OUR 23RD ANNUAL HERITAGE TRAVEL ISSUE

TRUE WEST

HISTORY ... FRONTIER

The Original Landman

Legendary Texan, Charlie Goodnight, was a Texas Ranger and he saved the buffalo. Some think he is the original landman. Here's the true story.

By Allen Barra

PLUS:

The Long & Dangerous Road to The Alamo

By Bill Groneman III

The Bowie Knife Backstory:

The legendary weapon prized by frontiersmen who used it for survival and defense

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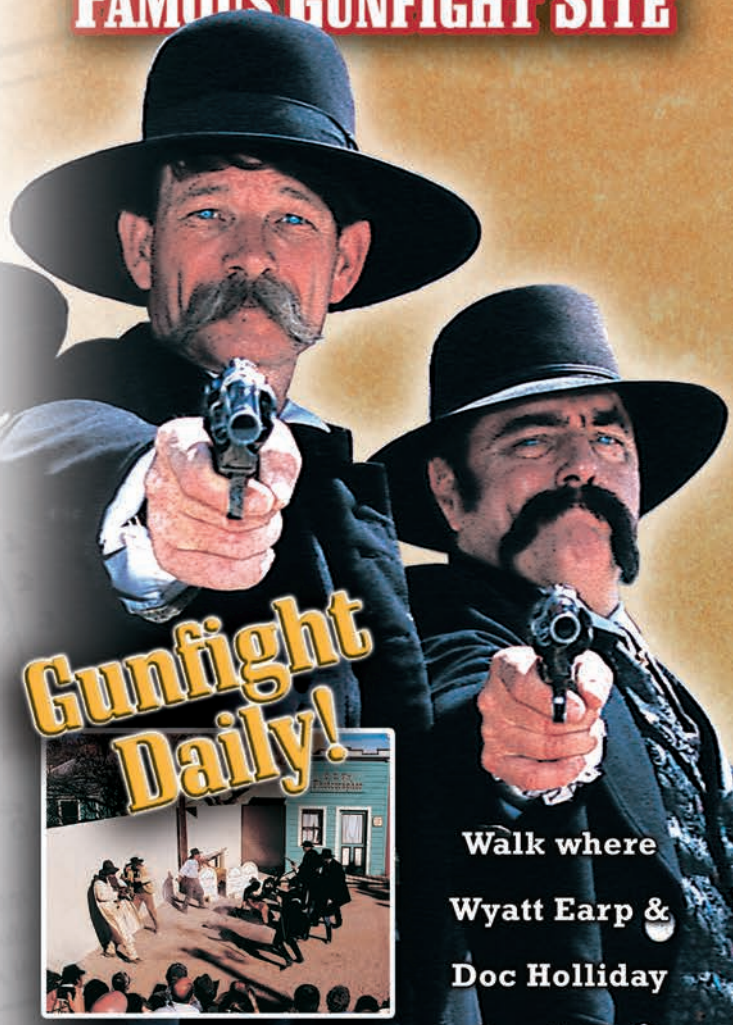

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WILD FRONTIER ADVENTURES

The Mountain Men who blaze the trails out in the American West typify Wild Bill Hickok's own adventures in the frontier wilderness. Harry Yount experiences the wild frontier in all its glories as he sits here at Berthoud Pass in the Rocky Mountains of central Colorado, in 1874, as part of the Ferdinand V. Hayden Survey. He begins to tame the newly created Yellowstone National Park six years later, as that park's first and only gamekeeper. He learns how impossible the task is for one man to patrol the park, and he urges the government to form a ranger force.

Courtesy U.S. Geological Survey

TRUE WEST
HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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

EDITORIAL

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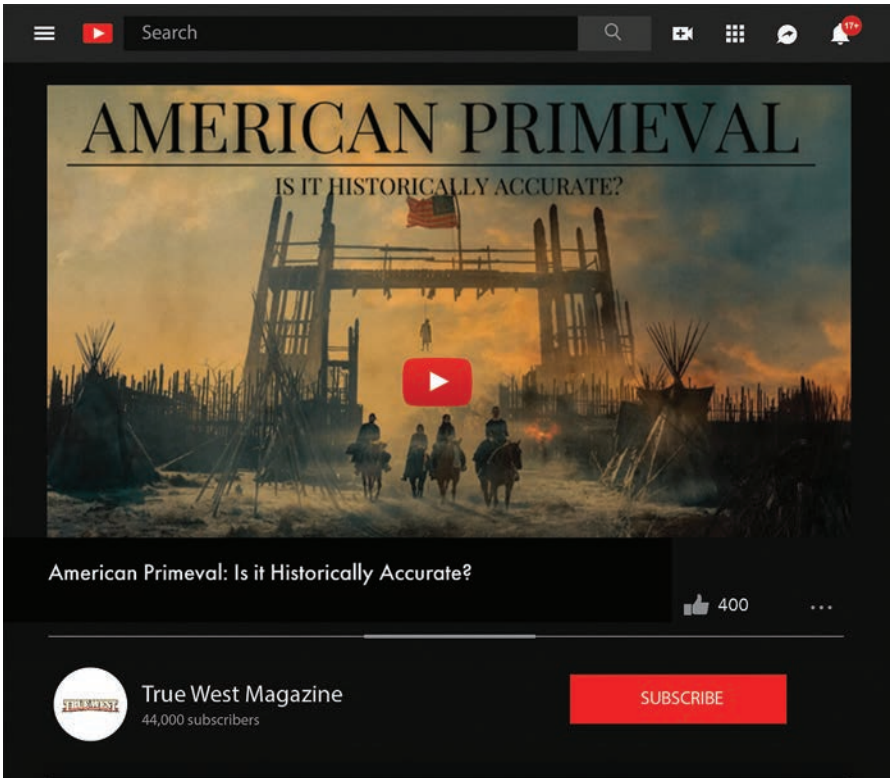

Bob Boze Bell
America's Western Storyteller

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

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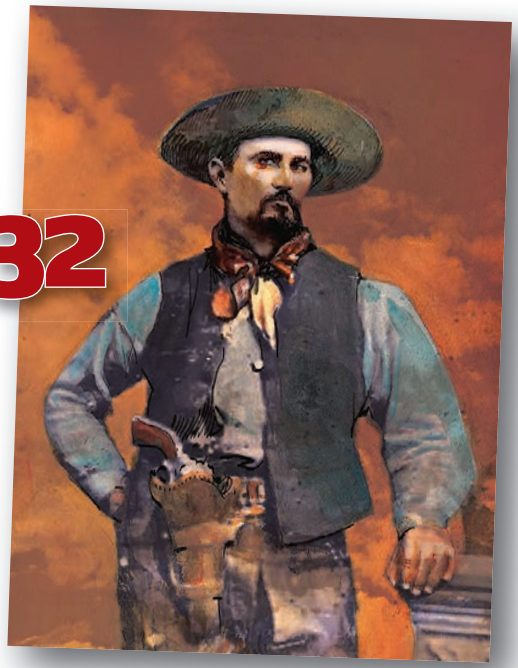

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Illustration by Bob Boze Bell
Cover Design by Dan Harshberger

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BY BOB BOZE BELL

Our Town

A tight-knit community pulls together.

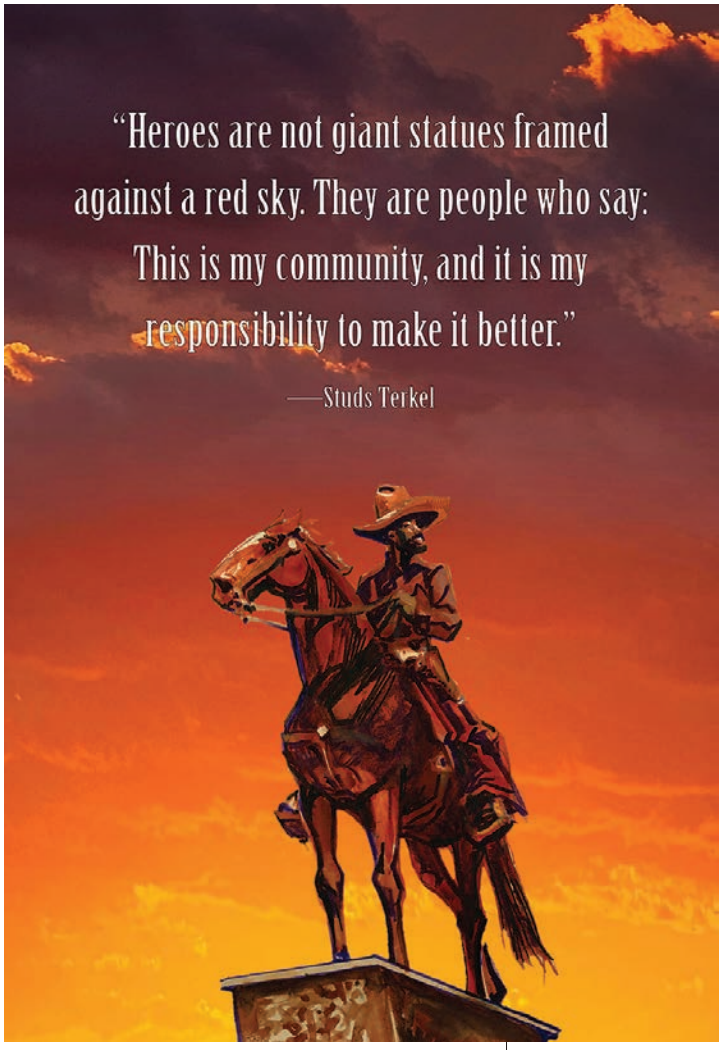
We had a rough year in 2024, losing key members of our community at the same time tightening our belts because of market-driven challenges. But our neighbors and friends have pulled together to fill the gaps to bring you another "welcome wagon" issue.

Lynda Sánchez has stepped up to write the late, great Jana Bommersbach's column, Old West Saviors (page 18). In a bit of small-town irony, Jana's first column on Saviors was with Lynda and her efforts to save Fort Stanton, New Mexico. So, that one stayed in the family.

Others in our community have stepped up as well, and we have received unsolicited but valuable help from Bill Groneman, Mark Boardman, Stuart Rosebrook and many others.

As we were prepping this issue for press, my longtime friend and writer, Allen Barra, had to go into the hospital with Covid, and so I asked one of our new neighbors, James B. Mills, if he would come over and help us, which he did, hopping over our backyard fence with ease. And, after a couple dozen edits and a rewrite on the intro for the Goodnight feature, he graciously finished his assignment with a neighborly smile and went home.

Not everyone was happy with this. "There goes the neighborhood!" one of my grouchiest contributors groused. Why? James may be metaphorically a "neighbor," but he is actually from Australia. As in, he lives there.



Yes, our close-knit history community is wonderful and very old-school, but it can also be like small towns everywhere, when it comes to being petty. And, I hate to admit this, but I love it all!

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

THE DOCTOR WILL SEE YOU NOW.

Bob Boze Bell has just completed the third edition of his definitive chronicle on the life and times of Doc Holliday. This completely updated version fills in the gaps bringing forth all the untold stories and discoveries since the first edition was published 24 years ago. *The Illustrated Life and Times of Doc Holliday*, Third Edition, is in full color and features a wide array of Bell's amazing art depictions of the American West's most beloved gunslinger.

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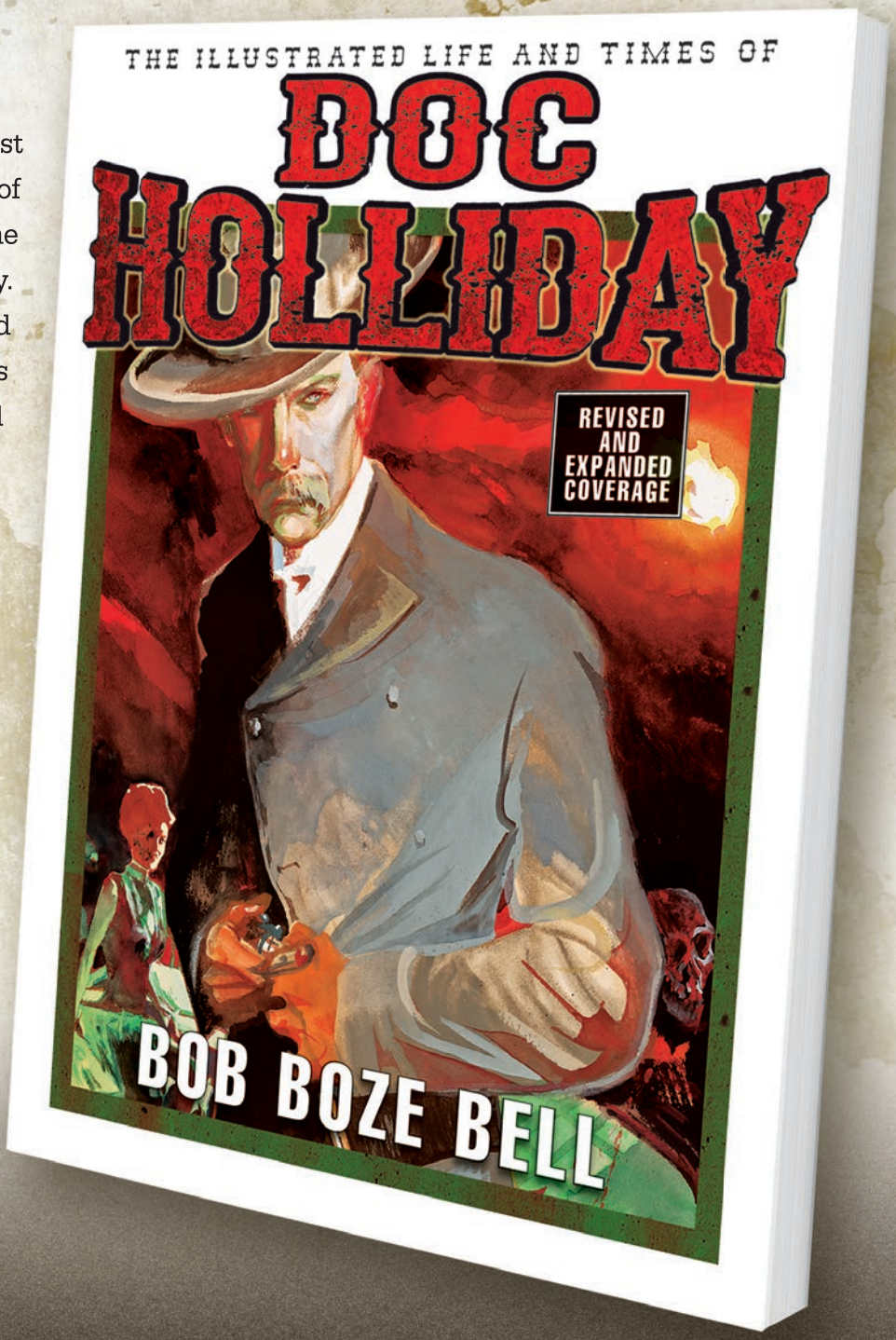

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TRUE WEST

COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Old Vaquero Sayings

"No one is as wrong as the man who thinks he knows all the answers."

QUOTES

"In the covered wagon days, if a baby was born in Texarkana while the family was crossing into the Lone Star State, by the time they reached El Paso, the baby would be in the third grade."

–Wallace O. Chariton

"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."

–Henry David Thoreau

"There's simply no polite way to tell people they've dedicated their lives to an illusion."

–Daniel Dennett

"Some people don't understand that sitting in your own house alone in peace, eating snacks and minding your own business is priceless."

–Tom Hardy

"For many people, the talents that bloom later in life are more consequential than the ones that bloom early."

–David Brooks

"The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm."

–Aldous Huxley

"Every saint has a past, and every sinner has a future."

–Oscar Wilde

"It's better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation."

–Herman Melville

"If you needed wild cows cleaned out of rough country, he was your man."

–David Hartman, on Facebook

Monk Maxwell, AY Ranch, Arizona, 1982

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

MARSHALL TRIMBLE RETIRES

I was an American history major in college and specialized in the American West. I never lost that love for the West. After retirement I even moved to Prescott! Candy Moulton's article is the best I have read on the fur trade and the rendezvous. Keep up the good work.

Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.
Happy trails to you,
Keep smiling until then.
Who cares about the clouds when we're together?
Just sing a song, and bring the sunny weather.
Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.

–Bernard Ruhnke
Prescott, Arizona

EVER ENJOYING

I am ever enjoying the Jan-Feb 2025 issue of *True West*, and I mean every turn of the page, be it a story or an advertisement. I'm struck by how many of the places mentioned I have at one time or another visited in the past. I'm 70 now, and there is something so American iconic about the West, and I love it all.

It is so visual as well and *True West* certainly captures this in spades, Colors are so important, and I'm thankful God gave me the eyes to see colors. Which brings me to why I am writing to you now. Upper right-hand corner of page 49 a lovely image by Birger Sandzen courtesy of Scottsdale Art Auction. Growing up 75 miles from his Lindsborg, Kansas, studio, I am familiar with his work and his museum there. So, it came to me, why not feature an American artist in each issue who captured the light, colors, action and things of the True Old West? You could increase your audience and foster an interest in those who have not considered art and its relevance to our Western heritage. I suggest beginning with Birger Sandzen. He'll make a great first artist going forward!

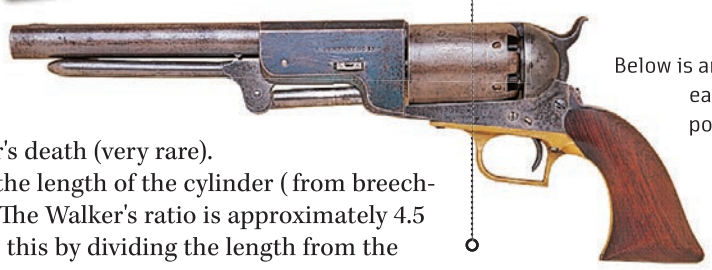
–Mathew Peters
Medina, Texas

NOT A WALKER 47

The photographs on pages 35 and 50 the Jan-Feb 2025 issue of *True West* are not of a Walker Colt, but of the Dragoon Colt. Walkers did not have the loading lever latch in the front, and none were modified to have one until after Walker's death (very rare). Furthermore, the ratio of the barrel to the length of the cylinder (from breechface to front) is too small for a Walker. The Walker's ratio is approximately 4.5 while the Dragoon's ratio is 4.2. You get this by dividing the length from the breechface to the muzzle by the length from the breechface to the front of the cylinder. This can be used on any of the Colt books to compare the models. The Walker barrel is 9" long, and the cylinder is also longer than on the Dragoon. Because we are using a ratio instead of actual measurements, this test works on any size photo. I hope this clarifies things.

–Mike Meacham
Phoenix, Arizona

The Colt Model 1848 Percussion Army Revolver, as incorrectly identified in our January/February issue, is actually a .44 caliber Colt Dragoon revolver designed by Samuel Colt for the U.S. Army's Regiment of Mounted Rifles.



Below is an actual Walker 1847, easily identified by the pointed loading lever... without the latch.

True West Archives

BUSHCRAFT

I would like to see more "bushcraft" in the magazine. How to cook over an open fire, or a wood-fired stove. How did cowboys out on the trail keep dry when it rained or snowed. How soap or candles were made. What people did for toothaches or common injuries when there was no dentist or doctor around. I'll bet this would be very popular with your readers.

–Lauren Kormylo
Prescott, Arizona

REMEMBERING PHIL

I first became acquainted with Phil Spangenberger in the late seventies and I always looked forward to everything he wrote about. He will be missed.

–Tony Stabo
Tempe, Arizona

BY MARK BOARDMAN

The Beginnings of the Bird Cage

Owner Billy Hutchinson led it through some difficult times.

Billy Hutchinson had a dream—an entertainment facility that would be the jewel of Tombstone. It took a year to get it done, but on December 24, 1881, the Bird Cage Theater had its grand opening.

In the fast and furious opening months of the theater, Hutchinson took in tens of thousands of dollars—revenue that exceeded most businesses in Tombstone at that time. Yet he experienced personal financial troubles. Combining a number of city, county and state records from when the events happed, his grim plight was revealed by Michael Mihaljevich in his definitive study, *The Bird Cage Theater: The Curtain Rises on Tombstone, Arizona's National Treasure*. According to Mihaljevich, Billy Hutchinson…

- **Never paid his 1882 county tax bill for the Bird Cage and his residence.**
- **Petitioned the city council to lighten his tax bill in spring 1882.**
- **Mortgaged the Bird Cage three months after opening despite generating tens of thousands of dollars of revenue.**
- **Failed to repay that mortgage and failed to appear in court after being seven months overdue.**
- **Lost all the theater's contents (stage scenery, tables, chairs, drink glasses, chandeliers, bar, bar utensils, iron safe, etc.) in a defaulted chattel mortgage in the spring of 1883.**
- **Was unable to pay a $10 fine for carrying concealed weapons in spring of 1883 and had to make an arrangement with the court to defer payment for more than a month.**

Joseph W. Bignon arrived in Tombstone in 1879. There he operated Theater Comique and later acquired the Bird Cage Theater, which he renamed the Elite. He and his wife, Minnie, left Tombstone in 1895 and moved to Pearce, Arizona, where he died at age 85.

Courtesy Heritage Auctions

- **Opted to spend five days in jail instead of paying a $5 fine for a local infraction in summer 1883. He publicly announced the Bird Cage was closing for business on the same day.**
- **Agreed to sell the Bird Cage. William Sprague reopened it in April 1884.**

The Bird Cage continued to be a Tombstone entertainment center for years—even as the town declined due to flooded mines and flagging silver finds. In early 1892, owner Joe Bignon closed the facility. It stayed shuttered for years.

A turn-of-the-century fiction book series by notable author Alfred Henry Lewis became a global sensation that lasted 50 years. It inspired motion pictures, festivals and dozens of international reprintings. Lewis incorporated the Bird Cage into the storylines, bringing massive attention that mobilized tourists to visit Tombstone at a time when auto-tourism was catching on. The Bird Cage drew in tens of thousands of visitors to the town at a time when the Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and the OK Corral gunfight was not promoted. This influx of tourism was the catalyst for the town's historical development into what we know Tombstone to be today. The Bird Cage started it all.

Jan MacKell and Frances Hennessey at the Bird Cage Theater in the 1940s

Courtesy Jan MacKell Collins

Even if its beginnings were tumultuous.

COME FACE TO FACE WITH THE WEST'S MOST DEADLY GUNFIGHTER

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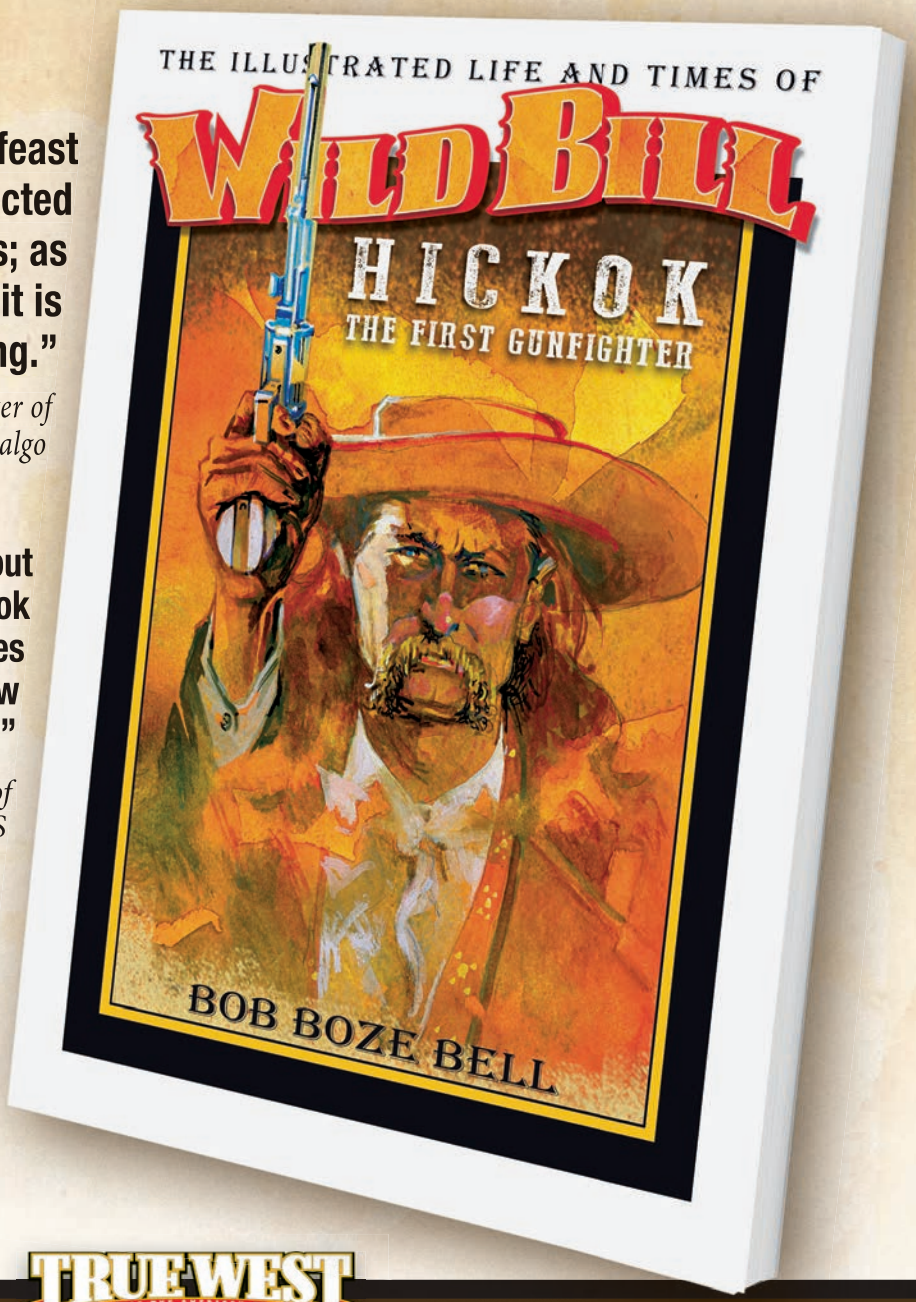
—John Fusco, Screenwriter of Young Guns, Thunderheart, Hidalgo

"It's one thing to read about history. It's another to have it look back at you through the eyes and art of a true storyteller. Now this is a history book!"

—Ted Simons, host of Horizon on PBS



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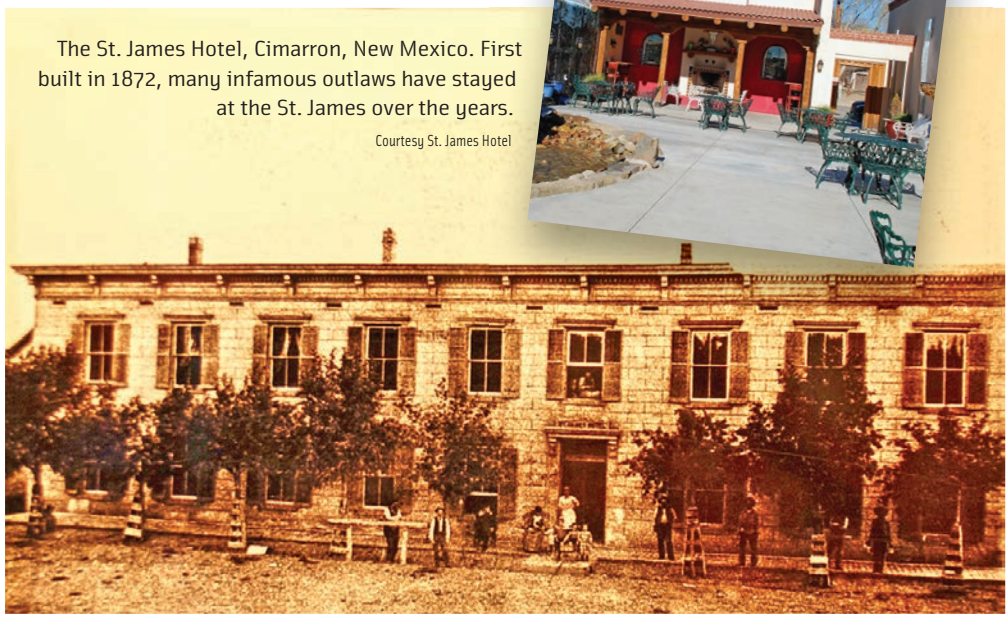
LYNDA A. SÁNCHEZ

A Gut Punch Turns into a Miracle Reprieve

A dedicated father/daughter team is restoring a historic New Mexico treasure.



The St. James Hotel, Cimarron, New Mexico. First built in 1872, many infamous outlaws have stayed at the St. James over the years.

Courtesy St. James Hotel

A "punch in the gut" and great public outcry may well have saved the historic St. James Hotel in Cimarron, New Mexico. After it was announced last September that the hotel would be closing, its Facebook page received hundreds of comments from disappointed fans and historians. Newspaper articles were written. Glaring headlines of its closure caused people's hearts to sink. This could not be…the elegant, historic hotel—with wonderful images, 1880s furnishings, ambiance and a ghost or two as well as a unique history including outlaws, rough ranchers and other rogues who rode the West and later faded into that exciting and violent past—would be no more.

Sherry Robinson, longtime investigative reporter and historian wrote: "If you love historic hotels, and I do, it was a punch in the gut to read that the St. James Hotel in Cimarron has closed. The storied St. James not only has a big place in New Mexico history—punctuated by 26 bullet holes in the barroom ceiling—it's a major employer in the tiny northern town."

New Mexico's former Heritage Tourism Development Officer Mike Pitel noted: "It is the crown jewel of the Santa Fe Trail; its authenticity is palpable and the guest registry is a Who's Who of the Old West."

Even New Mexico State Historian Rob Martínez lamented, "These spaces add color and context to our history and our ancestors." The iconic hotel is also on the important National Register of Historic Places.

After Henri (y) Lambert built the St. James in 1872, it soon became a favorite stopping place along the Santa Fe Trail. The hotel claimed that visitors including Wyatt Earp, Buffalo Bill Cody, gunman Clay Allison, bandido Jesse James and train robber Black Jack Ketchum stayed on site. Western writer Zane Grey composed material for his novels sitting outside against an ancient cottonwood, and artist Frederic Remington is rumored to have been a guest as well as Doc Holliday.

Miraculously, a few months after the closing, a lifeline was offered by the father/daughter team of Chad and Alyse Mantz. They believed they could change that trajectory, and their magic has extended just about everywhere giving people hope for their future and for saving yet another fine piece of Southwestern heritage. The folks that appreciate that history and the architectural elegance have earned their reprieve. That good news came in November. Today, the hotel is up and running.

The Mantz family is originally from Dodge City, another town replete with Wild West legend and lore. Realizing the incredible history of their new purchase brought them to understand that "Wow, this is awesome… Earp and Holliday are dear to us…to be able to keep that link with our home is very important…"

They plan to carry on the traditions and keep the 12 historic rooms of the hotel that date back to the late 1800s as they are; preserve the hotel's interior design; and through their company, M Vacation Properties and Resorts, extend to all a hearty "bienvenidos" into the next phase of the legendary and iconic St. James Hotel. *True West* declared the famous TJ's saloon an "authentic Old West bar and saloon." And not many of those remain. That says it all, and we look forward to more news of the team as they welcome back fans and tourists for a step backward into our frontier history.

