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TRUE WEST

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

Doc & Wyatt

Face-to-Face with the Cowboys

An excerpt from Mark Lee Gardner's revealing new book *Brothers of the Gun*

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A Fitting Tribute to Val Kilmer

Wyatt Earp on Film?
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Tombstone Temptress
A clear-eyed look at Sadie Marcus Earp
By Peter Brand

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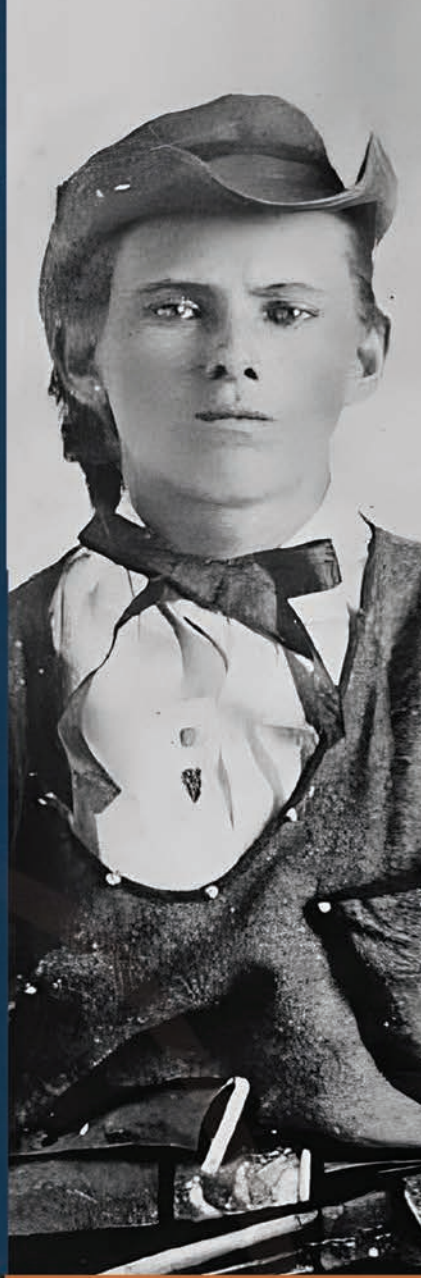

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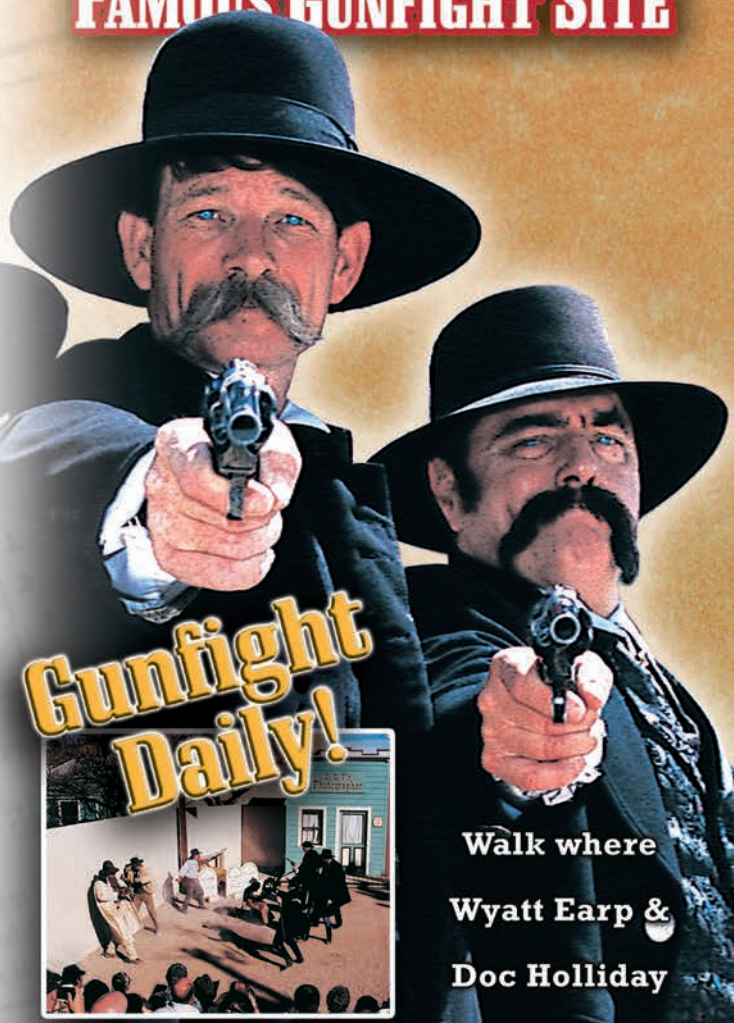

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WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST AT BILLY KING'S SALOON IN TOMBSTONE C. 1895

The gentleman with his foot on the rail is William Randolph Hearst. He paid Billy $20 to close his saloon for ten minutes so he could have this picture taken. At the end of the bar is Martin Mullins, the Hearst valet. Swede Pete, who ordinarily occupied the position of bodyguard, is outside holding the horses. Billy King is passing out the drinks.

Courtesy True West Archives

TRUE WEST
HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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

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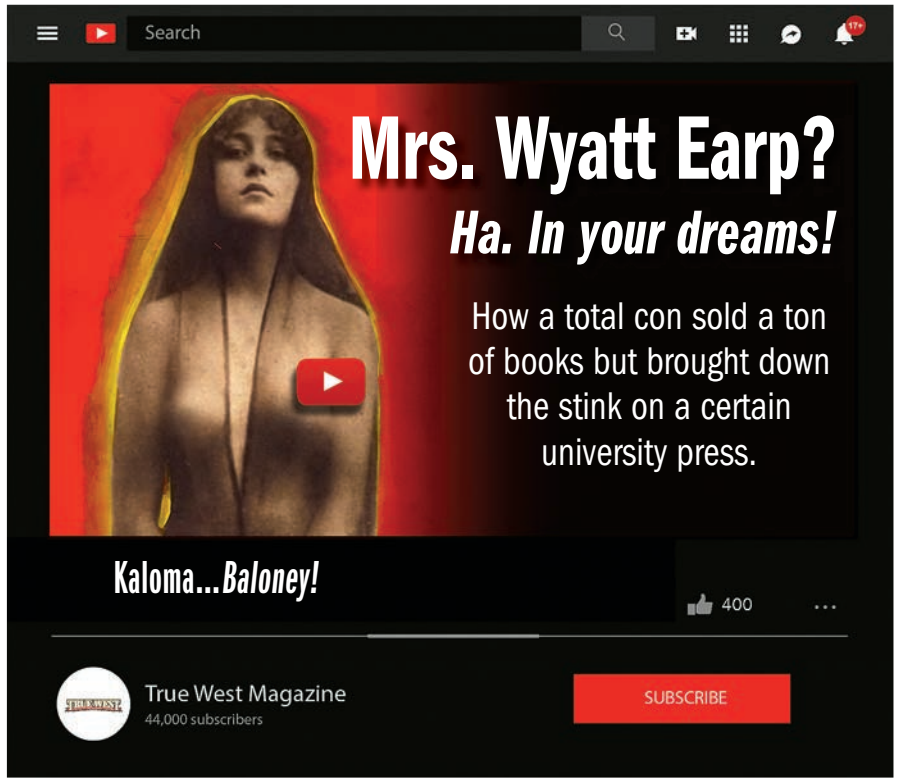

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Cover Design by Dan Harshberger
Illustration by Bob Boze Bell

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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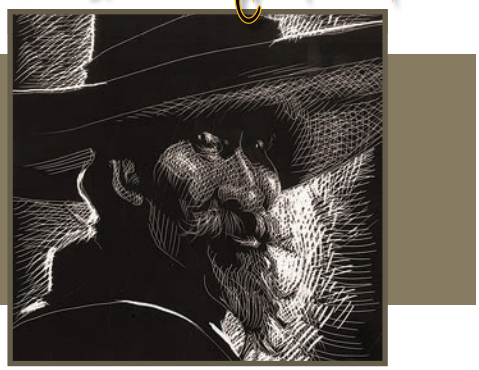
COMPILED BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Old Vaquero Sayings



"You can't change the past, but you can ruin the present by worrying about the future."

QUOTES

"Don't be afraid of failure, be afraid of never trying."

—Epictetus

"Those who don't know the truth are fools, but those who know the truth and call it a lie are criminals."

–Bertolt Brecht

Courtesy Library of Congress

"If you want to understand today, you have to search yesterday."

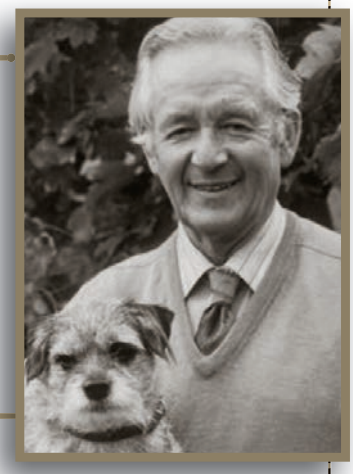
–Pearl S. Buck

"If you really want to piss people off, you can do two things; attain some happiness or tell the truth."

–Tennesse Williams

"If you're with a dog, you are not alone."

–James Herriot



Courtesy PBS

"Everything on this sign is accurate, but incomplete. The facts are not under construction, but the way we tell history is."

–A sign in the Muir Woods at Founder's Grove

"The Truth is rarely pure and never simple."

–Oscar Wilde

"We have to tolerate contradiction and undertow."

–Ken Burns

Courtesy PBS

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Rock Around the Block with Doc

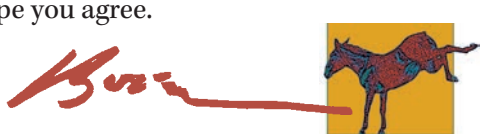
What goes around, comes around.

Personally, I have been enraptured with the Wyatt and Doc in Tombstone story for the past 50-plus years, and just when I think I know it all, new scholarship comes along to reshape the story we thought we knew all along. Several cases in point:

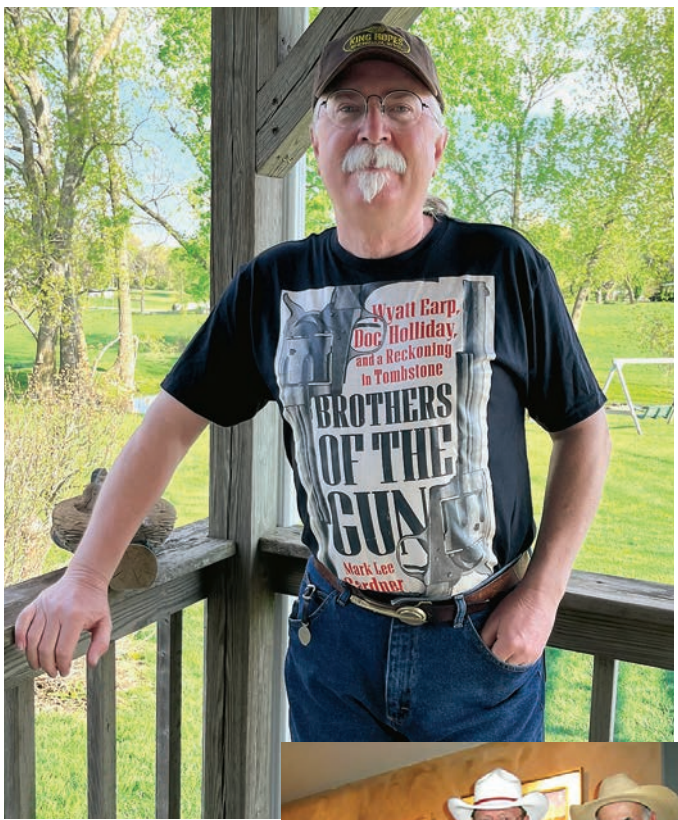
Leave it to our friend Mark Lee Gardner, who has taken the whole Tombstone saga and given it new life in his riveting new book, *Brothers of The Gun*, which we have excerpted for this issue (page 22).

It was on these pages, back in 2001 that Carol Mitchell first broke the story about the darker side of Josephine "Sadie" Marcus, better known as Mrs. Wyatt Earp. Now, Peter Brand has taken that shocking and scandalous story even farther with an excerpt from his groundbreaking new book, *Josephine "Sadie" Earp: The Sordid Truth 1870-1883* (page 32).

We are also paying a final tribute to Val Kilmer with two feature stories that might seem a tad redundant, but we felt he deserved the extra verbiage, in spite of the similarities in the coverage (pages 35 and 60). Look at them as bookends on a stellar career. A bonus of the heart. Hope you agree.



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



Mark Lee Gardner sports a snazzy new T-shirt that hawks his new book, *Brothers of The Gun*.

Courtesy Terri Gardner

Peter Brand from Down Under in Australia has broken new ground on our understanding of Sadie Earp.

Courtesy Wild West History Association

Tres Amigos: The artwork of Thom Ross, BBB and Buckeye Blake is currently gracing the walls of the Scottsdale Museum of The West with their collective show on The Resurrection of Billy the Kid, through December 31st.

by Lucinda Amorosano

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

DONE WITH BILLY!

I'm done with Billy the Kid!

Done.

Done.

Done.

Enough.

I am considering dropping my subscription.
WHY? Billy the Kid.

–Curt Beckner
Chino Valley, Arizona

Ed note: You will be happy to know, Curt, we have no more Billy the Kid features scheduled for this year. –BBB

MYTH VS. MURDERER

Though the July-August 2025 issue was a rip-roaring adventure, I was displeased and frankly uncomfortable with Buckeye Blake's glorification of Billy the Kid's Southwestern folklore. A saint-like wake will never bury the truth. Billy the Kid was an outlaw and a killer. Definitely not the type of guy you want your kids admiring. Buckeye needs to learn the distinct difference between historical interest and hero worship. What's next, a stained-glass window for John Dillinger?

–Pete Hale
Middleburg, Florida

WITH DUE RESPECT

Your article on Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill Cody was one of the best I've so far read in *True West*. Filled with interesting and informative facts about the great Native American chief, it debunked some of the misinformation about him, while treating him respectfully in the course of doing so. I thought the account of his shameful killing in military custody was especially compelling. I am confident that Col./Gen. Cody would approve of the writing, albeit not the shooting of his friend, the unarmed chief, whom, he said early on, had been murdered.

–Dr. Jim Vickrey
Montgomery, Alabama

PERILOUS PRAIRIES

In view of the recent interest in the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857, I would like to point out that Josiah Gregg in his 1844 classic, *Commerce of the Prairies*, warns readers that the Saints were treacherous and dangerous and advised travelers to stay at least one hundred miles away from Mormon Territory.

–D. N. Sandy
Houston, Texas

RANCH RECOLLECTIONS

Since my first memories, I've been a fan of the Old West, cowboys and especially horses. I'm 67 now but as a teen was fortunate to work on the Cow Creek Ranch in Okeechobee, Florida, for a couple of years. Afterwards I worked as the boys counselor at Tiawah Hills Dude Ranch here outside of Claremore, Oklahoma. We rode twice a day, every day, and I was in heaven. Tiawah Hills was owned and operated by Lela and Lyle Wells. Mr. Wells was a cowboy from Wyoming and even had bow legs to prove it! Keep up the great work!

–Patrick Kennedy
Tulsa, Oklahoma

4,000 WESTS

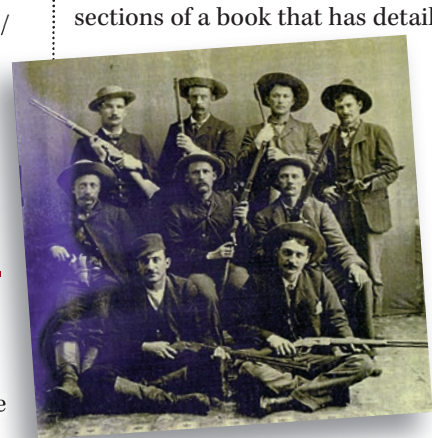
I read with interest your article on Cowboy Al's Wild West Museum. I too have a large Old West library, hardcover and paperbacks, close to 4,000. If you mention my name to Marshall Trimble, I am sure he will remember my name. I used to write in quite often over the years. My brother-in-law wrote this up for me.

–Paul Gordon
St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

MARSHAL TURNED OUTLAW

On page 95 of the September-October 2025 issue there is a picture of a posse and a short description. Maybe you already know this, but that is the posse that caught Henry Newton Brown when he flipped his marshal's badge around and tried to rob a bank. I have the two sections of a book that has detailed descriptions of the story.

–Will Watner
St. Marys, Kansas



The townsmen captured the four robbers, brought them back to Medicine Lodge where one was shot attempting to escape and the other three were lynched.

Courtesy of Len L. Gratteri, Jr.

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BY MARK BOARDMAN

Unlike Father, Unlike Son

Ed Scarborough didn't follow in the footsteps of his famous dad.

People expected great things from Ed Scarborough. And why not? His father, George Scarborough, was one of the bravest and toughest lawmen in the West. The father gunned down John Selman, killer of John Wesley Hardin, and at least two other hard cases in shootouts. And by the time Ed was 18, in 1897, he was riding posse with his dad. Even after George was killed by outlaws in 1900, Ed wore a badge. He was one of the first Arizona Rangers, among other things.

But he became increasingly erratic, threatening violence and trying to intimidate people. He was dismissed from the Rangers after just nine months for arresting alleged suspects but failing to provide any evidence against them. Ed was also spending an inordinate amount of time trying to find his father's killers.

People were disappointed with Ed. But he hadn't reached rock bottom yet.

That took place at about 2 a.m. on August 20, 1904. A person wearing women's clothes and a stocking mask entered the Harvey House Restaurant in Deming, New Mexico. The robber pulled a gun and demanded all the money in the cash register. It wasn't a good take—only $24. The suspect then left the building, threatening to kill anyone who testified against him.

Authorities were certain that the robber was a man dressed as a woman. And the trail pointed toward Ed Scarborough. Authorities went to his room and found the women's clothing. Then they began hunting for Ed.

This was a case where the perpetrator went back to the scene of the crime. The lawmen found Ed eating at the lunch counter in the Harvey House, the same place he'd robbed just minutes before. He was immediately arrested and taken to the Deming jail.

Ed was sentenced to 20 years in prison for that job. But for whatever reason, he left New Mexico and didn't serve a day in jail.

Ed continued to get in trouble with the law until he went way too far. In 1915, he brutally murdered a man just north of the Mexican border in Arizona. Scarborough was tried, convicted of second-degree murder and sent to prison, he but escaped after 12 months. Reportedly, he lived in Mexico, running a ranch during the 1940s. On occasion, he crossed back to the U.S. to visit relatives.

Many folks in New Mexio never forgot that August night when he robbed a restaurant, dressed as a woman.

Ed Scarborough was nothing like his father.

In the nineteen-teens, Ed Scarborough briefly did time in the Arizona State Prison at Florence. One day in 1915, he walked out and never returned.

George Scarborough was everything his son Ed wasn't—brave, thoughtful, in control. George died in a shootout with members of the Wild Bunch in April 1900.

All Photos Courtesy True West Archives

Ed Scarborough's mug shot was taken when he entered the Arizona Prison in 1915. This was 11 years after he robbed a lunch counter while dressed as a woman.

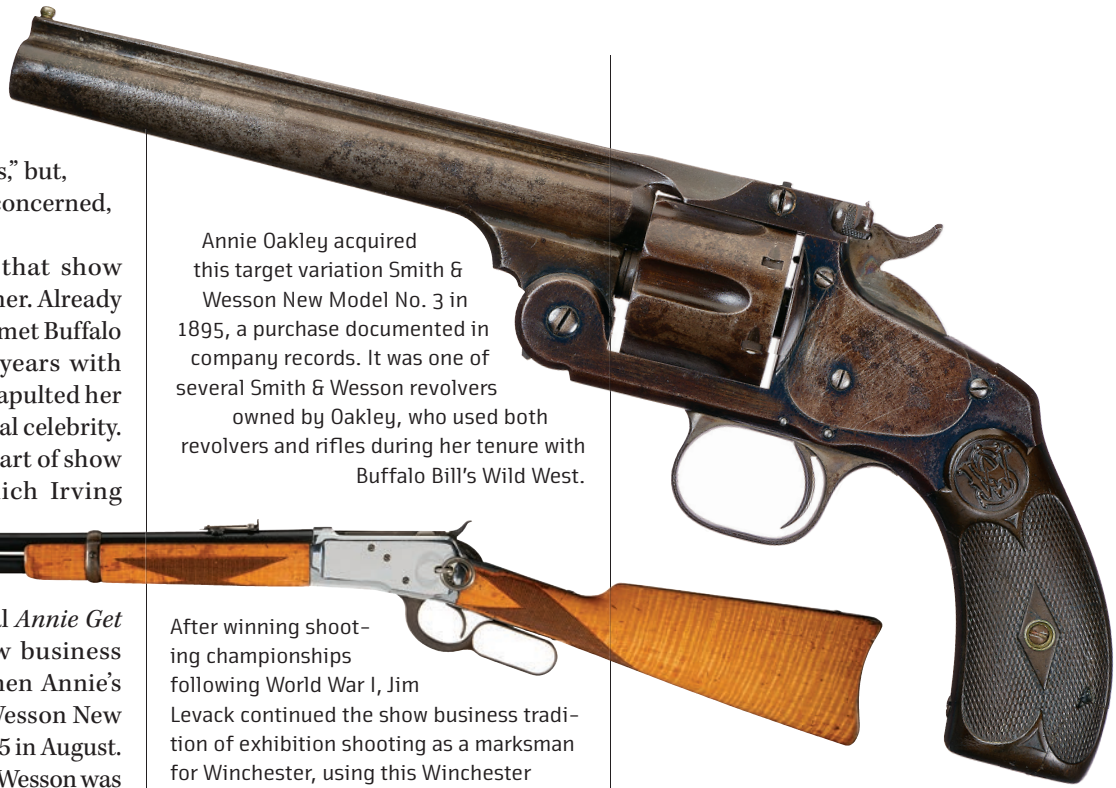
BUFFALO BILL CODY

MEET OUR ICONS AND OUTLAWS AT SHERIDANWYOMING.ORG

BY STEVE FRIESEN

There's No Business Like Show Business

Firearms from the stage, screen and expositions are a hit at auction.



Annie Oakley acquired this target variation Smith & Wesson New Model No. 3 in 1895, a purchase documented in company records. It was one of several Smith & Wesson revolvers owned by Oakley, who used both revolvers and rifles during her tenure with Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

After winning shooting championships following World War I, Jim Levack continued the show business tradition of exhibition shooting as a marksman for Winchester, using this Winchester Model 1892.

Annie Oakley probably never said "there's no business like show business," but, as far as Irving Berlin was concerned, she did.

There is no question that show business was very good to her. Already an excellent shot when she met Buffalo Bill in 1885, her next 16 years with Buffalo Bill's Wild West catapulted her to stardom and international celebrity. Sharpshooting became a part of show business, something which Irving Berlin noted in the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*. This year show business became good business when Annie's target variation Smith & Wesson New Model No. 3 sold for $323,125 in August.

Annie Oakley's Smith and Wesson was one of the highest selling firearms at a very successful Rock Island Premier Firearms Auction. Of particular interest were several other items with a show business connection. World War I veteran Jim Levack was a member of the U.S. Rifle Team and then became an exhibition sharpshooter for Winchester. His Winchester Model 1892, made in 1921 and engraved with his initials, sold for $8,812. The interest in sharpshooting exhibitions continued into the 1960s, when Colonel Larson set world records for marksmanship and was sponsored by Marlin as an exhibition shooter, billed as the "world's rifle champion." A pair of his Marlins, made in 1963, sold for $9,400.

Expositions were show business of another kind. They were the places where firearms manufacturers exhibited their newest and, in many cases, fanciest products. America's earliest exposition, held in 1876, celebrated the Centennial of our country. A nicely engraved Colt New Line .30 revolver from Colt's exhibit at the Centennial fair sold for $8,812. A pair of Colt New Line .38 revolvers were later presented by exposition president Joseph Hawley to the Conte del Donadio, manager of the Spanish exhibition at the fair. They sold for $188,000 at the auction. Greatly modified from its original incarnation as a Winchester Model 1892 rifle, Steve McQueen used what he called a "Mare's Leg" in the TV series *Wanted Dead or Alive*. This role launched his career and helped make the rifle a very desirable Hollywood prop for collectors, who bid its price up to $211,500 at the Rock Island Auction.

Whether it be a Wild West show, exhibition shooting, firearms displays at expositions, or the silver screen, it's all show business. And, for collectors of the true West, "there's no business like show business."

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.

Photos Courtesy of Rock Island Auctions

Colonel Larson continued in the footsteps of Annie Oakley, performing feats of marksmanship in rodeos, circuses and fairs into the 1960s. A playing card, split with a shot from a Marlin at 40 feet, was included in the auction lot.

This well-documented New Line .30 revolver was part of Colt's "wheel" exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The display, illustrated behind the revolver, featured over 300 Colt handguns.

One of three rifles used by Steve McQueen in the television show *Wanted, Dead or Alive*, got its name "Mare's Leg" after McQueen reportedly said that the short-barreled and stockless firearm kicked like a mare's leg when fired.

Steve McQueen wears the "Mare's Leg" in its holster rig.

While this pair of Colt New Line .38 revolvers was not part of the company's "wheel" exhibit at the 1876 Centennial Exposition, the exhibit inspired the exposition president to commission them as a gift to the official who organized the Spanish exhibit at the fair.

