



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

January - February 2008



Gov. William Gilpin

Colorado Civil War Heros

by Flint Whitlock

(presented Mar. 28, 2007)



Our Author

Flint Whitlock has been writing military history since 1986 and has been a full-time author since 2003. A transplant from Chicago, Flint has lived in Colorado since 1969, when he was assigned to Fort Carson during his fifth and final year as an Army officer. His book *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums* on this subject, (University Press of Colorado, 2006), was the result of nearly ten years of research.

In addition to *Distant Bugles, Distant Drums*, Flint is also the author of several World War II books: *Soldiers On Skis* (a history of the 10th Mountain Division), *The Rock of Anzio* (about the 45th Infantry Division, comprised of the Colorado and Oklahoma National Guard), *The Fighting First* (the story of the 1st Infantry Division and its role in D-Day), *Given Up For Dead* (about American POWs sent to work in a Nazi slave-labor camp), and *The Depths of Courage* (a history of the U.S. submarine force in the Pacific). He has also co-authored a biography of aviation pioneer *Elrey B. Jeppesen (Capt. Jepp and the Little Black Book)*, for whom the main terminal at Denver International Airport is named.

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THE DENVER WESTERNERS

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Colorado Civil War Heros

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In this paper I focus on four of the main figures who played a prominent role in the Civil War in the Far West. These individuals were Colorado Territorial Governor William Gilpin; the commander of the Colorado regiment, John P. Slough; and third in command of the Colorado Regiment, Major John Chivington, lauded as the Hero of Glorieta, but soon to be known as the Butcher of Sand Creek. I also touch upon the role of Confederate Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley. Each of these men played a crucial role in the drama that took place in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado in 1861 and 1862.

William Gilpin

As events that would eventually lead to the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861 came to a head, President Abraham Lincoln realized that he would need to appoint a strong, dedicated man to govern the newly created Colorado Territory.

After all, vast amounts of gold and silver had recently been discovered in the Colorado Territory, gold and silver that was needed to buy all the accoutrements of war. It was especially important that Colorado's gold and silver mines not fall into Confederate hands.

The man he selected out of several candidates was William Gilpin. Who was William Gilpin and why did Lincoln choose him?

One historian has said of Gilpin, "it is quite probable that the

verdict of posterity will be that the West owes more to William Gilpin than to any other American." Sadly, except for a Denver street and a Colorado county named in his honor, Gilpin today is almost totally forgotten. But he was truly one of the most remarkable men of his day and an unsung hero of the Civil War.

Born to wealthy, influential parents in Pennsylvania on October 4, 1815, young William quickly showed he possessed a studious mind and an adventurous spirit. Due to the paucity of good schools in America at the time, his parents sent him to England, where he studied from ages twelve through fourteen. While in England, he developed a life-long fascination with that most revolutionary invention of the Industrial Age—the steam locomotive. Returning to America with the fire of knowledge burning deep within him, William voraciously devoured any text upon which he could lay his hands, especially if it contained references to trains, travel, and military campaigns.

In 1831, fifteen-year-old William was admitted as a junior to the University of Pennsylvania. Learning came easily for him, and his prodigious intellect quickly absorbed DeTocqueville, Shakespeare, and other classical authors. He won an appointment to West Point but dropped out after a year because the curriculum was too dull for his tastes. He sailed to England and tried to join the British Army but was not accepted.

Learning of the Second Semi-

nole War going on in Florida, he returned to the U.S. and persuaded family friend and president Andrew Jackson to give him a military commission in the 2nd Dragoons. Jackson did, but instead of being assigned to fight Indians in Florida, Lt. Gilpin was sent to the Western frontier in Missouri to recruit soldiers for the Army.

Gilpin was not happy with this assignment and soon resigned his commission, but he was fascinated by the potential and promise offered by the lands beyond the sunset, and vowed he would someday return and explore the area more fully.

In 1843, he did just that, signing on with Lt. Charles C. Fremont's second expedition from Missouri to Oregon. The journey, which lasted from June 1843 until he returned east in the fall of 1845, was a journey which literally changed Gilpin's life.

Carrying a petition for statehood from the Oregonians, Gilpin traveled to Washington, DC, where his account of the westward journey and the unlimited potential of the West made him a sensation. A passionate advocate of "Manifest Destiny," just like President James Polk, for over a year Gilpin wrote and spoke to large, enthusiastic audiences about his adventures, touching off what was called "Oregon Fever", a fever that was broken only by the outbreak of the war in 1846 with Mexico.

Still craving military action, Gilpin returned to Missouri and enlisted as a private in Stephan Watts Kearny's Army of the West, which would march from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe and then farther south into Mexico. Of course, at that time, Santa Fe and

the area that would later be known as Arizona and New Mexico were all part of Mexico.

Gilpin swiftly rose in rank to become a Lt. Col. and commander of a battalion. At Santa Fe, Kearny split up his army and led half of his men westward to California, while the other half, under the command of Alexander Doniphan, continued southward. Gilpin and Doniphan defeated a superior Mexican force at the Battle of El Brazito, where the New Mexico town of Mesquite is today...then marched farther south, again routing a larger force in a dramatic battle atop a mesa north of the city of Sacramento. Again, Gilpin distinguished himself in the heat of battle.

American forces, under the command of General Winfield Scott, marched inland from their amphibious landing at Veracruz to eventually capture Mexico City. The war with Mexico was nearly won, and Doniphan's troops were not required for further action. Gilpin and the rest of Doniphan's force sailed home to New Orleans and a hero's welcome.

Gilpin returned to Missouri, ill from malaria, but heeded his governor's call when it came time to chase a band of hostile Indians. After a year of frustrating and futile action, Gilpin returned to Missouri, broke and broken in spirit.

But friends knew that Gilpin was ardently anti-slavery, and so got him a position as one of newly elected President Lincoln's bodyguards on the trip from Springfield, Illinois, to the inauguration in Washington. No doubt that on this trip Gilpin impressed Lincoln as a strong, steady hand completely devoted to the Union. When Colorado became a territory, Gilpin became

Lincoln's leading choice for governor. Shortly before Gilpin headed west to take up his duties, the rebels fired upon Ft. Sumter in Charleston Harbor and the long-feared Civil War had begun.

Traveling from Washington by train and then by stagecoach, the 45-year-old Gilpin arrived in Denver City on Monday, May 27, 1861, where he was fervently greeted by practically the entire town.

Southern sympathizers in the territory were worrying the pro-Union factions, and it appeared that the territory might even burst into its own mini-Civil War. But the pro-Union faction outnumbered the rebels and sentiment turned decidedly in the North's favor. Gilpin's arrival in Colorado put the territory firmly in the Union camp.

One of Gilpin's first items of business was to form a military force to protect the territory from invasion. At the beginning of 1861, two companies of militia existed in and around Denver, but these untrained volunteers were probably more dangerous than useful.

Gilpin had the territorial legislature authorize the raising and equipping of a 1,000-man force. John P. Slough, a former member of the Ohio legislature and a recent immigrant to Colorado, was chosen by Gilpin to recruit the first company of volunteers. Gilpin also appointed Samuel Tappan to raise the second company. In short order, Gilpin would promote Slough to colonel and commander of the fledgling regiment, with Tappan his second in command.

A less popular choice for commander is hard to imagine, as we will soon see.

Gilpin's most pressing problem,

now that hundreds of men, miners and merchants alike, began enthusiastically enlisting, was finding the money to equip, house, and pay the troops. When he had met with Lincoln and Secretary of War Simon Cameron before heading west, Gilpin had been told to buy whatever he needed for his force on credit and send the bills to Washington. So that's exactly what Gilpin decided to do.

He had hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of what were known as "sight drafts" printed up, which were really I.O.U.'s on the U.S. Treasury. When the bills started to hit Washington, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase hit the roof. With no written authorization from Lincoln or Cameron, Chase was not about to pay the merchants who had supplied wagons and blankets and muskets and every other thing to the fledgling Colorado regiment.

John P. Slough

Now let us turn our attention to this man, John P. Slough. As I said before, a more unpopular choice than Slough to lead the regiment would be hard to imagine.

John Potts Slough was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1829, earned a law degree, and became active in Ohio politics. At age 21, he was elected to the Ohio state legislature and quickly gained a reputation for belligerency. In 1857, during an argument on the floor of the state house, he beat up a fellow legislator. Slough was subsequently turned out of office by the voters in his district. Disgraced in his home state, he decided to move westward and start afresh in Colorado.



John P. Slough

Having made a welcoming speech upon the occasion of Gilpin's arrival in Denver, Slough must have impressed Gilpin, who evidently saw in him great leadership qualities. It soon turned out that Slough had the qualities of a martinet, abrasive, demanding, a strict disciplinarian solely for the sake of discipline. As far as is known, Slough had no military training or experience.

Initially, the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers was housed in downtown hotels, which was not a good idea. In their free time, the soldiers were frequent and regular visitors to Denver City's saloons and red-light district. And, because they were not being paid, they often resorted to stealing chickens and livestock from backyards to supplement their meager rations.

It was obvious that a proper military post was required and so Camp Weld, named after the young Territo-

rial Secretary Leland Ledyard Weld, was constructed along the South Platte River, two miles from downtown, near what is today 8th Avenue and Vallejo Street.

Naturally, the camp was built of materials purchased with Gilpin's sight drafts. It was a fine and proper camp, but the troops were growing bored. All they did was train, train, and train some more. The problem was, the men had signed up to fight the Confederates, but there were no Confederates to fight, the major battles were all taking place in the east.

Many, perhaps most, of the enlisted men and probably a majority of the officers, detested Slough. He got along with practically no one, including his second-in-command Tappan, and was often the subject of scathing letters to the editors of the local newspapers. As time went on, he would become even more hated by those under him.

John Chivington

At this point, we need to introduce perhaps the most popular member of the regiment, John Chivington. Like Slough and Tappan, Chivington had had no military background. He was a high-ranking member of the Methodist Church in Colorado. A giant bear of a man, Chivington went to Gilpin when the unit was first forming and asked for a commission. Gilpin offered to make him the regiment's chaplain, but Chivington turned it down, replying, "I want a *fighting* command." Impressed with Chivington's spirit, Gilpin appointed him a major and third in command.

Of all the regiment's officers, the enlisted men probably loved Chivington the most, even though he



John Chivington

was a staunch supporter of Slough. And although he was not a military man, he was a natural-born leader, and would get the credit for the stunning Union victory that was still many months into the future.

Henry Sibley

We now need to take a look at the other side. Unknown to the men at Camp Weld at the end of 1861, the Confederates were on their way. Leading them was a former major in the U.S. Army, Henry Hopkins Sibley, a flamboyant drunk whose reputation was so notorious that he was called “the walking whiskey keg” in an army not known for temperance.

Sibley, a West Point graduate, veteran of the Second Seminole War (he and Gilpin had both attended West Point at roughly the same time, and both had served in the 2nd Dragoons),

and had been stationed in the Southwest for many years, serving under Col. Edward Canby.

When the Civil War began, Sibley, a native of Louisiana, resigned his commission and joined the Confederate Army. He had a great scheme. Because he felt he intimately knew the Southwest, he believed he could raise an army, return to the region, and conquer it all, everything from the gold and silver mines of Colorado to capturing a port on the West Coast, an important mission because, at this time, all the southern ports were being blockaded by the Union Navy.

Somehow Sibley managed to convince Jefferson Davis of this crazy idea. Davis promoted him to brigadier general and authorized him to raise a 3,000-man brigade of mounted Texans for the purpose of invading the Southwest and securing it for the Confederacy.

As 1861 ended, the angry Denver merchants demanded that the U.S. Treasury pay for the goods they had supplied on credit, and Governor Gilpin was called to Washington to explain the matter of his sight drafts. Since there was no written authorization from either Lincoln or Cameron, who had been forced to resign and was replaced by Edwin Stanton, Gilpin was held responsible. Reluctantly, Lincoln fired Gilpin and appointed Dr. John Evans of Illinois as his replacement.

Although disgraced, Gilpin had used his ingenuity to accomplish one thing, he had organized, outfitted, and caused to be trained a proper regiment, a regiment that was about to be called upon to repel a Confederate invasion.

Back in Texas, Sibley had



Henry Sibley

raised and trained the brigade and led it from San Antonio to what is today El Paso, Texas, and from there up the Rio Grande. At first, all went well for the rebels. They began knocking off Union forts along the river, defeating Canby's men wherever they met them, and especially in February 1862 at the Battle of Valverde, near Canby's major post known as Fort Craig, a battle in which Lt. Col. Kit Carson's men played an important role, as did a company of Coloradans from Canon City under the leadership of Capt. Theodore Dodd. Valverde was the largest battle of the Civil War in the Southwest.

But Canby allowed victory to slip from his grasp and his force was defeated. While his troops retreated back to Ft. Craig to lick their wounds, Sibley's men moved northward, capturing Albuquerque, then Santa Fe. Their immediate goal, before moving into Colorado, was the capture of the Union's major supply base at Fort Union, between Santa Fe and Raton

Pass. Because of Sibley's inability to plan ahead, the rebels were nearly out of provisions and had been eating their draft animals to stay alive.

With Gilpin gone, and with alarming reports about Confederate victories coming from New Mexico, acting governor Lewis Ledyard Weld authorized the release of the Colorado regiment. Departing Camp Weld on Washington's Birthday, 1862, the men marched through blizzards, sometimes making 40 miles a day on foot. In one of the great foot marches in all of military history, they reached Ft. Union, 400 miles from Denver, in only 18 days.

But so hated did Slough remain that, along the way, some of Slough's men plotted to kill him. The plot was not carried out.

Once they arrived at Ft. Union, Slough received a message from Col. Canby, still down at Ft. Craig, advising him to stay put and protect the fort until they could join their forces and catch the Confederates between them. At the same time, Canby gave Slough the freedom to attack the rebels if the opportunity presented itself. Choosing to obey the latter order rather than the former, Slough left Ft. Union with his entire regiment, plus several companies of regular infantry and batteries of artillery.

The story of the Battle of Glorieta Pass is well known and I won't go into detail here, but on March 26, 1862, a column of Union troops led by the indomitable Chivington met the Confederate advance force head on, within the confines of Glorieta Pass and sent them reeling back toward Santa Fe.

A truce was called for the next

day to allow both sides to retrieve their dead and wounded. The battle resumed on March 28, 145 years from this presentation. The night before, Slough and Chivington agreed upon a plan. As Slough led the Union troops westward along the Santa Fe Trail, Chivington would take about 500 men, climb Glorieta Mesa that rose along the south side of the trail, cross the mesa, and come down in the rear of the Confederates.

The plan worked perfectly. While the rebels battled Slough's men around a stage stop at the eastern end of the pass known as Pigeon's Ranch, Chivington's troops descended the mesa, burned the rebels' supply wagons, and killed their mules. The men then re-climbed the mesa and headed back to the Union lines.

While the battle for Pigeon's Ranch raged, some of Slough's men again tried to kill him. He was forced to take cover behind a tree to protect himself.

During the bloody battle that lasted for hours at Pigeon's Ranch, the Confederates gradually pushed Slough's men back. As night fell, the commander of the rebel force, (Sibley was sick or drunk or both back in Albuquerque), learned that his supply train had been destroyed. Knowing that he could not go on, he pulled back to Santa Fe. Shortly thereafter, Sibley's Brigade began what could only be called a death march back to San Antonio, through the blazing, unforgiving desert without adequate food or water.

Thanks to the efforts of William Gilpin, John P. Slough, John Chivington, and thousands of brave Unionists, never again would the Confederates threaten Colorado. And without Col-

orado's precious gold and silver, the Confederacy was doomed.

About the fate of the major players: the Confederate general Henry Hopkins Sibley fought in other campaigns, continued to lead troops badly, lived through the war, and moved to Egypt as a military advisor to the Egyptian Army. With Egypt being a Muslim country where the drinking of alcohol is forbidden, Sibley had a very hard time coping. After breaking into a British wine-merchant's shop and consuming much of the product, Sibley returned to America, where in 1886 he died a penniless man, and was buried in Virginia.