Lynda Sánchez has been writing about the West since 1978. The award-winning author, historian and *TW* contributing editor lives with the ghosts of Billy and others on her ranch along the Rio Bonito in Lincoln, New Mexico. Long an advocate for preserving the West, she has written six books and over 400 articles. Ms. Sánchez urges folks to send success stories about saving/preserving the West to her at: diamondjnl@pvtn.net. *Ándale*!

"Fasten your seat belt for this one!
Bell's trade-mark blend of superb artwork, authoritative research,
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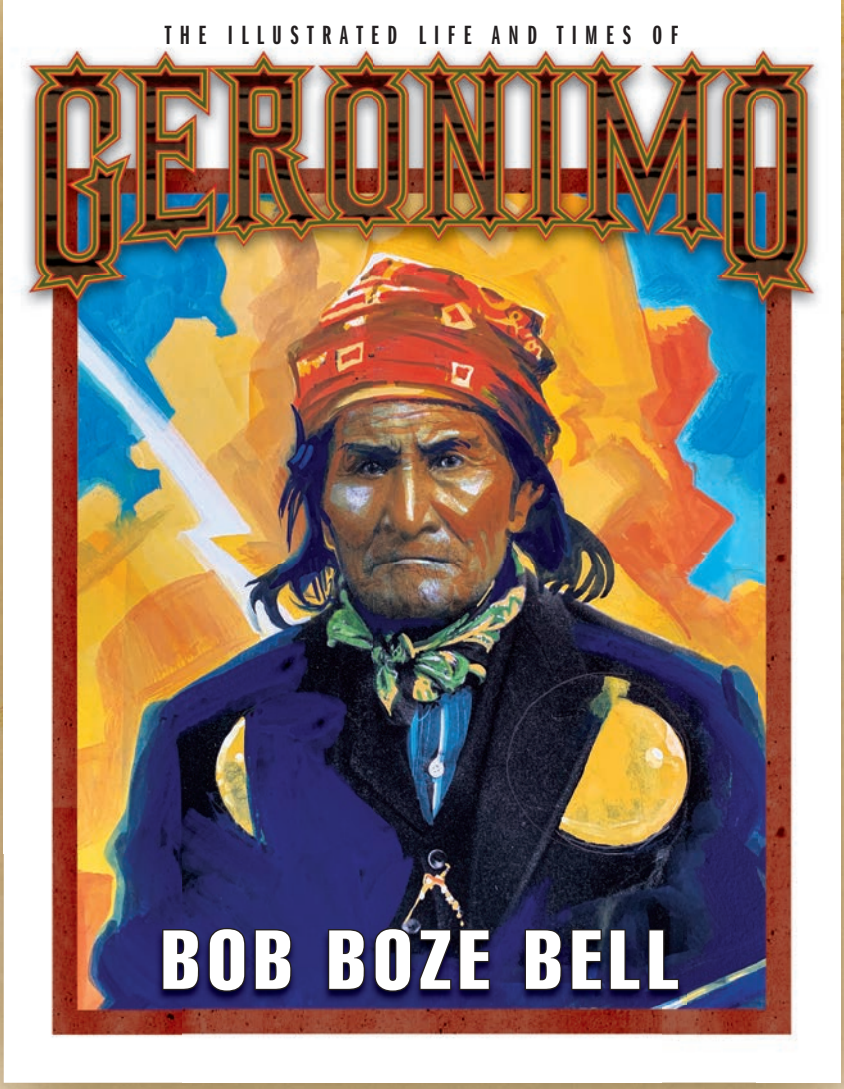
—makes this another masterful, must-have Boze western book."

—Paul Andrew Hutton



Hundreds of images never seen before, uncovered facts you've never heard before (Geronimo had ten wives?) and a blow-by-blow account of how he became the most famous In-din in the world.

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BY STEVE FRIESEN

Selling the Mythic West and the Real West

Parade saddles, illustrations and movie memorabilia were sold at auction.

It's been a little over a year since Morphy Auctions and Brian Lebel's Old West Events merged. The quality and variety of items offered from the real and the mythical West at their January Old West Auction in Las Vegas demonstrate that they are still a premiere source for collectors.

As would be expected, saddles by Swedish immigrant Edward Bohlin brought some of the highest prices at the auction. Bohlin worked out of Hollywood, supplying an estimated 20,000 parade saddles to the rich and famous...and doing his part to create the mythical West. Ridden at parades in Santa Barbara and throughout California by Louise Cottam, her highly decorated Bohlin saddle features leatherwork by Bohlin's leather carver Gabriel Diaz. The saddle, with matching bridle and horse collar, went for $233,700. The combination of fine craftsmanship and Hollywood celebrity brought a top bid of $31,980 for another Bohlin parade saddle. It was first purchased by Ray "Crash" Corrigan, who starred in 24 of the Three Mesquiteers B-Westerns, and was later owned by actor Charles "Durango Kid" Starrett. The lot included a horse collar, bridle and a portfolio of printed materials about Corrigan. The prices gathered at the auction

This Edward Bohlin parade saddle, heavily decorated with gold and silver, was a featured item at the Old West Auction. Made for Louise Rechner Cottam of Santa Barbara in the 1930s, it bears a cowboy on a bucking horse carved into the fenders.

First owned by well-known actor "Crash" Corrigan, this Bohlin saddle was later acquired by Charles Starrett, who acted in a record 131 Westerns as "The Durango Kid."

by these and other parade saddles demonstrate the enduring popularity of the mythical West.

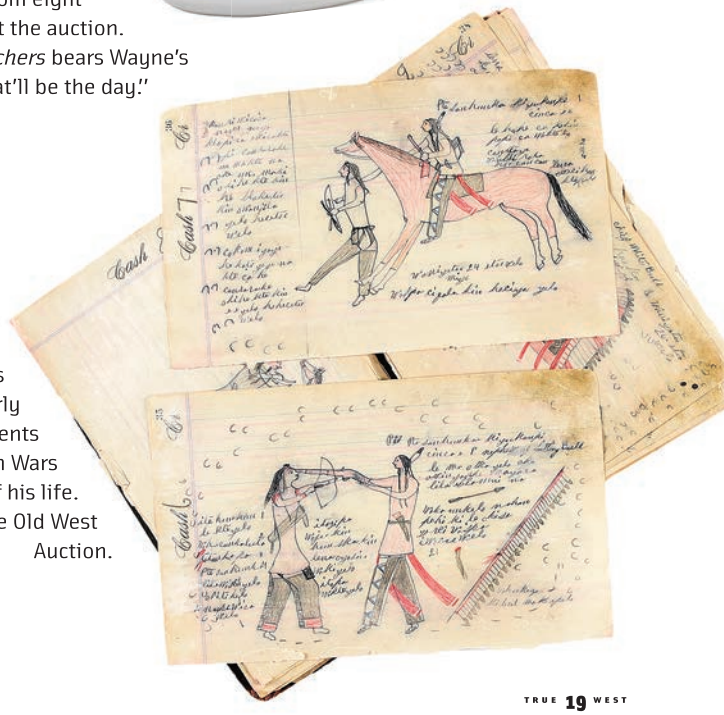
There were standout items in other categories at the Vegas auction. A stunning poster of Iron Tail, a Lakota star in Buffalo Bill's Wild West, sold for $5,280 while a sword cane, presented to Buffalo Bill by his business partner Nate Salsbury, brought $15,600. Iron Tail and Buffalo Bill experienced the real West, then went on to help create the mythical West. As an actor who inhabited the West created by Buffalo Bill and Hollywood, John Wayne came to personify the Western myth. Wayne had special mugs made for cast and crew members as souvenirs of their participation in his movies. Testimony to Wayne's legendary status, one such mug memorializing *The Searchers* sold for $4,096 at the auction.

The most expensive item sold at the Old West Auction was a ledger book created by White Bull, nephew to Sitting Bull and eyewitness to many battles. Thirty-three drawings in the book illustrate battle scenes and other memories from White Bull's life. The ledger book captured a top bid of $270,600, more than twice than was expected. Like the other artifacts at the auction, it demonstrates the continued attraction and importance of the true West.

Iron Tail was one of Buffalo Bill's closest friends and a Lakota performer in Buffalo Bill's Wild West. While he was also photographed numerous times, pictured on other posters, and was even a model for the Indian head nickel, this is one of the most striking images of him.

Nate Salsbury presented this sword cane to William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody during the Wild West's 1891 tour of England. The top of the cane is inset with an image of Cody as a businessman... with a cowboy hat.

John Wayne had limited-edition mugs made for the cast and crew of movies in which he starred. Mugs from eight of his movies were sold at the auction. This mug from *The Searchers* bears Wayne's line "That'll be the day."



White Bull's Ledger Book, created from his memories of late 19th- and early 20th-century life, documents battles during the Indian Wars as well as other aspects of his life. It was the top earner at the Old West Auction.

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

BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

King of the Scatterguns

The single best and most economical arm for hunting and defense in the Wild West was the double-barreled shotgun.

At the sign of trouble, the mere sight of a shotgun ready for business is more threatening than almost any other arm. As one stagecoach driver was quoted in Bodie, California's *Standard* on July 20, 1881 said, "I have had a six-shooter pulled on me across a faro table; I have proved that the hilt of a dirk can't go between two of my ribs;...but I was never really surprised until I looked down the muzzle of a double-barreled shotgun in the hands of a road agent. Why my friend, the mouth of the Sutro tunnel is like a nailhole in the Palace Hotel compared to a shotgun."

Despite often being relegated to the less than glorious position of an "also ran," in discussions of the most popular guns of the Old West, the double-barreled scattergun was often the frontiersman's hands-down favored firearm. In the age of muzzleloading flintlocks and percussion guns, many early Western adventurers found there were often occasions where their trusty rifle just couldn't do what was required. One traveler in the pre-Civil War West reflected on a situation if a shotgun

This carte de visite shows two young Dewitt, Iowa, hunters, circa 1870, with all of the appropriate muzzle-loading accoutrements. The lad at left has a full-stocked, front-loading percussion rifle with double set triggers and an elaborate patchbox. His partner sports a double-barrel caplock shotgun and slung over his shoulders are a shot pouch and powder flask. It's possible that the rifleman has loaded his smokepole with shot, turning it into a single-shot scattergun.

Courtesy Phil Spangenberger

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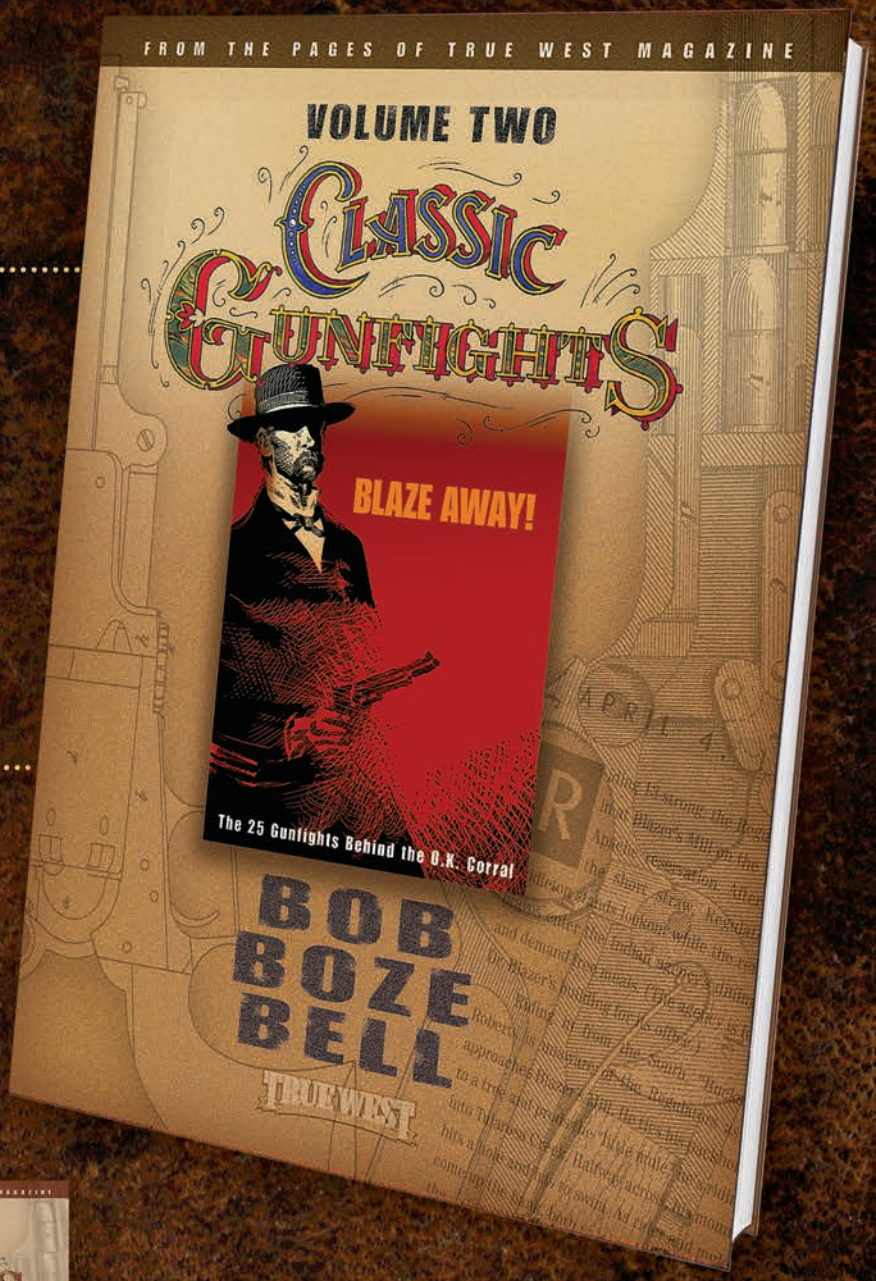

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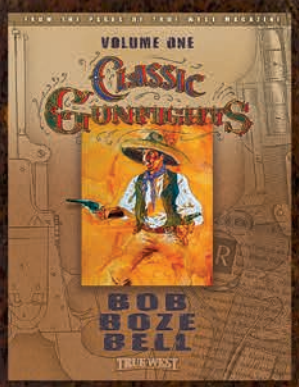

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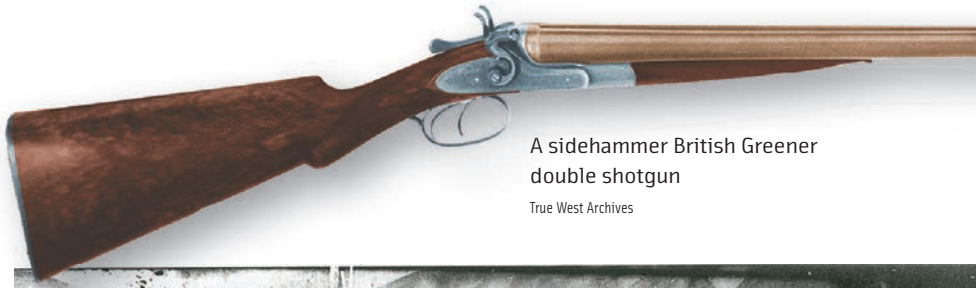


A sidehammer British Greener double shotgun

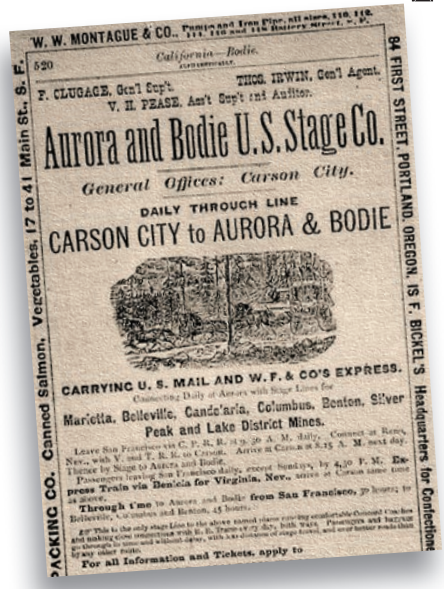
True West Archives

These circa 1888 Pueblo, Colorado, lads are all set to hunt with an 1886 Winchester lever-action rifle and a sidehammer double-barrel shotgun. Ten- and 12-gauge shotguns were the preferred bore sizes in the West, and while 16s, 20s and smaller bored scatterguns were plentiful, they were considered good only for specialized shooting.

would have served him better than his rifle. After sighting a flock of curlews at a waterhole, he later wrote "...had I been in possession of a double-barreled gun with small shot I would have had at least one good meal, but I only had a heavy rifle, and went to my lodgings on the ground supperless."

Early explorers frequently relied on shotguns for small game. The members of Lewis and Clark's expedition carried their issue Model 1795 flintlock muskets loaded with shot for such purposes, while their privately employed French-Canadian boatmen favored lightweight smoothbore "fuzees." Single-barreled

like the regulation musket of the Americans, they could fire a solitary ball or a charge of shot. During the fur trade, smoothbore muskets loaded with powder and shot, and shotguns including some double-barreled guns, were relied on with regularity for uses such as defense of the trading post and night guard duty in backcountry camps. Even the military, which in those days was slow to pick up on the latest in firearms technology, realized the value of the shotgun and in the years preceding the Civil War¸ often issued loads of buck and ball for use in the regulation smoothbore muskets. Regardless, officers were relying on civilian double-barreled scatterguns during their tour of duty out West. One such professional, an officer in the Regiment of Mounted Rifles, recalled a hunting foray around 1850 when in search of birds for the camp table he ventured alone into a canyon in Indian country. He loaded one barrel with No. 6 shot, while the "other held nine buckshot for Indians."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Mike Tovey had to fight off outlaws on more than one occasion while riding as a Wells Fargo shotgun messenger on the Aurora and Bodie U.S. Stage Co. to and from Carson City and Bodie.

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Phil Spangenberger, who died last year, wrote for *Guns & Ammo*, appeared on the History Channel and other documentary networks, produce Wild West shows, was a Hollywood gun coach and character actor. He was *True West*'s "True Westerner of 2022." He will be missed.

BY WILLIAM GRONEMAN III

The Kindled Flame 1835

A LONG ROAD TO THE BATTLE AT THE ALAMO

Mexico had its hands full with Texas—the northern portion of its state Coahuila y Tejas—in 1835. Many Texas citizens wanted separate statehood from Coahuila within the Mexican confederation. This proved a dangerous position, because Texas's first citizen of colonization, Stephen F. Austin, remained jailed in Mexico since the previous year for urging Texans to begin drawing up plans for separation. The issue also divided Texas. Some sought peaceful existence with the Mexican government. Others pushed for stronger action for statehood. These factions eventually separated into the "Peace" and "War" parties. Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna centralized his power in 1836 and kept an eye on Texas.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Stephen F. Austin, still in custody in Mexico, awaited passage of a new amnesty law that would ensure his freedom. He wrote letters to associates assuring them that Texas had friends among Mexican officials. Austin also praised Santa Anna's friendship toward Texas and felt confident that it would soon become its own state within the confederation.

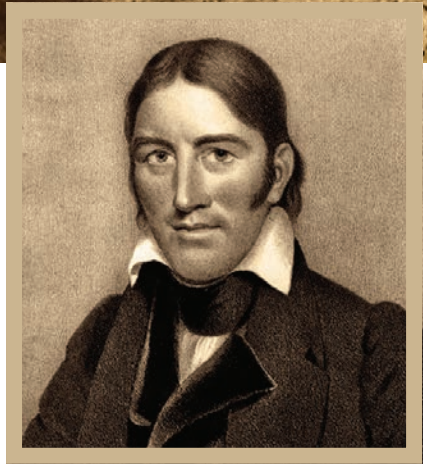
By the spring of 1835, Jim Bowie had shaken off his lethargy following the death of his wife and resumed his interest in land. The legislature of Monclova, capital of Coahuila y Tejas, appointed Bowie as a commissioner to oversee the distribution of 1,771,200 acres around Nacogdoches, Texas, with the money raised contributing to defense against Indians. Sweetening the deal, 420,660 acres of this land went to him, with other acreage going to his cronies at bargain prices before the land hit the market.

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

As tensions between Texas and Mexico increased, President Santa Anna sent General Martin Perfecto de Cós to Monclova to rein in the land speculators and the local government. Bowie joined Monclova's militia and forced Cós to

The earliest known photograph of the Alamo is this daguerreotype taken before 1850.

– True West Archives –



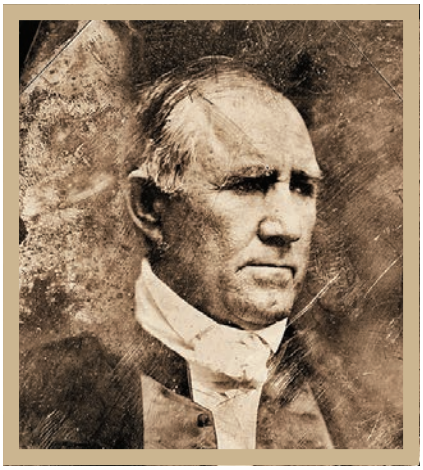
DAVID CROCKETT

back off without bloodshed, but the general returned in late May and arrested Bowie and others before they crossed over into Texas. Bowie escaped with a companion several weeks later and returned to their state.

By April 1835, Sam Houston set up in Nacogdoches, Texas, where he embraced Catholicism. An entitlement to 1,480 acres of land may have served as an incentive to his conversion. Although Davy Crockett had helped subdue a would-be assassin of President Jackson that January, his political career soon faltered. Meanwhile, young William Barret Travis was occupied with his legal practice and the slave-trade. Travis also wondered about Stephen Austin's fate and gave up any hope of Austin's release by June. "Let them sacrifice him if they dare," he declared. "A thousand of their contemptible 'red skins' shall be sacrificed to his name."

William Travis also pondered the increasing tensions with the Mexican government and impending conflict. "The rumor of troops coming to Texas in great numbers must be false. Such a measure would kindle a flame in Texas that would burn in twain the slender cords that connect us to the ill-fated Mexican confederation."

Houston the former governor, Austin the colonizer, Bowie the adventurer, Crockett the politician, and Travis the lawyer, all moved toward the yet-to-be



SAM HOUSTON

kindled flame. Travis, the youngest and least experienced, provided the spark that ultimately altered the map of North America.

★

William Travis received false information that Stephen Austin had received his freedom in Mexico by early June 1835. He soon signed "The San Felipe Pledge," with 25 others, forming an armed volunteer company with the purpose of disarming the Mexican military at Anahuac, on June 22. They wasted little time. Eight days later, Travis bluffed Captain Antonio Tenorio— commander at Anahuac—into a bloodless surrender and signing an agreement that the Mexican detachment would abandon their post and leave for San Antonio.

Public reaction to Travis's initiative was not favorable. Outraged members of the Peace Party feared his actions would impact Austin's status and push them toward war. Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea in San Antonio and General Martin Perfecto de Cós in Matamoras demanded Travis's arrest. A commander of a Mexican warship offered a $1,000 reward for his apprehension and the privilege of hanging him from his yard arm. With a price on his head, Travis laid low but expressed an opinion which may have had some bearing on events seven months later. "Let us be firm and united in defending Texas to the last extremity within our own limits," he wrote on July 6. "In offensive war we can do nothing, in defensive everything."

Jim Bowie soon emerged as the commander of a force in Nacogdoches on July 13. As Travis had done in Anahuac, they seized the local Mexican warehouse, removing weapons and equipment without bloodshed. Bowie also arranged for the seizure of a packet of Mexican communications, some of which laid out the plans for arresting Travis and

others. These acts did nothing to endear him to Mexican authorities. Travis displayed uncharacteristic caution when writing to Bowie on July 30. "The people are much divided here," he declared. "Unless we could be united, had we not better be quiet, and settle down for a while?" Travis later suggested a more defensive approach, when declaring, "If we are encroached upon, let us resist until our bodies and our property lie in one common ruin, ere we submit to tyranny."

In Nacogdoches, "General" Sam Houston was appointed to treat with various Indian tribes on August 15. Two weeks later, he issued a proclamation. "Our situation is unsafe," Houston announced. "Some Cherokees with the native Castilians, have

A photo of the Alamo taken after the U.S. Army modified the front of the building to include the famous "hump."

True West Archives

returned to the Cherokee village from Matamoras, and say that the Indians of the prairies and a Mexican force, are about to attack this portion of Texas." Houston requested militia from five counties be organized until United States Army reinforcements arrived. He also directed the militias to report to him as they arrived and encouraged the purchase of arms and ammunition.

Despite what William Travis had heard about Stephen Austin being freed in May, the Empresario did not receive his passport from Mexico until July 11. He sailed from Veracruz for New Orleans on July 23. Eighteen months as a prisoner affected his opinions about peaceful cooperation with Mexico. "[T]he best interests of the United States require that Texas should be effectually, and fully, Americanized," Austin wrote in New Orleans on August 21.

"Huzza for Texas!" William Travis wrote in response to orders for his arrest and execution for the Anahuac expedition on August 31. "Huzza for Liberty, and the rights of man!" News of a "convention of all Texas, to declare our sentiments, and to prepare for defense, if necessary," rendered Travis almost giddy. On the same day, General Martin Perfecto de Cós wrote to Colonel Ugartechea announcing his plans of coming into Texas in person.

Stephen Austin returned to San Felipe by the first week of September, delivering a speech at a public dinner in his honor. He stressed the dangers to the rights of Texas with the destruction of the Constitution of 1824, as well as the need for a general consultation of all Texans. Four days later, Austin chaired a meeting in San Felipe, with Travis present, laying out plans for a consultation, for a committee of vigilance and safety and resolving other measures. "Principle has at last triumphed over prejudice, cowardice and selfishness," Travis wrote to Henry Smith on September 15. "All will become united in resistance to a military government."

On September 19, Stephen Austin passed on information from an unidentified informant in Bexar that, "The final answer of Gen. Cós had just been received—It is positive that the persons [Travis and others] who have been demanded shall be given up and that the people of Texas must unconditionally submit to any reforms or alterations that Congress has to make in the Constitution.... War then is inevitable." In another letter he wrote, "War is upon us—there is now no remedy." Ten days later this communication appeared as a broadside for public consumption.

Mexico aided Austin in his war prophecy. On the same day as the issuance of his broadside, a force of one hundred dragoons from Bexar arrived at Gonzales to seize a cannon which had been given to the settlers for protection. Eighteen Gonzales citizens resisted, keeping the dragoons on the west side of the Guadalupe River. When the Texan force swelled to 140 men, it violated a truce with the Mexicans, crossed the river and attacked on October 2. One unfortunate Mexican soldier died in the resulting "battle." The Texans retained their cannon and sent the dragoons back to Bexar without loss. The flame kindled at Anahuac in June thus ignited the Texas Revolution.

Sam Houston wrote to Isaac Parker in San Augustine on October 5:

"... war in defense of our rights, our oaths, and our constitution is inevitable, in Texas!... If volunteers from the United States will join their brethren in this section, they will receive liberal bounties of land... Let each man come with a good rifle, and one hundred rounds of ammunition, and to come soon... Our war-cry is "Liberty or death... Our principles are to support the constitution, and down with the Usurper!!!"

"Let each man come with a good rifle, and one hundred rounds of ammunition, and to come soon... Our war-cry is "Liberty or death..."

—SAM HOUSTON

With San Augustine a good 300 miles from Gonzales, Houston either had an amazing sense of timing, or a communications system of remarkable speed.

Things happened rapidly. A Volunteer Texas Army took shape with Austin as commander, and Bowie with a colonel's rank, his aide. In late October, Bowie led men to reconnoiter the Espada and San José missions south of San Antonio where he drove back a force under Colonel Ugartechea. Later, he defeated a larger Mexican force at the mission Concepción. The Texans then set up a loose siege of San Antonio, the Mexican troops now commanded by General Cós.

The Texas Consultation convened on November 3. It soon formed a general council and named Henry Smith as governor. It also decided to push back a constitutional convention to March. The council reassigned Austin from his position as commander of the army to a diplomatic one, sending him to the United States to raise men and money for Texas. His volunteers, in keeping with tradition, elected Edward Burleson as his replacement.

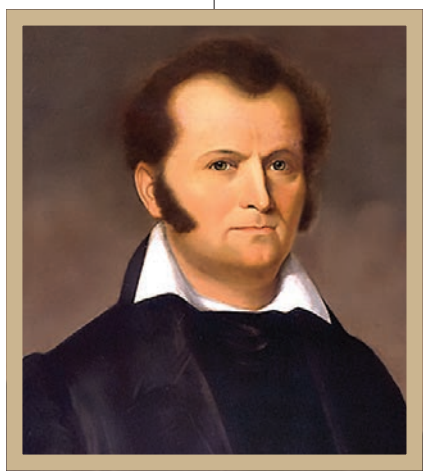
The governor and the council reached out to William Travis for his opinions on the organization of an army for Texas's defense. On December 3, Travis answered in a letter stressing the need for a cavalry commanded by a lieutenant colonel answering to the commander in chief, and suggested volunteers be subject to regular discipline and rules and articles of war. "A mob can do wonders in a sudden burst of patriotism or of passion, but cannot be depended on, as

soldiers for a campaign," he implored.

From December 5–9, Texan forces unsatisfied with Burleson's hesitant leadership, attacked San Antonio under the leadership of Ben Milam and William Cooke. After street to street and house to house fighting, they drove the Mexican army out of town and into an old mission across the San Antonio River called The Alamo. General Cós surrendered on December 9. Burleson paroled him and his men allowing them to return to Mexico, thus ending the first stage of the Texas Revolution. Neither Houston, Bowie nor Travis participated in this fight.

After suffering a congressional defeat that summer, Davy Crockett returned home and told his wife, Elizabeth, "Well, Bet, I am beat and I'm off for Texas." He wanted to move his whole family immediately, but his wife convinced him to proceed, look over the country and then decide if he wanted to make a home there for the family. On August 10, Crockett wrote to The (Washington) National Intelligencer (published on September 2), "I do believe Santa Ana's [sic] Kingdom will be a paradise compared to this, in a few years."

Davy held a festive barbecue before beginning his journey in the company of two neighbors and his nephew William Patton on the morning of November 1, 1835. His daughter Matilda described her father on the morning he left as "dressed in his hunting suit, wearing a coon skin cap."



JIM BOWIE

On November 10, Crockett and company arrived in Memphis, where he strolled the streets in relative anonymity. However, word of his arrival spread and a crowd of admirers, the curious and some old friends grew. By that night a movable party roared through Memphis's streets and taverns. James B. Davis, a young man on the periphery of the group, described it as a "big bender," adding, "It is needless to say we all got tight…very tight."