UPCOMING AUCTIONS

December 5-7, 2025
Rock Island Auctions Premier Firearms Auction
(Bedford, Texas)
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January 23 – 24, 2026
Old West Show and Auction (Las Vegas, Nevada)
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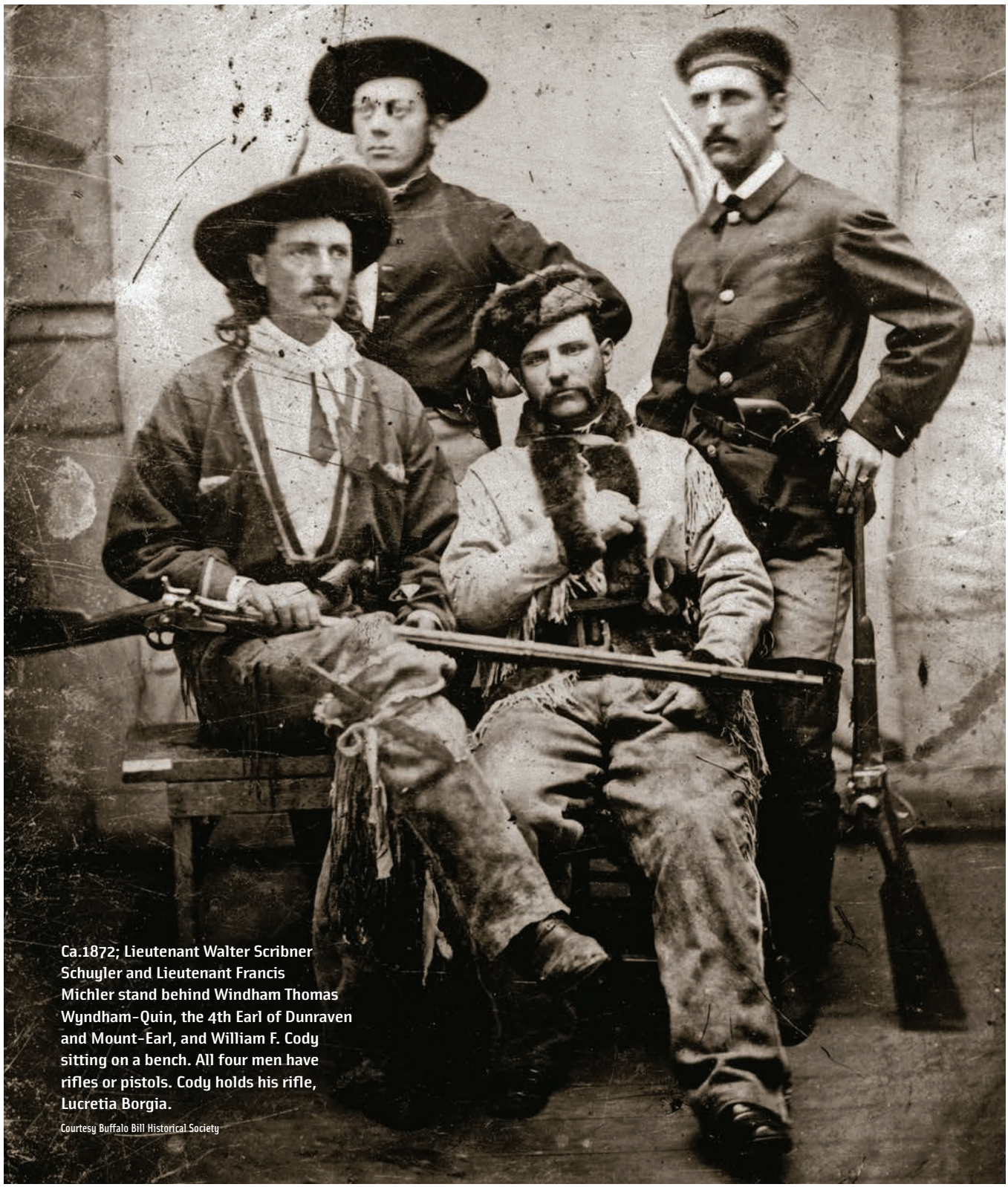
February 14, 20226
Jackson Hole Art Auction online only
(Jackson, Wyoming)
jacksonholeartauction.com • 307-734-9739

BY JIM DICKSON

Lucretia Borgia

This rifle turned William Cody into Buffalo Bill.



Ca.1872; Lieutenant Walter Scribner Schuyler and Lieutenant Francis Michler stand behind Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin, the 4th Earl of Dunraven and Mount-Earl, and William F. Cody sitting on a bench. All four men have rifles or pistols. Cody holds his rifle, Lucretia Borgia.

Courtesy Buffalo Bill Historical Society

A 50-70 Model 1866 trapdoor Springfield, or needle gun, as they were known on the frontier because of their long firing pin, quickly became William F. Cody's all-time favorite rifle. He named it Lucretia Borgia after the infamous Italian poisoner because she was pure poison on the buffalo. Together they carved out a name for William Cody. In 1867 Cody had a job killing buffalo to feed the workers building a railroad through Kansas. He and Lucretia killed 4280 buffalo that year, and over 18 months, the number raised to 4862. In the course of his career as a professional buffalo hunter they killed over 40,000 buffalo plus assorted other plains game. She helped him earn the nickname Buffalo Bill when he entered into a buffalo-shooting contest with fellow buffalo hunter William Comstock. The man with the highest bag at the end of the day won the right to the name of Buffalo Bill. With Lucretia in his arms, Cody decisively won with 68 buffalo to Comstock's 48.

Today many will decry the slaughter of the great herds of buffalo, but Cody never regretted it. He saw the extermination of the great herds as necessary for the expansion of the country into the Western frontier. Destruction of the buffalo herds was required to remove the Indians' larder and force them onto reservations. The huge herds also prevented settlement as they trampled and obliterated fences and farms while pushing domestic cattle herds aside as they passed over the land like a tidal wave scouring the surface.

Bill and Lucretia's favorite method of bagging buffalo was to ride as near to the front of the herd as possible and shoot the leaders, causing the now leaderless and confused herd to mill in a circle where they could be picked off with the carcasses landing close together for the convenience of the skinners and meat wagons. The herd's natural instinct under duress was to form a circle, a maneuver that worked well against wolves and bears. It played right into Bill and Lucretia's hands, however, as Bill would ride along the right side of the circled beasts, firing and taking down one after another. He fired Lucretia to his left, for he was right-handed, and this better balanced

Although this .50-70 caliber, 2nd Model Allin Springfield rifle is in relic condition, it holds great Cody historical significance. Converted by the government from a .58 caliber Civil War rifle-musket to a metallic cartridge arm, this is all that survives of Buffalo Bill's original companion during his time as a meat hunter for the Kansas Pacific Railroad. It was also the rifle he ran buffalo with while mounted on Brigham, his famed buffalo-running horse, and was the gun that helped him beat another buffalo hunter, Billy Comstock, during the 1869 contest for the title of World Champion Buffalo Hunter. Cody affectionately nicknamed this early trapdoor "Lucretia Borgia," after the renaissance-era femme fatale duchess, because he saw this sure-shooting rifle as beautiful but deadly.

BBCW, MS6, William F. Cody Collection, P.6.0906; Buffalo Bill Museum, BBCW, Museum Purchase, Garlow Collection, 1.69.366

him than shooting from the right side. He used this method in the contest with Bill Comstock as well.

Sometimes he would position himself on a knoll after the herd was bunched up and pick off the individuals breaking free as they tried to lead the herd away. The 50-70 Trapdoor needle gun was perfectly at home with this long-range shooting. The time lapse between the sound of Lucretia firing and the sound of the bullet hitting was so great that the Indians named her Shoot Today And Kill Tomorrow.

The movies would have us believe that the six-gun was about the only weapon the gunfighters used, but when Buffalo Bill helped a man recover his horse from a horse thief, it was the long range needle gun on the open plains that decided the issue and got the man his horse back without having to kill the thief.

Like her infamous namesake, Lucretia hobnobbed with royalty. Visiting dignitaries including Grand Duke Alexis of Russia hunted the West under the protection of the U.S. Army with Buffalo Bill as their guide.

Sadly, Lucretia's stock was broken in an accident and the butt end lost when the town house in North Platte burned down.

Of all the famous guns of the old West Lucretia Borgia stands out as the one most famous for its accomplishments rather than merely being the

gun of a famous figure. Today she resides in the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, Wyoming, where she receives many admiring visitors. In 1917 when Buffalo Bill was dying, he stated that Lucretia Borgia was his favorite rifle and that he had tried all the new guns as they came out, yet none could shoot alongside the 50-70 needle guns. A fitting tribute to Lucretia.

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

In 1872, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer posed in his buckskins and fur cap, with his .50-70 Springfield rifle, most likely an 1866 model with a possible Allin conversion. Prior to the Battle of Rosebud and Little Bighorn, Brig. Gen. George Crook and Custer were issued an updated 1873 Springfield "trapdoor" .45-70. Crook and Custer's soldiers were the first to use them in battle and the mixed results—based on post-battle analysis of accuracy and ammunition spent—are still debated by historians today.

Courtesy National Park Service

BY MARK LEE GARDNER

All images Courtesy True West Archives

"We Well Knew They Would Fight"

An Exclusive Excerpt from *Brothers of the Gun: Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and a Reckoning in Tombstone*

Tombstone, Wednesday morning, October 26, 1881

The Earps and Doc Holliday didn't get much sleep, but Ike Clanton didn't get any. With a revolver in his waistband and carrying a Winchester rifle, he paraded around Tombstone, letting anyone who would listen know that he was out for blood. At about 9 a.m., one of Virgil Earp's policemen came to his house and urged the police chief to get out of bed. "You better get up," the officer said excitedly, "there is liable to be hell to pay! Clanton is threatening to kill Holliday as soon as he gets up; he says he is counting you fellows in, too." Virgil wasn't too concerned. It would be a while before the men Ike was ranting about would be up and around, and maybe Ike would settle down or go sleep somewhere by then. He told the officer he would get up before long.

At about the same time that morning, a barkeeper went to Wyatt's house and woke him up. He reported that he'd seen Ike, armed, down by the telegraph office and that Ike was saying, "As soon as those damned Earps make their appearance on the street today, the ball will open; we are here to make a fight. We are looking for the sons of bitches." Wyatt, like Virgil, also didn't feel the situation was worth getting up for, at least not right away, and he went back to sleep for a couple of hours.

VIRGIL EARP

Ike soon made his way over to Fly's boarding-house, where he was greeted by Mary Fly. When Ike asked about Doc, she wisely answered that he wasn't there. A startled Mrs. Fly went to alert Kate Elder (then going by the name Mrs. Doc Holliday), who happened to be looking at the photographs displayed in the Fly studio gallery. Doc was still asleep, and Kate allowed him to rest a little longer. When she did wake him, she told him first thing that an armed Ike Clanton had been by earlier and was looking for him. "If God lets me live long enough to get my clothes on," Doc drawled, "he shall see me."

Sometime before noon, Virgil left his house and headed to the business district two blocks away. Nearly everyone in town, it seemed, knew about Ike's threats. Virgil met Jim and Morgan, who repeated to their brother what they'd heard: Ike was threatening to kill them on sight. Virgil told Morgan to come along with him; they'd locate Ike and disarm him before he hurt someone. They encountered Wyatt, who was also on the hunt for Ike, outside the Oriental. After a short exchange, they split up, with Wyatt going west along Allen Street and Virgil and Morgan walking north on Fifth. Virgil and Morgan quickly walked around the block to Fourth Street and turned back south. Halfway down the block, they spotted Ike at an alley entrance.

The police chief walked up behind Ike and grabbed his Winchester with his left hand. Ike let go, half turned his head and reached for the revolver in his waistband. That's when the Cowboy felt the cold steel of Virgil's six-shooter slam into his skull. The painful blow sent Ike to his knees, and blood began to trickle down the side of his head. Virgil and Morgan took Ike's guns. Looking down at a dazed Ike, Virgil said, "I hear you are hunting for some of us."

Wyatt arrived just in time to see Virgil place Ike under arrest for carrying firearms inside the city limits and then watched as his brothers dragged Ike in the direction of the police court a block away. The judge was absent, however, and Virgil put Ike in Morgan's charge while he went looking for the judge. Not long after, Wyatt entered the courtroom and sat down on a bench. A few other

IKE CLANTON

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell

people were seated in the room waiting. Ike Clanton sat facing Wyatt, just eight feet away, holding a bloody handkerchief to his head. A railing separated him from Wyatt. Morgan stood against the wall with Ike's guns.

"I will get even with you for all this," Ike said to Wyatt. "If I had a six-shooter, I would make a fight with all of you."

"You have threatened my life two or three times," Wyatt said angrily, "and I've got the best of evidence to prove it, and I want this thing stopped."

Ike mouthed off again, and Wyatt stepped to the railing, his patience with Ike and his Cowboy pals now fairly used up.

"You are a cattle-thieving son of a bitch," Wyatt barked, "and you know that I know you are a cattle-thieving son of a bitch. You have threatened my life enough, and you have got to fight."

"Fight is my racket," Ike said boastfully, "and all I want is four feet of ground."

Wyatt reminded Ike of the "fight" he'd had with Virgil that ended with him in the police court.

Ike looked over at Morgan. "If you fellows would have been a second later, I would have furnished a coroner's inquest for the town."

Then Ike turned to Wyatt. "You fellows haven't given me any show at all today. You've treated me like a dog!"

Suddenly, Morgan held out Ike's rifle. "Here, take this," he said. "You can have all the show you want right now."

This was too much for the few people seated in the courtroom, and they jumped up and ran to the door and out onto the street. One of those who ran said it was "the worst scared crowd I ever saw."

Ike started to get up to take the rifle, but one of Sheriff Behan's deputies pushed him back down, saying he wouldn't tolerate any fuss. When those who'd fled didn't hear any gunfire, they slowly began to filter back in.

DOC HOLLIDAY

Disgusted, Wyatt got up and walked out of the courtroom and almost immediately came face-to-face with Cowboy Tom McLaury, who picked the wrong time to challenge Wyatt.

"If you want to make a fight," McLaury said, "I will make a fight with you anywhere."

"All right," Wyatt replied, "make a fight right here." And he suddenly slapped McLaury across the face with his left hand while drawing his revolver from the large side pocket in his coat with his right. "Jerk your gun and use it!" Wyatt yelled at the stunned Cowboy. When McLaury didn't go for his gun, Wyatt swiftly raised his revolver and hit McLaury twice on the side of the head with it, sending McLaury's hat flying. The Cowboy collapsed to the ground, blood oozing from his left ear. Wyatt left him there and was overheard saying to himself as he walked away, "I could kill the son of a bitch."

From Wichita to Dodge City, Wyatt had found that the quickest way to take the fight out of a man—without killing him—was a sharp blow to the head with the barrel of a heavy revolver. Tom McLaury, confused and trembling, his head throbbing, indeed had lost all interest in fighting—for now.

When the judge finally appeared, he fined Ike $25.00 plus costs, making a total of $27.50. Virgil asked Ike where he wanted his firearms left. Ike, just as surly as ever, said, "Anywhere where I can get them, for you hit me over the head with a six-shooter." Virgil said he would leave them at the Grand Hotel bar.

Retrieving his weapons wasn't a priority for Ike then. He first found a doctor, who cleaned his head wound and bandaged it. Hungover, his eyes sunken from no sleep, in need of a shave, and no change of clothes for at least 24 hours, Ike Clanton was not the most attractive man in Tombstone that day.

Doc Holliday, on the other hand, wouldn't think of going out without looking his best. Before leaving the boardinghouse, he dressed in a gray suit with a pastel shirt. Snugged around the shirt's standup collar was his ever-present cravat with its diamond stickpin. Over the suit he wore a long, gray overcoat that came below his knees, and on his head he placed a broad-brimmed hat. And then there was the silver-headed cane, which, at times,

Above: Barely three years old when this photo was taken, Tombstone was a classic boomtown with classic problems of violence, greed and dirty politics.

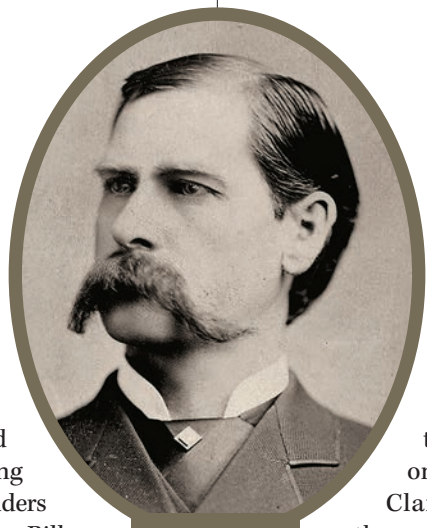
Left: Inside the Oriental Saloon

Below: The Can Can Restaurant, 1880s. The sign at right, center says: "No Dogs allowed in Dining Room"

he actually needed. Doc wasn't the same man he was of even a year or two before. His blond hair now had prominent streaks of gray. Doc was only 30 years old, but his disease was taking its toll. So was the liquor he drank to cope with the illness.

When Doc Holliday strolled over to Allen Street, at about 2 p.m., the town was fully awake. Many of those, like him, who'd been up all night and into the early morning hours patronizing the saloons and gambling halls, were eating their breakfast. Others were already back at the bars partaking of their favorite booze.

In a foreshadowing of things to come, Cowboy Frank McLaury once said to Tombstone Chief of Police Virgil Earp, "I never will surrender my arms to you. I had rather die a fighting man than to be strangled."



WYATT EARP

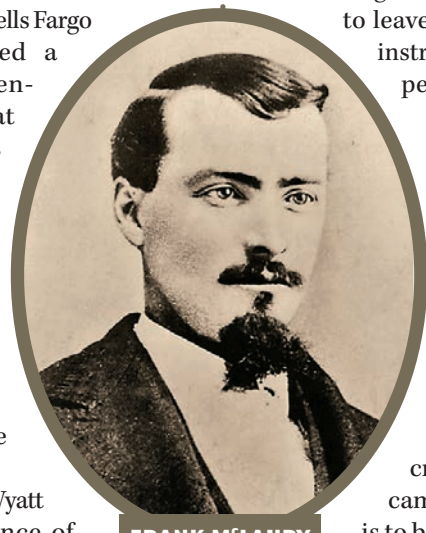
Sheriff Behan was at Baron's Barber Shop having a shave.

Doc happened to be near the Grand Hotel when three horsemen rode up and stopped at a hitching post out front. The riders were Frank McLaury, Billy Clanton and a cattleman named Frink from the Sulphur Springs Valley. They'd ridden in from Antelope Springs, 12 miles away, and were completely unaware of what had transpired in town over the last several hours. Strangely, Doc stepped up to young Billy and reached out and shook his hand, saying he was pleased to meet him. If there was something about Billy's dress or manner that caught Doc's attention, Doc never said. He didn't shake the hands of Billy's companions, though, and he walked away immediately after.

The two Cowboys and Frink went into the hotel and straight to the bar, where they were joined by an acquaintance named William Allen. As drinks were being poured, Allen quietly motioned Frank aside and asked him if he knew what was going on. When Frank shook his head no, Allen informed him that Wyatt Earp had bloodied his brother. Frank's pleasant demeanor turned to simmering anger: "What did he hit Tom for?" Allen didn't know. "I will get the boys out of town," Frank said. And then, turning to the others, he said, "We won't drink." They left their filled glasses on the bar, walked out, mounted up and rode down Allen Street.

While Frank and Billy were just getting an inkling of the trouble brewing, the downtown was already buzzing with what someone overheard or saw—or what they thought they heard or saw. A steady stream of concerned citizens approached Virgil on Allen Street with warnings about the Cowboys. "I see two more of them just rode in," one man told him. "Ike Clanton walked up to them and was telling them about you hitting him over the head with a six-shooter." And, the informant added, one of the men who road into town said, "Now is the time to make the fight." The speaker had hardly finished before another man urgently motioned for Virgil to come to him. "For God's sake," the second man said, "hurry down to the gun shop; they are all down there, and Wyatt is all alone. They are liable to kill him before you get there."

This last warning came across as overly dramatic, and Virgil found it hard to believe. But just to be safe, he walked into the Wells Fargo office and grabbed a short-barreled ten-gauge shotgun that was kept there for his use. He then rushed around the corner to the gun shop, where he saw Wyatt out front. And, instead of being killed, his brother was attempting to move a horse off the sidewalk.



FRANK McLAURY

Moments before, Wyatt stood at the entrance of Hafford's Saloon lighting a cigar when he saw the McLaury brothers and Billy Clanton pass by. He followed them and watched as they stopped at Spangenberg's Pioneer Gun Shop a half block away and walked in. Frank McLaury's horse stepped up on the sidewalk and stuck its head in the doorway. Wyatt grabbed the animal's bridle to remove him when the McLaurys and Clanton appeared at the door. Billy had his hand on the butt of his revolver. Wyatt, choosing to ignore Billy's menacing stance, instructed them that the horse couldn't be on the sidewalk, and Frank backed him off. Ike Clanton came along then, and with nary a word to Wyatt, all the Cowboys reentered the shop. Standing outside, Wyatt and Virgil clearly saw the men putting cartridges in their gun belts and examining various firearms.

The chief of police's movements, especially with a shotgun, drew the stares of numerous townsfolk on the streets, who sensed a train wreck in the making. A group of miners approached Virgil to talk, and not wanting to attract even more attention, Virgil told Wyatt he was going to leave with these men and instructed him to keep the peace until he returned. Wyatt followed the Cowboys back to Allen Street and watched them enter the Dexter Stables. Mean-while, inside Baron's Barber Shop, Sheriff Behan had a view of Allen Street from the barber's chair and noticed a crowd forming. A man came in and said, "There is to be trouble between the Clanton boys and Earp boys." Behan told the barber to hurry and finish his shave.

Leaving the barbershop, Behan spotted Virgil Earp with the

JOHN BEHAN

double-barreled shotgun on the street corner, next to Hafford's Saloon, and approached him. The sheriff asked Virgil what all the excitement was about, and Virgil replied that there were a lot of sons of bitches in town looking for a fight. Behan told Virgil he would have to disarm them. But Virgil, his patience running thin like Wyatt's, said he wouldn't. If they were bound and determined to fight, then they could have it. Behan was startled to hear that from the chief of police and strongly argued against any kind of confrontation with the Cowboys. He persuaded Virgil to join him for a drink in the saloon, where they could talk things over.

Virgil leaned the shotgun up against the building and went inside with Behan, but he didn't drink. Virgil asked Behan if he would go with him to disarm the Cowboys, but Behan refused, saying that if Virgil was present, the Cowboys wouldn't give up their arms, and a gun battle would surely result. "They won't hurt me," Behan said, "and I will go down alone and see if I cannot disarm them." That sounded good to Virgil. All he wanted, he said, was for the Cowboys "to lay off their arms while they remained in town."

Before Virgil left the saloon, a member of Tombstone's newly formed Committee of Safety came in to speak to him and motioned Virgil to the end of the bar. The purpose of the Committee, a group of one to two hundred citizens, was to assist Tombstone's law officers in defending the town from a threat, be it Indians, robbers or rustlers. The man offered the chief of police 25 armed volunteers who could be ready in a minute's notice. Virgil declined, believing he should give Sheriff Behan a chance to follow through with his plan. Outside Hafford's, yet another individual offered Virgil volunteers to deal with the Cowboys, saying he could provide 10 good men. Again, Virgil declined the offer.

Wyatt, Morgan and Doc Holliday now joined Virgil on the street corner. The Cowboys, they learned, had left the Dexter Stables, crossed Allen Street and gone into the O.K. Corral, Frank and Billy leading their horses. With the Cowboys was a 21-year-old man named William Claiborne. Known as "Billy the Kid," Claiborne was friends with the Clantons and McLaurys and was, as a local described him, "a stripling belonging to the profession." The Cowboy profession, that is. The Kid was unarmed.

As the Earps and Holliday talked, they were interrupted by a stranger. This man, a locomotive engineer who went by H. F. Sills, was visiting Tombstone for a few days. "Is your name Earp?" he said to Virgil. Virgil said it was. "Are you the marshal?" Virgil answered yes. Sills took Virgil a short distance away from his brothers and then blurted, "I just passed the O.K. Corral and saw four or five men, all armed, and I heard one of them say, 'Be sure and get Earp, the marshal.' The other one replied saying, 'We will kill them all.'"

This information was the tipping point for Virgil. The Cowboys were breaking the law in his town, and he would stand for no more threats. Virgil told Wyatt and Morgan to come along, they were going to disarm and arrest the Clantons and McLaurys.

Doc spoke up, "You're not going to leave me out, are you?"

Wyatt warned Doc it was going to be "a hard game."

"That's the kind I like," Doc replied, smiling.

Virgil stepped over and retrieved his shotgun from against the building. He asked Doc for his cane and handed him the shotgun, telling Doc to hide it inside his long overcoat. Again, people were watching, and it would cause a big stir to see the chief of police walking down the street brandishing a double-barreled shotgun with three grim-faced men marching behind him.

"They have horses," Morgan said to Wyatt. "Had we not better get some horses ourselves, so that if they make a running fight we can catch them?"

"No," Wyatt answered, "if they try to make a running fight, we can kill their horses and then capture them."

Fight. That word kept coming up. It seemed inevitable now. Wyatt explained years later that, "It was our intention to disarm them this time, and put them in jail or else make a fight if they wanted it, and we well knew they would fight."

The time was approximately 2:45 p.m., and the afternoon had turned cold and gusty. A winter storm was coming to Tombstone.

Award-winning author and historian **Mark Lee Gardner** can be seen on the hit Netflix docuseries *Wyatt Earp and the Cowboy War*. His YouTube video for *WIRED's* Tech Support, where Mark answers questions from the Internet about the Wild West, has received more than 5 million views. *Brothers of the Gun: Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and a Reckoning in Tombstone* publishes November 11, 2025.

TRUE WEST EXCLUSIVE

CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

30 SHOTS IN 30 SECONDS

BLAZE AWAY!

"HOLD ON, I DIDN'T MEAN THAT!"

"YOU'RE A DAISY IF YOU DO."

"You sons of bitches have been looking for a fight and now you can have it!"

