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# TRUE WEST

HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

## Wild Times

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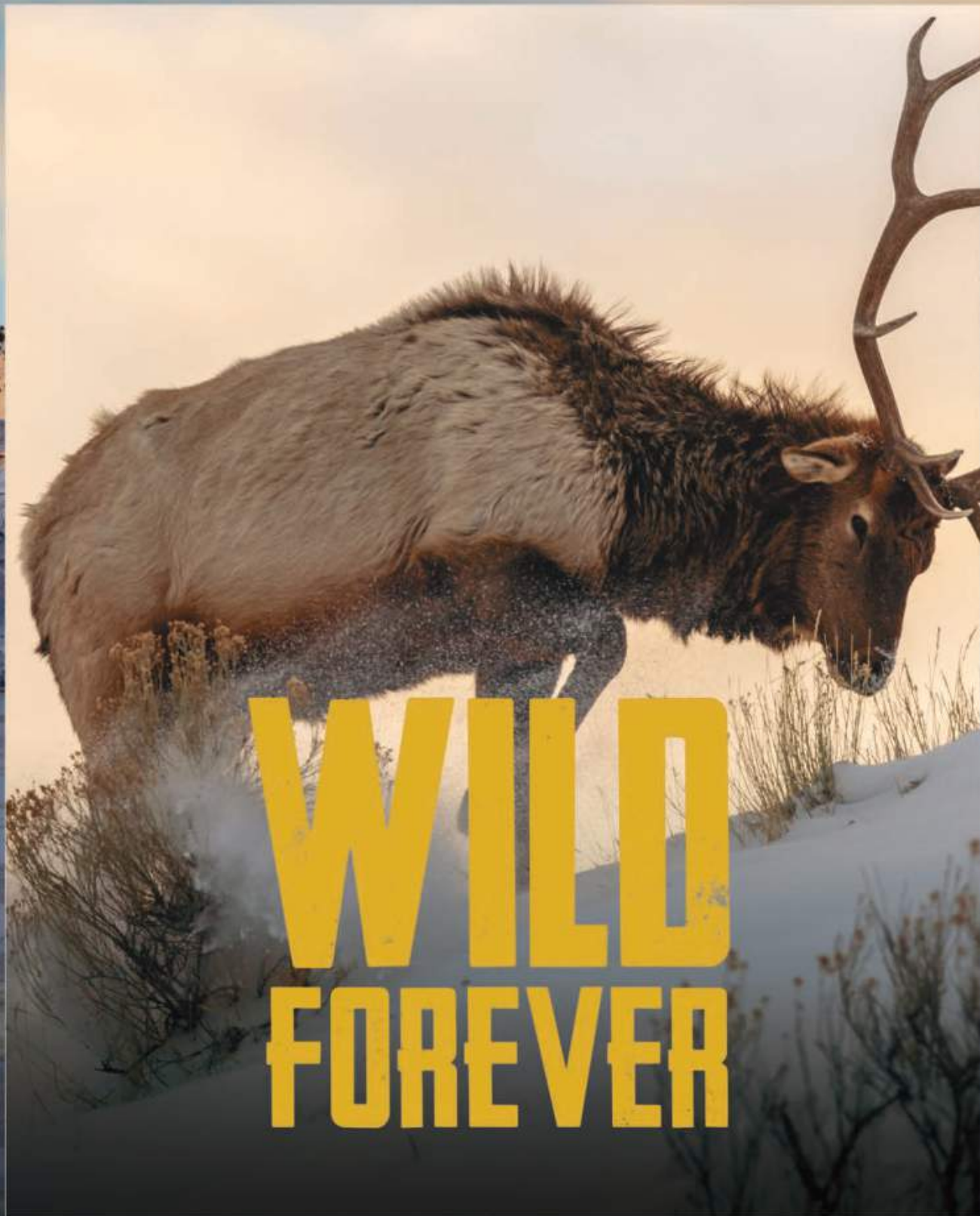
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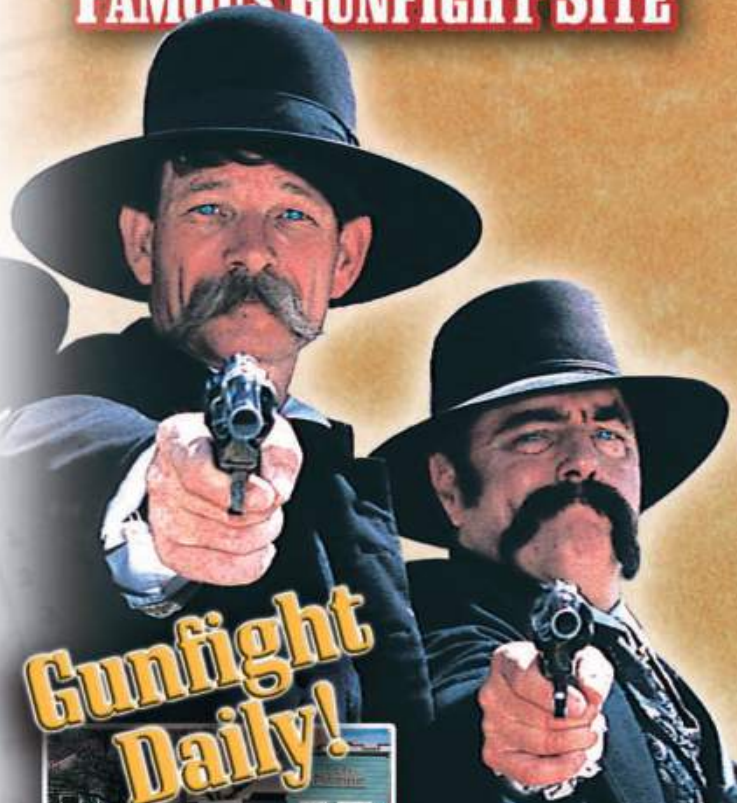
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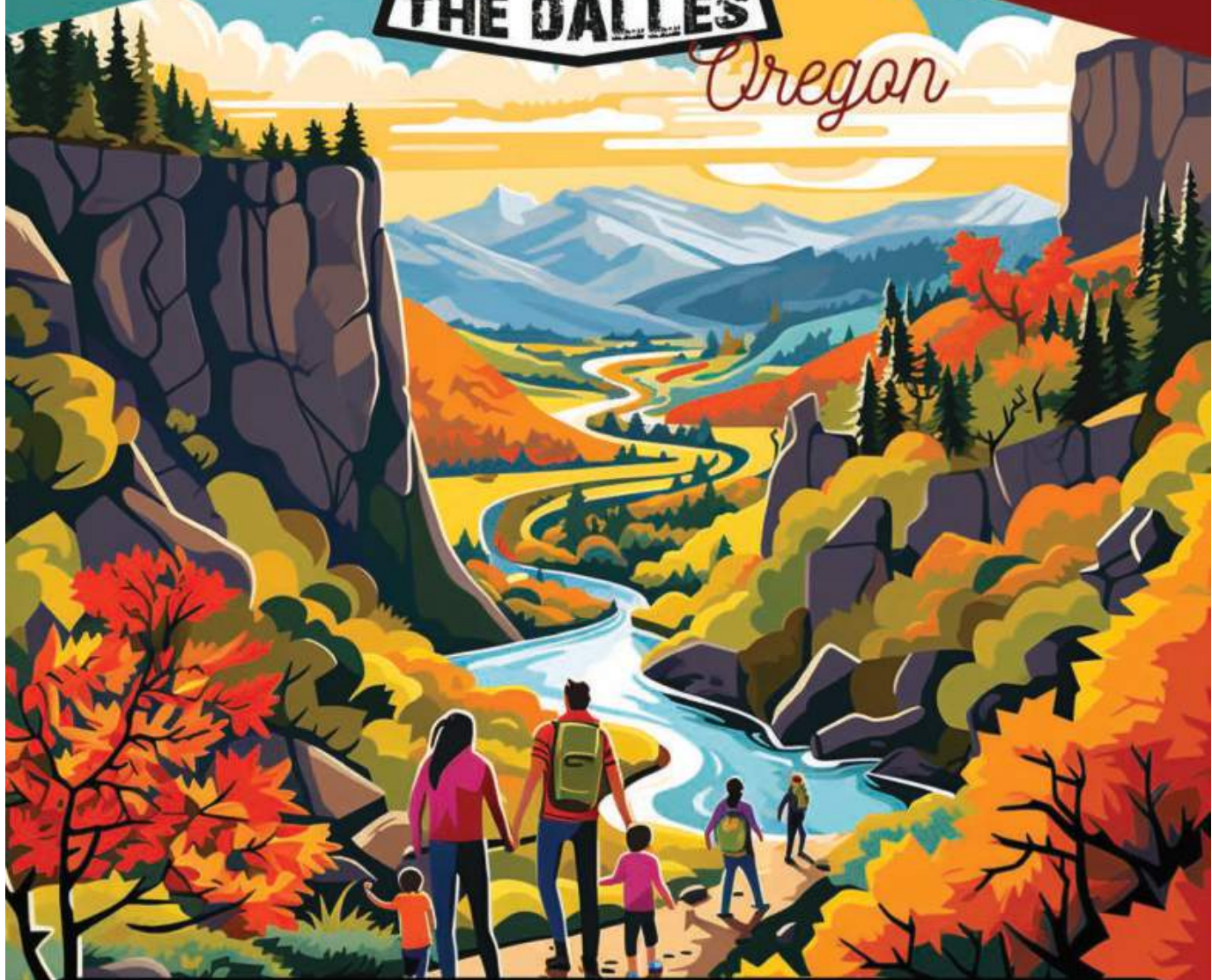
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## YELLOWSTONE RIVER

Photographer Evelyn Cameron (below with her Graflex camera) captured these images of the XIT herd swimming the Yellowstone River near Fallon, Montana in 1904. Rodeo cowboy, Johnnie Mullens worked for this large cattle ranch in his early days as a cowpuncher. Read more about Johnnie Mullens on page 42.

Yellowstone images courtesy Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, Texas, Bequest of Mary Alice Pettis—Public domain/Evelyn Cameron courtesy True West archives











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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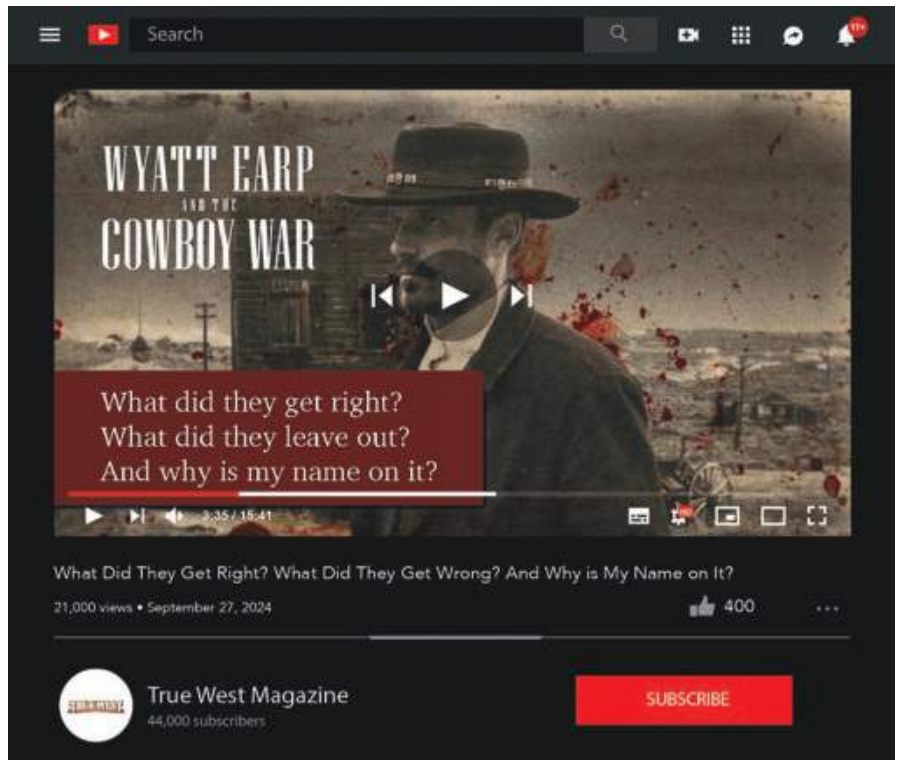
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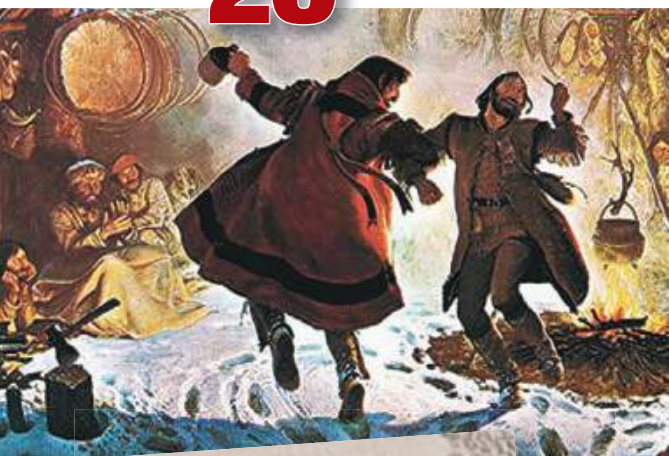


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200 years ago, Ashley's Hundred revolutionized the American fur trade, venturing into the Rockies, trapping beaver, and shaping Western history.

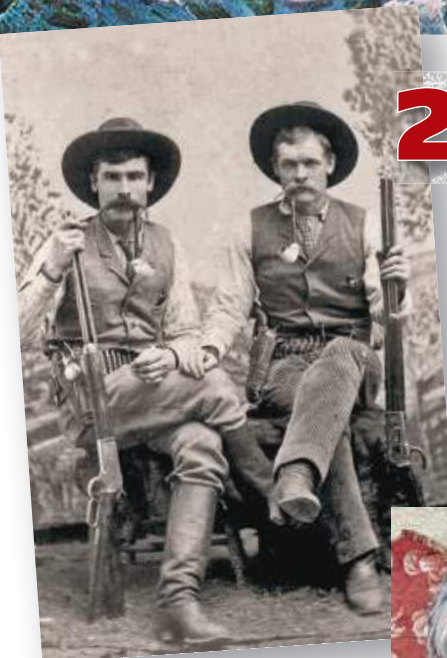
—By Candy Moulton

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—By Mike Coppock

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True West's own Jana Bommersbach challenged power, pursued truth, and shaped Arizona journalism for over five decades.

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—By Stuart Rosebrook

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Illustration by Herbert "Buck" Dunton  
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# Old Vaquero Sayings

*"Cerveza makes you feel like you ought to feel without cerveza."*



QUOTES

*"Large numbers of strangers can cooperate successfully by believing in common myths."*

*—Simon Sinek*

*"Life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent."*

*—Walt Whitman*



**"Choosing the right words is the difference between lightning and lightning bug."**

*—Mark Twain*

*"Anyone who believes you can't change history has never tried to write his memoirs."*

*—David Benburion*

**"Imagination is more important than knowledge."**

*—Albert Einstein*

*"I love those who can smile in trouble."*

*—Leonardo da Vinci*

*"And now that you don't have to be perfect, you can be good."*

*—John Steinbeck*



**"A hero is one who knows how to hang on one minute longer."**

*—Novalis*

*"The most important decision you make is to be in a good mood."*

*—Voltaire*

FROM THE TRUE WEST VAULT





# Walk Where They Walked

*Some may talk the walk, but we walk the talk.*

**I**n this issue of *True West* we are launching a new history campaign—actually more of a crusade—to Walk Where They Walked. We are going to encourage you and everyone you know to get out and experience history firsthand, by seeking out the actual ground where history happened. You will be amazed at what you pick up when you simply walk where they walked.

So get ready to experience history on a whole new level. For example, to better understand what actually happened to Willie B. Rude on July 14 of 1861 (see page 44), we are going to give you specific directions, so you can almost literally put yourself in his shoes. Look how happy it made me:

In March of 2024, Stuart Rosebrook and I met historian Greg Scott at the Green Valley post office, and we trekked out to the area where Rude made his brave stand 163 years before. When we got to the site, I could definitely sense the desperation he must have felt having to defend such an inferior position. And, I certainly felt his presence as I stood on the immediate ground he chose to fight to the death on.



Yes, I am excited to be on the actual site of gunfight. When you get to the Anza Trailhead parking lot (see map below) walk east, across the normally dry Santa Cruz Riverbed and about 200 yards north of the bridge, on the eastern bank of the river, in one of the many mesquite thickets is where the fight took place.

Photo by Greg Scott

## Directions to The Rude Gunfight Site

Here's how to get there. Starting from Tucson, go south on I-19 through Green Valley. From Canoa Ranch exit go south on the east frontage road about 3 miles to Elephant Head Road. Turn left, which is east. Go about a quarter mile to the Elephant Head/Anza Trailhead on the left.



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



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

## KILLER KIDS

Oh, the troubled faces of these killer kids on the cover of the current issue of *True West* reflect the horror and madness of war. You can tell those eyes saw and experienced too much. Fighting the brutal Civil War made these kids old beyond their years.

Like Bob Boze Bell said in his excellent article "Killer Kids of the Civil War, robbing and killing was all that Frank and Jesse James, and men of their ilk, knew how to do.

Over the next two decades the bloodshed spread from Kansas and Missouri to other parts of West like wildfire. And the influence these men left is still felt today in the form of film and print. Who can forget William Quantrill, "Bloody Bill" Anderson, Cole Younger, or Frank and Jesse James?



Bloody Bill Anderson, dead.  
True West archives

—Paul Hoylen  
Mexico

## AN ERRANT SLAB

There is much to talk about in the September/October issue of *True West*. But I must start with what stings my hide, the endurance of printing errors. You quote the last verse of Badger Clark's poem, *A Roundup Lullaby* from his book *Sun and Saddle Leather*.

**"Always seein' 'wayoff dreams of silver-blue,  
Always feelin' thorns that s(l)ab and sting."**

This comes from the 1917 second edition that everyone sees. But you will find in the 1915 first edition the correct original line,

**"...Always feelin' thorns that stab and sting."**

And this makes sense. Later in Clark's 1922 edition of *Sun and Saddle Leather*, the line is once again corrected to

**"... stab and sting."**

Yet, the most often seen edition gets the airplay and the "slab" error persists, which while being annoying to me, must have been acutely so to ol' Badger himself!

—Rex Rideout  
Conifer, Colorado

## LIVER EATING JOHNSON

I really enjoy your Mountain Man issues. Great info last year (Dec. 2023) about the "liver eater!" Henry Parke's Top Ten Mountain Man movies was good too, but how could he have omitted "The Big Sky"? That is easily top 5 in my book.

—Joe Long  
San Luis Obispo, California



## TRUE WEST AUDIO VERSION

The patrons of the Library for the Blind & Print Disabled love the audio version of your magazine. Keep up the good work!

—Larry Smith  
Jacksonville, Arkansas

## NEW WAVE WEST?

Concerning your pages devoted to art, I'm a child of the sixties so my tastes are less conventional than other patrons of your magazine. I'd like to see pictures of New Wave Western Art, painters and sculptors and certainly more on Native American Art.

—Michael Cajero  
Tucson, Arizona

## PHOTO ID

I am sending you a copy of a picture, below, that I came across. Maybe you can find out who this is? Thank you.

—Edward Mitchell  
Greybull, Wyoming



Edward Mitchell

## PRAISE FOR PHIL

Nice story in the new *True West* by Spangenberg regarding five or six cartridges in a revolver, plus a tip to a Rosebud connection. He is the best.

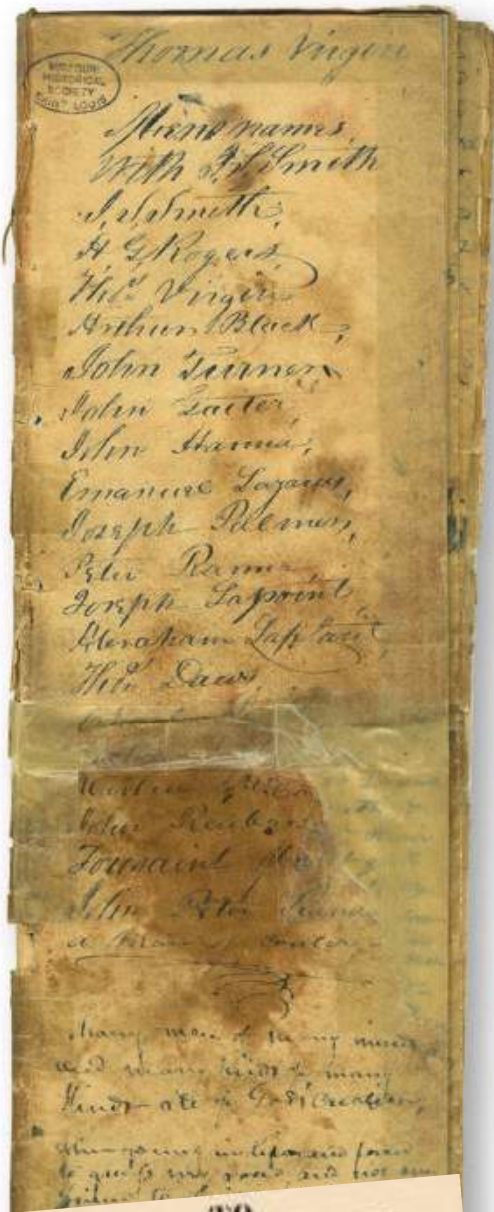
—Paul Hedren  
Omaha, Nebraska



BY MARK BOARDMAN

# The Lost Chronicles of Harrison Rogers

*How a Quiet Clerk's Journals Reshaped Western Exploration.*



**J**edediah Smith is considered one of the great Western explorers, blazing trails from Missouri to California in the 1820s. He was the first to enter California from the east. And then he and his company turned north, moving to Oregon before returning to St. Louis.

Less-known is Smith's second-in-command during his expeditions of 1826 and 1827. We know virtually nothing about Harrison Rogers—how old he was, where he came from, why he was given such an important role in the Smith journeys. But one of his tasks has had long-lasting impacts.

Rogers was the clerk, the man who kept journals of everyday experiences. Each evening, he took pen to paper to record what had happened in the preceding hours. Some entries were vitally important, recording the paths taken, the Indians that were encountered, native flora and fauna, and more. Some were pretty mundane.

For example, the expedition was held virtually captive by Spanish officials in California in 1826. Very little happened as Smith tried to convince the territorial governor to let the American group return home from their “base” at the San Gabriel Mission. Here, on December 6, 1826, Rogers wrote, “Early this morning I presented the old priest with my buffalo robe and he brought me a very

large blankett and presented me, in return, about 10 o'clock. Nothing new. Things going on as they have been heretofore; no answer from the governor as yet; we are waiting with patience to hear from the governor.”

The governor finally let them go. And they broke their word, heading north instead of east.

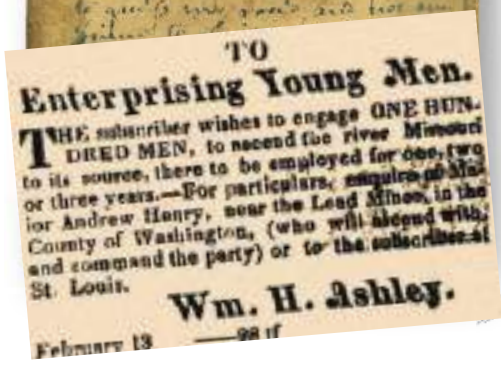
The tale of the journals is itself extraordinary. Smith and Rogers and company undertook another expedition in 1827; Smith was tasked with keeping the journals. Again, this trek went to California before heading north to Oregon. On July 14, 1828, Rogers and most of the group were killed by Umpqua Indians. For whatever reason, the Natives took Rogers's journals from his body. Smith desperately wanted them back, so he went to British authorities in Vancouver who were on good relations with the Umpqua. After a few months of negotiations, the journals were returned to Smith, who in turn took them back to St. Louis.

Before heading out on yet another expedition, Smith left the papers in the care of partner/executor William Ashley. Smith was killed in 1831. Ashley preserved the journals, then handed them down through his descendants. Around the turn of the last century, the journals were donated to the Missouri Historical Society, but they were primarily available for research purposes only.

They were finally published in 1918—90 years after Rogers's death and the end of his adventures. His journals had their own adventures and stories to tell.

Harrison Rogers was one of the young men who answered the ad for exploring the West—and then kept a record of what happened.

True West archives





BY STEVE FRIESEN

# All That Glitters is Not Gold

*Yes, some of it was silver, brass and polished steel at Brian Lebel's Old West Auction.*

**A**ll that glitters is not gold” is a phrase that has been used by everyone from Shakespeare to Neil Young. Had either of them been at Brian Lebel’s Old West Events Auction in Santa Fe on June 22, they would have found that to be true. With silver, brass and polished steel artifacts at the auction, there was plenty of glitter (even a little gold) to attract bidders.

The main attraction was an unusual Edward Bohlin Walt Disney saddle. Overwhelmingly silver-mounted, it did have some gold details, including an image of Mickey Mouse wearing a cowboy hat above Walt Disney’s signature. Made by Bohlin for Disney’s friend Justin Dart, the ornately decorated saddle fetched a bid of \$307,500. Another Bohlin silver inlaid parade saddle, with gun belt and gauntlets, sold for \$92,250. One of Bohlin’s biggest competitors was Frank Coenen. A silver-mounted parade saddle made by him and used in Pasadena’s Tournament of Roses Parade, sold for \$153,750. Both Bohlin and Coenen came from Scan-dinavia, a region known for its workmanship in silver.

Scandinavia was also known for its blacksmithing. The Qualey Brothers, the sons of a Norwegian blacksmith who emigrated to Idaho, began making spurs in 1920. A pair of silver overlaid spurs made by them captured \$25,830. Spurs always fetch top prices at the Lebel auctions. A pair of polished Spanish colonial-style

spurs, made in the latter 19th century by Jose Tapia, sold for \$34,440. Another pair of engraved silver spurs, made by Jesus Tapia some-time between 1915 and 1920, brought \$67,650.