John Potts Slough, fearing that he would be court-martialed for disobeying Canby's orders to wait at Ft. Union, resigned his commission and moved to Washington DC, where he commanded the Military District of Alexandria, Virginia. He returned to the Southwest after the war and became Chief Justice of the New Mexico Territory. But his temper and abrasive manner got the best of him and, following an argument with a member of the New Mexico legislature, was shot to death in 1867 in Santa Fe.

Following Slough's resignation after the Battle of Glorieta Pass, John Chivington was promoted over Tappan to become the commander of the First Colorado regiment. He later became commander of Colorado territorial forces and, in November 1864, following his own heart as well as Governor Evans's orders, led a motley band of vigilantes calling themselves the Third Regiment of Colorado Cavalry to the eastern plains where they slaughtered a peaceable encampment of Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians at Big Sandy

Creek, the infamous Sand Creek Massacre.

William Gilpin, after being terminated as Colorado's first governor, became involved in land speculation near Fort Garland, and he became wealthy when gold was found on property he owned. He moved to Denver and married a widow whom he had loved for many years. Theirs was a stormy marriage and they divorced in 1887. In 1894, he was run over and killed by a horse-drawn carriage on a Denver street, and is buried in Denver's Mount Olivet Cemetery.

And what of the First Colorado and the other units from Colorado that were formed during the war?

For the majority of the Colorado soldiers, the departure of Sibley's Brigade from New Mexico did not mean an end to their war. The First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers was reorganized in November, 1862 as the First Colorado Cavalry Volunteers under Col. John M. Chivington.

A full second regiment was clearly needed. In February 1863, Col. Jesse H. Leavenworth, the son of the officer for whom Ft. Leavenworth was named, was authorized to raise six companies of volunteers. Forming the core of this new regiment were James Ford's and Theodore Dodd's independent companies. Leavenworth was appointed commander of this unit, the Second Colorado Infantry Volunteers, with Dodd as his second in command. In the summer of 1863, the Second Colorado was ordered to proceed to Ft. Scott, Kansas. Along the way, on July 1, at Cabin Creek, the regiment encountered and defeated a Confederate force commanded by the Cherokee Indian

and Confederate Colonel Stand Watie.

Diverted to Ft. Gibson, Oklahoma, the Second Colorado Infantry was attached to a larger force commanded by Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt, who was preparing to engage an invading rebel brigade under Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, encamped at Honey Springs. With a force of some 3,000 whites, blacks (the First Kansas Colorado Infantry Regiment), and Indians, Blunt turned back Cooper's force on July 17, 1863.

In August, Blunt's men again clashed with the Confederates, this time under William Steele, who had been one of Sibley's regimental commanders and was now a brig. gen., at Perryville, about 60 miles south of Ft. Gibson. Once again, the Union forces prevailed.

The men of Chivington's First Colorado Cavalry, meanwhile, were anxious to see action against the Confederates, but the immediate concern in the territory was the Indians. In late 1862, following Gov. John Evans's request for additional help to combat the growing Indian problem, the War Department authorized the formation of the Third Colorado Infantry Volunteers, but recruitment was slow.

In July 1863, Maj. Edward Wynkoop, a company commander at Glorieta, led a force of four companies from Colorado to Ft. Bridger, Wyoming, against bands of marauding natives. The continued unrest of the Indians in Wyoming and Colorado's eastern plains kept Wynkoop and his men in the saddle for the rest of 1863.

In October 1863, five companies of the Third Colorado Infantry Volunteers were consolidated into the Second Colorado Infantry Volunteers

and re-designated the Second Colorado Cavalry Volunteers; Col. James Ford was placed in charge, with Lt. Col. Dodd his second in command. Ford's regiment was then assigned to fight the Confederate guerrilla bands in central Missouri, including those of "Bloody Bill" Anderson and George Todd. It was a dirty and dangerous business.

Back in the Colorado Territory, relations between the whites and the Indians continued to deteriorate, and Gov. Evans continued to ask the War Department for the return of Ford's Second Colorado Cavalry. But his appeals were denied because of the critical situation in Missouri. In mid-September 1864, Confederate Maj. Gen. Sterling Price, who had served with Gilpin in Doniphan's force during the Mexican War, invaded Missouri with an army of some 18,000 mounted rebels. Price first attempted to take St. Louis, but was checked at Pilot Knob by Union forces under Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing. An attempt to take Jefferson City ended in a similar result.

Price had better success farther to the west. On October 22, 1864, his troops met Blunt's men along the Big Blue River and pushed them back. But Union Maj. Gen. Alfred Pleasanton's army drove the rebels out of Missouri for good, and the West was truly saved for the Union.

Meanwhile, in Colorado, the Indian situation was growing worse. Outraged at the gruesome massacre of the Hungate family by a band of renegade Indians near where the town of Elizabeth stands today, the citizens of Denver City demanded that the natives be dealt such a severe blow that they would never again threaten the

white settlements. To deal with the problem, a unit called the Third Colorado Regiment of Cavalry Volunteers was formed. But rather than trained, disciplined soldiers, the Third Colorado Cavalry was a ragtag outfit of civilians, many of whom had lost friends and relatives to the Indians and were out for revenge.

The plan backfired. In November 1864, Col. John Chivington, upon Gov. Evans's orders, led the Third Colorado Cavalry into infamy as they attacked a peaceable encampment of Arapahos and Cheyennes at a place called Big Sandy Creek, more than a day's ride north of Ft. Lyon on the Arkansas. Maj. Edward Wynkoop, the previous commander of the Ft. Lyon garrison, had already effected a peace treaty with the Indians at that encampment, and had even escorted their leaders to Denver City to meet with Gov. Evans. But Chivington and Evans chose to violate the treaty and attack them anyway.

The surprise attack, which is today known as the "Sand Creek Massacre," came at dawn on November 29, 1864. Hundreds of peaceable men, women, and children were killed, some in the most brutal ways imaginable. The attack outraged and unified many of the tribes, and plunged the West into two decades of savage warfare between whites and the Native Americans.

To their credit, the majority of troops from Ft. Lyon whom Chivington ordered accompany his raiding party sat on their horses during the uneven fight and refused to take part in the slaughter.

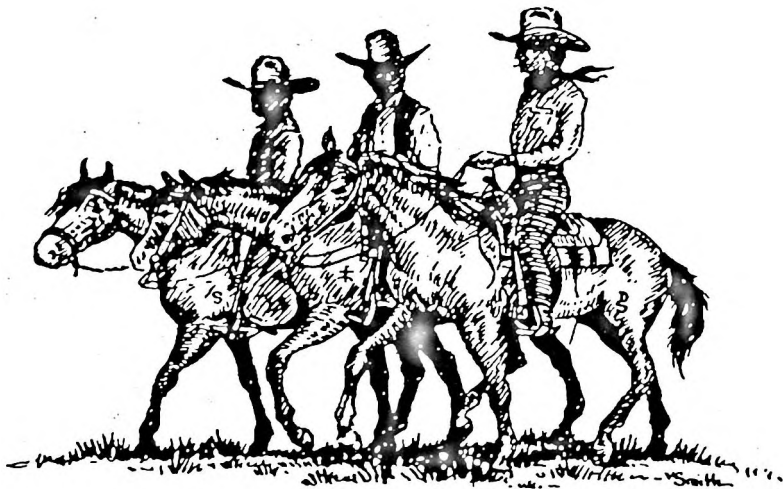
Although many Denverites at the time celebrated Chivington's "victory" and praised him for "saving" their

community from Indian depredations, many others were horrified at the butchery by the Third Colorado Cavalry. Soon a Congressional investigation was launched and many of the troopers from Ft. Lyon who refused to participate testified against Chivington to Congressional investigators.

Chivington, the Hero of Glorietta, became the Butcher of Sand Creek. Inexplicably he was never punished for leading the massacre. He left the territory in 1864 or 1865 but returned in 1883, served as the sheriff and coroner of Arapahoe (now Denver) County, and

died in 1894 at age 73. He is buried at Fairmount Cemetery.

So ends the saga of Colorado in the Civil War. Although many historians have discounted the impact of what were viewed as minor skirmishes out here in the wilds of the Far West, had the rebels' plans succeeded, even to a small degree, the outcome of the war probably would have been considerably different than what it was. And for the Union victory in the Far West, we must forever remember the names of Gilpin, Slough, Chivington, and so many, many more.



Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ken or the editor, Jim Krebs, P.M. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

November meeting, November 28, 2007

Eighty Posse members and their guests enjoyed a delicious dinner and were entertained and educated by John Fielder, master photographer and lecturer, when he presented his "Colorado 1879 - 2000, Vol. II" slide show and presentation. This is the second volume of his "Colorado 1879 - 2000" books. Mr. Fielder showed 65 pictures of pioneer photographer H. W. Jackson that he overlaid with his own pictures of the same scenes. In many of the scenes his triangulation proved to be almost the exact same spot of the original picture.

December Winter Rendezvous, December 19, 2007

One hundred and nine Posse members and their guests met for the Winter Rendezvous meeting the Park Hill Golf Clubhouse. After a delicious meal of baked salmon or steak, the Posse was entertained by Hugh Bingham as he portrayed "Mark Twain" with his big black cigar. The talk was a running account of Mark Twain's journey by stagecoach for twenty days across the western prairies to Carson City in 1867. Mark Twain's dry humor was well portrayed and there were also a few modern day stories woven into the presentation. It was indeed a very pleasant presentation.



Gene Rakosnik, P.M., chairman for the Fred A. Rosenstock Awards, had triple by-pass surgery a few days before the meeting, so Tom Noel, P.M., made the presentation of the Fred A. Rosenstock Award. The award is for Outstanding Contributions to Colorado History. The award for \$1,000.00 was presented to the Friends of Historic Fort Logan, represented by Norm Brown. The award was dedicated to the memory of Earl McCoy, P.M., who led in founding the Friends of Historic Fort Logan the Fort's centennial year of 1987.



The Lifetime Achievement in Western History Award 2007 was presented to Max Smith. Max and his brothers, Wayne and Dale, who are also longtime Denver Posse stalwarts, operated Smith Brothers Trading Post of Western Art at Heritage Square near Golden from 1968 to 1973. As a Western artist, Max specializes in pyrographs, pen and ink, pencil, watercolors and mixed media. Max has been among the most active and generous members of the Denver Posse, of which Max has served as Sheriff.



Welcome back

The Posse welcomed back to membership Richard G. Akeroyd, Jr. P.M., who had moved to the East Coast several years ago. In 1985, while Sheriff, he built the case in which "Old Joe" the Denver Posse Buffalo Skull is stored. "Old Joe" now resides in the Westerners' archives at Ft. Logan.

It was good to hear from another Posse Member, Dr. Robert W. "Bob" Mutchler, DDS. He is living in San Antonio, Texas. Bob joined the Posse in 1965, was elected to the Posse in 1967 and served as Sheriff in 1971. He was the Brand Book Editor in 1972, Vol. XXIX. He is the proud owner of a collection of over 1300 items covering Colorado ghost and historical towns and sites. It is hoped that this fine collection can someday be housed in a library in Denver.

The Posse mourns the passing of a friend

Dale Wesley Smith was born in Blackwell, OK in 1928 and lived on the family ranch with his parents and two brothers, Wayne and Max. Dale served in the U.S. Air Force and came to Denver to go in business with Wayne with Sinclair stations in Englewood and Littleton. Dale was a multi-talented guy. As a youth he played accordion and in later years took up guitar and played with local groups. He started doing hand carved leather belts, then woodcarving and later went into Western-themed sculpture. Dale passed away Jan. 3, 2008.

Dale joined the Westerners in 1986, and in 1989 he was elected to the Posse. He was awarded honorary membership in the Posse in 2003. Dale, with brothers Wayne and Max, presented the program "Some Northern Douglas County, Colorado Ranches" in August 1989, and their paper was printed in the January-February 1990 issue of the *Roundup*. In the *Roundup* there was a paragraph on each of the Smith Brothers, and the paragraph on Dale read: "Dale has always preferred the three-dimensional side of art. His early experimentation started in carved leather and wood carvings. The next progression was to bronze. Dale has a keen eye for details that makes his subject matter truly realistic-representative. He studies the anatomy of his own horse to make sure every muscle is correct and that the flavor of the moment is frozen."



Westerners Bookshelf



Ballots and Bullets: The Bloody County Seat Wars of Kansas, by Robert K. DeArment. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006. 266pp. Photos, bibliography, map, index. Cloth, \$29.95

The “Bleeding Kansas” of *Ballots and Bullets* is not the pre-Civil War years, nor the bloody raids occurring during the Civil War, but rather the little known but equally frightening bloody engagements incurred by animosities created out of bitter county seat wars in the years 1885-1892 from various counties roughly from south-central to north-western Kansas. *Ballots and Bullets* is a well-written, thoroughly researched book that gives the reader a good reading knowledge of how violent some of the disputes became over attempts to establish towns that became county seats.

As many as a dozen men were murdered in these “wars,” many more wounded, and no one was ever really brought to justice for these brazen murders.

A general introduction brings the reader into the conflict. After a chapter on non-lethal county seat battles, DeArment discusses violent conflicts in Grant, Gray, Wichita, Stevens and Stewart counties. By far the most gratuitous violence occurs in Stevens County where what became known as the Hayfield Massacre occurred. A party of five men was surrounded as they slept in a hayfield on the night of July 25, 1888. They were then summarily shot by more than a dozen men, themselves seeking to retaliate against an earlier unsuccessful attack upon some of them.

All were executed except for one, a young man named Herbert Tonney, who, though shot through the neck, feigned death and survived. What is interesting about this event is that six men were later sentenced to die upon conviction for the murders, but they were eventually released on a court technicality and were never again tried for their crimes. Indeed, what marks these violent county wars as remarkable is the fact that no one really ever was brought to justice for these violent criminal attacks, and that primarily because of the issue of the county seat. One’s peers are the very people who would not convict the killers for their crimes.

There is much more intrigue and detail to this book than has been revealed here. *Ballots and Bullets* is a very interesting book about an aspect of Kansas history that has had little written about it. The Wild West remained wild long after Indian raids, outlaw towns and other well-known events of the West had been tamed. This is a good book and comes highly recommended for anyone interested in reading this relatively little-known history of 19th century Kansas.

--Jeff Broome, P.M.

Civil War to the Bloody End: The Life and Times of Major General Samuel P. Heintzelman, by Jerry Thompson. Texas A&M University, Press College Station, 2006. 464pp. 14 black and white photos, seven paintings, line art, nine maps, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$35.00

"He was an honest man, a brave soldier, and in manners as simple as a child." So wrote Charles Poston, a good friend of General Samuel P. Heintzelman. In his latest book, historian and biographer Jerry Thompson writes an interesting and what perhaps will be the definitive life story of this Union Civil War General. In Thompson's previous biography of Confederate General Henry Hopkins Sibley, *Confederate General of the West* the author found that none of Sibley's private correspondence had survived and his letters stored in the National Archives did not give an intimate look into his background. With his new subject, Thompson found just the opposite.

Samuel Peter Heintzelman, coming from Pennsylvania German background, compiled and preserved his personal journals, pocket diaries, along with many papers and military records. These he started when he entered West Point in 1822. His pocket diaries and journals by themselves consist of over 3,300 hand-written pages. He was a refined and cultured family man who also was a patron of the arts and avid reader of Shakespeare and lover of opera. Samuel Heintzelman was a amateur astronomer, meteorologist, geologist, naturalist, inventor, violinist, and a cartographer. As a respected career military officer who spoke three languages, he took part in the latter stages of the war against Mexico. In 1850 he established Fort Yuma along the Colorado River and became interested in silver mining and helped establish the Sonora Exploring and Mining Company. He also led the Federal forces in the Cortina War along the Rio Grande in Texas in 1859-60. As many officers were at the time, Heintzelman was a tough disciplinarian. He could also be argumentative, proud, irritable, self-centered, and excessively vain (that could be a description of a good many Civil War General Officers).