Davy loosened up enough by morning to take leave of his beloved Tennessee for the last time. Crockett and his companions boarded a ferry, crossed the Mississippi River into Arkansas and made good time through the territory, arriving in Little Rock by the evening of November 12. There they attended a dinner in his honor, and he entertained with a speech. He and his party set out again the next morning. They crossed the Red River at Lost Prairie, Arkansas, setting foot in Texas for the first time. Before leaving Arkansas, with funds running low, he traded his pocket watch with its inscription of his motto, "Go Ahead" to settler Isaac Jones for his watch and a 30-dollar balance.

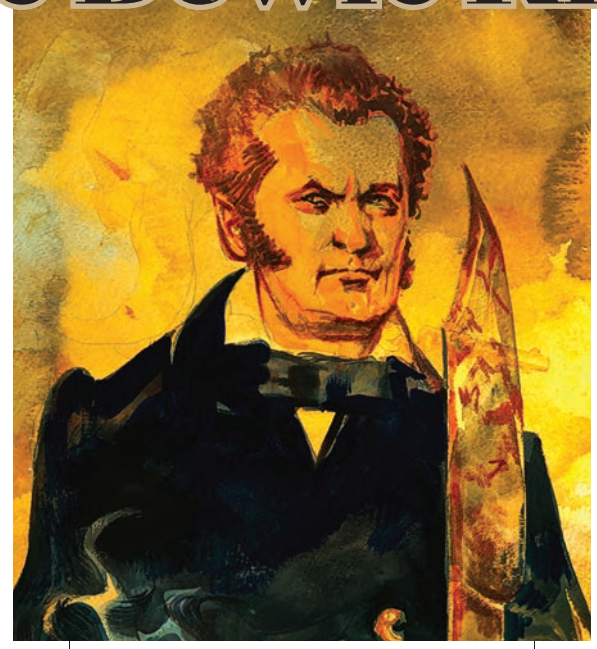
During the following month, the travelers roamed and explored the northeast Texas countryside, visiting Big Prairie, Clarksville and Nacogdoches. Crockett enjoyed celebrity treatment at each town and delivered his well-rehearsed speeches. He and his party became so enthralled during a hunting expedition in December that they went missing for several days, causing speculation that they had been killed by Indians, as later reported by American newspapers.

It is unlikely that Crockett and his friends fully grasped the seriousness of the situation into which they rode.

William Groneman III, born and raised in New York City, has written a number of books related to the Alamo, among them are *Eyewitness to the Alamo, David Crockett—Hero of the Common Man* and *Death of a Legend—the Myth and Mystery of Davy Crockett's Death at the Alamo*. He also authored *September 11: A Memoir*.

BY JIM DICKSON

The Bowie Knife



Jim Bowie, the original blade runner
Illustration by Bob Boze Bell

The Bowie knife is an iconic symbol of American toughness and independence. Yet, its true origins are often misunderstood. The knife became famous after Jim Bowie's involvement in the Vidalia Sandbar Fight, in which he used a large knife described as "a big butcher knife." However, there were no photographs of this knife at the time, so the description was applied to any large, hefty blade. Most likely, the knife was a straight-backed butcher knife similar to what we today consider a slicing knife. This design resembled the Spanish Dagger single-edged knives that were common in the 19th century.

Most early knives associated with Jim Bowie and his brother, Rezin, were variations on the Spanish Dagger style. The knife Rezin gave to actor Edwin Forrest, for instance, was a later version with a sharpened top edge, distinguishing it from the earlier butcher-style knives. It's this version, modified from the traditional Spanish Dagger, that likely influenced Jim's famous blade, especially the one he took to the Alamo.

There's still room for debate about the exact knife Jim Bowie carried during the Battle of the Alamo, but I believe it closely resembles the one described in Robert Abel's book. This knife, which was made by James Black, a respected silversmith and blacksmith of the time, had a clipped point and double guard, marking a departure from earlier Bowie knives. Black, known for his fine craftsmanship, likely produced two knives for Jim Bowie—one was the knife he was requested to make, and the other, with a more Scottish influence (given Bowie's heritage), was likely the one Jim selected.

James Black's design incorporated features similar to a Scottish dirk, such as the straight clip and substantial double guard. When Bowie picked up his knife, he chose the version he thought was best suited to his needs—Black's clipped-point design over another, simpler version marked "Bowie number 1," which lacked a guard and had an upward-angled handle.

The Bowie knife's distinctive hooked point evolved from the German messer, a type of knife with a curved blade used in combat. The messer was notorious for its ability to act as a sharp claw on the backstroke, a feature that made it particularly deadly in close-quarters fighting. These knives were often around 18 to 26 inches long and were used extensively by pirates for boarding ships. Unlike the elegant fencing swords of the time, the messer was a practical, rough-and-tumble weapon designed for serious combat.

Smaller messers with double guards had already gained popularity in America before Jim Bowie's time. These knives resembled the classic Bowie knife as we know it today. As demand for larger, more versatile blades grew, knife makers began producing more Bowie-style knives, including a 10-inch blade variety made in Solingen, Germany. Thousands of these knives were imported to America, and their basic design, unchanged for centuries, continues to be made in Solingen to this day.

The popularity of the Bowie knife soon reached new heights. It became fashionable to carry

Known facetiously as an "Arkansas toothpick," the Bowie knife looms large in American legend.

Courtesy Joseph Musso Collection

one, replacing both the sword and sword cane in many places. The Bowie knife was seen as an essential tool for survival, and it was carried by rich and poor alike. The phrase "No man, be he worth a leek, be he mighty or be he meek, but he bare a basilard" reflected the growing importance of carrying a blade, similar to the medieval basilard dagger.

Bowie knives could be carried openly or concealed. One method, especially popular in the South, involved suspending the knife behind the neck, allowing it to be drawn like an arrow from a quiver. This tactic worked well for leaner men but proved more difficult for those of stockier builds. So common was this method of carry that it became a warning sign during an argument: scratching the neck could be mistaken for drawing a knife, sparking a fight.

In contrast to modern knife fights, where both opponents are often injured, the Bowie knife was used with a level of precision that allowed the wielder to control the fight. In the 19th century, combatants aimed to disarm and disable their opponent swiftly, often striking their opponent's weapon aside before targeting a vulnerable part of the body. The key to success was always maintaining distance—strike, then step back to avoid a counterattack.

Bowie knives were designed with a particular fighting style in mind. Early versions of the knife had handles angled upwards, making it easier to fight with the edge up, striking with the back of the blade against another knife. Some Bowie knives also featured a brass parry strip to reinforce the blade during these strikes. Later, the technique evolved, and the edge of the knife became the main point of contact in a strike, similar to saber fighting.

The Bowie brothers themselves were skilled in both sword and knife fighting. They honed their skills in New Orleans, a city rife with duels and violence during the 19th century. New Orleans, a cultural melting pot, was known for its high number of duels, and it was here that Jim Bowie made his name during the infamous "Rough fight" at the Sandbar Duel. Though dueling had been outlawed, men like Bowie and his brother Rezin were still deeply involved in this dangerous practice.

In the Sandbar Duel, Jim Bowie was called upon to act as a second for Gen. Montfort Wells. When the duel took an unexpected turn, with one of the combatants being shot, the real fight began between the seconds. Despite being severely wounded by a gunshot, Jim Bowie, armed with his brother's large knife, fought off four attackers, killing one and injuring others. His dramatic survival and ability to fight back despite serious injuries cemented the Bowie knife's reputation as a weapon of deadly efficiency.

The role of the Bowie knife as a hunting tool should not be overlooked. It was prized by frontiersmen and hunters, who often used it for both survival and defense. In the 19th century, men were expected to fight off wild animals, such as bears, with nothing more than a knife. The knife was an essential part of frontier life, especially for hunters who needed it to skin and butcher large animals like bears. Confederate Gen. Wade Hampton was renowned for his ability to kill bears with a Bowie knife, a skill passed down to many hunters of the era.

In the later 1800s, as firearms technology improved with the advent of the Winchester M1873, hunters increasingly relied on rifles, but the Bowie knife continued to be a trusted companion, especially in the rougher conditions of the frontier.

During the Civil War, the demand for Bowie knives surged. Confederate blacksmiths made large, heavy knives to replace short swords in the infantry, and these knives were crafted with the same principles of speed and efficiency that made them so valuable in combat.

Though smaller knives have taken over the market in recent times, the Bowie knife has never lost its place in American history. Despite the push by manufacturers to produce cheaper, more compact blades, the Bowie knife remains a symbol of rugged independence, practicality and the spirit of frontier survival. The legend of the Bowie knife endures because it works—whether for combat, survival or simple utility, this iconic blade has stood the test of time.

Jim Dickson is an internationally recognized authority on weapons, including the Bowie knife, and has written for gun magazines in 13 countries since 1979. The former blacksmith makes his home in Clayton, Georgia.

BY ALLEN BARRA

All images courtesy True West archives unless otherwise noted

FRONTIER COLOSSUS

A LOOK BACK AT THE LEGENDARY TEXAS COWBOY WHO TRANSFORMED THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST

He almost single-handedly created the cattle industry, invented the chuck wagon, was an innovator for modern irrigation, helped save the buffalo from potential extinction, fought Indians, befriended Indians, scouted the plains, hauled freight, hanged rustlers, saved lives, kept his promises, founded the first ranch on the Texas Panhandle, is considered by some to have been the first Landman, and posthumously served as the inspiration for Larry McMurty's lead character "Captain" Woodrow F. Call in the author's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Lonesome Dove*. Few men could have boasted of having blazed such an impactful trail across the American West throughout their lifetime. While the "Father of the Texas Panhandle" rarely gloated over his own accomplishments, *True West* is only too happy to celebrate the extraordinary life and achievements of a true colossus of the frontier. Was "The Colonel" the original man of vision? Yes, a hell of a vision.

Charlie Goodnight
Legendary Texas Cowboy

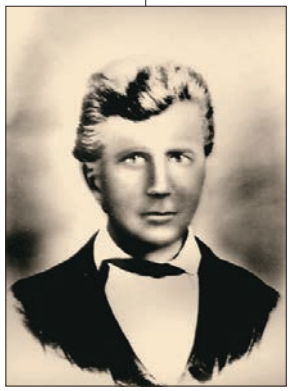
A composite image, illustrated by BBB and designed by Dan "The Man" Harshberger

Charles Goodnight and Friend

A composite image, illustrated by BBB and designed by Dan "The Man" Harshberger

Charlie's exploits over the next 70 years would—and have—filled volumes. During his youth, Charlie, like all Texas immigrants, lived within the menacing shadow of the Comanche nation. Clashes between Americans and Comanches were shockingly brutal, even by the standards of frontier warfare. The Comanches, once the undisputed masters of the Texas Plains, found themselves pushed farther northwest, and the clashes between Indians and Whites became more frequent. Having no army to protect them, Texans often formed their own militia. Goodnight joined a group of Texas Rangers captained by one Jack Querton, signing on as a scout. "First, [to be a scout] a man must be born a natural woodsman and have the faculty of never needing a compass except in snowstorms or darkness," he later recalled. "I've never owned a compass." By his early 20s, Charlie was a more capable scout and guide than just about any of his fellow rangers.

In 1860, Charlie proved his worth in resounding style when finding a trail leading to a Comanche camp on the Pease River, where Cynthia Ann Parker—taken by the Comanches when she was only nine—was living. Charlie guided a company of rangers to the camp, took part in the attack, and recaptured Cynthia. Goodnight could not have known it at this time, but this action was to have important consequences later in his life.



Oliver Loving

– Courtesy Frederick Nolan –

The cattle business was in chaos by the final year of the Civil War. While Comanches ran off an estimated 2,000 head of cattle in 1865, Charlie Goodnight found a new range along Elm Creek in Throckmorton County. As the market for cattle in Texas was in the doldrums, Goodnight and his fellow cowmen sought a better return for their beef from the army posts and Indian agencies in New Mexico. Goodnight, Loving and 18 other drovers (including the eventually infamous Clay Allison) pushed a drive from Fort Belkamp to the Pecos River and then north to Fort Sumner, where the U.S. government bought beef for the reservation Indians at a healthy price of eight cents a pound.

That cattle drive made history. The path they cut through became known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail, destined to become one of the most frequently trod cattle highways in the Southwest. The hands usually ate what they could carry and catch, like dried beef and hardtack. On that drive, Charlie invented the chuck wagon, which allowed the drovers to enjoy a hot meal for the first time. In one stroke of genius, he gave the world the food truck and Meals on Wheels.

The boys made two more drives along this trail, and the third one proved fateful. Loving was wounded in a fight with Comanches and died shortly after. Charlie honored his commitment to Oliver. He had Oliver's body brought back to his home in Weatherford and told the family they would continue to receive a share of the profits. Intrigued, the greatest of Western novelists, Larry McMurtry, used Charlie and Oliver as models for Woodrow Call and Gus McCrae.

While Texas suffered a sagging postwar economy, Goodnight was expanding his business, contracting to deliver herds, some of them belonging to well-known names such as John Chisum. Some of his cattle drives went as far as Colorado, and even Wyoming. In 1869, Charlie built a ranch, the Rock Canyon, five miles from Pueblo, Colorado, the only ranch he built outside Texas. The Rock Canyon expanded to encompass several cattle lines and ranches, and in 1869, Charlie and his hands even found time to build an architecturally significant stone barn which still stands today—all that remains of Charlie's Colorado empire.

The new decade marked an important event in Charlie's life. In July 1870, he married the sweetheart from his early years, Mary Ann "Molly" Dwyer, who had become a schoolteacher in Weatherford. The marriage was no small event. The couple traveled to the home of Molly's family, Hickman, Kentucky, and returned to Rock Canyon, where they lived until 1875. The Goodnight business was thriving. Charlie, working with John Chisum, cleared a profit of $17,000 in 1871 alone.

A progressive farmer, Goodnight was among the first to use modern irrigation for his farms and helped found the Stock Growers Bank of Pueblo, even

Charles Goodnight house, circa 1895.
– Courtesy Charles Goodnight Historical Center in Claude, Texas –

becoming part-owner of Pueblo's new opera house. The present was bright, and the future looked even brighter. But his ranges were overstocked, and the depression of 1873 caused him to lose most of his enormous holdings. Never at a loss for new ventures, he looked for an untouched grassland to feed his remaining cattle.

Charlie was still shy of this 30th birthday and had already lived more of a life than most men on the frontier would ever know. He was just getting started, as the loss of most of his holdings was simply a challenge to start over. "Better to lose your fortune than to lose your honor," he later reflected.

Charlie sent Mary Ann to stay with relatives in California while he set out to rebuild his business. Once hostile Indian tribes had been defeated, the Panhandle was ripe for cultivation. Goodnight settled on Palo Duro Canyon. His devotion to the Panhandle lasted throughout his life. After losing a lawsuit, he proudly explained, "It cost me a lot of money, but we upheld the honor of the Panhandle."

His negotiating skills were put to good use when he sat down with the biggest sheep rancher in the Panhandle, Casimero Romero, and drew up an agreement which divided up nearly all the stock-growing land of northern Texas. Romero and the other pastores had the area around the Canadian River (which

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

– True West Archives –

In 1866, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving became the first cattlemen to herd cattle onto the Llano Estacado of West Texas. Ten years later, Goodnight drove his first herd for the JA Ranch in the Palo Duro section of the Texas Panhandle southeast of Amarillo. He established the ranch with John Adair, whose descendants run it to this day. You can imagine Goodnight stopping for water with his herd, just like these JA Ranch hands did in 1903.

– Courtesy Library of Congress –

cuts across the northern handle), while Goodnight and his associates had sole use of the canyons, grasslands and headwaters of the Red River.

A non-judgmental businessman, Goodnight hired Nicholas Martínez, a former Comanchero–trader from northern New Mexico and West Texas who often dealt in illicit activities that most respectable Hispanics and Anglos avoided. Martínez knew the old trails and canyons used by the Indians and proved an asset for Goodnight and his new cattle outfit, including a young Englishman named James T. Hughes, whose father, Thomas, was well known in Victorian England as the hugely popular author of *Tom Brown's School Days.*

Within the bounds of what is now Palo Duro Canyon State Scenic State Park, Charlie and his crew built a dugout out of cottonwood and cedar logs. Comanches had left some lodge poles behind, and the cowmen used them for rafters. Farther to the south, they found a canyon floor that widened out for more than 10 miles. Charlie supervised the building of a three-room ranch house. Having no nails, they had to notch the ends to fit each other in the manner of Lincoln logs. Corrals for their stock soon followed.

In 1877, Goodnight launched the JA Ranch in a five-year contract with John Adair; the deal made Charlie both co-owner and the resident manager of the ranch. Later, he extended his agreement with Adair for six more years. From the JA he led a herd along the Palo Duro-Dodge City Trail to the nearest railhead. The Queen of Cowtowns, Dodge City, Kansas, was a town where visiting cowboys could have a good time but within the boundaries set by Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson. The JA was the first large cattle ranch in Texas. It is still running—the oldest cattle business in Texas—and is still owned by the descendants of John Adair.

"I NEVER HAD A COMPASS IN MY LIFE BUT I WAS NEVER LOST."

—Charlie Goodnight

A hundred years of movie and TV Westerns— John Wayne in *Red River*, Tommy Lee Jones in *Lonesome Dove* and Lorne Greene in *Bonanza* all come to mind—have told us that on the American frontier in the 1860s and '70s, for ranchers to survive, they had to use force. In the movies, the invisible force of manifest destiny was backed by the latest repeating rifle and revolvers. The reality was somewhat different. Faced with potential enemies on all sides, ranchers keen on survival in that time and place had to be masters of diplomacy. Charlie Goodnight was blessed with resilience and a shrewd intelligence that manifested itself in negotiating skills which Talleyrand himself would have envied.

Charlie needed those qualities to deal with men such as Dutch Henry Born, the nemesis of Texas ranchers called by some historians "the biggest horse thief in the American West." Legend has it Dutch was so good that he once sold a sheriff his own stolen horse. Charlie dealt with the Dutch Henry threat by meeting it head on, not with a Winchester, but with diplomacy. Setting up a meeting with Born and his gang near Fort Elliott, he made a deal with the outlaw to keep the rustlers north of his land, sealed with whiskey and a handshake.

Bison herds were considerably down in the late 1870s, and Indians who were otherwise peaceful began raiding ranches. Ever the negotiator,

Goodnight met with Quanah Parker, the last chief of the Quahada Comanches. Charlie agreed to provide bison meat every other day if the tribe did not disrupt the operations of the ranch. The agreement not only held, but it was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between Charlie and Quanah, the son of the White woman he had rescued from a Comanche camp in 1860.

In 1877, Goodnight bought a herd of nearly 100 Durham bulls, the first to be bred in the area. He also tested crossbreeding Angus cows with bison, creating "cattalos." Worried about the possible extinction of the bison, Mary Ann gave Charlie the idea to breed them as domestic animals. Today, the descendants of these bison can be seen at the ranch as well at the Official State of Texas Bison Herd in Caprock Canyons State Park. In 1880, he organized the first stockmen's association in the Panhandle, which protected the cattle by policing trails, and running out thieves and outlaws.

Meanwhile, John Adair worked to expand the JA Ranch into a large operation. He succeeded beyond the expectations of either man. By the time of Adair's death in 1885, the JA had grown to more than 1,300,000 acres,with well over 100,000 head of what one historian called "Goodnight's carefully bred cattle."

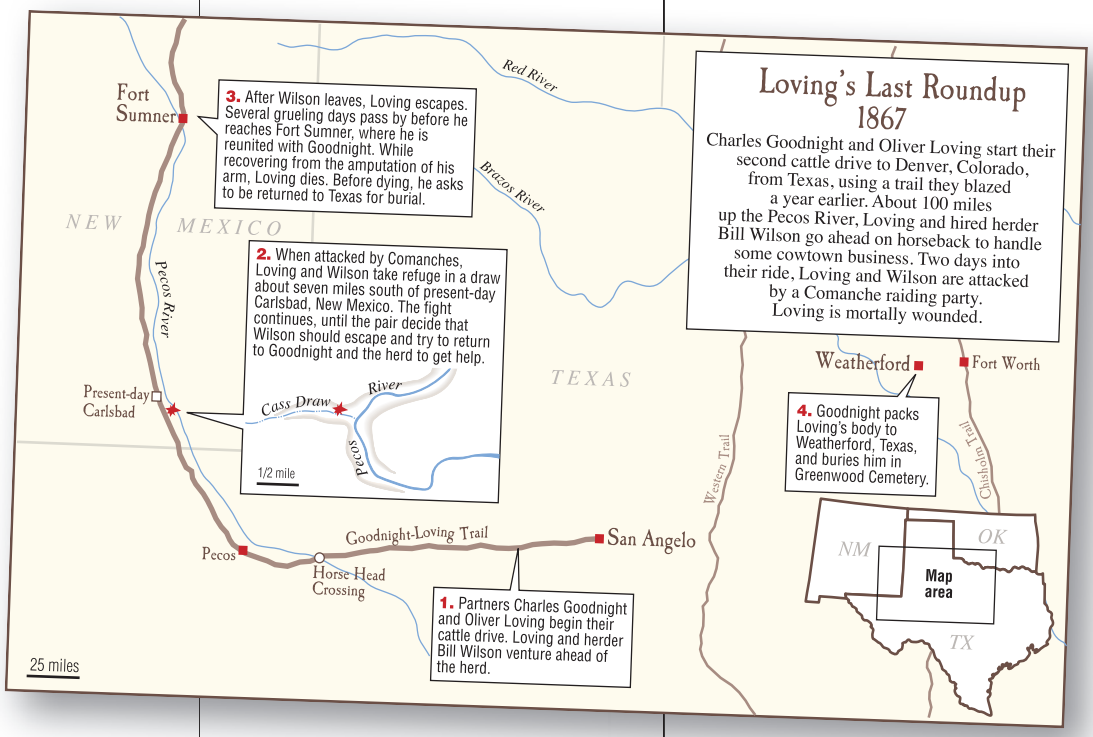
In addition to co-owning the largest ranch in Texas, Charlie saw to it that it was also the most up-to-date. He was the first rancher in the Panhandle to irrigate his farmlands, thus creating a rich new stream of income by establishing permanent ranges on his land.

In 1887, Charlie sold his holdings in the JA Ranch and moved north to create the Goodnight Ranch. He and Mary Ann settled there near the town named for him, building what is now called a Folk-Victorian two-story house. The house stands in the Duro Palo Canyon State Scenic Park; it has been restored and is open to the public.

In 1887, Charlie sold his holdings in the JA Ranch and moved north to create the Goodnight Ranch. He and Mary Ann settled there near the town named for him, building what is now called a Folk-Victorian two-story house. The house stands in the Duro Palo Canyon State Scenic Park; it has been restored and is open to the public.

As Charlie approached retirement, he looked back on his life on the frontier: "If all the good luck and all the bad luck I've had were put together, I reckon it'd make the biggest damned pile of luck in the world."

With the frontier now tamed, the years of Charlie's adventures came to an end, but not his business ventures. In 1890, he invested in gold and silver mines in Mexico, which failed, proving



to be the crypto of its time. He and Mary Ann had saved enough to finance Goodnight College in 1898. He continued breeding cattle, buffalo, elk, antelope and different species of prairie foul in enclosures which, for all intents and purposes, made him the creator of the first zoo in the entire region. Buffalo from his herd went to zoos in New York, Philadelphia, London and Paris. He and Mary Ann also began a wildlife preservation effort which put them in touch with the leading naturalists of the time. Charlie lent some buffalo to Quanah Parker's people so the young braves could experience a buffalo hunt. He became friends with Pueblo tribe leaders in New Mexico and took their side in Congress in lawsuits involving land and water rights.

In their retirement, the Goodnights sold the ranch and moved to Clarendon, Texas. Mary Ann died in 1926. The void in Charlie's life was soon filled by a 26-year-old woman from Butte, Montana, named Corrine Goodnight. Historians are divided to this day as to whether Corrine was a distant cousin. Perhaps the most incredible chapter in an incredible life occurred when the old cattleman, ready for one more drive, married Corrine on his 91st birthday. The odds of a woman named Goodnight seeking Charlie out would have to be astronomical. The odds of a 91-year-old man marrying a 26-year-old woman would make for odds somewhat higher.

Charlie Goodnight had found religion by the time he and his second wife, Corinne, were staying in their winter home in Tucson in December 1929. When his biographer J. Evetts Haley asked him which church he had joined, Goodnight had merely replied, "I don't know, but it's a damn good one!" The legendary "Father of the Texas Panhandle" probably found comfort in his faith during his final moments before dying from influenza at the age of 93 in Tucson at 5:45 on the morning of Thursday, December 12, 1929.

In 1955, Charles Goodnight was inducted into the Hall of Great Westerners of the National Cowboy Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. It is hard to imagine why it took them so long to recognize a man who was entitled to be the first plaque on their wall. Charlie's legacy was well expressed: "Known for transforming cattle drives from a hard scrabble frontier livelihood into the biggest business in the American West."

Charlie surely smiled in 1995 when the great character actor James Gammon was cast as Charles Goodnight in the TV miniseries based on Larry McMurtry's *Streets of Laredo*. In the end, Charlie had summed up his life better than any portrayal could: "It has been my aim through life to try to have the world a little better because I lived in it."

Allen Barra is the author of *Inventing Wyatt Earp: His Life and Many Legends*. and a former sports columnist for the *WSJ*. He has also contributed to *The Atlantic*, *New Republic* and the *Daily Beast*. He appeared in Bill Kurtis' docudrama on the street fight.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BY BOB BOZE BELL AND BUCKEYE BLAKE

THE COWBOY PILGRIMAGE

My fellow Kid Krazy Pard, Buckeye Blake, recently told me about a little-known pilgrimage that cowboys are making in west Texas.

Goodnight Country

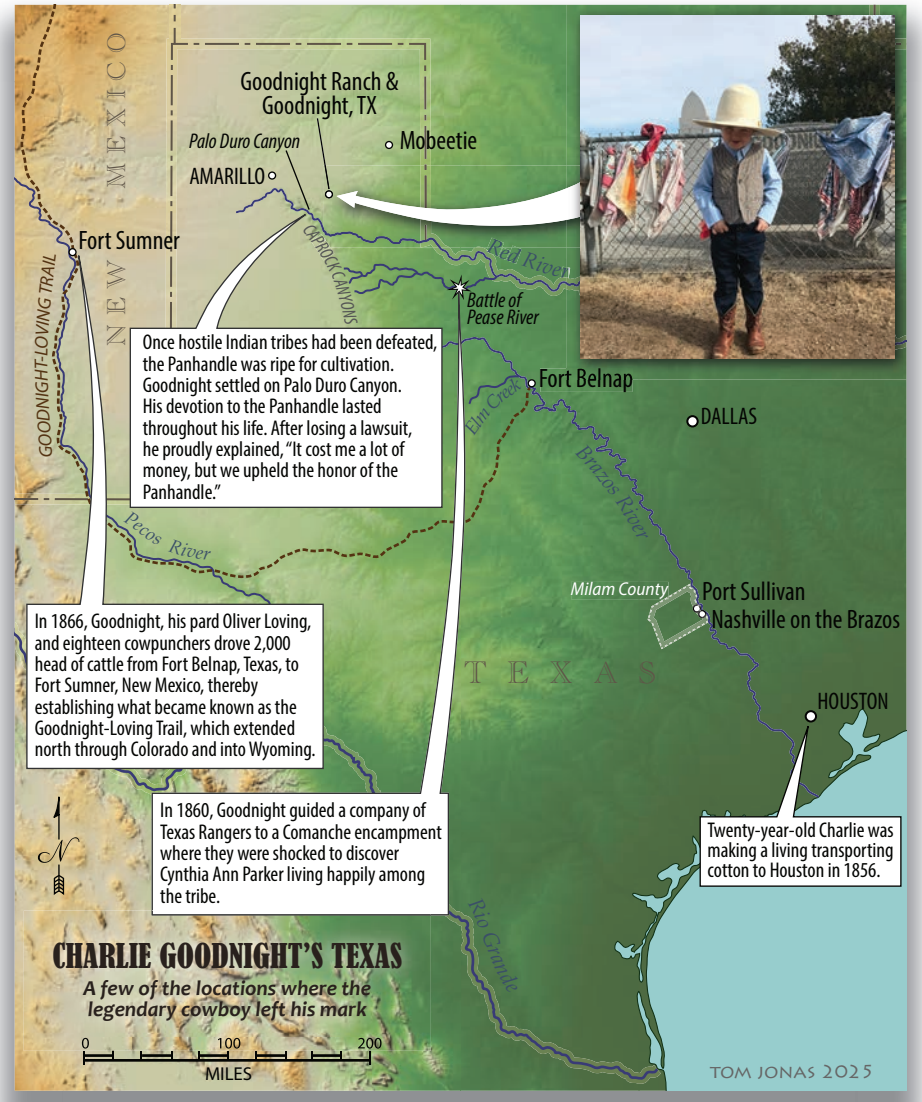
That's Buckeye's grandson Luca, age 7, taken four years ago at the Charlie Goodnight gravesite in Goodnight, Texas. And those are neckerchiefs, sleeve-garters, bandanas and cowboy scarves hanging on the fence behind him. (I know, I know, some of those terms are redundant, but Buckeye uses them all, sometimes in the same sentence.) Buckeye says the truckers scream by on Highway 287, but the cowboys stop to pay homage to one of their own and leave behind their tokens of respect tied to the wire mesh fence.

"It's bleak out there," Buckeye told me over the phone. "The wind always blows and most of the ranch is gone, but the cowboys stop and pay their respects." He added, "There's lots of ghosts out there, but it's the Cowboy's Path, and we stay on it."

My Kid Krazy Pard Buckeye Blake stays true to the Cowboy's Path

"There's heavy-duty medicine out there, that's why we stop and pay our respects."
—Buckeye Blake

Buckeye Takes A Knee
Photo courtesy of Buckeye Blake



IF YOU GO

Check out the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in nearby Canyon, Texas. It is the largest history museum in Texas and is about 15 minutes south of Amarillo on the campus of West Texas A&M University.

Series to watch before visiting: *Lonesome Dove* (1989)

Soundtrack to play on the road: "The Goodnight-Loving Trail," written and recorded by Utah Phillips. We prefer the version by Ian Tyson, and you can also listen to Ian sing "The Gift," his most excellent song about Charlie Russell. And while you're at it, why not add "Amarillo by Morning" sung by George Strait? You'll be on Interstate 40, which is essentially Route 66, so you know what to do: "Don't Haul Bricks on 66" by the Dusty Chaps for starters. And we prefer "Route 66" by the Rolling Stones. Don't forget Winona.

Book: *Charles Goodnight: A Man for All Ages* by B. Byron Price

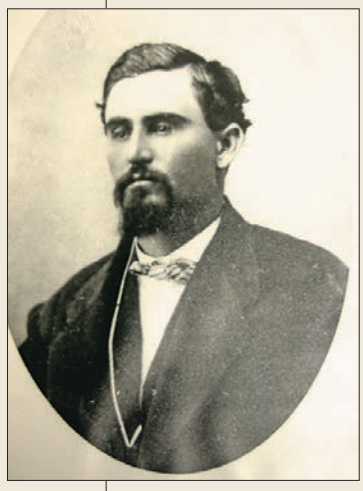
—Greg Scott,

WAS CHARLIE GOODNIGHT THE ORIGINAL LANDMAN?