Celebrities associated with Western movies are always represented at the Lebel auctions. A nicely decorated and silver-mounted gun rig with two Colt revolvers, made for stuntman Ray “Crash” Corrigan by Edward Bohlin, sold for \$20,910. But it was blued steel and a story from the true West that



Linking legendary saddlemaker Edward Bohlin with maker of legends Walt Disney, this saddle brought the highest price at Brian Lebel’s Old West Events Auction. Its silver and gold conchos include symbols and animals from the West, but the centerpiece, on the pommel, was Disney’s most famous creation, Mickey Mouse.

All Images Courtesy Morphy Auctions



## UPCOMING AUCTIONS

**November 9, 2024**

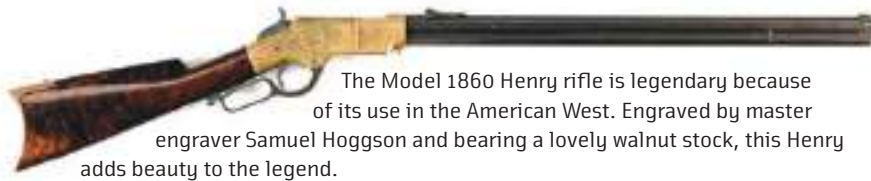
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**December 5-8, 2024**

Premier Firearms Auction #4093  
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The Model 1860 Henry rifle is legendary because of its use in the American West. Engraved by master engraver Samuel Hoggson and bearing a lovely walnut stock, this Henry adds beauty to the legend.

Ray "Crash" Corrigan starred in B-Westerns in the 1930s and '40s. His ranch in California was also used to film Western movies and television shows. This gun rig and revolvers were decorated with silver by Bohlin and worn by Corrigan around his ranch when he staged Western-themed entertainment for visitors.



The story goes that the Daltons ordered and received delivery of 10 brand new revolvers to use in their ill-fated effort to rob Coffeyville. This Colt Army, in excellent condition with blued steel and pearl grips, was one of those pistols.



This parade saddle was made by Frank Coenen, a silversmith like Bohlin and one of his rivals. It included a matching bridle and breast collar. Floral carvings and Western symbols in silver cover the saddle, bridle and collar.

The large rowels on these spurs, made by Jose Tapia, are similar to those introduced to the Americas by the conquistadores during the Spanish colonial period. But Tapia's spurs are clearly from the late 19th century, with silver floral buttons and conchos as well as jingle-bobs.



Made in the early 20th century by Jesus Tapia, these spurs make use of highly decorative silver, with delicate floral inlays. Of more than 55 spurs in the auction, these commanded the highest price.



The Qualeys were an immigrant family in Idaho. Building on their father's skills as a blacksmith, his sons Tom and Nels started making spurs in 1942 under the Qualey Brothers name. These spurs nicely exhibit the brothers' talents at working with both steel and silver.

attracted bidders to a Colt Army revolver with pearl grips. This well-documented and attractive firearm, used by one of the Daltons during the infamous Coffeyville robbery, "stole" a high bid of \$233,700. Another eye-catching firearm, a Model 1860 Henry

rifle with an engraved brass frame and a rare walnut stock, sold for \$29,520.

Many auction companies offer Western artifacts, with most concentrating on fine art and firearms. Brian Lebel's Old West sales are uniquely diverse, offering collectors objects of many types, all

representing both the true and the mythical West. And, as this latest auction demonstrated, that includes a fair amount of glitter, even some gold.

**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.





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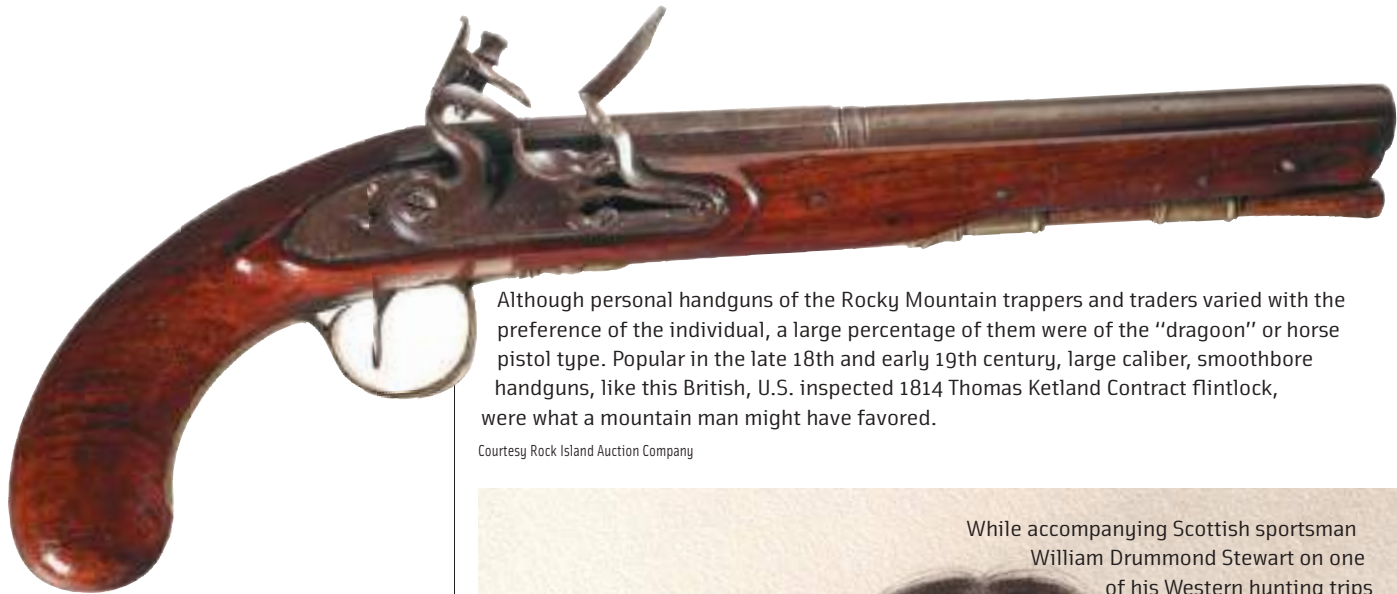




BY PHIL SPANGENBERGER

## THE MOUNTAIN MAN'S ACE IN THE HOLE!

*In the age of single-shot muzzleloaders, a handgun or two could decide a mountain man's fate in a life or death fight!.*

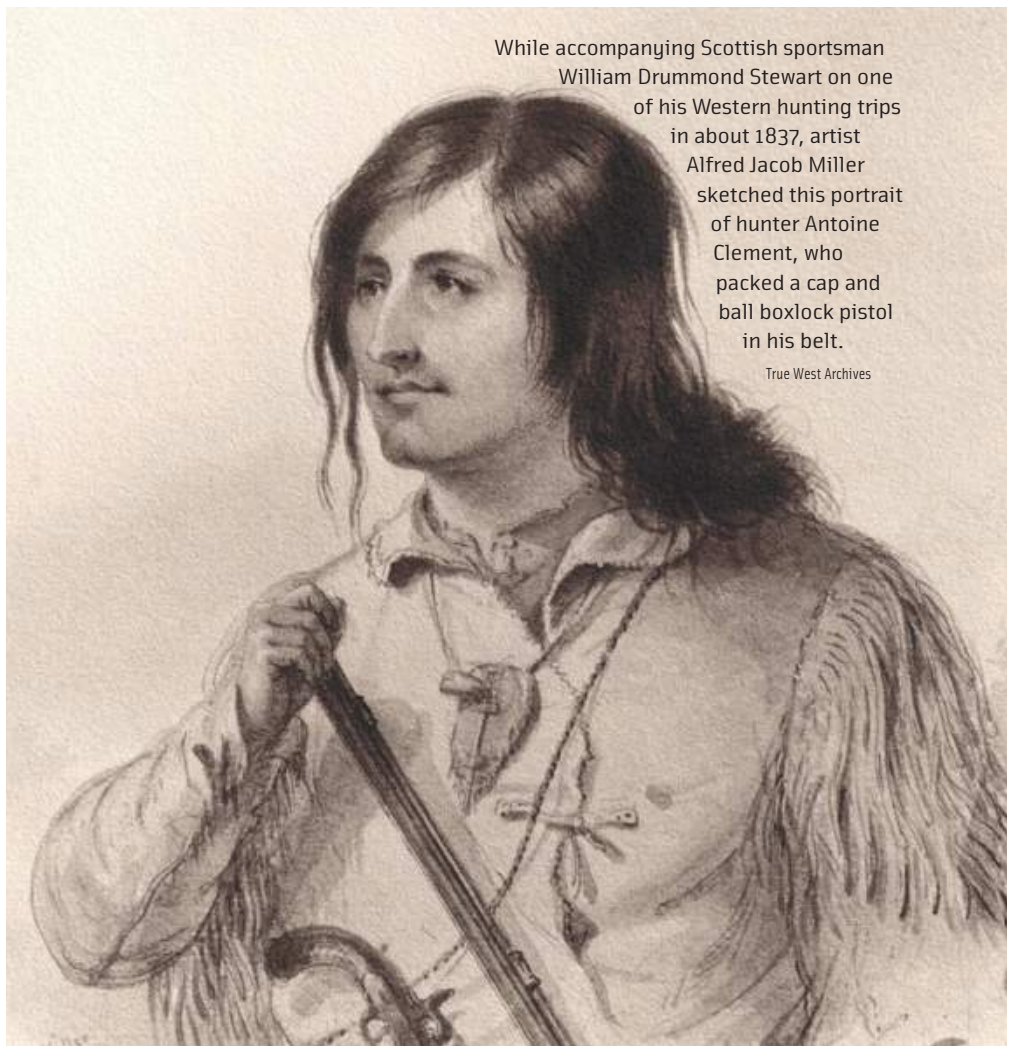


Although personal handguns of the Rocky Mountain trappers and traders varied with the preference of the individual, a large percentage of them were of the "dagoon" or horse pistol type. Popular in the late 18th and early 19th century, large caliber, smoothbore handguns, like this British, U.S. inspected 1814 Thomas Ketland Contract flintlock, were what a mountain man might have favored.

Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

**I**n the discussion of firearms of the fur trade era, handguns are usually given a back seat and are seldom mentioned in any detail. In reality, though, the trappers and traders placed a great value on them. True, while they lack the accuracy, range and power of the longarm, in a desperate situation such as a fight with hostile Indians or the sudden attack of a ferocious beast, the extra firepower a handgun or two might afford made them indispensable to these frontiersmen in the age of single-shot muzzleloading arms. Pistols were also quite popular with the mountain men as trade items and for sport as well, especially for running buffalo on horseback.

Many Western adventurers of that era carried two or more pistols in their belts or saddle holsters, giving them several shots before reloading. Whether in flintlock or percussion ignition, such pistols varied with the preference of the man who



While accompanying Scottish sportsman William Drummond Stewart on one of his Western hunting trips in about 1837, artist Alfred Jacob Miller sketched this portrait of hunter Antoine Clement, who packed a cap and ball boxlock pistol in his belt.

True West Archives



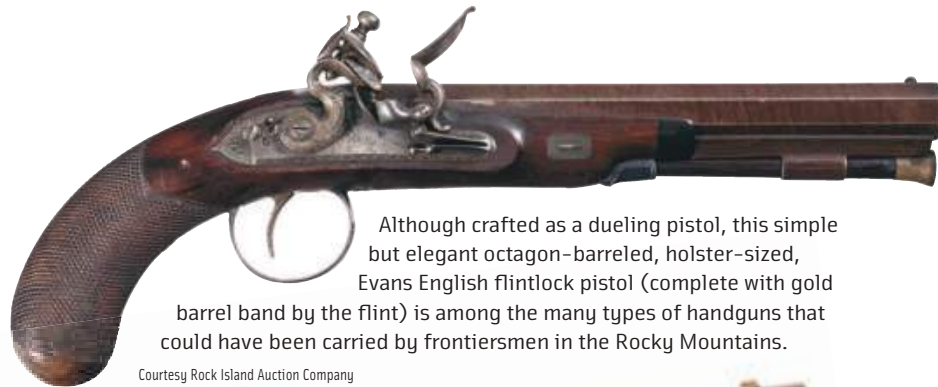


## Ride Cowboy, Ride!

On September 26, 2024, *True West's* 2022 True Westerner of the Year and beloved Firearms Editor Phil Spangenberg died suddenly during a heart procedure. Phil was considered one of the most noted experts on 19th- and early 20th-century American firearms. He was a contributor to *True West* for over 20 years, and for four decades the black powder firearms editor for *Guns & Ammo*. A highly regarded film and television firearms consultant and coach, Phil was the founder of Red River Western Wear and Old West Gun Holsters. Many likened him to a modern Buffalo Bill, who inspired generations of men and women to become reenactors, to collect and wear correct period Western clothing, and become participants in Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association and the Single Action Shooting Society. He was an inspiration to thousands around the world, a renowned horseman, reenactor and Western entertainer. Phil, a native of Florida, is survived by his beloved wife, Linda J. Spangenberg, of Chino Valley, Arizona. He was 84 years old.

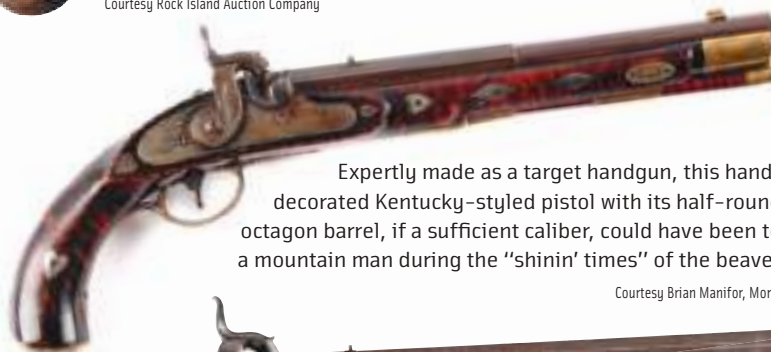
*True West* will publish Phil's final column and review in the January-February 2025 issue with an extended memorial of his life and career.

—Stuart Rosebrook



Although crafted as a dueling pistol, this simple but elegant octagon-barreled, holster-sized, Evans English flintlock pistol (complete with gold barrel band by the flint) is among the many types of handguns that could have been carried by frontiersmen in the Rocky Mountains.

Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company



Expertly made as a target handgun, this handsomely decorated Kentucky-styled pistol with its half-round, half-octagon barrel, if a sufficient caliber, could have been toted by a mountain man during the "shinin' times" of the beaver trade.

Courtesy Brian Manifor, Morphy Auctions



A handgun like this engraved Charles Lancaster percussion dueling pistol might have made a good belt pistol for a man in the wilderness. Once fired, its iron-capped butt stock would have made a handy club in a close encounter.

Courtesy Rock Island Auction Company

carried them. Regardless, they were predominantly single-barreled horse pistols of the military or "dragoon" type in .52 caliber or greater that sported barrels of 8 to 10 inches or more. Worn in braces (pairs) or packing more, even with their heavy smoothbore or rifled barrels—these handguns did not add significantly to the overall weight one carried and could mean the difference in life or death. As Western hunter Osborne Russell recalled when he and other trappers feared a possible Indian attack in 1835, he wrote, "I kept a large German horse pistol loaded by me in case they should make a charge when my gun was empty."

As far back as the mid-18th century, pistols were considered essential as trade items as well as for defense by trappers, hunters and traders. We know that the government provided Capt. Meriwether Lewis "1 pr. Horsemans Pistols" among the firearms and other stores for the Corps of Discovery's (1803-1806) expedition. Captain Lewis and Lt. William Clark each recorded their carrying of pistols and trading them for horses, and in 1805-1806, the expedition found Indians as far west

as along the Columbia River armed with pistols.

By the early 1800s, gunmakers in the settlements along the edge of civilization were doing a brisk business in pistols of all sizes and configurations—from big-bore horse pistols to finely made Kentucky-type and dueling pistols to diminutive pocket guns—many destined for the fur trade. One notable ad for "Sales at Auction" in St. Louis in June 1816 advertised "Horseman's Pistols, Powder Flasks, Shot Pouches" along with a selection of smaller pocket-sized handguns, while a local competitor, Smith & Spicer, who boasted of being "Lately from New York" carried flasks, gun locks and "Holster Pistols" (.45-.54 caliber Kentucky and dueler types) in their inventory.

Besides the heavy martial horse or dragoon-sized pistols, just about any handgun of the era might have been used by these men of the mountains. Along with English and European sporting and dueling pistols, American surplus military arms could be found in holsters or tucked into waistbands, along with imported guns like those from Ketland & Co. of London or Birmingham. Actually, this British arms maker exported a large



number of pistols to American shores both for the civilian trade and as government contract arms. By the late 1830s and the final years of the fur trade, the Hawken brothers, famous for their mountain rifles, were also turning out a few large-bore holster and belt pistols in percussion ignition.

Sometime around 1820, British gun-makers began converting their earlier flintlock dueling pistols to percussion and started producing them in caplock form along the same general lines as the older arms. By 1834 Ethan Allen had patented the double-action system for the multibarrel pepperbox revolvers. Single-action pepperboxes that required manual rotation of each barrel, although popular in the far West, had enjoyed a limited popularity with the mountain men, due to their temperamental nature and exposed nipples, which could lead to unintentional discharges.

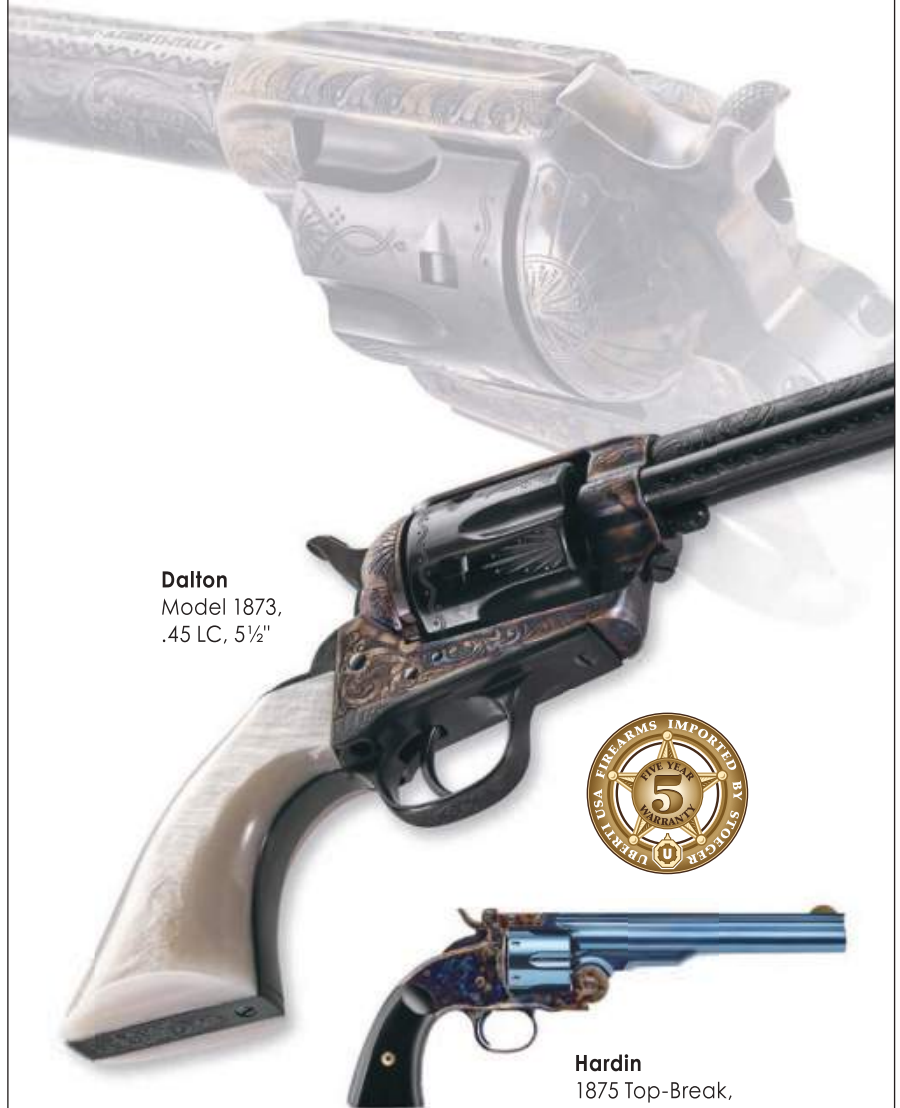
With the general acceptance of the percussion system, the development of multi-shot pistols was given a considerable boost, and although a few double-barreled pistols had seen some use on the beaver front, it was the caplock that gave real credence to repeating handguns.

With the invention of Colt's repeating pistols in 1836, and having a small number of them reaching the far West over the next few years, the age of single-shot handguns began a rapid decline into the back pages of history. Ironically, the late 1830s also saw the last few seasons of the beaver trade, the great rendezvous and the men who had roamed the mountains in search of beaver skins. By the early 1840s those hardy trappers who remained on the frontier became scouts, hunters and pathfinders for eastern emigrants and found themselves out on the plains rather than in the Rockies. A little more than a decade later, the single-firing pistols of the fur trade had given way to the five- and six-shooters of Wild West fame. As one Indian survivor of an 1841 fight with Kit Carson and his Paterson Colt-armed men later lamented, "White man shoot one time with rifle and six times with butcher knife!" The revolver had become the king of handguns.



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

## BECOME PART OF THE LEGEND



**Dalton**  
Model 1873,  
.45 LC, 5½"

**Hardin**  
1875 Top-Break,  
.45 LC, 7"

### OUTLAWS & LAWMEN SERIES

The Outlaws & Lawmen series pays homage to the most legendary names in the Wild West. Each piece in this collection is inspired after revolvers actually carried by famous heroes and villains, undying characters in the riveting drama of American history. Stunning to look at, fantastic to shoot, available in limited quantities through your Uberti USA dealer.

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**Uberti USA.**  
HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF



BY CANDY MOULTON

# WILD TIMES

Artist John Clymer's classic painting "Whooping It Up" illustrates the wild times the mountain men enjoyed at their annual rendezvous. Clymer once said he tried to take the viewer of his art to an "actual place and make him feel that he was really there." He has succeeded.

Courtesy Coeur d'Alene Art Auction

Jim Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, William Sublette and dozens of their companions waded into cold mountain streams 200 years ago, setting beaver traps and establishing an industry. They were doing the job Gen. William Ashley and Maj. Andrew Henry advertised in 1822 in St. Louis when they posted notices for 100 young men to explore the headwaters of the Missouri River, launching the mountain fur trade with their Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

Ashley's objective in entering the fur trade was to raise money for a political career. Henry became his partner to manage the operation; he had experience having worked for the Missouri Fur Company from 1809 to 1811. In that era, the fur operation involved trading parties who primarily relied on Indians to bring pelts to fixed posts and exchange them for goods that would make their lives better. Most of the trading took place at posts established along the Missouri River.

But in 1822, when William H. Ashley advertised for "One hundred men, to ascend the

river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years," he had already envisioned changing the way the industry worked.

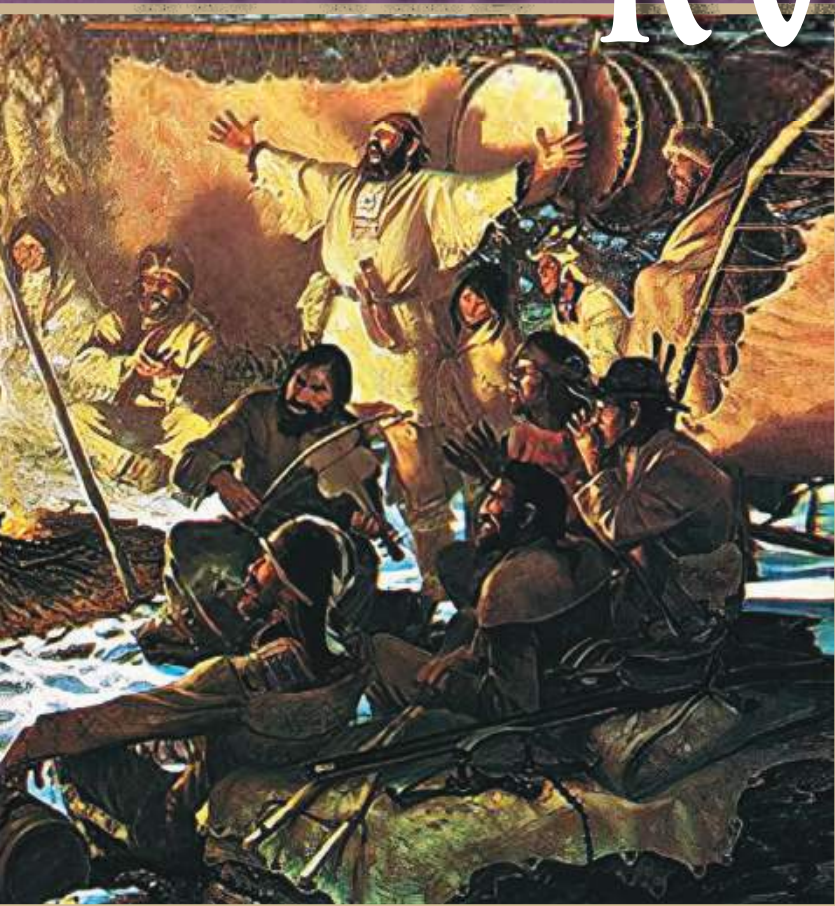
His company would stake the men who answered the advertisement supplies like guns, powder, lead and traps. Those trappers would then overspread the Rocky Mountain West, setting their traps and working in the beaver streams of the region. They would repay the company with half of the furs they harvested. But the other half of what they caught were their own property. This gave the men incentive to work hard—for the company and for themselves.

It wouldn't be long before Ashley's Hundred would gather at an innovating trading camp out





# IN THE ROCKIES



## THE MOUNTAIN MAN RENDEZVOUS —200 YEARS LATER.

earth...who lead a life of more continued exertion, peril, and excitement, and who are more enamored of their occupations, than the free trappers of the West. No toil, no danger, no privation can turn the trapper from his pursuit.”