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

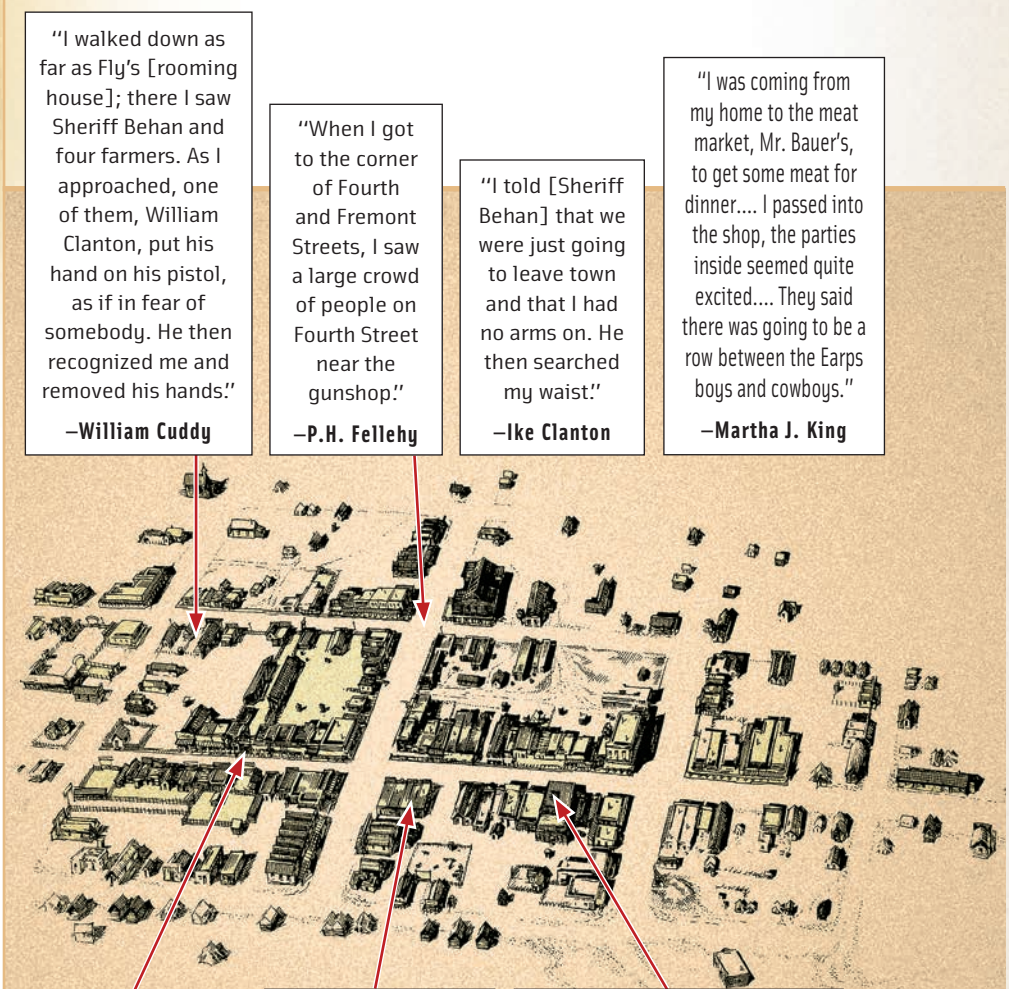
BY BOB BOZE BELL

Based on the scholarship of Jeff Morey

OCTOBER 26, 1881

Ike Clanton has been threatening the Earps to fight for the last 24 hours, spending much quality time in Kelly's Wine Rooms and other Tombstone establishments (there were 66 saloons in a town of 10,000 residents!) bellowing to anyone who would listen that as soon as the Earps show, the ball would open. After the town marshal Virgil Earp arrested Clanton with a blow to the head, the threats continued until quite a crowd began to gather at Hafford's Corner, eager to see the coming showdown.

With couriers running back and forth between the antagonists, fanning the flames, Virgil Earp as town marshal finally feels he has to act and he deputizes his brothers, Morgan and Wyatt, along with Doc Holliday to go down and disarm the cowboys. We join the events in progress.



"I walked down as far as Fly's [rooming house]; there I saw Sheriff Behan and four farmers. As I approached, one of them, William Clanton, put his hand on his pistol, as if in fear of somebody. He then recognized me and removed his hands."

—William Cuddy

"When I got to the corner of Fourth and Fremont Streets, I saw a large crowd of people on Fourth Street near the gunshop."

—P.H. Fellehy

"I told [Sheriff Behan] that we were just going to leave town and that I had no arms on. He then searched my waist."

—Ike Clanton

"I was coming from my home to the meat market, Mr. Bauer's, to get some meat for dinner.... I passed into the shop, the parties inside seemed quite excited.... They said there was going to be a row between the Earps boys and cowboys."

—Martha J. King

"I was in the O.K. Corral at 2:30 p.m., when I saw the two Clantons and the two [McLaurys] in an earnest conversation across the street in Dunbar's corral."

—R.F. Coleman

"I slept late the day of the shooting. Got up about one or half-past in the afternoon; went to the barber shop to get shaved. While there, heard someone say there was liable to be trouble between Clanton and the Earp boys."

—John Behan

"I first saw Frank McLaury on that day pretty near the Grand Hotel as they were riding in. Frank McLaury, Bill Clanton, and an old gentleman who I am not acquainted with. This was about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. At first, Doc Holliday went out and shook hands with one of them in a pleasant way, and said, 'How are you?' or something like that."

—William Allen



The crowd at Hafford's Corner grew quite large and boisterous, with local wags and windbags running back and forth to the O.K. Corral helping to fan the flames of a showdown, which they finally succeeded in doing by 2:45 p.m. on October 26, 1881.

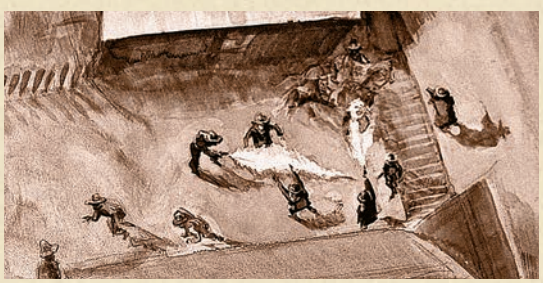

The Earps and Holliday take off, walking up Fourth Street, then turning west onto Fremont. Just past the rear entrance to the O.K. Corral, they meet the sheriff of Cochise County, Johnny Behan, who tells them to stop because he has disarmed the cowboys.



Believing Johnny Behan the Earps relaxed and put away their guns but kept going to confront the threats they had been receiving for the past 24 hours.




Entering the lot the Earp party realizes Behan has misled them and a tense situation gets even more tense. Virgil barks, "Throw up your hands, Boys. I want your guns." The cowboys start to comply, but something spooks them. (Holliday brandishing the shotgun probably didn't help.)


Sensing a misdemeanor arrest about to unravel, Virgil holds up Doc's cane and exclaims, "Hold on, I don't want that!" but it is too late. Billy Clanton aims at Wyatt, who in turn aims at Frank McLaury and two shots go off almost as one.



There is a pregnant pause after the first two shots as everyone in the small space realizes the ball has opened. Billy's shot misses Wyatt, but Frank McLaury has been gut shot. Ike runs up to Wyatt and grabs him by the arm and pleads with him to stop, but the latter says, "This fight has commenced. Get to fighting or get away." Clanton runs away.



Virgil moves the cane to his left hand, pulls his pistol out of the waistband and joins the fight, shooting at Billy Clanton, who is hit multiple times as he staggers towards the Harwood house.




Doc finally gets a bead on Tom McLaury, who has been hiding behind his horse, and blasts him with both barrels of the Wells Fargo shotgun. Mortally wounded, Tom runs away like a deer and Holliday throws down the shotgun in disgust, thinking he had missed. Doc moves out into the center of Fremont Street and pulls his pistol.




Frank McLaury staggers into the street and takes aim at Holliday, barking, "I've got you now!" to which Holliday replies, "You're a daisy if you do." Both Doc and Morgan shoot as one, toppling Frank into the dust and the fight is over. Only one of the fighters is unscathed and that is Wyatt Earp. And long may his story be told.

"Oh, this is just awful—awful."

Crying Shame

One of the aspects of the O.K. fight that rarely gets mentioned is, according to Big Nose Kate, Doc came into their apartment after the fight and sat on the bed with his face in his hands and wept, saying, "Oh, this is just awful—awful."

The Tombstone Makeshift Jail

When the boomtown mining camp was brand new they didn't have a real jail, so a carpenter was hired to build a wooden box with two-by-fours on top of each other and spiked down. It was 10' X 16' and had two cells, if you could call them that. This is the jail that Virgil and Wyatt Earp guarded all night when Curly Bill was arrested for the shooting of Marshal White. Ironically, it's also the same jail Wyatt and Doc Holliday were put in after the street fight. They were held during the Spicer Hearing for 16 days. I think it's safe to say Holliday didn't enjoy it much.

With Doc and Wyatt in the flimsy contraption, Earp's friends and members of the Vigilance Committee guarded the makeshift jail day and night for the 16 days and nights, but it's instructive and sobering to note that a mere two years later, after the county built a two-story brick courthouse with a state-of-the-art jail that a Bisbee mob came and liberated one John Heath and hung him from a telegraph pole within spitting distance of the original makeshift jail.

John Heath was lynched for his part in the so-called Bisbee Massacre on February 22, 1884, from a telegraph pole on Toughnut Street in Tombstone. The Bisbee lynch mob threatened the jailers and they caved, giving up their prisoner.
True West Archives

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Murder charges were filed against the Earps and Holliday by Ike Clanton. A hearing convened on October 31 to determine if there was enough evidence to support a murder trial. The brother of the slain McLaury brothers, Will McLaury, arrived from Fort Worth, Texas, and took over the prosecution. After a parade of cowboy partisan witnesses, Wyatt and Doc were arrested by Harry Woods and placed in Tombstone's makeshift jail (a small 10' X 16' wooden structure of two-by-fours that resembled a chicken coup) and were held there for almost 16 days before being released.

The Earps and Holliday were exonerated by the Spicer Hearing, but three days after Christmas, cowboy assailants ambushed Virgil Earp as he walked across the intersection of Fifth and Allen. Although Virgil lived, he lost the use of his arm for the rest of his life. Morgan Earp was assassinated on March 18.

Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and eight other partisans went on the so-called Vendetta Ride, killing a handful of men, including, as Wyatt claimed, Curly Bill Brocius in the Whetstone Mountains.

Wyatt Earp gives both barrels of his shotgun to Frank Stilwell near the Tucson train station.

By mid-April of 1882, Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday left Arizona for New Mexico as wanted fugitives.

Recommended: *The Illustrated Life & Times of Doc Holliday* by Bob Boze Bell

BY PETER BRAND

Josephine "Sadie" Earp

Secrets & Lies Revealed

When Josephine "Sadie" Earp (nee Marcus) decided it was time to tell the story of her life in 1937, she had a big problem. Her early life and that of her family were far from ideal, and the way she dealt with such potential embarrassments was to simply wipe them from her story, or invent a more acceptable fictional story to compensate. She had already tried this method with some success, in helping with the biography of her common-law husband and lifelong partner, Wyatt Earp. The biography was written by Stuart Lake and was published in 1931.

Josephine was a strong-willed and determined woman who managed to have her own name and that of Wyatt's "wife," former prostitute Mattie Blaylock, kept out of Lake's book. This was no small feat, since both women were present in Tombstone at the same time, and they had much in common. The fact that Blaylock ended up committing suicide, accidentally or otherwise, in Arizona after Wyatt had deserted her in favor of the younger and more appealing Josephine, would not have reflected well. Having erased both herself and Blaylock from the pages of Earp's story, she then tried to use similar tactics in her own memoir.

Josephine, or "Josie," as she preferred to be known after Wyatt's death, was in her mid-70s in 1937 and not faring too well—financially or emotionally—after the death, in 1936, of her wealthy younger sister, Henrietta. Cut off by Henrietta's children, Josie then reached out to Wyatt's cousins Mabel Earp Cason and Vinnolia Earp Ackerman for help to write her memoir. Mabel and Vinnolia agreed and allowed Josie to live at their homes while they worked on the project. What followed was a torturous four-year effort to pry factual information from Josie about her early years, her time in Tombstone, and how and when she met and began her love affair with Wyatt Earp. It proved to be an impossible task, as Josie refused to provide accurate chronological details of all the information that would be required to form a publishable book, and the sisters eventually gave up on the project.

Josie was determined to paint herself as a nice, stage-struck, fun-loving girl, who came from a wealthy German family. In order to do so, she employed her previous tactic of leaving out crucial information if it was considered potentially embarrassing; completely ignoring certain people, places and events for similar reasons; inventing false characters and scenarios; and lying continually about her early years. The resulting manuscript remained a curious collection of disjointed memories, with large time-gaps and highly dubious, or untruthful, information about Josie's formative years from 1870 to 1883, and a veritable chasm of facts about Tombstone, and how and when she actually met Wyatt Earp and later became his partner.

When Vinnolia Earp Ackerman died in 1954, Mabel Earp Cason kept their many typed stories and the notes they had taken, and their attempted drafts. These became known as the Cason Manuscript. In 1976 a highly stylized, edited and ultimately flawed version was published by controversial researcher Glenn Boyer, complete with a salacious and unsubstantiated cover photo with the title, "I Married Wyatt Earp." The unedited version of the Cason Manuscript remained unpublished, but the original was made available for public perusal by researcher Earl Chafin in the mid-1990s.

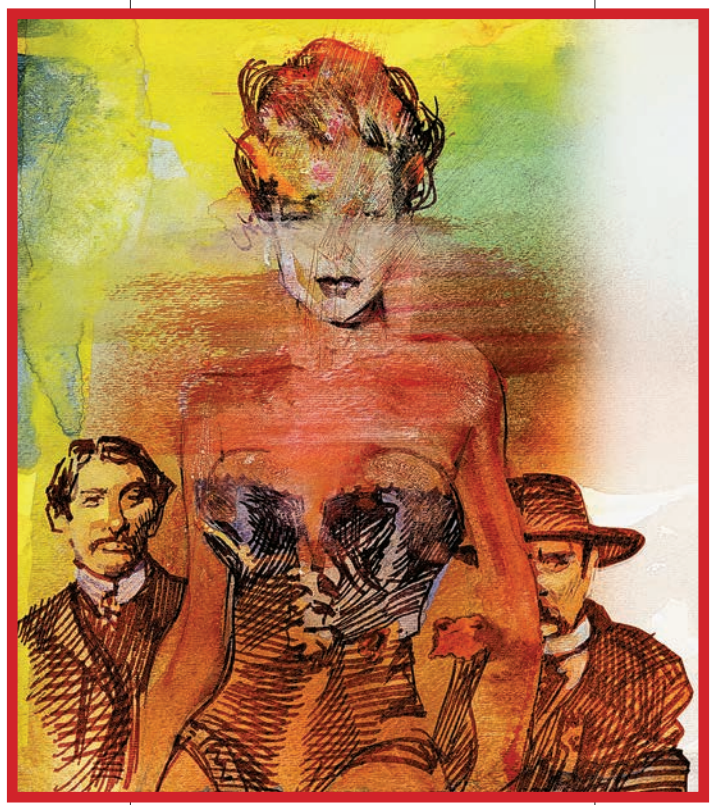
In creating her "story," Josie avoided some very unpleasant truths, but the information that was included guided diligent researchers, if they were willing to dig hard enough. The late Carol Mitchell was the first of these writer/researchers to "join the dots," when she published her theory that Josie was actually a prostitute, using the alias "Sadie Mansfield," in her article "Lady Sadie" for *True West* magazine in 2001. The article raised eyebrows, but did not seal the deal.

In 2013, the now late Roger Jay, a diligent and extremely articulate writer/researcher, went even further in his ground-breaking article "Face to Face: Sadie Mansfield/Josephine Sarah Marcus" for the Wild West History Association. Jay's in-depth research presented Carol Mitchell's theory, but with an incredibly accurate critical analysis of the Cason Manuscript. Jay held Josie to account in terms of the dates, places, events and the people included in her memoir. He completely demolished any possibility that Josie had been truthful about why, when and with whom she had originally traveled to Tombstone. In doing so, he added considerable weight to Carol Mitchell's original theory. Once again, his article created interest in Josie's early life, as it was fast becoming obvious, even to the uninitiated, that something was radically wrong with Josie's version of events about her arrival in Arizona, not once, but twice.

Much to her credit, author Sherry Monahan clearly summarised Jay's

Sexy Sadie and her shady past have haunted historians for the better part of the last century. Her love triangle between two of Western history's biggest rivals, John Behan and Wyatt Earp, might be the secret Sadie was trying to blot out. Or was she hiding her past as a soiled dove? Compelling new evidence points the way.

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



findings, and then produced even more of her own in her excellent 2013 book titled *Mrs. Earp: The Wives and Lovers of the Earp Brothers*. Monahan was of the same opinion about Josie's suspect storytelling. She wrote, "[Josie] always made sure no one knew the true story of what happened while she was in Arizona…forever taking her secrets to the grave, just as she wanted."

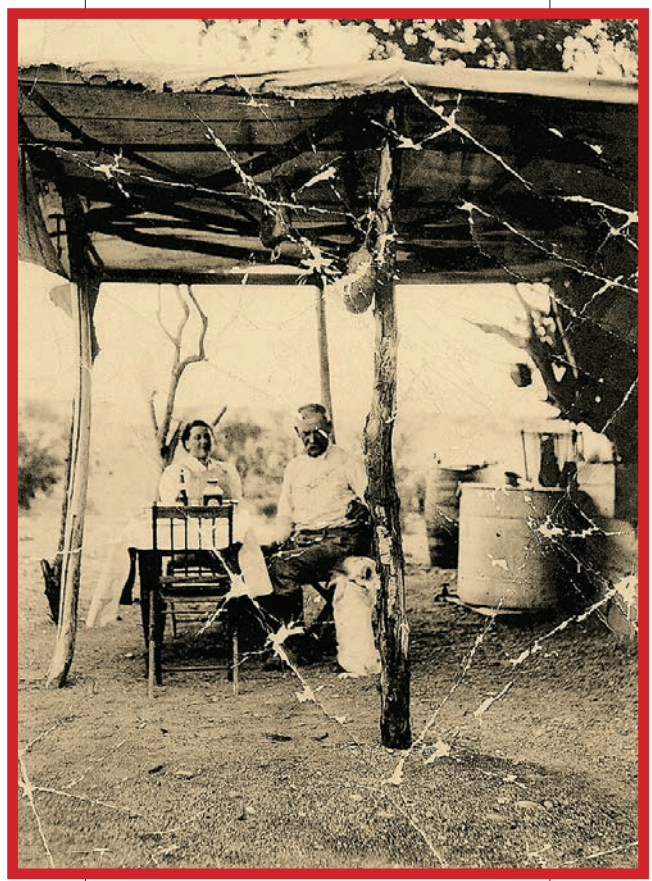
Sometimes, as Roger Jay pointed out, it was not only what was said in the Cason Manuscript that caused considerable doubt about Josie's tall tales, but the pertinent information and important names that Josie refused to mention also prompted further speculation about her story. Josie had good reasons to avoid the truth, because the truth, in her case, was often sordid, sometimes confronting, and certainly not the way an elderly woman, or some of her family members, would want to be remembered.

Her father, Hyman (Henry) Marcus, was a poor Prussian Jewish baker who, according to census records, was born in 1836 and had immigrated to New York, where he met and married Sophia Lewis, who was six years his senior. Although she was probably also a Prussian Jew, her background is far from clear. She had a daughter, presumably from a previous marriage, named Rebecca, who was born in 1851 or 1852. Sophia then produced three children with Hyman Marcus, all born in New York—Nathan in 1857, Josephine "Sadie" in late 1860 or early 1861, and Henrietta "Hattie" in 1863. The family moved from New York to San Francisco by 1870, but the move did not improve their social standing. They remained anchored in poverty and as a result, resided in the lower-class regions of the industrial area of San Francisco.

Josie, however, lied and stated she was actually from a well-off middle-class family, claiming that her father was a successful merchant. This misinformation was just the start of what would become a litany of lies. The most outrageous tale told by Josie to her would-be biographers was that she ran away from home to join a professional performance troupe headed to Arizona. This fantasy story eventually became embedded in the Earp legend and formed the basis for her character's representation in two major 1990s motion pictures, *Tombstone* and *Wyatt Earp*. Josie would have the last laugh, however, as her previous modern-day biographers and these movie producers were completely deceived by her tall tales and, even today, tourists are presented with this inaccurate depiction of her, when they wander the streets of Tombstone, Arizona.

The truth of her youthful years in San Francsico was far less palatable. She was a reluctant pupil who, from an early age, possessed a rebellious streak and a desire to free herself from the poverty that surrounded her working-class neighborhood. In September 1873 she was one of four schoolgirls who ran away from home in the company of a prostitute working on behalf of a notorious San Francisco procurer. At the tender age of 12, Josie slept in her first seedy brothel, but she was arrested shortly thereafter and spent a night in the San Francisco County jail, before facing a police court. She risked confinement in an asylum for wayward girls, but was ordered to return, reluctantly, to her parents. Far from being scarred by the whole experience, her taste of the "dark side" merely seemed to galvanize her defiant attitude. This was only one of a series of running away escapes that defined her impulsive high-risk attitude toward life.

When later dictating her memoir, she obviously felt compelled to cover up her scandalous past, and invented the story in which she was an innocent schoolgirl who left home carrying her school books on a stormy day, but then ran away with a fictional schoolfriend, whom she christened "Dora Hirsch," in order to join the Pauline Markham professional theatrical troupe on its way to Arizona. Her incredulous story had lurched into an obvious lie because no such person named "Dora Hirsch"



In a rare photo of the couple together, Josie Marcus sits with Wyatt Earp at their desert camp at their Happy Days gold mine, across the river from Parker, Arizona, in the 1920s.

Courtesy Jeff Morey

existed, and the Pauline Markham theatrical tour of Arizona actually commenced in October 1879. At that time, Josie would have been 18 years old and, as an adult, would have been free to come and go as she pleased and would not have been carrying books on her way to school, as she claimed.

The Pauline Markham tour was reported in the California and Arizona press at the time, yet Josie and her fictional friend, naturally, did not appear in the list of performers. Some authors, in an unconvincing attempt to make her story fit the lie, made the false claim that the two girls used the stage names of May Bell and Belle Howitt (aka Hewitt) when they supposedly ran away with the Markham troupe. This claim is easily exposed as false, because the Markham troupe were all professional entertainers and Mary "May" Bell and Belle Howitt were both well-known actors, singers and performers who gave individual performances in Tucson in late 1879, with and without Pauline Markham. These performances were described and critiqued in the Tucson newspapers and lauded for their quality. In addition, Mary "May" Bell was actually listed in the San Francisco City Directory in 1879 as a professional actress, while the blond-bombshell, Belle Howitt, was recognized nationally as a talented performer, who had shared the stage previously with Pauline Markham.

In fact, Josie's fictional story completely falls apart when a diligent study is made of Markham's entourage, and the actual route and mode of transport taken by that group to reach Arizona in 1879. Along with the star, Pauline Markham, was her husband, Randolph McMahon, and additional male performers named Joe Dauphin, Tom Casselli, Frank Roraback and Harry Carpenter; female performers were Mary "May" Bell, Belle Howitt, sometimes spelled "Hewitt," and Gertrude Pring, aka "Gertrude Hayne." All members were Caucasian; males outnumbered females and, importantly, the Markham group traveled by train, a fact which Josie, obviously, did not seem to know.

The Markham troupe operated on a tight budget, as the frontier venues were small in comparison to the large city theaters. The performers were multi-talented and would sometimes be required to portray different characters on any particular night. There were no inexperienced extras or dancers recruited for the tour. The troupe could not afford such luxuries on the frontier. If any additional crew or stage attendant, were required, they were sourced from the local workforce in the frontier towns. The thought that professionals like Markham, Howitt and Bell would tour with unknown and unskilled debutantes was naïve in the extreme.

In addition, the Markham group traveled by train from Los Angeles to Yuma and then east to Casa Grande, near Tucson, Arizona. This information becomes very important when compared to the journey and route described by Josie in her memoir. The fact was that she actually described the exact route and mode of transport taken, not by the Pauline Markham troupe in 1879, but by a group of prostitutes headed to Prescott, Arizona, in 1874, just over a year after Josie's previously mentioned runaway. These prostitutes included 13-year-old Josephine "Sadie" Marcus using the alias "Sadie Mansfield," and they traveled by stagecoach from Los Angeles direct to Prescott. She even dropped her guard in her memoir and carelessly mentioned the name of one of her fellow stagecoach passengers, "negress, Aunt Julia," who turned out to be an African American named Julia Burton, who was to be employed as a housekeeper in the Prescott brothel where Josie, now known as Sadie, worked upon her arrival. It was in that Prescott brothel where she first met Johnny Behan, who immediately became one of her most enthusiastic customers. She eventually embarked on a failed on-again, off-again, relationship with Behan, which included lengthy stints as a prostitute, during which time she later met Wyatt Earp in Tombstone.

Josie managed to keep her past, as prostitute Sadie Mansfield, hidden from view during her lifetime, and refused to

Josie Sadie Marcus Earp, as she appeared in her later years. Recalling a visit she took to Tombstone, Arizona, in 1937, she told Wyatt Earp's cousins, Mabel Cason and Vinnolia Ackerman: "I don't know how long I stood there, dreaming. The old scene had faded—all had gone except one—the figure of a quiet, dignified man standing there so quiet and lonely."

Courtesy True West Archives

reveal the facts about how, when and under what circumstances she actually met Wyatt Earp. My conclusion from the available evidence suggests they bonded in Tombstone via a typical gambler-prostitute client transaction. All the Earp brothers were associated with prostitutes and brothels throughout their early lives, and this fact should not come as a surprise to most readers.

In light of this new research, Sadie's reasons for concealing her sordid past are now very obvious, and to find out even more about her wayward teenage years and more details about what actually transpired, readers are encouraged to reference the new book, *Josephine "Sadie" Earp: The Sordid Truth, 1870–1883* by Peter Brand. (Available at Amazon.com.)