During the Civil War he rose to the rank of major general of volunteers in command of the III Corps of the Army of the Potomac. He took part in the battle of First Bull Run (where he was wounded), Yorktown, Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Savage's Station, and Glendale. These last six battles were part of the 1862 Peninsula Campaign. His last major battle was at Second Bull Run. On several occasions Heintzelman tried to get President Lincoln to place him in command of the Army of the Potomac. However as a result of his troops taking heavy casualties at Second Bull Run, he was relieved of command. During the latter half of the war, he administered prison camps in the Midwest. One of many people he came in contact with was Ohio's provost marshal Brig. Gen. Henry B. Carrington, who would later command Fort Phil Kearny on the Bozeman Trail. He would also be involved in the Reconstruction turmoil of Texas.

Jerry Thompson's book is a interesting and well-written study of a career military officer for both the Civil War and Western history buff. Major General Samuel Peter Heintzelman said it best for the *Washington Daily National Intelligencer* on August 9, 1865, "I have no hesitation in leaving my reputation...in the hands of the future historian."

--Mark E. Hutchins, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

March - April 2008



Gall the Warrior

Gall: Warrior of Controversy
by Robert W. Larson. P.M.
(presented May 23, 2007)



Our Author

Bob Larson, a retired history professor from the University of Northern Colorado, has been a member of the Denver Posse since 1993. He received the Fred A. Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement award from the Posse in 2006. Prior to Larson's retirement in 1990, he published four books which focused on such topics as New Mexico's statehood movement, the Populist movement in the Mountain West, and a history of the first one-hundred years of UNC's history.

His main interest in recent years has been the Lakota Sioux Indians and their resistance to the U. S. Army during the Indian wars. In 1997 he published *Red Cloud: Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* for University of Oklahoma Press, a biography that has been translated into French and Italian. His most recent publication, also with Oklahoma, is *Gall: Lakota War Chief*, which is the subject of this article. As this issue goes to press, Bob has just been awarded the "Spur" from the Western Writers of America in the non-fiction biography category.

He lives in Denver with his wife and research companion Peggy; they have children and grandchildren in Greeley and the Denver metro area.

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Gall: Warrior of Controversy

by Robert W. Larson, P.M.

(presented May 23, 2007)

On August 11, 1873, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer was fending off a bold attack by Lakota and Cheyenne Indians fighting under Sitting Bull during the Battle of the Yellowstone. Although Custer held the high ground, his advantage did not stop these angry warriors from charging the well-fortified center of his line. The Indians attacked in two large waves with about one hundred warriors in each. Despite the ferocity of their assault, troopers from the Seventh Cavalry under Captain Owen Hale and Custer's brother, Lieutenant Tom Custer, charged down a steep ravine to meet these screaming warriors. One of the observers at this battle was *New York Tribune* correspondent Samuel J. Barrows, who likened the army's counterattack to a "whirlwind," one which caused many of these Indians "to jump off their horses and flee." Barrows noticed, however, that "one conspicuous Indian in a red blanket, supposed to be Gall, an important chief, had his pony shot dead under him." But he "leaped on a fresh horse and got away."

By the time of this incident, which occurred during the last Yellowstone Expedition, Gall was becoming better known to the veteran Indian fighters of the U. S. Army. The muscular war chief was indeed an impressive figure. Mrs. Custer, upon seeing a photo of Gall many years later, grudgingly admitted that he was the finest specimen

of a warrior she had ever seen. When Gall was finally forced to surrender at the Battle of Poplar River in Montana on January 2, 1881, he did it with an almost majestic dignity. As Captain J. M. Bell, one of the army officers on the scene described it: Gall "came riding out on his pony with his blanket wrapped around him and his arms folded...[He] looked around him as like an old Roman as any man I ever saw."

During the encounter observed by Barrows along the Yellowstone, Custer and Gall proved to be more alike than either of them would care to admit. During their 1873 confrontation, Gall wore his familiar red blanket; because of his strong affinity for red his people often called him Walks-in-Red-Clothing. Custer, for his part, wore a bright red shirt, both men evidently not concerned about making themselves conspicuous targets. The colonel's recklessness in this regard disturbed those around him. Barrows, for instance, begged him, for his own safety, not to fight in such a brightly colored shirt, advice that Custer did not heed until his wife, Libbie, later pressured him to switch to buckskin. Gall, as we have seen, was shot off his horse during this Yellowstone encounter but continued to fight. Custer, in this same battle, was shot off a horse for the eleventh time during his tumultuous military career.

In 1975, historian Stephen E. Ambrose published a book called



Lt. Col. George A. Custer

Crazy Horse and Custer, in which he compared the fighting prowess of these two fighting men, famous warriors in their own right. General George Crook, who had faced Crazy Horse's wrath at the Rosebud, once compared Gall with Crazy Horse, giving Gall the advantage. The problem with Crook's assessment is that he may not have directly encountered Gall in battle. The Hunkpapa war chief may have been at the Battle of the Rosebud, but there is little evidence that he took an active part in it. For one thing, Gall probably had been a participant in the Hunkpapa sun dance prior to the Rosebud, where Sitting Bull had his famous vision of soldiers and horses falling upside down into their camp. Sun dances, incidentally, can be particularly rigorous; one historian of the Lakota Sioux has claimed that it often took four days to prepare for this

most sacred ritual of the Sioux and four days to recover. One outcome of this dance, which solidified Sitting Bull as a great medicine man and visionary, may have been that Gall and other exhausted dancers were tired enough to let Crazy Horse and his men do most of the fighting, along with that fearless Cheyenne upstart, Little Hawk and such Cheyenne warriors as Two Moon and Spotted Wolf. Regardless of the questionable value of Crook's evaluation of Gall's mettle, he was often called the "Fighting Cock of the Sioux" by many of the bluecoated soldiers who faced him in battle.

Gall, or *Pizi*, to use his Lakota name, was born on the Moreau River in present-day South Dakota in 1840. He was raised on the harsh Dakota plains by members of a small Hunkpapa band. The Hunkpapas were one of seven Lakota tribes, the others being the Oglalas, Brulés, Miniconjous, Sans Arcs, Two Kettles, and Blackfoot Lakotas. Information regarding his parentage is muddled. His father was not around during most of the years following Gall's birth; indeed, some have assumed that he died young. Thus, like the Oglala chief Red Cloud, Gall was raised by his mother and solicitous relatives. One advantage he may have had over Red Cloud was an alleged blood tie to the respected Hunkpapa leader Black Moon, a member of one of the leading families of the seven Lakota Sioux tribes.

As a child Gall was exceptionally robust. As he was built like a baby grizzly, his mother, Walks-With-Many-Names, called him Little Bear Cub during his early years. One day, however, she observed him eating the gallbladder of a freshly killed buffalo and began

calling him Gall. Although her son, who loved to be in the center of a fight, preferred to be called The Man-That-Goes-in-the-Middle, the name he used when he made his mark on the Treaty of Fort Laramie, he was stuck with Gall.

Young Gall soon became known for his remarkable strength. One day when Gall's band was encamped near a band of friendly Northern Cheyennes, a wrestling contest called *Che-hoo-hoo* was arranged. A number of young Hunkpapas were pitted against an equal number of young Cheyennes in a series of one-on-one contests. The rules of *Che-hoo-hoo* were strict. You could not strike with your hand or kick with your feet. Each of the individual matches ended when one boy threw the other to the ground and held him there until he was counted out.

After an intense back-and-forth struggle amidst cheers and groans from both sides, only two young men remained standing. One was the Hunkpapa Gall, the other was the now famous Cheyenne warrior, Roman Nose. These two Apollos became the center of a throng of cheering partisan spectators. Although one of them could sometimes lift the other off the ground, neither of them was strong enough to throw his opponent down. Finally the husky Gall, either through force or trickery, hurled Roman Nose to the ground and held him there for a minute. Gall had won. The disappointed Cheyennes took this defeat in good grace. Roman Nose's mother graciously threw an impressive buffalo robe over Gall's shoulders, while Walks-With-Many-Names returned the compliment by covering Roman Nose with a fine looking blanket.

Although Gall was deprived of a

father during most of his developing years, he did find a mentor who, in many ways, assumed that role. Sitting Bull, a young man nine years his senior, saw the great potentialities of Gall as a warrior. Working closely with him, he helped Gall acquire many of the skills that made him the great warrior he became. Moreover, he was largely responsible for Gall's admission to one of those all-important warrior or policing societies called *akicitas*. Through his sponsorship, Gall became a member of the prestigious Strong Heart Society. Later Gall, working with the renowned Crow King and Sitting Bull, organized the Midnight Strong Heart Society, which historian Robert M. Utley once called "an elite within an elite." This group became known for its night feasts, where its members could proudly relate stories of their bold coups and other potentially fatal scrapes with danger.

Gall and Sitting Bull were built much alike, both having short, stocky bodies. Although Gall was only five feet seven inches tall, three inches shorter than his mentor, he looked larger and more formidable, because of his massive chest and exceptionally powerful arms. When mounted, he could easily be mistaken for a six footer. Each man had a distinctive personality and a strong streak of independence. Gall was probably less reserved than Sitting Bull, but he had a mercurial temper which few would be willing to arouse. Sitting Bull was a more serious and focused person. Gall was more pragmatic, which sometimes brought him into serious controversy. But Gall's more famous mentor did not seem to mind. When Gall went to Fort Rice as Sitting



Sitting Bull

Bull's emissary in a conference on the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie, he denounced the treaty in that famous oration in which he threw off his blanket to show his white-inflicted battle wounds. Then he turned right around and signed it. Many of the older Hunkpapa leaders were upset, if not angry over Gall's surprise reversal, despite the presents his people received as a result of Gall's action. But Sitting Bull, who now regarded him as an invaluable war lieutenant, remarked with great humor: "You should not blame Gall. Everyone knows he will do anything for a square meal."

Gall's earlier years as a warrior were largely consumed fighting rival tribes, such as the Crows, Assiniboines, Arikaras, and Shoshones. We are not certain how many coups he earned in combat. One Bull, a nephew of Sitting

Bull, claimed that Gall could count only twenty coups, an unreliable number and probably too low; One Bull, for instance, maintained that Sitting Bull earned thirty coups, even though the overall tribal consensus was that he earned as many as sixty-three. The problem, of course, evolves around the question of what constitutes a coup when your fighting against enemies such as those in the U. S. Army, where discipline and a group action are stressed rather than the individual acts of valor that characterize Indian warfare. Although another nephew of Sitting Bull, White Bull, counted coup when fighting soldiers, it is uncertain whether others, such as Gall, did.

In 1862, after Little Crow's War (also called the Minnesota Uprising) ended, the attention of most northern Lakotas turned to a new enemy, the military forces under Henry Hastings Sibley and Alfred Sully. These two brigadier generals led forces into Dakota Territory during the Civil War years to capture those fleeing Dakota or Santee Sioux warriors who had fought under Little Crow in Minnesota. They also wanted to quell opposition on the part of northern Lakota tribes against white emigrants who had the temerity to move west into their territory. Gall fought against General Sully at the Battle of Killdeer Mountain in August 1864 and three weeks later, along with other Sitting Bull lieutenants, he led the attack on the Fisk wagon train. Despite Gall's participation in the Killdeer Mountain and Badlands campaigns of 1864, his military adversaries probably did not know him by name until 1866. In fact, according to historian Herbert T. Hoover, Gall's name first

appeared in federal records as one of those Hunkpapa warriors who cooperated with Red Cloud in the Fetterman Fight of December 21, 1866. The extent of Gall's participation in Red Cloud's War has become a matter of controversy because of the near-fatal wounds he received at the hands of Bloody Knife and a detachment of soldiers while on a trading expedition in the Dakota Territory a year earlier.

In late 1865, Bloody Knife, who later became Custer's favorite scout, spotted Gall and his small band encamped near Fort Berthold where a number of Arikaras, Mandans, and Hidatsas had congregated. Bloody Knife, who was half-Arikara and half Hunkpapa, hated Gall for a number of reasons. When Bloody Knife lived in his father's Hunkpapa camp, both Gall and Sitting Bull made his life miserable. When he left with his Arikara mother to live with her people, his hatred for Gall worsened, especially after Gall killed, scalped, and mutilated two of Bloody Knife's brothers after a bitter skirmish in the Dakota Badlands. Consequently, he eagerly lead a group of soldiers to Gall's tipi and, when the unsuspecting Lakota warrior opened the fold of his tipi to crawl out, these soldiers bayoneted him. Bloody Knife, determined to finish off his mortal enemy, stuck the barrel of his gun inches from Gall's face. But before he could shower his hated adversary with buckshot, the officer in charge of the detachment struck the gun barrel with either his arm or leg and knocked it aside. Because of Gall's iron constitution, he survived these near-fatal wounds. It seems doubtful, however, that one year later he could contribute much in helping Red Cloud

drive U. S. Army forces from the Powder River country.

Gall's reputation as that fierce Lakota warrior dressed in red was probably ensured by his deeds along the Yellowstone, where the Sioux tried to stop the Northern Pacific Railroad from surveying a rail route through their Montana buffalo grounds. During Colonel David S. Stanley's Yellowstone Expedition of 1872, it was Gall and his band who spotted Stanley's 600 infantrymen, while Sitting Bull, whose forces usually operated in close coordination with Gall's, was engaged in a fight with Major Eugene M. Baker's men some 160 miles away on what is now called Pryor Creek near Billings. During Gall and Stanley's first encounter, the flamboyant Gall taunted Stanley across the Powder River, gravely warning him that he could bring many more bands to oppose him. Later at Gall's behest, Sitting Bull arrived to enlarge Lakota numbers significantly. Stanley, in response, began a slow retreat down the Yellowstone, eventually reaching Fort Rice on the west bank of the Missouri. Near the fort, Gall engineered an ambush in which two of Stanley's lieutenants and the colonel's own black servant were killed. In an episode that seared Gall's memory in the minds of soldiers for years to come, Gall defiantly dangled the scalps of at least two of these victims from a hillock near Fort Rice to the utter horror of Stanley's men.

One of Colonel Stanley's lieutenants who was a victim of Gall's ambush was Louis Dent Adair, a cousin of President Grant's wife, Julia Dent Grant. Gall's flamboyance and Lieutenant Adair's death would cause a reaction

that neither Gall nor Sitting Bull could have anticipated. There was great anger among both politicians and army officers. Grant's son, army officer Frederick Dent Grant, bitter over the death of his relative, asked to go on a Northern Pacific survey expedition planned for the following year. Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan ordered as many as 1500 soldiers to accompany this much larger escort for the 1873 survey party. Grant himself would take a much harder line on Indian affairs after his reelection in 1872 and Gall would truly become a national figure, albeit a highly controversial one.

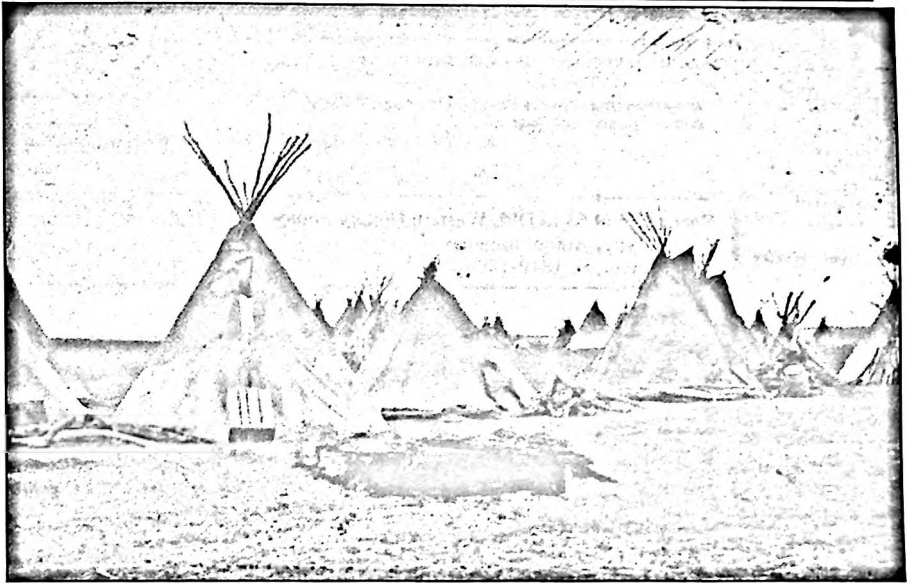
The next year Custer returned with Stanley on the Yellowstone Expedition of 1873. Custer's Seventh Cavalry made a much better impression on the Lakotas than the soldiers under Major Baker and the often inebriated Colonel Stanley. Yet, despite Custer's well publicized pursuit of Sitting Bull, Gall, and their warriors, he could not break their opposition. But a decision made by the owners of the Northern Pacific to delay their construction of railroad tracks through the Yellowstone country made further military efforts unnecessary. The failure of the banking house of Jay Cooke and Company, which closed its doors on September 18, 1873, not only doomed the nation's businesses, causing the Panic of 1873, but it also ended the possibility for laying tracks west of the Missouri for many years.