Billy Bob Thorton in *The Landman*

While Charlie Goodnight may not fit with our modern-day image of a land man—see Billy Bob Thornton's character in Taylor Sheridan's *Landman* series—the "Father of the Texas Panhandle" was worthy of the title. In addition to his business acumen and negotiation skills, the legendary surveyor knew how to get the most out of any terrain in his possession with ground-breaking irrigation methods. Far beyond the standard rancher and cattleman of his time, Goodnight's shrewd management of resources and commitment to sustained development were very much in line with those profiting in the oil and gas industries today. Charlie was not only one of America's first land men, but an argument could be made that he was one of the most innovative and effective.

—James B. Mills



Charlie Goodnight as the original *Landman*

True West Exclusive

Classic Gunfights

"Brazen Bill" Shot to Blazes

"Brazen Bill" Brazelton vs A Tucson Posse

"I DIE BRAVE, MY GOD!"

According to the *Prescott Enterprise*, Bill Brazelton is "the most successful 'single-handed' highway robber of modern times."

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

Based on the research of Erik J. Wright

JULY 31, 1878

A lone highwayman, masked in muslin, robs a stage en route from Tucson to Florence, Arizona, carrying three passengers, including *Arizona Citizen* editor John Clum. He robs the stage of about $60 when it reaches Point of Mountain (near present-day Marana). The victims report the robber gripped his weapons in a peculiar manner; he held his pistol against the barrel of his rifle, almost as if he were hedging his bets should anyone creep up on him.

The next week, on August 8, the Tucson to Florence stage approaches the spot where the robbery took place. A curious passenger asks the driver, Arthur Hill, to point it out. As he does, out steps the same masked man. "There he is again," Hill shouts. This time the brazen highwayman escapes with about $500.

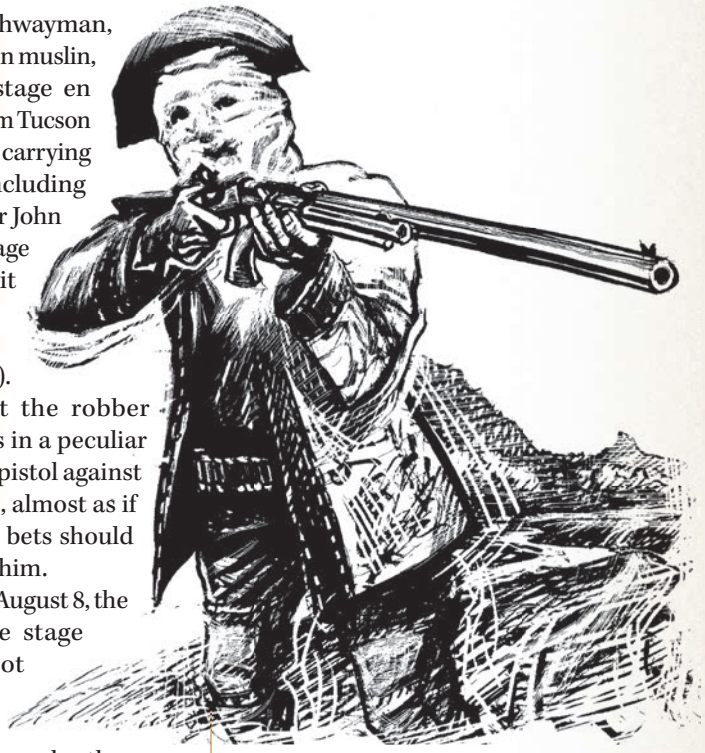
Arriving on the scene, a sheriff's posse trails the robber but fails to find him. Seasoned tracker Juan Elias is brought in on the investigation, and he discovers a clever ruse.

Two sets of horse tracks are found leaving Tucson and heading to the scene of the crime, but none of them returned. Trailing the northbound tracks south, Elias notices the tracks give an odd impression. The horse had a twist in its step which Elias later saw at the Festival de San Augustin in Tucson and tracked the horse to David Nemitz's house, four miles south of Tucson.

The police arrest Nemitz, and the court sets bail at $2,000.

Caving under interrogation, Nemitz betrays the robber he names as being William Whitney Brazelton, who worked for a time at James Lee's grist mill.

On August 19, Pima County Sheriff Charles A. Shibell and a posse of six deputies set up a trap. Brazen Bill has agreed to meet Nemitz for needed supplies.



Robbery victims report that Brazelton held a pistol against the barrel of his rifle, probably as a hedge against shifting circumstances, so he could switch weapons during a close fight. During the robbery, he also wore his coat turned inside out.

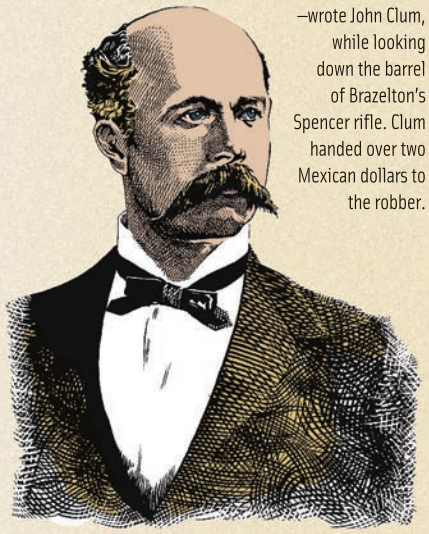
In a thicket near the river (now the southeast corner of Ajo Way and Mission Road in Tucson), Brazen Bill approaches a log and coughs. Hidden in the heavy brush, a posse member returns the signal, a reply cough. Brazen Bill responds by placing his hat on the log, a signal that Nemitz is free to come out in the open. Suddenly, the silence is broken by a shotgun blast. A fusillade of pistol shots follow.

"You son of a bitch!" yells Brazelton, realizing he has been set up. "I die brave, my God! I'll pray 'til I die."

Shot ten times in the chest, Brazelton expires.

(opposite page) A Tucson street scene during the 1870s, around the time when Bill was active in the city

"My six-shooter on the floor of the coach might as well have been in Tucson or Timbuctoo."



—wrote John Clum, while looking down the barrel of Brazelton's Spencer rifle. Clum handed over two Mexican dollars to the robber.

Hundreds flocked to see the notorious bad man propped up with his guns and accoutrements on. Tucson photographer Henry Buehman took two photos of Brazelton which were distributed widely.

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

The newspapers (John Clum's in particular) reported that Brazelton had robbed nine coaches in Arizona and New Mexico—all of them single-handedly. Clum also wrote that Brazen Bill was "dextrous with firearms and had not [a] streak of yellow in him."

Little is known of Brazelton's early years. He told a friend in Tucson that he had robbed two stagecoaches in northern Arizona, three near Silver City, New Mexico, and four near Tucson. One of the newspapers described Brazelton as a "great, big, good natured fellow; and except when on business, as harmless as any man could be."

For many years after Brazen Bill's death, the native population around Tucson avoided the spot where he had met his end, especially when traveling at night, even if they had to make a journey of a mile to go around it. The old-timers often told tales of seeing a phantom highwayman, El Tejano, standing in the road (see below).

Recommended: *William Brazelton: Masked Highwayman of the Tucson Basin* by Erik J. Wright, published by Tripaw Press.

CLASSIC TRUE WEST

FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: If you'd like to read more of Richard K. Kolb's articles, like "Black Gold on the Western Frontier" from the November 1988 issue, please go to TrueWestMagazine.com and subscribe for full access to more than 70 years' worth of exciting issues.

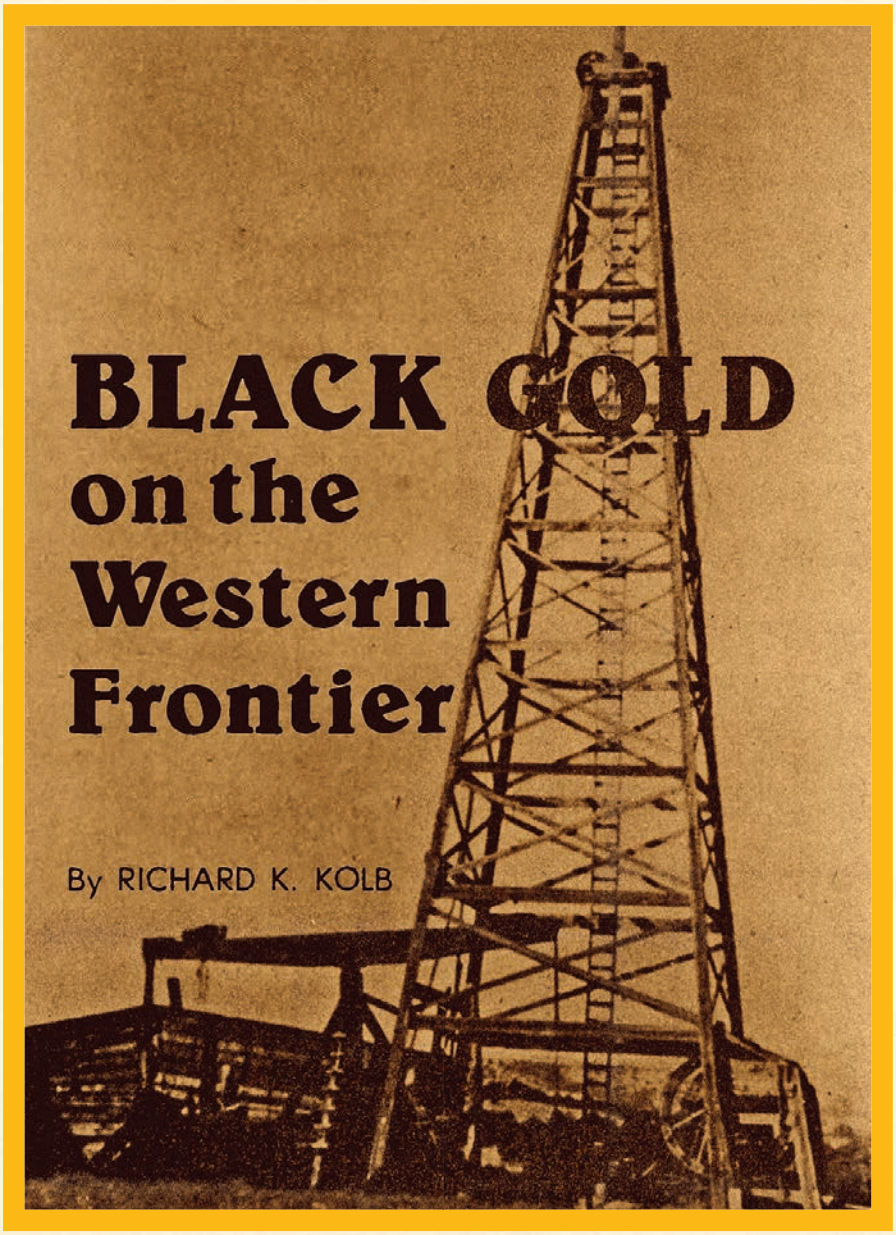
BY RICHARD K. KOLB

BLACK GOLD ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

The land Spanish explorers called "Colorado" was an untamed wilderness in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet following close on the heels of western trailblazers came pioneers of a different sort determined to tame the Wild West. They brought economic advancement to a region deemed worthless by their contemporaries, and no other sector of the frontier economy played a more pivotal role in this development than the mining industry.

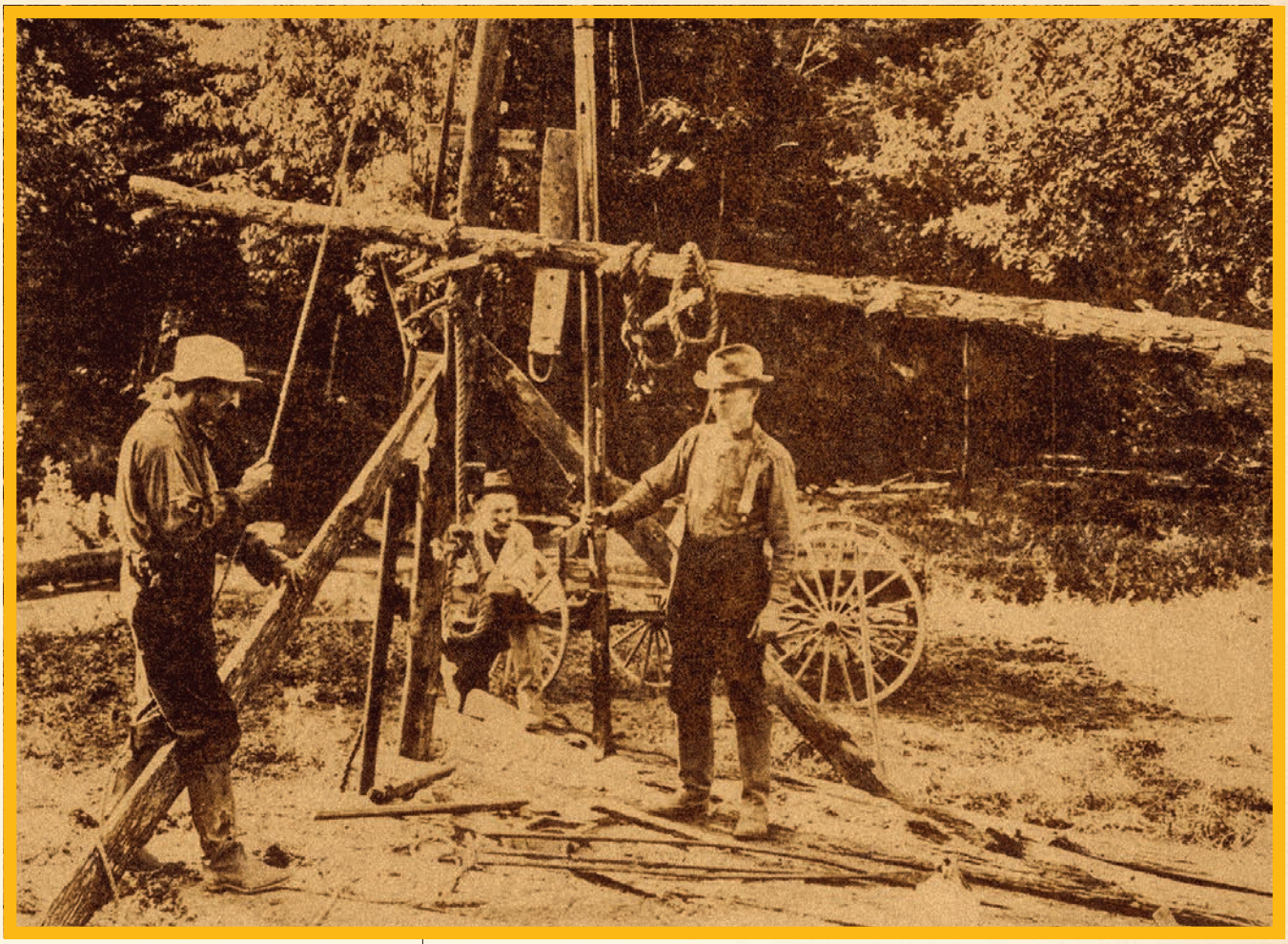
Colorado, in fact, was born and built in a rush-a virtual mineral stampede. Gold and silver formed the foundation stones of statehood. But sandwiched between those stones was an equally valuable mineral-oil-which eventually eclipsed the others in economic importance. Oddly enough, the "Black Magic Rush" is one of the state's best kept historical secrets.

The Centennial State marked a milestone in 1987—the 125th anniversary of the Rocky Mountain West's petroleum industry. Discovery and development of the first oil field west of the



Florence oil field, Colorado, date unknown

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming



The spring pole method of drilling, otherwise known as "stomping down a well," was the cheap though strenuous process used by most of the first prospectors. The manpower exerted on stirrups and handle could drive the drilling tools suspended from the center rope to an eventual depth of several hundred feet.

American Petroleum Institute

Mississippi River occurred only three years after "Colonel" Drake's famous well launched the U.S. oil business back east in 1859.

While the country was embroiled in civil conflict, a resolute oil man heeded newspaper publisher Horace Greeley's immortal advice, "Go West, young man." Alexander Morrison Cassiday, one of Drake's proteges, carried his newly acquired technical skills west to tap the region's liquid treasure. His venture was all the more remarkable because of the circumstances under which it was undertaken.

Prospecting for and producing petroleum in the Rocky Mountain region the "Great American Desert"—was a risky business at that time. The foothills of the Eastern Slope and the adjacent high plains were inhospitable, and inhabited by warlike Indian tribes. In 1852 U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster asked, 'What do we want of this worthless area, this region of savages and wild beasts, of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts and these endless mountain ranges?"

CASSIDAY HAD a pretty good idea of the value of these "wastelands." But he was probably unaware of the trouble brewing in the region when he arrived in search of oil.

When Cassiday was staking his first Colorado oil claim in the spring of 1862, a Confederate invasion of the gold-rich territory was imminent. A 1,100-man Rebel army raised in Texas was poised to strike. But thanks to the equally strong First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers nicknamed "Gilpin 's Lambs"

In 1852 U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster asked, "What do we want of this worthless area, this region of savages and wild beasts, of shifting sands and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever hope to put these great deserts and these endless mountain ranges?"

after the territorial governor the transplanted Pennsylvanian was able to work his claim.

The regiment tramped through a blizzard across a mountain pass into New Mexico Territory, and on March 28 confronted a column of Confederates in an arroyo near Glorieta. Though defeated in the main engagement, 430 Pike's Peakers under Major John M. Chivington restored the unit's reputation by hitting the Rebel rear, utterly destroying the enemy's supply train. The Texans high-tailed it back to the Lone Star State.

Panorama of Florence, Colorado, which was the state's rowdiest industrial center during its heyday

Casualties in the fight-a total of over 230 killed, missing, and wounded-were light by Civil War standards. But the outcome of the combat was decisive. Known as the "Gettysburg of the West," the battle not only thwarted Dixie's occupation of the area but also prevented Cassiday 's petroleum pioneering efforts from becoming an unknown casualty of the Civil War.

Cassiday was not a man to shirk danger. Having read Lieutenant Zebulon Pike's 1806 report about oil on a creek that flowed into the Arkansas River, he had ignored the warnings of "dangerous crossings" and hastened to the territory hell-bent on finding "black gold."

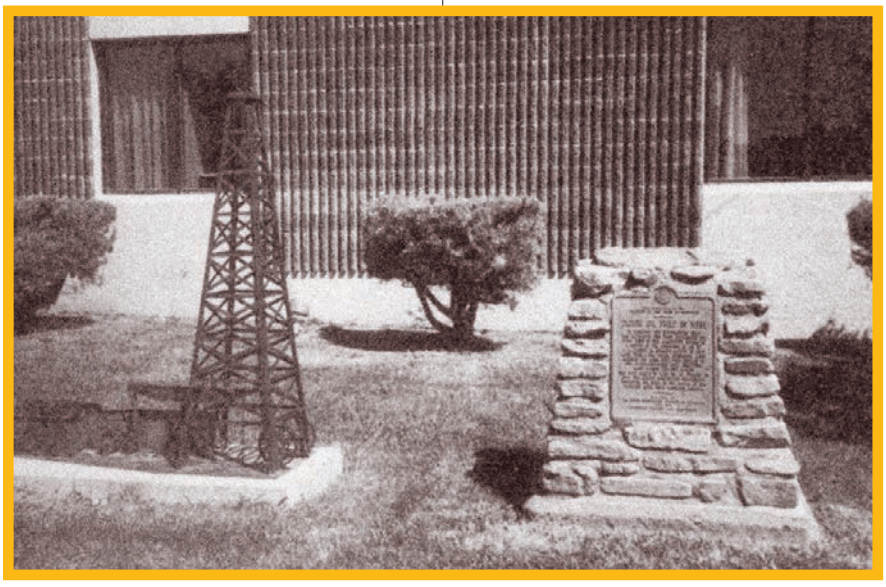
Florence became Colorado's greatest ihdustrial center-and its rowdiest. Slick gamblers and "soiled doves" flocked to the town to fleece workers of their paychecks. Florence's population reached 7,000 while its annual oil production peaked at 824,000 barrels in 1892.

In the vicinity of Royal Gorge—the "Grand Canyon of the Arkansas River" —surface seeps on Four Mile, or Oil Creek, had attracted Indians for generations. The Utes skimmed off the oil and used it to soothe aching joints and cure other ailments. The first white man to stumble upon the oil spring, located six miles north of what became the town of Canon City in Fremont County, was a prospector named Gabriel Bowen, who was looking for bullet lead.

Shortly after news of Drake's discovery reached the West, Bowen claimed 160 acres surrounding the In spring. He and one Matthew G. Pratt unsuccessfully worked the prospect. Oil was collected by digging shallow shafts near seeps along the creek bed. Since the enterprise was not commercial, the prospector sold the land to Cassiday.

The Pennsylvanian and a local partner, James A. McCandless, employed the tried and true technology of the day—"creekology." Drill sites were selected simply by locating a drilling apparatus near a visible oil seep.Cassiday, who had been a roustabout on the crew that drilled the nation's first oil well at Titusville, had acquired two years of first-hand experience at digging holes in the Pennsylvania oil patch.

The early method of "making hole," known as spring-pole drilling, required two men who bent a springy sapling which pushed an augur into the ground. The elastic strength of the rod raised the bit, prepared for the next stroke. The larger end of the pole was anchored to the ground, supported in the center by a forked stick with the bit-end positioned directly over the hole. Drillers' feet were placed in rope loops and kicked downward, hence the expression "kicking



A marker outside the Florence, Colorado, municipal building commemorates the days of the town's oil boom

Caro Fisher, Fremont-Custer Historical Society

Florence Pioneer Museum and Historical Society

down hole." Holes were encased with wooden, and later iron, "pipe" to prevent the cavity from caving in This back-breaking work required physical strength as well as an iron will.

In March 1862, as Coloradans were defending the territory's borders, the duo struck oil at fifty feet in their first well. A crude pump was installed to remove the petroleum from the well bore. But a year later the yield was still only one barrel a day. After producing fifty barrels of oil it was finally abandoned. A second well was "spudded" (started) in 1863-two years later it reached approximately 500 feet. According to early newspaper, accounts it found an "inexhaustible supply" of oil, most of which was located up the hole at shallower depths.

Cassiday sank a total of six wells in what became Canon City field. Early production from thwe wells, all of which was froμi above 100 feet, reportedly reached 25 to 30 barrels a day sometime in 1865.

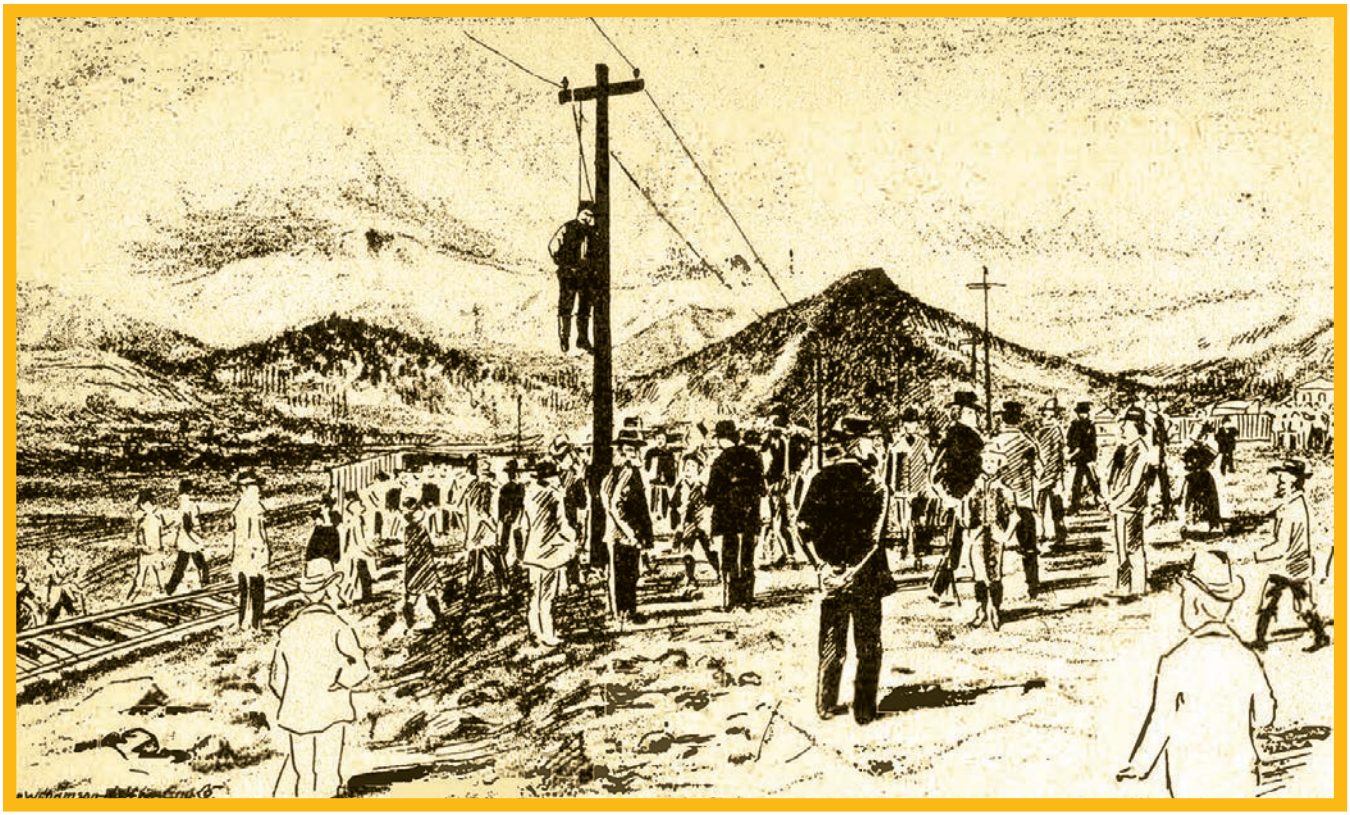
Cassiday is also credited with establishing the first commercial oil refinery west of the Mississippi River. He built a rudimentary retort, or still, out of materials acquired in Denver, and operated it near 'the wells. A skimming plant was also set up to collect surface oil off the water. A decade earlier, one Maurice LeDoux had skimmed oil from ponds and processed it through a small still with a condensing tube made from an old rifle barrel. He used the processed oil in lighted oil pots at his trading post. LeDoux 's post was later burned to the ground, and the residents massacred by Indians.

"Coal oil," as it Was then known, was refined into kerosene for use as a fuel in lamps. Cassiday had the only ready supply of kerosene between the Rockies and the Mississippi. Besides providing illumination, crude was used to lubricate machinery and as axle grease. According to one account, Cassiday 's operation refined as much as 300,000 gallons of petroleum, the equivalent of 7,143 barrels (a 42-gallon barrel became the petroleum standard in 1866).

Petroleum products were transported from the isolated field in wooden barrels atop wagons drawn by teams of oxen or horses. Though travel along wagon trails was hazardous; Cassiday managed to keep the crude moving to the market. It cost up to $1.50 per gallon to freight the oil, depending on the destination. Markets ranged from Denver to Santa Fe, New Mexico, over hundreds of hostile and rugged miles. Still, Cassiday realized a profit of $100 on a barrel when the price skyrocketed to $5 a gallon during the Indian hostilities of 1864-65. During the Civil War years, the Plains tribes took full advantage of the absence of regular Army troops from the frontier posts. Colorado had long been the domain of nomadic Indians. Only two years before oil operations began there, Oil Creek was the site of a fight between warring Cheyennes and Utes. Now settlers became the target of choice.

Arapahoes and Cheyennes soon began raiding stagecoaches, freight wagons, and ranches and stealing horses along the South Platte Trail. Between the summer of 1864 and March 1865, Canon City and Denver were 'virtually under siege by warriors on the warpath. Communication with and transportation to the outside world were severed. Prices for all commodities were astronomical. Territorial Governor John Evans wrote, 'The Indian war interrupted our commerce on the plains so the territory has had a severe back set." Colorado's volunteer cavalry engaged hostiles on at least eighteen occasions during the period of open warfare.

When the Civil War neared an end, the territorial militia finally managed to clear the overland routes to the mining region. However, there were other causes of concern for safety. Lack of law and order was a major threat to the area. Horace Greeley described Colorado 's boom towns as overrun with characters "soured in temper, always armed, bristling at a word, ready with rifle, revolver or bowie knife." Rough and-tumble miners participating in one of history's greatest gold rushes generated most of the disorder. One berserk miner shot and killed three men in a single year around Canon City. Canon City had earned a reputation as a wide-open, wild town known for its "depravity," according to a local newspaper editor, well before Cassiday arrived.



Early artist's drawing of a Canon City lynching

Vigilantism and its most lethal weapon—lynching—rose in response to the unrestrained violence. A people's court was created, and supplemented by "private enforcers." One dandy gambler, himself of questionable character, tracked and personally lynched a horse thief. On more than one occasion personal justice was dispensed from the barrel of a six-gun.

The worst offenses against the townspeople occurred in the spring of 1863-the "time of terror." A band of Mexican outlaws vowing vengeance against "gringos" went on a murder spree. A local judge was found dead, a crude cross carved in the flesh of his chest. The thrye brothers responsible for this and other killings were trailed by an angry posse. One of the bandits was dispatched quickly. The remaining two were later bushwhacked by a bounty hunter, their heads taken in a gunnysack back to Fort Garland. The $2,500 reward on their heads was never paid because the territory claimed it was short of greenbacks.

Neither outlaws, Indians, Confederates, nor the harsh elements deterred Cassiday. Lack of cold cash, however, did put a damper on his operations. Consequently, in the late 1860s he sold three-fourths interest in the oil operation for $60,000 to Boston financiers. A stock company called Boston and Colorado Oil Company was then formed.

High hopes were held for Colorado's oil field. On December 13, 1865, the *Rocky Mountain News* optimistically reported, "We have every reason to believe from the indications and discoveries made that portions of our Territory are as rich jn petroleum as celebrated Pithole District in Pennsylvania." Canon City field did, in fact, continue to yield enough liquid gold to supply the needs of Colorado and New Mexico. Colorado crude commanded a higher price than easternoil because of its superior quality.

But any kind of economic activity in Colorado Territory outside of a populated center was risky. Indian hostilities flared anew around 1870. On one occasion five teamsters were ambushed and killed near Carson. Emboldened, the Indians then attacked a train. Shortly thereafter 20 settlers were massacred.

Perseverance, though, has always been a trait of petroleum pioneers Cassiday, disdainful of the danger and fully aware of the profit to be made, could not stay away long. In the early 1870s he renewed his search for the elusive bonanza. A few years later his undaunted determination led to the extension and development of Colorado's only producing field of the 19th century.