Peter Brand is an author and researcher who focuses on Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday and their friends and enemies. He has written biographies on Wyatt's friend Texas Jack Vermillion, and Doc's enemies, Johnny Tyler and Perry Mallon. His latest book deals with the truth about Josephine "Sadie" Earp's formative years from 1870 to 1883. His books are available worldwide at *Amazon.com*

BY PETER BRAND

Kaloma & Glenn Boyer

Courtesy Craig Fouts

The raunchy image now commonly known as "Kaloma" was used, without sourcing information, by controversial researcher Glenn Boyer, on the cover of his 1976 edited version of Josephine "Sadie" Earp's memoir titled *I Married Wyatt Earp*. Although accepted at face value at the time, upon closer scrutiny in the 1990s, it was determined that large chunks of the early chapters were the work of Boyer, not Sadie, and the dubious cover photo was found to be copyright 1914, by the Pastime Novelty Company of New York. Once a bright spotlight was focused on the sources for the book and the photo, Boyer was forced to address both issues.

In 1996 he blamed the publisher, University of Arizona Press, for removing a large section of the original early material and truncating other sections, forcing him to fill in the gaps.His explanation of the source of the Kaloma photo was questionable at best. He claimed that while living in Yuma, Arizona, in 1956, the owner of a cantina, Mrs Carmelita Mayhew (nee Alvarado), gave him a copy of the image and claimed it was Sadie as a young woman. Boyer estimated Carmelita was close to 90 years of age, however, research in the available records shows she was 75 at the time of their meeting but was, indeed, the owner of a Yuma bar known as Carmelita's Place. According to Boyer, she claimed to have known Wyatt and Sadie and even traveled with them to the Harquahala mining district. Unfortunately, this attempt to strengthen the veracity of her claim quickly unravels, as Carmelita was only eight years old when Wyatt prospected the Harquahala mining district in 1889.

In a failed attempt to strengthen a weak case, Boyer went on to say he had been sent a face-only image in a locket owned by Mabel Earp Cason's husband, that he [Boyer] claimed appeared to resemble Kaloma's facial features. Conveniently, however, this alleged locket image was never published by Boyer.

Upon the discovery of the Kaloma image with a copyright date of 1914 by the Pastime Novelty Company, Boyer scrambled to come up with a scenario that would somehow have allowed the image to still be that of salacious Sadie. He offered the highly improbable theory that perhaps the image was found in Johnny Behan's effects at the time of his death in 1912 and then distributed for commercial gain.

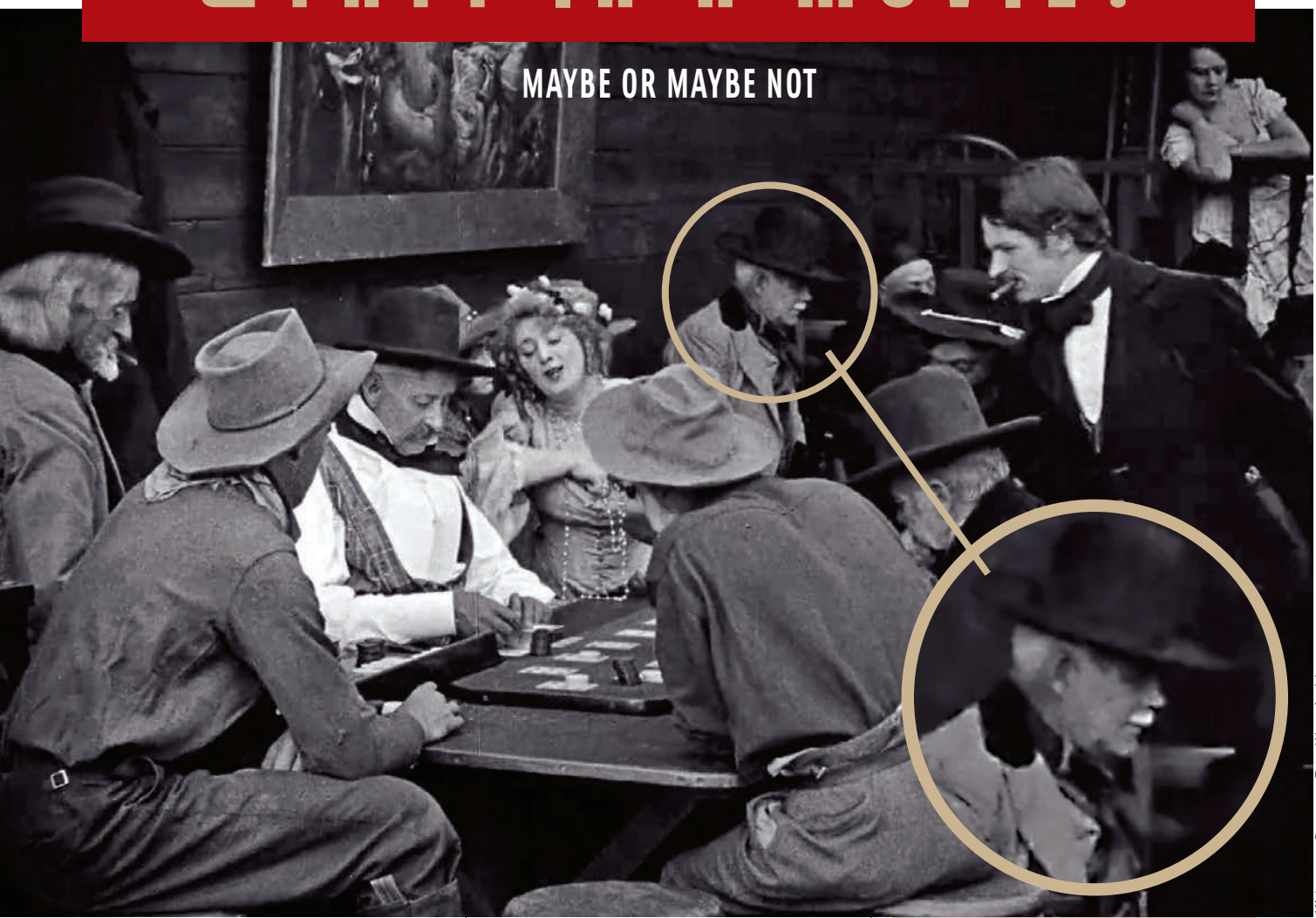
In the end, Boyer was forced to concede that there was actually no proof that the image was Sadie, and concluded, among other options, that it may well have even been a photo of Carmelita Mayhew, his own alleged source, in her adventurous youth. For further details of these claims see, *"Wyatt Earp Facts, Volume Two: Childhood and Youth of Wyatt's Wife, Josephine Sarah Marcus"* by Glenn G. Boyer, 1996 (self-published).

In truth, the style of the model, and the photo itself, indicated it was produced and wisely distributed at a much later time period, and had nothing to do with Sadie Marcus-Earp.

BY BOB BOZE BELL

WYATT IN A MOVIE?

MAYBE OR MAYBE NOT



All images Courtesy True West Archives

Earlier this summer I was contacted by a *True West* reader named Dean Shier who told me he just may have found an image of Wyatt Earp on film.

In my 1993 book, *The Illustrated Life & Times of Wyatt Earp,* I covered the tidbit that came from the Hollywood director Allan Dwan about his memory that the real Wyatt Earp was an extra on his 1916 silent film *The Half-Breed* starring Douglas Fairbanks. I covered all this in my book, but at the time I had not seen the film and relied on a friend, Jeff Morey, who had seen it. It was Jeff's astute opinion that the only person in the film that Dwan may have been referring to was a guy who more resembles Texas John Slaughter who was, like Earp, also a lawman in Cochise County. Perhaps Dwan confused the two men?

Dean told me he easily found the film on YouTube. It has been restored with lost footage and everything. So, with much enthusiasm, I did the same thing—and so can you!

As intriguing as this find is, there are problems with the image. For one, Dwan claimed (see opposite page) that Wyatt Earp appeared in a trial scene and this is clearly a saloon scene. The other problem is that most Earp experts complain that this gent's jaw is not right. Still it is causing quite the stir among history buffs everywhere.

Wyatt Earp author Casey Tefertiller is quite skeptical and says the jaw is not right, but I have to say, there are other confirmed photos of Earp that are similar, if not a little jaw-dropping. . .

Dwan Recalls

"He was a visitor to the set when I was directing Douglas Fairbanks in *The Half-Breed*. As was the custom in those days, he was invited to join the party and mingle with our background action. I think there was a trial of some kind. A group of people demanded that the half-breed be sent out of town. In that group was Earp. He only stood there and nodded his head.

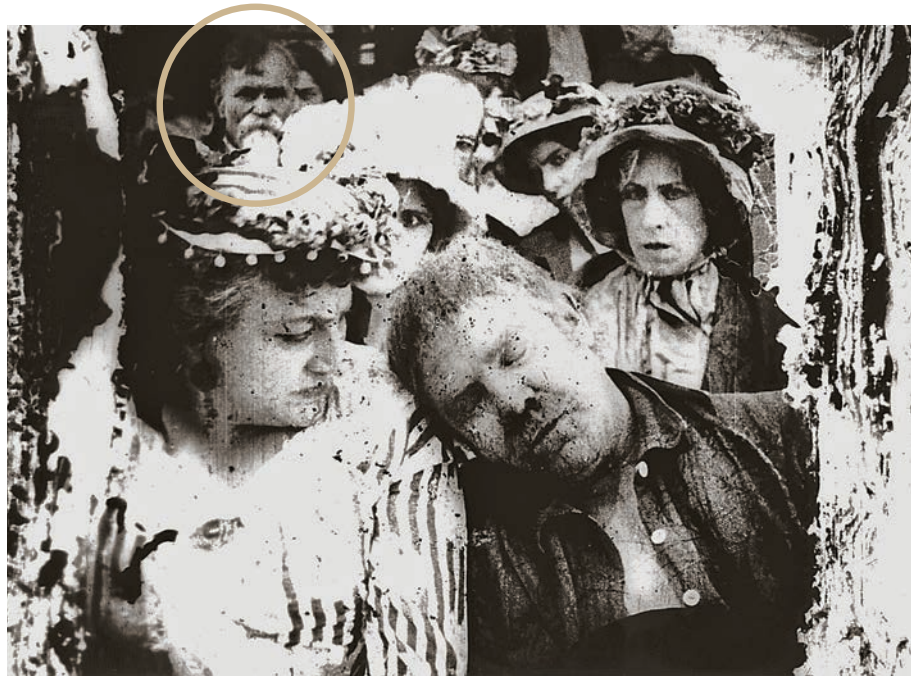
Earp was a one-eyed old man in 1915, but he had been a real marshal in Tombstone, Arizona, and he was as crooked as a three-dollar bill. He and his brothers were racketeers. All of them. They shook people down. They did everything they could to get dough. But they had the badge and they had the gun and they won all the gunfights simply by shooting the man before he was told he was arrested. And so they were terrific heroes in the eyes of certain people.

When I knew him, he was no longer a marshal and there was no longer a West, and he couldn't be the symbol that he had been. He looked for what anybody would look for, and the first person who got ahold of him said he was a natural for show business. Well he was, and he wasn't.

Our suspicion, because of the people who came around the set with him, was that he was looking for a place in law and order. He would have loved to have been chief of police of Los Angeles, or the marshal of the county. I think he was timid about being photographed, about acting and pretending. He knew inside himself that he wasn't an actor and had nothing to offer. I remember he saw Fairbanks bouncing around in the trees and said, 'Oh no, I'd not like to do that.' And I think, for that reason, he took one last look and left."

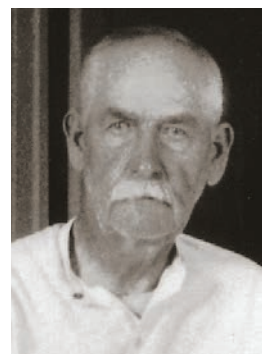
—Allan Dwan

A still from the movie *The Half-Breed*, 1916



Frame Blowup

Texas John Slaughter



Wyatt Earp

Is Wyatt Earp hamming it up? If it's actually him it is quite telling because Dwan claimed the former lawman wanted to try his hand in movies.

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS INTERVIEW RAN IN *TRUE WEST*'S "OLD WEST JOURNAL" IN 2001 AND HAS BEEN EDITED FOR CLARITY.

BY ALLEN BARRA

BEST DOC EVER

A FITTING TRIBUTE TO VAL KILMER

Old West Journal: You've been making movies since 1983, but I'll bet most people, particularly in the Southwest, where you live, remember you for the two Westerns.

Kilmer: I'm surprised that people don't remember that I've done three Westerns.

Old West: The third?

Kilmer: *Thunderheart.*

Old West: Oh, of course. And your character had Indian blood. You do, too, don't you?

Kilmer: Cherokee, on dad's side. I've always thought that people who want to make movies about the West limit themselves too much. There are so many good contemporary themes or at least stories that you could set at different times in the 20th century, after the…

Old West: After the legendary period?

Kilmer: Right. The West didn't end at 12:01 on January 1, 1901. Some of the best Westerns of the last few decades have been contemporary stories.

Old West: Some people think Larry McMurtry's best books are the ones set in modern times…

Kilmer: I think *Hud* [originally titled *Horseman, Pass By*] is as good as *Lonesome Dove.*

Old West: I've heard that Billy Bob Thornton has a lot of good ideas for contemporary Western stories…

Kilmer: Oh, God. Billy Bob. What a hoot. On the *Tombstone* set he kept coming around and saying, like, "I've got these really great scripts and could you read them?" And I was, like, "Billy Bob, this whole picture is falling down around us, let's do this first." I mean, I wasn't annoyed, I don't mean it that way. He's a wonderful actor and great fun to be around.

Old West: And, as it turns out, a pretty good writer.

Kilmer: Oh, hell yes. Bill Paxton kept telling me, "Hey, man, you oughta read some of these scripts of his, they're terrific." I guess Billy Bob and Bill have known each other for years. I never doubted they were great, 'cause Thornton is so great at telling great stories. My trouble, though, is that I can't be involved in something so deeply as the *Tombstone* script and still be reading another script. You know? If I was doing a small part in a movie I would do that, but not while playing something as involving as Doc Holliday.

Old West: You said, "The picture is falling down around us." Could you talk about what happened with Tom*bstone*?

Kilmer: Well, I guess more of the story is known by now, but when Kevin [Jarre] was fired as director, it seemed like the end of the world to those of us who believed in his vision of the film. He had written such a wonderful script, it's the reason so many of the actors in the film wanted to be associated with the project in the first place.

Old West: Was the problem Jarre's inexperience as a director? All the reports said he was moving too slowly and that the budget was spiraling…

Kilmer: That's not for me to say. All I can say is that he wrote a great script and that it had a wonderful part for me.

Old West: Do you know how the project came about?

Kilmer: Well, I got a lot of this second hand, but if I understand it right, it began to germinate in the minds of Kurt Russell and Mel Gibson after they made *Tequila Sunrise.* I think Mel wanted to be Wyatt Earp, and Kurt said he thought he could starve himself into playing Doc.

Old West: Mel Gibson as Wyatt?

Courtesy Walt Disney Studios

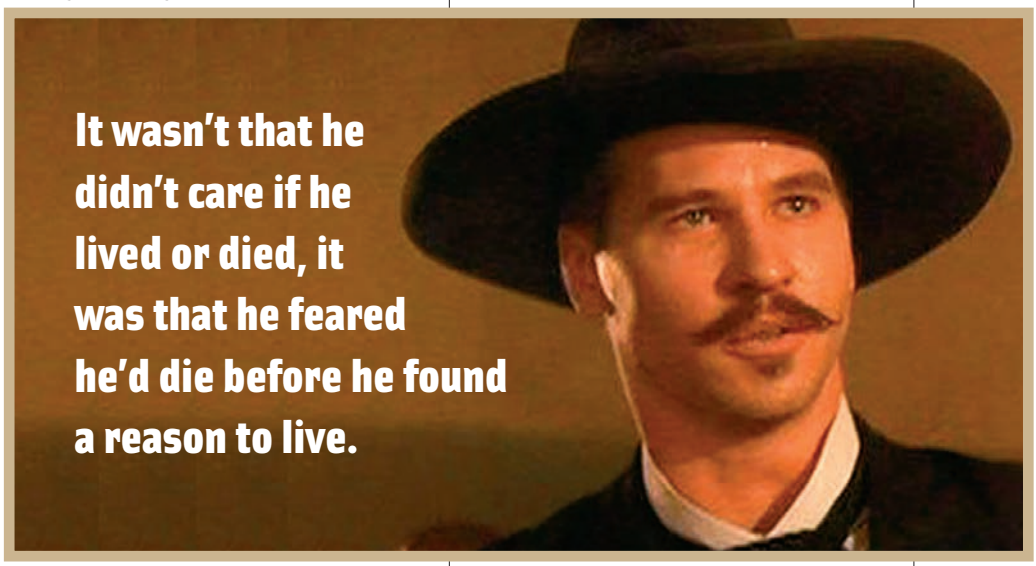
The famous scene of Doc Spinning A Cup was a difficult stunt to capture on screen, until someone suggested putting a weight inside the cup which worked like a charm.

Kilmer: That's right. And I think after a while he simply decided he wasn't tall enough. I think he wanted to do a Western and that was the genesis of how he came to do *Maverick*. But anyway, Kurt never let go of the idea. He's the one who eventually willed it into reality. He really, really wanted to play Wyatt Earp. He wasn't listed as one of the producers, but in a real sense he had as much to do with producing it as anyone else.

Old West: You walked off with most of the reviews…

Kilmer: But it was Kurt, you know, who was the real glue. Not only behind the scenes but on camera. I went back and watched a lot of the old Wyatt Earp films, and his Earp is really the most interesting, the most complete. Randolph Scott [*Frontier Marshal*] and Henry Fonda [*My Darling Clementine*] and Burt Lancaster [*Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*] were all playing a character that was a heroic plastersaint…Kurt's was the first multi-faceted Earp. He got at so much in the character. I love the way he shows iron-will kind of courage, when he holds the gun to Stephen Lang's [Ike Clanton] head, then a few scenes later, is weak and indecisive when dealing with Dana [Wheeler-Nicholson, who plays Mattie]. That's something that other actors who have played Earp were afraid to

Courtesy Walt Disney Studios



show: weakness. I think Kurt is a great actor, one of the most underrated in films.

Old West: I see you watched a few of the earlier Earp films. What did you think of other Doc Hollidays?

Kilmer: Victor Mature, of course, was miscast. He wasn't bad in the part, he simply wasn't Doc Holliday. Too big, too physically imposing. Caesar Romero [*Frontier Marshal*] was probably miscast too, but he was fun to watch, very sly and surprising. I think Doc Holliday [*Gunfight at the O.K. Corral*] might have been Kirk Douglas's best performance.

Old West: Now, the obvious question is: What did you think of Dennis Quaid in *Wyatt Earp*? You must be aware that miles of space have been taken up debating your two interpretations…

Kilmer: And that means we both must have done something right. The funny thing is that both of our Doc Hollidays are more alike than either is like anyone else's Docs. For one thing—correct me if I'm wrong—we were the first movie Doc Holliday to use Southern accents. Am I right?

Old West: Let's see, Harry Carey, Jason Robards, Jr., Arthur Kennedy… Yeah, I think that's right.

Kilmer: I talked to Dennis about this. We both made decisions to try and use an almost archaic accent, the kind that has almost vanished from the deep South. We both wanted a deeper tone, and if you listen to us in other films, you'll see that we both had to alter our voices to get it.

Old West: You both dragged out the pronunciations…

Kilmer: Yes, and spoke slower.

Old West: Quaid's Doc looked more to me like the post-Tombstone Doc.

Kilmer: You mean after Doc left Tombstone?

Old West: Yes, after the vendetta ride. He looked more ravaged than your Doc.

Kilmer: Hmm, well, the books say he aged quickly before he died.

Old West: What book helped you the most?

Kilmer: There wasn't much to go on in 1993. There are more books to consult now. But John Meyers' book I think did a good job at getting the issue of Holliday. Meyers stressed the aristocratic aspect of Doc's background and how that shaped his outlook, his sense of loyalty and how that affected his behavior.

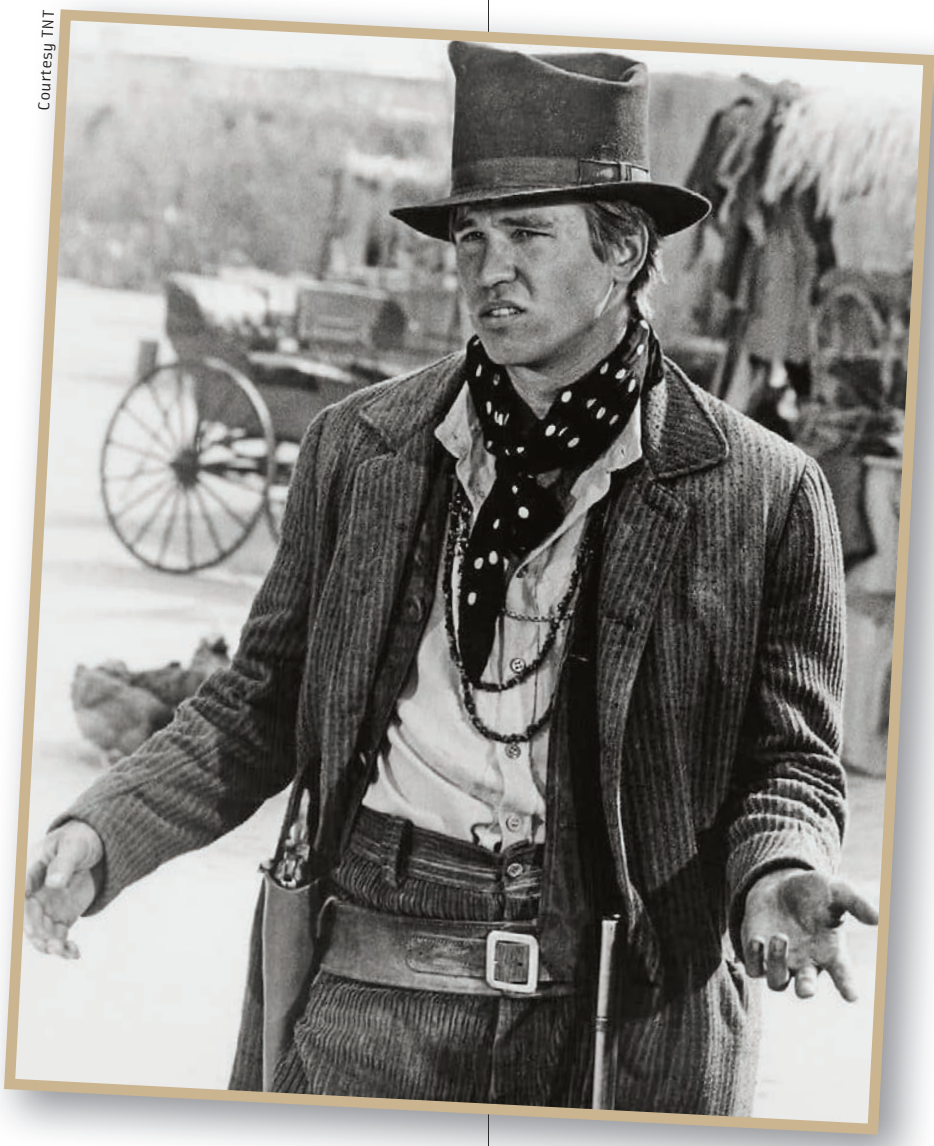
Old West: You keep reading in the old-times about how Doc didn't care if he lived or died, that he went out West to die in a gunfight.

Kilmer: Now, I would disagree with that. It wasn't that he didn't care if he lived or died, it was that he feared he'd die before he found a reason to live. Maybe I'm making that sound too simple, but I really feel that since he was faced with the fact of his death nearly every waking hour of the day, he was looking desperately for a way to die that would give his life some meaning. To me, he really is one of the most enigmatic figures of the Old West, and Kevin Jarre was the first writer to do justice to him.

Old West: Jarre was the first writer to play off of the antagonism between Doc and Johnny Ringo.

Kilmer: Yeah, I love the way he created those three great face-offs between Doc and Ringo. You get the feeling that they are the only two characters that are capable of really understanding each other, of looking into each other's souls.

Old West: That's right. Doc gets three face-offs with Ringo. In the first one you guys get that wonderful duel in Latin…



Courtesy TNT

Val is one of the few actors to play both Doc Holliday and Billy the Kid. Several critics have praised his ability to capture the youthfulness and almost goofy nature of the young outlaw.

Kilmer: And I have to twirl that damn cup. That wasn't easy, you know. I mean, Michael [Biehn] did a great job with that gun, but a Colt is a properly balanced mechanism. You can control it. That stupid cup was all over the film.

Old West: I never thought of that. Did someone give you cup-twirling lessons?

Kilmer: Hey, how can you teach someone how to twirl a cup? It kept flying off my finger. We were afraid we were going to have to cut the scenes. Finally, someone came up with the idea of putting some putty in the cup. That gave it some balance.

Old West: You called Doc one of the West's most enigmatic figures. How about the other enigmatic figures you played? Billy the Kid.

Kilmer: You know, a lot of people who have seen the movie don't recognize me.

Old West: Maybe it was the buck teeth.

Kilmer: And the goofy voice. A friend of my mom's in Arizona saw the movie and said to her, "You know, Val could've played that, only I think he'd have been better."

Old West: Why did you think Billy continues to fascinate us? Within the space of, what two decades between the early '70s and early '90s, we had five or six new Billy the Kid movies? Why?

Kilmer: I think Billy is kind of a gauge of our national attitude about our own innocence. Or rather our loss of it. New Mexico is such a perfect setting for that story because it can seem like paradise one moment and hell the next. You have this boy, Billy, who seems to have a kind of Huckleberry Finn innocence, not the kind of person you think would go down in history as the prototype of a natural born killer. Depending on our attitudes about law and order, you can keep reviving him at any time as either symbol of lawlessness, or...how should I say it?