The problem of dealing with those Lakota and Northern Cheyenne warriors who refused to abide by the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, however, remained. Refusing to give up their old ways and live permanently on government reservations, these warriors,

often labeled as nontreaty Indians, met in 1869 and chose Sitting Bull as their supreme chief. The Oglala Crazy Horse was made his second in command, while Gall, Crow King, and other Lakota warriors were made war chiefs. Moreover, the organized resistance started by these new nontreaty bands would continue through the Yellowstone expeditions and eventually lead to the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

Gall's defiant, sometimes brutal actions during the Yellowstone campaigns of 1872 and 1873 were not controversial to his people; indeed, they were enthusiastically lauded by many of them. But he would eventually become controversial with many Lakotas and Cheyennes during the years from the Little Bighorn catastrophe to Gall's death on the Standing Rock Reservation in 1894. Three important episodes from the rugged warrior's life would cause disputes that would eventually tarnish his reputation in the eyes of many. One was his role at the Little Bighorn, another was his 1880 break with Sitting Bull, and the third was his unusually close cooperation with Indian Agent James McLaughlin during his Standing Rock years.

The Battle of the Little Bighorn was actually a great personal tragedy for Gall, a fact not always understood or stressed by students of Indian history. He lost two wives and three children at the hands of Major Marcus A. Reno's scouts and soldiers. When Reno's three companies attacked the upper end of the massive Indian village along the Little Bighorn, or the Greasy Grass to use the Sioux name, their first targets were the Hunkpapa and Blackfoot Lakota tribal circles. Reno's assault was evidently a complete surprise as some of the Indian



Gall's encampment at the time of his surrender at Ft. Buford

women and children from this part of the village were wandering in that danger zone between Reno and these two Indian camps. Probably no more than ten of these unlucky wanderers, including five from Gall's family, were killed by Reno's Arikara and Crow Scouts probably led by Bloody Knife, Gall's old nemesis. Gall, along with Crow King and other Hunkpapa warriors, only became aware of this attack after their tipis in the embattled Hunkpapa circle were strafed by Reno's men that fatal June afternoon. Unprepared for action, Gall finally headed for the benchlands above the village, where most of the Indian ponies were kept, and got his war mount.

Largely because of Gregory F. Michno's methodical study, *Lakota Noon*, I was able to follow Gall's movements throughout the rest of this much-studied battle. Gall returned on

horseback to participate in the attack on Reno's men, joined by Crazy Horse and a host of other Indians. But, by his own admission, he did not pursue Reno across the river or up the hill, where Reno and Benteen would hold out for two days. Instead, he was diverted by one of his comrades, Iron Cedar, who claimed he sighted other army troopers on the east bank of the Greasy Grass. When Gall and Iron Cedar reached the other side of the river, they saw a mounted officer with binoculars, who was gazing intently at the large village on the opposite bank. The man was probably George A. Custer, but Gall could not boast of an original discovery; Custer's presence was already known by Indians camping downriver from the Hunkpapas. Gall then recrossed the river, riding westward to see if his family was among a large group of refugees who had fled from Reno's

surprise attack. Again his search was futile, although he did encounter Sitting Bull, who was warning his people not to steal things from their white adversaries for fear of future retaliation.

Gall, having only one recourse left, returned to the badly damaged tipis that he had left an hour and a half earlier. A search in the woodlands south of the Hunkpapa and Blackfeet Sioux circles revealed what he had long dreaded: the scattered dead bodies of his own family. Understandably heartbroken, he vowed vengeance. "It made my heart bad," he said. "After that I killed all my enemies with a hatchet." Overcoming his grief, he returned to battle, but, when he crossed the Little Bighorn at the Medicine Tail ford, it was after Crazy Horse and Crow King had already done so. As a consequence, Gall did not get into the thick of the fray until two hours after it had started, a fact that hardly justifies his long-standing reputation as the bellwether of the Little Bighorn.

Once Gall was committed, however, he fought with his usual ferocity. Wielding a hatchet, by his own testimony, the broad-shouldered Hunkpapa war chief led a resolute charge against the dismounted troopers under Captain Miles W. Keogh on a slope north of Deep Coulee. Despite a heavy volley of fire by Keogh's men, his troopers were forced by Gall's charge to move northward and join Captain George W. Yates after a half-hour of vicious fighting. Perhaps Gall's major contribution in this engagement against Keogh was his insistence that the Sioux should stampede the army's horses. With one of four troopers at this besieged site assigned to keep the army's horses from fleeing, concentrated Indian fire on Keogh's

horseholders eventually caused this to happen. "We tried to kill the holders," Gall later claimed, "and by waving blankets we scared the horses down the coulee," forcing Custer's cavalrymen to fight on foot, where they were not at their best. When all resistance failed, these harried survivors of the Seventh Cavalry retreated up Custer Hill, where they joined Yates's men still struggling to turn the tide.

Great courage on both sides was shown during this phase of the battle. For instance, members of Yates's Company E later charged down a hill toward the Greasy Grass, only to be cut down, their dead bodies scattered on the ground below. One of the battle's early historians, Charles Kuhlman, even claimed, in a disputed version of the battle, that four or five of Yates's men ran right into Gall's arms, where he allegedly released much of his pent up ferocity by killing them. Finally, Gall, despite the controversy over his early role at the Little Bighorn, did participate in Custer's legendary Last Stand; with other zealous warriors, he charged across Custer Hill on horseback at the close of this most famous phase of the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

After this stunning victory, which shocked much of the country, Gall and Sitting Bull were pursued by Colonel Nelson A. Miles for ten months before they sought exile in Canada. Gall, with his own band or working in coordination with Sitting Bull's, fought a rear-guard action against the resolute Miles. The war chief also spent almost four years in Grandmother's Land, as the Sioux called Canada in honor of Queen Victoria. It was also in Canada that Gall broke with Sitting Bull, after almost



James McLaughlin, Gall's
Indian agent at Standing Rock
Reservation

a quarter of a century of unwavering loyalty. The reason for this rupture is understandable: the Lakota Sioux exiles were near starvation and Sitting Bull stubbornly refused to surrender. As a result, Gall took his band and many new followers to the United States in January 1881, six months before Sitting Bull finally acknowledged defeat.

When Gall reached Standing Rock five months later, he found himself involved in another controversy. The pragmatic war leader decided, along with such Hunkpapa warriors as Crow King, that he would walk the white man's road because, to him, there was really no other practical alternative left for his people. Persuading him in this regard was Standing Rock's Indian agent, James McLaughlin, a master

manipulator. Gall, who soon became a leader in the reservation's more cooperative faction, served for nine years as a district farmer. In this capacity he was able to show other Indians the necessary skills needed for success in agriculture. He was also a judge on the Court of Indian Offenses for one term, where he tried to achieve the kind of justice his people could understand. Indeed, he tried to become what ethnohistorians and cultural anthropologists today would call a culture broker, one who bridges the gap between two opposing cultures. In this endeavor he had only limited success, because when Sitting Bull came to Standing Rock, he vigorously opposed McLaughlin's policies of assimilation.

The tension between these two men increased dramatically when that controversial religious movement, which the whites called the Ghost Dance, began to spread throughout Standing Rock in 1890. Sitting Bull was willing to give the new faith a try, but Gall, who would eventually become an Episcopal convert, would have nothing to do with it. Because this prolonged and mournful dance was misconstrued by federal authorities as a war dance, an attempt by federal troops to arrest Sitting Bull resulted in the old chief's death on December 15, 1890. Although Gall and Sitting Bull had not been close for many years, Gall was greatly disturbed by the death of his old friend, even questioning McLaughlin's wife about the circumstances surrounding Sitting Bull's tragic end.

One positive factor about Gall's role as both a war chief and reservation leader was the loyalty he gave his band, or *tiospaye* to use the Lakota word. As the



Gall as a reservation Indian wearing a suit

headman of his band, he was almost always cognizant of the needs of his band members, making decisions he thought were best for their welfare. When his people were near starvation in Canada, for instance, he broke with Sitting Bull and surrendered along with his band; this move was soon followed by most of the other bands which had sought exile in Canada. Gall was also more democratic than most Lakota headmen. When he decided to join Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse in the months preceding the Battle of the Little Bighorn, he allowed his band members to decide for themselves whether they would accompany him in his defiance of the federal government during one of the coldest winters on record. A majority of his people joined him, leaving primarily

the band's older members to remain at the Standing Rock Agency, where they would be better fed and sheltered from the frigid winter weather.

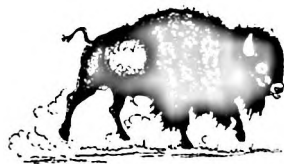
Because of Sitting Bull's intransigence toward McLaughlin's plans, the willful Indian agent was able to turn such reservation leaders as Gall, John Grass, and Crow King against him. As Gall was the best known of the cooperative Indians at Standing Rock, McLaughlin continually praised him for his valor in battle, while denigrating Sitting Bull's accomplishments at every turn. In fact, it was McLaughlin's version of Gall's role at the Little Bighorn, along with similar ones published by the noted photographer David F. Barry and the politically prominent Usher L. Burdick, that made the case for Gall

as the real hero at the Little Bighorn. To them it was Gall who outgeneraled Custer and made it possible for the Lakotas and Cheyennes to achieve their stirring successes. In the end these overstated claims hurt Gall the most. His role as a culture broker at Standing Rock was compromised by these exaggerated praises of his deeds, which many Indians, already alienated from him by his break with Sitting Bull, knew were not true.

Gall unwittingly contributed to the controversy over his role at the Little Bighorn when he became the first major Indian participant to give his version of the battle. This event occurred in 1886, during the tenth anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn. There he gave his rendition of the conflict to Edward S. Godfrey, who was one of Reno's lieutenants at the battle. It was a fairly straightforward account. He did not present himself as the key person at the battle, as McLaughlin would later argue; in fact, he admitted that his participation at the Reno fight was quite minimal. Some of his critics, however, insisted that Gall focused almost solely on his own role in his interview with Godfrey. But Gall's approach should come as no surprise. Walter S. Campbell, who wrote under the name of Stanley Vestal, concluded, after interviewing many of the Little Bighorn's seasoned Indian veterans, that most warriors, when giving testimony about a battle, usually concentrate on their own involvement. This tendency was confirmed for me when I read Red Cloud's autobiography in preparation for my study on this great chief. In truth, to many warriors, it was considered improper, if not wrong, to talk

about another man's coups.

Gall's fame as one of the greatest of the Great Plains warriors has diminished significantly during the past century. Rivaling that of Sitting Bull during the late nineteenth century, his historical legacy has been dramatically eclipsed by Sitting Bull. Some historians have even called him an opportunist, a characterization that both Robert M. Utley and I reject. He was, rather, a very pragmatic person. An opportunist would not serve his mentor Sitting Bull with unswerving loyalty for almost 25 years. Nor would an opportunist work as diligently to become assimilated in the dominant white culture at Standing Rock as Gall did. Probably the most opportunistic thing Gall did was to let federal authorities praise him as the bellwether at the Little Bighorn without making any effort to correct the record. But, like most of us, he was all too human, preferring to bask in the glory of his fame for as long as he could. As for my own evaluation of Gall, I agree with his descendants at Standing Rock that he was an exceptionally formidable war chief, and that should be his major historical legacy, despite the controversies he engendered during his lifetime.



Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ken or the editor, Jim Krebs, P.M. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

We welcome new members

Dr. Jack Ballard, M.D. of Centennial, referred by Bill Leeper. Dr. Ballard is interested in Western Military history. He is the author of three books, articles, and reviews. He is a member of Western History Association.

John P. Thornton of Littleton, referred by Chuck Hanson and Max Smith. John's interests are Western history and archeology

Dennis Potter, of Morrison, referred by Jeff Broome. Dennis is a college professor and has an M.A. in American Military Studies and an interest in the Civil War on the frontier.

Kellen Cutsforth of Denver, referred by Dennis Hagen. Kellen works as an archivist at the DPL Western History and Geneology Dept. He is interested in Western pioneers past and present.

Bob Sweeney, of Denver, referred by Bob Pulcifer. His interests include Western newspapers.

January 23, 2008 meeting

This is the beginning of the 63rd year of the Denver Posse of Westerners. This Posse is the second oldest Posse formed in the world and was instrumental in the founding of six other Corrals or Posses in Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Today there are 25 past Sheriffs in the membership. Three people have been members for over 50 years, and many others have been members for over thirty years.

The meeting held at the Park Hill Golf Clubhouse in January was attended by over 70 members and guests. The program "Scotty's Castle" was presented by Dorothy Shalley Clark. She was a Park Technician and lived in the castle from 1971 to 1979. Her well-illustrated presentation covered the story of the castle from the turning of the first shovel of dirt to when it became a National Historic Park. The final part of the presentation was the playing of one of Scott Joplin's well known Jazz numbers played on the large pipe organ. It was a very enjoyable program.

Of the 11 programs presented in 2007, only 3 were by Posse members. Presenters who are not members of the Denver Posse are presented with a plaque, and are presented with a complimentary corresponding membership for one year. The following 8 are new 2008 members: Jan MacKell, Victor, CO; Flint Whitlock, Denver, CO; Mike Moore, Denver, CO; Marilyn Riley, Denver CO; Margaret Coel, Boulder, CO; John Fielder, Denver, CO; Hugh Bingham, Greenwood Village, CO.

The Denver Posse extends to Deputy Sheriff Steve Weil, P.M. its sympathy in the passing of Steve's father, Jack B. Weil, in January. The Rockmount Western Wear Co. was founded by Jack A. Weil, Jack B.'s father, and Steve's grandfather, Jack A. Weil, who at 107 years old is still active in the daily affairs of this innovator in western wear.

Posse member, Lawrence (Larry) Reno, P.M. died January 27, 2008. We express our deepest sympathy to the three sons Elliot, Mark and Scott Reno. Larry Reno, (9/28/33 - 1/27/08) went to school at Steck, Gove Jr. High, and East High. He graduated from Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. He graduated from Yale University in 1954 as an Industrial Engineer and received his Law degree from the University in 1963. He practiced law until the time of his death. He was on the Board and an Officer and Director of Children's Hospital, Trout Unlimited, The Trout and Salmon Foundation, the Western Outlaw - Lawman History Assoc., the Mile High Rotary, Sons of the American Revolution, the Denver County Club, and the University Club, among others. During the last decade he was the author of many articles and a book on historical subjects. At the time of his death he was working on a book on his grandfather, William Reno, a well-known lawman at the turn of the 20th century.

Westerners International 2007 Annual Writers Contest

It is time to enter the Westerners International 2007 writing contest. The categories are: Philip A. Danielson Award for best program delivered to a Corral during 2007 by a Westerner. The Coke Wood Award is for historical monograph or published article based on individual research, personal knowledge or family records during the year of 2007. The Best Book award is for a book published during the year 2007. The book must be nonfiction on Western history, biography, or of social significance, containing Western personages, sites or events. For questions about the contest, see Ken Gaunt, P.M. Entries must be in by April 15, 2008

February 27, 2008 meeting

"The Buffalo Soldier Story" by John Bell

Mr. John Bell and Mr. Fred Applewhite, African-American men, presented the history of the "Buffalo Soldiers" in full U. S. Cavalry Sergeant's uniforms. They took turns telling of the founding of "Buffalo Soldiers of American Wars" which John Bell founded in 1994. They told the history and stories of the U. S. 9th and 10th Cavalry and of the history of the four Infantry regiments. On display was a large collection of guns, horse equipment, and pictures of the "Buffalo Soldiers". It was an enlightening and interesting program, featuring little-known Western history. At the February meeting Alan Culpin, long-time bookman, was elected to membership in the Denver Posse of Westerners. For many years he operated a fine bookshop. During that time he was a corresponding member of the Denver Westerners. Alan left Colorado for Texas for a few years, but he has returned, and now continues his Abracadabra Book Shop in the Stapleton neighborhood. The Great War is his area of expertise.