From the beginning, the company owners expected the men working for them to remain in the mountain country during the winter. This allowed them to trap throughout the late fall, and they could then be ready to set traps again in the early spring when the beaver pelts were in their prime.

west where they “tried to out-brag and out-lie each other in stories of their adventures,” even as they traded for supplies to continue their work.

The men Ashley recruited—initially about 150 of them—became the first free trappers. Some were quite loyal to the company and would eventually even own it, but all were also independent, seeing their own best opportunities. They traveled extensively on foot and by horseback, learning and mapping the country and developing friendly connections with several of the Indian nations. Their names are iconic in Western history: Thomas Fitzpatrick, Jim Bridger, Hugh Glass, James Beckwourth, David Jackson and dozens more.

As Washington Irving wrote: “There is, perhaps, no class of men on the face of the

### AMERICAN FUR TRADE ROOTS

America’s involvement in the fur trade began shortly after Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with their Corps of Discovery returned to the upper Missouri River in the summer of 1806.

Early in the morning of August 12, 1806, Lewis encountered Joseph Dickson and Forest Hancock, two American trappers who were headed up the Missouri, intent on catching beaver. They had come from Illinois and were the harbingers of the American fur trappers. This meeting with Lewis and his men was



Mountain Man extraordinaire, Jim Bridger had a prominent fort named for him.

All images True West archives unless otherwise noted



Thomas Fitzpatrick managed the supply trains for one of the rendezvous in 1831.



fortuitous as the would-be trappers gained firsthand information about the country to the west and the opportunities for fur trapping. As a result, Dickson and Hancock reversed their

course of travel and headed back downstream with Lewis. They overtook William Clark and his party, who had been following the Yellowstone River, and two days later, the combined group was at the grand village of the Hidatsa.

When Lewis and Clark left the Hidatsa village and continued downstream to St. Louis, one of their key hunters, John Colter, stayed behind. He had been granted permission to travel back into the Rocky Mountain region with Dickson and Hancock. Colter eventually reached the area of Yellowstone National Park and had a near-deadly encounter with Blackfoot warriors in what is now Montana before eventually heading back down the Missouri.

Other American trappers included those who worked for the American Fur Company, which was started by John Jacob Astor after 1811. Those trappers all gathered furs and traded them at posts built at key locations.

It took the organized operation of Ashley and Henry with their Rocky Mountain Fur Company to revolutionize the American fur trade. Their men spread not only on the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers,

but also across the Continental Divide to work along the streams of the Green River, Snake River and Bear River basins.

Like other trappers working for Astor's American Fur and the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), during the first two years of operation, the men working for Rocky Mountain Fur traveled annually to fixed posts to obtain ammunition, food supplies and other goods needed in their quest for beaver. The need to travel to the fixed posts required arduous, sometimes dangerous journeys.

But then in the summer of 1825, General Ashley, always seeking to maximize company profits, spread the word for the men working for the company to meet him at a location in what is now southwest Wyoming. In St. Louis, Ashley organized a caravan of horses, loaded packs with the traps, firearms, bullets, black powder, food and other goods the trappers would need. Instead of the company men going to the

fixed posts, he went to them.

The first fur supply caravan reached Rendezvous Creek, what was later called Henry's Fork of the Green River, for a trading session that took place July

1, 1825. Around 125 men, "assembled in two camps near each other about 20 miles distant from the place appointed by me as a general rendezvous," Ashley recalled later that year.



Captain Benjamin L.E. Bonneville led the first wagon expedition to cross South Pass and also had a fort named for him.

Library of Congress



This John Clymer painting, *John Colter Visits the Crows 1807*, depicts the guide John Colter approaching an Indian village on the South Fort of the Shoshone River. To ease the tense situation, he holds his rifle in the air to indicate he comes in peace, while making sign for "talk" as wary Crows ride out to meet this stranger.

Courtesy Coeur d'Alene Art Auction



That one-day event was all business. The next day Ashley and some 50 men with him loaded the furs onto their pack animals and set off for St. Louis.

This first rendezvous eliminated the need for the trappers to travel hundreds of miles to

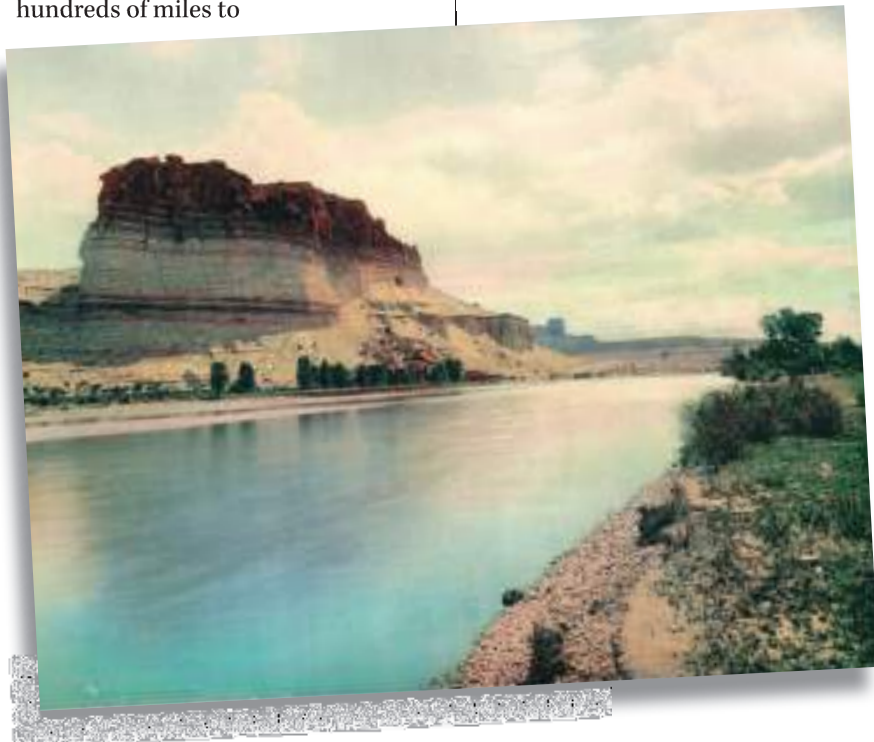
fixed site posts to obtain supplies. It completely revolutionized the beaver trade and gave the West an iconic event that is celebrated to this day, just shy of 200 years later.

Although it was a short gathering intended strictly for an exchange of

goods, the rendezvous set the stage for the next 15 years. The second, third and fourth rendezvous took place in Cache Valley and near Bear Lake, in today's Utah, even though in 1828 the fur caravan was extremely late, not arriving until late fall.

The trade rendezvous in 1829 took place farther north in an area called Pierre's Hole, which is in the Teton Valley near Driggs, Idaho. The 1830 gathering moved into the central Rocky Mountains along the Popo Agie River in the Wind River Basin, at the edge of present-day Riverton, Wyoming.

No true rendezvous took place in 1831, though some trappers gathered in Cache Valley again. But the supply train managed by Thomas Fitzpatrick



A familiar landmark to the mountain men was the Bluffs of the Green River, photographed by William Henry Jackson.

Library of Congress



A pioneer family with their Dearborn wagon, which is the kind of wagon Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding travelled in over what became known as the Oregon Trail.

National Archives



never made it to the site. Late in the summer, Henry Fraeb located Fitzpatrick, and then Fraeb spent much of the fall delivering goods to the trappers who had already spread out to their favorite beaver streams.

Fitzpatrick was delayed again in 1832 by an encounter with seemingly hostile Blackfoot and Gros Ventre warriors, but William Sublette arrived at the rendezvous location in Pierre's Hole and began distributing goods, picking up pelts from the free trappers as well as some company men.

Once the trading concluded, the trappers set off to return to fur trapping haunts, but before Milton Sublette traveled far his group of men encountered Blackfoot and Gros Ventre leading to a fight that became known as the Battle of Pierre's Hole. This was the only rendezvous that involved hostile interactions with tribal members.

Captain Benjamin L. E. Bonneville, a bald thirty-seven-year-old French-born West Point graduate, took a two-year leave from the U.S. Army in 1832 to explore in the West and determine American fur trade potential in the Rocky Mountain region, even though the trade was already well established.

Bonneville began his explorations in Independence, Missouri, on May 1, traveling to Pierre's Hole and the

rendezvous there. Accompanying him were 110 men and several wagons, which are believed to have been the first wagons to cross South Pass. After the rendezvous, Bonneville continued traveling west, exploring areas that are now Idaho and Oregon, before he returned to the region just west of South Pass.

In the Green River Valley above the confluence of Horse Creek, the captain established a fort that took his name—Fort Bonneville—but was soon called Fort Nonsense or Bonneville's Folly. The two names arose from the fact that although the Green River Valley with its abundant grasslands and available water in the river valley seemed to be an ideal location in the summer and fall, the winters were harsh. Bonneville soon learned that the extremely cold weather and deep snow in that region made movement difficult and limited the availability of wild game. Despite the weather issues, Fort Bonneville was in use until 1839.

### MEET ME ON THE GREEN

The well-watered region in the Upper Green River Basin became the most popular rendezvous site with seven gatherings held there between 1833 and 1840.

From the first rendezvous of around 125 men, the annual summer gathering grew exponentially to more than 2,000 people. It also expanded from a trapper gathering to one that involved Indian tribes who were allies of the mountain men. Though it was started for the practical reason of trading for necessary supplies, rendezvous quickly became a raucous gathering. As one historian put it, rendezvous was "one hell of a party."

Originally called Ashley's Hundred, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was in fierce competition with John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company and the long-established British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC).

But for a week or two every summer, generally in July, "The three rival companies, which, for a year past had been endeavoring to out-trade, out-trap and out-wit each other, were here encamped in close proximity, awaiting their annual supplies. About four miles from the rendezvous of Captain Bonneville was that of the American Fur Company, hard by which, was that also of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company," according to Washington Irving writing of the 1833 Horse Creek rendezvous in *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*.





*A Blackfoot Indian on Horseback* by Karl Bodmer, 1840

Library of Congress

## OPENING THE WEST

Without doubt the most momentous event of the rendezvous era occurred in 1836 when the fur brigade arrived on the Upper Green River with two White women. They were Narcissa Prentiss Whitman and Eliza Spalding, who were traveling to new homes they would establish in Oregon Country with their missionary husbands, Dr. Marcus Whitman and the Reverend Henry Spalding.

They set out from the Missouri River with a light Dearborn wagon that belonged to Eliza Spalding and a freight wagon hauling goods and supplies. Although there were several in their group, they traveled with the fur brigade, which not only knew the route, but also afforded a measure of security as they moved across Indians lands.

Fort Laramie had not been built when the Whitman-Spalding party passed through, but an earlier establishment, a fur trade post that originated as Fort John and later became Fort William, served travelers.

At Fort William the fur caravan left its wagons and repacked the supplies onto horses and mules. The missionaries abandoned their large wagon, too, putting as much as they could on the lighter Dearborn wagon. From this point the two women rode horseback on the sidesaddles they had brought for that purpose. They were proving their determination and mettle to their husbands and the fur traders with whom they traveled.

Since rendezvous involved all the free trappers and the competing companies, it was well known that the first brigade to arrive with supplies had “the greatest chance to get all the peltries and furs of the Indians and free trappers, and to engage their services for the next season,” Irving wrote.

Given the competition for furs, it might be expected that there would be hard feelings, even hostility or outright brawls, when the trappers came together at the rendezvous. But from mid-June until early September, when no trapping took place, they drank, sang and whooped it up. They

“tried to out-brag and out-lie each other in stories of their adventures and achievements,” Irving wrote.

Each year the trappers started gathering before the fur brigade with its pack animals arrived, so rendezvous was in full swing when the first trader packs were unloaded and broken open. The trading was soon fast and furious. The free trappers made extravagant purchases of traps, hunting knives,

ammunition, guns, red blankets and scarlet cloth, as well as glittering trinkets and garish beads. They bought coffee and tobacco.



A typical beaver dam on Henry's Fork, near the location of the first rendezvous in 1825.

Library of Congress

Named for mountain man Jim Bridger, Fort Bridger as it appeared in 1858. It had been a major supply point for emigrants since 1843.



Fort Bridger today  
Candy Moulton

On July 4, 1836, Eliza Spalding wrote in her diary that they “crossed a ridge of land today called the divide; which separated the waters that flow into the Atlantic from those that flow into the Pacific.”

Days later as they approached the rendezvous grounds, a welcoming party raced out to greet them.

Narcissa Whitman would later write to her family, “As soon as I

alighted from my horse I was met by a company of matron [Indian] women. One after another shaking hands and saluting me with a most hearty kiss. This was unexpected and affected me very much. They gave Sister Spaulding the same salutation. After we had been seated awhile in the midst of the gazing throng, one of the chiefs whom we had seen before came with his wife and very politely introduced her to us.”

She added, “They say they all like us very much and thank God that

they have seen us, and that we have come to live with them.”

## HEADED FOR THE PLACE OF THE RYE GRASS

After a sojourn at the rendezvous, Nez Perce guides took the missionary party on west. Hudson’s Bay Company trader Nathaniel Wyeth established Fort Hall in 1834 on the Portneuf River of southeastern Idaho. There Dr. Whitman modified the Dearborn wagon into a two-wheeled cart to continue hauling their gear over the rough country, as there was not much of a trail to follow.

The missionaries followed the Snake River to Farewell Bend, Oregon, before continuing north over the Blue Mountains to present Walla Walla, Washington, where the Whitmans established their Whitman Mission—Wailatpu—the Place of the Rye Grass, to serve the Cayuse tribes.

The Spaldings followed the Clearwater River to its confluence



with Lapwai Creek. There they established a mission they called Lapwai, known to the Indians as the Place of the Butterflies. It lay in the heart of Nez Perce country at a site long used as a tribal winter camp.

Rendezvous in 1837 took place on the Green River, between the New Fork and Horse Creek. Then in 1838 the trappers gathered on the Popo Agie, near the same site as the 1830 rendezvous. By then the men realized that their mountain trade was in decline. The styles of men's hats had shifted from beaver to silk and the fashion trend impacted the need for beaver pelts.

The mountain men held two more rendezvous, both along Horse Creek, a tributary of the Upper Green River. Jim Bridger, Henry Fraeb and Andrew Drips guided the last caravan from the settlements along the Missouri River to Horse Creek in 1840.

There would be no more company brigades and mountain man rendezvous. The country was changing. Instead of seeking to dominate the region through trade, the Americans set out to control the region through settlement. Wagons had already crossed South Pass, and the journey of Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding made it clear women could make the long journey from the Missouri River to the Oregon Territory.

The Bidwell-Bartleson wagon train traveled to Oregon Territory in 1841, but the first large wagon train followed the route that would become the Oregon Trail in 1843. During the next 20-plus years well over 500,000 people crossed the region on the Oregon, California and Mormon Trails. In those earliest years, the wagon trains were guided by the mountain men who knew the region so well. Throughout the period and beyond, the trading post started by Jim Bridger and Louis Vasquez that

became known as Fort Bridger, was an important trade post on the trails.

Men who were a part of Ashley's One Hundred left their mark on many other areas across the region including such well-known places as the Fitzpatrick Wilderness, Sublette County and Jackson Hole. The era of rendezvous, which marks its bicentennial in 2025, died out. But the experience is revived each year at

modern-day mountain man gatherings across the West, including the annual Green River Rendezvous the second weekend in July, and the largest annual gathering at Fort Bridger over Labor Day Weekend.



**Candy Moulton** is the 2023 True Westerner named by *True West*, a four-time Spur Award Winner, and a lifelong resident of Encampment, Wyoming.

## RENDEZVOUS LOCATIONS

1825 – Henry's Fork of the Green River (Burnt Fork, Wyoming)

1826 – Cache Valley (Willow, Utah)

1827 – Bear Lake (Utah)

1828 -- Bear Lake (Utah)

1829 – Pierre's Hole (Driggs, Idaho)

1830 – Popo Agie (Riverton, Wyoming)

1831 – No true rendezvous; men gathered at Willow, Utah; Thomas Fitzpatrick's supply train never arrived; Henry Fraeb finds Fitzpatrick and spends the fall delivering goods to the trappers

1832 – Pierre's Hole (Driggs, Idaho)

1833 – Horse Creek (Pinedale, Wyoming)

1834 – Near Granger, Wyoming

1835 – Fort Bonneville (Pinedale, Wyoming)

1836 – Horse Creek (Pinedale, Wyoming)

1837 – Green River, between Horse Creek and the New Fork River (Pinedale, Wyoming)

1838 – Popo Agie (Riverton, Wyoming)

1839 – Green River (Pinedale, Wyoming)

1840 – Green River (Pinedale, Wyoming)

BY MIKE COPPOCK

# THE MARLOW BROTHERS

## BORN WITH OUTLAW GRIT

Whether highborn or from the wrong side of the tracks, those who came West appreciated grit in a person, never mind if displayed by a hero or an outlaw. Their attention was captured by the grit displayed by the Marlow Brothers who overwhelmed a vigilante mob while shackled.

George, Charley, Alf and Epp Marlow were chained together in pairs along with two other prisoners

as they were being transported out of Graham, Texas, in the dead of night on January 19, 1889. The brothers were accused of killing a popular local sheriff. They were being transported to a nearby town so they would not be lynched.

With Phlete Martin guarding them, they were in the lead wagon as they began crossing Dry Creek. A second wagon followed manned by Deputy U.S. Marshal Edward Johnson and

three additional guards. A buggy with four guards brought up the rear.

As the first wagon entered the shallow creek to cross it, masked men came out of the brush shouting for the convoy to halt.

“Here they are,” shouted Martin diving off the first wagon. “Take all six of the sons of bitches!”

When Deputy Marshall Edward Johnson saw his guards run off to join the vigilantes, he began shooting at

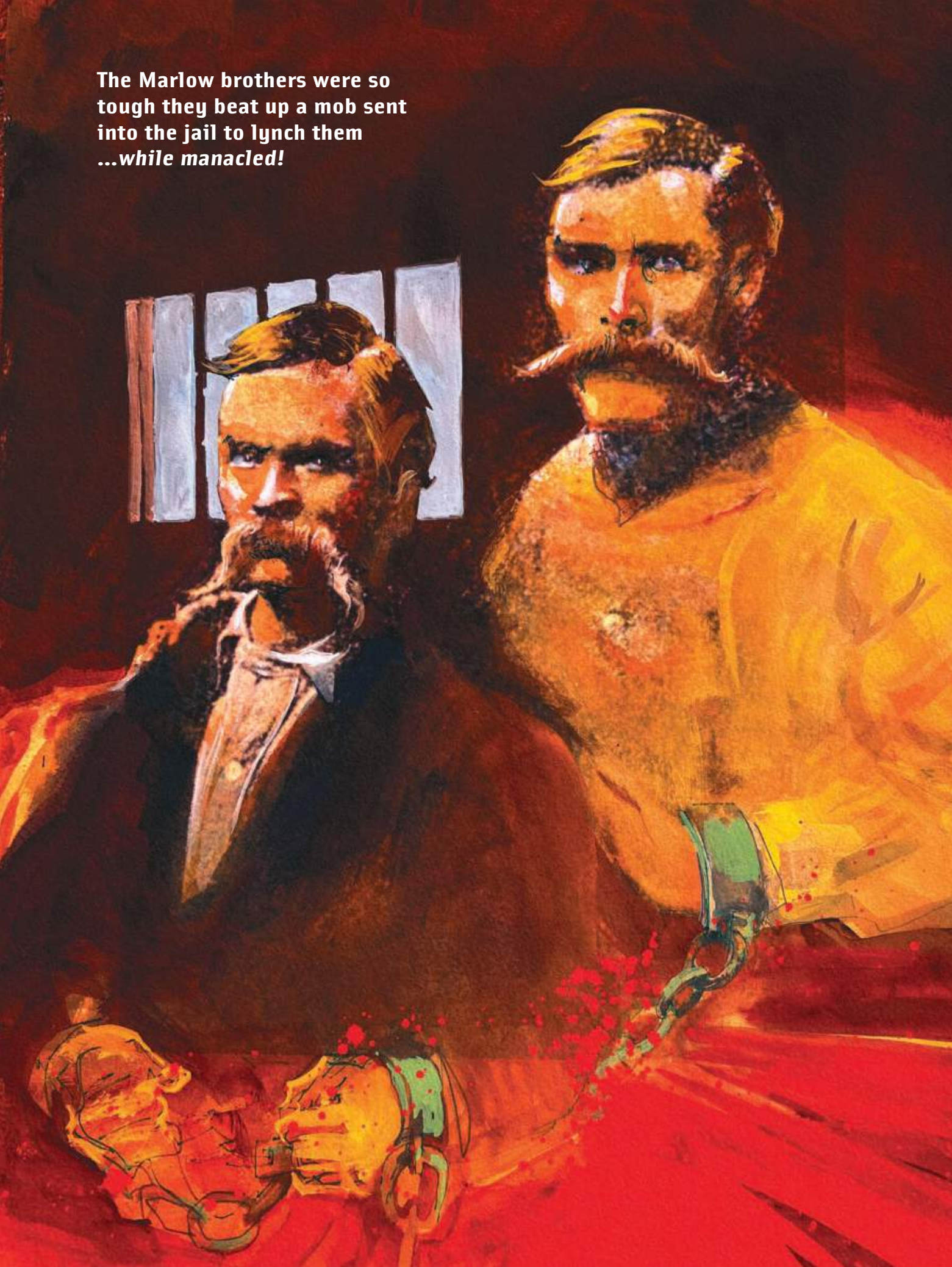


The five Marlow Brothers left to right George, Boone, Alfred, Lewellyn and Charles.

All images True West archives unless otherwise noted/illustration by Bob Boze Bell



The Marlow brothers were so tough they beat up a mob sent into the jail to lynch them ...while manacled!







The Sons of Katie Elder  
Movie Poster 1965



Sheriff Marion  
Dekalb Wallace

Vigilante  
Frank Harrison  
then marched  
toward the  
Marlows,  
firing with his  
revolver.  
George shot  
him down.

them, hitting one before taking a bullet himself through the hand. The one-armed Johnson, who lost his other hand years earlier in a gunfight, took cover.

The brothers along with the two other prisoners jumped to the second wagon where guns were kept. They could not run due to the shackles. Standing behind the wagons, the prisoners began shooting it out with the vigilantes.

They were able to kill vigilante leader Bruce Wheeler and one other. But Alf Marlow fell dead riddled with 15 bullet holes. Soon brother Epp was shot dead as well. George Marlow was hit in the hand but kept shooting as did the fourth brother, Charley. The two remaining brothers stood back-to-back answering shot for shot from the ambushing mob.

Someone fired a shotgun hitting Charley in the head and chest.

“Come again, you cowardly bastards!” George shouted. “We have plenty of ammunition and nobody hurt. Come on!”

Charley spotted another vigilante shooting him down as well.

The vigilantes broke and ran. George and Charley were still cuffed to their dead brothers. George found a knife on one of the dead vigilantes using it to desperately cut the feet off the two deceased brothers thus allowing him and Charley to free themselves from the shackles.

The brothers, along with the other two prisoners, drove one of the wagons to the Marlow family cabin. On the way they stopped at a farmhouse to break their leg irons. One of the other prisoners went his own way while the other tagged along with the two brothers.

There at their family cabin they waited for the law to catch up to them.

It is the stuff of movies. Indeed, the story of Oklahoma’s Marlow Brothers became the John Wayne film *The Sons of Katie Elder*.

Their father, Dr. Williamson Marlow, suffered from wanderlust. As

his family  
grew, he led  
them from  
Missouri to

the Indian Territory into Mexico, New Mexico, Colorado and finally Texas. To make ends meet when he was not doctoring, he and his sons handled and sold stock, though there were rumors the animals had been rustled. The wandering claimed the elder Marlow’s first wife, but he found the time to obtain a second wife to be the mother to his sons. He died in Texas in 1885.

The second wife, Martha Jane, and sons George, Charley, Alf, Boone and Epp migrated across north Texas like nomads from one settlement to another.

Near the end of 1885, brother Boone shot and killed a cowboy in Vernon, Texas. He fled to Colorado. A court dismissed the murder charge against him on the grounds of self-defense. The Marlow family followed after Boone, reuniting in Trinidad, Colorado.

From there, the family started up a homestead in Indian Territory along the Chisholm Trail.



The family made a living selling horses to the U.S. Army located at Fort Sill. Texan drovers complained horses and some cattle being sold by the Marlows were actually from their trail herds as they drove to Kansas railheads. But Texas authorities had no jurisdiction in the Indian Territory.

By 1888, both Charley and Alf were married and fathers. They were working for a Kiowa chief named Sun Boy close to Fort Sill, while the other brothers were still working horses and cattle.

Come that spring, Charley rode to Gunnison, Colorado, to visit his friend Cyrus Shores, who was county sheriff, and his in-laws. But toward the end of summer, Las Animas County Sheriff William Burns wrote to Deputy U.S. Marshal Edward Johnson serving in Graham, Texas, to watch out “for five Marlow brothers who are endeavoring to get away with 40 head of horses stolen from this place.”

Burns sent a follow-up letter stating the accusations against the Marlows had been a mistake. Still, between the Colorado letter and complaints that



An earlier photo of George and Charley before their escape from Texas. They and their brothers resisted Texas trying to extend the state's sovereignty into what is now Oklahoma.

the brothers were also stealing reservation horses from American Indian owners, Johnson felt he had enough cause to form a posse and ride into the Indian Territory to arrest the brothers. Charley, Alf, Boone and Epp were cuffed and brought back to Graham for arraignment.

George gathered up the rest of the family and traveled to Graham to see if he could get his brothers released.

The family rented a cabin near Graham, but when George went to the Graham jail, he found himself also arrested and jailed with his siblings.