Between 1871 and 1874 the entrepreneur induced four associates to buy large tracts of land near Florence, a town twelve miles southeast of Canon City. All the holes drilled on the tracts languish, and the venture apparently failed, for when Cassiday surfaced again he was in another line of drilling. In1881, Cassiday 's ex-partner hired him to drill a water well at the Canfield Coal Mine. Ironically, oil was found insteadof water. Several barrels were recovered before the tools were lost in the hole. Confirmation of the strike was postponed until proper title to the land was secured. Once news of the discovery spread, interest in the near-dormant field was revived. A virtual boom was launched two years later when a new discovery was made.

By 1884, Cassiday was on his own again. Investors from Cleveland backed him in the formation of the Arkansas

Valley Land and Oil Company. Two of the three wells drilled by the company produced oil. The firm later bought another five wells and built the first refinery at Florence. It was capable of refining one hundred barrels of oil a day.

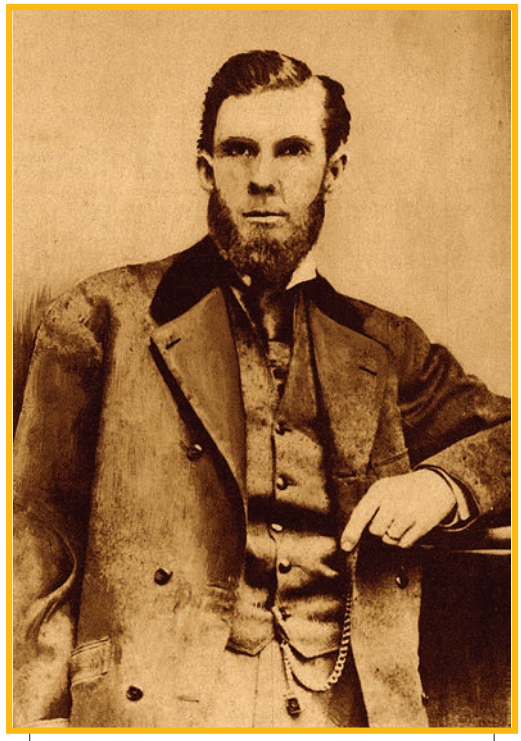
At this juncture, Cassiday's fate becomes a bit confused. It appears that he was bought out by the Cleveland investors in July 1885. Arkansas Valley Land and Oil then merged with Colorado Trust Company, owned by one D.G. Peabody, to form United Oil Company in 1887. Cassiday's role in the field no doubt diminished with the emergence of larger companies. He may have died about this time. Whatever the case, he is well deserving of the title of "father of the Colorado petroleum industry."

As the decade came to an end, an oversupply of crude as well as inadequate storage facilities temporarily shut in many of the field's 20 producers. The area, however, made a quick comeback. A concurrent surge in ore processing and oil production in the early 1890s led to a boom in Florence, the town founded by James A. McCandless, Cassiday 's partner in the state's first oil venture. (McCandless' family had gained notoriety in western annals when his brother, Colb, was allegedly murdered in cold blood in 1862 by none other than "Wild Bill" Hickock.)

Florence soon became Colorado's greatest industrial center-and its rowdiest. Fifteen saloons remained open around the clock, and slick gamblers and "soiled doves " flocked to the town to fleece workers of their paychecks. Florence's population reached 7,000, while its annual oil producdion peaked at 824,000 barrels in 1892.

One year before, the state's first pipeline-a four-inch line stretching some 30 miles from the Florence field to a refinery northwest of Pueblo was engineered by J.H. Caldwell and laid by Rocky Mountain Oil Company, a firm financed by Cleveland interests. The line had a capacity of 5,000 barrels a day, and oil was stored in three large reservoirs. But construction of another refinery near the field quickly put the transporter out of business.

Boom times also brought cutthroat competition. Fortunately for Florence, a kerosene war with Cleveland's capitalists led by John D. Rockefeller ultimately ended in victory for local marketers. Two companies, both formed in 1887, emerged from the war as the leading producers in the field.



Alexander Morrison Cassiday

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming

During the heyday, United Oil controlled 40,000 acres, operated 16 producers and employed 40 workers. Florence Oil Refining held 10,000 acres, owned ten wells, and had 35 men on its payroll. By 1900, United controlled most of the production. But within three years the boom settled down. Access to outside markets was maintained through an affiliation with a company destined to become a major integrated oil firm.

Continental Oil and Transportation Company, formed in Ogden, Utah, in 1875, was "devoted to the distribution of petroleum products to the pioneers of the West. " After many years of indirect involvement in the field, Conoco bought out United Oil in 1916. For seventy years, Conoco and its predecessors operated Florence field. From headquarters in Denver, Conoco maintained a network of tank cars, storage tanks, distribution stations, and agencies.

Florence field, with its 20,000 proven acres—2,000 of which were developed—established some interesting records. By 1903 the Number 49 well, which was located within the city center, had produced one million barrels of oil. It was grandiosely regarded as "the greatest payer in the shape of an oil well that the world had ever known." At the same time, the Number 357 well at 3,650 feet was purported to be the deepest hole in the world outside of Pennsylvania.

Florence's cycle of boom and bust ran its inevitable course. A new age dawned with the invention of the incandescent light bulb. Kerosene lamps soon went the way of the horse. And the advent of the "horseless carriage" witnessed the wane of the Wild West. By the late 1920s, the number of wells in the field • had surpassed the 1,000 mark, but peak production had long since declined. Though tµe boom passed, the reservoirs kept yielding black-gold. Cumulative output for the field surpassed fifteen million barrels in 1987.

Even today, the 14-square-mile field continues to pump oil. About a dozen independent operators work forty wells. Florence's most famous hole, the Number 42, produced continuously from April 1889 until at least Colorado's one hundredth petroleum anniversary in 1962, making it the oldest continuous producer in the Rocky Mountain West.

The Canon City-Florence field's importance transcends mere production. This is where an entire region as well as a state launched its petroleum industry. It is also visible testimony to the tenacity of a disappearing breed of men the wildcatter.

BY CANDY MOULTON

The Frontier Characters of South Dakota

Calamity Jane, Wild Bill and George Custer roamed the Black Hills.

On July 2, 1874, George Armstrong Custer led a surveying expedition of around 1,000 men, 110 wagons and hundreds of head of mules, horses and cattle from Fort Abraham Lincoln into the Black Hills of western South Dakota. He had orders to explore and locate a potential site for a fort in the Black Hills and to establish a route to Fort Laramie.

Unofficially, Custer's expedition was tasked with determining whether there was truth to the rumors of gold in the Black Hills. This was the first military encroachment into the Black Hills, the long-held territory of the Lakota people. Traveling with Custer were both White and Indian scouts, teamsters, scientists, five newspaper reporters, two miners, photographer William Illingworth, and even a 16-piece band.

By late July Custer's command had established a camp south of what would later be called Harney Peak and is now named Black Elk Peak, near the present town of Custer. Some of the men climbed the peak; they mapped the area and then traveled west into present Wyoming where Custer climbed Inyan Kara Mountain, south of Sundance, and carved his name on the rocks giving the area below the name "floral valley."

In their explorations, the Custer expedition produced a number of photographs, a slew of newspaper accounts and noted the presence of gold in the area. The word spread quickly, and

WILLIAM H. ILLINGWORTH

Illingworth's photograph of Custer's 1874 expedition into the Black Hills of South Dakota shows the photographer's wagon, carrying his photography equipment including glass plates.

All images courtesy True West Archies unless otherwise noted

PHONE OFF. WILD ON.

TOP 10 TRUE WESTERN TOWNS OF THE YEAR 2025

Deadwood, a National Historic Landmark and proud to be named the Top True West Town.

1876
DEADWOOD
SOUTH DAKOTA
Deadwood.com

GENERAL CROOK

in 1875 a scientific expedition to the Black Hills led by Henry Newton and Walter Jenney with troops commanded by Gen. George Crook, confirmed the gold. Maps drawn by Valentine T. McGillycuddy, a cartographer with the expedition, provided detailed information for those who instigated the Black Hills Gold Rush.

By June 1876, when Custer met his demise in the Battle on the Greasy Grass, or Little Bighorn, the rough and tumble town of Deadwood was established, one of many gold towns that sprang up in the Black Hills.

That fall Crook returned to the area with his hungry and weary soldiers who had taken part in the Battle of Slim Buttes, just weeks after the fight at Little Bighorn, and endured the Horse Meat—or Starvation—March on their way to Deadwood.

Arriving there in September 1876, the troops remained in the gold rush boom town for about a month to recuperate from their hard travels, taking part in dances and other community events.

A Hangout for Wild Bill and Calamity Jane

Calamity Jane, who greeted Crook's troops as they approached Deadwood, had first seen the area when she traveled with the Newton-Jenney Black Hills Expedition. She was in and out of Deadwood the remainder of her life. She was there in 1876 when James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok arrived.

Hickok followed the Cheyenne-Deadwood Trail to the mining town, where he spent the last of his days. While he did some prospecting, Hickok spent most of his time at the card table. He was playing poker in the Number 10 Saloon on August 2, 1876, when John "Jack" McCall shot and killed him.

A gambling hell in its early days, you'll still find poker tables and a full range of other casino games and slot machines in Deadwood today. There is an original bar in the Old Style Saloon Number 10. This is not the building where Hickok met his end, but you can play cards and have a shot of whiskey, though you might want to keep your back to the wall, as Wild Bill should have done.

Hickok was buried in the Mount Moriah Cemetery on a hillside in Deadwood. Calamity Jane traveled to other locations after his death, but by 1903 she was back in the Black Hills, working as a cook for Belle Fourche Madam Dora DuFran. When she died, Calamity was taken to Deadwood and buried beside Hickok. Their gravesites are among the most visited historic sites in Deadwood.

Calamity Jane Steals The Limelight for Eternity

In 1876, Martha "Calamity Jane" Canary was a 24-year-old woman who often passed as a man. Because of her legendary notoriety—she is thought to be the most written-about Western American woman of the 19th century—Calamity Jane ended up as "Wild Bill" Hickok's love interest in countless books and movies. She is seen at right, posing in front of Hickok's grave. She requested to be buried beside him, and the town fathers of Deadwood granted her wish—partially as a joke and partially because they knew the graves would attract tourists. That Calamity Jane has totally usurped Agnes Lake as Hickok's paramour is nothing short of outrageous.

The Days of '76 Museum houses historical items including the Don Clowser collection of 19th-century pioneer, cowboy and American Indian art and artifacts. The Days of '76 Rodeo attracts the top cowboys in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association every July, and the town's Western heritage is on full display during the Days of '76 parade, which winds through the historic buildings of downtown Deadwood. The Black


In a world filled with digital connection and manufactured excitement, discover the thrill of what's real in Rapid City. Leave behind the noise and immerse yourself in a sea of ponderosa pines, with a soundtrack of rocks crunching beneath your tires, the wind of the Black Hills breathing into your spirit.
Silence your notifications and let your heart rate rise with your elevation gains. Here, the excitement is tangible and adventure is a cherished tradition that can't be simulated.
It's Real.
RAPID CITY SD
Request an Official Guide at
VISITRAPIDCITY.COM

of downtown Deadwood. The Black Hills have several other small towns and attractions well worth a visit including Lead, with its Homestake Opera House, and Hot Springs, with its ancient Mammoth dig site. Hill City and Custer are close to both Custer State Park and Mount Rushmore National Monument.

The Needles Highway through Custer State Park is arguably the most interesting route you can take in the Northern Plains, and if your scheduling works out, try to attend the annual buffalo roundup in the park in late September.

The largest city in western South Dakota is Rapid City, home to the outstanding Journey Museum, which interprets American Indian history and stories of the settlement in the Black Hills by miners and town builders. Without doubt the store to visit for authentic art and items created by Lakota artists is Prairie Edge in downtown Rapid City.

South Dakota's Earliest Settlement

The Chevelier Pierre Gaultier de la Verendrye in 1743 stood on a hill overlooking the Missouri River and buried a lead plate telling local Indians it was "memorial of those who had come to their country." In reality he was claiming the land for France.

De la Verendrye is the first outside explorer to camp in the vicinity of today's Fort Pierre, but certainly not the most well-known. That distinction falls to the Americans William Clark and Meriwether Lewis. Today, you can follow Lewis and Clark's trail to Fort Pierre, and stand at a monument dedicated to Verendrye. The site has a panoramic view of the Missouri River.

Fort Pierre is the oldest permanent town in South Dakota, having been established as Fort La Framboise in 1817, which became Fort Pierre Choteau, a fur trader's post. The Fort Pierre to Deadwood Trail started here, providing one of the major routes to goldfields in the western Black Hills after 1876.

While in the area, visit the Verendrye Museum in Fort Pierre, a small-town collection ranging from ranchers' hats to saddles, and Indian metates to household items.

Like most other Western states, South Dakota has its share of legendary characters like Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok. In 1929 S.G. Tillett of Alliance, Nebraska, answered many questions posed by Edwin L. Sabin of Clinton, Iowa, who was researching a number of those frontier characters.

Sabin became particularly frustrated in his effort to obtain accurate details, leading him to confide to a friend: "I fully agree with you upon the exasperating difficulty of obtaining accurate data upon the careers of Wild Bill and other frontier 'heroes.' From deeds to dates, everything is in confusion and a state of prejudice."

While you may not find the full and true story of any of the characters who have visited the Black Hills, on any trip to South Dakota you will have a chance to see the land—from mountains and streams to open prairie and badlands—where they once traveled.

Candy Moulton lives and writes in ranch country near Encampment, Wyoming.

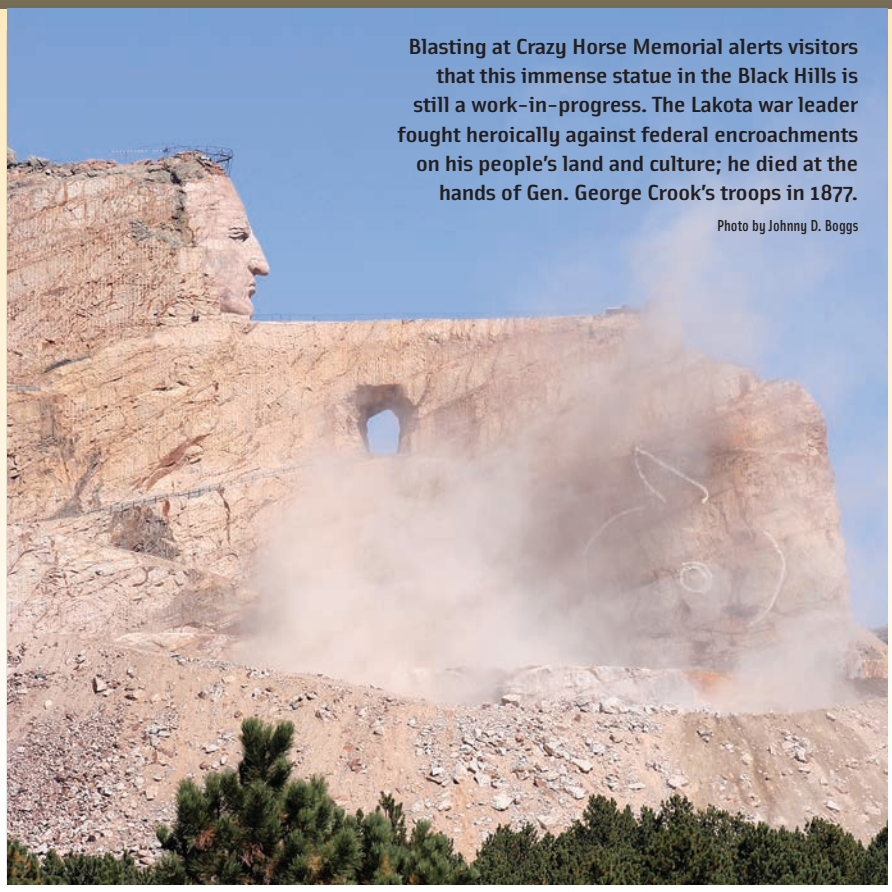
A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

CRAZY HORSE MEMORIAL

The Black Hills are sacred to the Lakota people, and one of their important leaders is being memorialized at the Crazy Horse Memorial in the form of a carving of the war leader into the granite face of the mountain. The work has been ongoing for decades. The site is also the location of the Indian Museum of North America and hosts a variety of programs presented by artists and culture bearers. ***www.crazyhorsememorial.org***

GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

GOOD GRUB: The Deadwood Social Club, Deadwood, SD; **Deadwood Legends Steakhouse at the Franklin Hotel**, Deadwood, SD; **Alpine Inn**, Hill City, SD; **The Firehouse Brewing Co.**, Rapid City, SD
GOOD LODGING: The Lodge at Deadwood, Deadwood, SD; **Alex Johnson Hotel**, Rapid City, SD



Blasting at Crazy Horse Memorial alerts visitors that this immense statue in the Black Hills is still a work-in-progress. The Lakota war leader fought heroically against federal encroachments on his people's land and culture; he died at the hands of Gen. George Crook's troops in 1877.

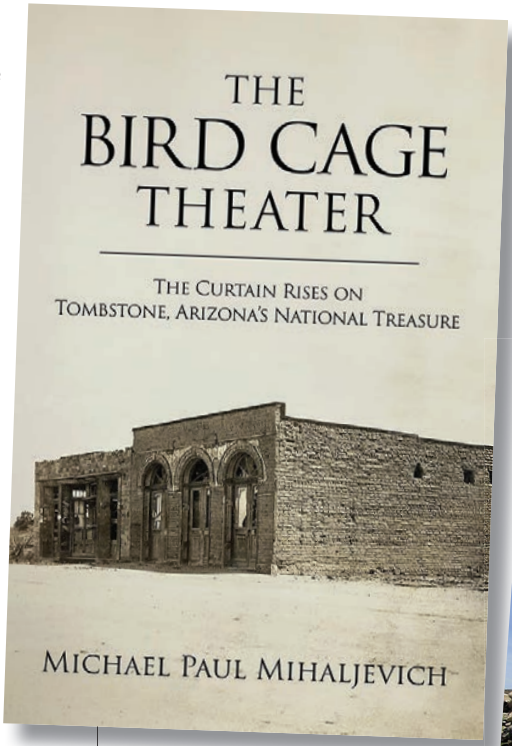
Photo by Johnny D. Boggs

Three for the Road
The Bird Cage, the Butterfield and the Bunch

Three Western legends receive their due, a biography of an outlaw, a new look at La Frontera and a new biography of a Great Plains river.

The Gilded Theater

In Old West history there are few cities as infamous as Tombstone, Arizona, and as few Western territorial buildings as iconic, famous or legendary as the Bird Cage Theater. Author and Tombstone historian Michael Paul Mihaljevich has made it his passion for many years to uncover the truth behind the storied theater, and with the publishing of his first book, *The Bird Cage Theater: The Curtain Rises on Tombstone, Arizona's National Treasure* (University of North Texas Press, $34.95), he has cemented himself among the top researchers of current Tombstone historians. Like Peter Brand's research for his recently published biography, *Josephine "Sadie" Earp: The Sordid Truth, 1870-1883*, Mihaljevich's detailed research provides readers with insights into the history of Tombstone and the legendary—even mythic—Bird Cage Theater that have never been illustrated in one volume before. The author's first book is enlightening in its conclusions, entertaining in its style and, most significantly, groundbreaking in its conclusions. I especially appreciated Mihaljevich's timeline of the Bird Cage Theater's history, his detailed notes and bibliography, all of which Tombstone writers and researchers will be using as an invaluable resource on the town's history for many decades ahead. After reading it, I am already looking forward to his next book on "the town too tough to die."



Stage Road to Destiny

In the annals of the Butterfield Trail, there may not be a greater, more passionate and more knowledgeable

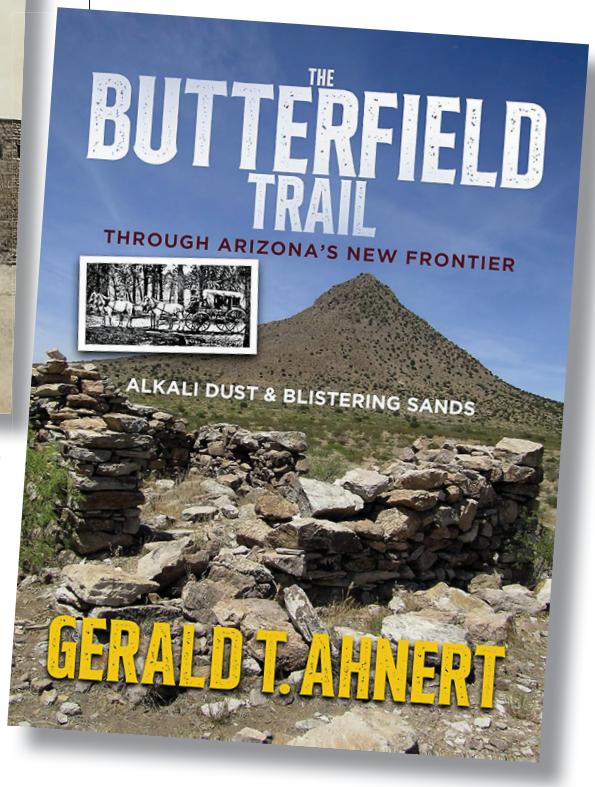


Photo by Robert Ray

ON THE ROAD WITH A GOOD BOOK

What is a Western road trip without a good book or two, or even three? I always seem to be stuffing my bags with a few extra books just before I leave for a trip, and this winter my mailbox has reminded why I'm always reading–and always have a stack ready to pack with me when traveling.

I like to blend a few classics in with new books I've received recently. Here are five I think you should consider taking along with you this summer:

J. Ross Browne's *Apache Country: A Trip Through Arizona 1864* (Folly Cove) has been republished many times since it was first released. Browne was both a journalist and an artist, and his reflections on the new territory will make you realize how primitive and rugged travel was 160 years ago.

David A Wolff's *The Gold Rush: Black Hills History Tours* (South Dakota Historical Society Press) is brand new, and if you are going to South Dakota, I'd read it before you go and have it handy while touring the natural wonders and historic sites of the Hills.

Harry Musselwhite's *A Month of Sundays, the New Mexico Columns, edited by Richard Jay Hutto* (WheredePony Press) reminds the reader to slow down, keep a journal and enjoy every moment–while at home and on the road. I love his line: "We have returned home, but I am still not sure where we went."

Lee E. Wells's *Day of the Outlaw* (A Black Gat Book) is a classic Western first published in 1955. Can you actually go out West on a backroad trip without a pulp Western?

Donna L. Erickson's *Rooted at the Edge: Ranching Where the Old West and New West Collide* (Bison Books) is a very thoughtful reflection on today's West from the perspective of a native of Montana.

—Stuart Rosebrook

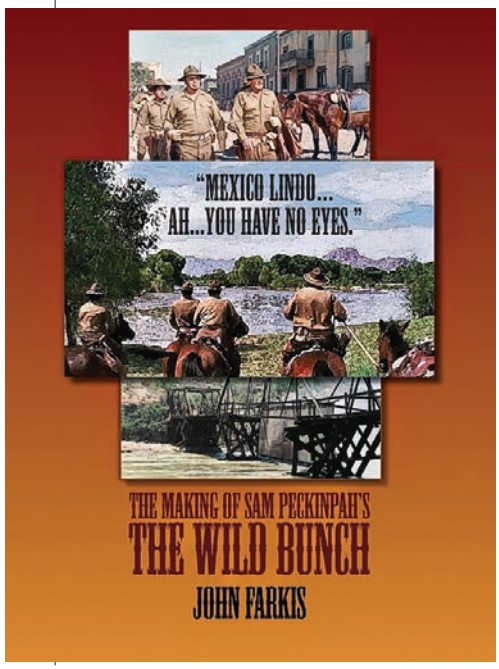
biographer of the road than Gerald T. Ahnert. The author, who has split much of his time between the Yukon and Arizona the past 54 years, is the world's authority on the historic road, especially in the Grand Canyon State. His latest book, *The Butterfield Trail: Through Arizona's New Frontier, Alkali Dust and Blistering Sands* (ECO Publishing, $19.95) will be the standard for decades to come.

Since 1970, Ahnert has traveled and explored the trail's route across Arizona by all means possible. He has been off-road and on-foot, with paper and pen, historic and modern maps, compass and camera in hand, tracing, tracking and chronicling the trail, its stage stops, the outbuildings, the corrals and the way markers left behind by the stage line's users. Anyone who seeks to know more about the Butterfield Trail in Arizona—and wishes to walk where history happened—will read Ahnert's wonderfully illustrated, detailed and colorful book. And, most importantly, you won't leave home without it because he shows you how to get there.

The Greatest Western of All Time

You can make the argument for John Ford's *The Searchers* or Kurt Russell's *Tombstone*, or even *Lonesome Dove* (but it's a miniseries) as the greatest Western of all time, but I believe there has never been, before or since, a better, more important Western than Sam Peckinpah's 1969 epic masterpiece *The Wild Bunch*. As one of the most original American artforms, the Western is a cultural icon whose influence on the world's perception of the culture of the United States cannot be measured. In 1969, three Westerns were released that had significant influence on the genre, *True Grit*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and *The Wild Bunch*. But of the three, none had a greater influence on the artform of cinema than Peckinpah's legendary film.

Fifty-five years later, film historian John Farkis has written the definitive history of the film, *"Mexico Lindo…Ah…You Have No Eyes." The Making of Sam Peckinpah's The Wild Bunch* (Bear Manor Media, $40, hardback / $29.95, paperback). Farkis, who has previously chronicled the making of John Wayne's *The Alamo* and the modern classic and fan favorite *Tombstone*, is a meticulous researcher



A JAYHAWK AUTHOR SHARES HIS FAVORITE HOMESTATE NOVELS

A native Kansan, author **Scott F. Smith** (ScottSmithWesterns.com) is proud of the Sunflower State's history. "Forget Sumter, the Civil War started here, along the border," he says. "That history is all around us."

The following novels are some of his Kansas favorites:

❶ ***Rifles For Watie*** by Harold Keith (Harper Collins): Historical fact compellingly mixes with fiction in the telling of the story of a too-young Kansas boy who enlists to fight for the Union army.

❷ ***Doc: A Novel*** by Mary Doria Russell (Random House): Dodge City, 1878. The burned body of a mixed-blood boy shocks a part-time policeman named Wyatt Earp. The killing also is of peculiar interest to Doc Holliday, a young dentist who has just come to town.

❸ ***Sycamore Promises*** by Paul Colt (Five Star): A young couple leaves Ohio for the promise of a new life in Kansas. A second young couple escapes the bonds of slavery in Missouri. Circumstance brings them together as they fight to hold their land against the backdrop of a divided nation.

❹ ***The Fall of Abilene*** by Johnny D. Boggs (Blackstone Publishing): Chronicling 1871, Abilene's last year as a cattle town, the story sheds real light on the mythic legends that are Hardin and Hickok while painting sobering portraits of a city undergoing rapid change.

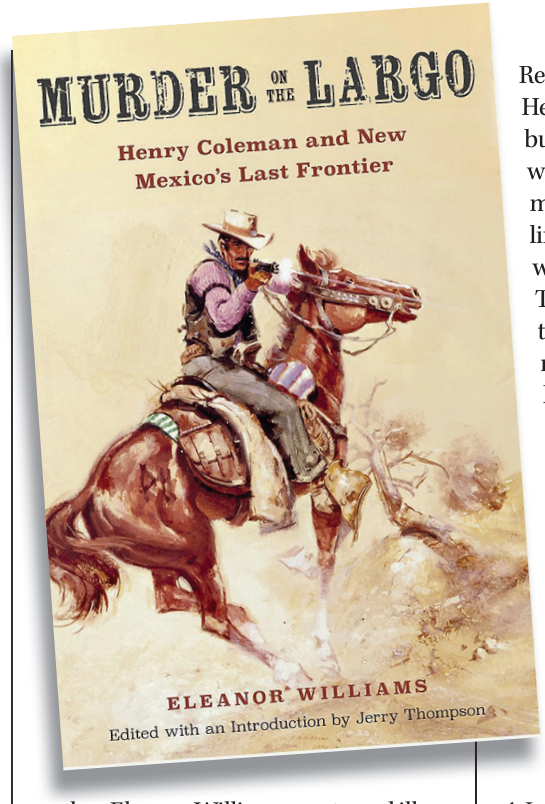
❺ ***The Last Cattle Drive*** by Robert Day (University Press of Kansas): A stubborn rancher decides to drive a large herd of cattle from Hays to Kansas City, despite the modern era of automobiles. This "last" traditional drive leads to a humorous and chaotic journey filled with clashes against modern society.

Courtesy Scott F. Smith

and interviewer. For film historians, Farkis's biography of *The Wild Bunch* is a must read—and a model for researchers who want to write film history. Fans and admirers of Sam Peckinpah will hang on every word and read and re-read Farkis's well-organized and detailed research, filled with quotes and insights from those who made the film. Like all fans of great Westerns, who wish they could have seen early cuts of their favorites before their final cinematic edits, I wonder what an early four- or five-hour version of *The Wild Bunch* must have been like. It must have been a treasure— just like Sam's genre-changing film and Farkis's groundbreaking biography of the greatest Western of all time.

An Outlaw Rediscovered

Murder on the Laredo: Henry Coleman and New Mexico's Last Frontier by Eleanor Williams, edited with an introduction by Jerry Thompson (University of North Texas Press, $29.95) is a unique and wonderful history reborn from the pages of *New Mexico Electric News*. New Mexico

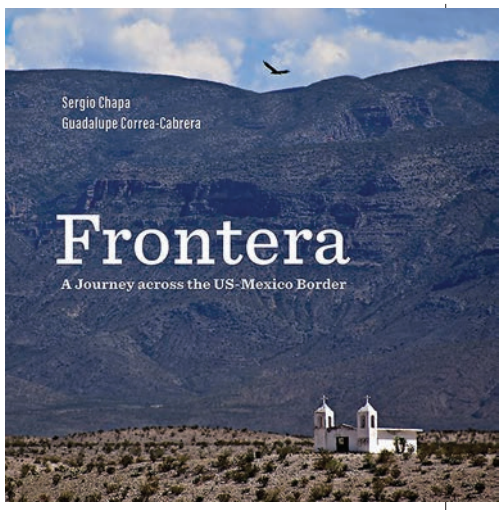


author Eleanor Williams wrote and illustrated the history of the lesser-known outlaw through a series of interviews she conducted from her ranch along Largo Creek near Quemado, New Mexico. Readers will be intrigued to learn about Henry Coleman's legendary, violent life, but also about Williams, a Pittsburgh woman of society who came West and made all her own rules to carve a new life for herself as a ranch woman in western New Mexico. After finishing Thompson's well-edited and annotated book, you will be glad you never met Coleman, but sure wish you had known Eleanor.