Coming Events

April 24, 2008: "Ralph Carr, former Governor of Colorado," John Schragyer, Denver Post writer.



Westerners Bookshelf



High Altitude Attitudes: Six Savvy Colorado Women by Marilyn Griggs Riley. Foreword by Thomas J. Noel. Johnson Books, Boulder, CO, 2006. 169 pp. Illustrations, index. \$16.00

In the twentieth century we lived in the Glennon Heights area on Green Mountain. Young boys entertained themselves by exploring the area on their bikes. One day, way off in the distance, our boys spotted a beautiful mansion and rushed home to tell their mom (who had hoped to purchase one) about their wonderful discovery. It was some distance from our little house but we weren't aware that Lakewood had one of the finest mansions in the state - May Bonfils' beloved Belmar. Consequently, I especially enjoyed reading about the mansion and its owner.

The author takes the reader from the height of Denver's society, Louise Sneed Hill, to Five Corners and the life of Dr. Justina Ford, Colorado's first black woman doctor.

The tumultuous lives of the daughters of Fredrick Gilmer Bonfils, publisher of the *Denver Post*, provide interesting information about Denver during the 1960s and 70s.

The next biography is the life of Caroline Bancroft, granddaughter of Colorado's early pioneer physician, Dr. Frederick J. Bancroft. Ms. Bancroft wrote countless booklets on the history of Colorado, which remain best sellers.

Finally, but not least, the life of Mary Coyle Chase, who wrote the wonderful account of an oversized rabbit named "Harvey," is told in loving detail.

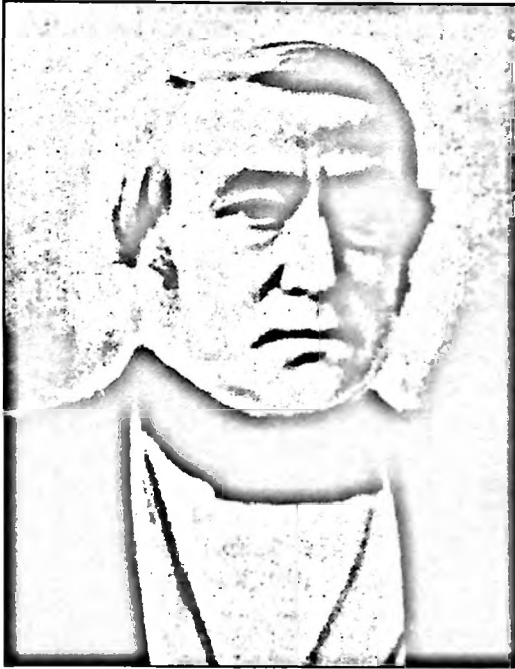
This is a small book loaded with information. It is a quick read and these biographies are especially interesting to those interested in the history of Colorado. The entire book is entertaining as well as very informative. It is the best little book that I have read in a long time. I couldn't put it down!

--Vonnie Perkins, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

May - June 2008



Tom Fitzpatrick

The Quintessential Mountain Man
by Mike Moore
(presented June 27, 2007)



Our Author

Mike Moore has been a staff writer for *On the Trail* magazine for the last ten years. He has appeared on the History Channel special *The Opening of the West, the Jedediah Smith Story*.

He is a member of the Western Writers of America and has three non-fiction books out on the early West: *Heroes to Me*, *Rocky Mountain Album* and *Life in the Early West*. His fourth, *A View to the West*, should be out soon. Check your regional book store or <http://furtradebooks.com> for these and other books on the West.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXIV NO. 3



May - June 2008

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The Quintessential Mountain Man

by Mike Moore
(presented June 27, 2007)

Quintessential: the most perfect embodiment of something. *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*

If I were to ask you which one of the mountain men was the most written about in the core journals and diaries, whom would you say? I asked myself this question while doing research for my *Names of People in the Fur Trade* database that is on the Internet. Which individual had the most written about him or her in the 89 primary sources I used? I will not give away this person's name right away- but let me give you some hints: this person was in the William Ashley's first group west, people who knew this character had a nickname for him and he was known to be more than just a trapper. Any idea who this is?

The most written about person is Tom Fitzpatrick. Tom's name appears in 26 or 31% of the books I used and is the most written about with the over 2600 names in the large database. He has a well-recognized name, but most early West enthusiasts do not associate him as being special in any way. What made Tom so special that he is in such a wide range and in so diverse of journals? Tom had an adventurous, long life in our West which started by answering Ashley's call for 100 adventurous, young men and which ended well past the decline of the fur trade.

He was born in Cavan County,

Ireland in 1799¹ and came to America when he was about 17 years old.² Adolphus Wislizenus described him later in life as *"a spare bony figure, a face full of expression and white hair, his whole demeanor reveals strong passions."*³

A few nicknames were associated with him through his life: he lost a finger and crippled his left hand when shooting a rifle, which gave him the Bad Hand⁴ or Broken Hand⁵ nickname. The Indians who dealt with him called him "Withered Hand". But a few readers may recognize him by another one- "White Hair"⁶. This last name was given to him after a run in with a bear and some Indians, which turned his hair gray almost overnight. The change was so noticeable he was called by this nickname after that.

By the end of his life he had many jobs. Besides the above-mentioned 1823 trip with Ashley, he was a quartermaster (one who provides quarters, clothes, supplies and transportation for a group of men) for Colonel Leavenworth's Arickara campaign,⁷ a clerk for David Jackson, a partner of Jedediah Smith and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company when the group made the first ever trip over South Pass⁸. He guided Father DeSmet,⁹ Samuel Parker and Marcus Whitman from Fort Laramie to the 1835 rendezvous.¹⁰ Whitman returned east with Tom when the rendezvous was over and the next year returned with his

new wife, Narcissa Whitman and a few other missionaries.¹¹

When Osborne Russell arrives at the rendezvous and finds Rocky Mountain Fur Company there, Tom is one of three men¹² along with Milton Sublette and James Bridger who owned it. Tom piloted the caravan taking supplies to the 1831 rendezvous, which arrived late for the scheduled July 5 starting date.¹³ He led a group of Jesuits to Fort Hall.¹⁴ And Colonel John Fremont selected Tom as his guide for both his 1842¹⁵ and 1843 expeditions.¹⁶ In his spare time, he carried dispatches for the U.S. Government,¹⁷ guided for Lt. Abert and in his later years, he was the Indian agent for the Upper Arkansas and Platte River regions.¹⁸ It was Tom who appointed John Smith Cheyenne agent for the upper Arkansas in 1847.¹⁹ He also participated in the Fort Laramie treaty signing of 1851.

As you can see Ol' Broken Hand had quite a few adventures in his life. On a few of these, the people around him thought he had died. One occasion, he was lost and found wondering near a rendezvous site:²⁰ *"completely exhausted, and so much wasted in flesh, and deformed in dress, that, under other circumstances, he would not have been recognized. This poor man was reduced to a skeleton, and was almost senseless."*²¹

The second time, Warren Ferris with four others traveled with Tom searching for Andrew Dripps. Tom arrived back late to the camp and Gervais wrote a note saying he had gone under²². His 1843 trip with Fremont was a just a short one from the states to Fort Vancouver, on to Sutter's fort in California and then over to the Old

Spanish trail to Bent's fort and ending in Missouri!²³ John Fremont noted in his journal that Tom had endured a lot in his western travels.²⁴

One way he suffered while in the West was participating in large and small battles. Tom was at the Battle of Pierre's Hole in 1832.²⁵ Kenneth McKenzie notes in a letter: *"Fitzpatrick, Capt. Stewart robbed by Crows."*²⁶ Carson joins a party of men under Tom in the fall of 1831 heading to the Rocky Mountains on a trapping expedition. They went up the Missouri River until they came to the Platte River, then to the Sweetwater, on to the Green and then to Jackson's Hole before stopping at the head of the Salmon River. They lost four or five men to Blackfeet on this trip who were out hunting buffalo.²⁷ Horse Creek in Wyoming gets its name from when Tom and Jedediah Smith were robbed of their horses.²⁸

He was involved in the Arick-ara fight, and the punishment afterwards.²⁹ He had two horses shot out from under him in a battle with some Blackfeet in 1829.³⁰ Joseph Williams' journal tells of an 1841 report of a man with the Bidwell-Bartleson Company that was robbed by the Sioux. Tom arranged for the return of the stolen gear.³¹ And we must not forget that he was the last person to see Jedediah Smith alive.³²

Like a lot of people we know of, Tom had various sides to his personality. He was a dependable, good leader and was respected by most who met him. It is interesting however to see how different individuals felt about this man. Rev. Joseph Williams described Tom as:

"... a wicked worldly man and is much

opposed to missionaries among the Indians, he has some intelligence but is deistical in his principles."³³

While Zenas Leonard was making a cache, Tom shows up with three other men. Zenas says Tom was the principal man among them and was on his way to St. Louis:

*"He was a (sic) old Hand at the business and we expected to obtain some useful information from him, but we were disappointed. The selfishness of man is often disgraceful to human nature; and I never saw more striking evidence of this fact, than was presented in the conduct of this man Fitzpatrick. Not with standing we had treated him with great friendship and hospitality, merely because we were to engage in the same business as him, which he knew we never could exhaust or even impair- he refused to give us any information whatever, and appeared disposed to treat us as intruders."*³⁴

Once Tom told Mr. Lovejoy and his party of immigrants "*there was not land enough in Oregon for our part*" and for them to go home. Lovejoy questioned whether Tom had ever been to the valley³⁵ when he later wrote in his journal.

Mr. Fitzpatrick definitely had a protective side of him, which knew when any help to a future competitor might harm him someday. And when this happened, he always chose to do what was best for him. I think this was a quality learned from life on the frontier. You had to look out for yourself and others should learn lessons the same way he had to, the hard way. Despite this negative view, he showed himself to be very responsible in a number of incidents.³⁶ A quote from

Fremont's journal in which Tom and another went looking for Tabeau:³⁷ *"As observed before, Mr. Thomas Fitzpatrick was to be our guide; a gentleman eminently qualified in every respect to fill the arduous and responsible station assigned him, Having spent many of the best years of his life exposed to the toils and vicissitudes of the mountain and prairie, he had acquired an intimate knowledge of the Indian character, which enabled him to conduct our little party safely and successfully through a country inhabited by numerous and powerful hordes of people...He had accompanied Captain Fremont, and rendered signal services in the long and arduous campaigns of 1843 and 1844... and was not just rerunning from the South-pass, where he had guided the dragoons under the command of Colonel Kearny..."*³⁸

Narcissa Whitman commented that they *"...find it much harder to make one camp in a day than we did to make two, while with Fitzpatrick..."*³⁹ Father DeSmet wrote *"Everyday, I learned to appreciate him [Tom] more..."* and Elijah White wrote *"[he] is one of the ablest and most suitable men in the country in conducting us to Fort Hall, beyond the point of danger from savages."*⁴⁰

Another personal characteristic of Tom was his business sense. Some might call him unscrupulous, others would say he did what he knew was best for him. Tom Fitzpatrick comes into Zenas Leonard's camp and said that Gant & Blackwell (the company Zenas was employed by) was insolvent. So Mr. Stephens and the whole company joins Tom's group of 115 men. They sell 120 beaver skins to

Tom, and goes to the rendezvous with them, where they make arrangements for hiring and purchasing equipment.⁴¹ This event showed how Tom used some information that works out for his betterment and gained men, some hides and eliminates a competitor all at once. After the combined group arrives at the rendezvous site, a disagreement arises between Mr. Stephens (one of Leonard's bosses) and Tom over the prices of horses.⁴² The price was agreed upon when the two groups came together, but now with the advantage in his favor, Stephen's group has to pay more for them. Zenas gave a not-so-flattering description of Tom and how he deals with their group, which was shown previously. This all looks bad, especially when Stephen and his men who left the rendezvous with him were attacked and some killed by a hostile tribe afterwards.

In the ever-changing world of the fur companies, Tom has another chance to rid himself of a competitor and did it this time in the easiest way he knows: he bought him out. Kit Carson was with Captain Lee who leaves winter quarters in 1833-4 and heads to Tom's and Jim Bridger's camp 15 days away. The captain sold his goods to Tom in exchange for beaver hides.⁴³ Kit stays with Tom for about a month. The only business transaction I can think of where Tom came up short was having the supply contract for the 1831 rendezvous. (Webber, *The Taos Trappers*, pages 200-1) It was Tom who went to Taos and got supplies for the 1831 rendezvous, but arrived late and missed the gathering. Probably the most famous instance of his business style was with Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834. He paid

the forfeit penalty, \$500 if I remember right, instead of taking the goods⁴⁴ in a deal he had with Nathaniel Wyeth who then builds Fort Hall to sell his goods which could not sell at the rendezvous because of the broken contract.

To show just how far he would go to cause problems for a competitor or drive them out of business, Tom and his trapping company once sacrificed the entire trapping season rather than share the catch with Vanderburgh and Drips.⁴⁵ The American Fur Company hounded and trailed Tom and Jim Bridger and their Rocky Mountain Fur Company all trapping season trying to see where they went and how they did their business of collecting furs. But Fitzpatrick and Bridger lead them on a wild goose chase.⁴⁶ When Tom and his partners thought it was best, they even bought a valuable trading establishment. Campbell writes that the Campbell & Sublette Company sold the "new" Fort William in the spring of 1835 to Fontenelle, Fitzpatrick and Company.⁴⁷

A completely different subject comes up when we are studying about Tom Fitzpatrick and it involves Jedediah Smith. The same day that Smith died, Friday May 27, 1831, Tom finds a small Arapahoe Indian boy close to the search area. His people being scattered by an attack from the same group that they think killed Jedediah. He names this little boy Friday, after the name of the week he found him.⁴⁸ You have to wonder if he read Robinson Crusoe, since the author names one character the same way. Friday, whose real name was Warshinum, translated Black Spot,⁴⁹ was adopted by Tom and later educated in St. Louis. Friday shows up



Margaret Poisal

in the West in 1838, when he decides to stay on the frontier and even make some trips with Tom.

After all this information, what more could we say about a man like this? He shows his longevity and toughness. If we list the "firsts" that Tom had a part in they would include: first white group to travel over South Pass,⁵⁰ he is one of the men with William Ashley in September 1823 to go to the Crow country (along with Jedediah Smith, William Sublette and others from Fort Kiowa (Lookout)⁵¹ and he guided the first emigrant caravan to Oregon (Bidwell's wagon train).⁵²

After what seems like one or two lifetimes spent on the Western frontier, Tom dies. He had married Margaret Poisal, the daughter of John

Poisal and Snake Woman (sister of Chief Left Hand). She was about 17 when the event happened, he maybe 50. Tom and Margaret had two children: Andrew Jackson and Virginia Thoma-



sine. When he died on February 7, 1854, while serving as the Indian Agent in a Washington D.C. hotel of pneumonia; he left an estate worth about \$10,000⁵³ to his two children. I should comment here, that his estate showed how smart he was, since it read that the estate went to his son and any unborn children that might be born within nine months of his death. Virginia was born six months after his passing.

Tom lived a long life and he saw the rise and fall of the fur trade. He was there in the very beginning with Ashley and lived long enough to change along with the times. His progression from trapper to guide and on to Indian-related employment parallels where Western American history was heading. Tom was layered and complicated; to study some of the events in his life is to see a different kind of man. The traits he exhibited might be a true expression of what people were like 170 years ago. He has a well-recognized name today, but no one gives him the credit he deserves. Tom was always second or third in list of people

on a trip, had only one book written about him, *Ol Broken Hand* by LeRoy Hafen, but was a very important part of America's early West and well deserves the title of the "Quintessential Mountain Man."

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35. Rumer, page 40.
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37. George Brewerton, *Overland with*

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47. Campbell, page 9.