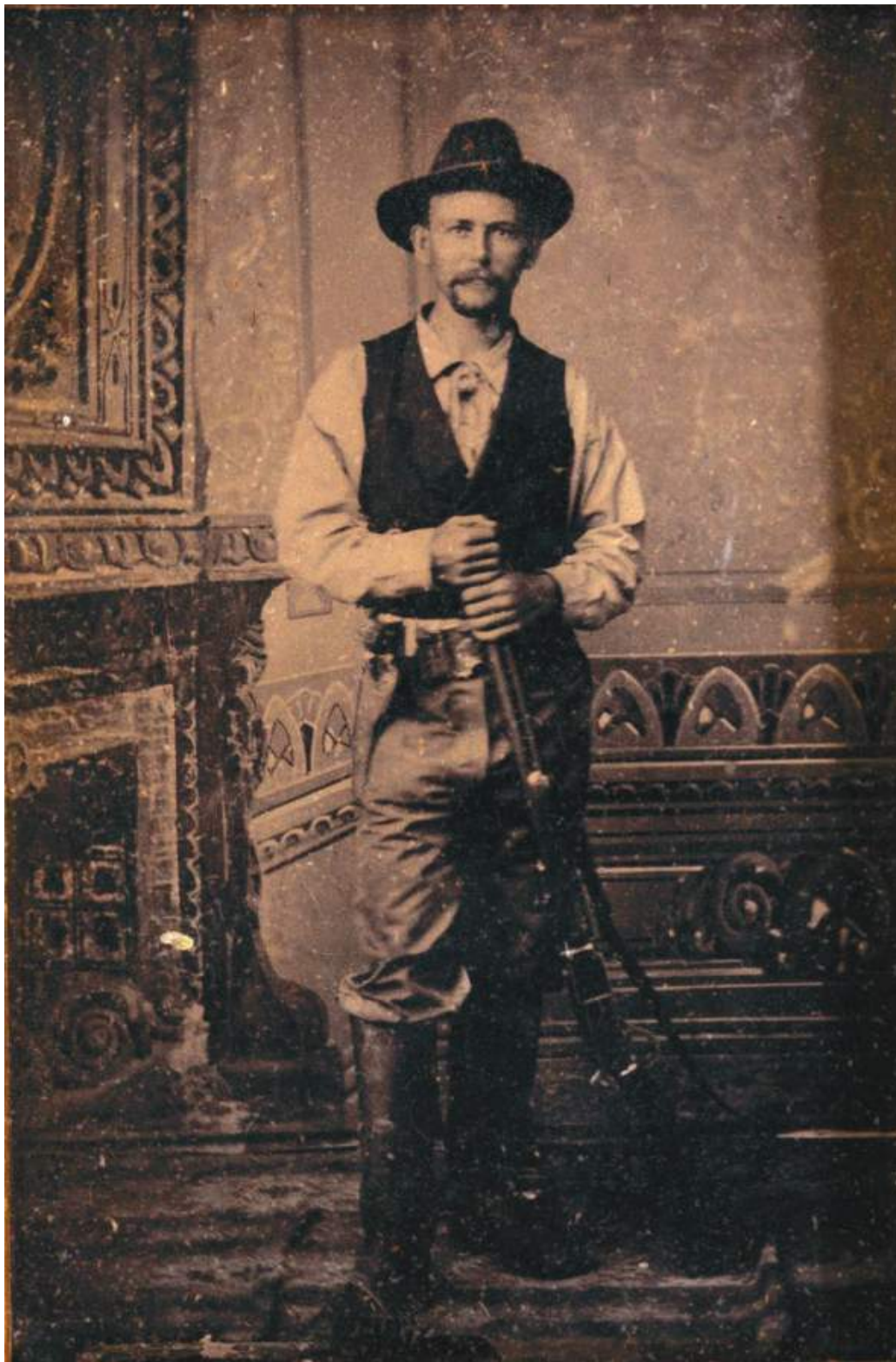
A Texas grand jury indicted them on horse theft involving three Indians. None of the Indians in question testified against the brothers. “Marlow men no steal Indian man’s

horses anyway because the Marlows had better horse,” stated Ba-Sinda-Bar, a Caddo who was one of the three supposedly aggrieved Indians.

Their stepmother was able to bail the brothers out in October.

Believing they would be found innocent, the brothers found jobs in the area. Meanwhile, Johnson was able to get a warrant against Boone on murder for the Vernon, Texas, shooting years earlier.

The Marlows did have a champion in Young County Sheriff Marion Wallace. Wallace and Johnson did not like each other, but Wallace was



Tintype of Bill McDonald, circa 1880s with Winchester 1873 lever action rifle. He later served in the Texas Rangers as captain of Company "B," Frontier Battalion, from 1891 through 1907

Wallace in his side, mortally wounding him.

Epp rode into town to get a doctor. For some reason Collier began telling people arriving at the cabin it had been Charley who had shot Wallace, though the sheriff told the doctor it had been Boone.

Boone leaped on a mount and escaped into the Indian Territory. Though miles away when the shooting took place, George and Alf were arrested as were Charley and Epp as accomplices to the shooting. Bail was set at \$1,000 apiece. Wallace died on Christmas Eve which made Collier the new sheriff.

popular in the surrounding communities. It was Wallace who warned the family about Johnson.

When the warrant for Boone's arrest arrived from Vernon, Wallace and Deputy Tom Collier rode out to the Marlow cabin to take Boone in. Collier went to the door first greeted

by Charley who invited him in for dinner. The deputy stepped inside. Seeing Boone, Collier said, "I've come for you, Boone" then drew and fired his pistol at Boone but missed. Boone grabbed his Winchester and returned fire. One bullet grazed Collier, but a second shot struck

After overhearing their jailers talk about lynching them, the brothers decided to try to break out. Getting a knife from another prisoner, they cut their way through the wall of their cell. On January 4, 1889, they managed to escape but were caught and shackled to each other before



## **Boone Marlow, the Slayer of Sheriff Wallace, Himself Slain.**

**Followed Into the Indian Territory.  
Refusing to be Taken Alive, He  
is Filled with Bullets.**

**His Body Delivered to the Citizens of Graham.  
Who Promptly Pay the Reward of  
Fifteen Hundred Dollars.**

being placed back in a cell.

Two weeks later, on January 17, a mob broke into the jail. The jailer let the vigilantes into the cell. The mob tried dragging the brothers out, but they were putting

up a fight. One man, Bob Hill, rushed in and grabbed Charley, but the Marlow brother gave Hill a beating. Hill struck his head against a wall, later dying from the injury. Alf drove the others out with a lead pipe he was able to get his hands on. The mob finally gave up and dispersed.

Johnson decided to spirit the brothers and the two other prisoners out the night of January 19, 1888, to Weatherford, Texas, and into the ambush at Dry Creek.

After escaping the vigilante ambush, the two brothers woke to find their cabin surrounded by Collier and his posse. They declared they would only surrender to a U.S. Marshal. For two days, the posse laid siege to the cabin when the U.S. Marshal finally arrived and took them away to safety, though in custody.

Their brother Boone was not so lucky. He had a reward on his head of \$1,500 when his body was brought in

riddled with bullets on January 29, 1889. Bounty hunters claimed he resisted arrest, but it was discovered he had been poisoned, and the bounty hunters were taken prisoner.

Graham citizens were shocked by the brutal ambush indicting several members of the vigilantes. Their trial date was set for October. George and Charley were acquitted of horse theft in March but told to stay in Dallas as federal witnesses for the upcoming mob trial.

But Charley got wind that Collier had a warrant for his arrest regarding the murder of Sheriff Wallace. The Marlows skipped out of Dallas, making their way to Ridgway, Colorado.

Texas Governor Big Jim Hogg issued an arrest warrant for the brothers on May 22, 1891, sending legendary Texas Ranger Captain Bill McDonald and another Ranger to bring them in from Colorado. But

neither local law officers nor the townspeople would allow the Rangers to take the Marlows back to Texas.

To avoid gunplay,

the parties agreed the Marlows would remain federal witnesses in the case of the mob trial and be allowed to stay in Colorado. The two became successful ranchers and later became Colorado lawmen themselves.

In 1891, during sentencing of one of the mob members, Federal Judge A.P. McCormick stated, "This is the first time in the annals of history where unarmed prisoners, shackled together, ever repelled a mob. Such cool courage that preferred to fight against such odds and die, if at all, in glorious battle rather than die ignominiously by a frenzied mob, deserves to be commemorated in song and story."



**Mike Coppock** grew up in Western Oklahoma and graduated from the region's Phillips University with a degree in history. He has spent 40 years in Alaska as a newspaper editor, a teacher in a Native village, and a flight specialist. He is currently an interpretive coach at Denali National Park. In 2024, he won the Will Rogers Medalion Award for Best nonfiction article and his book, *The Oceanside History of Alaska*, was released.

BY STUART ROSEBROOK

# Wild & Free

THE ONE AND ONLY

JANA BOMMERSBACH

•1945-2024•

**A** whirlwind of ink and drama, Jana Bommersbach never blinked in the pursuit of a great story. Ever. She was an omnipotent presence in any room she entered. Her passion for writing, for truth, for justice—for the First Amendment—were guideposts that drove Jana forward every day. For five decades, Jana was an inspiration to her peers in journalism. She never backed down from a bully; she was a thorn in the side of every politician; and she was unwavering in her pursuit of a good story.

When did I first discover the power of Jana's pen? It had to be when I moved to Tempe, Arizona, and began a tenure working in the KTVK-TV3 newsroom in 1986. There was no internet, no cell phones. You sought the news from all its sources—radio, TV, local newspapers, weekly news magazines—and in Phoenix—the weekly alternative newspaper, *The New Times*. And by 1986, Jana Bommersbach was a news-breaker every week with her no-holds-barred style of journalism. She and her colleagues at Phoenix *New Times*, including *True West's* very own Bob Boze Bell, challenged the status quo every week with their withering, hard-hitting style of journalism. No one in the business of reporting the news in Arizona could ignore the alternative newspaper as it forced the entrenched powers at the local editorial newsrooms in print, radio and TV to take notice and pursue a higher level of investigative journalism. And from day one, Jana Bommersbach led the way.

When did I first meet Jana? Hard to say...probably at a political event KTVK-TV3 was covering—but only in

passing. Jana was yet to be a local TV celebrity—in the 1980s her hands were ink-stained with newsprint—and it was one of her groundbreaking stories—on the infamous Winnie Ruth Judd—that finally brought me face-to-face with her powerful personality. After reading her multi-part series on Judd in the April editions of *New Times*, I called my father, Jeb Rosebrook, a Hollywood writer-producer, and suggested that he and his partner, Joe Byrne, option Jana's articles for a movie or miniseries. The option led to Jana writing her biography of Judd, the option and development of scripts of

*The Trunk Murderess* into a miniseries, but unfortunately, as it happens often in Hollywood, it ran into studio-network squabbles and was never produced. (Maybe, now we should do it!!) What it did produce was a cherished friendship—and one last surprise (other than calls about how we could get Winnie produced) that lasted until Jana's passing earlier this year.

That surprise—and great honor—was that I was Jana's editor at *True West*. How could I have ever imagined—going back nearly 40 years to my work as a young journalist, working as an assignment editor at KTVK-TV3—that I would someday be Jana Bommersbach's editor? As editor of Jana's *True West* column, "Old West Saviors," I found she was a dream to work with—even when I ended up working as a negotiator and peacemaker between her and Bob Boze Bell on the creation of their final (and only) book together—*Helraisers & Trailblazers: The Real Women of the Wild West*.

A true woman of the West—born and raised on the plains of North Dakota—Jana will always be an inspiration







to me as a writer, historian and editor. Thank you, Jana. I will miss your calls, your pursuit of the truth, and love of a new, undiscovered story. Your legacy as a hellraiser and trailblazer will live on through your writing for many generations. And as you once reminded me, never leave home without a shovel, pen and paper. You never know when you might have to uncover a dead body and meet an editor's deadline with a new, groundbreaking story.

—Stuart Rosebrook

## Athia Hardt's Eulogy for Jana

When Jana Bombersbach walked into *The Arizona Republic* and said to me, "Hi. I'm Jana. What are you doing for dinner tonight?" It was the beginning of a 52-year friendship that sometimes felt like a sisterhood, with all the ups and downs that come with being sisters.

But it was more than that too, it was a clear statement of who Jana was, not just for me, but for all of you too. Friendly, not afraid to approach a stranger, always willing to party, and open to new experiences. Whether you knew Jana for five decades, watched her on television or listened to a podcast, what you saw was what you got.

As you all know, she was a great writer, an amazing author, and the recipient of too many awards to list. These have all been written about in the days since she left us, and if you've missed the list, you can google it or go to her website. There is no question it was an amazing career. But I'm not going to talk about that today. I want to talk about my friend and yours.

Let's spend just a few minutes admitting what Jana was not. She was not a housekeeper. In fact, in her first Hoover Street home, there was a big sign as you entered the kitchen that said, "Well, a word I shouldn't say here, followed by Housework." She had other things to do, and that was pretty much her motto all her life.

She was not good at money. Not at all. She just didn't want to deal with it. Many times she would call me, on Cloud Nine about some project she'd agreed



In December of 1978 Jana, far right, posed with the owners of *New Times Weekly*, Mike Lacey (next to Jana) and Jim Larkin (next to Lacey) and BBB (in hat). Jana had a falling out with Larkin and Lacey during the Backpage controversy and they never talked again.

to do, and I'd say, "That's fabulous. What are they going to pay you?" (Knowing the likely answer.) And she'd say, "I forgot to ask."

Although she was one of the best researchers and writers I ever knew, she was a terrible speller. And she didn't bother to spell-check either.

In fact, she laughed about these things, because they weren't her focus. She cared about telling stories, about offering points of view that we might not have considered and about raising unknown heroes, like the early west women with whom she identified.

She cared about raising all women up. She would have been delighted to know that the Democratic Party nominated a woman for the presidency. In fact, she would be making phone calls for her right now. (Sorry; you didn't think you were going to get through a talk about Jana without politics being mentioned, did you?)

As much as she loved writing, Jana loved more just being with friends and both her birth family and the Phoenix family she created. Really, Jana loved people. I once told her, when we were both in our 20s, "Jana, wherever you go, there's a party." Even as we both grew older, she said it was the best thing I ever said about her.

I'll tell you a secret: That tough reporter who could stop freeways and shine spotlights on human trafficking, also was a softie. For more than 40 years, Jana threw an annual Christmas party for the children of her friends. Santa came and, by the end, not only was each child holding a gift, but Santa's sleigh was filled with gifts donated for children in hospitals.

And she could sometimes be a little too trusting in her personal dealings with people. When she first came to Phoenix, and we were living paycheck-to-paycheck, she badly wanted to buy a piano. She put up a sign on the newsroom bulletin board, saying she was looking for a cheap used piano. And lo and behold, a guy in the sports department offered to sell her one AND deliver it. About a month later, he called and asked to borrow it back. He wanted to have a party. He'd pick it up and return it. You got it. After a few weeks, the piano hadn't returned. A few weeks later, he declared bankruptcy, and Jana vowed to go testify at his hearing as a debtor. When she came back to the newsroom, I asked how it went, and she said, "I couldn't do it. Athia, you won't believe this, but when he saw me, he THANKED me for coming to show support."



"I'm still dancing with the one who brung me!" stated Jana in her book, *Cattle Kate* which she also dedicated to her friend and co-author BBB.



## JANA BOMMERSBACH BY THE NUMBERS

There are many stories like that one. Because you can't open your heart without taking a risk, and Jana did that every day.

So to my friend, Jana, who never forgave me for moving to Seattle, we say goodbye today.

Goodbye to the biggest fan of Christmas I ever met. Goodbye to the lady who held two states—Arizona and North Dakota—in her heart. Goodbye to the friend who was always looking for an excuse to throw a party. Goodbye to the lover of yard sales and thrift shops. Goodbye to the Do It Yourselfer who experimented with stained glass and sewed hundreds of flowing over-tops for special occasions. And goodbye to the collector of everything—glass-ware of all kinds, dolls, ceramic turtles, storyteller dolls, bells, anything Christmas, but especially nutcrackers and nativity scenes, copper, perfume bottles...everything that caught her eye. Jana collected friends everywhere she went, and we will miss her.

On her FaceBook page, when I was looking for photos, I found a lovely but unattributed quote:

“We need to hang around people that pour water on the fires of our fears and throw gasoline on the passions of our dreams.”

Jana did that.

—Athia Hardt



In March of 2016, Athia Hardt and Jana took several Arizona road trips to see some cowboy country, so Athia took her friend to Globe, where Athia was born and raised and then up through the Salt River Canyon into the White Mountains. This photo was taken on one of those trips.

Total number of writing awards

**40**

Named Journalist of the Year Award

**2**

Don Bolles Award For  
Investigative Journalism (1988-1999)

**2**

Emmys

**2**

Inducted into the Arizona  
Women's Hall of Fame

**1**

Number of books published

**8**

Number of Christmas  
parties held

**43**

Number of *True West* features

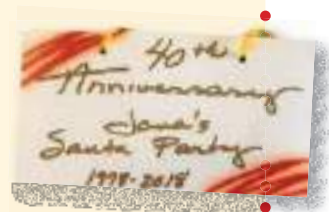
**12**

Number of Old West Savors  
columns written

**370**

Number of fans

**countless**



additional reporting by Garrett Browning

TRUE WEST  
EXCLUSIVE

# CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

## ONE RUDE DUDE!

### WILLIE B. RUDE VS APACHE RAIDERS

AGAINST OVERWHELMING  
ODDS RUDE RELOADS WITH  
DEADLY EFFICIENCY



Willie B. Rude,  
aka William Rood, Bill Rhodes

Illustrations by Bob Boze Bell

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Map by Tom Jonas

Based on the research of Greg Scott

JULY 14, 1861

**A**n American ranchero named Billy Rude, along with a Mexican vaquero named Felix, are riding from Tubac, Arizona to retrieve some horses which Rude had left on his abandoned farm, after a series of very aggressive Apache raids.

The farm is about 18 miles from Tubac, on the road to Tucson. Riding through Canoa, a stockade inn, 14 miles from Tubac, they meet two Americans who were in charge of the place cooking dinner, Rude and his Mexican helper told the two they would return with their horses for dinner. After a half-hour ride and successfully rounding up the horses, they return to Reventon, where they secure the loose horses in the corral, and then turning toward the inn, they spy a bloody shirt hanging on the gate. Approaching the dwelling, they spot a large party of Apaches (estimated at about 100 in number) lying low on their horses about a hundred yards off the road. They put the spurs to their horses and take off for Tubac with the Apaches in full pursuit. About a mile from the inn, Rude's horse started giving out, and the two split up with Rude striking off the road toward the mountains.

Finding his horse failing, and having an arrow through his left arm, Rude left the road, hoping to make it to a thicket he remembered having seen on the trip up. With the attacking Apaches about 200 yards in the rear, Rude threw himself off his horse and took cover in the

thicket. He later said it was very dense, with a narrow entrance leading to a dry mud-hole, or charco, in the center. Lying down, he spread his revolver cartridges and caps before him, and broke off the arrow shaft in his arm, painfully pushing it through and out, then buried his profusely bleeding elbow in the damp earth to stanch the bleeding. By then the Apaches had surrounded his leafy location, surrounded the thicket and began volley after volley into the defenseless position. A steady aim of the old frontiersman brought down the first Apache who charged the thicket. Each succeeding attacker met the same fate, until he had fired six shots. Then, believing him to be out of bullets, the Apaches charged with a loud yell. But the cool ranchero had loaded after each shot, and a seventh ball brought down the leader of the charge and then the eighth one brought down the attacker behind him. Volley after volley was fired into the thicket in the hopes of killing Rude, but he was tucked down into the dirt and survived the fuselage. The Apaches tried another charge, but Rude brought down another Apache and so they yelled at him: Guiermo—Come and join us; you are a brave man and we'll make you a chief."

Rude laughed and yelled back, "Oh, you devils, you! I know what you'll do with me if you get me!" A moment went by, then Rude heard a loud shout: "Sopori! Sopori!" the name of a neighboring ranch and the entire attacking party rode off.

The intense battle is over and now Rude got ready for a long walk.



#### A BARELY DEFENSIBLE POSITION

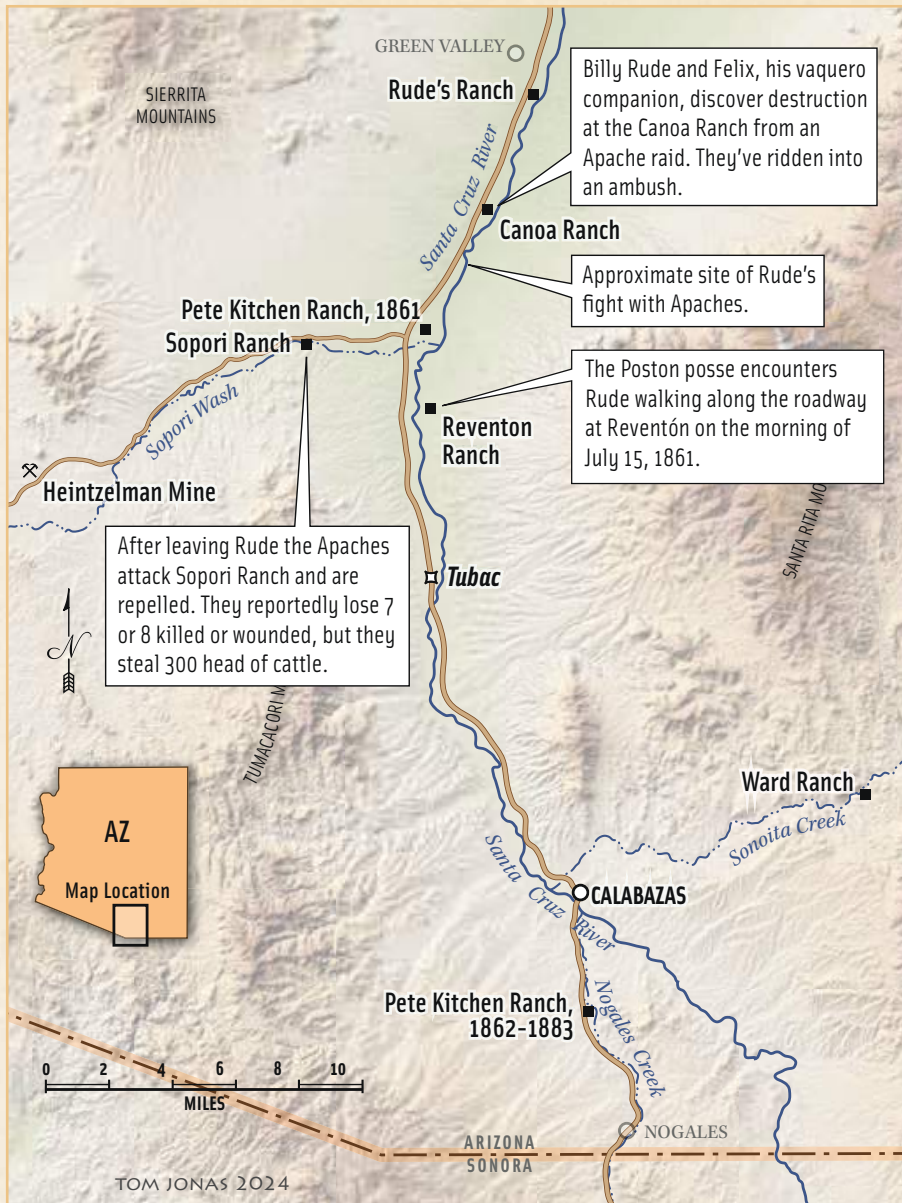
A modern photo taken at the battle site of the possible mesquite thicket Rude may have sought refuge in.

Photo by Bob Boze Bell





## A Rude Map of The Fight

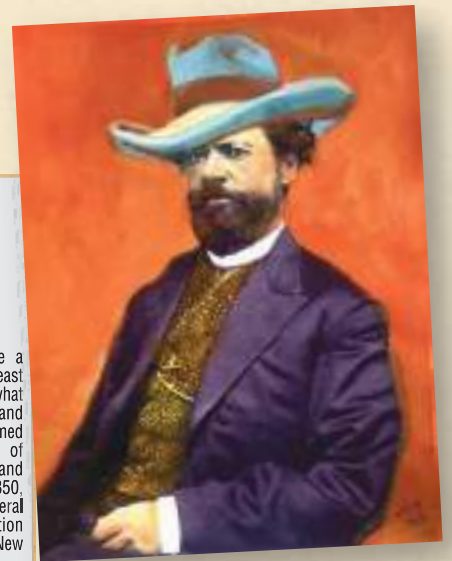


## The King of Santa Cruz Valley

In addition to being the leader of the Sonoran Mining Expedition near Tubac which was capitalized with a \$2 million secured investment and proceeded to produce an alleged \$3,000 per day. Charles Poston was known as “the Colonel” and he printed his own money and officiated marriages and divorces and baptisms of children and he was the acting promoter and mayor of the place (see quote below) until Bishop Lamy in Santa Fe came to investigate. Allegedly, a payoff, I mean—a donation!—of \$700 sanctified the unions. Poston also surveyed the townsite of Colorado City (later Yuma) and sold it for \$20,000 before returning to San Francisco.

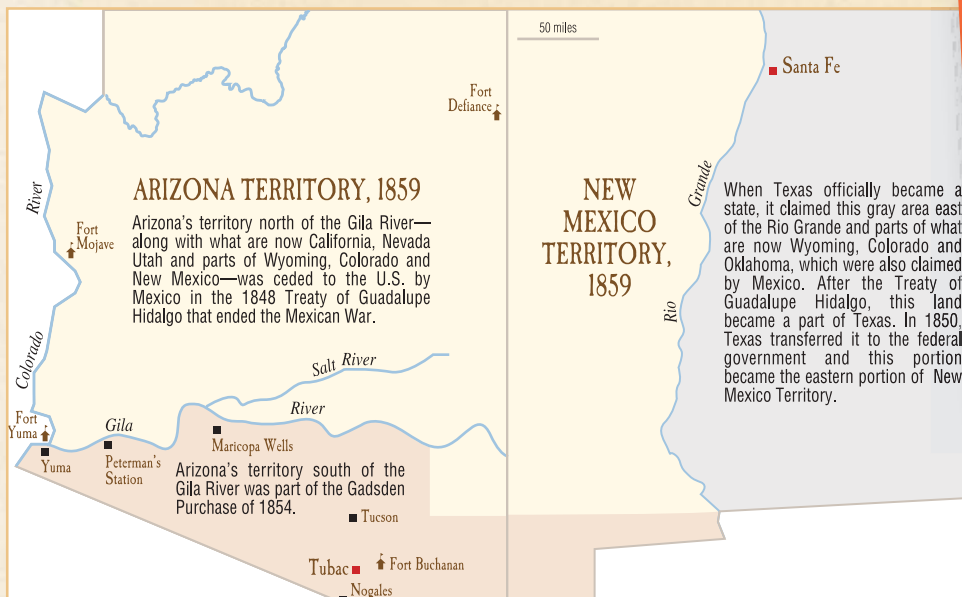
**“We had no law but love, and no occupation but labor. No government, no taxes, no public debt, no politics. It was a community in a perfect state of nature.”**

—Charles Poston, on the Santa Cruz Valley



**CHARLES DEBRILLE POSTON**

The upstart settlers called his new region “The Purchase” short for “The Gadsden Purchase.”