—Stuart Rosebrook

On the Border

The 2,000-mile international border between the United States and Mexico means different things to different people. For some it is a cultural divide. For others, political. Yet, for another group of the population it is a scar dividing two similar societies. In *Frontera: A Journey Across the US-Mexico Border* (TCU Press, $48.95), authors Chapa and Correa-Cabrera take readers on a photographic and essay journey from the Rio Grande to the Pacific Ocean

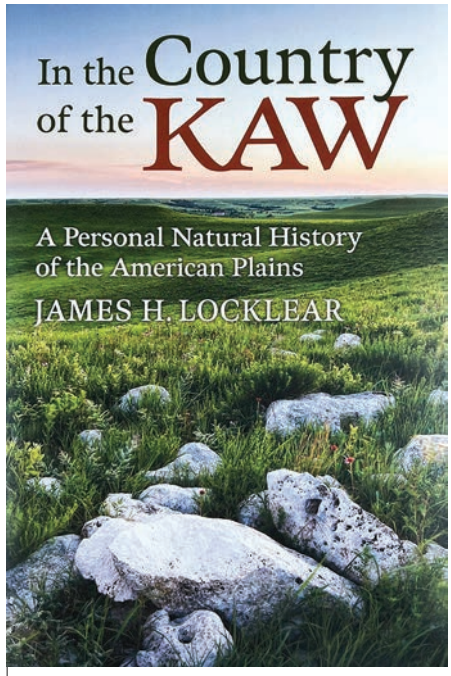


chronicling the small nuances of border life, geology, ecology and society as it stretches like an old snake between the two countries. Not since Leon Metz's *Border* has there been such a comprehensive, encyclopedic and accessible take on the region, and *Frontera* will be heralded as a standard text on the region for decades to come.

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

A Glorious River

A prairie river, the Kaw, gathers its waters from the plains of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska. Author James Locklear explores his beloved river from the plains of Colorado to Kansas City. *In the Country of the Kaw* (University Press of Kansas, $34.99) is packed full of detailed information about the region's ecology, geology and flora. Locklear also is careful to address how the Kaw and similar river systems in the Great Plains were changed by or because of human settlement and later development. As a sort-of love letter to the river, Locklear's book is not without heartbreak. He describes the negative impacts that humans have wrought upon the environment. A half century of rambling and rooting around in this region has given him a deep awe and affection for its uniqueness and goodness, which he conveys to the reader on every page. *In the Country of the Kaw* is a fascinating read and has earned a place among my favorite books on the Great Plains.



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

By Henry C. Parke

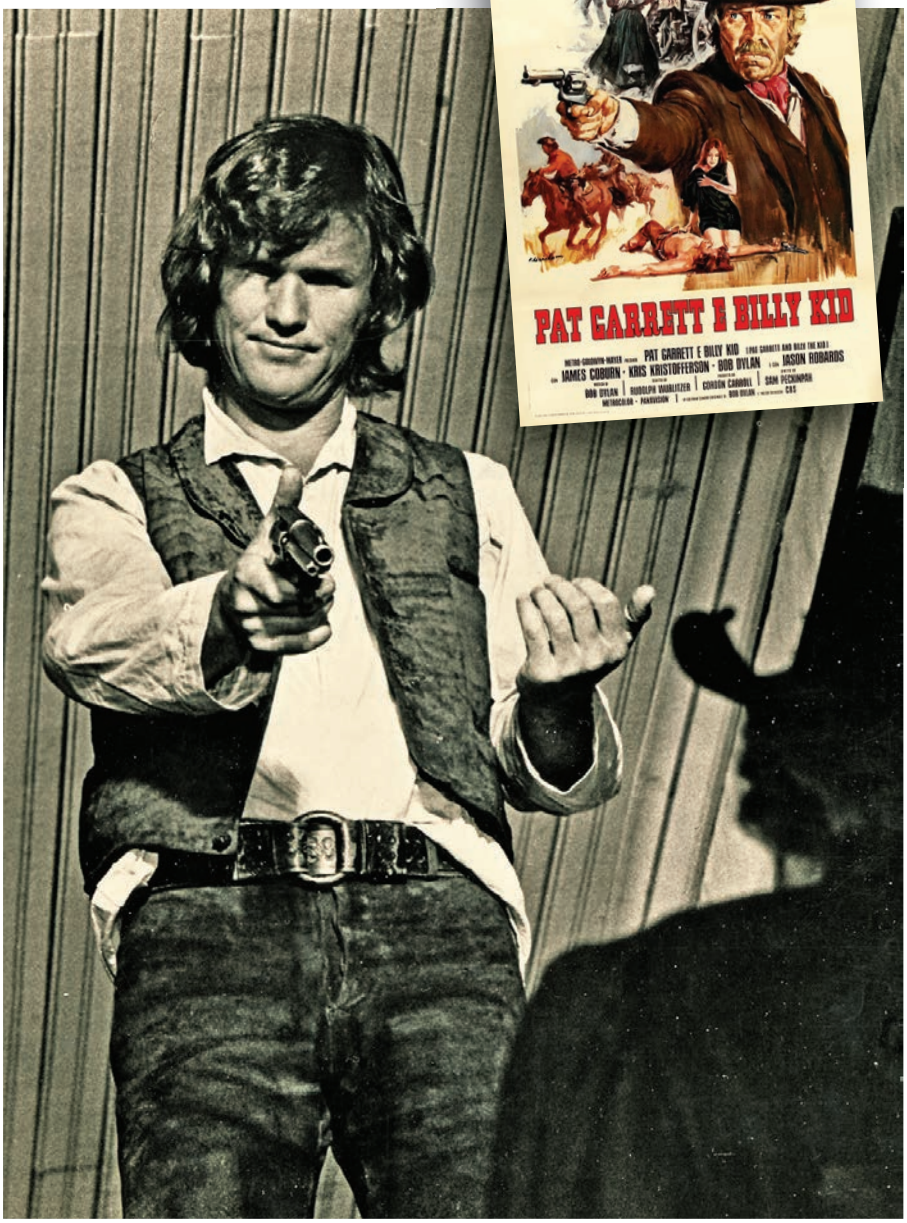
Kris Kristofferson—A Texan at Oxford

The scholar, songwriter, pilot also acted in dozens of Westerns.

If he'd done nothing but write *Me and Bobby McGee*, and *Sunday Morning Coming Down*, he would have achieved musical immortality. Since the September 2024 passing of Kris Kristofferson at the age of 88, a great deal has been written about the Air Force brat turned Rhodes scholar turned Air Force helicopter pilot turned Nashville songwriter turned actor.

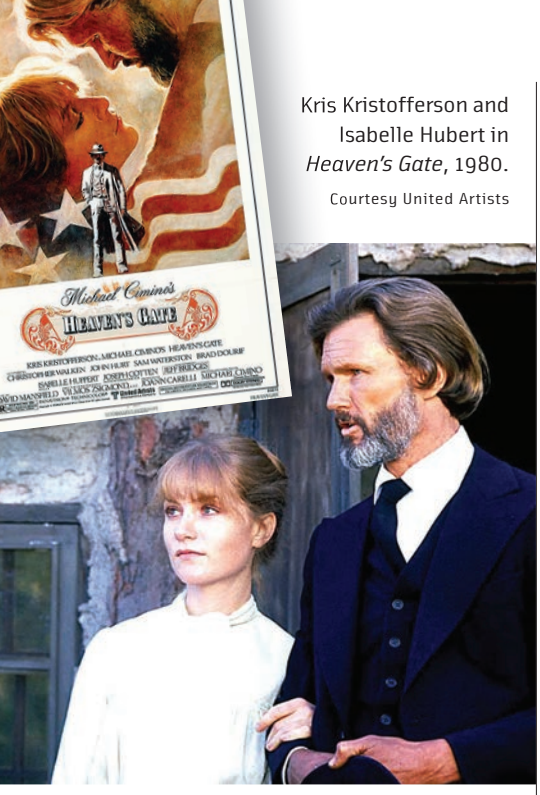
Most of what's been written about his acting has centered on *A Star is Born*. ("Filming with Streisand is an experience which may have cured me of movies," he said.) Very little was written about the fact that he appeared in more than two dozen Westerns. His film debut was a small role as a minstrel wrangler in Dennis Hopper's experimental Western, *The Last Movie*. Two years later he starred as Billy in Sam Peckinpah's *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*. He made two more films for Peckinpah—*Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* and *Convoy*.

The size and scope of his films ran the gamut, from 1980's studio-bankrupting *Heaven's Gate* to 2016's straight-to-video *Traded*. He played Abraham Lincoln in *Tad* (1995) and Andrew Jackson in *Texas Rising* (2015). He was chilling as a corrupt lawman in John Sayles' *Lone Star* (1996). He made a handful of films co-starring with his musical Highwaymen cohorts, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson and Johnny Cash—they starred together in a remake of *Stagecoach*, and Kris



Kris Kristofferson reinvented Billy the Kid under the tutelage of a tormented yet brilliant Sam Peckinpah.

Courtesy MGM



Kris Kristofferson and Isabelle Hubert in *Heaven's Gate*, 1980.

Courtesy United Artists

played Jesse to Cash's Frank in *The Last Days of Frank and Jesse James*.

In July of 2017, I was on set for the second day of what would be Kristofferson's final Western, *Hickok*. They were shooting at Caravan West Ranch in Santa Clarita. The film was based on events in the early career of soon-to-be legendary lawman Wild Bill Hickok, starring Luke Hemsworth. Kristofferson was playing Abilene Mayor George Knox. It had been a long day, and was becoming a long and cold night, and Kristofferson had been very busy when, at about seven, he was able to sit down in the makeup trailer for a few minutes to talk about Westerns.

I asked if he'd grown up as a fan of the genre. "I grew up down in Brownsville, Texas, down at the very bottom of Texas, and we went to a Western movie every week. I had my first horse when I was five years old. And I had horses all the time until I was a teenager, and we moved to California. I've always felt comfortable riding a horse."

What appealed to him about *Hickok*? "Well, I liked the story, I like the script, and I like the guys that I'm working with, the director, Tim Woodward. And a Western is something we can have some kind of fun with."

He'd worked with many of the best directors of his time—Peckinpah,

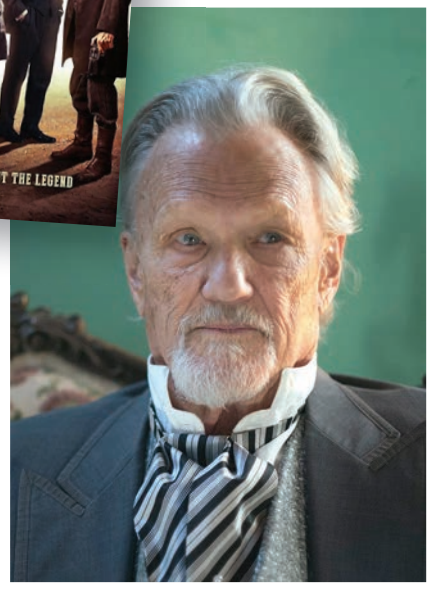
Kris Kristofferson in 2008.

Courtesy Screen Media

Sayles, Scorcese. What makes a great director? "It's someone who knows the script, and knows the potential of the story, whatever it is. And never forgets it during the filming; doesn't get sidetracked."

Which was his favorite among his own Westerns? "Boy, I don't know. I loved working with Sam Peckinpah, and we did a couple of things together. But there's another, *Heaven's Gate*. I think it was a really beautiful film that got clobbered. I think it had to do with our director, Michael Cimino. It just seemed like that was not an uncommon thing, to get in a film, and all the rivals running it down in the papers and everywhere. And it was so long a production that there was plenty of time to get down on Michael Cimino."

What was it like working with the other Highwaymen? "They were my heroes. And the notion that they would one day be my friends and working partners. I look back on it as probably the best ten years of my life. Willy and Waylon and John."



Kris Kristofferson in *Hickok*

Courtesy Paramount

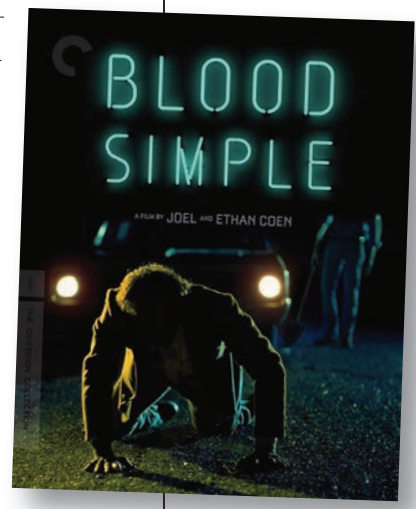
Jennings died in 2002, and Cash the following year. Was he still close with Willie Nelson? He laughed, "Oh, yes! He's a hero, and just a plain funny person. He's probably the best musician I know. He plays the guitar like Segovia. And just a funny man."

The 1986 remake of *Stagecoach* was originally planned as a musical; besides the Highwaymen, other singers in the cast included David Alan Coe, Jessi Colter, June Carter Cash, Anthony Newley and John Schneider. So why, aside from the theme sung by Willie Nelson, is it not a musical? Was it money? "I couldn't tell you; I remember that it had a lot of trouble getting started, and we ended up in the stagecoach for most of it. I look back on those years with The Highwaymen as a real blessed time in my life. With my heroes; and we were really good together. And everybody, Waylon, Johnny Cash, Willy Nelson, were perfect all the time. I'm not saying they weren't all crazy too. We had a wonderful ten years."

BLU-RAY REVIEW

BLOOD SIMPLE–1984

Criterion; 4K + Blu-Ray–2 discs $49.95, Blu-Ray–1 disc $39.95, DVD–2 discs $29.95



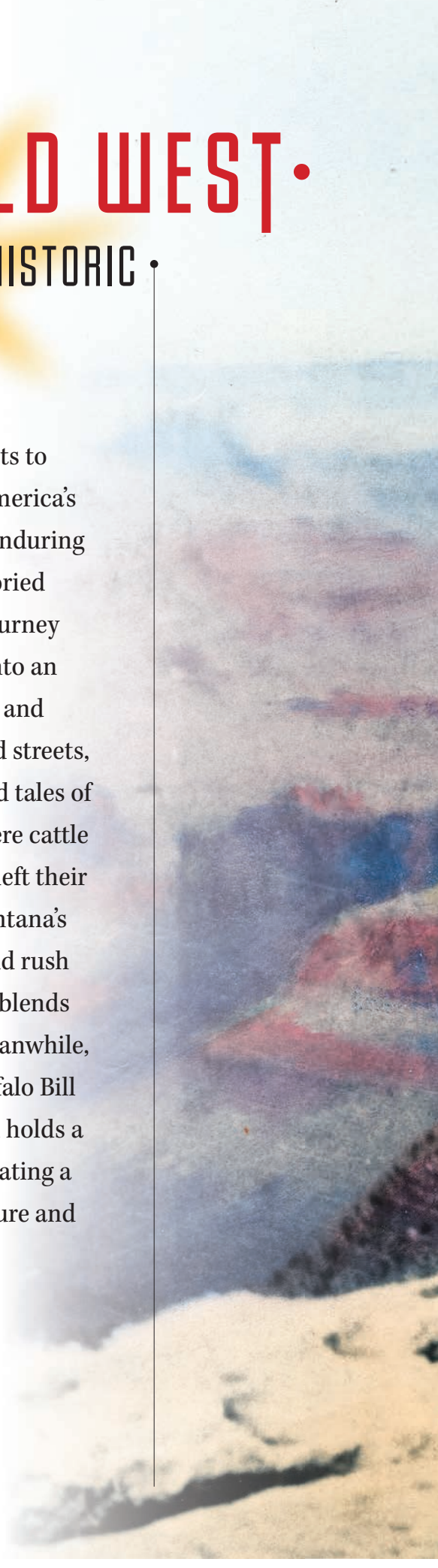
Before their films *True Grit*, *No Country for Old Men* and *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* helped rejuvenate the Western film genre, brothers Joel and Ethan Coen, kids fresh from NYU film school, wrote and directed the Texas noir, *Blood Simple*. This down-and-dirty, unnervingly smart thriller features the first screen performance of quadruple-Oscar-winning cinema grand dame Frances McDormand when she was a comely ingenue, or was she a femme fatale after all? Dan Hedaya is her creepy saloon-owner husband, John Getz is her boyfriend, and as a P.I., M. Emmet Walsh, the then most familiar cast member had such faith in the Coens that he insisted on cash payment every week. Including great cast and crew memories, it's testament to determination and an inspiration to filmmakers.

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

TRAILS OF THE OLD WEST

DISCOVERING AMERICA'S HISTORIC FRONTIER TOWNS

From Arizona's sunbaked deserts to Wyoming's untamed wilderness, America's historic frontier towns capture the enduring spirit of the Wild West. These storied destinations take travelers on a journey through time, offering glimpses into an exciting era of cowboys, outlaws and pioneers. Walk Arizona's saloon-lined streets, uncover Colorado's mining legacy and tales of Doc Holliday, or explore Kansas, where cattle drives and infamous gunfights have left their indelible marks on the prairie. Montana's sweeping landscapes echo with gold rush dreams, while Texas's Hill Country blends rich heritage with rugged beauty. Meanwhile, Wyoming brings the legends of Buffalo Bill and Butch Cassidy to life. Each town holds a piece of America's frontier past, creating a road trip steeped in history, adventure and iconic Western charm.



Trailblazing historian Sharlot Hall gazed upon Arizona's grandest wonder in 1928.

ARIZONA

HIGHWAYS TO HISTORY

EXPLORING THE WILD WEST THROUGH ARIZONA'S HISTORIC TOWNS

Jerome's mining boom faded, leaving behind Arizona's most famous ghost town.

Arizona is a state where the spirit of the Old West lives on, from its dusty deserts to its rugged mountains. It's a land steeped in rich history, from Native American heritage and Spanish exploration to cowboy legends and mining booms. If you're looking to take a road trip through time, Arizona's historic towns are the perfect destinations. Whether it's a visit to iconic Wild West gunfight sites, a stroll down streets lined with old-time saloons and shops, or exploring museums that tell the stories of pioneers and outlaws, Arizona offers an unforgettable journey into the past. Here's a guide to some of the state's most historic towns that bring the Wild West to life.

Experience Prescott

True West. Real Adventure.

Experience Prescott-
One of Arizona's Most Beautiful & Historic Destinations.

Prescott's perfect weather provides an average temperature of 70 degrees, with four beautiful and distinct seasons, breathtaking landscapes complete with granite mountains, lakes, streams, and rolling meadows filled with wildlife. It's a destination for everyone! Visit **experienceprescott.com** for more details.

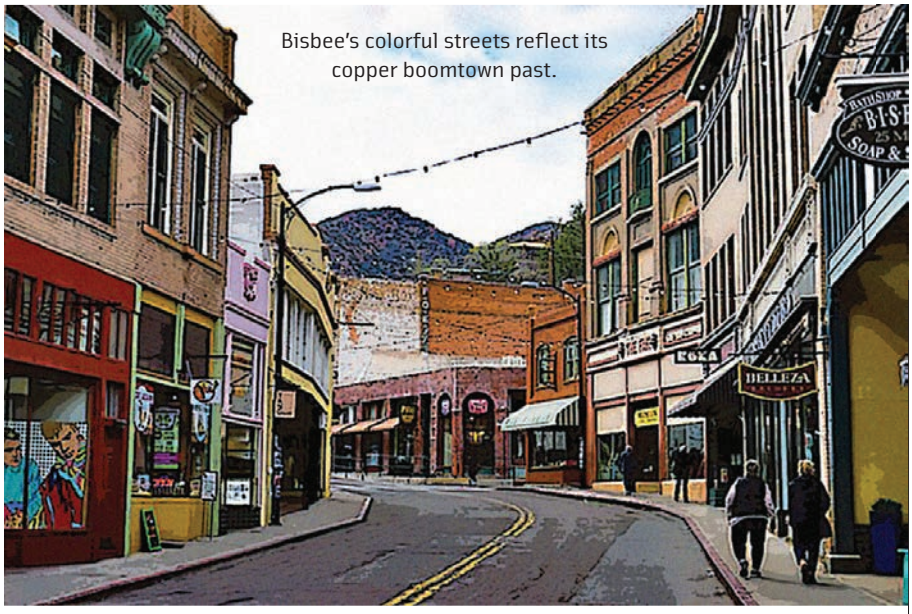
Cave Creek: A Cowboy's Dream

Nestled in the foothills of the Sonoran Desert, Cave Creek offers a true taste of the Old West. Known for its Wild West vibe, the town attracts visitors looking for a bit of cowboy culture and history. Famous for its honky-tonks Harold's and The Buffalo Chip, shoppers will love Watson's Hat Company and the Cave Creek Cowboy Company for the real McCoy in cowboy attire. If you're looking for a piece of Western heritage to take home, dozens of shops line the main drag offering art, history and rustic home decorations. The Cave Creek Museum offers an intriguing look into the town's past, with exhibits on early settlers, mining and the cultural influences that shaped the area. With its Western shops, old-time saloons and stunning desert scenery, not to mention iconic restaurants like Big Earl's Greasy Eats and Cryin' Coyote Barbecue, Cave Creek is the perfect starting point for anyone looking to experience Arizona's cowboy history. cavecreekaz.gov

Cave Creek's Frontier Town keeps the Old West spirit alive today.

Bisbee: A Mining Town with a Soul

Once one of the largest mining towns in the United States, Bisbee is a beautifully preserved slice of Arizona history. Known for its vibrant arts scene and historic



Bisbee's colorful streets reflect its copper boomtown past.

architecture, Bisbee offers a unique look into the state's mining past. The town was founded in the late 1800s when copper was discovered in the area, and it soon became one of the most prosperous mining centers in the country. Today, visitors can explore the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum, which tells the story of the town's copper boom and the immigrant miners who built it. A visit to the Queen Mine Tour offers a firsthand look at the underground life of miners. Bisbee's picturesque, hilly streets lined with Victorian homes and quirky shops give the town a distinctive charm that mixes history with modern creativity, and a visit wouldn't be complete without a visit or stay at the historic Copper Queen Hotel. discoverbisbee.com

Camp Verde: A Crossroads of Cultures

Camp Verde, located along the Verde River, is rich in Native American and military history. Once a military post during the Indian Wars, the town has evolved into a historic destination with strong ties to its past. Fort Verde State Historic Park preserves the site of the original fort, and visitors can learn about

Arizona's military past comes alive in Camp Verde during Fort Verde Days.

the soldiers and settlers who lived and fought in the area. The fort also houses the Verde Valley Archaeology Center, showcasing Native American artifacts and prehistoric history from the region. Camp Verde is a great place to explore the intersection of Native American, military and Western history while taking in the scenic beauty of Arizona's Verde Valley. visitcampverde.com

Jerome: A Ghost Town Reborn

Perched on the side of Cleopatra Hill, Jerome is a former mining town turned thriving artist enclave. Once known as the "Wickedest Town in the West," Jerome boomed during the copper mining days of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In its heyday, Jerome was the wealthiest mine in the world owned by one man, but when the mines closed in the 1950s, the town became a near ghost town. Today, Jerome is a place where history and art collide. Jerome State Historic Park offers a look at the town's mining heritage, housed in a former mansion that was once the residence of the town's mine manager. Visitors can also explore the Jerome Historical Society Mine Museum to learn about the boom and bust that defined the town. Jerome's narrow, winding streets are now lined with art galleries, boutiques, winery tasting rooms and restaurants, making it a quirky and fascinating destination with a colorful history. jeromechamber.com

Kingman: A Route 66 Classic

Kingman, hometown of *True West* Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell, is one of the classic towns along the iconic Route 66. It's full of

ARIZONA

Western history and nostalgic charm with its Old West past and vibrant Route 66 culture. The Mohave Museum of History and Arts is a great place to start, where visitors can learn about the area's Native American, mining and railroad history. The Mohave County Historical Society Museum is another must stop. For fans of the historic highway, the Route 66 Museum gives a deep dive into the legacy of the Mother Road and its role

The neon glow of Kingman's Route 66 Museum lights up the highway's rich history.

in the development of the American West. Kingman's historic downtown has a great selection of old-time diners, vintage shops and motels that make it feel like stepping back in time.

explorekingman.com

Old Town Scottsdale: A Modern Western Experience

While Scottsdale is known for its luxury resorts and upscale shopping, Old Town Scottsdale offers a glimpse into the town's Old West roots. Founded in the 1880s, Scottsdale was originally a farming community and later developed into a key town for cattle ranchers. Today, Old Town Scottsdale is a vibrant mix of historic buildings, art galleries and Western-themed shops. The Scottsdale Historical Museum provides insight into the town's early days, including its ties to the native Hohokam culture, its

Legends of the West come alive through bronze tributes at Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West.

agricultural past and its role as a staging area for cattle drives. Scottsdale's Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West is another highlight, offering exhibits on the history of the American West, including cowboy culture, Native American artifacts and Western art.

experiencescottsdale.com

Prescott: The Old West Lives Here

Prescott is often referred to as "Everybody's Hometown" and is a must-see stop for those interested in Arizona's Wild West history. Established in the 1860s, Prescott became Arizona's territorial capital and was a key player during the state's early years. The town's historic Whiskey Row, once home to 40 saloons and gambling halls frequented by lawmen,

Prescott's Hassayampa Inn preserves 1920s elegance in Arizona's cowboy heart.

outlaws, including Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp, is now known for its live music scene, art galleries, candy shops and of course its famous saloons including the iconic Palace Restaurant & Saloon. The Sharlot Hall Museum offers a deep dive into the area's history, focusing on Native American culture, early pioneers and the founding of Prescott. The town is also famous for hosting Frontier Days, The World's Oldest Rodeo. For Western art enthusiasts, the Phippen Museum showcases some of the best cowboy and Western art in the state. Prescott's historic homes, old churches and charming town square offer a glimpse into life in Arizona during the 19th century.

experienceprescott.com

"LEST WE FORGET"

The bronze by Bill Nebeker stands on the Prescott Courthouse Plaza and honors Arizona lawmen.

Tombstone: The Town Too Tough to Die

No Western road trip is complete without a stop in Tombstone, the town made famous by the O.K. Corral Gunfight. Known as the "Town Too Tough to Die," Tombstone was once one of the most lawless places in the West, home to infamous figures like Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and the Clanton gang. Today, visitors can step back in time with a tour of Big Nose Kate's and The Crystal Palace Saloon, where the colorful characters of Tombstone once gathered. The Bird Cage Theatre, an original Wild West theater, is a must-see, offering a glimpse into the entertainment that once flourished here. The O.K. Corral is

The Old Butterfield Stage Coach is one of two Tombstone stage companies that offer tours of the mining town made famous by the Earps, Clantons and Doc Holliday.

Courtesy Tombstone Courthouse State Historic Park

where history's most famous gunfight took place, and you can witness reenactments of the infamous showdown. Tombstone's historic streets, authentic saloons and frontier-style shops offer a true Wild West experience.

discovertombstone.com

Wickenburg: A Desert Town with a Rich Legacy

Wickenburg is a charming desert town with deep roots in mining and ranching history. Originally a mining town, Wickenburg was founded in the 1860s and later became known for its cattle ranching and horse trading. Desert Caballeros Western Museum is a key stop for anyone interested in the region's history, offering exhibits on Native American culture, early ranching

The Western past shaped by cowboys, miners and artists thrives at Wickenburg's Desert Caballeros Western Museum.

life and the history of the American cowboy. Wickenburg is also home to the Vulture Mine, an old gold mine that was one of the richest in Arizona, and visitors can take tours to learn about the boom and bust of mining in the area. The town's historic downtown area is full of Western charm, with shops and restaurants that reflect its cowboy past. A stay at Rancho de los Caballeros, the Flying E Guest Ranch, or The Kay El Bar, Wickenburg's oldest guest ranch, will make your trip to Wickenburg a bit more special.

wickenburgchamber.com

Williams: Gateway to the Grand Canyon

Williams, located along historic Route 66, is often called the "Gateway to the Grand Canyon" because it serves as a hub for visitors heading to one of the world's most famous natural wonders. Williams' Old West atmosphere is reflected in its vintage storefronts, diners and motels. A highlight of Williams is the Grand Canyon Railway, which offers a scenic train ride to the Grand Canyon, providing an unforgettable way to experience Arizona's wilderness. The town

also has the Williams Depot, a historic train station where visitors can learn about the importance of the railroad to the town's history. Williams offers the perfect blend of Western charm and natural beauty, making it a great stop for anyone exploring Arizona's history.

experiencewilliams.com

Route 66 glows in Williams—where neon nostalgia meets Wild West roots.

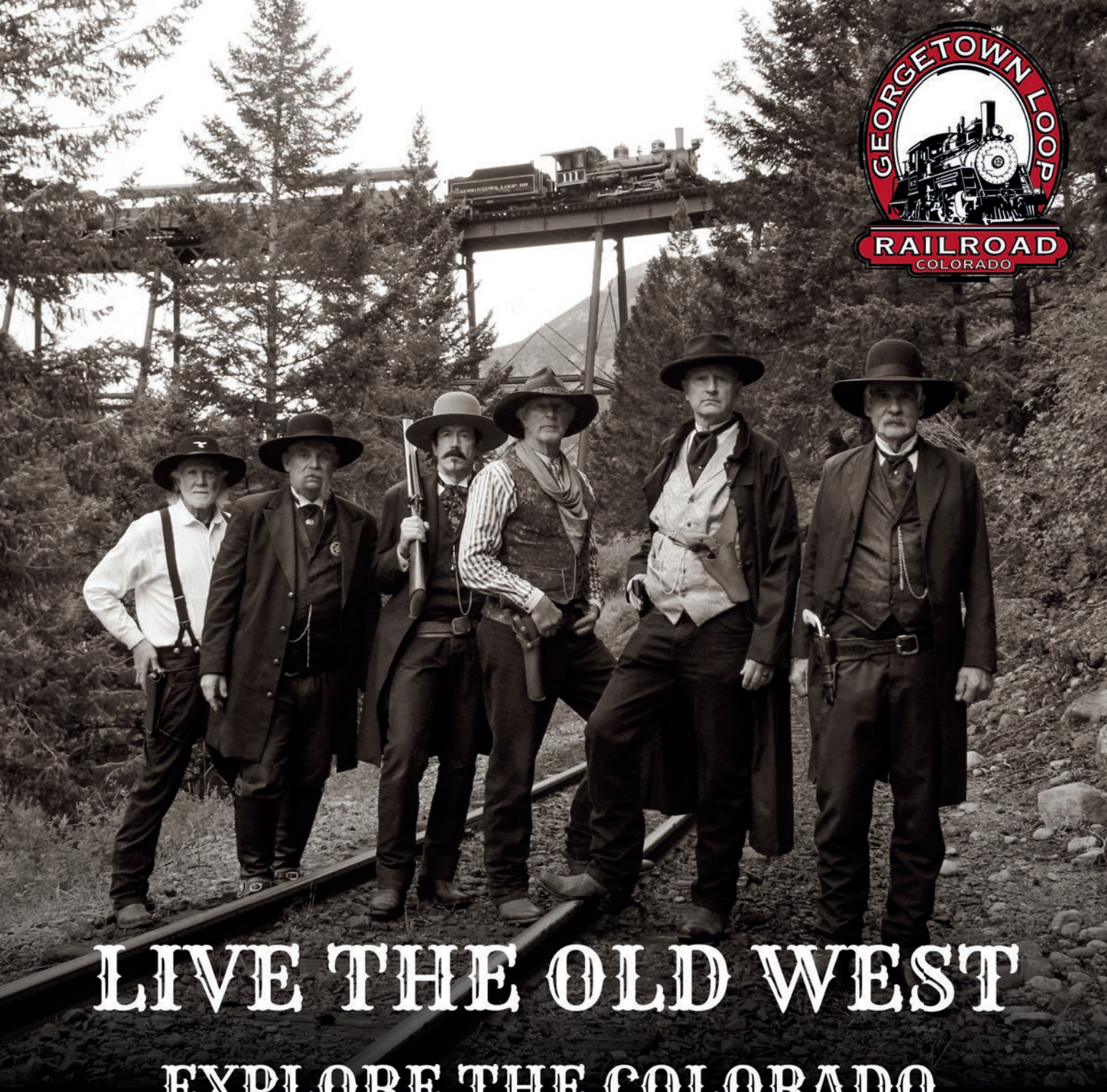
COLORADO

LAWMEN AND OUTLAWS

EXPLORING COLORADO'S WILD WEST TOWNS

Durango & Silverton Railroad offers scenic rides through the San Juan Mountains.

