for Westerns at the various film companies I've worked. I remember director Robert Wise would see me and say, without provocation, "I'm sorry, Rob. I just don't like Westerns."

**The Lone Pine Film Festival** is unique. You're able to watch one of the dozens of films shot in the Alabama Hills and then walk among them with the ghosts of Randolph Scott, Audie Murphy, William Boyd, Roy and Gene.

**My eclectic career** prepared me to produce and host the talk show, *A Word on Westerns*. It evolved from a monthly lunch with friends into an award-winning weekly YouTube series lasting over 10 years...so far.

**Laura**, my smart, beautiful and loving wife of 30 years, has taught me that it's not always about me. Having a son born later in life enabled me to say "no" to many jobs that would have deprived me of spending time with him. Now RJ's a talented producer, and we often work together.

**History Has Taught Me** that happiness and friendships can't be bought. Always follow your dreams. Find a profession that makes you happy and you will succeed.



# Discover Where History Happened in the Old West

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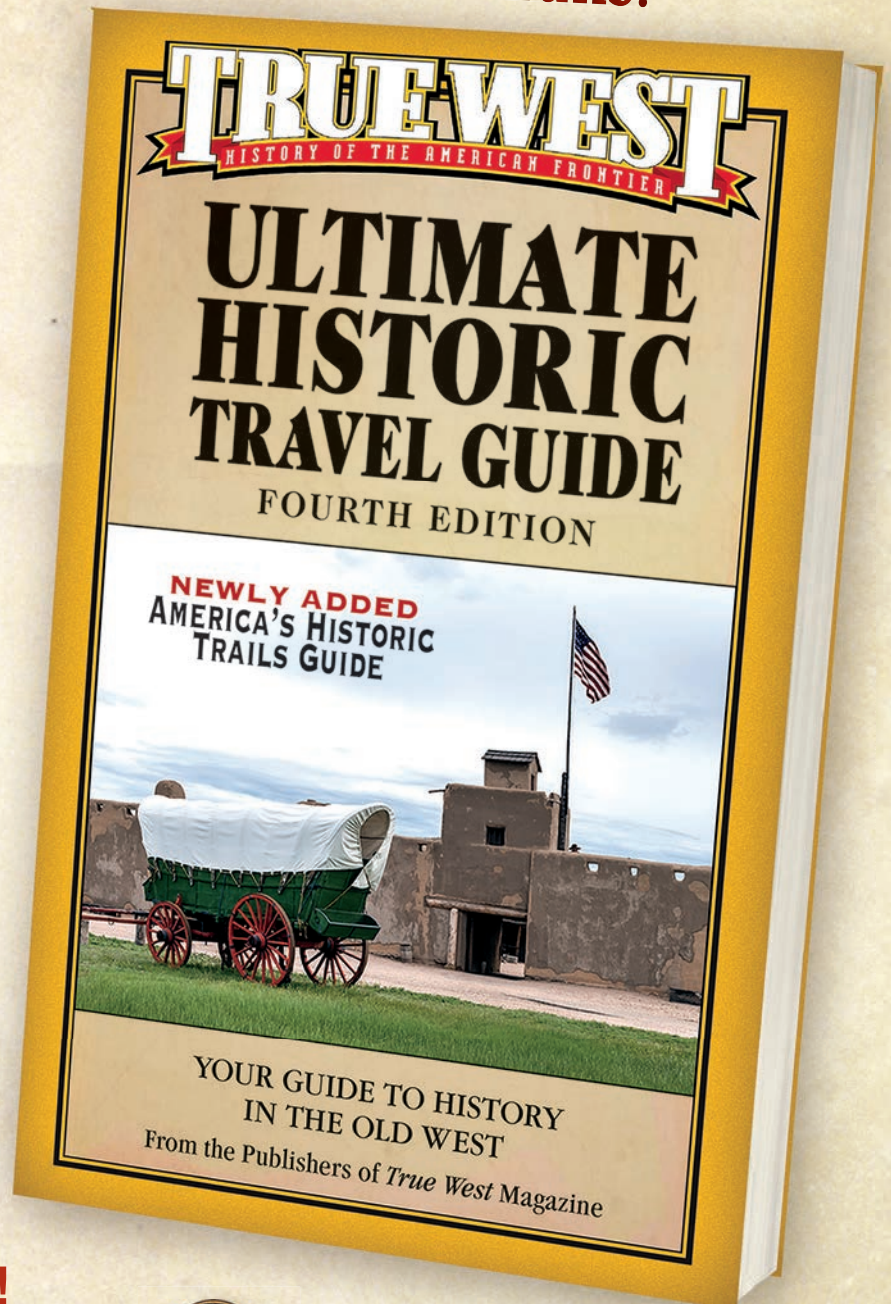
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