This is how Phil imagines Rude's layout looked in the thicket

Courtesy Phil Spangenberg

## RUDE'S RELOADING LAYOUT

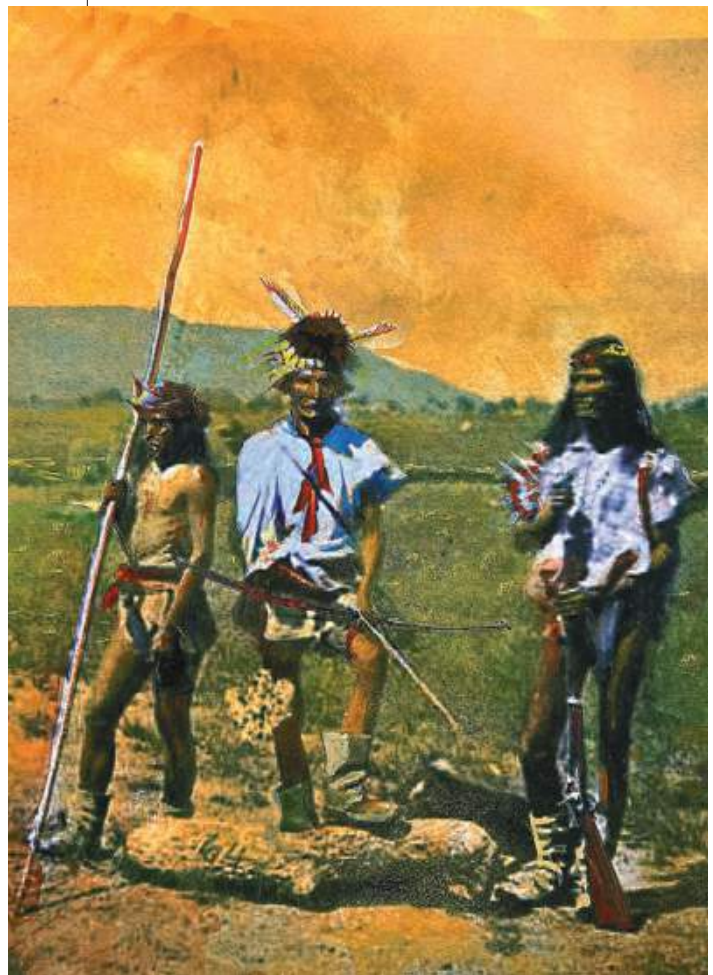
*We asked our gun editor, Phil Spangenberg to walk us through the steps Rude had to take in order to reload his Colt after each shot.*

In the mesquite thicket that Rude holed up in, he probably had his defensive layout looking something like this. After each shot was fired and the Apaches temporarily backed off, he wisely reloaded his six gun, keeping it ready for any onslaught his attackers might throw at him. To reload his caplock six-shooter he'd have to first bring the revolver to the half-cock position and manually rotate the cylinder so the now empty chamber was located just to the right of the barrel assembly, allowing him to pour a fresh charge of black powder (contained in his pistol flask at left on belt pouch) into the fired chamber of the gun's cylinder. Then he'd take a lead pistol ball from the small pouch (fringed buckskin bag) where extras were carried, place the ball over the powder in the chamber, then using the under-barrel loading lever, seat the ball firmly over the powder charge. Once the ball had been seated, he'd rotate the cylinder to the cutout capping portion of the frame so he could place a small copper percussion cap, taken from the little round cap box (seen just above the buckskin pouch) and thumb press it over the empty nipple at the rear of the revolver's cylinder. He then had his smoke wagon fully loaded and ready to greet any of his attackers. It takes longer for an experienced six-gunner to write this caption than to accomplish the loading of a single, or maybe even a couple of fired chambers in a cap-and-ball six-gun...as the Apaches found out!

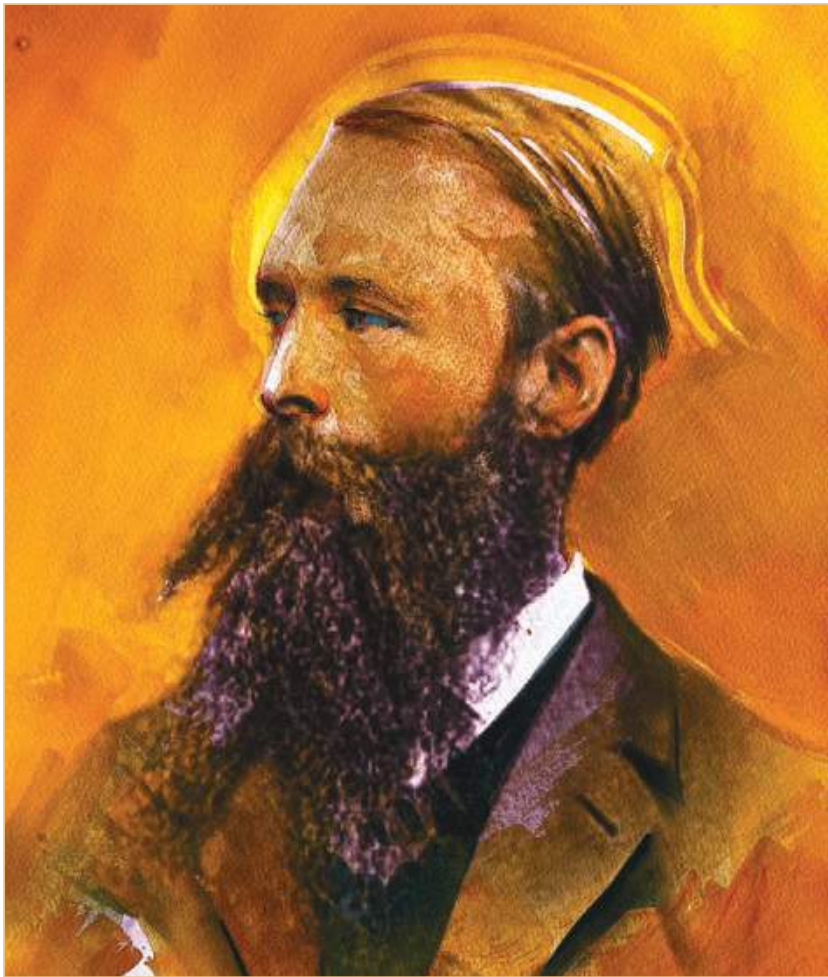
—Phil Spangenberg

### Weapons of The Apache Attackers

Although this illustration is based on an 1873 photograph of Apache warriors, this is likely how they were armed against Rude in the 1861 era: the trusty Apache lance, bows and arrows and single-shot long guns. it's still amazing he even had a chance.







Charles Raphael Pumpelly wrote up the first and best narration of the Rude fight we have.



After the drowning death of Rude, treasure hunters destroyed his ranch house along the Colorado River looking for rumored hidden wealth.

## Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Rude's companion, the vaquero Felix made it safely back to Tubac, where he related this harrowing escape to Colonel Poston and Charles Pumpelly.



In the morning Poston led a heavily armed group out to bury the bodies and search for survivors. One of the posse members, Pumpelly relates that to their great surprise the first man they met was Rude, walking with his arm in a sling.



Not long after the Apache-mesquite fight near the Canoa Ranch, Rude and the other American rancheros had to abandon the Santa Cruz Valley for safer climes, and Rude ended up along the Colorado River, about 40 miles north of Yuma where he established his Rancho de los Yumas and began farming and raising cattle. He reportedly did quite well for some time, but on April 29, 1870 he and his ranch foreman, Alex Poindexter, crossed the river to pay Indian woodchoppers and on the way back, their raft hit a snag and Rude drowned. The foreman claimed he clung to the raft and made it to safety. After Rude's death, rumors of hidden gold brought out the treasure hunters who picked at his walls and dug up the floors until only a shell of the house remained.



After a twenty year career in Washington and hopscotching around the globe, Charles Poston settled in Florence, Arizona and tried to build an eternal flame memorial on the nearby hillock. When that failed he moved to Tucson and became a lecturer and writer and after a few more government jobs he ended up in Phoenix in the 1890s where he sank into obscurity. The Territorial Legislature came to his rescue and provided him with a \$25 month pension and increased it to \$35 a month. Poston died of a heart attack in 1902. He became known as the Father of Arizona.



**Recommended:** The account of the fight was first published in a book, "Across America and Asia," in 1869 by Raphael Pumpelly, a mining engineer who was in the small, five man posse led by Poston who encountered Rude at Retention after the fight. It contains the most accepted version of the Rude fight.



## CLASSIC TRUE WEST

FROM THE TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

**Editor's Note:** The Western pulp writer, Walt Coburn often contributed to *True West* magazine. One of his earlier features was on the death of Tom Mix (see February 2024 *True West*).

BY WALT COBURN

# INDESTRUCTABLE JOHNNIE MULLENS

**Under the dateline of June 23, 1934, the following Associated Press news item was flashed over the wires from Reno, Nevada:**

### JOHN MULLINS KILLED IN AUTO MISHAP

John Mullins, 40, formerly of Bozeman, Montana, died here today from injuries received when he was struck by an automobile at Wadsworth, 30 miles from Reno, last night.

Mullins, who had resided at Wadsworth for the last two years, was struck while he was crossing a highway running through town by an automobile driven by Arthur Downs, Fallon, Nevada. Mullins received a fractured skull and other injuries and never regained consciousness. He was brought to a hospital where he died.

Within twelve hours every newspaper in the United States, Canada and Mexico printed the tragic news of the death of Johnnie Mullens, known nationally and internationally as the greatest rodeo arena director in the world. (The AP News had misspelled the name Mullins.)

Johnnie Mullens, well known rodeo contestant, had served as arena director and furnished the livestock for the famous Tex Rickard Madison Square Garden Rodeo in New York City from 1924 to 1930. He became arena director for the Calgary Stampede in 1912, to put Calgary on the map as holding the first great rodeo in the world, and he held that job from 1912 until 1917. He was arena director of the Philadelphia Rodeo, and in Montana he was arena boss at the Bozeman, Deer Lodge, Livingston and Butte Rodeos. He also managed the rodeo arena at Couer d'Alene, Idaho; Kansas City, Missouri, Silver City, New Mexico; Tucson, Arizona; and many others throughout the country.

As a bronc rider and roper Johnnie Mullens contested in every large rodeo from Canada to Mexico City. He once worked with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and Miller Brothers' 101 Wild West Show. He handled the famous Ringling string of bucking horses and rodeo stock.

The name of Johnnie Mullens was a byword in the rodeo world. As a boy and youth he punched cows for the biggest cattle spreads from the Indian Territory and New Mexico to Montana, the Dakotas and Alberta, Canada. Owners of the biggest cow outfits in the United States, Mexico and Canada, knew and liked the smiling, good-natured top bronc rider and cowhand. Every rodeo



Johnnie Mullens at Bozeman, Montana-1923

All images courtesy Walt Coburn unless otherwise noted





Roman race riders, Johnnie Mullens, Tillie Baldwin and A.J. Bryson at the Winnipeg Stampede 1913.

True West archives

contestant worthy of the name called Johnnie Mullens his friend.

News of his untimely death spread throughout the West like a prairie fire driven by a strong wind. Cowtowns without newspapers or telegraph or telephone service heard the news by word of mouth. Even on remote cattle ranches the report of his death somehow reached the distant cow camps. And for those who called him friend, the news carried an impact of shock, deep grief and sorrow.

Thus the tragic word of the death of Johnnie Mullens and the frantic search to locate Mrs. Mullens (the former Ruby Shepard of Bozeman, Montana) kept the telegraph wires hot from Reno to all compass points.

Johnnie Mullens is one of the last of a vanishing breed of men, the old-time cowhand. Those old-time cowhands knew the meaning of loyalty to whatever outfit they worked for, and Johnnie worked for the best.

Those were the days of free grass and open range, before the cow country was fenced in by the homesteaders, who plowed up the old roundup trails and fenced in the waterholes. When a cowboy could swing a big loop without getting it fouled up on a fence post. The days before barbed wire.

The old-time cowhand was proud, independent, durable and tough as rawhide, seasoned and hardened to endure the hardships of a frontier country. That tough, hardy breed of cowhand was needed in those days of the frontier cattle country, and they fulfilled their destiny, left their mark in the Archives of Western history.

A couple of years ago, Johnnie's horse got fouled up in a brush-concealed tangle of rusted barbwire. In the horse's frantic scramble to free his legs from the entanglement, he came over backwards, pinning Johnnie down. When the horse finally scrambled to its feet, Johnny kicked his feet from the stirrups and rolled free. He wound up in the community hospital with a shattered pelvis.

"First time in my life," Johnnie told me when I visited him, "I was ever laid up in a hospital. First time I ever got busted up." And he was then seventy-eight years old.

The doctors decided that Johnnie Mullens would never be able to ride a horse again. Seven months later he was back at the ORO ranch making a hand.

Then about a year ago, along about the Christmas holiday season, one morning early as Johnnie stepped into the house to eat breakfast, it happened again. Johnnie stepped on a small scatter rug that slipped out from under him and he wound up in the hospital with a broken hip, going from bed to wheelchair, to crutches, and then to a cane.

When I saw him recently he was walking around spry as a cricket in his shopmade high-heeled boots, with the short, bowlegged stride of a cowhand. He boarded a California-bound bus to visit his daughter, Colleen, and her family. After a few days in California he went to El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico, to visit relatives and friends. He came back bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, with scarcely a limp, using a cane more for balance than anything else.

Right now the durable, indestructible octogenarian is back at the ORO ranch, where he still makes a cowhand wherever. a top hand is needed.

"I've been roundsidin' long enough," Johnnie told me just before he pulled out for the ranch. "Puttin' on too much taller around the belly. A week or so a horseback is what a feller needs to get back in shape."



**Walt Coburn** (1889-1971) was a prolific Western writer churning out a reported 600,000 words a year. Born in Montana and raised on a ranch, he started writing in the 1920s and was promoted as the "Cowboy Author," he committed suicide in Prescott in 1971.

## TRUE WEST ARCHIVES

This article from the *True West* archives has been edited for space and clarity. To read the full version go to [twmag.com](http://twmag.com)

**Our past awaits you!**



Johnnie Mullens, at age 81, sits tall in the saddle at the ORO Ranch near Prescott, Arizona.

BY CANDY MOULTON

# On the Road to Rendezvous

*Still meeting up after all these years.*

**M**ore than half of the gatherings of mountain men and fur trade caravans took place in Wyoming, including the first one in 1825 along the Henry's Fork of the Green River. By far the most popular place for the annual summer rendezvous was in the Upper Green River Valley, not far from present-day Pinedale, with six rendezvous camps in that area.

The Green River Rendezvous is still celebrated in that community with an annual reenactment and mountain man camps, held each year in mid-July.

This summer's event involved an authentic mountain man camp set up by the American Mountain Men, a group of historians who faithfully adhere to the mountain man era. Everything in their clothing, gear and accoutrements is what would have been available

***Catching Up, ca. 1858-1860***

In 1858 Baltimore born artist Alfred Jacob Miller was comissioned to paint 200 watercolors on paper for \$12 each. These paintings were rendered from sketches Miller had made during the 1837 Green River Valley rendezvous.

Library of Congress





during the period before 1840, when rendezvous ended.

As part of the gathering they not only have an exceptional camp, including one buffalo hide tipi, but they also share information about the era with visitors. Their topics are diverse, ranging from building a hide-covered bullboat to Indian sign language to the etiquette of tipi living to firearms.

Located on grounds adjacent to the Museum of the Mountain Man, the AAM rendezvous site has traders offering items also representing the era pre-1840—from furs to beads, fire-starting kits, weapons (knives and guns) and libations.

In downtown Pinedale, another rendezvous camp has even more traders, with programs ranging from how to shoot a bow and arrow or throw a tomahawk to craft events for children.

North of Pinedale, visit the Trapper's Point marker, an area atop a bluff with a view overlooking the Green River Valley Rendezvous site. Other nearby monuments commemorate Father



Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale, Wyoming.

Courtesy Museum of the Mountain Man



The American Heritage Center in Logan, Utah.

Candy Moulton



FATHER PIERRE-JEAN DE SMET, 1864

True West Archives

Pierre De Smet, who celebrated the first Mass in the area, a monument to Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spalding, the first White women to attend a rendezvous, and a monument recognizing Pinckney Sublette, another of the family of brothers who came west and left their name on the county.

The goods for each rendezvous were brought overland by caravans of horses and mules carrying heavy packs of goods. They organized goods in St. Louis and traveled overland following the

Platte River, then the North Platte and crossing the South Pass that had been identified by Robert Stuart when he crossed it in 1812, traveling to St. Louis from the West.

The locations for the rendezvous were established each year for the following year, so everyone would know where to gather.

Rendezvous was in Utah for its second, third and fourth years, with gatherings in Cache Valley in 1826 and at Bear Lake in 1827 and 1828.

The American West Heritage Center in Wellsville, Utah, recognizes the



Cache Valley rendezvous and the mountain man era with an annual gathering in the spring including a trader's row, primitive skills demonstrations such as flint knapping, bullet making, starting a fire with flint and steel and other activities.

In 1829, rendezvous moved north to Pierre's Hole (today's Teton Valley), near Driggs, Idaho, and the mountain men returned there in 1832. More than a thousand mountain men and Indians had gathered for the 1832 rendezvous when William Sublette arrived in early July with a hundred mules carrying merchandise.

Thomas Fitzpatrick reached the gathering late because he'd been attacked by some Gros Ventre Indians and had to evade them by hiding in the mountains for five days. That was a clue that there was tension in the mountain trade with some tribes.

When the 1832 rendezvous concluded, Milton Sublette, a brother of William, led a party of trappers from Pierre's Hole, but they only got about six or eight miles before setting up a nightly



The Blacksmith shop at Fort Bridger, today.

Carol Highsmith photo courtesy Library of Congress

camp. The following day Gros Ventre and Blackfoot tribesmen approached Sublette's camp. Being outnumbered by the mountain men, those tribal warriors retreated.

When a Flathead chief and one of the trappers went to meet the Blackfoot while exhibiting a white flag of truce, they killed a tribal headman who'd come out to meet them. This caused the Blackfoot and Gros Ventres to quickly retreat and prepare a rough fortification.

William Sublette soon learned of the incident and with many men he rode to the area where brother Milton had camped, and they engaged the Blackfoot. What became known as the Battle of Pierre's Hole led to the deaths of five trappers, seven American Indians fighting with them, and perhaps 26 Blackfoot tribal members.

Pierre's Hole was a regular trapping location, but so was the hole to the east,

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# A WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

a location named for David Jackson. Our route takes us back into Wyoming and through Jackson's Hole then across Togwotee Pass and into the Wind River Valley.

The 1830 and 1838 rendezvous were both held on the Popo Agie River in central Wyoming. The 1838 gathering is recognized each year in early July with a modern rendezvous on the site of the original rendezvous in Riverton. Events include shooting competitions, trader's row, kid's activities and American Indian singing/drumming.

The first rendezvous took place in southwest Wyoming, and today one of the largest annual gatherings is held over Labor Day weekend at Fort Bridger State Historic Site. The largest of the historic rendezvous attracted two or three thousand participants, so the large-scale event at Fort Bridger is most representative of what it was like at a rendezvous in the 1825 to 1840 era.



Candy Moulton is the author of the Spur Award Winning biography *Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth, and Legend*. She lives near Encampment, Wyoming.

## THE MUSEUM OF THE FUR TRADE AND BORDEAUX POST

Chadron, Nebraska

The concept of rendezvous involved fur supply brigades taking goods to the mountain country where the trappers lived and trapped beaver. But there also were places established during the era that were fixed-site posts. The Bordeaux Post is one of them, located at the Museum of the Fur Trade on the east side of Chadron. This outstanding museum has one of the finest displays of fur trade era goods anywhere, ranging from trade cloth to trade beads, traps and tools, firearms and American

Indian items, including many pairs of moccasins.

## GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

**GOOD GRUB:** Wind River Brewing Company, Pinedale, Wyoming; Stockman's Saloon and Steakhouse, Pinedale, Wyoming; The Bunnery, Jackson, Wyoming; Mack's Inn, Island Park, Idaho; Angie's Restaurant, Logan, Utah

**GOOD LODGING:** Chambers House B&B, Pinedale, Wyoming; Highline Trail RV Park, Boulder, Wyoming; Teton Valley Cabins, Driggs, Idaho

The Bordeaux Trading Post, originally operated from 1837 to 1876.

Courtesy Museum of the Fur Trade



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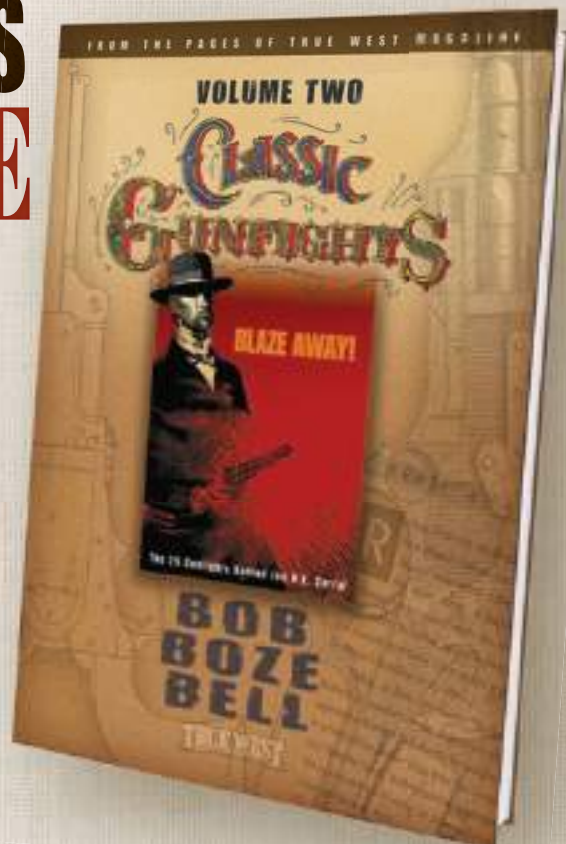
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## Legends of the West

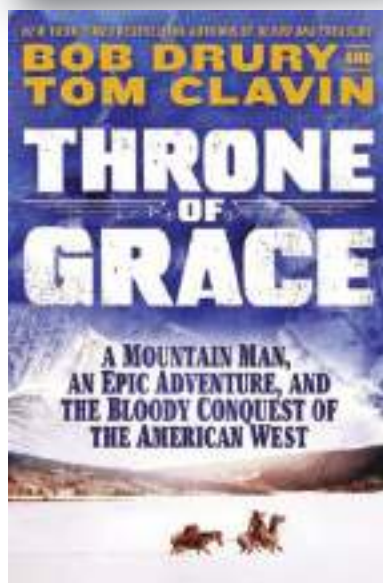
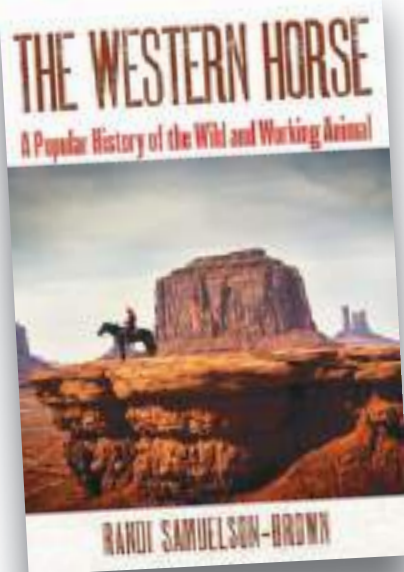
*New chronicles of the mountain men and the horse, plus a classic new Western, a new history of the Buffalo soldiers, a travel guide to Western forts and biography of a Civil War legend-maker.*

**I**n the annals of North American history, the fabled lore of the horse and the mountain man are two of the most chronicled and beloved. From Columbus's introduction of the horse to the New World in 1494 to the empirical battle to control North America through the fur trade, the wild mustang and equally untamed fur trapper remain legendary icons of the American West.

Long before the first companies of European fur trappers arrived in North America, the Spanish Empire brought the horse to the shores of the Caribbean Islands and Mexico. Colorado historian Randi Samuelson-Brown's latest book, *The Western Horse: A Popular History of the Wild and Working Animal* (TwoDot, \$22.95), is an excellent primer on the saga of how the storied steed became the most important animal in the settlement of the New World and the legendary animal it is today.

Readers of *The Western Horse* will appreciate the way Samuelson-Brown organizes her book chronologically and topically with endnotes provided at the conclusion of each chapter. Educators—at any level—will discover this fresh, new volume on the legendary Western caballo an accessible resource for research and teaching about the horse in American history.

For scholars and novelists of the fur trade and mountain men, Ashley and Henry's Rocky Mountain Fur Company is one of the most researched, recorded and recounted in popular culture. Bob Drury and Tom Clavin's *Throne of Grace: A Mountain Man, an Epic Adventure, and the Bloody Conquest of the American West*



*the Bloody Conquest of the American West* (St. Martin's Press, \$30) should be considered one of the best biographies of

Jedediah Smith and best Western history books of the year. Supported by excellent maps and illustrations, *Throne of Grace* is a primer on the international fur trade and conflicts between European empires, Native tribes and the emerging American nation for control of the West and its resources. And as Drury and Clavin demonstrate in their dramatic narrative, fur trapper and trailblazer Jedediah Smith was at the center of America's expansion in the early decades of the 19th century.