Old West: A victim?

Kilmer: A victim of corruption, you know, the corruption of civilization. Either point of view makes for a good movie.

Old West: It sounds like you've thought a lot about this subject.

Kilmer: You can't live in the Southwest and not think a lot about it. It's part of your legacy if you grow up here, which is why I want to spend as much time as I can here with my kids. I want them to experience a part of the country where Hispanic, Native American and White people get inspiration from each other and draw from a common heritage. It makes me proud to think that I might have played a part in making the Southwest come alive for them.

Allen Barra is the author of *Inventing Wyatt Earp*, and a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, and the *Village Voice*.

THE RESURRECTION

PART ART SHOW, PART WAKE,

By *True West* Staff

Billy the Kid just won't stay dead. Starting October 4, 2025, Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West teams up with *True West* to raise the Kid one more time in a sprawling exhibition that runs through the end of the year.

Titled *The Resurrection of Billy the Kid*, the show promises to be equal parts art exhibition, séance, and showdown. Three heavy hitters—Bob Boze Bell, Thom Ross, and Buckeye Blake—take aim at the West's most notorious outlaw with paint, canvas, and sculpture.

Bell's trademark historical paintings strip away the myths to show what really happened in Billy's short, turbulent life. Ross brings his surreal touch, spinning the Kid's legend into a fever-dream frontier ballet. And Blake? He delivers the knockout: a life-size sculpture of Billy on his deathbed, staged like a wake, complete with candles, curtains, and even a guest book for mourners.

The spectacle doesn't stop there. The museum's newly renovated Piper Theater will screen 10 classic Billy flicks—including *Young Guns*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, and *Old Henry*. To top it off, John Fusco, the man who created the *Young Guns* saga, will appear November 1 to talk about his latest chapter, *Young Guns III*.

This is Billy the Kid as you've never seen him—resurrected, reimagined, and impossible to ignore.

For details, visit westernspirit.org/project/billy-the-kid.

OF BILLY THE KID

PART WILD WEST SHOWDOWN

La Punta de la Glorietta
by Thom Ross

THE RESURRECTION

Billy & Paulita by Tom Ross

The Wake of Billy the Kid

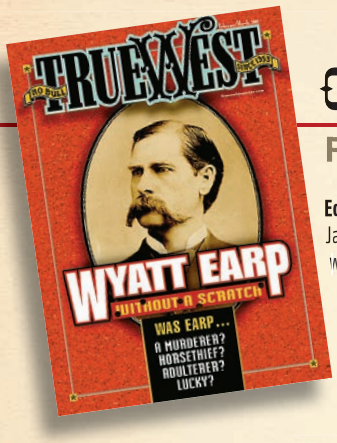
A lifesize sculpture by Buckeye Blake

Rider on the Storm by Buckeye Blake

OF BILLY THE KID

Billy the Kid Returns from the Dead by Bob Boze Bell

Billy the Kid at Midnight on the Most Dangerous Street In America by Bob Boze Bell



Editor's Note: If you'd like to read more past articles in *True West*, including this one from the January/February 2001 issue, go to TrueWestMagazine.com for full access to over 70 years' worth of exciting issues.

BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Mattie Earp's Grave

Celia Ann "Mattie" Blaylock came to Tombstone as Wyatt's wife. Wyatt and Mattie, by all accounts, had a stormy relationship, to say the least. When Sadie, the future Mrs. Earp, entered the picture, Wyatt left Mattie for good.

After moving first to Globe Arizona, and then to Pinal (also Arizona), Mattie worked "on the line" until her untimely death July 4, 1888. According to court transcripts, Mattie committed suicide while still deeply depressed over the loss of her relationship with Wyatt:

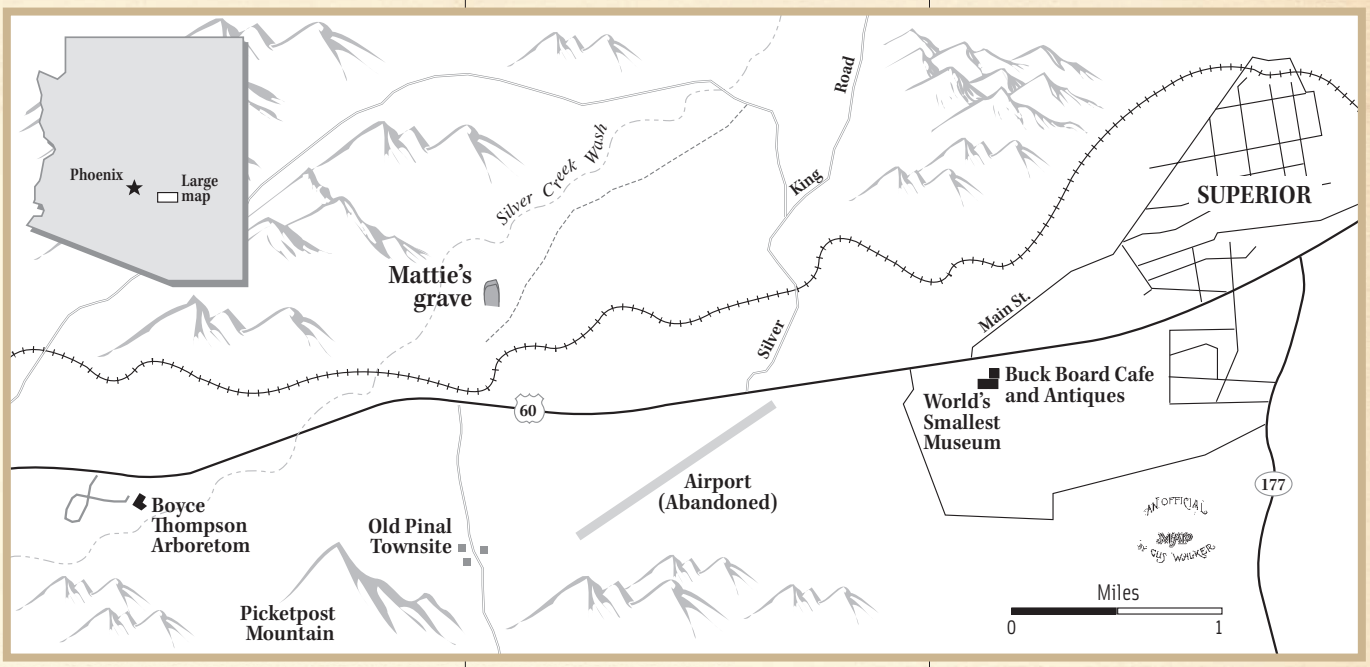
Coroner: "Did you hear the deceased threaten her own life?"

Flannery (the 30-year-old laborer who found her dead): "I have. Earp, she said, had wrecked her life by deserting her and she didn't want to live."

Mattie's grave, as reported by *True West* staffers Gus Walker and Robert Ray, is situated on a hill just outside of Superior, across Route 60 from the old Pinal townsite, marked by a stone. A shrine of sorts stands a few feet away adorned with flowers and an epitaph (we can only assume), the shreds of which still remain.

There is little provenance on this alleged photo of Celia Ann "Mattie" Blaylock Earp, but it has the Fly stamp and is often used to illustrate Wyatt's second wife.

True West Archives



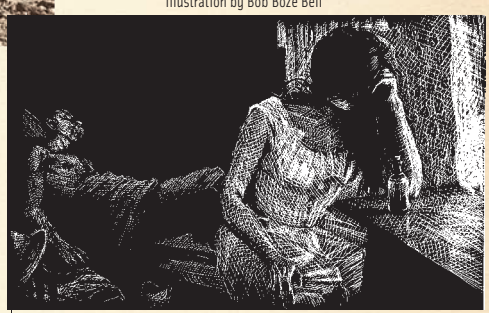
Above: Marked by a piece of sandstone (the headstone was stolen years ago), Mattie's grave lies atop a hill within view of Apache Leap.

At right: Notice the vandalized "shrine" a few feet from the grave marker.

All photos by Bea Ray unless otherwise noted

Mattie Earp:
"Wyatt Earp ruined my life."

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell



UPDATE

The Pinal City cemetery is now properly protected with a handsome fence and Mrs. Earp also got a suitable memorial.

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Undiscovered Texas

See lesser-known, less crowded spots worth a visit.

Most tourists and history buffs come to Texas to see those bucket-list sites: the Alamo in San Antonio… Fort Worth's Stockyards… the remote but mesmerizing Big Bend… Austin's music scene… the Hill Country's charm… the Panhandle's Palo Duro Canyon.

But I'm hitting lesser-known but oughta-see spots, most of them found in or near major metropolitan cities but don't get enough recognition.

Take San Antonio's Witte Museum, which certainly made an impression with *Black Cowboys: An American Story*. The exhibit closed in April and has moved to the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles through January 4.

There's still a lot of great things to catch here, at the permanent Naylor Family Dinosaur Gallery, Kittie West Nelson Ferguson People of the Pecos Gallery and—especially for Texas and history buffs—the Robert J. & Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center.

While Waco draws most Texas Ranger aficionados to its Texas Ranger Hall of Fame & Museum, San Antonio has a pretty good museum, too. The Texas Ranger Museum, which opened in 2006 in partnership with the funky Buckhorn Saloon and Museum, remembers Rangers legends from John B. Armstrong to Frank Hamer to Joaquin Jackson.

Another great art museum can be found about an hour northwest of San Antonio in Texas's fabled Hill Country.

Kerrville's Museum of Western Art started more than 40 years ago as the Cowboy Artists of America Museum, which was formed to house artwork from the members-only Cowboy Artists of America. CAA had been founded in 1965 by cowboy artists who were "committed

On the main drag of Warrenton, an unincorporated community in Fayette County

All images courtesy Johnny D. Boggs

Unlike most of what you'll find in Round Top, the circa 1880 Precinct Courthouse is not for sale.

Gasoline Hill & Antiques, located near Round Top, advertises "items with history."

In addition to antique shops, Warrenton, Texas, is also home to St. Martin's Catholic Church, founded in 1888. The "world's smallest Catholic church" can seat up to 20 people.

to making quality and authentic art portraying the cowboy West."

The CAA did branch out to bring in other viewpoints; in 1993, the great Oreland Joe, of Diné and Ute descent, became the first Native American artist to join CAA.

The Black Cowboy Hall of Fame Museum and Black Cowboy Museum in Rosenberg, Texas

Although the CAA and the museum parted ways, cowboy paintings and sculptures are still housed at this wonderful facility. So is art from masters who don't just paint cowboys.

The museum also houses one of Comanche leader Quanah Parker's headdresses, plenty of saddles and branding irons and a large display of "patented" barbed wire.

Now it's time to head east. First stop: Austin.

There's absolutely nothing wrong with the Bullock Texas State History Museum or barhopping on Sixth Street, but when you're in the state capital, don't miss the Texas State Cemetery. It's the final resting place of many key Texas figures, including Stephen F. Austin, the father of Texas; Albert Sidney Johnston, killed while leading the Confederates at Shiloh in 1862; Alamo survivor Susanna Dickinson; famed Texas writers J. Frank Dobie (*The Longhorns* needs to be on your bookcase) and Walter Prescott Webb (so does The Great Plains); and even "Mr. Superharp," American blues legend James Henry Cotton.

Just outside of Austin is Round Rock, where outlaw Sam Bass made a bad career move and was mortally wounded while in town to rob a bank. He's buried in the Round Rock Cemetery.

Now it's on to Houston, but before getting there, for a respite after all that traffic and city noise, check out the auction and antique capital of rural Texas: Warrenton and Round Top.

"Twice a year, antiquers from across the South converge for an almost cultish expedition to find the most outrageous of collectibles and antiques," Ken Amorosano, the editorial director of this magazine, told me.

It took me half an hour to find Warrenton and Round Top on a map.

"I love to watch the Houston housewives in their trailer-laden SUVs coming to the area to not only shop," Amorosano went on, "but to enjoy music and the variety of pop-up food vendors and the restaurants."

Lawman Bass Reeves and other historic Black figures get their due at the Black Cowboy Museum in Rosenberg, Texas.

Though I arrive in off-season, I'm captivated by the funkiness of Warrenton and Round Top. Besides, no one honks horns or cuts me off on the road the way they do in San Antonio and Austin. And the staff at the Round Top Coffee Shop lets me sit, sip and eavesdrop as long as I want.

But there's one more big city I have to visit, dreading the traffic in Houston that's a mite heavier than it is on Texas 237, which links Warrenton and Round Top.

Metropolitan Houston, however, has two important museums that aren't just about the West, but the Black West.

My first stop is the Black Cowboy History Museum, founded by Larry Callies in 2017, in Rosenberg, a roughly 35-minute drive from Houston's downtown.

What started out as two rooms in a borrowed storefront moved into a 900-square-foot building years ago, and the Black Cowboy Hall of Fame Museum was added in 2023. Those connected museums were ready for the groundbreaking for a new museum at Bates Allen Park in nearby Kendleton before becoming a casualty—temporary,

Callies hopes—of the freeze on federal grant funding.

Callies is taking a day off when I show up, but his assistant, Mike Buford, is happy to show me around.

Buford is a prime example of what museums can do to educate young and old.

Before he happened upon the museum, he tells me, "I'd never even heard of Black cowboys." Except for those on TV and in film. You know, Sammy Davis Jr. in a guest part in The Rifleman, and Black Exploitation Western films of the 1970s starring Jim Brown and Fred Williamson.

School-age children and adults learn about the history of those working cowboys at the museum and the adjoining Black Cowboy Hall of Fame Museum, which opened in 2023.

Hall of Fame inductees include the names you expect—Bose Ikard, Nat Love, Bill Pickett, even "Stagecoach" Mary Fields—and others like Acynthia Villery, the first African American female rodeo announcer.

The success of the Black Cowboys Museum isn't much different than the Buffalo Soldiers National Museum in downtown Houston.

Founder Paul Matthews collected too much stuff, and his wife suggested that he find somewhere else to keep it.

In 2001, the Buffalo Soldiers Museum opened. In 2012, it moved into the Historic Light Guard Armory, located in Houston's museum district.

What started out as a mom-and-pop-like museum has grown into a state-of-the-art facility with no plans of slowing down. It's certainly worth being stuck in traffic to see.

Johnny D. Boggs recommends a good—long—audiobook to listen to while driving through San Antonio, Austin and San Antonio. Not needed for Round Top or Warrenton.

The Buffalo Soldiers National Museum has been in Houston's Historic Light Guard Armory since 2012.

A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

When it comes to early Texas history, the Alamo, Goliad and San Jacinto usually hog all the attention. But don't overlook Nacogdoches.

Considered Texas's oldest town—founded in 1779—Nacogdoches is practically a museum, at least on the plaza and surrounding area.

David Crockett and Sam Houston stayed at what's now the Sterne-Hoya House Museum, a dogtrot house built in 1830. Oak Grove Cemetery is the final resting place of Thomas Jefferson Rusk, Houston's secretary of war, and four signers of Texas's declaration of independence from Mexico.

History is well-preserved at Millard's Crossing Historic Village; Stone Fort Museum (a 1936 reconstruction for Texas's centennial); the Old Nacogdoches University Building, built in 1859; and several other sites. The Charles Bright Visitors Center is the best place to start.

Of course, if you want to check out an older town, Caddo Mounts State Historic Site, roughly 32 miles west, recreates Caddo dwellings, etc., on the home of the "Mound Builders" who lived here from roughly 800 to 1300 A.D. ***VisitNacogdoches.org***

GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

GOOD GRUB: Off Main Brewing, Kerrville, TX; **El Nuevo México**, Austin, TX; **Round Top Café**, Round Top, TX; **Lucille's**, Houston, TX;

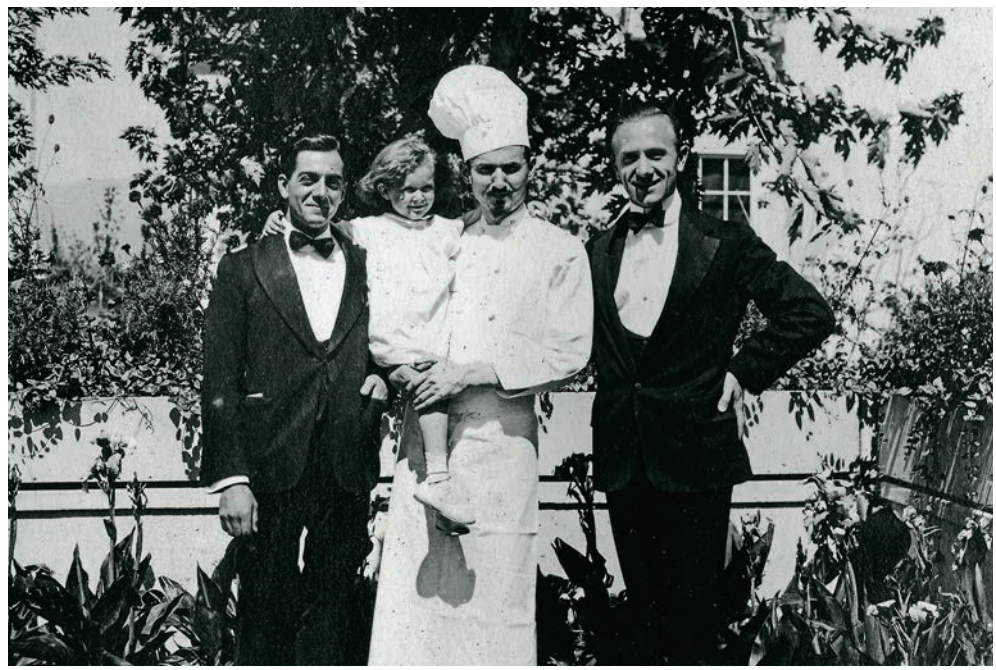
GOOD LODGING: Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio, TX; **Driskill Hotel**, Austin, TX; **Wander Inn**, Round Top, TX; **he Sam Houston, Curio Collection by Hilton**, Houston, TX

Art and history coexist on the historic plaza in Nacogdoches, Texas.

BY SHERRY MONAHAN

Young Chefs of the West

They came to the frontier from around the world and invented dishes still served today.



This photo was taken at the Broadmoor in 1920/1921 with chef Louis Stratta (center) along with manager, Edward Burke, and his daughter Bonnie (left). The man on the right is unknown.

Courtesy of the Broadmoor Hotel

Did you know a large number of pioneers who settled the West were men and women in their 20s, 30s and 40s? Those included chefs, cooks and bakers. Most of them were men, classically trained, and from European countries. The bigger the frontier city, the more credentialed the chef. Rural locations often had cooks and bakers who were self-taught or former Army cooks. Female chefs were rare, but many women cooked in their own boardinghouses, private homes and in some restaurants. Female chefs started getting attention by 1915.

Because Tombstone, Arizona, was a rich silver mining town, it attracted some pretty qualified chefs and bakers. Its first baker was German immigrant Otto Geisenhofer, who was just 22 years old. In 1880, The Oriental Saloon hired Isaac "Jakey" Jacobs, a 27-year-old Russian, whose catering skills were well-known. He also ran the Maison Doree and in 1882 opened his own restaurant on Fourth Street, where he once served George Hearst. He then opened the Grand Hotel's restaurant. *The Epitaph* wrote, "The fact that Jacobs has taken the dining room of the Grand is an assurance to the public that Tombstone is fast to have an eating house worthy of the town. 'Jakey' is the boss caterer of Arizona, 'don't you forget it.'"

In the late 1800s San Franciso had some young, top-notch chefs including at Frank's Restaurant on Pine Street. It featured a 35-year-old Frenchman named Louis Coutard, who has been credited with making the famous dish, Crab Louis. His motto was, "It's better to have a simple dinner well cooked than a complicated dinner indifferently prepared." Canadian Arthur Logan was the chef at the Hotel St. Nicholas when he was 35. He went on to cook for others including the Stewart Hotel. He loved old-fashioned cooking and shared his

favorite recipes, like Maryland Fried Chicken, Julienne Potatoes, Tomato Salad Marquerite and Vanilla Ice Cream with Chocolate Sauce in the *San Francisco Call*. The Palace Hotel did well with French youth. It hired 31-year-old Ernest Arbogast as a cook who made his way to chef by the age of 38. In 1915 Frenchman Philip Roemer, at age 33, became its head chef. In 1923 he created the famous Green Goddess Salad Dressing.

The Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado, hired a 32-year-old Italian chef named Louis Stratta. Stratta believed in food tasting good as well as being eye-appealing. He served as the Broadmoor's head chef and the pastry chef for decades. Of flavor he said, "Cookery in America is all going to the bad, since Prohibition has come in. How can one get the flavor, the dash, in the food, when there is no wine or brandy? You want to save American cookery? Get them to vote back the liquor, so then we have delicious food again." Stratta created the Broadmoor's signature dish Shrimp Salad a al Louis Stratta, still served there today.

At the age of 32, Otto Karl Klopfer became the executive chef at the Jefferson in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1913. He was born in Bietigheim, Germany, where he studied cooking in his own country and in Italy. He also cooked for the German army and prepared banquets for 200 officers on the steamship *Deutschland*. When he came to America he worked at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City and also worked in Chicago, New Orleans, San Francisco and Kansas City before starting at the Jefferson. He shared many of his classic recipes, like this one, with the *St. Louis Dispatch*.

ESCALLOPED CORN

2 cups corn • ½ cup bread crumbs
¼ tsp. pepper • ½ tsp. salt • ½ tsp. sugar
2 tbsp. butter melted • ½ cup milk

Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and pour into a buttered baking dish.

Bake at 350°F for about 25 minutes until golden.

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

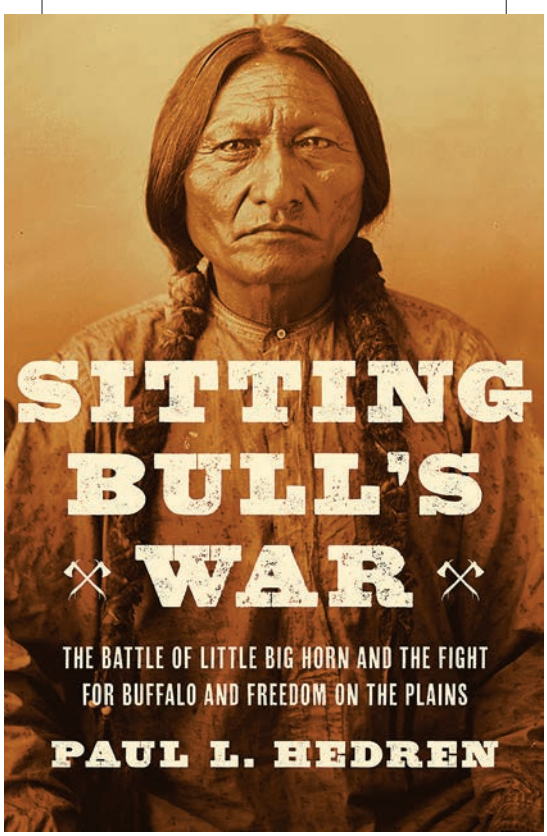
A War of Freedom, A War Never Won

Paul Hedren's new biography of Sitting Bull, plus three new biographies on the Earps and Doc Holliday, Jim Bridger, and the legendary boomtown of Deadwood

In the annals of the American West, few names are as iconic and internationally recognized as Lakota Sioux leader and holy man Sitting Bull. Mythmakers, historians, boosters and filmmakers have all been drawn to his legendary life. Since June of 1876 and his overwhelming defeat of the U.S. Army and George Armstrong Custer along the banks of the Little Bighorn, Sitting Bull has captured and recaptured our imaginations. For many decades, historians have sought to provide us with a greater understanding, a more detailed and empathetic biography of the mythic man of the Sioux people, and one of those chroniclers is the award-winning scholar, Paul L. Hedren.

For the past two decades, the Omaha, Nebraska, historian has been thoroughly researching the history of the Great Sioux War. *Sitting Bull's War: The Battle of Little Big Horn and the Fight for Buffalo and Freedom on the Plains* (Pegasus Books, $35) is Hedren's 14th book. Many will consider it the greatest chronicle of Sitting Bull, the Lakota people, the war with the United States, and the significance of how the war changed the direction of American history forever. As the retired superintendent of national parks states in his Preface, "I've spent most of my adult life writing about of the great sagas occurring the plains, the Great Sioux War, or, as some call it, the Custer War, and others, the Black Hills War. ... I consciously intend that the work in hand defy the standard tradition. This is a unique history of the Great Sioux War, carefully and deliberately told through the eyes of its victims, the Lakotas and Northern Cheyennes of the northern plains, the tradition-embracing people of the buffalo prairie."

Hedren, who has followed in the footsteps of National Parks historian Robert Utley, has written what should be considered his finest work, and will reset the historiography of the Great Plains wars going forward. What most readers will enjoy is how Hedren presents history. His literary style reveals a love for his subject matter and his passion for detail and recasting the well-trod story from a new and invigorating perspective, that of the Lakota and Northern Cheyenne. Integrated into his magnum opus is the two-pronged story of the defeat of a proud people and the decimation of the buffalo as the American empire conquers a continent. The book is well-illustrated and annotated. Scholars and amateurs alike will appreciate its detailed maps, his telling of Sitting Bull's war, bibliography and endnotes.



I am eager to learn what the quiet chronicler from Nebraska will be inspired to research and write next. Will his trail continue his pursuit of providing us a greater understanding of the Plains people who followed the buffalo, the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, and the legendary leader Sitting Bull? Or will he be drawn forward into the present and provide us with the next chapter of their history since the demise of the bison and Sitting Bull? We shall see, but if you are like me, you will be first in line to read the man from Omaha's latest scholarship.

—Stuart Rosebrook

Photo by Tracey Horn

ALL ROADS LEAD TO CODY, WYOMING

On September 6, 2025, Western Writers of America held the James Ersfeld Symposium at the McCracken Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming. The McCracken Library is home to the Western Writers Hall of Fame and an exhibit about the Hall of Fame writers and its active members.