Nestled among the towering Rocky Mountains, Colorado is a land of rugged beauty and rich history. The echoes of lawmen and outlaws still resonate across its landscape, where mining towns once flourished, railroads cut through the wild frontier and notorious figures like Kid Curry and Doc Holliday made their mark. From the snow-capped peaks of the San Juan Mountains to the bustling streets of historic downtowns, Colorado's Wild West towns offer visitors a chance to step back in time and experience the legends of the American frontier. Whether you're interested in the tales of famous outlaws, colorful pioneer, or the lawmen who brought them to justice, these towns reflect the history of the Old West. Here's your guide to some of Colorado's most fascinating historic destinations, where the stories of the Wild West are just waiting to be uncovered.



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The Durango & Silverton Railroad's steam engine roars across bridges, preserving Colorado's railroading past.

COLORADO

The Georgetown Loop Railroad offers a glimpse into the town's mining days, on a ride through tunnels and across bridges.

Durango: The Gateway to the Old West

With its historic district and the iconic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Durango is a town that's deeply connected to Colorado's Wild West heritage. Founded in the late 19th century, Durango was a key stop on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, bringing prosperity to the region's mining industry. Today, the train still runs from Durango to Silverton, offering a scenic ride through the San Juan Mountains. Durango's historic downtown, with its well-preserved Victorian buildings, including the elegant Rochester and Strater Hotels, serves as a reminder of the town's frontier past. For a deeper dive into Durango's Wild West history, visit the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum or the Animas Museum, which covers everything from Native American history to mining and railroad heritage. It's worth timing your visit for the annual Durango Cowboy Gathering and a classic western supper at Bar D Chuckwagon Supper Show.

durango.org

Georgetown: The Silver Mining Town

Nestled in a picturesque mountain valley, Georgetown was once one of Colorado's most prosperous silver mining towns. The town's history is still visible in its beautifully preserved Victorian buildings, making it a perfect place to immerse yourself in the past. The Georgetown Loop Railroad offers a glimpse into the town's mining days, taking visitors on a historic ride through tunnels and over bridges to nearby Silver Plume. For a more in-depth look at the town's mining history, stop by the Georgetown Historical Museum, which showcases exhibits on the silver boom and the hardworking men and women who lived here. Georgetown is also home to a number of ghost stories, with tales of hauntings and mysterious happenings surrounding its historic buildings.

georgetown-colorado.org

The rugged charm of Silverton echoes its silver boom days.

Silverton: The Mountain Retreat of the Wild West

Silverton is a rugged, high-altitude mining town that has retained its Wild West charm. Located at 9,318 feet, this remote town was once the center of silver mining in Colorado and played a significant role in the state's economic development. Today, it feels like stepping into the past, with its preserved Victorian storefronts, narrow streets and old-time saloons. Silverton was a haven for outlaws. Visitors can explore the mining history at the Silverton Mining Museum or take a guided tour of the old mining districts near the town. The surrounding wilderness also offers hiking, ghost town exploration and incredible mountain vistas, and a stay at the Grand Imperial Hotel will make your visit complete.

silvertoncolorado.com

Leadville: The High-Elevation Wild West

At an elevation of 10,152 feet, Leadville is the highest incorporated town in North America and a key location in Colorado's mining history. Founded during the Colorado silver boom, Leadville became a thriving mining hub, attracting pioneers, entrepreneurs and infamous outlaws. The town's rich history is on full display at the Leadville Heritage Museum, where you can learn about its mining roots, its role in the labor movement and the lives of notorious figures like Doc Holliday, who spent time here. Leadville is also home to the historic Tabor Opera House, once the site of lavish performances, and the Mining District, where you can still see old mine shafts and equipment. Leadville's Victorian architecture and mountain setting offer a glimpse into the hardships and triumphs of life on the frontier. Stay at the Delaware Hotel, make a stop at the National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum and take a ride on the Leadville, Colorado & Southern Railroad.

leadvilletwinlakes.com

Greeley: The Frontier Farming Town

Greeley's roots are firmly planted in agriculture, but the town has its fair share of Wild West history, particularly with its connections to the Colorado frontier. Founded in 1869 as a Utopian colony, Greeley grew into

A mule-drawn wagon rolls through the historic streets of Leadville celebrating the town's rich mining and frontier heritage.

Greeley's pioneering spirit thrives where agriculture and frontier history meet.

a bustling town that became known for its large-scale farming and cattle ranching. The Greeley History Museum offers a fascinating look at the town's pioneer beginnings, including exhibits on homesteading, the rise of the sugar beet industry and the establishment of the Union Pacific Railroad. While not as wild as some of Colorado's other mining towns, Greeley has its own unique frontier story to tell. It is home to the world-famous Greeley Stampede Rodeo and the fine hatmaker, Greeley Hat Works, which will measure your head to exact proportions and design a custom hat for you and your own Western personality.

greeleychamber.com

Glenwood Springs: A Soothing Oasis with Wild West Flair

Known for its geothermal hot springs and dramatic canyon views, Glenwood Springs offers a blend of relaxation and adventure tied to its Wild West roots. It was once a favorite retreat for Doc Holliday, and the legendary gunslinger spent his final days here. Visitors can pay tribute at his memorial in Linwood Cemetery. The town thrived during Colorado's mining boom, and its historic downtown features charming 19th-century architecture. The historic Hotel Colorado offers timeless charm, and no visit to Glenwood Springs would be complete without a visit to Glenwood Springs Historical Society's Frontier Museum and Doc Holliday Collection.

glenwoodchamber.com

Morrison: The Gateway to Red Rocks and Western History

Nestled at the base of the stunning Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Morrison is a small town that packs a punch when it comes to Western history. The town played a part in the early cattle industry and was home to a number of prominent ranchers. Today, Morrison's proximity to Denver and its location in the foothills of the Rockies make it a popular destination for history lovers and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Two popular attractions are The Fort Restaurant and Tesoro Cultural Center. The Morrison Natural History Museum offers exhibits on the region's prehistoric past, while the nearby Red Rocks site is rich in local folklore and has a deep connection to the area's frontier history. Though the town

is now known for its vibrant arts scene, Morrison still holds echoes of the Wild West era.

morrisonco.us

Ouray: The Switzerland of America

Comfortably set in the heart of the San Juan Mountains, Ouray is a gem of the Old West. Known as the "Switzerland of America," its breathtaking peaks and Victorian-era charm make it a must-visit destination. The town's history is steeped in mining, and visitors can delve into the past at the Ouray County Historical Museum or the Bachelor Syracuse Mine Tour. For those seeking a touch of luxury, the natural hot springs offer the perfect respite after a day of exploring. Ouray's rugged surroundings and preserved history make it a quintessential Wild West experience and offers several comfortable places to stay including the Historic Western Hotel and Beaumont Hotel & Spa.

visitouray.com

Ridgway: Cowboys, Cinema and Mountain Magic

Ridgway blends its Old West heritage with cinematic flair. This small town served as a filming location for classic Westerns like *True Grit*, and its ties to cowboy culture are evident in its ranching history and annual rodeo. Visitors can learn about the area's colorful past at the Ridgway Railroad Museum or enjoy its modern arts scene at the town's galleries. Surrounded by dramatic mountain landscapes, Ridgway offers easy access to outdoor adventures, from hiking to horseback riding. With its unique mix of history and natural beauty, Ridgway embodies the spirit of the frontier. For lunch be sure to visit True Grit Café and feast on "The Grit," a triple-stacked chicken-fried steak burger topped with bacon and white gravy.

ridgwaycolorado.com

KANSAS

COWBOYS, OUTLAWS AND THE CIVIL WAR

EXPLORING KANSAS' WILD WEST HERITAGE

Cowboys drive longhorns through Dodge City, echoing Kansas' cattle boom days.

Courtesy Dodge City CVB

Kansas, often called the "Gateway to the West," is a state where the frontier spirit is alive and well. Its prairies once echoed with the galloping of cowboys on horseback driving cattle across the open range, while lawmen and outlaws squared off in dusty streets of frontier towns. From the cattle trails to infamous gunfights, Kansas offers a rich tapestry of Wild West history, where the stories of cowboys, lawmen and painted ladies are woven into its very fabric. Today, these historic towns serve as living reminders of the untamed days of the American frontier, offering travelers a chance to step back in time and explore the legends that helped shape the West. Whether you're following in the footsteps of legendary lawmen like Wyatt Earp or discovering the stories of infamous outlaws, Kansas invites you to experience the Old West in all its rugged glory. Here's your guide to some of the most fascinating Wild West towns in Kansas.

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Cattle trails and Wild West legends shaped historic Abilene's frontier days.

Abilene: The Cowboy Capital

Abilene is a town where the Wild West truly comes to life, known for its pivotal role in the cattle drive era. As a major terminus of the Chisholm Trail, Abilene became a bustling hub for cowboys and cattlemen in the late 19th century. Today, visitors can explore the history of the cattle trade at the Kansas Central Railway Depot or the Abilene and Smoky Valley Railroad, which offers historic train rides, and the Dickinson County Historical Society & Museum. The town also hosts the Old West-themed Heritage Center, where you can learn about the lives of the cowboys, lawmen and outlaws who passed through. The highlight is the beautifully restored Old Town District, where you can walk the streets that once saw rowdy cowboys and painted ladies. Abilene is also the home of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum & Boyhood Home, giving it an interesting blend of Wild West history and 20th-century political significance.

abilenekansas.org

Dodge City: The Wickedest Town in the West

No town in Kansas has a more infamous reputation than Dodge City, once known as the "Wickedest City in the West." Famous for its wild saloons, gunfights and rowdy cowboys, Dodge City was the quintessential frontier town. Visitors can step back into this raucous era at the Boot Hill Museum and Gunfighters Wax Museum, which preserves the town's storied past with exhibits on outlaws, lawmen and the people who built the town. Take a tour of the Dodge City Trail and visit landmarks like the original Boot Hill Cemetery. The Dodge City Roundup rodeo and myriad other annual events keep the cowboy spirit alive today, making this a must-visit for Wild West enthusiasts.

visitdodgecity.org

Fort Scott: The Military Frontier

As a vital military post during the Indian Wars, Fort Scott played a crucial role in the defense of settlers moving westward. The fort's site, now preserved as a National Historic Site, offers an immersive look into the military life of the 19th century. Visitors explore the original buildings, including officer's quarters, barracks and a working blacksmith shop, for a glimpse into the challenges faced by soldiers stationed here. Fort Scott's location on the Santa Fe

Dodge City's gunfights revive Old West lawlessness and legendary lawmen.

Historic cannon fire echoes the past at Fort Scott, a living history site.

Courtesy Visit Fort Scott

Trail also made it a key stop for pioneers, and the town celebrates its frontier history with a variety of events, including reenactments and heritage festivals.

visitfortscott.com

Coffeyville: The Dalton Gang's Last Stand

Coffeyville is forever tied to one of the most famous robberies in Wild West history: the failed heist by the Dalton Gang in 1892. The gang attempted to rob two banks simultaneously, but local lawmen and citizens fought back, resulting in a dramatic shootout that left the Daltons dead in the streets. The Dalton Defeat is commemorated at the Dalton Defenders and Coffeyville History Museum and Dalton Defenders Days, where you can learn about the robbery and the courageous citizens who helped bring the gang to justice. The Coffeyville Historical Society operates and maintains various museums and historical sites including the Dalton Defenders Museum, old city jail and Brown Mansion. Coffeyville's charming downtown is full of historic buildings, and the town's connection to the Wild West is an integral part of its identity, making it a must-see for history lovers.

visitcoffeyville.com

Olathe: From Ranching to Railroads

Olathe, now a suburban city outside of Kansas City, was a vital hub for ranching and railroads in the 19th century. It was

KANSAS

established as a railroad town in the 1850s and quickly became a key link in the transportation of cattle and goods. The Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm is a living history site where visitors can experience the lifestyle of early Kansas settlers, including demonstrations of blacksmithing, farming and stagecoach rides. Olathe also played a significant role during the Bleeding Kansas era, when pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions clashed in the years leading up to the Civil War. Today, Olathe is a thriving modern city, but its frontier roots remain an important part of its history.

olathe.org

Larned: A Frontier Settlement

Larned, a small town in central Kansas, was founded near Fort Larned a military post active during the Indian Wars. The Fort Larned National Historic Site preserves this history, allowing visitors to explore the fort's nine original buildings, including the officers' quarters, barracks, guardhouse and the fort's commissary. Larned was an important stop on the Santa Fe Trail, and its strategic location helped protect travelers from Native American raids. A visit to the Santa Fe Trail center Museum & Library is a must stop. Today the town offers a peaceful retreat into the history of the Old West, with preserved historical sites, a friendly atmosphere, and a connection to the early days of the frontier.

larnedks.org

The history of the Condon Bank in Coffeyville (pictured here c. 1890) includes the Dalton Gang's infamous 1892 raid gone wrong.

Courtesy Coffeyville Chamber of Commerce

Wichita: The Cowtown of the Plains

Wichita, once a prime stop for cattle drives along the Chisholm Trail, grew into a major trade center in the late 1800s. The Old Cowtown Museum brings this era to life, offering interactive exhibits on the cowboy, Native American, and pioneer experiences. Stroll through the recreated 1865 streets of Wichita and visit historic buildings like the Wichita Train Depot, where the railroad played a vital role in the city's growth. The annual Wichita Frontier Western Festival celebrates the cowboy culture that helped shape the city, making it a great stop for Wild West fans, and the Wichita Art Museum offers a vibrant space for all ages to deepen their connection with the arts.

visitwichita.com

Lawrence: A Town Torn by Conflict

Lawrence's history is deeply entwined with the violence and conflict that defined the border wars between pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions. During the Civil War, Lawrence was sacked by pro-Confederate guerrillas under William Quantrill in 1863, resulting in the deaths of more than 150 residents. The Lawrence Visitor Center offers historical tours that cover the events of the sacking and its aftermath. The Douglas County Historical Society, founded in 1933, preserves the heritage of Douglas County. Since 1975 the Society has operated Watkins Museum of History, housed in the 1888 Watkins Land Mortgage and Nation Bank Building. The town's preservation of its Civil War heritage is a poignant reminder of the fierce battles fought on the frontier. Stay at the historic Eldridge Hotel and pay a visit to Freedom's Frontier National

Keeper of the Plains is a tribute to Wichita's Native heritage and spirit.

Heritage Area to gain insight into the struggles for freedom and equality during pivotal moments in American history.

explorelawrence.com

Lecompton: The Birthplace of Kansas' Struggles

Lecompton, once the territorial capital of Kansas, played a pivotal role in the state's turbulent history. The town was at the center of the debate over slavery in the territories, with both pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions vying for control. The Lecompton Constitutional Hall is one of the most significant historical sites in Kansas, as it was the site where the pro-slavery constitution was drafted in 1857. The building now serves as a museum, offering insight into the political and social struggles that led to the Civil War. Lecompton is

Lecompton's history shaped Kansas' fight over slavery and statehood debates.

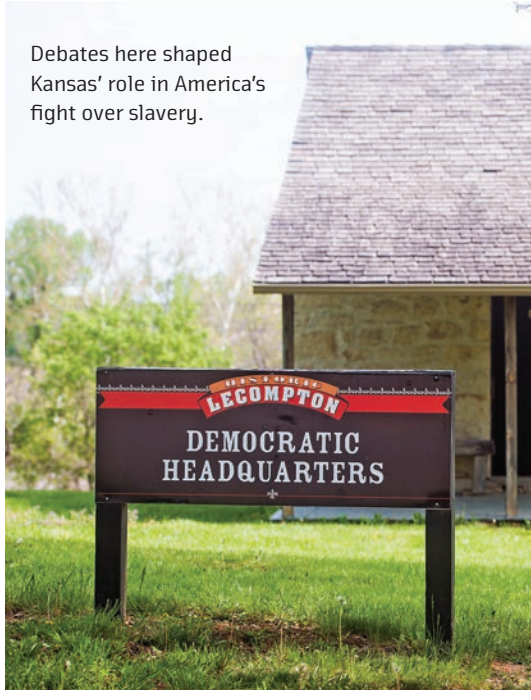
Courtesy Lecompton Historical Society

a quiet town today, but its role in Kansas history is crucial, and it offers an authentic look at the frontier's political turmoil. The Lecompton Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Historic Lecompton's museums, historic sites and National Landmarks.

lecomptonkansas.com

Topeka: The Heart of Kansas' Wild West Legacy

As the state capital, Topeka played a key role in Kansas' transformation from a lawless frontier to a settled state. The Kansas State Capitol Building stands as a reminder of the state's political history, while the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site commemorates the landmark



Debates here shaped Kansas' role in America's fight over slavery.

Supreme Court decision that ended racial segregation in public schools. Topeka was also a major stop on the Santa Fe Trail, and the Old Prairie Town at Ward-Meade Historic Site offers a glimpse into the lives of

early Kansas settlers. Topeka's mix of political, cultural and frontier history makes it an essential stop for anyone exploring the Wild West heritage of Kansas.

visittopeka.com

MONTANA

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

EXPLORING THE WILD WEST LEGACY OF THE TREASURE STATE

Echoes of Custer's Last Stand linger at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in Montana.

Courtesy Visit Billings

Montana—where the rugged peaks of the Rocky Mountains meet the vast, open plains—is a land of vast horizons, dramatic history and untold stories. From the gold rush days to the legacy of cattle ranchers, lawmen and outlaws, Montana offers a rich tapestry of Wild West history. Whether you're following the footsteps of the notorious outlaws who once roamed the state or soaking in the landscapes that inspired iconic Western films, Montana is a place where history and adventure converge. Known for its wide-open spaces, big skies and legendary figures, the state remains a treasure trove of frontier lore. Here's a guide to some of Montana's most historic towns, where the spirit of the Wild West still runs free.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MONTANA

Montana's Big Sky sunsets stretch across cowboy country and rugged peaks.

Big Sky: The Gateway to Adventure

Big Sky, located in the heart of Montana's mountainous wilderness, is more than just a world-class ski destination; it's also a place rich with frontier history. While Big Sky itself is a modern resort town, the surrounding area was once home to fur trappers, Native American tribes and early pioneers. Today, visitors can explore the history of the region at the nearby Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman or head to Lewis and Clark Caverns State Park to learn about the famous explorers who passed through the area. While Big Sky is best known for outdoor adventure, from hiking to skiing, the landscape itself evokes the feeling of the Wild West, where the untamed beauty of Montana's mountains still dominates the horizon.

visitbigsky.com

William Clark's 1806 signature remains at Pompeys Pillar National Monument which preserves Lewis and Clark's journey.

Courtesy Visit Billings

Billings: The Cowboy Crossroads

As the largest city in Montana, Billings serves as the gateway to the Yellowstone Valley and the kick-off point for a visit to the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument. Known as the "City of Cowboys and Culture," Billings was founded in 1877 as a railroad town and grew rapidly as a cattle and agricultural hub. The Yellowstone County Museum provides a fascinating look at the region's history, including exhibits on Native American culture, early pioneers and the rise of the railroad, and the Yellowstone Art Museum connects the contemporary past and present by preserving and exhibiting art. Visit the Moss Mansion Museum, a turn-of-the-century home designed by New York architect Henry Janeway Hardenbergh as well as Billing's Boot Hill Cemetery. To satisfy your appetite for the Wild West, a visit to Pioneer Park will offer a glimpse of Billings' early days and the people who helped shape its development.

Bozeman, the gateway to Yellowstone, blends frontier history with modern adventure.

visitbillings.com

Bozeman: Where Gold Rush Meets Adventure

Bozeman is a vibrant college town and gateway to Yellowstone National Park, but its history is deeply intertwined with the gold rush of the mid-1800s. In 1864, John Bozeman, a pioneer from

Georgia, blazed the Bozeman Trail, which was used by settlers heading west to find gold in the Montana Territory. The Museum of the Rockies offers extensive exhibits on this period of history, including a fascinating collection of Native American artifacts and dinosaur fossils, and the Gallatin History Museum offers a unique glimpse into the area's past. Bozeman's historic downtown is filled with Victorian architecture, and it's easy to imagine what life was like during the gold rush days. The Bridger Bowl ski area nearby also provides a scenic backdrop to the area's historical significance, offering modern adventure amid Montana's Wild West legacy.

bozemanchamber.com

Deer Lodge: A Glimpse of Old Montana

Deer Lodge, once a center of the region's mining and ranching industries, provides a rare glimpse into Montana's past. The Old Montana Prison complex in Deer Lodge is one of the most visited sites in the state, offering guided tours of the historic penitentiary, which housed infamous criminals like Harry "The Kid" Hill. The Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, another key destination, tells the story of the American cattle ranching industry, which played a major role in shaping Montana's economy. Deer Lodge's small-town charm and historical significance make it a must-visit stop for anyone interested in the state's Wild West history.

cityofdeerlodgemt.gov

MONTANA

Great Falls' *Rainboffalo* artfully celebrates Montana's bison and colorful sunsets.

Great Falls: The Power of the West

Great Falls, named for the series of waterfalls along the Missouri River, played an essential role in the expansion of the American West. As a center for both the fur trade and the railroad, Great Falls became a critical link between the East and West. The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center provides insight into the explorers' journey and the significance of Great Falls on their path. The C.M. Russell Museum showcases the work of the famous cowboy artist Charles Marion Russell, whose paintings captured the essence of the frontier. Great Falls is also home to the Mighty Mo, a historic locomotive that symbolizes the town's connection to the industrial expansion of the American West. Stay at the historic Hotel Arvon and plan visits to The History Museum and Lewis & Clark Trail Alliance.

visitgreatfallsmontana.org

Helena: The Last Best Place

Helena, the state capital, was founded as a gold camp in 1864 and quickly grew into one of the wealthiest cities in the West. The Montana Historical Society Museum offers a comprehensive look at the city's history, including its pivotal role in Montana's gold rush, the rise of Helena as a political and economic hub, and its colorful cast of characters. Helena's architecture reflects the boom years, with opulent mansions, historic churches and a vibrant downtown area. The nearby Reeder's Alley, one of the city's oldest preserved districts, takes visitors back in time to when Helena was the center of Montana's mining empire. With its history, culture and natural beauty, Helena is truly one of Montana's most iconic destinations.

helenachamber.com

Livingston's Murray Hotel glows—a beacon of Montana's railroad history.

Courtesy Explore Livingston

Livingston: The Gateway to Yellowstone

Livingston, once a bustling railroad town, is the historic gateway to Yellowstone National Park and offers a fascinating look at Montana's cultural and artistic heritage and the majority of Downtown buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Livingston Depot Center highlights the town's history as a vital stop on the Northern Pacific Railroad, which helped open the region for settlers

Gold rush riches built Helena—Montana's capital of frontier grandeur.

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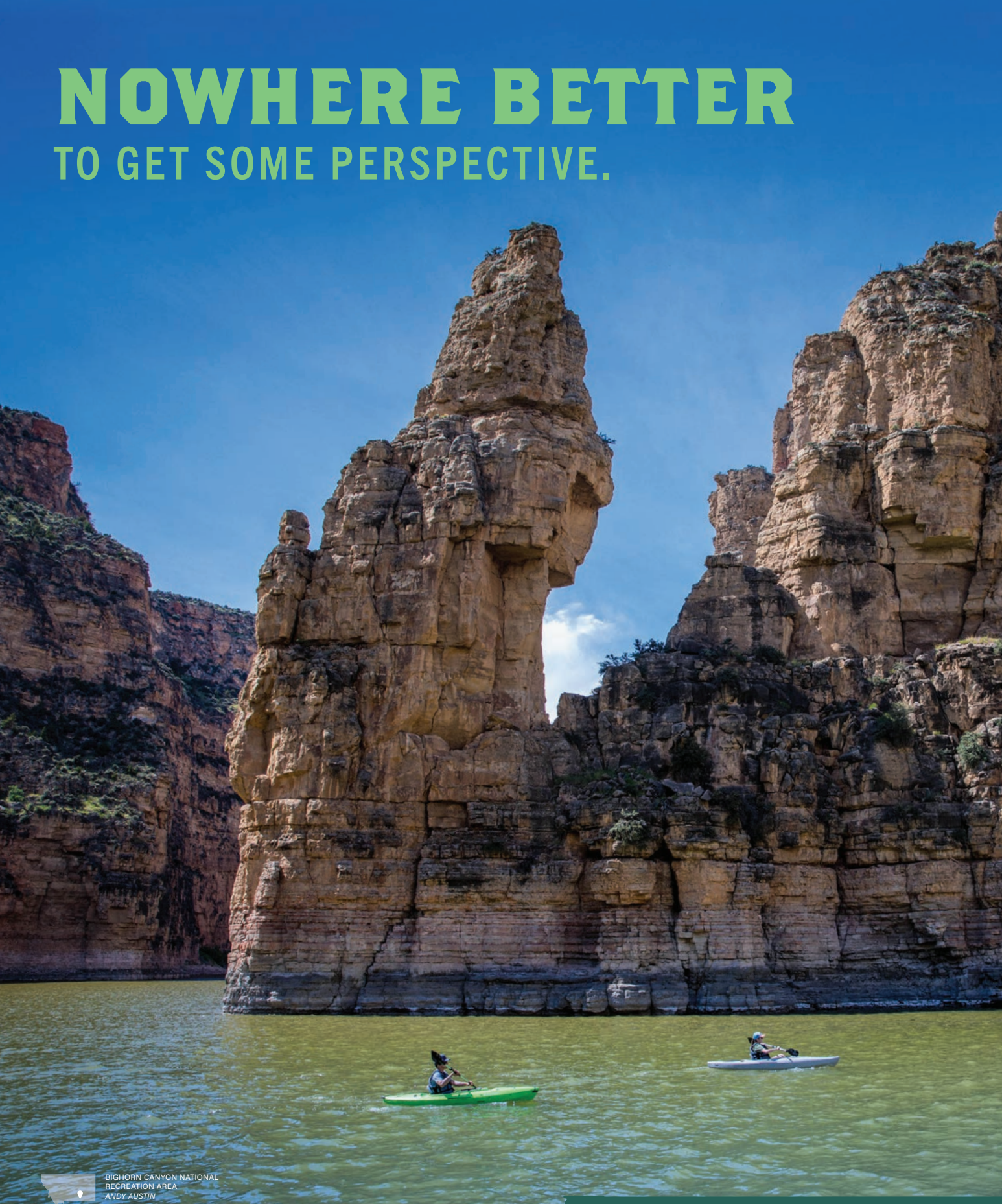

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Oktoberfest in Livingston celebrates the heritage of where railroads once shaped the West.

Courtesy Explore Livingston

and tourists alike. The Yellowstone Gateway Museum provides insight into the town's history, including its mining past and role in the development of the American West. Livingston is also home to a thriving arts scene, with numerous galleries and a rich tradition of Western art and literature. It's a perfect blend of history and modern-day creativity, set against the backdrop of Montana's breathtaking landscapes.

explorelivingstonmt.com

Miles City: The Cowtown of Montana

Miles City, known as the "Cow Capital of the West," is a town deeply rooted in cattle ranching and rodeo culture. Founded in 1877 as a trading post on the Yellowstone River, Miles City grew to become a major hub for the cattle industry, and its legacy as a cow town is still visible today. The Range Riders Museum offers an in-depth look at the town's ranching heritage, showcasing everything from cowboy gear to antique firearms. Miles City also hosts the annual Miles City Bucking Horse Sale, one of the largest rodeos in the state. With its Wild West charm and cowboys still living and working in the area, Miles City is a must-visit for anyone wanting to experience the authentic cowboy lifestyle. Grab a drink and an awesome prime rib dinner at the Historic Montana Bar in town.

milescitychamber.com

Missoula: The Heart of Western Montana

Perched along the Clark Fork River, Missoula is a vibrant town with a deep connection to the Wild West and a lively modern arts scene. Once a key hub for the railroad and timber industries, Missoula is now known for its outdoor recreation, but its history still resonates throughout the town. The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula tells the story of the town's military past, dating back to the establishment of Fort Missoula in 1877. The Missoula Art Museum provides an ideal environment for exhibiting,

Cowboy capital, Miles City preserves its bucking bronco and cattle drive past.

The rugged Yellowstone River shaped Miles City's frontier legacy and cowboy culture.

celebrating and preserving its growing contemporary art collection. Nearby, the University of Montana campus features several historic buildings, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation offers an exploration of the state's wildlife heritage. Whether exploring the surrounding wilderness or strolling through the historic downtown, Missoula offers the perfect blend of natural beauty and Wild West history.

destinationmissoula.org

Virginia City/Nevada City: Ghost Towns and Gold Rush History

For a truly authentic glimpse into Montana's gold rush days, Virginia City and Nevada City offer a fascinating look at life during the boom years of the 1860s. Once a bustling gold mining town, Virginia City has been beautifully preserved and offers visitors the chance to explore historic buildings, including old saloons, stores and the Old City Jail. The Virginia City Museum offers exhibits on the area's gold mining heritage and the stories of the people who lived and worked here. Just a short distance away, Nevada City is a well-preserved ghost town, where visitors can walk through the remains of homes, shops and saloons that once catered to miners during the gold rush. Together, these towns provide an immersive experience of Montana's frontier days, where the echoes of gold-seekers and prospectors still linger. Three important stops on your itinerary should include the Bale of Hay Saloon, Rank's Mercantile and the Bucket of Blood Saloon.

virginiacity.com

Gold rush dreams made Virginia City Montana's liveliest frontier town.

Missoula's past whispers through mountain valleys once roamed by pioneers.

TEXAS

WINDING ROADS AND HIDDEN GEMS

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY

The Alamo stands defiant—Texas' most legendary battle for independence.

The Texas Hill Country is a land of rugged beauty, rolling hills and wide, winding roads that beckon travelers to explore its hidden gems. This region, known for its rich history, charming small towns and breathtaking natural landscapes, offers a captivating blend of cultural heritage and outdoor adventure. From the historic streets of Fredericksburg to the lively urban heart of Austin, the Hill Country provides a unique journey through the heart of Texas. Whether you're drawn by the allure of the Wild West, the melodies of country music or the charm of German heritage, these towns reveal a Texas that's rich in history and character. The Texas Hill Country isn't just a place—it's a journey that will take you back in time, and forward to moments of discovery, beauty and Texas-sized hospitality. Here's your guide to some of the region's most iconic towns, each with its own special story to tell.