For the past two decades the writing duo of Drury and Clavin has become well-established in the genre of popular Western history, and the genre is better for it. They have a dynamic literary style that brings history alive and accessible for the modern reader while mining familiar subjects and topics for new audiences of the subject matter. For those who are familiar with the fur trade and the annals of the American mountain men of the early decades of the 19th century, Drury and Clavin's *Throne of Grace* is an excellent new recounting of the era and should inspire a new appreciation for the courage, bravery and folly of the fur trappers who plied their trade against all odds across the continent. As one who has greatly admired the mountain men and their audaciousness, I am inspired to read further, set my horizons to venture into the heart of the West and retrace their routes in hopes of viewing, in some small way, the same grand vistas that greeted them two centuries ago.

—Stuart Rosebrook



## FROM THE PEN OF JANA BOMMERSBACH

The silence is deafening. When the pen of a great writer is put down for the last time and the words stop singing from their hand to the page, we all hear it. And it is louder than you can imagine.

Since Jana Bommersbach's passing on July 17, 2024, in Fargo, North Dakota, her voice and joy, her words and wishes, her curiosity and imagination—her passionate pursuit of justice and bringing voice to the voiceless—were suddenly and quietly silenced. Odd and strange how that happens. It will happen to all of us, but no matter who it may be—or the circumstances surrounding each of our last moments on this earthly plain—the quiet that surrounds someone who made their living with words—with storytelling—is not silent at all. In fact, their words, their voices, their wanting to share what they just learned, roars in our ears.

How will we keep Jana's voice heard beyond our own imagination? The best and only way I know is to keep reading her writing—sharing it with others—and sharing stories of her with all those willing to listen and be inspired.

The best place to start is *True West's* archives. Jana, a dear and close friend of *TW* Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell for 50 years, was a contributor to the magazine from almost the first month BBB owned it. She was a trailblazer on women's history in the magazine, and 25 years of columns and features beg to be edited into follow-up volumes to *Hellraisers & Trailblazers: The Real Women of the Wild West*.

Where else can you find Jana's voice? Go online and you will find her byline in the pages of *The Arizona Republic*, *Phoenix New Times*, *Arizona Highways* and *Phoenix Magazine*. Jana also brought her voice to television, where her great sense of justice and humor can be discovered in her contributions to PBS and KTVK-TV3. For those of us who followed her writing, she seemed omnipotent, there was nothing she could not do.

And how about her books: take the time to go back and rediscover Jana's writing, including her novel *Cattle Kate: A Mystery*, her true-crime nonfiction *The Trunk Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd* and *Bones in the Desert: The True Story of a Mother's Murder and a Daughter's Search*.

I promise you—once you start reading Jana Bommersbach—her voice will never be silenced, and it will always be with you.

—Stuart Rosebrook

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—Mike B. Harvey  
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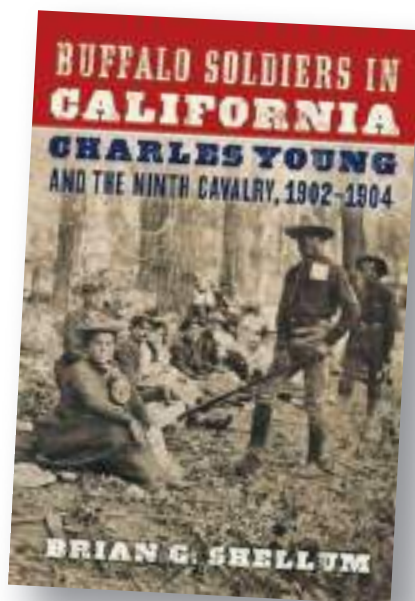




### A Western Classic

When a traditional Western author exceeds expectations, it's cause for celebration. Author M. Timothy Nolting's novel *...By the Way They Treat Their Horses* (Austin Macauley, \$13.78) is a real gem. The fast-action tale gives us reason enough to cheer, but his characters occupy a literary stratosphere reserved for the truly unique. Oklahoma homesteader Eli Brandt is as vile a figure as you'll ever read about. His Cheyenne wife, Maria, as strongly conflicted. Together—and alone—they bring up a trio of kids on the wind-torn turn-of-the-last-century prairie. It's young Jacob Brandt who becomes the heart and soul of the tale, struggling against a heritage of anger and violence under the watchful eye of Charlie Davies, a man with reason enough to hate the Brandt family. Eli and Maria's future is uncertain. Jacob's redemption isn't assured. A wonderful debut from a talented new voice, this one's a page-turner from start to finish.

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



### Golden State Cavalry

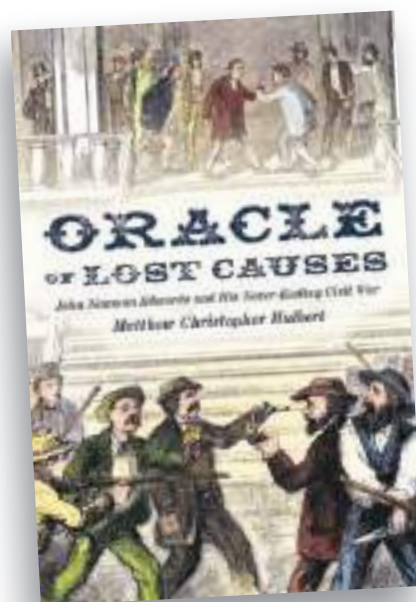
*Buffalo Soldiers in California: Charles Young and the Ninth Cavalry, 1902-1904* (Bison Books, \$26.95) is a wonderfully fascinating story. Retired army and intelligence officer turned government historian Brian G. Shellum, in what could be considered a follow-up to his 2021 book *Buffalo Soldiers in Alaska*, has unearthed a mine of information. Charles Young was a studious and youthful Black army officer who, in 1902, was one of only three African American soldiers serving in the U.S. Army. A graduate of West Point (its third Black graduate), Young led troops in the Spanish-American War and saw heavy combat in the Philippine-American War. By the turn of the century, however, Young and his troops were sent to San Francisco and engaged in routine military duties at the Presidio as well as patrolling the newly established national parks of Sequoia and Yosemite. With his troops, whom Young called the “rowdy gang of mine,” early 20th-century California, a state brimming with opportunity population booms, was kept in check. Shellum's book casts a wider net on the history of African Americans in the United States and their overlooked contributions. *Buffalo Soldiers in California* is a must read.

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

### Making Myths, Making History

John Newman Edwards was the best press agent a cold-blooded outlaw or a drunken Confederate leader could ever have. Best known for his biased books about Confederate Gen. Joseph O. Shelby and Missouri bushwhackers and his equally one-sided newspaper articles defending Jesse James, Edwards was also a drunkard, duelist, devoted father and a romantic to the core. Matthew Christopher Hulbert brings this “quarrelsome” (an understatement) character to life in *Oracle of Lost Causes: John Newman Edwards and His Never-Ending Civil War* (University of Nebraska Press/Bison Books, \$34.95). More than a biography of a “natural-born troubadour” and “fiercely loyal friend,” this fascinating book shows the Civil War and post-Civil War West for what it was, and how myths and legends were made.

—Johnny D. Boggs, author of *Longhorns East and Bloody Newton*

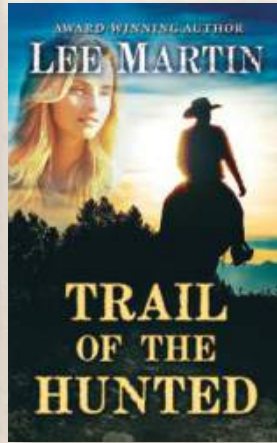




# LEE MARTIN



**COMING SOON! LAST TRAIL OF THE ASSASSIN:** In 1879 Wyoming Territory, Booth may still be alive as a lascivious preacher protected by dangerous fanatics. On his trail, a desperate young woman, who can identify Booth and his look alike, seeks the help of a gun toting lawyer already defending the preacher against a wrongful murder charge.



**NEW! TRAIL OF THE HUNTED:** In 1877, Danny Montana, a bounty hunter with a price on his head and no answers, takes up a badge and soon stumbles onto a fugitive woman desperate to find her sons, leading to discovery of secrets in both their lives as they fight a mutual, powerful enemy for survival.

**TRUE WEST, JANUARY 2023, BEST OF THE WEST:**

Best Historical Western Novelist and Novel, PEARL HART & THE VIOLENT MEN  
"Chance Donovan, a U.S. Deputy Marshal

and former Texas Ranger, having to deal with his own secret past as well as the vengeful and deadly Boxer gang among others, has a yen for Pearl Hart, a feisty suffragette with an abusive husband. When it all comes together, only a few will survive the deadly climax."

Two new western films, written by Lee Martin and based on Martin's novels, were produced and directed by Michael Feifer and have been released to select theaters, online streaming and movies on demand, as well as DVD.

**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.

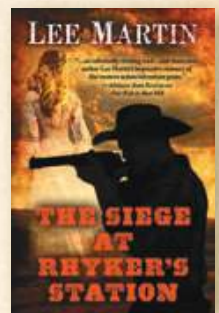
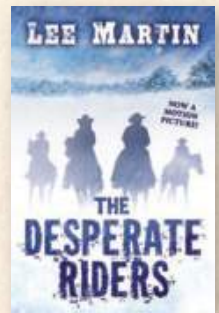
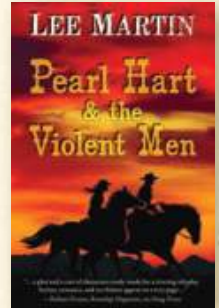
Kansas Red, a mysterious gunfighter-preacher, leads a small party of rescuers, including a teen-age boy, a rancher, and a young Texas woman with a deadly aim, on a wild ride through high mountains to save kidnapped women from escaped convicts and their unstoppable leader, moving to a violent climax with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

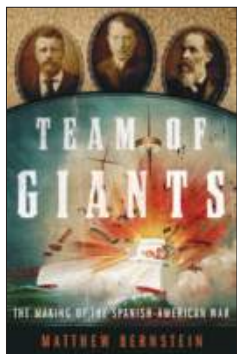
**SHADOW ON THE MESA:** While a hired gun for the cattlemen, Wes learns his Arapaho mother was murdered. He also learns that his long lost white father is still alive, rich with a family, and may have hired the killer. Wes starts out on a trail for vengeance against his own father.

Martin also wrote the script for the movie, starring Kevin Sorbo, which won the **Wrangler Award** given by the *National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum*.



Look for all of Lee Martin's 32 Westerns at **AMAZON** or wherever books are sold.  
Many are on audio with **BOOKS IN MOTION**.



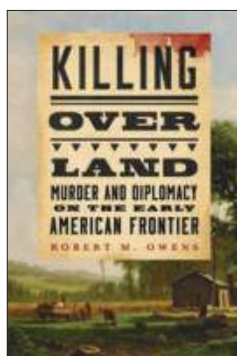


## Team of Giants

The Making of the Spanish-American War

By Matthew Bernstein

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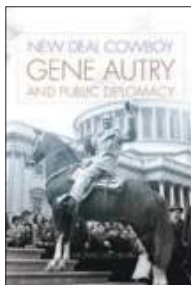
## Killing over Land

Murder and Diplomacy on the Early American Frontier

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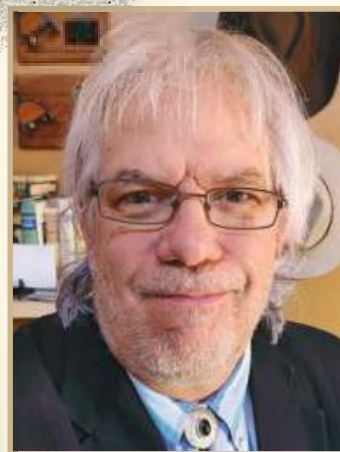
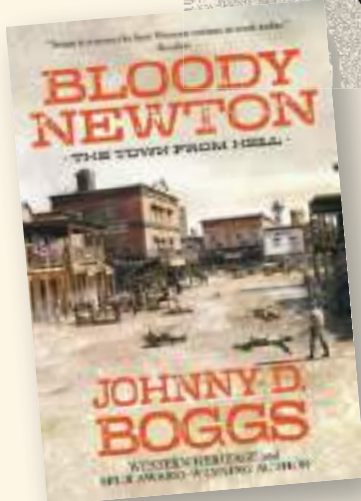
By Michael Duchemin

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Courtesy Johnny D. Boggs

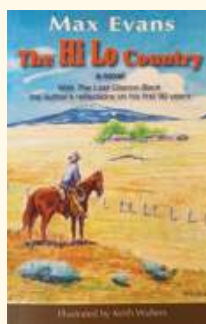
### 5 MUST-READ CLASSIC WESTERNS STILL IN PRINT

Award-winning, New Mexico author Johnny D. Boggs is one of the West's most respected authorities on Western writing and novelists. A longtime contributor to *True West* and the editor of Western Writers of America's *Roundup Magazine*, Boggs's latest novel is *Bloody Newton: The Town from Hell*. Here are five Western novels he believes everyone who loves the genre should know and read.

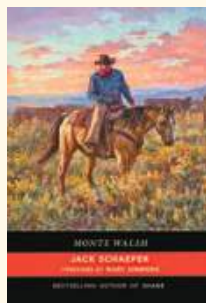
1 **The Big Sky** by A.B. Guthrie Jr. (Mariner Books): Guthrie won his Pulitzer for *The Way West* (1949), a sequel to this, his best work. *The Big Sky* (1947) is a searing, unromanticized look at the fur trade and mountain men. The 2002 edition includes Wallace Stegner's 1965 introduction.



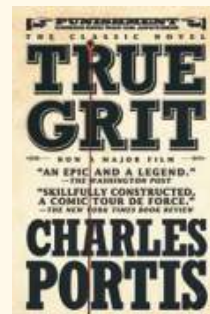
2 **The Hi Lo Country** by Max Evans (University of New Mexico Press): Ol' Max's most personal novel, set in northern New Mexico just after World War II, is a lean, elegiac and incredibly honest Shakespearean tragedy set in a stark, rapidly changing country. The 2021 edition was released on the 60th anniversary of the novel's original publication.



3 **Monte Walsh** by Jack Schaefer (University of New Mexico Press): Schaefer might be best known for *Shane*, but 1963's *Monte Walsh* is his masterpiece, told in vignettes that span the life of a cowboy from the 1870s to the early 1900s. The 2017 reprint includes a foreword by Marc Simmons.



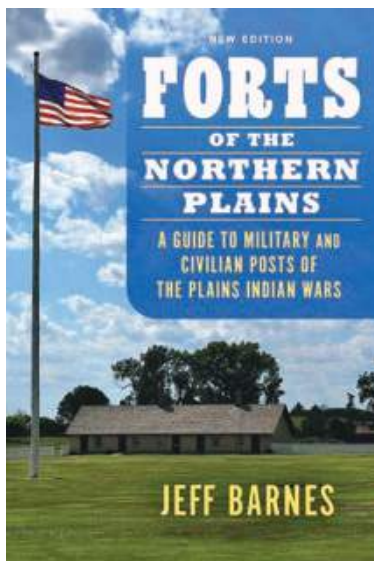
4 **True Grit** by Charles Portis (Overlook Press): You've probably read it, and likely can recite dialogue verbatim. But this novel remains fresh, vibrant and fun no matter how dog-eared the pages have become. The 2013 paperback release includes an afterword by novelist/essayist Donna Tartt.



5 **Ceremony** by Leslie Marmon Silko (Penguin Classics): Critically acclaimed upon its 1977 release, *Ceremony* follows a Laguna Pueblo World War II vet trying to heal himself through his people's past. Beautifully written by a woman of Laguna-Mexican-white heritage, this 2016 edition includes an introduction by Larry McMurtry.



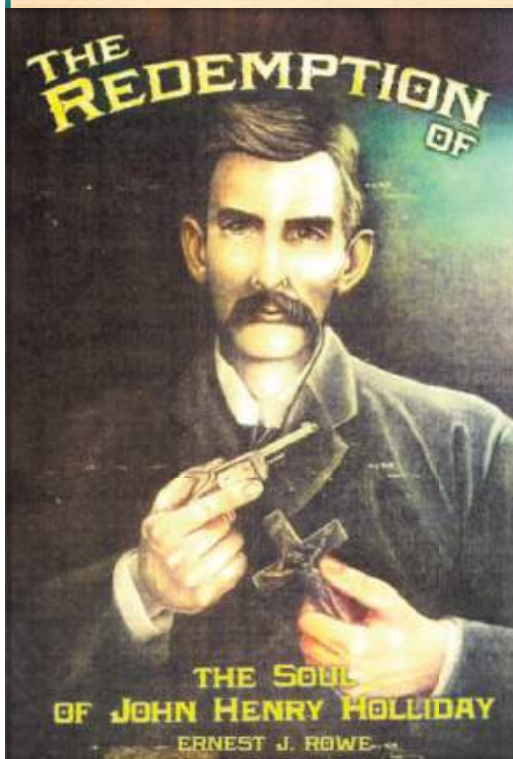




### Follow the Guidon

The late Robert M. Utley hailed *Forts of the Northern Plains: A Guide to Military and Civilian Posts of the Plains Indian Wars* (New Edition) (Bison Books, \$24.95) by Jeff Barnes as a “very timely and impressive work.” Jerome Greene, a highly respected historian of the West, commented that Barnes’s book “should be on the shelves of everyone with an interest in the West during this traumatic period of American history.” While I am not Utley or Greene, I agree. *Forts* is a comprehensive, readable and easily accessible guide to the military outposts of Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. Barnes presents a concise informative history on each installation with maps and color photos, and all are divided geographically by state. The author takes it a step further for the adventurous traveler by giving each military post a starred ranking system. This indicates (at time of publication) the site’s accessibility, modern interpretive measures in place and other considerations. Some forts and outposts in the book are mere remnants, while others are National Historic Sites with gift shops and reenactors. *Forts of the Northern Plains* is a beautifully presented volume and will undoubtedly be an important addition to the study of Great Plains, military and Indian Wars history for decades to come.

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



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## THE REDEMPTION OF THE SOUL OF JOHN HENRY HOLLIDAY

BY ERNEST J. ROWE

This is a story of redemption, conversion and baptism of John Henry “Doc” Holliday into the Catholic Faith, at the pleading and prayers of his first cousin, Martha Ann Holliday, or ‘Mattie’ as he called her.

**About the author:** Ernest J. Rowe’s interest in the life story of John Henry Holliday began at an early age. His father Ernie Rowe, owned a sporting goods store in Glenwood Springs, and in 1956 was given Doc’s gun. The author had heard many stories from his grandfather, Ernest C. Rowe, who had been great friends with George Manley Weirick, who was the other bell boy at the Hotel Glenwood; during Doc’s stay the Hotel Glenwood.

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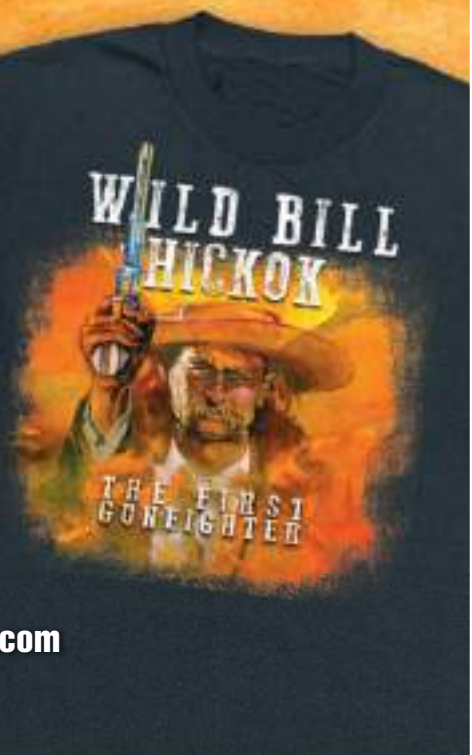
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**TRUE WEST**



## Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid—The Way It Should Be Seen

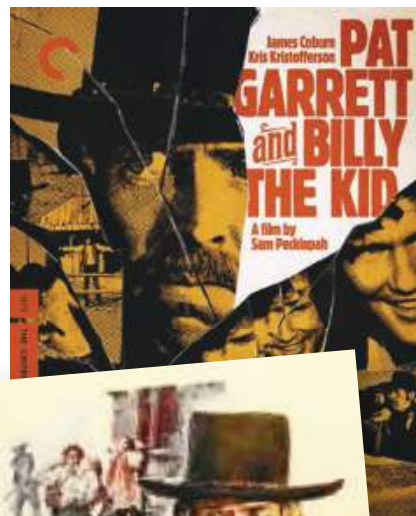
Fifty years after its first release, the film's recent version is considered the best.

**H**alf a century after its theatrical release, with the new Criterion version, Sam Peckinpah's final Western, *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, can finally be seen—as far as we can tell—the way Sam wanted it to be seen. It is certainly the best version there has ever been. And there have been many versions: Sam's first and second preview cuts, both about 122 minutes, but with a lot of different footage; the 106-minute theatrical release; the 96-minute Jim Aubrey cut; the broadcast TV cut; the

Z-Channel cut; and finally, both supervised by Emmy-winning editor and author Paul Seydor, the 2005 and new, 117-minute 2024 cuts.

Peckinpah was eager to tell the story of Pat and Billy, going back at least to 1957, when he was hired to script *One-Eyed Jacks*, then fired by Marlon Brando. Fifteen years later, Rudy Wurlitzer's *Pat Garrett* screenplay was snapped up by MGM, and they wanted Peckinpah because they wanted another *Wild Bunch*. If they'd actually read the script,

*Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* Criterion version  
Courtesy Criterion



On the set of *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (from left) Sam Peckinpah, James Coburn (Garrett) and Kris Kristofferson (Billy the Kid)

All images courtesy MGM unless otherwise noted



*Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*  
original movie poster





Katy Haber with Sam Peckinpah on the set of *The Getaway*.

they might have noticed that while *Wild Bunch*, *Major Dundee*, et al were all about driven men on a mission, *Garrett* was an elegiac character piece which doesn't "go" anywhere. As producer and close Peckinpah ally Gordon Carroll said, "It's a movie about a man that doesn't want to run, pursued by a man who doesn't want to catch him." Or as the real Billy himself was quoted, "I am not going to leave the country, and I am not going to reform, neither am I going to be taken alive again." It opens in Fort Sumer, New Mexico, ends in Fort Sumner, and mostly takes place in and around Fort Sumner, with a brief excursion to Old Mexico.

The 1970s was a tough time to make movies, especially in the studio system, particularly at MGM. The Hollywood one-time jewel was nearly bankrupt in 1969 when former TV executive Jim "the smiling cobra" Aubrey was installed as president. To cut costs and produce income, Aubrey cancelled a dozen green-lit films, sold off acres of studio backlot, auctioned their costumes and props, and began building the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

It was an even tougher time for Westerns: Katy Haber, who'd assisted Peckinpah on *Straw Dogs*, *Junior Bonner* and *The Getaway*, wasn't available for *Garrett* because she was in Spain, on Sam Fuller's Western, *Riata*. But in mid-shoot, Haber recalls, "Paramount decided that the film didn't cut together, canceled the production and we were all sent home," making her available, a little late, for *Garrett*. Another Western's production problems had a direct bearing on *Garrett*. Seydor explains, "Aubrey wanted a film...he could put into theaters that summer. That was supposed to be *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*." There were delays due to a switch of directors, then a stunt injury to star Burt Reynolds, then the suspicious death of Sarah Miles's manager/lover. "They couldn't finish that up. So they ramped up the release of *Pat Garrett*."

And Peckinpah was not a man to be rushed. Charles Martin Smith remembers, "I ended up just sitting in Durango for weeks, because he'd plan to shoot a scene that I was in, and then shoot some other stuff."

Smith had a nice role in *Culpepper Cattle Company* and had just finished *American Graffiti*. "I went in on the role of Alias, the part that [Bob] Dylan played. I auditioned for Sam. He was volatile, unpredictable. And he explained how he had a bunker in Mexico. 'We're gonna shoot this movie in Mexico, and when the shit hits the fan, that bunker's where [I'm] gonna go!' I'm a 19-year-old kid thinking, I might be over my head with this guy."

Other issues slowed progress. Shooting in dusty, primitive Durango, Peckinpah wanted a Panavision technician along, but Aubrey refused. Thus they shot a week's worth of scenes out of focus. "We had a lot of reshoots," Haber recalls, "because the 45-millimeter lens wasn't working." Aubrey forbade any reshoots; "he wanted all the meaningful stuff cut out of the film. So we shot on Sundays, with no pay, without anybody else's knowledge."

Dylan wrote *Knocking on Heaven's Door* and other powerful songs for the film, but casting the inexperienced and otherworldly Dylan as Alias didn't speed up the shoot. "We've been waiting days to get a 'golden hour' shot," Haber says. "Kristofferson's in the foreground, and all of a sudden, Harry Dean Stanton and Dylan are jogging in the background! Sam goes, 'Cut!' Harry comes running up, panic on his face. 'Oh, my God, Sam, I'm so sorry! I saw Dylan running, and I was trying to stop him.' Dylan was not easy to shoot because he had no concept of film whatsoever. Ironically, shortly



Bob Dylan in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*.





Sam Peckinpah is ready for action on the set of *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*

after the end of *Pat Garrett*, Dylan directed his first and only film, *Renaldo and Clara* (1978)."

Even in the smallest roles, the cast is brimming with great Westerners, and

what the film lacks in plot, it makes up for with memorable death scenes for Slim Pickens, Jack Elam, L.Q. Jones, R.G. Armstrong, Matt Clark and youngsters like Smith, who remembers fondly, "I

got the full *Wild Bunch* treatment, with the squibs going off and everything!"

"Kris really befriended me, and then 40 years later, I ended up directing him in *Dolphin Tail*; we'd sit around on-set and talk about Sam. Coburn was a very grand Hollywood actor of the old school. He always smoked a cigarette in a long cigarette holder."

"What pisses me off about people calling [the theatrical release] a butchered version," Seydor bristles, "is that film is magnificently cut by men who were real artists." Indeed, Peckinpah's editors, led by Roger Spottiswood, later the Emmy-nominated director of *And the Band Played On*, tightened the often-sluggish pre-

view versions, and by removing scenes that didn't advance the core narrative, were able to preserve the story, the performances, the lyrical moments, within the imposed running-time,

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preventing Aubrey from substituting his own cut.