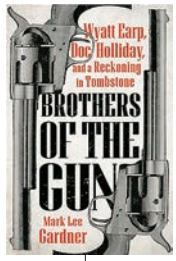
WWA President Melody Groves greeted the symposium attendees and introduced WWA's new executive director, Kellen Cutsforth. Cutsforth presented a lively discussion on how AI is changing the landscape of writing and creativity. Groves followed with a presentation on writing and creating 3D characters. The keynote speakers were Wister Award-winners Kathleen and Michael Gear, who shared cautionary tales on the dangerous climate of censorship and algorithms in the publishing world—and how it is dramatically changing the Western fiction marketplace. Both of them provided insights on how to battle these changes but warned it was going to be very challenging for all writers going forward.

In the afternoon, the Buffalo Bill Museum's Tate Chair of Western History and Interim Director Paul Andrew Hutton welcomed the attendees to the museum before a tour of the library's archives. Following the tour, Joe Brown presented on how to set up a successful book tour. The symposium concluded with my presentation on the revolutionary year in American history, "1876: The Crossroads of the Real and Imagined West."

If you are writing or researching your next Western, I suggest your path go through Cody to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, the most important Western American museum complex outside of the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

—SR

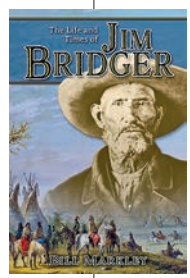
Born Pistoleros



For the past three decades, few historians have profiled as many Western icons with as much detail and groundbreaking research as author Mark Lee Gardner. The Colorado historian is not afraid to write about the most legendary, controversial, confabulated characters, and in his latest, *Brothers of the Gun: Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, and a Reckoning in Tombstone* (Dutton, $35), Gardner hits you with both barrels of facts and literary style. Whether you have read everything previously published on the Earps, Doc Holliday, the Cowboys and Tombstone, or if this is the first book you read on these legendary characters and the gunfight behind the O.K. Corral, you will want follow your reading of *Brothers of the Gun* with a trip to Tombstone, Arizona. Gardner brings his charismatic, fact-filled prose to the forefront in *Brothers*, providing the reader with a deeper understanding of these complicated characters and the significance of their lives to American Western history. As he states so eloquently in his Preface, "Icons never die. Such is the fate of Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday, friends in life and friends in immortality, forever facing down 'the Cowboys' at the O.K. Corral." Thanks to the award-winning author, we have a chance to rediscover the fateful reasons why the lives of Wyatt and Doc cannot, and will never be, separated into fact or fiction.

—*SR*

Rocky Mountain Hero

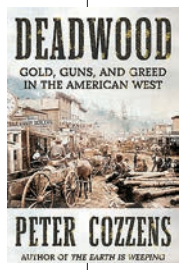


Author Bill Markley is passionate about the history of the American West, its people and its culture. From his adopted home state of South Dakota, Markley has been able to pursue his craft while exploring the state, much of it to research his favorite subjects. His latest biography, *The Life and Times of Jim Bridger* (Farcountry Press, $19.95), reflects the award-winning author's interest in the lives of important contributors to the history of America and the West. A Western author who lives in the Missouri River Valley for any length of time will soon be intrigued by the facts and fiction that swirl around the history of the mountain men and fur traders who plied the mighty Missouri in keelboats and canoes, with Jim Bridger at the forefront. As a fan of Bridger since I read my first biography of the trailblazing mountain man in grammar school, I believe Markley has provided us all with one of the most readable and insightful biographies ever written about the American icon. Markley brings Bridger's life in focus—from his first forays up the Missouri River to his last years surrounded by family on his farm in Westport, Missouri—without fanfare or hoopla, just the facts. Markley's succinct conclusions blaze a clear trail for all of us to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of

what an accomplished, legendary life the boy from Virginia lived from 1804 to 1881.

—*SR*

The Living Legend of the Black Hills

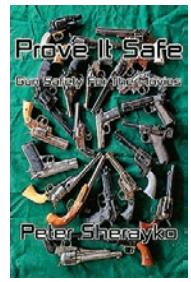


Award-winning, internationally acclaimed author Peter Cozzens has returned to the Old West in his latest literary history, *Deadwood: Gold, Guns, and Greed in the American West* (Alfred A. Knopf, $35). His 19th major book on American history, *Deadwood* will be considered by both scholars and popular audiences as the new benchmark tale of the legendary and iconic Black Hills boomtown. For worldwide audiences who are aficionados of the Old West, Cozzens' decision to tackle such a mythic topic as Deadwood is both courageous and deliberate. Despite the oft-dramatized Western year of 1876—the year of Wild Bill Hickok's murder in Deadwood and Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse's defeat of George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry at the Battle of Little Bighorn—Cozzens states firmly in his Prologue what set his scholarship apart and why he chose to write about the city's earlier years. "*Deadwood: Gold, Guns, and Greed* in the American West is the first book dedicated to the story of early Deadwood. It also probes timeless subjects such as race and sex, crime and punishment, religion and recreation, and everyday life in a manner that I hope will immerse readers in the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the frontier West." Cozzens, the literary scholar, delivers on his promise to give the reader the truth behind the legend of Deadwood. If you don't book a trip to the Black Hills city after reading Cozzens' instant classic, you will never know truly how close his prose brings you to being in the Gulch and the spirits of the legendary denizens of that famous town.

—*SR*

Prove it Safe: Gun Safety for the Movies

I wish I'd had this book in film school: with my theatrical gun permit and zero training, only the refusal of one actor to fire a blank-loaded shotgun directly at another prevented serious injury. Dedicating his informative and opinionated book to Halyna Hutchins, whose tragic accidental *Rust*-set shooting-death was entirely preventable, Sherayko, prop man and/or armorer on over a thousand Westerns and crime shows, spells out California's new film-set safety regulations, hopefully to be copied nationwide. And with an examination of every known Hollywood film gun-shot injury, he explains the common-sense rules for gun-handling that, when followed, have kept movie sets safe for over a century. With 50 photos illustrating the nuts-and-bolts details of firearms and their handling, all this book lacks is a glossary for the sometimes-dense terminology and jargon.

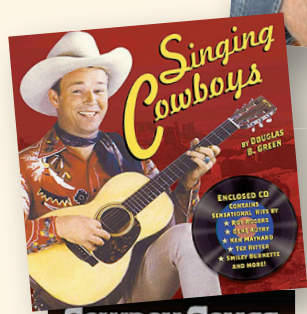


—*Henry C. Parke,* True West*'s Western Film & TV Editor*

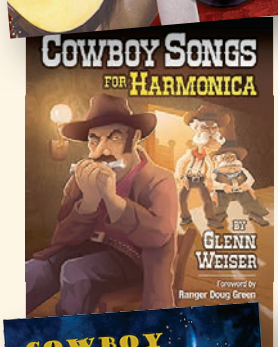
FIVE WESTERN MUSIC BOOKS THAT BELONG ON YOUR SHELF

New Mexico writer and musician Harry Musselwhite has performed all over the world, from Carnegie Hall to the cathedrals of Europe. His collection of essays, *A Month of Sundays*, is an award-winning anthology of stories of the American Southwest, and his children's music books (with illustrator Rick Geary) are beloved by music-loving kids everywhere. Here are five books about Western music guaranteed to delight a music lover's affection for "music out on the range."

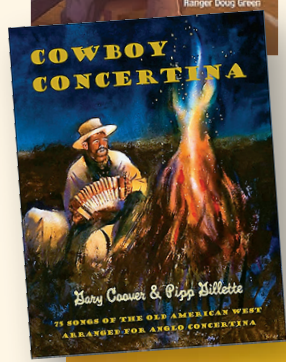
Courtesy Harry Musselwhite



❶ ***Singing Cowboys*** by Douglas B. Green (Gibbs Smith): Known by his legions of fans as "Ranger Doug" and as a member of Riders in the Sky, Green has produced a magnificent picture book (with an enclosed CD) detailing the history of the American motion picture cowboy singer. The engaging text is lavishly illustrated with PR stills and vintage movie posters.



❷ ***Cowboy Songs for Harmonica*** by Glenn Weiser (Centerstream Publishing): The quintessential cowboy instrument, the harmonica, is well represented in Weiser's book featuring 27 traditional Western ballads and supporting materials. This the perfect book for cool nights and warm tunes around the campfire.

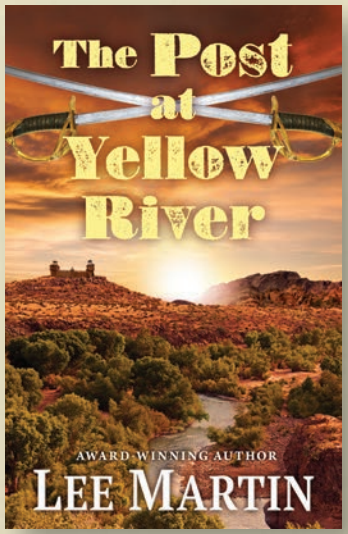


❸ ***Cowboy Concertina: 75 Songs of the Old American West*** by Gary Coover and Pipp Gillette (Rollston Press): The 20- and 30-button Anglo concertina is an instrument not found in most music studios, but this book provides a primer on this storied instrument. The book features copious teaching pages and even includes links to online video instruction.

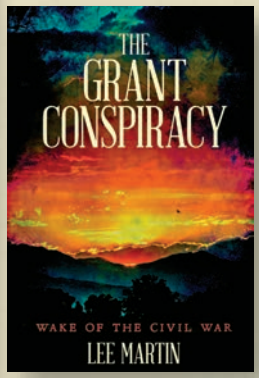
❹ ***Singing in the Saddle: The History of the Singing Cowboy*** by Douglas B. Green (University of Illinois Press): Ranger Doug's music-writing chops are evident in his book telling the compelling story of the singing cowboy from the days of vaudeville and radio performances to the present day.

❺ ***Music in the Westward Expansion: Songs of Heart and Place on the American Frontier*** by Laura Dean (McFarland): Laura Dean's scholarly look at Western music takes the reader from the songs of the Northern Cheyenne, through the Oregon Trail, and musically through the end of the 19th century. The valuable appendix features songs, musical works and even musical scores.

LEE MARTIN



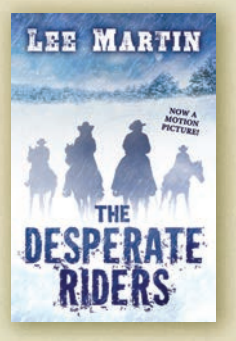
NEW! MARTIN'S LATEST NOVEL: THE POST AT YELLOW RIVER: In 1876 in Arizona Territory, Captain Steele's lonely outpost is disrupted by a visit from a westbound superior officer who hates him ever since an enquiry during The War Between the States, along with four women who cause a lot of trouble, all the while expecting a full scale attack from Apache outcasts led by Cayote."



GRANT CONSPIRACY, "In 1880 Colorado, a young lawyer, an angry newspaperwoman, and a black veteran stumble on an evil law firm's plot to assassinate Grant, not for the Civil War but for Black Friday, when he tours the Rockies by wagon.

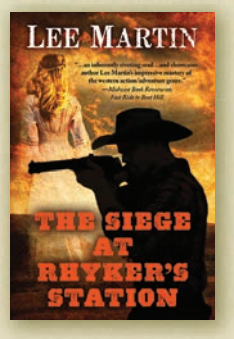
Rocky Mountain Cloak & Dagger: *"Lee Martin's The Grant Conspiracy plays out like a game of checkers with bodies piling up and the surviving characters vying for the final position."*

— TRUE WEST April 2016
by author Eric H. Heisner.



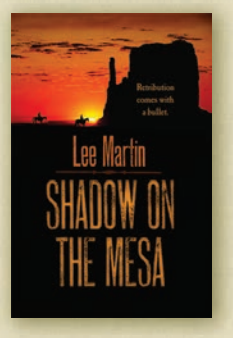
THE DESPERATE RIDERS, Lee Martin's novel, is now a motion picture and stars Drew Waters, Vanessa Evigan, Sam Ashby, Cowboy Troy, Victoria Pratt, Rob Mayes, and with Trace Adkins and Tom Berenger.

Kansas Red, a mysterious gunfighter-preacher, leads a small party of rescuers, including a teen-age boy, a rancher, and a young Texas woman with a deadly aim, on a wild ride through high mountains to save kidnapped women from escaped convicts and their unstoppable leader, moving to a violent climax with secrets revealed.

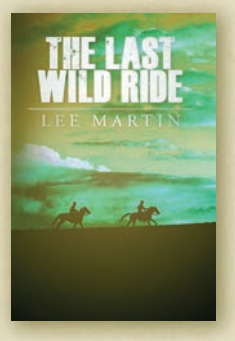


LAST SHOOT OUT, written by Lee Martin and based on Martin's novel *The Siege at Rhyker's Station,* was produced and directed by Michael Feifer. Variety and others gave fine reviews. Martin's screenplay has won the coveted **"Spur Award"** for best western drama script as given by Western Writers of America. Stars include Brock Harris, Skylar Witte, Peter Sherayko, Jay Pickett, David Deluise, Michael Welch, Brock Burnett, Caia Coley, Keikilani Grune, Cam Gigandet, Jerry Bestpitch and the legendary Bruce Dern.

"A powerful clan has a vast cattle empire and runs rough shod over New Mexico Territory, but when one's terrified, runaway bride is rescued and taken to a relay station by an old trader and a mysterious young saddle tramp with a fast draw, the clan surrounds it with a deadly siege."



SHADOW ON THE MESA: While a hired gun for the cattlemen, Wes learns his Arapaho mother was murdered. He also learns that his long lost white father is still alive, rich with a family, and may have hired the killer. Wes starts out on a trail for vengeance against his own father. Martin also wrote the script for the movie, starring Kevin Sorbo, which won the **"Wrangler Award"** given by the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.



THE LAST WILD RIDE: In 1877, a bitter ex-lawman is rope into escorting a fugitive widow and her mute son through the badlands with the help of old scouts and a gambler, while her vengeful in-laws are on their trail.
"The story is full of suspense and adventure. It is an easy, fast read that I strongly recommend. It will keep your interest, encouraging you to keep reading to find out what happens next." Lowell F. Volk Author of the Luke Taylor and Trevor Lane series *TRUE WEST* July, 2017

Look for all of Lee Martin's 34 Westerns at AMAZON or wherever books are sold.
Many are on audio with BOOKS IN MOTION.

By Henry C. Parke

Val Kilmer in His Cups

Tombstone costume designer Joseph Porro defined "Doc."

Remember a little scene in *Tombstone*, in a saloon? Johnny Ringo (Michael Biehn), "the deadliest pistoleer since Wild Bill," they say, has just met Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) and tries to intimidate him with some flashy gun-spinning; and Doc mocks him by mirroring his moves with a silver cup. *Tombstone* costumer Joseph Porro remembers the scene, not because of a costume, but because of a prop. "One thing Val did do. He was definitely the one who worked out [twirling] the silver cup. And I'm the one that supplied the silver cup. I still have it. I was watching the rehearsal. They were trying with a regular glass mug. It didn't work. And I said, 'Wait a minute.' I went to my car for the collapsible silver drinking-cup with a little handle I'd gotten in a Tucson thrift shop. I brought it over. I said, 'What about this?' It was just used in that one scene and then it went back right into my pocket."

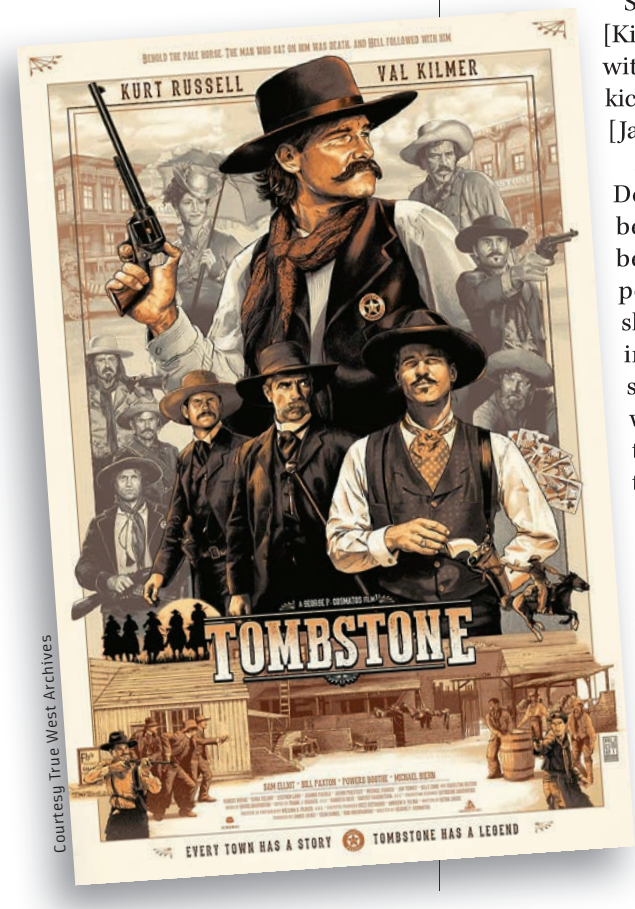
Doc Holliday in His Cups

Illustration by Bob Boze Bell

With *Tombstone*, Porro, costume designer for *Independence Day*, Emmy-nominated for *The Mandalorian*, was making his first Western and starting with a major disadvantage. "At the time I was hired, Kevin Costner was doing *Wyatt Earp*, and they were doing *Geronimo*. So literally every single Western [rental] costume was gone. So how the hell am I going to do this movie? I said, 'I can get Victorian clothes in England. I think you need to put me on a plane because there's nothing here.' I said, 'I'm from a fashion design background, so I "get" manufacture. I was in New York for four years working with the designers, and we made things.' So everything was manufactured, and that's why I think it had that look. There's things I would change today. I'm much more persnickety about period men's suits and coats and how they're done. Then, I was just happy to get someone to make it. And [director] Kevin [Jarre] wanted it much more Technicolor. He was very into the history. He really knew his shit." Kilmer concurred; Jarre knew his shit, *as a screenwriter*. As Kilmer noted in his memoir, *I'm Your Huckleberry*, "I had only read half of Kevin Jarre's brilliant screenplay before I made up my mind to accept the role." But as a director? On the first day, the first setup, "Kevin Jarre shouted, 'Action!' The problem was, there was no shot. Kevin had positioned the camera at an untenable angle… Kurt [Russell] looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Val, we're in trouble.'"

Val Kilmer

Courtesy the Rosebrook Collection



Courtesy True West Archives

Says Porro, "I think [Kilmer] had a lot to do with Kevin Jarre getting kicked out. He didn't think [Jarre] was up to snuff."

Dressing Kilmer as Doc Holliday would not be easy. Porro remembers, "I had ties of the period made up. I had shirts. He would just sit in front of the mirror staring at himself. And we have five other fittings to do today. And this is a small film, done on a tight little budget. I've got to get shit done nonstop around the clock. And he is sitting there and asking you, 'Can you find sushi in Tucson?' Can you get me this and can you get me that? I go, 'You have got 28 changes. We need to lock them in and do the alterations on them.' And we didn't know what he was wearing till 10 minutes before he was in front of camera. We had to put all of his clothes—three

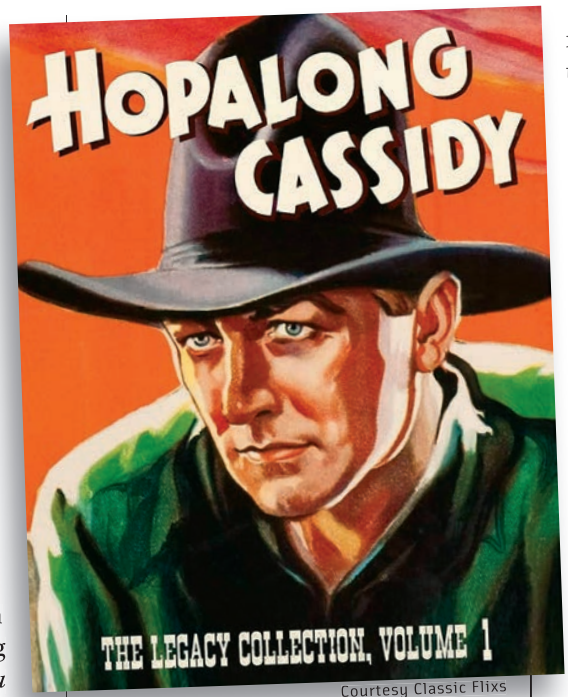
Joseph A. Porro

Courtesy IMDb

racks—in his trailer and let him go through and decide. I went to Kevin Jarre early on. I go, I don't know what he's going to show up in. I told him what the scene is; I told him what I think is appropriate for the scene, but he'll choose a different tie or he'll decide a different cuff link or whatever. And that's what I dealt with every day. Not fun.

"I ended up spending literally the whole year with Kurt Russell, because I did *Stargate* with him right after *Tombstone*." Porro has nothing but praise for the rest of the cast—"It was like a bunch of overgrown kids, playing."

But Porro didn't work with Kilmer again; he passed on doing costumes for *Island of Dr. Moreau* (1996). "How was Val Kilmer in *Tombstone*? He was amazing. Brilliant actor. He's the perfect person for this role. He drove all of us crazy, but you can't take his talent away."



Courtesy Classic Flixs

BLU-RAY REVIEW

HOPALONG CASSIDY – 1935 – THE LEGACY COLLECTION, VOL. 1

Classic Flix – $49.99

Stunningly restored from 90-year-old, ready-to-decompose camera negatives, these first three of the 66 Hoppys introduce the thrilling, action-packed series. William Boyd couldn't sing like Autry or ride like Ken Maynard, but he had as much style as Tom Mix and was the best actor in the genre since William S. Hart. Ironically, a mistaken-identity scandal that destroyed Boyd's leading-man career made him available for B-Westerns. Boyd and his impetuous young sidekick Jimmy Ellison, and crotchety compadre Gabby Hayes, set the pattern for "trigger trios" as they battle a conniving rancher, rescue a reformed outlaw's grandchild, and combat a wholesale rustler with a Napoleon complex, all with Lone Pine's spectacular Alabama Hills as a backdrop. With documentaries, commentaries and outtakes, they're great entertainment for all ages.

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.

BY PETER CORBETT

Wickenburg Booms Again

The once mining boom town then dude ranch capital, is now a team-roping capital and arts center.

Wickenburg started as a gold mining boom town. It's been the Dude Ranch Capital and now stakes its claim as Team Roping Capital of the World. Throughout its 162-year history Wickenburg has been a resilient and adaptive Western town.

"Wickenburg is the West's Most Western Town. I don't care what Scottsdale says," said Julie Brooks, retired Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce executive director of 33 years.

Wickenburg is all about cowboys and cowgirls riding and roping and appreciating the Western lifestyle in a small town an hour from Phoenix. There are seven roping and rodeo arenas in the Wickenburg area. Team roping is a cowhand sport with two riders on horseback racing to both rope the same elusive steer.

But don't think that Wickenburg is a one-horse town. It's culturally rich, riding tall in the saddle for a rural Arizona town. The single-screen Saguaro Theater, that opened in 1948, still shows first-run movies and has hosted a cowboy poetry gathering. The Del Webb Center for the Performing Arts and the Desert Caballeros Western Museum are valued community assets. The Bar D Wranglers will perform at the Del Webb Center in December, and the Gatlin Brothers are on the bill in February.

The Western Museum burned down in 1972, but the town rallied to rebuild it three years later.

A half-century later, the museum's vast collection of Western art and historic items has outgrown its facilities. So the town has rallied again, raising $30 million to build a 7,600-square-foot Art Museum and Pavilion across the street.

The museum is scheduled to break ground in early 2026. The largest donation for the project was from Wickenburg residents Jack and Carey Sigler, who contributed $20 million, said Dan Finley, DCWM executive director.

The museum will be renamed the Sigler Western Museum, he said.

Going Up the Trail for the First Time, bronze (23 x 22 x 8) by Deborah Copenhaver Fellows, is on display at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum.

Courtesy Desert Caballeros Western Museum

The new building will house the museum's art collection, while the historic exhibits will be reorganized in the current building.

A rendering of the new Sigler Western Museum, which is being designed by Studio Ma, which also designed Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West. The new museum is scheduled for completion in summer 2027.

Courtesy Studio Ma

46TH ANNUAL

BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL

NOVEMBER 14-16, 2025

31ST ANNUAL

CHRISTMAS PARADE OF LIGHTS

DECEMBER 12, 2025

77TH ANNUAL

GOLD RUSH DAYS

AND SENIOR PRO RODEO

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WICKENBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Town of Wickenburg

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Wickenburg

LET'S RIDE

Photos: Top, Michael Cowan; bottom, Craig W. Cutler Fine Art

Desert Caballeros Western Museum's iconic hand-painted boot honors Cowgirl Up!, the pioneering annual exhibition celebrating and empowering contemporary female Western artists.

Courtesy Desert Caballeros Western Museum

Meanwhile, in March the museum will again host its wildly popular Cowgirl Up! art show, marking its 20th year of featuring women Western artists.

Karla Mortimer, the new Wickenburg Chamber executive director, said, "The perception is that Wickenburg is just Western. It is just Western, but we like to play pickleball, we like to hike, we like to mountain bike and we enjoy the hot springs. It's a very diverse little town."

Castle Hot Springs luxury resort is down the road near Morristown.

"Even for those who aren't Western, they love the Western roots, the little cowboy statues on the corner or the Gila monster on the corner," Mortimer said.

Artist J. Seward Johnson created realistic bronze statues of Gila monsters, roadrunners, rattlesnakes and tarantulas. The immobile critters reside on the sidewalks of Wickenburg's historic district.

"It's still funny to watch people walk by and get scared by the rattlesnakes or the tarantula because they didn't know they were fake," Mortimer said.

The artist's human figures include a miner, cowboy and dance hall girl, plus a felon in prison stripes chained to Wickenburg's Jail Tree. It's an ancient mesquite which reportedly was used to keep bad guys on a short leash in the late 1800s.