48. Sage, page 359.

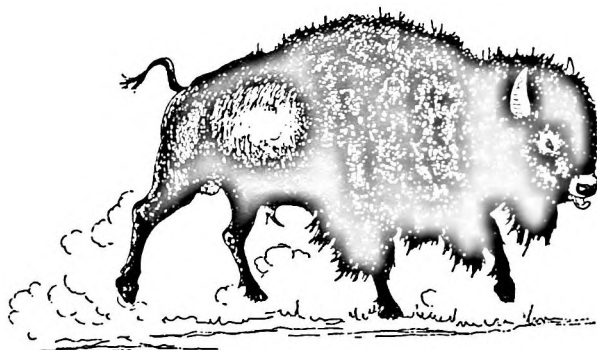
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53. Hafen, volume 7.



Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ken or the editor, Jim Krebs, P.M. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

On the evening of March 26, sixty-nine members and guests enjoyed a program of "Western Songs and Western Voices" presented by Paul Malkoski. Paul accompanied himself on his guitar and sang some of the old "Western" songs and then would explain the unfamiliar meanings of the "cowboy" words. It was program that was enjoyed by all that were present.

April 26 was a busy and enjoyable meeting held at the Park Hill Golf Club. The evening started off with a spirited auction of items that were varied and interesting and the proceeds are use to offset *Roundup* publication costs. The speaker for the evening was Mr. Adam Schrage, a broadcast journalist for KUSA TV Channel 9, the NBC affiliate in Denver. The title of his talk was, "The Principled Politician, The Ralph Carr Story". Ralph Carr was the Governor of Colorado during the World War II years. Adam had deep knowledge of the Governor and told of his fierce devotion to his high ideals. His belief that the internment of the Japanese was wrong was a sore spot to many people and his beliefs were the cause of his not going further in elected office.

Lee and Jane Whiteley, Posse members and authors, offered copies of their book entitled *The Yellowstone Highway* for sale for \$1.00 a copy and they introduced their latest work, *The Lincoln Highway in Colorado* and also sold it for \$1.00 a copy. Lee has designated the proceeds of the sale of these books to be given to the Gaunt Fund. Long time Posse member Ken Gaunt founded the Gaunt Fund several years ago. The earnings from this fund are to be used to improve the programming of the Posse. Gifts become a continued memorial from the giver of money to the Fund.

The Western Writers of America have announced that Sandra Dallas, P.M., has won the 2007 top "SPUR" award for best Western short novel *Tall Grass*, this is Sandra's second "Spur" award. Robert Larson, P.M., also was announced as the recipient of the "SPUR" award for the best non-fiction biographical book of 2007. These awards are from the Western Writers of America and are highly prized. We congratulate both Sandra and Robert on receiving these two top awards. Sandra's book is a fiction story based around the Japanese Internment camp at Amache. Bob Larson's book is about the powerful Indian Chief "Gall" and should be read by anyone interested in the battle of the Little Big Horn.

There are still some copies of *The Denver Westerners 60th Anniversary, Vol. XXXIV* available. These make excellent gifts to members of your family or to a prospective member of the Westerners. Copies are available from Tallyman Ted Krieger, P. M. at every meeting of the Posse.

The Denver Westerners welcome new corresponding member Scott Sauer. We also welcome back Pam Milavec who has rejoined us.

At a recent posse meeting Alan Culpin was elected to active posse membership, Alan, a well-known antiquarian bookman, was nominated by John Hutchins and Mark Hutchins. After operating a fine bookshop in Denver, and regularly attending Westerners meetings, Alan moved to Texas. Since his return, his active participation in our meetings has been a decided plus to the activities.

The Posse mourns the loss of friends

Tom Noel, P.M., expressed the Posse's sympathy to the family of Gordon Singles who died April 11, 2008. Gordon joined the Westerners in 1997, and was the Sheriff of the Posse in 2002. He was an active member of the Denver Posse until illness kept him from attending. Gordon's family were Denver pioneers. His great-grandfather, George Tritch, founded the prominent Tritch Hardware Company of Denver, and ran for mayor. Another great-grandfather, Lafayette E. Campbell, came to Denver to build Fort Logan, and became a mine owner in partnership with David Moffat and others. Lafayette owned the fabled Amethyst and Commodore Mines at Creede along with other mines. His mansion at 950 Logan St. is now a Denver landmark. Gordon worked as a fraud investigator for the Colorado Department of Employment but made history his main avocation.

The Denver Posse of the Westerners has been informed of the passing of Reserve Posse member Jean-Carol McCammon. We extend condolences to her husband fellow Reserve Posse member Bob McCammon.





Westerners Bookshelf



LAS MISSIONES ANTIGUAS, The Spanish Missions of Baja California 1683-1855, by Edward W. Vernon. Viejo Press, Santa Barbara, CA. Distribution by The University of New Mexico Press, 2002. 303 pages, 35 black and white and 288 color photographs, historical timeline, glossary, credits, bibliography, and index.

This book is an excellent introduction to the history of Baja California, and a detailed look at the 35 mission churches founded by three orders of Priests from 1683 to 1855. It is a rare look at an area few Americans have visited, except for the resort areas at the tip of Baja California.

Edward Vernon begins with a brief overview of the history of Baja California, the European explorers, Indians, missionaries, and a mission guide, detailing who the founder was, key facts, the location of the missions and their present conditions and whether they are in use or not.

The main body of the book consists of three very large chapters. The old black and white pictures and recent color photographs vividly illustrate each page. The first chapter details the work of the Jesuits, who arrived first in Baja in 1683 departing in 1768. They founded 22 mission churches. The Franciscans were chosen to replace the Jesuits and arrived in 1768 and departed in 1773, and their efforts were not marked by great achievements. The Dominicans were the last of the missionaries to bring religion to the Indians. They built their first of eight missions in 1774, however, by then the Indian population had shrunk due to introduced diseases, Indian uprisings, natural disasters and resistance to the teaching of the missions. The last priest departed in 1855 from Baja, Calif. after serving 30 years.

After 155 years of colonization and the building of 35 missions by the Padres the majority of mission sites have almost disappeared. Few foundations are still to be found, and all look lonely and deserted with only a handful of the original missions still being used as churches today. It is thought provoking to realize that the heartbreaking and well-intentioned efforts of the Padres to bring the Indians into the civilized world, are now represented by a handful of faithful natives in the northeast corner of Baja California.

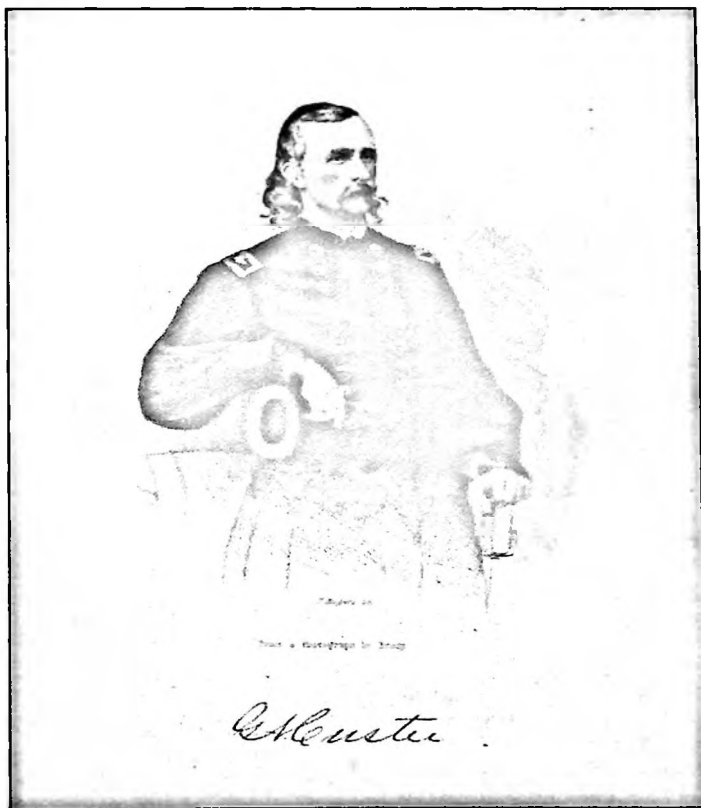
This is a beautiful, well-researched book describing the history, way of life, the arid, hostile, and difficult landscape, and how it shaped the missions, the priests and the Indian people. This is a wonderful armchair travel guide to Baja California and makes a lovely coffee table book.

--Winnie Burdan, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

July - August 2008



Author's Collection

Custer's Summer Indian Campaign of 1867
by Jeff Broome, P.M.
(presented October 27, 2007)



Our Author

Posse member Jeff Broome holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the Univ. of Colorado at Boulder, along with an MA from Baylor University and a BS from CSU at Pueblo. A 5th generation Coloradan, his great-great-grandfather, William A. Watson, first came to Colorado in 1859, and settled down permanently in 1863.

Jeff teaches philosophy full-time at Arapahoe Community College. Prior to teaching he was a detention counselor with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department, and also a chaplain and clinical director of The Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center in Denver.

His interests in Western history go back to his childhood. His second book, *Custer into the West: With the Journal and Maps of Lieutenant Henry Jackson*, is due out late fall 2008 by Upton and Sons, Publishers. His third book should also be out in 2009, *Tales along the Overland Trail: The Indian War and the Denver Trail, 1864-1869* (Lincoln County Historical Society, Lincoln, Kansas).

Jeff is happily married to Kelley Nearhood Broome. Their first child, James Kile, is due July 2008. In addition to Kile, Jeff has three children and Kelley has two.

This is Jeff's fourth paper presented to the Denver Westerners.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

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Custer's Summer Indian Campaign of 1867

by Jeff Broome, P.M.
(presented October 27, 2007)

New Information on Custer's first Skirmish with Hostile Indians and the 7th Cavalry Desertions at Riverside Station. *Copyright 2007 by Jeff Broome*

On June 1, 1867, Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer led a six-company column of the Seventh Cavalry out of Fort Hays on a summer expedition, the purpose of which was to find and engage hostile Indians known to be prowling somewhere between the Platte River to the north and the Smoky Hill River to the south. This was a large area of land encompassing northeastern Colorado Territory, southwestern Nebraska, and north central and west central Kansas. This was, officially, Custer's first campaign against hostile Indians.

Custer's specific orders were to proceed:

... in a northerly direction to the Platte, and thence to McPherson, at which point you will find a large supply of rations and forage. As to the length of time you are to stay at Fort McPherson, should you receive no word on your arrival there, you will be governed by circumstances and such information as you may be able to obtain from parties at that place. From Fort McPherson proceed up the south fork of the Platte to Fort Sedgwick, and thence in the direction of Fort

Morgan. If everything is to be found quiet and your presence not required in the vicinity of Forts Morgan and Sedgwick, you may come south to Fort Wallace, at which point you will find further instructions.

The object of the expedition is to hunt out and chastise the Cheyennes and that portion of the Sioux who are their allies between the Smoky Hill and the Platte. It is reported that all the friendly Sioux have gone north of the Platte, and may be in the vicinity of Fort McPherson or Sedgwick. You will, as soon as possible, inform yourself as to the whereabouts of these friendly bands, and avoid a collision with them.¹

Leaving from the Seventh Cavalry camp about one-half mile south of the original site of Fort Hays, Kansas, the column first went north, where it arrived at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, on June 9. From there they proceeded south to present-day Benkelman, Nebraska, staying there June 22-29. They then went west into Colorado Territory, where they arrived on July 5 at Riverside Station on the South Platte Trail to Denver. Custer's campaign ended when the command came to Fort Wallace, Kansas, on July 13.

The 43-day expedition is mostly remembered as the cause for Custer's subsequent court-martial and

suspension from service for a year.² A careful study of this campaign, however, uncovers many other historically significant incidents besides Custer's court-martial, not the least of which involves his first skirmish with Indians and the many desertions that occurred during this expedition. A total of 60 enlisted men deserted during this campaign, 21 of whom deserted at or near Fort McPherson from June 15-22, including the regimental sergeant major. Thirty-four more men deserted at the camp on the South Platte River near Riverside Station in Colorado Territory on the nights of July 5-6 and 6-7. An additional five men deserted from the noon camp after the command left Riverside Station on July 7.³ The purpose of this study is to highlight the historically interesting events connected with Custer's first skirmish and to delve more fully into the desertions, especially those at Riverside Station. In addition the modern locations will be shown where Custer's command camped at both of these sites. The skirmish site is in the extreme southwest corner of Nebraska, just west of the town of Benkelman, and the desertion site is just south of the town of Iliff, Colorado.

The companies making up this expedition were A, D, E, H, K, and M. A train of 20 wagons accompanied the excursion, which was led by a civilian wagon master and several teamsters.⁴ An unknown number of Delaware Indians also joined the expedition in addition to several scouts, the most well-known of which was Will Comstock. The supplies were replenished twice, first at Fort McPherson, probably on their last day near the fort on June 14, and again at Fort Wallace on June 25.⁵

At Fort McPherson, Custer arrested all but two of the teamsters for unknown reasons, and replaced them with enlisted men.⁶ According to the odometer report kept by Second Lieutenant Henry Jackson, who was assigned as the itinerary officer for the campaign, the total distance traveled during this expedition was 704 miles. Reports compiled and used in Custer's court-martial in the fall of 1867 indicate that 357 enlisted men were part of the expedition; however, the muster rolls report only a total of 338 enlisted men present, along with twelve officers and one surgeon. Using the figures from the muster rolls, this would mean Custer suffered an eighteen percent desertion rate during the campaign.⁷

The Seventh Cavalry muster rolls for this period show an interesting cast of officers and men with Custer:

Headquarters Staff: Those accompanying the expedition included Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, commanding; Major Joel Elliott, Major Wycliffe Cooper, and Sergeant Major Myles Moylan (Adjutant). Not listed but also attached to the headquarters staff were Assistant Surgeon Isaac Coates, Second Lieutenant William Winer Cooke, and Itinerary Officer, Second Lieutenant Henry Jackson, on detached service from Company G at Fort Wallace. While the Headquarters Staff muster rolls for this time period list surgeon Henry Lippincott as present, in fact he was not; Isaac Coates was assigned in his place.⁸

Six enlisted men were assigned to headquarters, including Sergeant Major Charles Keyne. Keyne was appointed as the second sergeant major of the newly formed Seventh Cavalry.



Courtesy James David Nelson, Jewell, KS
www.jdnelsonportraits.com

Original painting depicting Custer's first skirmish near Benkelman, NE, June 24, 1867

He deserted near Fort McPherson on June 18.⁹ The first sergeant major was Charles E. Thomas, but he had been sent in December 1866 to Washington, DC, for an officer candidacy examination. He was appointed as a first lieutenant of the Seventh Cavalry on July 28, two weeks after the expedition ended, under his real name, Myles Moylan.

One of the enlisted men in Custer's headquarters staff was the saddler sergeant, Michael Madden. This was the same Private Madden who was wounded at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, while protecting water

carriers during Major Marcus Reno's hill top siege. Madden's wound resulted in the amputation of his leg and ended his service career in the Seventh Cavalry. In October 1867, after Custer's summer expedition, Madden was demoted from sergeant to private and assigned as saddler to Company A, where he would remain until his severe wound nine years later.¹⁰

All but one of the six companies had only one officer present:

Company A: Captain Louis Hamilton and 51 enlisted men present for duty.

Company D: First Lieutenant Samuel M. Robbins and 59 enlisted men present for duty.

Company E: Captain Edward Myers and 69 enlisted men present for duty. First Lieutenant David Wallingford remained sick at Fort Hays and missed the expedition.

Company H: First Lieutenant Thomas Ward Custer, assigned from Company A, and 52 enlisted men present for duty. Captain Frederick Benteen, commanding the company, missed the expedition because he had been called to Fort Riley to testify in a court-martial against one of his men who had earlier deserted from his company.¹¹

Company K: Captain Robert West and 35 enlisted men present for duty. Second Lieutenant Charles Brewster remained at Fort Hays on detached service.¹²

Company M: First Lieutenant Owen Hale, Second Lieutenant James Leavy, and 66 enlisted men present for duty.¹³

The first day the command marched 15 miles before camping. They marched 14 miles the next day, crossed the Saline River and camped. June 3 would be a different story. The protocol for such campaigns was to start slow and build endurance. On June 3 the command marched 26 miles, crossing the Solomon River before camping.¹⁴ They would continue marching an average of 23 miles a day until arriving at Fort McPherson on the afternoon of June 10.