The crucial loss was the 1908 flash-forward opening, where Pat is assassinated by someone we'll meet as the film progresses, intercut with Pat's guardedly friendly 1881 visit to Billy at Fort Sumner, warning him to head to Mexico. It is cinematically the high point of the film, elevating it from narrative to fine art.

Ironically, a true butchering, censoring the sex and violence for network TV, so shortened the film that previously cut scenes—Garrett with Barry Sullivan as Chisum, Garrett's scene with his wife, Billy romancing Martha Coolidge as Maria—were added. When Z-Channel's Jerry Harvey heard about the missing prologue, Haber supplied it. "Every night when we finished editing, Sam hid the print in the fridge so that nobody could get to it." Other scenes, one featuring Dub Taylor and Elisha Cook, Jr., are now part of the film for the first time.

It's taken so long to get the film right that Smith, the youngest person involved, has retired. "I was fascinated by the way Sam ran the set, his meticulousness, his

attention to detail. Sam would be so careful about where that camera was, exactly what it was seeing, what was at the edge of the frame. Every shot was like a painting."

## BLU-RAY REVIEW

### BRING ME THE HEAD OF ALFREDO GARCIA

(United Artists, 1974)

Kino-Lorber Blu-Ray \$29.95

Following the nightmare of making *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*, Sam



Peckinpah gave audiences a nightmare, *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, starring Warren Oates in a two-hour impersonation of Peckinpah, down to sleeping in sunglasses. A nobleman's daughter is impregnated, and saloon-pianist Oates is on the hunt for that noggin. With enough rambling, over-the-top violence, and tear-off-the-top nudity to be a Peckinpah parody, *Alfredo* is a guilty pleasure about assigning guilt, and a parable about filmmaking. Gig Young, Robert Webber and the rest of the prissy bad guys are nothing like gangsters, but precisely like studio executives, who have hired Oates to deliver something so disgusting symbolically the re-edited *Pat Garrett*—that Oates spends much of his time fighting the flies and the stink.



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

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BY PETER CORBETT

# Cave Creek's Untamed Legacy

*From Gold Rush Glory to Western Weekend Getaway.*

**M**iners searched for lucrative gold strikes in the Cave Creek mining district 140 years ago. Soldiers from nearby Fort McDowell fought off marauding Apaches to protect miners in those early days.

“Cave Creek started as a rough-and-tumble mining town back around 1880,” said Preston Westmoreland, a local Realtor and broadcaster. He’s sold a few former mining properties in Cave Creek over the past 40 years.

Ranchers followed the miners to Cave Creek, staking their land claims and stringing barbed wire to fence in their cattle.

Cave Creek never became a boomtown like others in Arizona, but mining continued into the 1940s.

While Phoenix and the Salt River Valley to the south grew in the early decades of the 20th century, Cave Creek carved out a niche with a trio of dude ranches—Spur Cross, Rancho Mañana and Sierra Vista. Those dude ranches folded by the early 1960s, according to Evelyn Johnson of the Cave Creek Museum.

Spur Cross Ranch is now a conservation area with hiking and equestrian trails north of town. Rancho Mañana is a golf resort, with the Tonto Bar & Grill now in its 30th year.

Modern Cave Creek, which shunned town government until 1986, has grown to a population of nearly 6,000 people. The town booms with visitors, especially on weekends as a playground for metro Phoenix bikers and city slickers in Wranglers, snap-button shirts and Tony Lama boots.

“On any night of the week you can hear live music in Cave Creek,” Westmoreland said. “They’ve created an amazing destination. So many people in Phoenix love to go out to Cave Creek.”



Lon Megargee poses in the doorway of his Cave Creek home, which, though privately owned, is still admired by local artists who describe it as magical. Notably, he posed a model in the front yard with Lone Mountain in the background for his famous painting, “Cowboy Dream,” making this an historic spot to say the least.

True West archives





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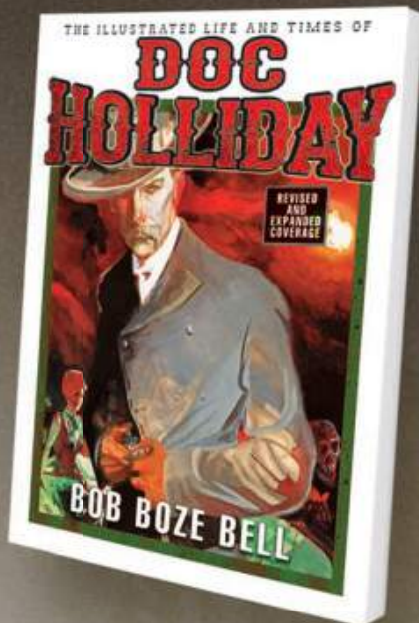


For more information visit [CaveCreekAZ.gov](http://CaveCreekAZ.gov)





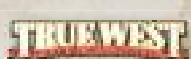
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By day, Cave Creek has its share of coffee shops, cafes, antique and touristy stores selling kitschy Western items in Frontier Village and along Cave Creek Road. Cave Creek Cowboy Co. is celebrating two decades in business selling Western wear, jewelry and leather goods.

After sundown, Cave Creek can get rowdy with saloons featuring country-rock music and dancing.

Harold's Cave Creek Corral is the oldest of the bunch. A guy named Johnny Walker started the Corral Bar in 1935 to serve construction workers for nearby Bartlett and Horseshoe dams. It was tiny place with picnic tables and mesquite trees for shade. The workers entertained themselves with a contest to see who could sit on a block of ice the longest.

Harold Gavagan bought the Corral Bar in 1950, renamed it and enlarged the place. A notable photo at Harold's shows comedic actor Dick Van Dyke playing a snare drum with a guitarist and washtub bass player.

Next door is the Buffalo Chip Saloon & Steakhouse, established in 1951. The bar was leveled in a Thanksgiving Day fire in 2015. It reopened less than a year later with a much larger footprint. The Chip features bull-riding for amateurs Wednesdays and Fridays in a small arena tucked into a hillside.

Bikers line up their Harleys and Indians at the Roadhouse across from Harold's and the Hideaway down the block.

The Buffalo Chip, known to locals as "The Chip" does a rip-roaring business in the entertainment corridor of Cave Creek.

With the original honkytonk, Harold's, next door, the Roadhouse across the street and the Hideaway down the street, Cave Creek has become a destination for bikers and cowboys for several decades now. That there haven't been more fights is a testament to the vibes and the entertainment.

True West Archives

Janey's Coffeehouse & Bodega, farther down Cave Creek Road, is a quieter spot with live music on a patio flanked by tall saguaros.

Locals pay homage to town history at the Cave Creek Museum. It's open October 1 to May 31, closed Mondays, Tuesdays and holidays.

The museum features a relic of Cave Creek's mining era, a 10-stamp mill once used to crush ore at the Golden Reef Mine north of town. The restored mill is powered up for demonstrations on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month, October 26 through late May.

New exhibits include historic lunch boxes miners carried with them underground. Also, a collection of delicate bronze and pewter sculptures portray Native Americans.



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



## WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY



### FIRST STOP

Cave Creek Tourism Bureau, 6061 E. Cave Creek Road, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily, October to May and weekends June to September.  
[cavecreek.org](http://cavecreek.org)

### MINING HISTORY

Learn about the area's mining era at the Cave Creek Museum, 6140 Skyline Drive.  
[cavecreekmuseum.org](http://cavecreekmuseum.org)

### BULLS TOSS FOOLS

Wannabe bull riders can test their mettle for a few seconds in the Buffalo Chip's bull-riding arena on Wednesdays and Fridays. The saloon serves barbecue, beer, booze and church on Sunday.  
[buffalochipsaloon.com](http://buffalochipsaloon.com)

### HAROLD'S GOES WAY BACK

Cowboys, cowgirls and city slickers gather at Harold's Cave Creek Corral for dining, dancing and country-rock music.  
[haroldscorral.com](http://haroldscorral.com)

### HERE'S JONNY'S

A popular spot, Local Jonny's serves coffee, breakfast, lunch and dinner. That includes burgers, tacos, wraps and salads plus a full bar with a choice of Arizona craft beers.  
[localjonnys.com](http://localjonnys.com)

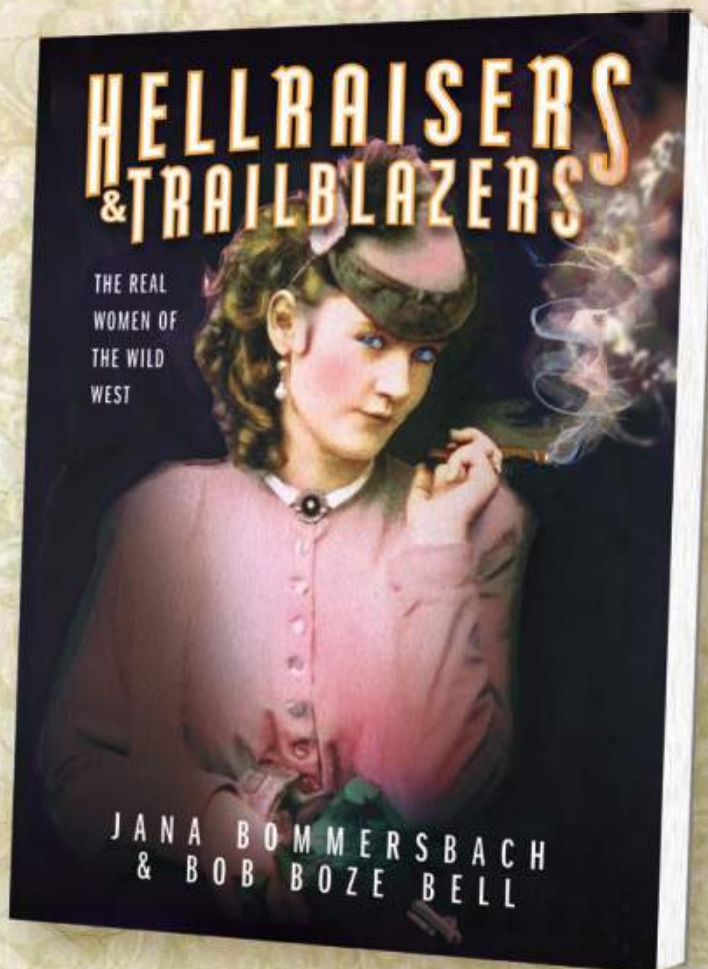
### JANEY'S COFFEEHOUSE & BODEGA

This little gem features a mix of musicians on its patio, including the Sonoran Dogs, a progressive bluegrass quartet, and acoustic guitar virtuoso Bill Dutcher.  
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BY STUART ROSEBROOK

# WALK WHERE THEY WALKED

Across the American West, visitors can experience history firsthand in iconic towns and historic sites.



How do you get hooked on history at a young age—or at any age, for that matter? I'd say one of the best ways is to get out of the library and classroom and walk where history happened. For me it started in Jerome and Clarkdale, Arizona. My earliest memories of historic places are of the fabled mining town and its ghostly, nearly all empty buildings (we're talking 1968 here!) and the ruins of the ancient Puebloan people of Tuzigoot, a national monument near the Verde River, below Jerome. Walking those fabled streets of miners and village of ancient Indian people sparked my curiosity for the past that has never waned.

The editors and correspondents of *True West* have spent the past 71 years championing, chronicling, researching, debating and arguing the history of the American West. But one thing they have never disagreed on is the importance of leaving the books behind and traveling across the

Western United States to experience the West where history happened. Seasons change, interpretations are updated and new exhibits are created, but the lessons learned by visiting where history happened, cannot be recreated anywhere else.

The following Western cities and sites are just an introduction to—a mere taste of—what awaits you on an adventure out West. Take your time, explore, be inspired, jump-start your curiosity and get out of your car and comfort zone. Walk where history happened. You won't regret it. And, I predict you will do it again and again because your curiosity will not allow you to stay home any more.

Stuart Rosebrook, the newly appointed executive director of Sharlot Hall Museum in Prescott, Arizona, just visited Joshua Tree National Park for the first time and can't wait to return and hike and camp in the park.



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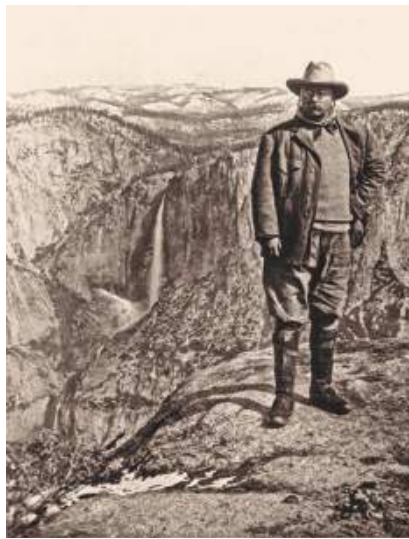


It is a very magical thing to walk the Allen Street boardwalk, especially at night, when you can almost feel the presence of those first Tombstone pioneers. Walk where they walked, indeed!

Courtesy Stuart Rosebrook



Every year in our final issue of the year, *True West's* editors revisit the regions of the *True West Ultimate Historic Travel Guide*. The guidebook is organized into five regions. We hope you will enjoy visiting the following historic towns and sites, knowing that each state and region has hundreds of unique and interesting places to visit and walk where history happened. If you have a favorite place where history happened to share, send it to Executive Editor Bob Boze Bell at [bozebell@twmag.com](mailto:bozebell@twmag.com).



President Theodore Roosevelt, Glacier Point, Yosemite National Park, California, 1903

Courtesy Library of Congress

Museum, and continue on to the Oasis Bordello Museum and the Northern Pacific Depot Museum. Don't leave town without taking the Sierra Silver Mine Tour.

[wallace-id.com](http://wallace-id.com)

## NEVADA

### Elko

An unofficial capital of the Great Basin and the buckeroo culture of Nevada, Elko is home to the Western Folklife Center and the world-famous National Cowboy Poetry Gathering every January-February. Museum lovers will enjoy touring Northeastern Nevada Museum and the Cowboy Arts & Gear Museum in G.S. Garcia's saddle shop. Ever wondered what it was like to cross the nation in a Conestoga wagon? Or to walk across the continent to find your bonanza of gold in California? The California Trail Interpretive

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## OREGON

### The Dalles

A tribal fishing center and crossroads of the Columbia River history for centuries, The Dalles developed as an American community at the terminus of the Oregon Trail and launching point for emigrant rafting parties down the river to the Willamette River Valley. While an alternate overland route was built over the Blue Mountains and around Mt. Hood to Oregon City, The Dalles remained an important economic and transportation hub. Today, visitors should begin their visit at Fort Dalles and then tour the world-class Columbia River Gorge Discovery Center. [thedalleschamber.com/historicthedalles.org](http://thedalleschamber.com/historicthedalles.org)

### Baker

Located in the beautiful Powder River Valley, Baker City has a rich, Western heritage as a crossroads of history. The Oregon Trail brought the first settlers through the region on the way to the Willamette Valley, but many returned to found the city and seek their bonanza in mining, ranching and farming. When in town, enjoy walking the downtown district, take time to visit the Leo Adler House Museum and the Baker Heritage Museum. The Geiser Grand Hotel is a wonderfully restored, historic hotel. Just east of the city, the Bureau of Land Management's Oregon Trail National Trail Center is dedicated to interpreting history through exhibits and ranger-led programs, many in period costume, explaining the history and experiences of the thousands of emigrants who made the overland journey across the country on the Oregon Trail. [bakercity.com](http://bakercity.com)

## WASHINGTON

### Toppenish

Located in south-central Washington, Toppenish is in the middle of the Yakama Indian Reservation. The community has a rich Native heritage and is considered a top agricultural district in the state, well-known for some of the best hops in the country. The city is adorned with murals—78 in all—depicting local history. The city also boasts some very popular museums: the Pacific Railway Museum, the American Hop Museum and the Yakama Nation Cultural Center, which should not be missed. Fourth of July is all about celebrating the region's Western heritage, with a Wild West Parade and the two-day Toppenish Rodeo. Wine and nature lovers enjoy the city for its nearby wineries and beautiful vistas of Mount Adams and Mount Rainier. [visittoppenish.com](http://visittoppenish.com)

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# The Desert Southwest

Moran's Point, Grand Canyon, Arizona Territory, circa 1903  
Courtesy Library of Congress

## ARIZONA

### Prescott

The historic and picturesque Territorial capital of Arizona, Prescott is the perfect town in which to take a walk through state history. Start at Sharlot Hall Museum, the living history center with several historic buildings, including the Territorial Governor's Home, and walk down Gurley Street to Prescott's historic Yavapai County Courthouse Plaza, where Solon Borglum's Rough Rider bronze greets visitors to the park. Across the street, take a walk down Montezuma Avenue, known as Whiskey Row, and visit the historic Palace Restaurant & Saloon. Fort Whipple Museum, managed by Sharlot Hall Museum in a 19th-century officer's home on the V.A. campus, is open on Fridays and Saturdays.

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

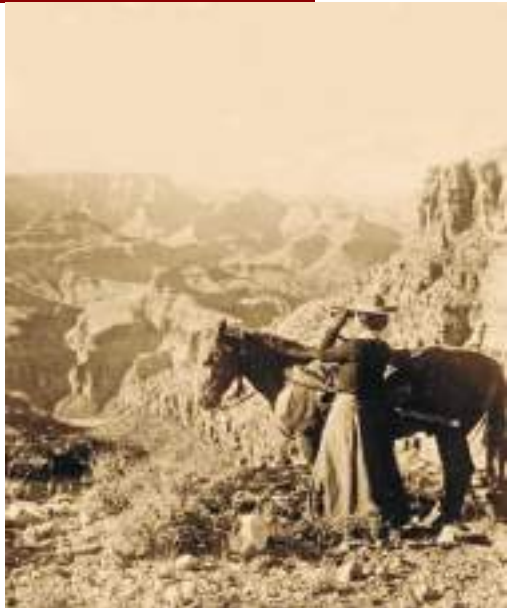
### Tombstone

"The town to tough to die," Tombstone is Arizona's most infamous Territorial mining camp and is known internationally for the Earp-Clanton gunfight behind the O.K. Corral. Tour the Tombstone County Courthouse State Historic Park, take a walk through Boothill Graveyard, and park at one end of Allen Street and walk into history. In the National Historic District, don't miss visiting Big Nose Kate's Saloon, the Crystal Palace, C.S. Fly's, O.K. Corral, the Bird Cage Saloon, Rose Tree Museum, Good Enough Mine Underground Tour and the Tombstone Epitaph Museum.

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

### Wickenburg

One of Arizona's oldest towns north of the Gila River, Wickenburg owes its beginnings to gold but its present



to cowboys, ropers, dudes, dudettes and tourists. Home to one of the best climates in the state, Wickenburg celebrates its heritage at Gold Rush Days every February. Tours of the Vulture Mine and historic downtown are a must for visitors to Wickenburg. Local guest ranches still attract visitors from around the world as do the Desert Caballeros Western Museum's exhibits and art shows.

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

## NEW MEXICO

### Lincoln

In the annals of Western U.S. history, the humble town of Lincoln's notorious past is synonymous with the violence that plagued the West, and especially the New Mexico Territory after the Civil War. The historic buildings in the center of town are managed and preserved as a New Mexico Historic Site. Visitors can walk the streets of Lincoln and stride in the footsteps of the Regulators, Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, John Tunstall, Alexander McSween, Lawrence G. Murphy and James J. Dolan. Stay the weekend at the Dolan House, Ellis Store or





Many big outfits in the West, including New Mexico's Canjilon Ranch, turned their headquarters into dude ranches for tourists to enjoy a real, Old West experience, near Canjilon, New Mexico, circa 1925.

Edward Kemp/New Mexico History Museum, Negative No. 053697

Wortley Hotel. Tour the 17 historic structures (call ahead for scheduled openings), including the Old Lincoln County Courthouse, the Tunstall Store, Montaña store, the 1850s stone Torreon, San Juan Mission Church and the Anderson-Freeman Museum. Old Lincoln Days are held every August and re-enactors entertain tourists with some of the most infamous moments of the Lincoln County War, including Billy's dramatic escape from the Lincoln County Jail.

[nmhistoricsites.org/](http://nmhistoricsites.org/)  
[billybyway.com](http://billybyway.com)

## OKLAHOMA

### Muskogee

Founded in 1872, Muskogee is one of the most historic and best-known cities in Oklahoma. Proud of its history and culture, the city welcomes visitors to its state-of-the-art museums, Three Rivers, Five Civilized Tribes and Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. From the 1870s to the 1890s, Muskogee had a notorious reputation and Deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves was one of many federal officers sent to the area to help suppress the local crime. Today, the city welcomes visitors from around the world seeking to learn more about the Native culture, Oklahoma history and music.

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

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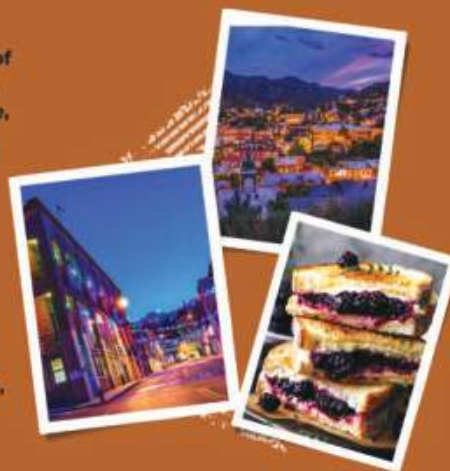
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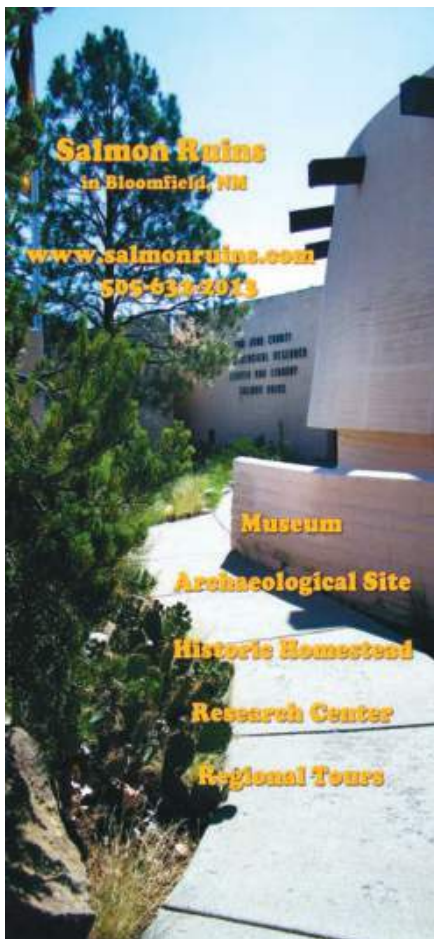
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## TEXAS

### Fort Concho

Built in 1867 as a strategic U.S. Army outpost during the post-Civil War conflict with the Southern Plains tribes, Fort Concho served its purpose effectively until it was closed in 1889. The City of San Angelo operates the historic landmark, museum and the staffing and preservation of 23 fort buildings. Walk in the footsteps of soldiers and their families who lived at the fort and tour Officers Row and Quarters, the Enlisted Men's Barracks, Post Headquarters, Hospital, School House and Chapel. Fort Concho is also the site of numerous annual living history events, including Buffalo Soldier Heritage Day in February and Fort Concho Frontier Day in April. [fortconcho.com](http://fortconcho.com)

### El Paso

#### Concordia Cemetery

Take a walk back into time in El Paso's historic Concordia Cemetery, the eternal resting place for the famous and infamous, valiant and brave, humble and unknown. El Pasoans have buried their dead in the graveyard since the first soul was interred in the 1840s. The historic cemetery is managed by the Concordia Heritage Association to protect, preserve and maintain the graveyard. Visitors can walk its grounds and see outlaw John Wesley Hardin's grave as well as the grave



of John Selman, the lawman who put Hardin in Concordia. Don't miss the special section dedicated to Buffalo Soldiers, the graves of Texas Rangers, Civil War veterans and the innumerable headstones of El Paso's citizenry forgotten with time. [concordiacemetery.org](http://concordiacemetery.org)

### San Elizario Historic District

Just east of El Paso, the San Elizario Historic District is a living history center that provides visitors with a window into 18th- and 19th-century life along the Rio Grande River in southwestern Texas. Founded in 1789, the town of San Elizario grew up in support of the Presidio San Elcear. Visit the city's historic sites on a walking tour that includes the Presidio, Old City Jail, Memorial Placita and Los Portales, home to the city's museum and visitor center. [cityofsanelizario.com](http://cityofsanelizario.com)

### Waco

Driving the longhorn herds north from southern Texas to Kansas, the range bosses and cowboy crews faced innumerable daily dangers, but pushing thousands of steers across rivers on the Chisholm trail led to many drownings of men and animals. The Brazos River in Waco was unpredictable, and the ferry crossing was cumbersome for cattle drives. The city recognized an opportunity for the future and built a 475-foot suspension bridge, the first ever in Texas. Today, the Waco Suspension Bridge is for pedestrians only, but Waco still holds its Independence Day celebration at the bridge and Indian Springs Park, the original townsite. Not too far from the bridge is the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame & Museum, where visitors will discover the inspiring history of the Texas Rangers from their founding in 1823 to the present. [wacoheartoftexas.com](http://wacoheartoftexas.com)

The bespectacled cowboy models the best gear he owns from his hat to his spurs, including his wild rag, fringed shotgun chaps, leather wrist cuffs and grass rope.