Austrian immigrant Henry Wickenburg struck gold in 1863 at his nearby Vulture Mine, launching the town named for him. Vulture Mine tours are available seasonally.

The *Weekly Journal-Miner* (Prescott) of October 1867 observed that "the town of Wickenburg has improved somewhat upon its ancient appearance. The stores and saloons, of which there are about ten, are built of adobes, flat-roofed and nicely plastered and whitewashed inside… We see no reason…why Wickenburg should not grow to the size of Virginia City, Nev., inside of the next five years."

The *Journal-Miner* was way off. Virginia City had 20,000 residents by 1870. Wickenburg today only has about 8,500 residents. The population surges in winter when team roping enthusiasts hit town with their horse trailers and RVs.

Today, Wickenburg is also known for its heritage events, most notably the 77th Gold Rush Days, on February 13-16 this year.

More immediately, Wickenburg will host the 46th Wickenburg Bluegrass Festival November 13-16 at the Everett Bowman Rodeo Arena. The 31st Annual Christmas Parade of Lights is December 16.

Peter Corbett has been writing about Arizona and the West for nearly a half century. His On the Road Arizona blog features Wickenburg and 40 other towns in the Grand Canyon State.

The Wickenburg Jail Tree, a 200-year-old mesquite, once held prisoners chained in its shade, now preserved as a powerful reminder of frontier justice and resilience.

Courtesy The Town of Wickenburg

WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY

FIRST STOP
Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce occupies a restored 1894 train depot at 216 N. Frontier St. Get the lay of the land and check out the town's historic locomotive and drover caboose.
WickenburgChamber.com

GO HELL-BENT FOR LEATHER
Ben's Saddlery makes and restores saddles and tack. Custom items include holsters, scabbards and chaps. The aroma of leather is intoxicating in this vintage shop.
BensSaddlery.com

CELEBRATING WESTERN ART & HISTORY
Desert Caballeros Western Museum's exhibit of early Western women artists runs through February 15. The 20th annual Cowgirl Up! show is March 27 to May 31.
WesternMuseum.org

VINTAGE WESTERN VIBE
Rancho Bar 7 serves American and Mexican food in this classic Western restaurant and lounge, in business since 1937. A patio has fans, misters and music.
Rancho-Bar-7.menu-world.com

CANTAKEROUS BOVINE BBQ
BBQ in Wickenburg seven years ago, but Dan's prowess as a pitmaster goes back a half century. Get your fix of ribs, pulled pork, brisket and all the fixins'.
OneryHogBBQ.com

Joe Beeler's 1988 *Thanks for the Rain* sculpture outside the Desert Caballeros Western Museum. The city refers to its location as "out Wickenburg Way."

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

BY THE EDITORS OF *TRUE WEST*

Winter IN THE WEST

When winter sweeps across the West, the old frontier changes its coat, and the towns change their welcome. Some trade dust for snow, others bask under a warm sun, but in each one, history is ready to greet you at the door. These are places where the sound of the boots of Billy the Kid, Wild Bill Hickok, Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Jesse James and countless nameless drifters once echoed down the streets. Deals were struck in smoky saloons, shots rang out in frosty nights, and legends were born beneath star-filled skies.

Today, those same towns still open their doors to wanderers. You can stroll the weathered boardwalks, pull up a chair at the bar where a lawman once nursed his whiskey, or sleep in the very rooms that sheltered gunslingers, ranchers and dreamers. Whether you're seeking the warmth of a sun-soaked escape or the crisp magic of a snow-dusted frontier, these Winter in the West destinations invite you to step inside, stay awhile and become part of the story.

The Vereins Kirche, or Society Church, was built in Fredericksburg's city center in 1847. Today, rebuilt in stone from the half-timbered local Fachwerk, it is home to the Pioneer Museum.

Pierce Ingram, Courtesy Travel Texas

Winter IN THE WEST

WARM WINTER TOWNS

Alpine, Texas
(Winter Avg. High 61°F)

By the 1880s, Alpine was a small cattle town along the Southern Pacific Railroad, serving as a vital link between El Paso and San Antonio. It thrived as a ranching supply hub and gateway to the rugged Big Bend region. Its location made it a crossroads for cowboys, outlaws and traders moving through West Texas. Today, Alpine's historic downtown blends 19th-century mercantile buildings with art galleries, cafés and the 100-year-old Holland Hotel, which has hosted generations of travelers. The Museum of the Big Bend at Sul Ross State University tells the story of the frontier, from Native peoples and Spanish explorers to cattle barons and railroad builders. Alpine is at the center of the Greater Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve, the largest area of protected night sky in the world. The nearby McDonald Observatory offers world-class stargazing. Just an hour away lies Big Bend National Park, where winter's cool temperatures are perfect for hiking desert canyons and spotting wildlife. Nearby Fort Davis preserves an authentic frontier military post, complete with stone buildings once guarded by Buffalo Soldiers.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Comfortable climate, rich ranching history and easy access to Big Bend and Fort Davis.
Annual/Special Events: Alpine Artwalk (Nov), Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering (Feb)

Hancock Hill rises above Alpine, Texas, offering sweeping desert views.

Courtesy Alpine, Texas

The Hicks family has welcomed guests to stay, relax, ride and cowboy-up at their Mayan Ranch along the Medina River near Bandera for over 50 years.

Courtesy TxDOT

Bandera, Texas
(Winter Avg. High 61°F)

In the 1880s, Bandera earned its title as the "Cowboy Capital of the World" by sending trail-hardened cowboys up the Great Western Trail. The Medina River winds past what was once a hub for cattle drives and now serves as a playground for horseback riders and hikers. The Frontier Times Museum captures Bandera's frontier days through colorful exhibits and artifacts, while the Bandera General Store offers a taste of 19th-century mercantile life.

STATUS UPDATE: LEGENDARY

TOP 10 TRUE WESTERN TOWNS OF THE YEAR 2025

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

Today, Bandera is still all about cowboy culture, with guest ranches, including the Flying L Ranch Resort and Mayan Dude Ranch, offering trail rides, campfire cookouts and lariat lessons to keep the Old West alive. Winter's mild weather makes it easy to explore Main Street, take a ride along the river or enjoy live music at a honky-tonk. The pace slows, but the cowboy heart beats strong here.

Why It's Perfect for Winter: *Mild Hill Country climate, peak hiking season to experience vibrant fall foliage, crystal-clear dark skies ideal for stargazing, authentic guest ranch stays, cowboy heritage at every turn. Annual/Special Events: Annual Lighted Christmas Night Parade (Dec), Cowboy Mardi Gras (Feb)*

Bisbee, Arizona
(Winter Avg. High 61°F)

Founded in 1880 as a booming copper, gold and silver mining camp, Bisbee quickly became one of the richest mineral sites in the world. By the early 1900s, it was a cosmopolitan town filled with saloons, theaters and a lively red-light district. Today, its preserved Victorian architecture and steep hillside streets recall those

While Tombstone's silver boom attracted Doc Holliday and the Earps to its opportunities in law enforcement, vice and gambling, just a few miles south the copper camp of Bisbee was roaring 24 hours a day. Today, "Bisbee Gulch" is the place to start a tour of the historic mining town.

Courtesy City of Bisbee

rowdy days. The Copper Queen Mine Tour takes visitors deep underground for a firsthand look at the miner's life, while the Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum, a Smithsonian affiliate, brings the town's colorful past to life. The historic district brims with art galleries, antique shops, bookstores and cafés, offering plenty to explore on a sunny winter afternoon. Outdoor staircases wind through neighborhoods, rewarding visitors with sweeping views of the Mule Mountains. As evening falls, Bisbee's lively arts and music scene takes center stage in its historic venues. Winter in Bisbee means crisp mornings, warm afternoons and brilliant desert sunsets over a town that still hums with frontier charm.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Rich mining history, preserved historic district and lively arts scene.
Annual/Special Events: Plein Air Festival (Oct), Mariachi Festival (Nov), Sidepony (Nov), Home Tour (Nov)

Bass Reeves monument in Fort Smith, Arkansas

Courtesy Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism

Fort Smith, Arkansas
(Winter Avg. High 50°F)

The 19th-century past of Fort Smith, once the last bastion of law in the untamed Indian Territory, is steeped in stories of Judge Isaac Parker, the "Hanging Judge." At the National Historic Site, explore drill grounds of Mexican and Civil War soldiers, learn about the Trail of Tears, get to know the Wild West's most notorious outlaws, and visit Judge Parker's courtroom, gallows and barracks. The Clayton House, a restored Italianate-style Victorian mansion in the Belle Grove Historic District, offers guided history tours, and the Fort Smith Museum of History highlights the city's role in frontier justice. Miss Laura's Brothel Museum, located in an elegantly restored 1898 brothel, offers a unique glimpse into the city's more colorful history. One of the newest and most impressive additions is the U.S. Marshals Museum, which tells the sweeping story of America's oldest federal law enforcement agency through artifacts and immersive exhibits featuring the likes of U.S. Deputy Marshal Bass Reeves, one of the most successful lawmen of the frontier. Mild winters make exploring these sites and strolling the charming downtown a comfortable pleasure.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Frontier justice history, Bass Reeves legacy, world-class U.S. Marshals

Museum and pleasant winter weather. Annual/Special Events: Peacemaker Festival (Oct), Old Fort Days Rodeo (May), Fall Festival (Oct)

Fredericksburg, Texas
(Winter Avg. High 60°F)

Founded in 1846 by German immigrants, Fredericksburg blends Old World charm with Texas frontier grit. In its early days, it was a vital settlement in the Texas Hill Country, serving as a trading post for settlers and a waypoint for cattlemen and frontier travelers. While its German heritage is still front and center, evident in the stone architecture, bakeries and beer gardens, Fredericksburg also has deep Western roots, tied to ranching and the surrounding open range. History lovers can explore the Pioneer Museum, which preserves 19th-century homes, barns and schoolhouses, or visit the Vereins Kirche Museum, a replica of the original 1847 community building. Winter's mild temperatures make it perfect for strolling Main Street, lined with shops, art galleries and tasting rooms. Just outside town, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park offers a look at Texas ranch life in the 1900s. Cimarron Firearms, known for its authentic replicas of historic guns, connects modern visitors to Old West craftsmanship.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Mild weather, rich frontier and German heritage and walkable historic core.
Annual/Special Events: Oktoberfest (Oct), Luckenbach Texas Blues Festival (Jan)

Grapevine, Texas
(Winter Avg. High 58°F)

Founded in 1844, Grapevine was a frontier outpost that grew along the Chisholm Trail. By the 1880s, it was a thriving agricultural and ranching hub, with cotton gins, cattle pens and vineyards shaping the economy. Today, Grapevine's historic Main Street showcases 19th-century storefronts housing boutiques, wine tasting rooms and cafés. The Grapevine Vintage Railroad offers

Take your family aboard the North Pole Express on Grapevine's 1888 railroad.

Courtesy Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau

rides in restored 1920s-era coaches, while the Settlement to City Museums give visitors a firsthand look at frontier life. Winter's mild climate makes Main Street strolls especially pleasant, and the slower pace allows time to savor the local food and wine scene. The restored Palace Theatre keeps the early 20th-century spirit alive with live performances and classic film screenings. Grapevine's roots in both agriculture and hospitality make it a natural winter stop.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Mild weather, historic railroad rides and charming small-town atmosphere. Annual/Special Events: Grapefest (Sept), Jazz Wine Trains (Mar/Apr)

Jerome, Arizona
(Winter Avg. High 54°F)

A National Historic Landmark perched high on Cleopatra Hill overlooking the Verde Valley, Jerome began in 1876 as a roaring copper boomtown. Once known as the "Wickedest Town in the West," its saloons, boardinghouses and brothels catered to miners working the massive United Verde Mine. After the mines closed in 1953, Jerome nearly became a ghost town until artists, historians and entrepreneurs revived it. Today, its steep, winding streets are lined with preserved 19th- and early 20th–century buildings housing galleries, museums, shops and cafés. The Jerome State Historic Park, with its Douglas Mansion, tells the story of the town's mining heyday, while the Jerome Historical Society's Mine Museum offers an intimate look at daily life in the boom years and preserves key structures throughout town. Adding to the charm is a

Jerome, Arizona
Library of Congress

flourishing wine scene with tasting rooms from the Verde Valley Wine Trail offering local vintages with stunning views. Panoramic vistas of the Verde Valley and red rocks of Sedona make every stroll a scenic one. Winter's mild temperatures mean you can enjoy it all without summer's heat or crowds.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Mining history, vibrant arts and wine scene and sweeping views.
Annual/Special Events: Jerome Music & Arts Festival (Sept), Jerome Historical Society Ghost Walk (Oct), Jerome's Light Up the Mountain Holiday Celebration (Nov)

Kerrville, Texas
(Winter Avg. High 60°F)

Founded in the mid-1800s as a frontier settlement along the Guadalupe River, Kerrville became a ranching and trading hub in the Texas Hill Country. It attracted pioneers, merchants and cattlemen, and its scenic surroundings made it a favorite stopping point for travelers. Today, the Museum of Western Art stands as one of the region's cultural treasures, dedicated to preserving and celebrating the heritage of the American West. Its galleries display paintings, sculptures and artifacts that depict the life of cowboys, Native Americans, pioneers and frontier landscapes. Rotating exhibitions and educational programs ensure there's always something new to discover, while the museum's hilltop setting offers panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Downtown Kerrville invites leisurely strolls past historic buildings, antique stores and riverside parks along the Kerrville River Trail. Mild winter temperatures make it a peaceful retreat with a strong sense of Western identity.

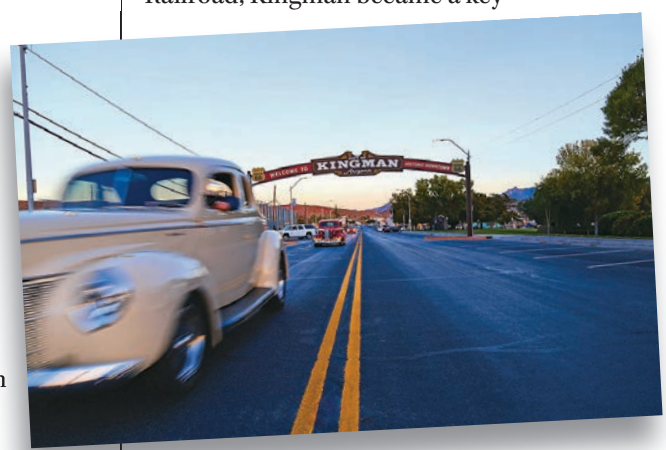
Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Hill Country scenery, world-class Western art collection and mild weather for outdoor exploring.
Annual/Special Events: Hill Country District Junior Livestock Show (Jan)

Museum of Western Art, Kerrville, TX

Courtesy Museum of Western Art

Kingman, Arizona
(Winter Avg. High 60°F)

Founded in the 1880s as a railroad town along the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, Kingman became a key stop for miners, ranchers and travelers heading west. The arrival of the rails brought prosperity, and by the mid-20th century, Kingman was a thriving Route 66 community, welcoming cross-country motorists with diners, motels and classic



Vintage cars cruise down Historic Route 66 in Kingman, Arizona, where the Mother Road's spirit still rolls on.

Courtesy City of Kingman

service stations. The Mohave Museum of History and Arts highlights Native American heritage, mining history, ranching and the area's role in Western expansion. The Arizona Route 66 Museum shares the chronological history of Route 66 from Native American trade routes to the post World War II high time of America's car culture. Kingman also celebrates its deep ties to the Mother Road, and 2026 will mark the 100th anniversary of Route 66 with special events and celebrations. Beyond downtown, sunny winter days are perfect for exploring nearby desert landscapes, scenic drives and ghost towns that whisper the stories of the Old West. With its blend of railroad heritage, Route 66 charm and wide-open Arizona skies, Kingman offers a warm welcome all winter long.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Historic Route 66 charm, railroad and mining heritage and sunny desert climate.
Annual/Special Events: Kingman Route 66 Fest (Oct), Route 66 Fun Run (May)

Prescott, Arizona
(Winter Avg. High 53°F)

Established in 1864 as the first capital of the Arizona Territory, Prescott quickly grew into a hub for miners, ranchers and traders seeking fortune and opportunity in the mountains of central Arizona. Whiskey Row, once lined with more

The exquisitely restored Art Deco lobby of the 1927 Hassayampa Inn in downtown Prescott offers a welcoming respite spot for guests after a busy day touring the historic sites of the mile-high city.

Courtesy the Hassayampa Inn

than 40 saloons, remains the heart of the historic district, with the Palace Restaurant and Saloon, Arizona's oldest bar, serving as its lively crown jewel. Inside, the ornate bar, pressed-tin ceilings and vintage photographs transport visitors back to the rowdy days when lawmen, gamblers and miners swapped stories over whiskey. For history lovers, the Sharlot Hall Museum preserves territorial heritage through pioneer homes, artifacts and living exhibits, while the Museum of Indigenous People highlights the artistry and traditions of the Southwest's Native cultures. The Phippen Museum showcases Western art and cowboy heritage, and the Western Heritage Center tells the story of Prescott's frontier role. With Victorian neighborhoods, a stately courthouse plaza and crisp winter days perfect for exploring nearby trails, Prescott blends history, scenery and Old West charm.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Territorial history, Whiskey Row saloons and mild mountain weather. Annual/Special Events: Prescott Courthouse Lighting Ceremony (Dec)

Silver City, New Mexico
(Winter Avg. High 54°F)

Founded in 1870 after silver was discovered in the surrounding mountains, Silver City quickly transformed from a rugged mining camp into one of the most dynamic towns in the Southwest. Early residents included miners chasing fortune, ranchers tending the high desert, merchants supplying goods, and outlaws seeking refuge in its remote location. Today, its historic downtown is lined with brightly painted 19th-century buildings that now house art galleries, antique shops and locally owned cafés, giving it a vibrant yet historic feel. The Silver City Museum, set in a beautifully restored 1881 home, tells the story of the boom years, frontier life and the town's diverse heritage. Just beyond the city limits, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument preserves ancient homes built by the Mogollon people more than 700 years ago. Winter days here bring crisp mornings, sunny afternoons and a relaxed pace, perfect for exploring both history and the surrounding natural beauty.

The historic Silver City Museum in Silver City, New Mexico, preserves the rich heritage of this former mining town.

Courtesy Silver City Museum

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Rich mining and cultural history, nearby ancient sites and clear winter skies. Annual/Special Events: Southwest Print Fiesta (Oct), Dia de los Muertos (Nov), Victorian Christmas (Dec)

Williams, Arizona
(Winter Avg. High 50°F)

Founded in 1881 as a railroad hub for the timber and ranching industries, Williams soon became known as the "Gateway to the Grand Canyon." Its historic downtown preserves brick buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, now home to shops, restaurants and museums. Pete's Route 66 Gas Station Museum offers a nostalgic look at mid-century road travel, while the Grand Canyon Railway keeps history alive with vintage train excursions to the South Rim. Winter in Williams means fewer crowds, crisp sunny days and a relaxed pace for exploring. Visitors can stroll along Route 66, enjoy the charm of historic storefronts, and warm up in cozy cafés after a morning of sightseeing. Outdoor enthusiasts will find nearby trails and scenic drives framed by snow-dusted pines, adding a wintry beauty to the high-country landscape. Whether you come for the history, the scenery or the ride to one of the world's great natural wonders, Williams welcomes winter travelers with open arms.

The Grand Canyon Railway locomotive carries passengers on a nostalgic journey to one of the world's greatest natural wonders.

Courtesy the City of Williams

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Historic Route 66 town, vintage train rides to the Grand Canyon and small-town charm.
Annual/Special Events: Steam Saturdays (Oct), Polar Express Grand Canyon Railway (Nov), Holiday Tree Lighting (Nov)

Winter IN THE WEST

COLD WINTER TOWNS

Abilene, Kansas
(Winter Avg. High 44°F)

In the late 1860s, Abilene became the first "cowtown" of the West, a rowdy endpoint for the Chisholm Trail cattle drives. For a few wild years, this Kansas prairie town was the stomping ground of legendary lawmen, including Wild Bill Hickok, who tried to bring order to its saloons, gambling halls and dance parlors. Joseph McCoy's stockyards made Abilene the hub of the cattle trade, and the Union Pacific Railroad carried the beef east. Today, winter visitors can step back into that history at Old Abilene Town, a living history site with restored buildings, vintage shops and seasonal reenactments. The Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum and Boyhood Home adds another layer, telling the story of Abilene's most famous son. The Seelye Mansion, built in 1905, offers a glimpse into Gilded Age elegance with original furnishings and stories from the mansion's early days. The Dickinson County Historical Society preserves artifacts from the pioneer and cattle drive era. Winters here are cool but not harsh, making it a comfortable time to explore without the summer crowds.

Why It's Perfect for Winter: *Legendary cattle town history, authentic Old West sites and fewer visitors for a more relaxed experience.*
Annual/Special Events: Abilene Oktoberfest (Sept)

The Seelye Mansion in Abilene, Kansas, has been named "one of the 8 wonders of Kansas architecture."

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

Bishop, California
(Winter Avg. High 54°F)

Bishop, nestled in California's Owens Valley, began as a ranching settlement in the mid-1800s, supplying miners, ranchers and homesteaders who came to tame the high desert. By the late 19th century, it had become a gateway to the Sierra Nevada, with stage stops, bustling general stores

Bishop, California, the self-declared "Mule Capital of the World," celebrates its Eastern Sierra Nevada mule-packing heritage at Bishop's Mule Days, a weeklong festival held every May over Memorial Day weekend.

Louis Basso, Courtesy Bishop, California CVB

and the narrow-gauge Carson & Colorado Railroad linking it to distant markets. Today, its historic downtown still reflects that pioneer spirit, with preserved storefronts, family-run cafés and outdoor outfitters. The Laws Railroad Museum & Historic Site transports visitors to the railroad era with its preserved depot, locomotives and historic buildings. The Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center offers an important perspective on the region's Native heritage through exhibits, artifacts and traditional stories. Winter in Bishop brings crisp, clear days framed by snow-dusted peaks, making it a peaceful season for exploring nearby hot springs, hiking in the valley or taking scenic drives into the surrounding desert and mountains.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Sierra views, rich Native and rail history and a laid-back pace.
Annual/Special Events:
Mule Days (May)

Cody, Wyoming
(Winter Avg. High 37°F)

Founded in 1896 by the legendary showman Buffalo Bill Cody, this Wyoming town was built on the promise of Western hospitality and access to Yellowstone National Park. Cody's early days revolved around cattle ranching, hunting and entertaining travelers from across the globe. Today, the Buffalo Bill

A reconstruction of artist Frederic Remington's studio at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a complex of five museums and a research library in Cody, Wyoming, featuring art and artifacts of the American West

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

Center of the West houses five world-class museums under one roof, covering everything from Plains Indian heritage to firearms history. In winter, the streets are quiet, the scenery dramatic, and the wildlife easier to spot in the surrounding valleys and mountain foothills. Nearby, the historic Irma Hotel—built by Buffalo Bill himself—still serves guests much as it did in the early 1900s, with its famous cherrywood bar shipped from France. The snowy season offers a slower pace, giving visitors time to appreciate Cody's Old West architecture, unique galleries and welcoming restaurants without the summer crowds.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Buffalo Bill heritage, uncrowded museums and winter wildlife viewing.
Annual/Special Events: Cody Ice Festival (Feb)

Deadwood, South Dakota
(Winter Avg. High 37°F)

Booming to life in 1876 during the Black Hills Gold Rush, Deadwood became infamous for its lawlessness, saloons and legendary figures Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane. The town's 19th-century core has been preserved as a National Historic Landmark, offering a vivid glimpse into its rowdy past. Visitors can explore the Adams Museum, the Days of '76 Museum, and Mount Moriah Cemetery, where Hickok and Jane rest. The historic Bullock Hotel, built in 1895 by Lawrence County's first sheriff, Seth Bullock, remains a crown jewel of Main Street. With its ornate Victorian architecture and period furnishings, it blends frontier elegance with rugged history. Guests can stay in rooms that still bear the spirit of the Old West, and some say Bullock himself lingers in the halls, making it one of Deadwood's most storied (and possibly haunted) landmarks. Winter transforms Deadwood into a peaceful, snow-dusted retreat, perfect for strolling historic streets or enjoying the quiet glow of its saloons.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Gold Rush history, preserved architecture and intimate winter ambiance.
Annual/Special Events: Mardi Gras Weekend (Feb)

Dodge City, Kansas
(Winter Avg. High 46°F)

Once known as the "Wickedest Little City in America," Dodge City thrived as a key cattle-shipping point in the 1870s and 1880s. Lawmen like Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp

Deadwood, South Dakota street scene

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

The "Dodge City Longhorn Cattle Drive" is an annual event held during Dodge City Days, where longhorn cattle are driven down Wyatt Earp Boulevard, bringing the historic West to life for the public.

Courtesy Dodge City CVB

patrolled its streets, keeping order amid the saloons, gambling halls and dance parlors that catered to cowboys fresh off the trail. Today, visitors can step into that past at the Boot Hill Museum, one of the most immersive frontier history experiences in the West. Spread across multiple buildings, the museum features original artifacts, reconstructed storefronts and detailed exhibits that bring Dodge's wild days to life. In the summer, reenactments of gunfights and saloon shows capture the drama of the era, while the nearby Gunfighters Wax Museum offers a unique chance to meet life-sized figures of Old West legends. Together, these attractions create a vivid picture of frontier life, from the cattle drives to the railroad era. The Santa Fe Trail tracks, still visible nearby, connect visitors to the pioneers who came before. Winter's cooler weather and lighter crowds make for an ideal visit.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Legendary lawmen, authentic frontier history and uncrowded attractions.
Annual/Special Events: International Festival (Sept), Parade of Lights & Chili Cook-off (Dec), Dodge City Days (July)

The Durango Polar Express offers kids a ride on an 1879 train to hear the Christmas tale on the way to see Santa.