Two days before arriving at Fort McPherson, the command had arrived at Medicine Lake Creek, about 50 miles southeast of the fort. The men had gone into camp and in just a few minutes Major Wycliffe Cooper shocked everyone when he killed himself with a pistol shot to his head. Lieutenant Jackson briefly acknowledged in his itinerary remarks for June 8, "Bvt Col Wycliffe Cooper Seventh Cavalry committed suicide in this camp."¹⁵ In 1890, however, Theodore Davis, an illustrator for *Harper's Weekly* and accompanying the expedition on Major General Winfield Hancock's invitation, had more to say when he recalled this tragic event:

But we presently met with one of the saddest occurrences of my army life, a tragedy with whiskey at its base. One of the officers of the 7th Cavalry, a handsome manly fellow, who joined us late in the campaign brought as a principal mess store a keg of whisky – through over indulgence in which, he

brought on a dementia, in a fit of which he took his own life – the act was planned with the cunning of insanity, and executed in his own tent just as his brother officers were grouped about their mess chests at sunset.¹⁶

Custer wrote in his report that Cooper "committed suicide while in a fit of delirium tremens.... His remains were interred in the cemetery at Fort McPherson at 10 AM this day (June 11). [Brevet] Colonel Cooper committed suicide by shooting himself through the head with a revolver."¹⁷ With Cooper's death, Major Elliott took over as second in command.

Custer would remain a week in camp near Fort McPherson until the morning of June 18. During this time he would meet Sioux Chief Pawnee Killer two times. Pawnee Killer's appearance apparently was not one to inspire trust. Captain David Poole, in 1869 assigned as an Indian agent, remembered his first impression when meeting Pawnee Killer:

So far as villainy can be depicted in the human countenance, it was to be found in Pawnee Killer's. His face had a lean and hungry look: he was long and lank, and reminded one of a prowling wolf. He seldom smiled while talking with his companions, but stalked about with his blanket closely wrapped around him, as if expecting at each turn to pounce upon an enemy, or be himself attacked. He had a murderous looking set of followers....¹⁸

Before Custer's campaign was over he would observe firsthand the "villainy" of Pawnee Killer, both with his first skirmish and later with the gruesome discovery of the dead remains of Second Lieutenant Lyman S. Kidder, a scout and ten men of the Second U.S. Cavalry.

After Custer's meetings with Pawnee Killer, General William T. Sherman arrived at Fort McPherson and spent two days with Custer. When Sherman learned of Custer's pow-wows with Pawnee Killer he expressed no faith in "Pawnee Killer and his band, and desired that *a party* be sent in pursuit at once, and bring the chiefs back and retain a few of the prominent ones as hostages for the fulfillment of their agreement."¹⁹ Custer's earlier orders, however, when he left on the expedition, left him with little choice to do other than what he did when he met with Pawnee Killer. His orders explicitly stated that the friendly Sioux "may be in the vicinity of Fort McPherson or Sedgwick," and that he was to "avoid a collision with them."²⁰ It was at McPherson that Pawnee Killer appeared, professing his peaceful intentions and desire to be separated from the warring Cheyenne. Arresting the important leaders along with Pawnee Killer as a means to assure the tribe returned to McPherson would no doubt be seen by Pawnee Killer as a hostile act. Custer was simply following orders by accepting Pawnee Killer's appeals of peace and then urging him to bring his followers to the vicinity of the fort.

It was during Custer's stay near Fort McPherson that he experienced his first desertions. On June 13 Privates

Michael Murphy and George Zincer deserted from Company D. On June 15 Sergeant James Wilson of Company H deserted, as did Privates James Poyner and Dennis Doherty of Company K. Privates Arthur Rooney of Company D and Jerome Howard of Company K deserted on June 16, bringing to seven the number of men that had deserted from Custer's various campsites near Fort McPherson.²¹

After consulting with Sherman it was understood that Pawnee Killer's village was to the south in the Republican River valley, somewhere along Beaver Creek. Sherman changed his original orders for Custer to patrol the Platte River trail to Fort Sedgwick. He now instructed Custer to move his command southwest to the forks of the Republican, locate Pawnee Killer's village, "and compel him, if necessary, to move nearer the fort, so that we might distinguish between those who were friendly and those who were not."²² Custer's understanding of the orders he received from Sherman was that he was to thoroughly scout the area surrounding the forks of the Republican and then come to Fort Sedgwick, where he would "either see General Sherman or receive further instructions from him."²³

General Sherman's new orders: March south twenty (20) miles over a day and night make a forced march to the Republican to reach the Republican to the south west and follow it up. Scouting it thoroughly to White Man's Fork about fifty (50) miles west of Fort Sedgwick and *then strike for the South Platte and into Sedgwick where I shall be or leave orders*

for you with General Potter. Better take as little baggage with you as possible sending your train here [Fort Sedgwick] under light escort. We will have plenty of hay and grain for you here and at end of track. If you can succeed in riding down and killing a good many Indians no fault shall be found if you kill your horses but I hope you may capture some good ones. The railroad shall be abreast of this in ten (10) days. As soon as possible get after them, kill as many men as you can, capture and bring in women and children. You may have for your command all the horses you capture. I propose you march up the Platte. Answer fully what you saw in coming across.²⁴

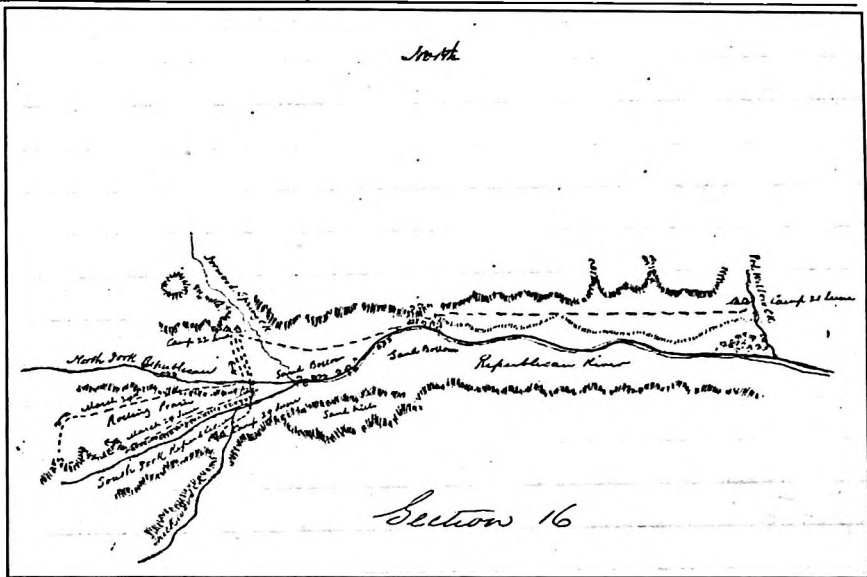
With Sherman's orders in hand, Custer began marching southwest. The command left at 5 A.M. on June 18, traveled back to Medicine Lake Creek, and camped on the south side of the creek. Lieutenant Jackson estimated the distance marched to be 26 miles, as the odometer on one of the wagons was temporarily malfunctioning.²⁵ Perhaps it was because the command was leaving the area of the Platte River that the temptation for desertion grew greater, for five more men deserted. One of the deserters was Sergeant Major Keyne. Corporal William Kelley of Company E joined him, as did Private Bernard Campbell of Company D, Bugler Charles Brown of Company K, and Private Joseph Miller of Company M.²⁶ For Custer to have lost a man of the

stature of Sergeant Major Keyne must have dismayed him greatly.

Desertions prior to this expedition had been a problem, not only for the Seventh Cavalry, but for all other Army units out west as well. Indeed, between the years 1867-1891, fully one-third of all recruits in the regular Army deserted.²⁷ Ninety soldiers from the Seventh Cavalry alone deserted in the five weeks before the expedition started on June 1.²⁸

Captain Michael V. Sheridan, commanding Company L, Seventh Cavalry, at Fort Morgan, Colorado Territory, reported on January 14, 1867, that 40 men deserted the night before, "taking their arms and horses."²⁹ Taking flight with the rest of the deserters was Company L First Sergeant Eli Woodbury, Sergeants John Kelley (not Corporal Kelley a.k.a. Kyle) and Don Griswold, and five corporals.³⁰ The subsequent rumors surmised that First Sergeant Woodbury, after tattoo, went into the barracks and called the men out for detached service. Obtaining rations for several days, he marched the men several miles from the post, halted and informed them that they were all deserters and on their own. Woodbury then started in the direction of the mining fields while two or three men returned to Fort Morgan and gave themselves up, no doubt reporting the story of Woodbury's deception.³¹

From December 1, 1866, through February 11, 1867, just as the regiment was being formed, nearly as many men deserted as were being assigned to the new companies. One hundred and five men of the Seventh Cavalry deserted during this time, all from Fort Riley. In the remaining days



Courtesy National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Lt. Jackson's map showing Custer's June 22-29, 1867 campsite, where he had his first skirmish with Indians June 24, just west of present-day Benkelman, Nebraska

of February, an additional 81 soldiers deserted.³²

The desertions under Custer's command continued in small numbers for the next few days. It would grow hugely by July. Privates Patrick Welch of Company A and Charles Sotten of Company D deserted from Custer's camp on June 19.³³ Four more men deserted on June 21: Privates John Bogart and Peter Schuchman deserted from Company A, Private Daniel Spencer deserted from Company E, and Private Albert Hale from Company M.³⁴ Custer had now lost 18 men to desertions, and one officer to suicide.

On June 22 Custer's command camped on the north fork of the Republican about half a mile west of its split

with the south fork. The camp was on the west bank of a small creek spilling into the Republican. Jackson called the creek Forwood Spring Creek (present-day Spring Creek). The command would remain in camp at this site for a week. While there Custer sent Captain Robert West with Company K to Beaver Creek, about 33 miles south. First Lieutenant Samuel Robbins and the whole of Company D were sent with a 16 wagon escort to Fort Wallace, about 70 miles south, with orders to replenish the supplies.³⁵

Three more desertions were reported on the first day in camp, all from Company M. Corporals John Ryan and John Kelley, along with Bugler Augustus Anthony all were reported



Courtesy Glenwood J. Swanson

Lt. Henry Jackson, 7th Cavalry

as deserting from camp on June 22. The likelihood that all three deserted together is quite strong; however, if so, the reason they chose to desert so far from the Platte River and seemingly in the middle of Indian country, will in all probability remain a mystery. Compounding the mystery is the fact that Ryan later turned himself in at Fort Kearny, Nebraska, on August 22, where he reported that he had become lost when the command left camp a month earlier. He said that he had been away from camp filling several canteens with water, just prior to the command departing for the day's march, and that he got lost returning to camp because of a heavy fog. His company commander, First Lieutenant Owen Hale, later testified at Ryan's desertion court-martial that Ryan's horse was saddled and in camp when he disappeared, and that indeed, the day he disappeared was the day the camp was covered in heavy fog,

thus giving credence to Ryan's claim of being lost and not being able to get back to the command before they left.³⁶ Ryan was exonerated and restored to rank and duty.

There are two things that make Ryan's story troubling. One is the fact that from Lieutenant Jackson's itinerary report, the day of the fog was in fact June 20 and not June 22, when Ryan is reported to have deserted. Perhaps all three men deserted on June 20 and the reported desertion date of June 22 is incorrect. This might well be the case. Precise dates of incidents noted in the muster rolls are often incorrect. This is because muster rolls are prepared only once every two months, and sometimes even more infrequently if the company is out on campaign, as was the case when the Company M muster roll was prepared at the end of August. It would thus be easy for the rolls to err in recording a desertion date.

Another issue with Ryan's account is that when he wrote his memoirs he mentions both Kelley and Anthony as 1867 deserters from Company M, but tacitly excludes himself as being involved with them. Furthermore, his memoirs do not mention him being lost and then later cleared from a desertion charge.³⁷ How coincidental that, with all the other desertions from Company M during Custer's 1867 expedition (seven besides Ryan), his memoirs identify just the very two men that deserted the same day he disappeared.

The likelihood that the three left together seems more probable than the likelihood that they did not. Assuming they were together when they deserted, the question of why they deserted is a mystery. Had there been a

notorious "hog ranch" near the camp, one could understand that they perhaps overindulged in the delights of the ranch after sneaking out after tattoo and were not back in camp prior to the command moving out early the next morning, probably getting lost because of the heavy fog, assuming they deserted the night of June 19-20 and not June 22. In other words, their desertion would not have been intentional. Such opportunities for pleasure-fulfilling jaunts into the night existed near military posts, and this might be a likely scenario if the men had deserted near Fort McPherson. But if they deserted June 22 the camp was nearly 100 miles away from where there might be such a "hog ranch." However, if they indeed disappeared on the night of June 19, just before the dense fog obscured the march in the early morning hours of June 20, they would have been much closer to Fort McPherson than the command was on June 22.³⁸ Perhaps they did indeed did leave camp near Fort McPherson on the night of June 19-20. Ryan, after rejoining the Seventh Cavalry and being exonerated from the charge of desertion, went on to have a distinguished ten-year career, performing admirably at the Little Bighorn fight in 1876.³⁹

Yet another intriguing aspect is Ryan's report on the demise of Corporal John Kelley. He wrote that while the command was stationed at Fort Hays in early 1870, Kelley was reassigned back to Company I of the Seventh Cavalry as a new recruit, and that he had distinguished himself while with Brevet Major General Eugene A. Carr's Republican River Expedition in the summer of 1869. Ryan recognized him as the same Corporal John Kelley who

deserted in 1867. Ryan, now a sergeant of Company M, took him to Custer, knowing there was a bounty on flagging deserters and desiring to spare Kelley the embarrassment of being arrested. Ryan's memoirs state that he had Kelley show Custer his meritorious papers while serving under Carr and the Fifth Cavalry the summer before. According to Ryan, Custer then reassigned Kelley back to Company M, and not long after that he was killed by Wild Bill Hickok in Hays City, while he and another soldier, Longeran, had been fighting Hickok.⁴⁰ Ryan then goes on to say that he later learned Kelley's real name was Kyle.

The Company M muster rolls indeed show a Jerry Longeran, who enlisted from New York in 1867 and was honorably discharged at Fort Leavenworth on June 21, 1871, but there is no legible record of either Kyle or Kelley in Company M during this time in 1870. There is, however, in the May-June 1870 muster roll for Company I, the first mention of John Kile, who enlisted June 9, 1870. The muster roll for July-August records his death from a pistol wound on July 17 in an affair "not in the line of duty."⁴¹ Thus, Kelley/Kyle/Kile was in the Seventh Cavalry, this second time as John Kile and not as John Kelley, in Company I and not Company M as Ryan records. He had spent barely five weeks back in the regiment before he was killed, no doubt by Wild Bill Hickok.

Interestingly enough, the *Junction City Union* newspaper for July 23, 1870, records the name of the Seventh Cavalry soldier killed by Wild Bill as Kelley and not Kile, thus supporting Ryan's story that the man killed by Wild

Bill was indeed the man who deserted on the same day Ryan was reported to have deserted, June 22, 1867.⁴² Kelley and Kile or Kyle are in all probability one and the same person. Perhaps he was awaiting official transfer back to Company M when he was killed.

The meritorious papers that Ryan refers to that "Kelley" carried with him in 1870 when Ryan recognized him and remembered him as an earlier deserter in the 1867 expedition were significant, for they included his having received the coveted Medal of Honor for his brave action the year before in 1869. He was the only soldier to be awarded this prized medal during the whole campaign of the Republican River Expedition.⁴³ This Fifth U.S. Cavalry campaign in 1869, with a slightly higher number of men than Custer had with him in 1867, covered the same territory that Custer had marched in his 1867 summer Campaign.

John Kelley's (Kyle) brave act that resulted in his being awarded the Medal of Honor occurred on July 8, 1869. The official publication of the Department of the Army recorded that Kyle "and two others were attacked by eight Indians, but beat them off and badly wounded two of them."⁴⁴ General Carr, however, was more specific:

During the day three men of Company 'M' who were several miles in the rear of the column bringing in a given-out horse, were attacked by eight Indians. They got near a large rock for a breastwork on one side, and killed the horse as a defense on the other, and beat off the Indians wounding two badly.