True West archives



# Great Basin and Rocky Mountains



Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming  
Courtesy Library of Congress

## MONTANA

### Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

Little Bighorn remains one of most significant battles in American history. Located on the Crow Agency, the June 25-26, 1876, battle between Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse's Sioux and Cheyenne allies and Lt. Col. George A. Custer's 7th Cavalry, led to the death of 263 soldiers, including Custer. Visitors will discover a solemnity that imbues the park, whether one is touring the national cemetery, the visitor center museum, the walkways, the 1881 7th Cavalry Memorial or the 2003 Indian Memorial. Ranger-led programs provide expert analysis on the battle, while a drive out to the Benteen- Reno Battlefield provides a great view of the Little Bighorn River Valley. After touring the monument, don't miss an opportunity to visit the Custer Battlefield Museum, in Garryowen,

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## NEVADA

### Virginia City

In 1863, prospectors looking for the next bonanza discovered gold in Alder Gulch. Soon Virginia City was the latest Western boomtown that brought settlers deep into the Northern Plains. Within a year, 8,000 to 10,000 miners were living in the wild town. Soon thereafter Virginia City was made the Territorial capital. Today, visitors can walk the historic streets of the Victorian mining town, tour several historic structures, visit Boot Hill, be entertained by re-enactors, take a ride on a train and learn how Virginia City, Montana, changed the course of history in the West. [virginiacity.com](http://virginiacity.com)

## WYOMING

### Cheyenne

The state capital of Wyoming is the state's largest city and for lovers of Old West history, a must place to visit while on tour of the Cowboy State. Downtown is well-known for its historic sites and museums, including

the State Capitol building, the historic courthouse where Tom Horn was hanged, Union Station, the Wyoming History Museum, the Nelson Museum of the West, Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum and the Cowgirls of the West Museum. Stay at the famous Plains Hotel, take a trolley tour and enjoy the downtown district of restaurants, bars and shops. Plan ahead and get your tickets early for Cheyenne Frontier Days, held for 10 days every July. [cheyenne.org](http://cheyenne.org)

### Cody

The gateway city to Yellowstone National Park is one of the preeminent Western destinations. Founded as a land venture to attract the railroad near the east entrance of Yellowstone, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody lent his name to the town. Begin your tour by checking into Cody's Historic Irma Hotel (don't miss the cherrywood bar given to Cody by Queen Victoria),

The surveyors of the West went to great lengths to accomplish their enormous tasks, using whatever transportation was needed. In 1871, William Henry Jackson photographed members of the Hayden Survey on Annie, the first boat on Yellowstone Lake.

Courtesy Yellowstone National Park





named after his daughter, and then visiting the Buffalo Bill Center of the West's complex of five museums, library and archive, the most significant Western history museum center in the United States. Schedule a couple of days to tour the Buffalo Bill History Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, Plains Indian Museum, Draper Museum of Natural History and the Whitney Gallery of Western Art. [codychamber.com](http://codychamber.com)

### Hole-in-the-Wall/Kaycee

Forty miles southwest from Kaycee in the Big Horn Mountains, the legendary Hole-in-the-Wall outlaw hideaway is managed by the BLM. Outlaws Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch Gang were known to ride through the "hole" in the sandstone wall to escape from the law. The site is accessible only by primitive roads and a 2.5-mile cross-country hike. Always check with the field office for current conditions, a map and directions. Make your headquarters in Kaycee at the Willow Creek Ranch or Cassidy Inn, dine at the Invasion Bar & Restaurant, visit Chris LeDoux Memorial Park (Chris LeDoux Days is held every June) and tour the Hoofprints of the Past Museum. Interstate 25 south from Kaycee to the TTT Road exit. At TTT Road exit, drive south about 14 miles to Willow Creek Road (County Road 111). Take this road west for about 18 miles to a primitive two-track road which bears north. This is County Road 105, which has a number of livestock gates. [kayceewyoming.org/blm.gov](http://kayceewyoming.org/blm.gov)

### Sheridan

In 1882 John D. Loucks founded Sheridan, which he named in honor of his commanding officer in the Civil War. The gateway city to the Big Horn Mountains and Little Bighorn country of Montana, Sheridan became an economic center for the bi-state region after the railroad arrived in 1892. Today, visitors can stay at the fully restored Sheridan Inn, stroll historic downtown, visit the Mint Bar, and tour the Brinton, Sheridan County and Bozeman Trail museums. [sheridanwyoming.org](http://sheridanwyoming.org)

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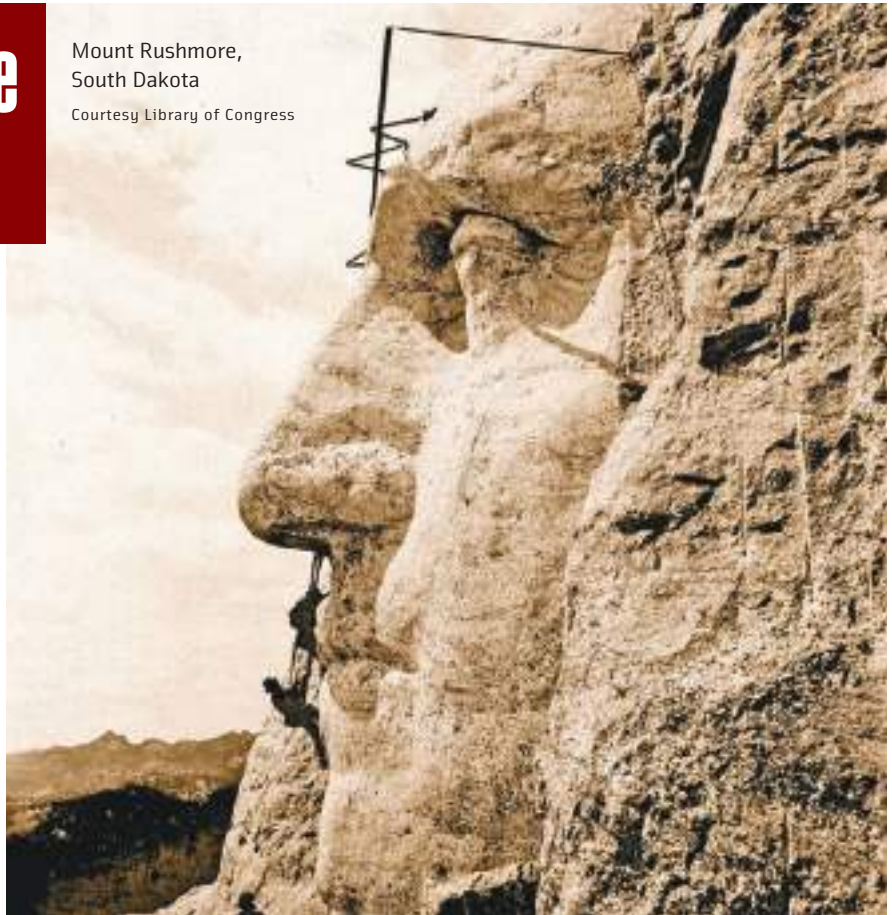
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# Northern Prairie and Plains

Mount Rushmore, South Dakota  
Courtesy Library of Congress



## NORTH DAKOTA

### Medora

Among the most beautiful—and entertaining—places in North Dakota are the inexorably connected restored historic village of Medora and Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Every summer the town of Medora comes alive as the community celebrates the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt at the *Medora Musical*. Frenchman Marquis de Mores founded the town in 1883 and named it for his wife. The Marquis's settlement also attracted another New Yorker, Teddy Roosevelt, who built a cattle ranch nearby in 1883. Roosevelt's experiences in the Dakota Territory would forever shape his life


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and political career, and the adjacent national park encompasses the land he so loved. There are three units to the park: North (near Watford City), Elkhorn Ranch (Roosevelt's ranch), and South (adjacent to Medora). The south unit's scenic drive, many pullouts and trails provide visitors beautiful overviews of the park and opportunities to see wildlife, including bison.

[medorand.com/nps.gov](http://medorand.com/nps.gov)

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### Deadwood and Lead

The epicenter of the Gold Rush of 1874-'76 that transformed the Black Hills, Deadwood was founded to supply the rush of miners everything they needed to survive: supplies, saloons and soiled doves. Visitors who walk the streets of Deadwood today should start at the visitors center in the restored railroad station for a map of the city, directions to local museums, daily events, historic sites and the Mt. Moriah Cemetery, where Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity



Jane are buried side by side. After touring Deadwood, drive up the mountain to tour the historic gold mining town of Lead.

[deadwood.com/leadmethere.org](http://deadwood.com/leadmethere.org)

Whatever class of ticket these pioneers had, they faced a tough journey while traveling on this stagecoach from Deadwood, Dakota Territory, circa 1880.

True West archives

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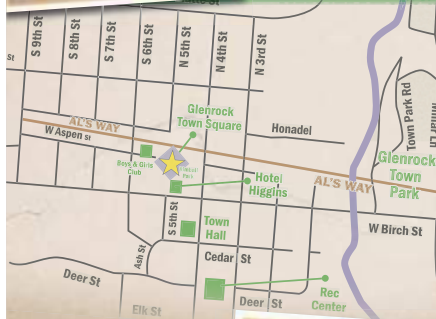
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# Southern Prairie and Plains

Sod House in Custer County, Nebraska  
Courtesy Library of Congress



## ARKANSAS

### Fort Smith Fort Smith Belle Grove Historic District

Belle Grove, one of the most significant historic districts in Arkansas, is a 22-block area of homes dating back 130 years adjacent to Fort Smith National Historic Site and the Arkansas River. Four homes are open for public tour: The Clayton House, McKibben-Bonneville House, Fort Smith Art Center and the Darby House.

### Fort Smith National Historic Site

In the annals of American Trans-Mississippi history, Fort Smith, founded in 1817, was an important gateway city to the West. While Missouri's St. Louis, Independence and St. Joseph receive more attention in the history books, Fort Smith's role in the development and settlement

of Western territories, including Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas, must be considered. The National Park Service's Fort Smith National Historic Site is one of the largest, best preserved interpretive centers of a historic 19th-century federal post west of the Mississippi. Tours should begin at the Visitor Center in the fort's former barracks/courthouse/prison. Fort Smith may have been best known as the court of Judge Isaac Parker, the hanging judge. Visitors can tour the 37-acre grounds of Fort Smith on a 1.4-mile self-guided tour of all the key historic structures and sites, including the Gallows, Commissary and Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Overlook.  
[nps.gov/fortsmithar.gov](http://nps.gov/fortsmithar.gov)

## KANSAS

### Dodge City

"The Queen of the Cow Towns," Dodge City's iconic status stands



equally with that of Deadwood, Lincoln and Tombstone. A tour of Dodge City should begin at the Visitor Information Center for an orientation and guide to the city. Take the Historic Trolley Tour (Memorial Weekend to Labor Day), pick up a map of the Dodge City Trail of Fame and visit the internationally acclaimed Boot Hill Museum. Boot Hill is known for its outstanding exhibits on frontier Kansas history, firearms, gambling, buffalo hunters and the Wild West era of cattle drives. Visitors will enjoy walking amongst the historical interpreters and watching gunfight re-enactments on Front Street and the Variety Show in the Long Branch Saloon. While in Dodge City, don't miss a visit to the Gunfighters Wax Museum, and the Wild West Heritage Foundation's Buffalo and Longhorn Exhibit.  
**visitdodgecity.org**

### **Coffeyville**

Rivaling the James-Younger Gang's failed bank robbery in Northfield, Minnesota, is the Dalton Gang's disastrous attempt to rob two banks, C.M. Condon and First National, simultaneously in Coffeyville, Kansas, on October 5, 1892. Convenient for visitors to Coffeyville, the area's chamber of commerce is located in the original site of the C.M. Condon Bank, the 1871 Perkins Building, in the city's historic district. The chamber is open Monday to Friday and the bank vault, tellers' area and lobby can be seen as they were on that fateful day. From the Perkins Building, take a walking tour of the district to the Dalton Defenders Museum. The graves of Bob and Grat Dalton and Bill Powers can be visited in Coffeyville's Elmwood Cemetery. Also, visitors should take the time to visit the Coffeyville's Historical Society's 1904 Brown Mansion.  
**coffeyvillechamber.org/  
daltondefendersmuseum.com**

## **MISSOURI**

### **Kearney**

Until 1978, the James Farm was owned by descendants of the famed outlaw Jesse James. Today, the

historic site in Kearney, Missouri, is a Clay County Museum dedicated to the James Family, the history of the region, the Border War and the Jesse and Frank James years as outlaws. The Visitors Center and Museum is in the restored 19th-century family home. Kearney has a charming historic downtown, including the Kearney Historic Museum.  
**jessejames.org**

### **St. Joseph**

Known best as the trailhead for the Pony Express, St. Joseph's historic district will inspire the imagination and remind visitors of the importance to American history of Missouri's Western frontier towns. Begin tours of historic St. Joseph at the Pony Express Museum, followed by a visit to the extraordinary St. Joseph Museum with its extensive displays on the culture and history of the region, including American Indian and Civil War exhibitions. Also, don't miss the Patee House Museum, Jesse James Home, Robidoux Row Museum and Pony Express Monument.  
**stjomo.com**

## **NEBRASKA**

### **North Platte**

Buffalo Bill State Historical Park preserves Scout's Rest Ranch, the North Platte home of the great Western showman William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody first began ranching in the area in 1877 and began building a major farm and ranch operation in North Platte in 1878. A major enterprise, the Nebraska ranch was home to Cody and his family for many years. He owned the property until 1911. The park includes the Cody House and barn. The ranch is also noted as the place Cody debuted his Wild West show, known as the Old Glory Blowout, in 1882. While in North Platte, visitors should also schedule time to tour Cody Park and the largest rail center in the world, the Union Pacific Railroad Bailey Yard and the Golden Spike Visitor Center.  
**visitnorthplatte.com/  
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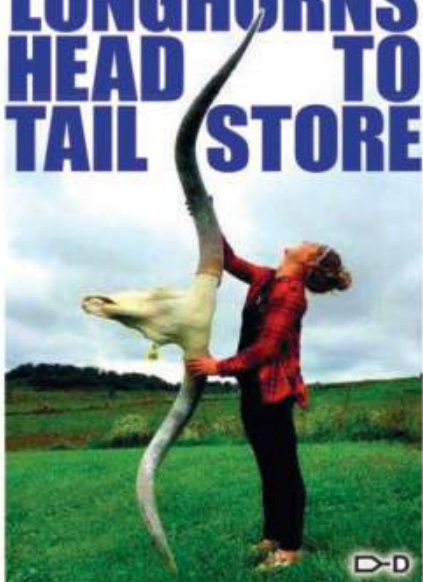
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[Briscoemuseum.org/NOA](https://briscoemuseum.org/NOA)





# Gunfighters, Vigilantes and the Duke



**Ask The Marshall**

BY MARSHALL TRIMBLE

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

Sheriff Henry Plummer hanged in the gallows he built.

True West archives



John Wayne in *The Shootist*.

Courtesy Paramount Pictures

## How many times did John Wayne's character die in his Westerns?

*Jimmy Garcia*

*San Antonio, Texas*

John Wayne's characters died in only three Westerns, *The Alamo* in 1960, *The Cowboys* in 1972 and *The Shootist* in 1976. He died on screen in nine non-Western films; in five others, his deaths were off-screen or ambiguous.

## What can you tell me about the Montana Vigilantes?

*Frank Weatherby*

*Burbank, California*

The big gold Montana gold strikes ran from 1862 through 1865, produc-



ing some \$10 million in gold annually. It also attracted a number of outlaws, which led to the formation of the vigilantes and eventually gave rise to the formation of a government in Montana.

Henry Plummer arrived around 1862. Well-liked by Montanans, he settled in Bannack and was elected sheriff, which gave him cover for his other occupation—leader of a notorious gang of outlaws known as the “Innocents.” The settlers of Bannack and Virginia City responded by organizing the vigilantes, who launched one of the most famous lynch-law campaigns in American history. They hanged up to 50 men over the years. Plummer was strung up from the gallows he'd built on January 10, 1864.

## Did any of the Old West gunfighters wear glasses?

*Willie Sloan*

*Augusta, Georgia*

Glasses were perceived as too “professorial” for those rough-and-tumble, devil-may-care types. They were hard to replace when broken and difficult to wear in the elements. But beyond that, most glasses just didn't help very much and they weren't available in many places. So even those shootists with bad eyesight didn't get glasses.

## Were lawmen of the Old West allowed to collect on rewards?

*Richard Burns*

*Lincoln, Nebraska*

Basically yes, lawmen could collect a reward for bringing in the bad guys. If



he used a posse for the apprehension, he would share the reward with them.

Very few civilians made their living by collecting outlaw rewards. But for lawmen, rewards were pretty much essential to making a decent living.

### How common were town shootouts, and would civilians react with excitement, indifference or fear?

*Pete Hale  
Orange Park, Florida*

Street fighting was about as rare as horseflies in December. It's more of a Hollywood creation. In localities without gun laws—and most did prohibit carrying in town—you'd see some gunfights in saloons or gambling houses. Alcohol was usually involved.

Frankly, the best way to be a survivor or come out a winner was to get the other guy before he got you. So, ambush, bushwhacking or back shooting were more common than stereotypical gunfights.

### What equipment did the pioneers carry to keep their wagons rolling?

*Greg Williams  
Apache Junction, Arizona*

Joseph Murphy began producing wagons for the traders headed west from Missouri to Santa Fe and later for the overland emigration. His wagons became the best known on the Western trails. Murphy's wagons consisted of wheels, running gear, a box and a cover. They were usually nine feet high with a 12-foot-long bed. The bed of a Murphy wagon had a straight box, unlike its more famous counterpart, the Conestoga, which had a curved box. A Murphy could comfortably haul 1,800 to 2,200 pounds. Straying too far above these load weights could risk serious problems. Broken axles from ruts in the trails were a major problem, but many travelers brought along a spare, just as our automobiles are equipped with a spare tire. Without it, the wagon would be abandoned, and other travelers would assist the family.

Certain accessories and tools for making emergency repairs to a wagon were necessary to bring along. These included rope, brake chains, a wagon jack, extra axles and tongues, wheel parts, axes, saws, hammers, knives and a sturdy shovel.



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# What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

**Don't get me started on** people who have no interest in the Wild West. Like jazz, it is uniquely American and a transformative period in the history of this country.

**For my money, the best Western is** Antoine Fuqua's *The Magnificent Seven*, mostly because I'm a huge Denzel Washington fan. But I'll watch *The Searchers* any time.

**I got my break when** I was 19 years old and handed a short film I made to producer Bill Lee. That's how I got hired to write and direct for the ABC late night comedy series *Fridays*. Right place, tight time.

**The problem with AI is** the term "Artificial Intelligence" sounds a lot like "Real Stupidity." And I've never met a computer with a pleasant personality.

**The only time I was star struck** was when I directed George Carlin in a film I wrote. I grew up listening to his comedy albums, and he was the very first celebrity I directed.

**Most people don't know** I lived in a remote monastery in New Mexico for 40 days. The best day there was when a monk took me open-range horseback riding. Up until then, I only rode horses in single file, walking slow over a narrow trail.

**History has taught me that** it's better to make good history while you can than worrying about your past.

**The dumbest thing I ever did** was giving in to peer pressure and trying drugs in Hollywood. The smartest thing I ever did was get clean.

**My first memory of meeting cowboys** was at Missouri's Silver Dollar City when I was just a kid. They might have been just acting, but they were real to me.

**While doing a TV series,** I lived for three months in historic Socorro, New Mexico. I appreciate it more each time I read about that Wild West town in *True West* magazine.

**As head writer on *Candid Camera*,** I got to work with Burt Reynolds. Burt did his own stunt for our show, and I could tell by the way he walked that he had fallen off many a horse in his day.

**Given the choice of directing domesticated cow or range cattle,** I'd now pick the cow. I learned this the hard way when shooting a parody of UFO documentaries. Instead of Cattle Mutilation, we had a sign that read "Kick Me" on a cow and called it Cattle Humiliation. Range cattle aren't too fond of being made fun of.

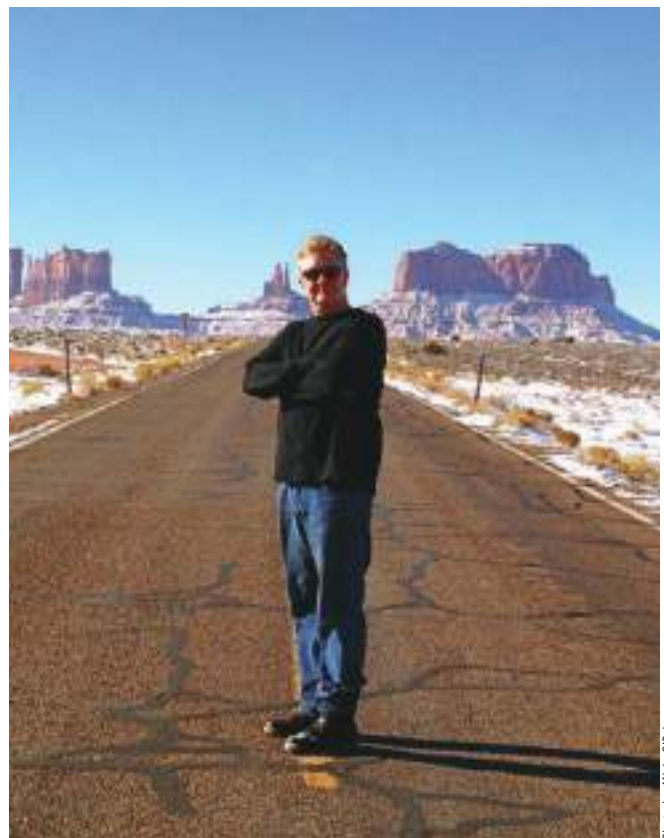


Photo by Alicia O'Brien

## TOM KRAMER

Tom Kramer was born and raised in Missouri but headed west to Hollywood at age 19. He is a three-time Emmy nominee and Writers Guild of America Award-winner on television shows that include *Candid Camera* (head writer) and HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (director). Tom loves exploring ghost towns and reading *True West* magazines when not walking his dog, Agnes. He lives in Southern California with his wife, Alicia, who just happens to be the daughter of original Mouseketeer Cubby O'Brien.

**I got hooked on Westerns** by listening to old *Gunsmoke* radio shows, and I read every Louis L'Amour novel I could find.

**I'm glad my wife let me** take her to the trifecta: Lincoln, New Mexico; Dodge City, Kansas; and Tombstone, Arizona.

**Closest I ever got to** making a real Western was when I directed a spaghetti Western parody starring Guido Sarducci (Don Novello from *Saturday Night Live*) and Dawn (yes...of Tony Orlando fame)

**Most people who know me** don't know that even though I've never owned a gun, I directed a History Channel series about weaponry in which I got to shoot almost every rifle made, from muskets to machine guns, to 50 mm sniper rifles.

**The closest thing to my knowing a cowboy** is that my wife Alicia's dad is Cubby O'Brien from the original Mouseketeers. He loved playing cowboy on the *Mickey Mouse Club*.





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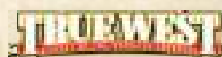
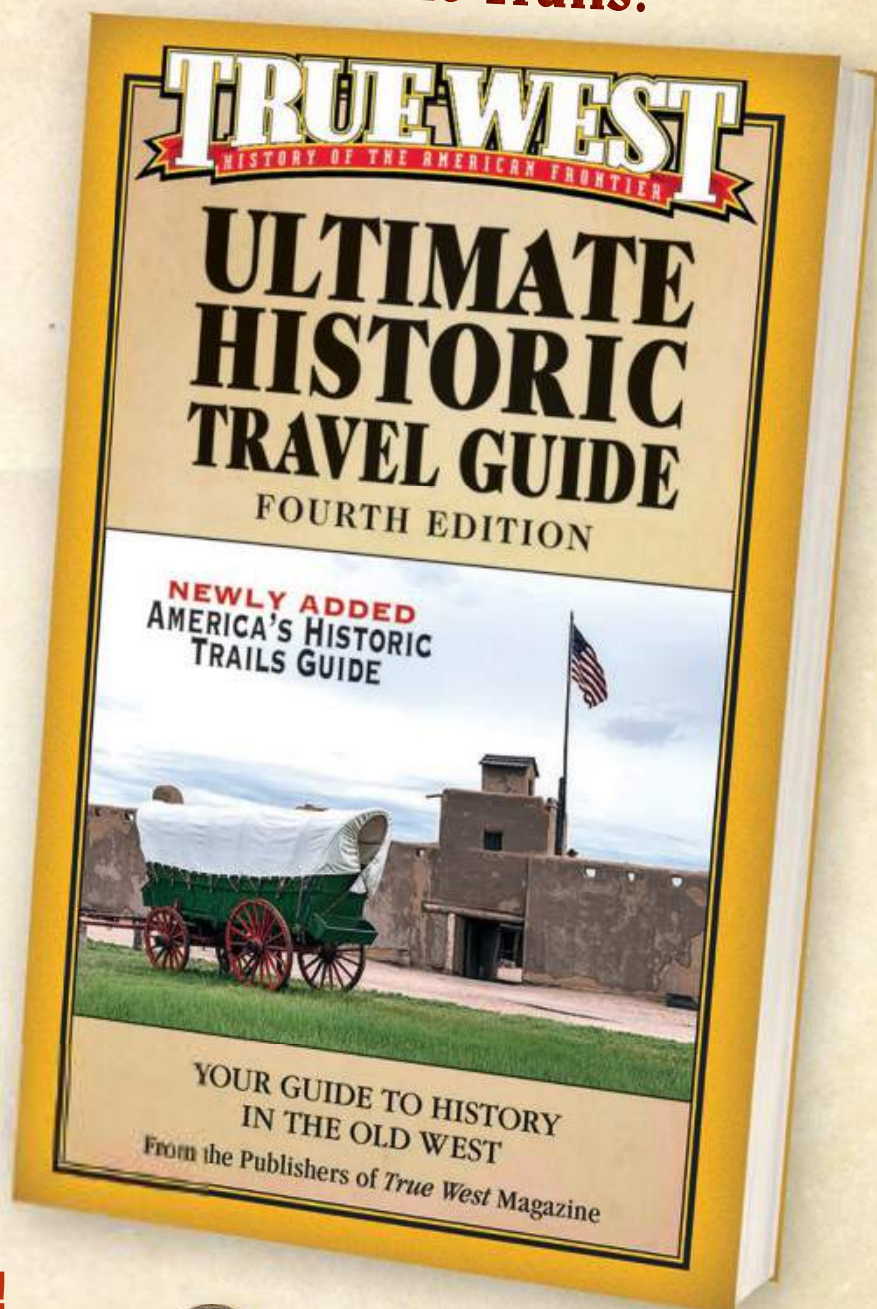
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