Courtesy Durango & Silverton Railroad

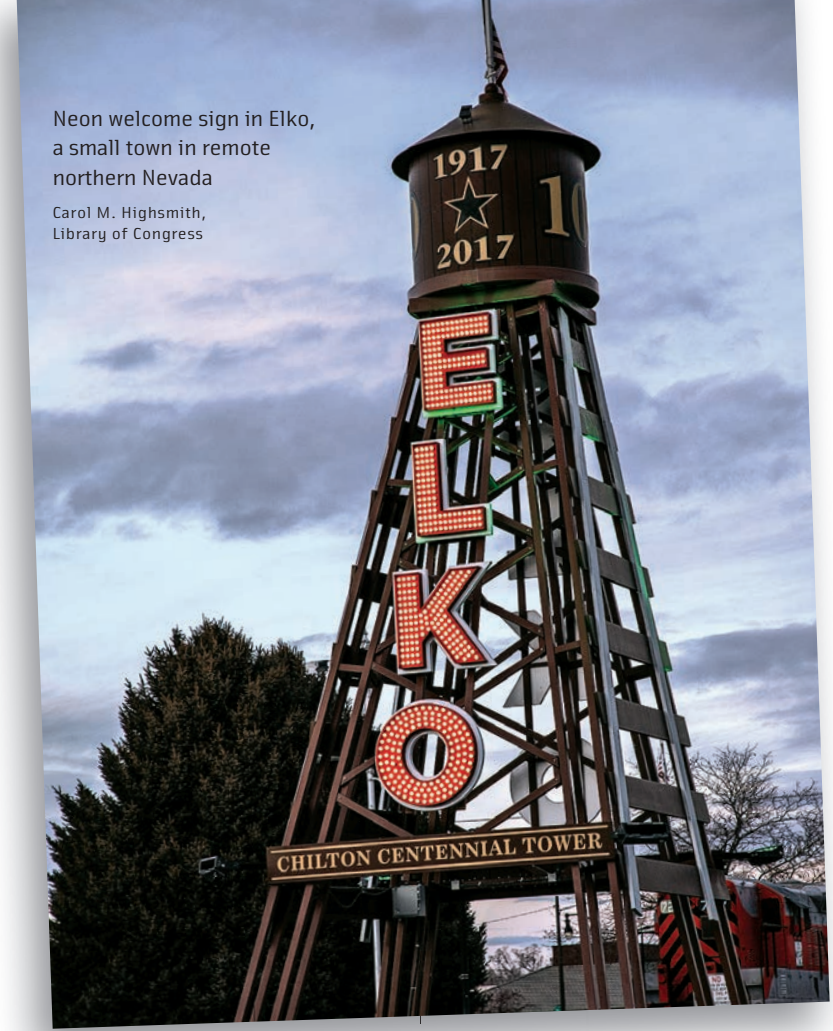
Durango, Colorado
(Winter Avg. High 43°F)

Founded in 1880 by the Denver & Rio Grande Railway, Durango was built to serve the booming mining industry in the San Juan Mountains. The historic Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, originally used to haul ore, still operates year-round, carrying passengers on a breathtaking journey along the Animas River with snow-covered peaks as a backdrop. Downtown Durango preserves its 19th-century charm with brick buildings housing shops, galleries, restaurants and saloons. The Strater Hotel, opened in 1887, remains a crown jewel of Victorian elegance and Western lore, having hosted dignitaries, outlaws and countless travelers over the decades. Inside, antique furnishings and period wallpaper transport guests into the Gilded Age. Winter in Durango is a magical time, offering peaceful snowshoe trails, horse-drawn sleigh rides and skiing at nearby Purgatory Resort. Evenings are best spent warmed by the glow of historic lamplight, with the sound of a piano drifting from a saloon.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Historic railroad rides, Victorian charm and winter mountain adventures.
Annual/Special Events: Harvest Fest (Sept), Durango Cowboy Gathering (Oct), Snowdown Festival (Jan)

Elko, Nevada
(Winter Avg. High 42°F)

Emerging as a key stop along the Central Pacific Railroad in the late 1860s, Elko quickly became a vital hub for ranchers, miners and travelers heading west. Its location on the Humboldt River made it an ideal supply center, and the arrival of the railroad ensured steady growth.



Neon welcome sign in Elko, a small town in remote northern Nevada

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

Today, Elko remains deeply tied to cowboy culture and the vast, open landscapes of northeastern Nevada. The Northeastern Nevada Museum offers an in-depth look at the region's heritage, with exhibits on pioneer life, Native history and the area's cattle ranching legacy. The California Trail Interpretive Center brings the dramatic story of westward migration to life through immersive exhibits and reconstructed wagon camps, while the Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum celebrates the craftsmanship of saddles, bits and spurs. Winter in Elko brings crisp, sunny days perfect for exploring the nearby Ruby Mountains, known as the "Swiss Alps of Nevada." The quieter season means more time for museum visits, hearty meals in historic diners and browsing Western shops.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Cowboy culture, rich museums and winter mountain beauty.
Annual/Special Events: National Cowboy Poetry Gathering (Jan)

The 1902 Northern Pacific Railroad depot operates now as the Depot Center Museum in Livingston, MT.

Courtesy Livingston Depot Center Museum

Livingston, Montana
(Winter Avg. High 37°F)

Born as a Northern Pacific Railroad town in the early 1880s, Livingston quickly became a bustling gateway to Yellowstone National Park. The railroad brought tourists, ranchers and entrepreneurs, turning the town into a lively mix of industry and hospitality. Its historic main street still showcases original brick and stone buildings, many now home to art galleries, bookstores and Western outfitters. The Livingston Depot Center, housed in the beautifully restored 1902 railroad station, offers a glimpse into the golden age of rail travel, when passengers arrived for their Yellowstone adventures. The Yellowstone Gateway Museum further

enriches the story, with exhibits on Native cultures, pioneer life and the natural history of the region. Winter transforms Livingston into a serene mountain retreat, with the snow-capped peaks of the Absaroka Range framing the Yellowstone River as it winds through the valley. The season is perfect for wildlife watching in Paradise Valley or savoring the warmth of historic cafés and eateries.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Railroad heritage, Yellowstone gateway and peaceful winter scenery.
Annual/Special Events: Light Up Livingston Celebration (Nov)

American Indian Beauty Pageant Winner, Oregon, 1997

William Albert Allard/ National Geographic

Pendleton, Oregon
(Winter Avg. High 46°F)

Established in the mid-1800s, Pendleton rose to prominence as a major trade and ranching hub in Eastern Oregon, its name forever tied to the world-famous Pendleton Round-Up rodeo. In winter, the pace slows, revealing the town's layered history in a more intimate way. The Pendleton Woolen Mills, in continuous operation since 1909, offers tours showcasing the craftsmanship behind its iconic blankets and clothing. Beneath the streets, the Pendleton Underground Tours lead visitors through a fascinating network of tunnels once used during the Prohibition era and by Chinese immigrants in the late 1800s. The Tamástslikt Cultural Institute shares the rich heritage of the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla tribes through immersive exhibits, art and storytelling. At the Heritage Station Museum, visitors explore pioneer life, transportation and the development of Umatilla County, while the Pendleton Round-Up & Happy Canyon Hall of Fame celebrates the legacy of one of America's greatest rodeos. Downtown's historic brick storefronts invite browsing, and the surrounding rolling hills glow under winter skies.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Deep ranching and Native history, cozy small-town vibe and unique cultural sites.
Annual/Special Events: Christmas in Pendleton (Oct), Oktoberfest Pendleton (Oct)

Sheridan, Wyoming
(Winter Avg. High 38°F)

Founded in the late 19th century, Sheridan grew as a ranching community and a vital railroad hub along the Burlington & Missouri line. The town still radiates frontier charm, with historic brick buildings, vibrant Western art galleries and the legendary Sheridan Inn, once managed by Buffalo Bill Cody and frequented by guests like Calamity Jane and Annie Oakley. In winter, Sheridan slows to a peaceful rhythm, inviting visitors to explore the Trails End State Historic Site, the elegant 1913 mansion of former Wyoming governor and cattle baron John B. Kendrick. The Museum at the Bighorns offers engaging exhibits on the region's Native heritage, ranching traditions and frontier history, while just a short drive away, the Brinton Museum showcases exceptional Western art and American Indian artifacts in a stunning mountain setting. Downtown's old storefronts

house boutiques, cafes and antique shops perfect for a leisurely afternoon. Just beyond town, the snow-covered Bighorn Mountains provide opportunities for snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and spotting elk, deer and moose in their winter range.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Buffalo Bill heritage, historic inn and scenic winter landscapes.
Annual/Special Events: Born in a Barn (Sept), Sheridan Wyo Film Festival (Oct), Christmas Stroll (Nov)

St. Joseph, Missouri
(Winter Avg. High 43°F)

Founded in 1843 along the Missouri River, St. Joseph quickly became a bustling supply point for pioneers heading west. It earned lasting fame in 1860 as the eastern terminus of the Pony Express, where young riders began their legendary 1,800-mile relay to California. The Pony Express National Museum, housed in the original stables, brings that history vividly to life with interactive exhibits, rider gear, historic maps and stories of the daring horsemen who braved storms, rough terrain and hostile attacks to deliver the mail in just 10 days. St. Joseph also holds a darker claim to fame; it's where outlaw Jesse James

Revelers fill downtown Sheridan, Wyoming, for the annual Christmas Stroll on Main Street, where twinkling lights, festive music and small-town charm create a holiday celebration.

Courtesy Sheridan CVB

The Peace Officers Memorial in St. Joseph Missouri

Carol M. Highsmith, Library of Congress

met his end in 1882. Visitors can stand in the very room at the Jesse James Home Museum where he was shot, his legacy forever sealed in Western lore. The Patee House Museum, once a luxury hotel and Eastern Headquarters for the Pony Express, offers an immersive look at frontier life, from vintage vehicles to opulent period rooms. Winter's quiet charm makes it easy to explore St. Joseph's ornate architecture and historic districts at an unhurried pace.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Pony Express heritage, outlaw lore and uncrowded museums.
Annual/Special Events: PumpkinFest (Oct), Winter Wine Festival (Feb)

The Dalles, Oregon
(Winter Avg. High 47°F)

Situated along the Columbia River, The Dalles has been a vital crossroads for centuries—first as a Native American trading hub, then as a pivotal stop for emigrants on the Oregon Trail. It also played a key role in the Lewis and Clark Expedition, serving as an important waypoint during their 1805–1806 journey to and from the Pacific. By the 1880s, The Dalles had grown into a thriving agricultural and shipping center, sending wheat, fruit and timber downriver. The Fort Dalles Museum, located in a preserved 1856 officer's house, holds one of Oregon's oldest historical collections, featuring military relics, pioneer

artifacts and period furnishings. The Columbia Gorge Discovery Center explores the river's role in westward expansion, Native culture and the natural forces that shaped the Gorge. Winter brings fewer visitors, creating a quiet atmosphere for exploring the historic downtown, walking the scenic riverfront and soaking in sweeping Gorge views framed by snow-dusted hills.

Why It's Perfect for Winter:
Lewis and Clark history, Oregon Trail heritage, scenic riverfront.
Annual/Special Events: Cherry Blossom Festival (Apr)

Mule-drawn wagons roll through The Dalles during Fort Dalles Days, celebrating the frontier spirit and pioneer heritage of Oregon's oldest city.

Courtesy The Dalles Chamber of Commerce

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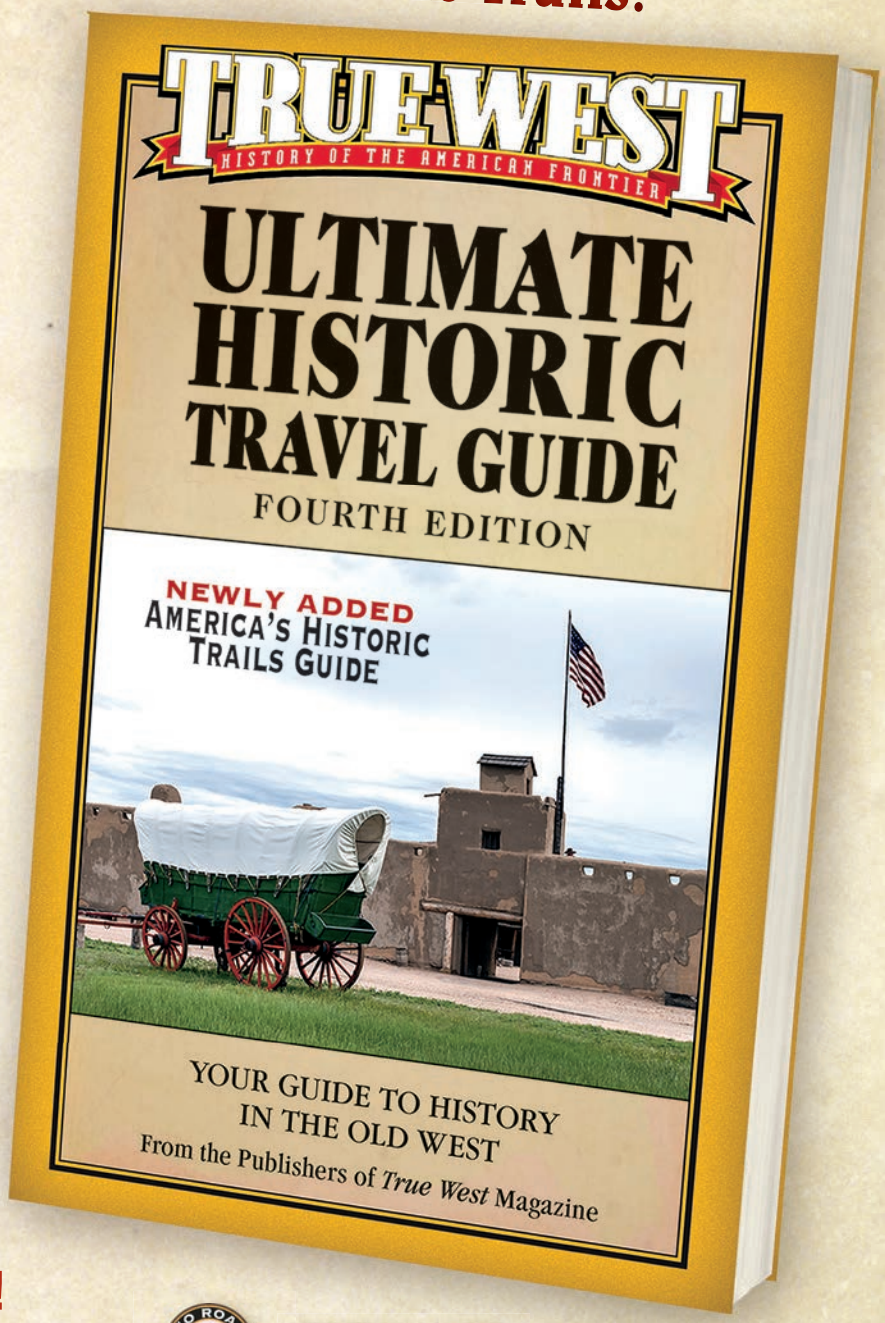

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TWO ROADS WEST

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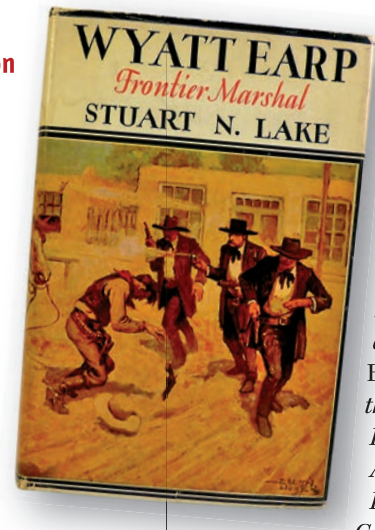
Cavalcade of Ask the Marshall

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.

Lessons I have learned during more than a quarter century of "Ask the Marshall"

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

Josh Taylor
Austin, Texas



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.

How factual are the books *The Earp Brothers of Tombstone* and *I Married Wyat Earp*?

Joe Manriquez
Whittier, California

I would donate them to some charity raffle. Authors Frank Waters (*Earp Brothers*...) and Glenn Boyer (*I Married*...) made up a lot of the content of those books. Frankly, the same is true of the other Tombstone writers of the 1920s, Stuart Lake, Walter Noble Burns and Billy Breakenridge. There's a lot of hearsay and legend in all of them. That's how it was done with the first generation of authors of the Wild West.

If you want some authors who are thorough researchers and can be trusted, here are some of my favorites: Casey Tefertiller, *Wyatt Earp, The Life Behind the Legend*; Dr. Gary Roberts, *Doc Holliday, The Life and the Legend*; John Boessenecker, *Ride the Devil's Herd: Wyatt Earp's Epic Battle Against the West's Biggest Outlaw Gang*; Allen Barra, *Inventing Wyatt Earp: His Life and Many Legends*; and last but certainly not least, *A Wyatt Earp Anthology: Long May His Story Be Told*, edited by Roy B. Young and Gary L Roberts.

What can you tell me about cowboy movie star Tom Mix?

Karl Reinhardt
Stuttgart, Germany

Tom Mix was the first superhero. Post WWI audiences wanted to forget problems and escape to fantasy. His movies were pure frolic and delight. He was the man in the white hat who rode into town and battled the bad guys. His Westerns were loaded with fist fights, slapstick stunts, pretty ladies, and to the relief of his adolescent fans, he seldom rode off into the sunset with any of them.

Mix knew his stuff. Born in Pennsylvania in 1880, he headed out West around the turn of the century. In Guthrie, OK, he worked as a bartender and played semi-professional football. The Miller Brothers saw him and hired him as a trick rider for their Wild West show. From there, it was a short shift to making movies.

Mix was making $17,500 a week in the 1920s. He eventually made 300 silent films and nine talkies—most of them with his "Wonder Horse," Tony (who became nearly as popular as his rider).

In 1929, many experts predicted talkies would be the end of cowboy movie stars whose virtuous characters were seen as old-fashioned. One critic wrote, "Tom Mix, Hoot Gibson and Ken Maynard had better switch to aeroplanes or retreat to the old actors home." Instead, Mix had some of his most successful years in the 1930s.


Tom Mix
True West Archives

Mix was killed on October 12, 1940, when his 1937 yellow Cord Phaeton convertible wrecked near Florence, AZ. Too late, he saw barricades on a bridge detour. He swung into a wash, jolting the car, causing an aluminum suitcase to fly up from the back seat and break his neck. Tom Mix was 60.

Based on sets, characters, clothing, firearms and treatment of horses, which Western movies are considered the best?

Tim Daley
Union Grove, Wisconsin

If you asked ten different Western film aficionados, you would likely get ten different answers, so here are mine.

1. *The Searchers* (1956)
2. *Shane* (1953)
3. *Monte Walsh* (1970)
4. *Dances with Wolves* (1990)
5. *High Noon* (1953)
6. *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948)
7. *Ride the High Country* (1962)
8. *Red River* (1948)
9. *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969)
10. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962)
11. *Lonesome Dove* (1989) was a miniseries. It's based on a true story with a great cast, and everything in the movie is authentic. It's one of a kind.

What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

Courtesy Lisa Bennett

JAMES TOWNSEND

James Townsend serves on the Board of Directors of Billy the Kid's Historical Coalition, has contributed to publications including *True West* Magazine and the *Tombstone Epitaph*, and is the co-host of the popular YouTube channel *Chasing Billy*. He lives in Saint Albans, West Virginia.

If I could go back in time, I would visit Charleston, Kanawha County, West Virginia, in the 1920s. As much as I love all areas of our collective history, family history is sacred to me, and I would love to meet my great-grandparents, who I feel are my "patron saints" on my genealogical journey. A close second, or perhaps tie, would be to go to back to any point prior to 2010, and just sit and talk one more time with my father, who we lost that year.

My parents taught me that "abundance" and "wealth" are two different things; that you should always stand up for yourself; and a life filled with laughter is one of the most important things you could aim for.

Growing up I was taught to trust people enough to show them who you are, and to trust them when they show you who they are.

I got my first gig when—If we're talking music, I formed a band when I was a senior in high school, and my first "gig" was my guitar player's girlfriend's birthday party. I got a headache from smoking too many clove cigarettes. If we're talking writing, it was a political editorial that I wrote as a young college student for a local newspaper. If we're talking mundane occupations that have nothing to do with who we are, it was slingin' bbq at a hole-in-the-wall dive off of a wooded two-lane country road.

I wish I had a dollar for every time someone said they had a photograph of Billy the Kid.

Closest I ever got to a bona fide spiritual experience was visiting Lincoln, New Mexico, for the first time. We pulled in at night, with the windows rolled down. Absolute silence. The empty street, a subtle floral scent to the air, and the buildings slightly illuminated by the moonlight.

When I was growing up, I loved to read. I became an avid reader around the age of seven or so, checking out tons of books from my school library. I even received a reward at an assembly once for reading an absurd amount of book. By middle school, I could read a 900-page book in a few days. There has not been a day since that I have not been reading something.

Most people don't know that, starting in the sixth grade and going into my fourth year at college, I took Spanish classes every year. My final exam in my last course was to speak nothing but Spanish with the Colombian professor for over an hour. I passed. While he said I could survive in a Spanish-speaking environment, my translation and transcribing skills were my strengths. I mostly avoid speaking Spanish because I sound like the Appalachian gringo that I am, and it feels pretentious and disrespectful to try and assume an authentic accent.

The best thing about history is realizing that the world around you is not only three-dimensional in a spatial sense, but also in a temporal one. The physical space that we all occupy has a depth extending into the past and future. When you walk down a street, you are walking through the shadows of Victorian gentlemen, Depression-era mothers and barefoot children dodging carriages in the Gilded Age. That which was, is now, and ever shall be. We are who they were.

For my money the best Western is *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford*. Critics may rightly say that the film moves slowly. There is not much action. But cinematically—visually—it is a masterpiece, a true work of art. I have no negative things to say about that film!

My favorite place in the West is Lincoln, New Mexico. That place is magical. Visitors and residents, I suspect, have always felt it. The land is alive. To riff off of Nietzsche: when you look upon Lincoln...Lincoln looks back.

What history has taught me is that none of us are that good, that bad, that rich, that poor, that healthy, that sick.... In short, none of us are that special. We're all just players in the grand drama of existence that unfolds. History without end, amen.

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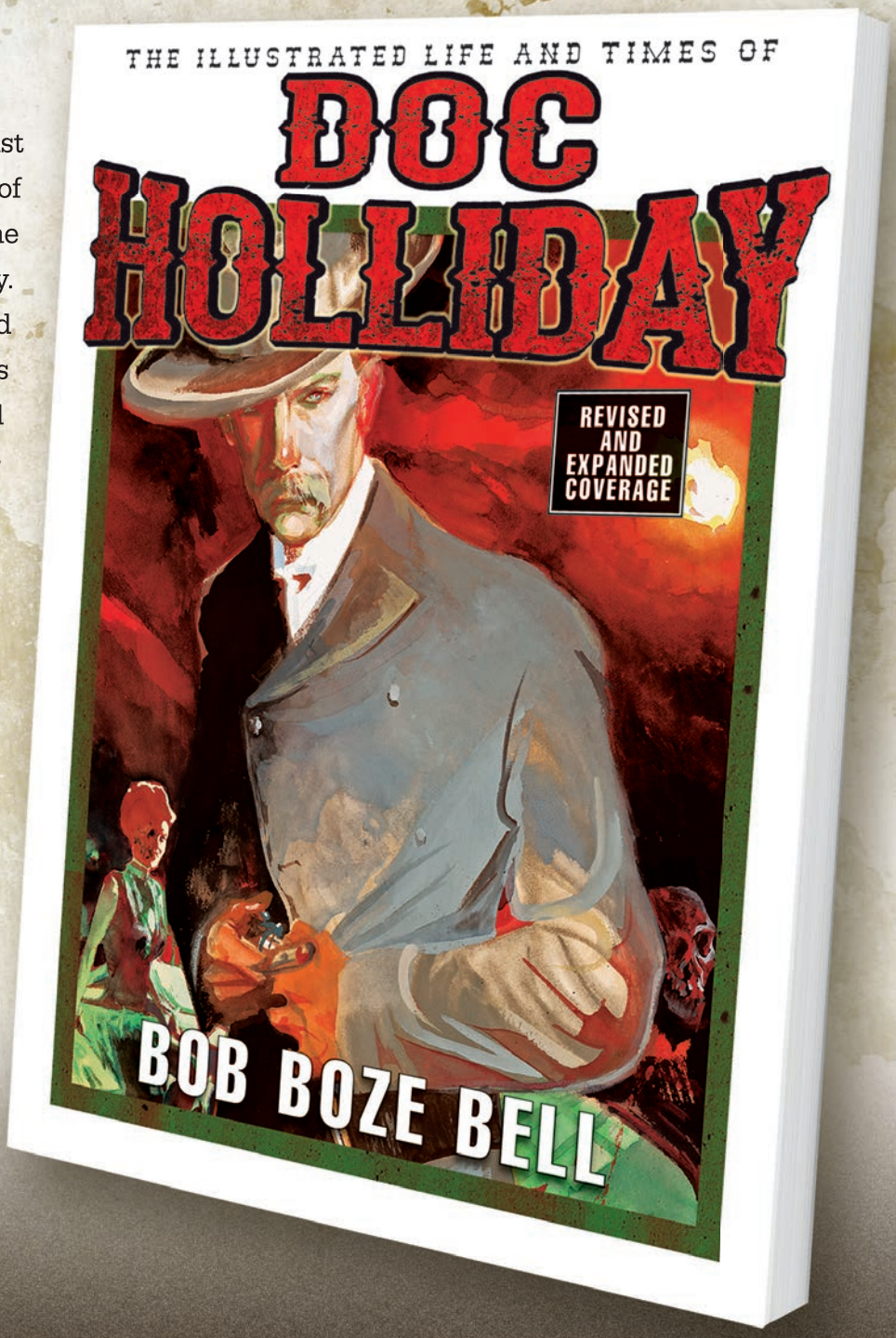

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