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The Museum *of* Western Art

1550 Bandera Hwy, Kerrville, Texas 78028
830-896-2553 ~ museumofwesternart.com

Bandera, the "Cowboy Capital," celebrates Texas' Western roots with pride.

Bandera: The Cowboy Capital of the World

Bandera, often referred to as the "Cowboy Capital of the World," is the perfect place to begin your Hill Country adventure. Positioned along the banks of the Medina River, this town has deep roots in Texas' cowboy culture. With its Western-themed shops, lively honky-tonk bars, such as 11th Street Cowboy Bar and annual rodeos, Bandera is the epitome of small-town Texas charm. History buffs can visit the Bandera County Historical Museum, which showcases the area's rich ranching and frontier heritage. For a true cowboy experience, head to one of the local ranches like the Mayan Dude Ranch and Twin Elm Guest Ranch that offer horseback riding and cattle drives. Bandera also hosts the Cowboy Mardi Gras, a lively celebration blending Western traditions with the spirit of the Texas Hill Country.

banderacowboycapital.com

Bandera's Mardi Gras blends Texas traditions with festive frontier spirit.

Legends say Billy the Kid lived on in Hico, Texas.

Hico: A Town of Outlaws and Legends

Hico is a small but historically significant town, which, according to local legend, has a connection to one of the most famous outlaws in American history—Billy the Kid. The town celebrates this claim at the Billy the Kid Museum and Gift Shop. While the story may be more myth than fact, the town is full of charm, with its historic buildings, quirky antique shops and excellent local restaurants. The Hico Historical Museum offers visitors a deeper look at the town's past, which includes a thriving 19th-century mercantile economy. Hico's peaceful streets and hidden

Lush Texas landscapes like Gloria Stephan State Park in Bryan hide deep histories of settlers, ranchers and resilience.

history make it a perfect stop for history enthusiasts and curious travelers.

hico-tx.com

Bryan/College Station: Where History Meets Modern Texas

Located just a short drive from College Station, Bryan is a charming town with a rich history and a thriving cultural scene.

·TEXAS·

Founded in the 1850s, Bryan was an important stop along the Houston and Texas Central Railway, and its historic downtown still retains much of its 19th-century architecture. The Bryan Railroad Depot and the Palace Theater are great places to start your visit. The Brazos Valley African American Museum offers insights into the region's history, including its African American communities. Bryan's blend of history and modern Texas life is also evident in its growing culinary and craft beer scene, making it a great destination for foodies and history lovers alike.

German heritage meets Texas charm in historic Fredericksburg's welcoming streets.

Cowboy hat makers, Catalena Hatters, have made Bryan their home.

bcschamber.org

Fredericksburg: A German-American Oasis

Fredericksburg is one of the Texas Hill Country's most iconic towns, known for its well-preserved German heritage and vibrant wine country. Founded by German immigrants in the 1840s, Fredericksburg feels like a little piece of Germany in the heart of Texas, with its charming downtown lined with boutiques, bakeries and biergartens. A visit to the National Museum of the Pacific War is a must for history buffs. It offers an in-depth look at the region's military history and the role of Fredericksburg native Admiral Chester W. Nimitz in World War II. The Texas Rangers Heritage Center is a must stop for Old West aficionados.

Fredericksburg is also home to Cimarron Firearms and its Texas Jacks Mercantile. Some of Texas' best wineries and vineyards are in Fredericksburg, making it a prime spot for wine tasting and leisurely exploration.

visitfredericksburgtx.com

Built in 1879, Schreiner Mansion reflects Kerrville's cattle and banking legacy.

Kerrville's Hill Country charm thrives where history and modern life blend.

Kerrville: The Heart of the Hill Country

Settled along the Guadalupe River, Kerrville is the gateway to the scenic beauty of the Texas Hill Country. Known for its stunning natural landscapes, Kerrville is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, offering activities like hiking, fishing and boating. The Kerrville-Schreiner Park is a popular spot for picnics and exploring the area's flora and fauna, while the Hill Country Museum provides a window into the area's history. Kerrville's downtown area is filled with art galleries, local shops and cafés, giving it a vibrant yet laid-back atmosphere. The town also hosts the Kerrville Folk Festival, which celebrates the state's rich musical heritage, especially country and folk music. The Museum of Western Art is dedicated to excellence in the collection, preservation and promotion of Western heritage and it's well worth a visit.

kerrvilletexascvb.com

TEXAS

San Antonio: The Cultural Capital of Texas

Spanish roots and Texas charm flow along San Antonio's storied Riverwalk.

San Antonio, the second-largest city in Texas, is a vibrant metropolis that blends rich history with modern amenities. Known for its historic sites like the Alamo and the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, the city offers a deep dive into Texas' colonial and revolutionary past. The River Walk is a must-see; its picturesque pathways along the San Antonio River are lined with shops, restaurants and bars. San Antonio is also home to a thriving arts and culture scene, with museums including the Briscoe Western Art Museum, The Alamo Museum, San Antonio Museum of Art and the McNay Art Museum. With its unique blend of Mexican and Texan cultures, San Antonio is a place where history and modern life converge in exciting and unexpected ways.

visitsanantonio.com

Remember the Alamo—Texas' defining battle forged a legendary independence.

Austin: Live Music and Lone Star Spirit

Austin, Texas' state capital, is known for its eclectic energy, live music scene and vibrant cultural landscape. Famous for its motto, "Keep Austin Weird," the city is a hub of creativity, arts and innovation. A tour of the Texas State Capitol offers a glimpse into the state's political history, while the Bullock Texas State History Museum takes visitors through the state's fascinating past, from Native American history to its time as a republic. Austin is also the live music capital of the world, with legendary venues like The Continental Club and Antone's hosting performances almost every night. Whether you're into the arts, history or great food, Austin's dynamic spirit offers something for every type of traveler.

austintexas.org

Llano: A Texas Hill Country Gem

Llano, located along the Llano River, is known for its natural beauty, historic downtown and delicious barbecue. The town was established in the 1850s and has since maintained its small-town charm, with local shops, art galleries and eateries lining the streets. Llano County Historical Museum gives insight into the area's past, including its role in the cattle industry and its history as a frontier settlement. Llano is also famous for its outdoor activities, especially fishing, with the Llano River offering some of the best bass fishing in the state. For foodies, Llano is known for its top-notch barbecue, with Cooper's Old Time Pit Bar-B-Que being a local favorite.

llanochamber.org

Blanco: A Quaint Town with a Rich History

Blanco, a picturesque town along the banks of the Blanco River, offers a peaceful retreat with a deep history rooted in Native American and early settler cultures. The Blanco State Park is a favorite for camping, swimming and fishing, while the

TEXAS

Blanco County Historical Museum showcases the town's agricultural roots and historical landmarks. The Blanco Courthouse, built in the 1880s, is a beautiful example of Texas' post-Civil War architecture and

Texas Historic Llano Courthouse stands tall—Texas' legal heart since 1893.

adds to the town's historical charm. With its friendly atmosphere and scenic beauty, Blanco is a perfect place to relax and enjoy the slower pace of Hill Country life.

visitblancotexas.com

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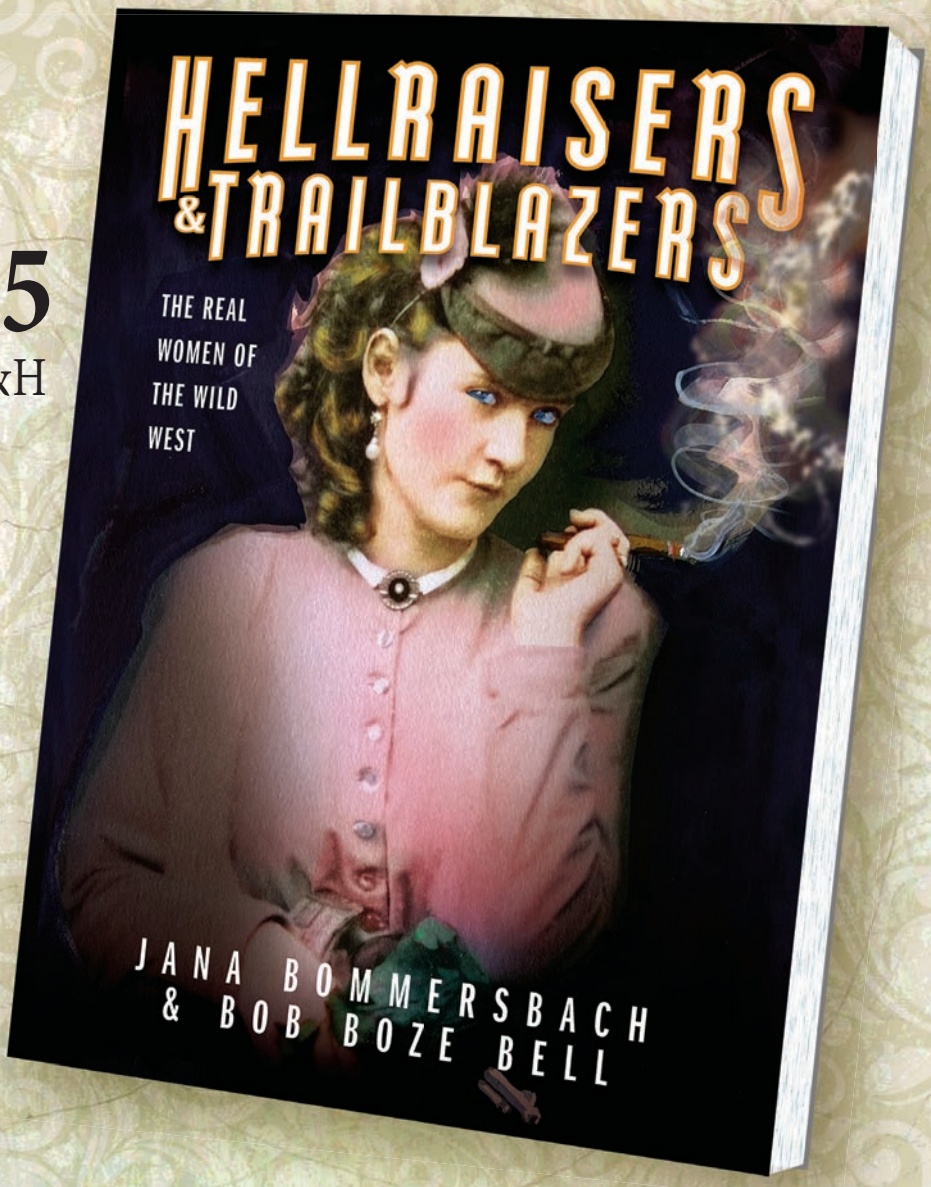

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Texas barbecue tradition thrives at Cooper's—where smoked meats tell stories.

Johnson City: The Home of President Lyndon B. Johnson

Johnson City, birthplace of Lyndon B. Johnson, echoes Texas' presidential past.

Johnson City is a charming small town known as the birthplace of President Lyndon B. Johnson and offers a glimpse into the life of the 36th President of the United States. The Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park is the main attraction, including the LBJ Ranch (also known as the "Texas White House"), where President Johnson spent many weekends and holidays. Visitors can tour the ranch and learn about Johnson's impact on both Texas and the nation. The town's historic district, with its restored 19th-century buildings, offers a quaint setting for shopping, dining, and exploring. Johnson City's small-town charm and rich connection to American history make it a must-visit stop in the Hill Country.

johnsoncitytx.org

Blanco's stone buildings stand where Texas pioneers shaped Hill Country history.

WYOMING

LEGENDS OF THE WILD WEST
A JOURNEY THROUGH WYOMING'S HISTORIC TOWNS

The historic Mint Bar echoes cowboy tales beneath neon glow in Sheridan.

Wyoming's vast, rugged landscapes echo with the spirit of the Wild West, where frontier towns once bustled with cowboys, outlaws and pioneers carving out a place in the American story. Today, these towns stand as living museums to a time when the lawless and the legendary roamed the land. For travelers looking to walk in the footsteps of legends, Wyoming offers a road trip like no other—one that traces the lives of the famous and infamous, from Buffalo Bill Cody to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Each stop brings a fresh chapter in the unfinished story of America's frontier past. Here's your guide to exploring the historical heart of Wyoming, where the Old West meets modern-day adventure.

BUFFALO BILL CODY

MEET OUR ICONS AND OUTLAWS AT SHERIDANWYOMING.ORG

The legacy of the Wild West is celebrated at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Cody: The Legacy of Buffalo Bill

Named after the iconic William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, this town is a tribute to the man who helped shape the myth of the Wild West. At the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, visitors can explore world-class exhibits on Cody's life, his role in popularizing the American frontier, and his showmanship in the legendary Buffalo Bill's Wild West performances. The center also delves into Native American history and houses the most comprehensive collection of American firearms in the world. Stop by the Old Trail Town and Museum of the Old West and don't miss the opportunity to walk the grounds of the Cody Trolley Tour, which stops at historic landmarks including the Irma Hotel, built by Buffalo Bill himself, where he entertained famous guests like Theodore Roosevelt. Cody is also home to the Dude Rancher's Association, if you're looking to book or learn more about a guest ranch excursion.

codyyellowstone.org

Buffalo: A Historic Crossroads

Nestled between the Bighorn Mountains and the plains, Buffalo is a picturesque town steeped in the history of the American frontier. It was a critical stop on the Bozeman Trail during the Indian Wars and saw its share of

Buffalo Bill's legacy lives on in this world-renowned Western museum.

skirmishes. The historic Occidental Hotel and Saloon, built in the 1880s, was frequented by famous figures including Butch Cassidy and Calamity Jane. Nearby, the renowned Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum offers a deep dive into local history, including Native American culture, frontier military life and the region's most storied characters.

visitbuffalowy.com

Laramie: A Frontier University Town

Home to the University of Wyoming, Laramie offers a unique blend of frontier history and

Cowboys, outlaws and pioneers once found refuge in Buffalo's Occidental Hotel.

Butch Cassidy and other outlaws once roamed Wyoming's territorial prison in Laramie.

academic influence. The Wyoming Territorial Prison State Historic Site, where outlaws like Butch Cassidy were incarcerated, gives visitors a glimpse into the hard life of those who faced the law. Laramie was also a key stop on the Union Pacific Railroad and is known for its historic downtown, where Victorian

architecture tells the tale of a town that grew alongside the railroad. The Laramie Plains Museum offers additional insights into the town's development and its role as a center for trade and culture in the 19th century.

visitlaramie.org

Sheridan: The Gateway to the Bighorns

Situated at the foot of the Bighorn Mountains, Sheridan is a town with strong ties to the cattle ranching era. Its historic downtown, with well-preserved 19th-century buildings, is a great place to experience Western hospitality. The Kendrick Mansion, built by a prominent local rancher, provides a glimpse into the opulence enjoyed by the area's wealthy settlers. For those interested in military history, the nearby Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site marks the location of an important fort during the Indian Wars and the infamous Fetterman Massacre of 1866. No visit to Sheridan would be complete without a visit to the Mint Bar and Kings Saddlery and Museum. The Sheridan Inn has always been a favorite place to stay among the many accommodations Sheridan has to offer.

sheridanwyoming.org

Buffalo Bill's Sheridan Inn (opposite) welcomed travelers, performers and frontier legends.

Native traditions thrive at Sheridan Inn's vibrant annual Pow Wow.

Gillette: The Energy Heartland

Though today Gillette is known as the "Energy Capital of the Nation," its history is deeply rooted in the railroad and coal mining industries that shaped its early growth. While the town is a modern-day hub, the Campbell County Rockpile Museum offers an intriguing look at the area's mining and railroad history, as well as its Native American heritage. The town is also close to the vast open spaces and natural beauty of the Powder River Basin, providing a perfect base for outdoor adventurers looking to explore Wyoming's backcountry.

visitgillettewright.com

Casper: The Historic Crossroads of the American West

Casper, the second-largest city in Wyoming, serves as a crossroads of history, where the Oregon, Mormon and California Trails converged. The National Historic Trails Interpretive Center is a must-see, providing an immersive experience into what it was like for pioneers traveling through the region. Casper is also home to the Fort Caspar Museum, which showcases the town's military history during the Indian Wars. Whether you're interested in pioneer history, the rugged Wyoming landscape or the story of the early settlers, Casper offers a fascinating look at the state's frontier past.

visitcasper.com

The Rockpile Museum in Campbell County preserves Wyoming's ranching, railroad and pioneer heritage.

WYOMING

Sundance: The Outlaw's Hideaway

This charming town, where the infamous Sundance Kid once sought refuge, is steeped in Western lore. The town's proximity to the Black Hills and the Wyoming-Montana border made it a hideout for outlaws, including Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch. A nearby historical marker that tells the story of their time in the region. The town also offers a wealth of outdoor activities, including hiking in the beautiful Bear Lodge Mountains, making it a great spot for both history buffs and nature lovers.

sundancewyoming.com

Oregon Trail pioneers braved hardships with resilience, hope and adventure.

Cheyenne: Wyoming's Capital of the Old West

As the state capital, Cheyenne is a city where the Old West meets the modern-day frontier. The city's Western heritage is evident in its annual Cheyenne Frontier Days, one of the largest and oldest rodeo festivals in the country. Visitors can explore the Wyoming State Museum for exhibits on the state's history, including Native American artifacts and pioneer stories. The

Cheyenne Frontier Days keeps rodeo traditions alive in America's legendary cowboy town.

Cheyenne Depot Museum, housed in a grand 1887 railroad depot, tells the story of how the railroad shaped the city. For those interested in military history, Fort D.A. Russell, now part of the city, offers a glimpse into the past, when it was a key outpost during the Indian Wars.

cheyenne.org

Encampment: A Pioneer's Paradise

Encampment, located near the Medicine Bow National Forest, offers a quieter, more remote slice of Wyoming history. The town, once a resting place for pioneers on the Overland Trail, still holds a small-town charm and a deep connection to the region's early settlers. The Grand Encampment Museum showcases artifacts from the days when pioneers and settlers passed through this area, including items from the days of the Overland Trail and the town's mining heritage. Its scenic location also makes it a prime destination for outdoor activities like hiking, fishing and wildlife watching.

townofencampment.com

The Grand Encampment Museum honors Wyoming's frontier life and its timber industry heritage.

WYOMING

Pinedale: The Mountain Gateway

Settled in the shadows of the Wind River Range, Pinedale offers visitors a glimpse into Wyoming's natural beauty and its frontier history. The Sublette County Historical Society Museum offers an excellent introduction to the region's early fur trappers, pioneers and Native American tribes. Pinedale's location makes it a perfect base

The lore of the Sundance Kid and other outlaws runs deep in Sundance, Wyoming.

·WYOMING·

Mountain men's stories live on where fur trappers once roamed.

for exploring the nearby Wind River Mountains, a region that was once a key part of the fur trade. The impressive Museum of the Mountain Man presents a visual and interpretive experience into the era of the mountain man, the Plains Indian and the Oregon Trail. The town also has a strong Western feel, with historic buildings and a welcoming community that embraces its past while looking to the future.

visitpinedale.org

Discover Where History Happened in the Old West

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

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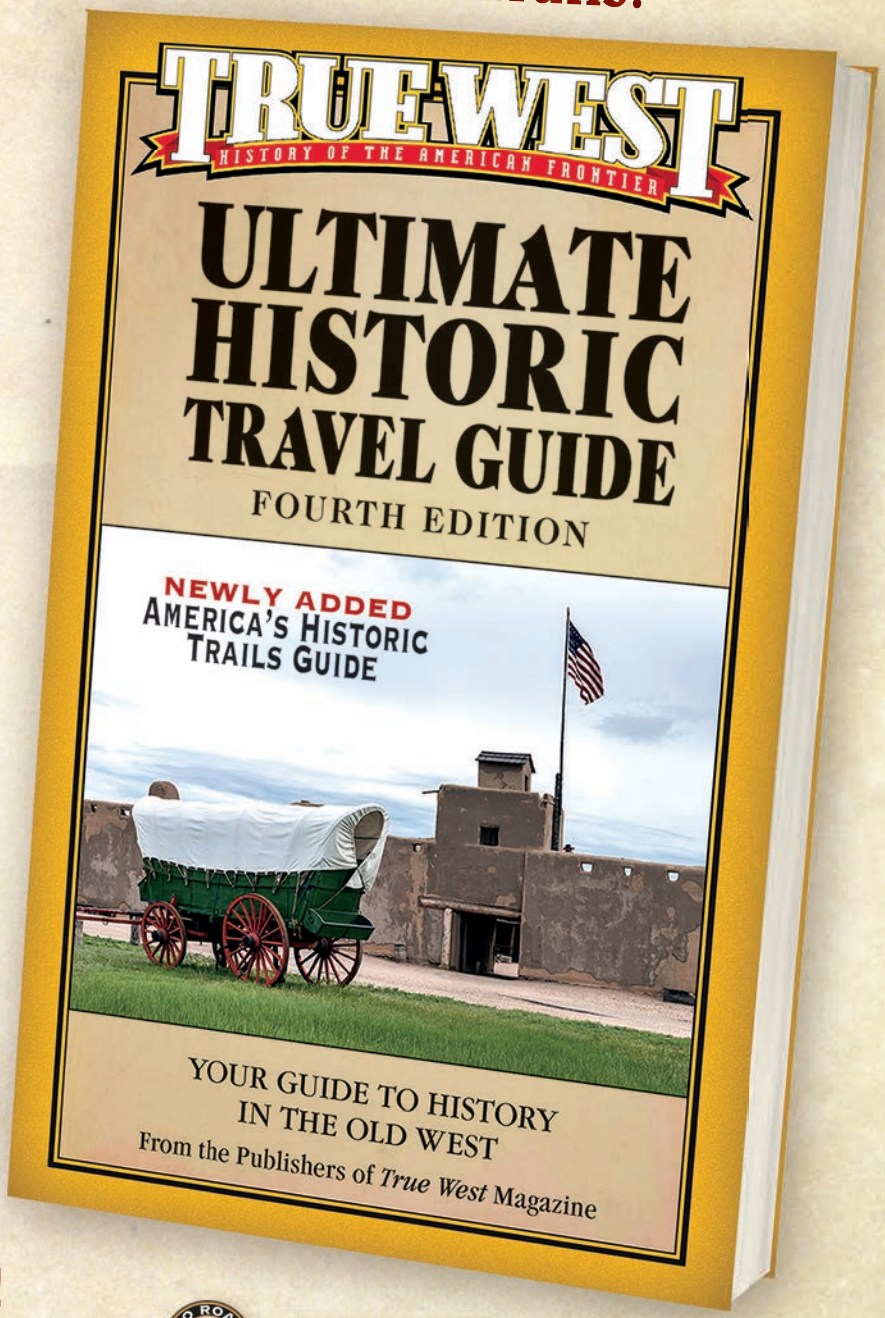

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TWO ROADS WEST

TRUE WEST

Ask The Marshall

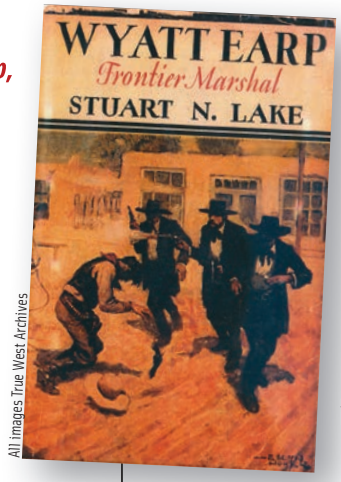
BY MARSHALL TRIMBLE

Marshall Trimble, Arizona's official historian and the beloved, now-retired writer of *Ask The Marshall*, has shared countless stories over the years. We asked him to select a handful of his favorites to feature in 2025. This collection showcases some of his top picks.

Earp, Cowboy Songs & Prairie Hygiene

What are your thoughts on Stuart Lake's book *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*?

Josh Taylor
Austin, TX



All images True West Archives

Much of Lake's book comes from the fertile mind of Lake, but to his credit, it made a Western legend out of Wyatt. Lake also had to deal with Sadie Earp, who was a constant thorn in his side while he was writing *Frontier Marshal*. She was hell-bent on making Wyatt a legend, forbidding Lake from writing anything about his jaded past (or her own shady story). He also had a difficult job in interviewing Wyatt, who left him to fill in many of the missing parts of his life. So, Lake had to be creative.

Old West books indicate that there were two main reasons why cattle didn't eat on pastures where sheep had passed: one, because sheep ate the grass to the roots, leaving nothing of it to the cows; two, that the scent of the sheep kept cattle away and prevented the cows from eating any grass. Which one is the right one? Can both be true statements?

Mario Raciti
Aci Catena, Sicily, Italy

Today it's common to see cattle grazing with sheep flocks nearby, but a century ago that wasn't thought possible. Historically, cattlemen believed that sheep had a gland between their hooves that exuded a substance that sterilized the ground. They also believed that sheep, with their sharply pointed hooves, cut the range grasses and made the ground stink so the cattle wouldn't use it. Cattlemen also believed that sheep grazed the grass so close to the ground that there was nothing left for grazing.

Cattle ranchers eventually came to realize that sheep and cattle could share the grazing ranges and there were advantages to raising them. They could be sheared once a year. There is always a market for wool. But for some ranchers, the old ideas still hold sway.

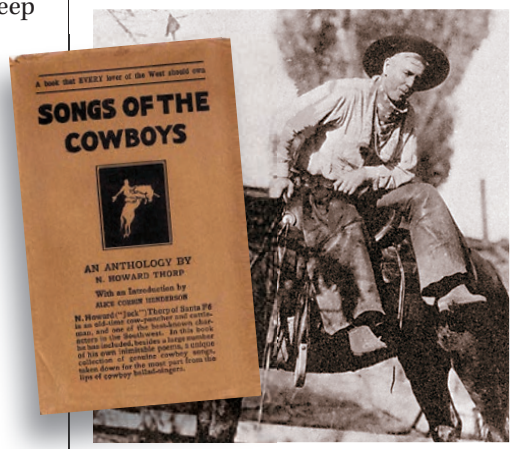
The cowboy song "Little Joe the Wrangler" says he died in a cattle stampede. One version says they camped by the Pecos River; another claims it happened by the Red River. Can you tell me where the stampede happened?

Charlie Thorne
Newton, KS

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. Sitting around the campfire one night, he scribbled the words on an old paper bag. It was about a wrangler he knew, and 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. It was first published in 1908 in Thorp's book, *Songs of the Cowboys*.

In the original lyrics Thorp writes, "We'd driven to Red River, the weather had been fine. We were camped down on the south side in a bend…" That when the norther started blowing and the cattle stampeded.

Songs like "Little Joe" and Curley Fletcher's "Strawberry Roan" drifted around the West; the lyrics were often localized and adapted to another horse and location, hence the version that mentions the Pecos River.



Jack Thorp and his book, *Songs of the Cowboys*.

When the pioneer women were crossing the Great Plains—where there were no trees—how did they find a private place to pee?

Betty Larson
Newton, KS

Come potty time on the lone prairie, the women went out in a group and formed a large circle and spread their skirts. One or two would enter the circle, squat and do their business (unencumbered by panties).

After each had their turns, they would return triumphantly to the wagon train.

In Western novels and movies, it seems that every time outlaws commit a crime in town, a posse is raised in order to chase after them. How often was a posse actually used in the real West?

Andy Barrett
Peoria, AZ

In some of the most notorious towns such as Bodie, California, where robbery was frequent, there might be a voluntary posse on call. In other places and situations, a posse would be raised after a robbery or when a citizen was shot. The size of the group varied, based on the size of the town and the number of available men. There usually was a daily nominal fee paid to the possemen. For some, going after outlaws was an adventure. Some posses stayed on the trail for hundreds of miles and weeks on end. Others made a cursory search that ended hours or a few days before returning to town.

Medicine Lodge, Kansas, citizen's posse that captured Henry Brown and his gang in 1884.

What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

My favorite place in the West is...the sky.

I started out as a reporter when I was 15 years old, at the local paper in Stuart, VA. My high school journalism teacher was exceptional, and I got the basics in that class.

When I got out of high school, I worked all over the business—newspapers, radio (news director at the legendary WPAQ Radio), magazine ventures. Later, I moved to Topeka and attended Washburn University as a non-traditional student majoring in history, graduating 20 years after I finished high school.

I think my biggest break came when I found the Historic Topeka Cemetery. While attending Washburn, I would walk through the cemetery and match the names to the streets or buildings. But when I literally tripped over the grave of Cyrus K. Holliday, founder of Topeka and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, memories of the movie *Santa Fe Trail* came back to me. That's when it hit me—Cyrus Holliday, Jeb Stuart, John Brown, etc., etc., had all been here, right here! I was hooked on the history of Kansas, on the history of the American West.

Don't get me started on being referred to as a history "buff." This is what I do for a living!

For my money, the best history is found standing on the ground where it happened.

Most people don't know I have had characters based on me in three fiction books by two authors, lost three homes to fire (all unrelated causes and unrelated to the four marriages), was a newspaper reporter covering court, which meant reporting on about 20 murder trials, and had my portrait painted for inclusion in an exhibit on "Interesting Women."

When I was growing up my favorite TV shows were *Superman* and *Daniel Boone*, and *The Virginian*. I wanted to be Lois Lane, or Jemima, or Betsy.

I was born to talk.

I wish I had a dollar for every time someone gets history wrong, really wrong.

History has taught me to be humble. Great people have great flaws and there is no cure for human nature. Our accoutrements change over time, but not people. Our pride should be tempered with the knowledge that accomplishment is fleeting. Likewise, when studying history, we tend to be arrogant and possessive. We must remember we do not know it all and never will.

The best way to host a TV show is enthusiastically. Nothing replaces passion for the work, the subject, the desire to share with people.

Photo by Jayne Humphrey Pearce

DEB GOODRICH, a native Virginian, lives in northwest Kansas where she serves as the Garvey Texas Foundation Historian in Residence at the Fort Wallace Museum. She chairs the Santa Fe Trail 200 (2021-2025) and has appeared in numerous documentaries on topics from Bleeding Kansas to Jesse James. She has hosted syndicated radio and television shows, including *Around Kansas*. Her alter ego, Dixie Lee Jackson, is a popular emcee and authored the book, *Cookin' and Kissin'*. She is a producer of *Sod and Stubble (Bailey Chase, Barry Corbin,, Buck Taylor)*, a film by Ken Spurgeon, slated for release in early 2025. She has served on the boards of Western Writers of America, the Kansas Music Hall of Fame, the Kansas Hall of Fame, and as president of the Civil War Roundtables of Kansas City and Eastern Kansas. Her most recent book, *From the Reservation to Washington: The Rise of Charles Curtis* (TwoDot) was published in October.

I got my gig when the Fort Wallace Museum was expanding and hired me to help with exhibits, I am so grateful.

The best cowboy I ever knew would have to be R. W. Hampton.

If I could go back in time, I would kiss Buffalo Bill Cody.

My next big challenge is writing a limited feature series on Charles Curtis.

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