Corporal John Kyle, Company M 5th Cavalry was in charge of the party; he showed special bravery on this, as he had done on previous occasions.⁴⁵

Kyle was officially awarded the medal on August 24, 1869, when Adjutant General E. D. Townsend wrote Major General C. C. Augur, conferring the medal to "Corporal John Kyle, Co. 'M' 5th U.S. Cavalry, mentioned especially for bravery and gallant conduct in General Order No. 48, Headquarters, Department of the Platte."⁴⁶ Thus, one of Custer's summer deserters goes down in history as being awarded the coveted Medal of Honor, only to then be killed by the famed Wild Bill Hickok.

It was at the June 22 camp that Custer wrote his first report to General C. C. Augur, detailing his activities since leaving Fort McPherson.

Camp of the 7th U.S. Cavalry
Near the Fork of Republican
River
June 22, 1867

Brev. Major General C. C. Au-
gur, Commdg Dept of the Platte
Fort Laramie, D.T.
General,

In obedience to instructions received from the Lieut. General Commdg Military Division of the Missouri, I have the honor to report the location of my command and the probable time of arrival at Fort Sedgwick. My command arrived at this point

today. Before leaving McPherson I had two interviews with Pawnee Killer, a Sioux Chief, whose band is reported as being on Beaver Creek some forty or fifty miles distant. At these interviews it was agreed that Pawnee Killer and his entire band should remove at once to a point on North bank of Platte, near McPherson, forty days was fixed as the limit within which this move must be made. I regard this agreement if successfully executed as of no little importance. Pawnee Killer's band being the owners of the lodges burned by General Hancock's command on Pawnee Fork. General Sherman rather mistrusted the sincerity of Pawnee Killer. I do not. I was directed to send this band in to McPherson under escort, it being supposed I would meet them en route to that post. They have not had time to move. I am now seventy five miles south east of Sedgwick, the same distance north east from Wallace. I have sent one squadron this evening to Beaver Creek forty five miles distant to bring Pawnee Killer and band to my camp. From Beaver Creek to Wallace it is thirty miles. I send one company of the squadron detached as above to proceed to Wallace from Beaver Creek with twelve wagons to procure supplies, while the other company under Captain West is collecting Pawnee Killer's band. My supplies can be drawn to this

point from Wallace with greater facility than from Sedgwick. The Guides informing me it is almost impossible to conduct a train across the country south of Sedgwick, there being no water for fifty five miles. If I can get Pawnee Killer's band north of the Platte, there will be only the Cheyennes to deal with South. I am confident from all the information I can gain that the Cheyennes are the authors of the depredations lately committed in the Platte Route. Pawnee Killer represents the Cheyennes as all intending to move south of the Arkansas, but before doing so parties of their young men numbering from five to fifty have been making raids on the Platte Stations. The Cheyenne village is represented as being south west from this point and on a tributary of the South Republican. Guides and Sioux agree in this opinion. I think I could do much toward breaking up the raids on the Platte Stations if allowed to scout the country in which this village is represented to be. No trails of Indians have been discovered between McPherson and this point, which is confirmatory of Pawnee Killer's story. General Sherman in the absence of contrary instructions from you directed me to keep on the move by easy marches and in this way make the Indians in this section feel unsafe. Shall I after scouting up North Republican as far as opposite

Valley Station turn and hunt the Cheyenne village. I believe I can find Indians. I will have twenty days rations when my train returns, which will be as soon as the officer bearing this can return. I have about three hundred and fifty men all told, quite a number dismounted, and mounted on unserviceable horses. General Sherman promised me some fresh horses from Omaha. I have six companies and ten officers.⁴⁷ I wish I could have twenty five or more of your Pawnees, for trailers. In the absence of definite information as to distance from here to Valley Station by proposed route, I cannot tell the exact day upon which I can make Sedgwick. I would prefer making the strike for the Cheyenne village before going to Sedgwick, unless you otherwise order. The officer bearing this to Sedgwick, Major Elliott of 7th Cavalry, will occupy two days in reaching that post. I will instruct him to wait instructions from you until the morning of the twenty seventh, then to rejoin me at this point. I will send messengers to Sedgwick from time to time to receive any instructions sent there and will try and reach that post in ten days from time of return of Major Elliott, unless I go on my proposed scout, which would probably delay my arrival at Sedgwick five days more. Please inform me fully of your wishes and whether my propo-

sition merits your approval.

Very Respectfully, &c

G. A. Custer

Brevet Major. Genl. Commdg⁴⁸

The command would remain in this camp for one week.

On June 23, after Custer had sent the wagon escort to Fort Wallace for re-supply, Custer ordered Major Joel Elliott, Second Lieutenant James T. Leavy, and ten men on a journey to Fort Sedgwick, Colorado Territory, to deliver the report noted above. They left at three a.m. under cover of darkness.⁴⁹

Sherman had promised Custer at Fort McPherson that if he was not at Fort Sedgwick he would leave instructions for Custer there. While General Augur did not have specific instructions from Sherman to Custer, he did telegraph from Fort Leavenworth to Major Elliott at Sedgwick what he inferred Sherman's instructions might be:

Your dispatch of 22nd received.

I answer here on the 23rd. I

infer from a dispatch recd.

from Gen. Sherman that he

will order you again to Smoky

Hill Route. *If not, proceed to*

carry out such instructions as

you have already recd. from

him concerning your present

scout, and having completed

it, return to Sedgwick. Gen.

Myers is purchasing a hundred

and fifty horses for you, how

rapidly I cannot say. I think it

very important to get Pawnee

Killer and all other Indians who

desire to be friendly, out of the

Republican country, and wish

you to do all you can to ac-

complish it. If your instructions

from Gen. Sherman will allow it, pitch into the Cheyenne villages by all means. Unquestionably the Cheyennes are the depredators along the Platte and I hope you will be able to punish them. I leave here in a few days for Fort Sanders, and shall be somewhere along the telegraph line for a month or more. Your dispatches to Sedgwick will reach me. If you do not meanwhile receive orders from Gen. Sherman, I will have none for you on your arrival at Sedgwick. Meantime scout the country well. Pawnees are all engaged.⁵⁰

Major Elliott was unable to make contact with General Sherman while at Sedgwick [Sherman was at the time riding a train to St. Louis] to get the confirmation General Augur anticipated, and thus Custer had no choice but to follow his earlier orders he received from Sherman at Fort McPherson, which committed him back to the Platte after scouting the Republican valley. Once he located Pawnee Killer's village he was to send the Indians under an escort to Fort McPherson. It was just a matter of waiting for the wagon train to return from Fort Wallace before Custer would proceed toward the Platte. No doubt what Custer received from Augur was disappointing, as it indicated that Indians were hostile down at the Smoky Hill River and not the Platte, where he was earlier ordered to go. General Augur's orders did not relieve him from Sherman's original orders, and thus Custer was obligated, without receiving new communications from

Sherman, to proceed to the Platte.⁵¹

On June 24, while Custer was awaiting the return of Major Elliott from Fort Sedgwick and the wagon party from Fort Wallace, that portion of his command remaining in camp at the forks of the Republican (Companies A, E, H, and M) had its first fight with hostile Indians. It actually amounted to little more than a small, spirited skirmish. It began in the early morning hours when the men were surprised with Indians raiding the camp. Lieutenant Jackson reported that "a party of Sioux Indians attacked camp at 5 A.M. and tried to stampede stock but failed."⁵² One of the soldiers on picket duty, Company H Private Patrick Ford was badly wounded, hit with a rifle ball in his left side. The Indians captured his carbine and ammunition.⁵³ He was the soldier who fired the first shot, alerting the camp that Indians were about to attack. The Indians numbered several hundred and were visible in the early morning light in all directions surrounding the camp. A party of about 50 warriors had used the cover of a nearby ravine to get very close to the soldiers before Private Ford saw them and sounded the alarm. After Ford was wounded, several Indians galloped their horses over his body, but they were unable to scalp him due to the protective fire of several soldiers.⁵⁴

Unable to stampede the horses, the Indians then withdrew to a high knoll to the south and about a mile away from the camp. There, using mirrors to signal their warrior comrades, numerous parties of Indians seemingly coming from all directions soon joined the main body. Custer then sent one of his interpreters, a man named Gay,

out to try to signal them in an effort to parley.⁵⁵

Custer had several motives for wanting to communicate with the Indians. First, he wanted to learn who they were and where they came from. He obviously knew their intentions were malicious, given their earlier attack upon the camp. Second, Custer was well aware that Major Elliott's small command, if found by the Indians was quite vulnerable to annihilation. In addition, the wagon party and two companies of troopers were also at risk to the south, given the number of Indians who showed themselves at the early morning raid. For Custer, stalling the Indians, however long, was a wise move.⁵⁶

A small party of Indians rode out on their ponies to communicate with Custer's interpreter and told him they would meet with the same number of officers. The warriors were on one side of the north fork of the Republican River, Custer's men on the other. Gay reported to Custer that one of the Indians was Pawnee Killer. Custer, six officers, a bugler and Gay went forward on horseback to a designated point, where they dismounted and proceeded on foot to the banks of the river and there met an equal number of Indians.⁵⁷

The conference accomplished nothing other than perhaps giving Custer time to plan his next move. Knowing his new orders from Sherman, Custer informed Pawnee Killer of his desire to follow him to his village and have him move his band north to the Platte. Pawnee Killer would not divulge the whereabouts of his village nor would he promise to move it down near Custer's camp. Custer then told Pawnee Killer that he would follow him

back to his village. During the parley some Indians, one at a time, crossed the river and joined Pawnee Killer. Custer finally warned him that if another Indian crossed the river he would signal his bugler to bring the whole command over and the parley would be over. That stopped the influx of warriors, but it also stopped the parley. The Indians soon departed, Custer refusing to give them sugar, coffee and ammunition.⁵⁸

This meeting must have taken some time to set up and conduct for when Custer returned to camp, his men were ready to move against the Indians, who were now about two miles distant. Lieutenant Jackson reported that the command left at noon. Davis wrote that the command left camp 20 minutes after Custer returned. The men crossed the north fork of the Republican, turned southwest, and followed the Indian trail for seven miles. They then turned northwest and finally northeast and then back to camp. The wily Indians were able to elude pursuit and after this journey of several miles, it was discovered upon returning to camp that other Indians had raided the camp while they were gone. No doubt this included pillaging the few wagons that remained in camp after the other wagons had been dispatched to Fort Wallace for supplies two days earlier.

This however was not the end of hostilities. About a half an hour after the command returned to camp, a party of about 15 warriors was observed on bluffs in the opposite direction (north) that the command had just pursued Pawnee Killer. Captain Hamilton, who would die the next year in the fight at the Washita (as would Major Elliott and Walter Kennedy, appointed as

regimental sergeant major to replace deserter Charles Keynes) was ordered to take 24 men from Company A and pursue the Indians.⁵⁹ He chased them for several miles when suddenly the small band grew to at least 50 Indians.⁶⁰ It was obviously a trap to lead the men far enough away from the camp to be beyond rescue, a typical Indian tactic. A hot skirmish began which lasted between one and two hours. During the fight the Indians repeatedly circled the soldiers, firing at them from atop and underneath their war ponies. They demonstrated remarkable horsemanship which probably resulted in poor aim when trying to shoot the soldiers. Davis reported three Indians killed and several wounded. The Headquarters Staff muster roll reported two Indians killed and several wounded. No soldiers were injured but one cavalry horse was killed.⁶¹

Custer later added another story to this fight, writing that Captain Hamilton took his whole company in pursuit of the Indians. After some miles the Indians divided into two parties, whereupon Hamilton split his company into two squadrons. He put Lieutenant Tom Custer in charge of the second squadron. Both detachments went in different directions to trail the Indians. Captain Hamilton had the fight noted above while Tom Custer did not engage any Indians and eventually returned to camp. Surgeon Isaac Coates, however (accompanying Tom Custer's detachment), somehow got separated from the men. Soon he heard the fight with Hamilton's detachment and rode in the direction of the gunfire. The warriors spotted him approaching and then a race for life began, Coates desperately

running his mount back to camp, hoping his horse would not fall or lose its wind before the Indians could overtake him. Custer said the race lasted about four miles before Coates barely made it back to camp, just before the Indians would have succeeded in overtaking him.⁶²

While this story makes for dramatic reading, it is problematic as Custer tells it, on more than one account. First, Captain Hamilton, in his report for the company muster roll, said the fight happened fifteen to twenty miles away from camp. There is no way Coates could have run his horse this distance, had he begun his race near where Hamilton was fighting. Second, neither Hamilton in his muster roll report on the fight, nor Davis in "A Summer on the Plains," nor Lieutenant Jackson in his *Itinerary* mention the entire company chasing the Indians. They all mention only a portion going. It is thus not likely that all the men of Hamilton's company were sent out in pursuit of Indians and thus Coates in all likelihood would not have been with the Company A detachment. More importantly, Lieutenant Tom Custer during the summer expedition was detached from Company A and placed in charge of Company H, Captain Benteen's company, as Benteen was on detached service during the summer campaign. Tom Custer thus likely would not have been with Hamilton when Hamilton left camp.

Does this mean that Custer is fabricating a story when he wrote *My Life on the Plains*? A little diffidence here seems wise. It could indeed be the case that Surgeon Coates was somehow chased back to camp by a small party

of Indians sometime during the day of June 24, perhaps after getting separated from a small detachment led by Lieutenant Custer, possibly sent out later in the day to scout for the whereabouts of Hamilton's detachment. But it would have been Company H troopers and not soldiers of Company A. Regardless of how it might have happened that Isaac Coates was nearly killed by Indians, June 24 was without question the most memorable day of the expedition to that date. Custer had now seen the red elephant.

On June 25, in response to the fight of the day before, Custer ordered Captain Edward Myers to take his Company E south to Beaver Creek, anticipating potential trouble with the wagon train coming under attack while returning from Fort Wallace.⁶³ Pawnee Killer had now proven himself to be anything but friendly and Custer was worried for the safety of the wagons and the Company D escort.

June 26 the command remained in camp. On June 27 the wagon train returned from Fort Wallace, along with Companies E, D and K. Custer then learned of the anticipated attack upon the wagon train, and the fortuitous arrival of Captain Myers and Company E.⁶⁴ Sending Myer's company to their aid was indeed a wise move.

When the wagons had earlier left Custer's camp near the forks of the Republican on June 22, they arrived at Fort Wallace the evening of June 24. They stayed only long enough to load the wagons (with what turned out to be insufficient forage), leaving the fort the evening of the next day.⁶⁵ On the morning of June 26 a war party of 500-600 Indians attacked the wagons and Com-

pany D near Black Butte Creek, about ten miles south of present-day Edson, Kansas. The ensuing fight lasted three hours, and would have gone on longer except for the timely arrival of Captain West's and Captain Myers's Companies E and K from Beaver Creek. By the end of the fight at least five warriors were killed, several wounded and one pony captured. Two soldiers received minor wounds, one cavalry horse was killed and two were abandoned due to exhaustion.⁶⁶

On July 6, while at Riverside Station in Colorado territory, Custer was able to telegraph General Augur a report of these fights:

On the twenty fourth (24) ult. forty five (45) Sioux Warriors attacked a detachment of twenty five men of this regiment under Capt. S. M. Hamilton near the forks of the Republican. Capt Hamilton's party after a gallant fight defeated and drove off the Indians, killing two Warriors and wounding several others his own party losing but one (1) horse wounded. On the twenty sixth ult. a war party of Sioux and Cheyennes combined numbering between five and six hundred (600) warriors attacked and surrounded forty eight (48) men of this Regiment, who under Lieutenants S. M. Robbins and W. W. Cook[e] Seventh Cavalry, were escorting my train of supplies from Fort Wallace. The Indians surrounded the train for three (3) hours - making desperate efforts to effect its capture, but after a

well contested fight, upon the part of Lieutenant Robbins' men, the Indians were repulsed, with a loss of five (5) Warriors killed, several wounded, and one (1) horse captured. Our injuries were but two (2) men slightly hurt. The Indians were under the leadership of Roman Nose, whose horse was shot in one (1) of the attempts to charge the train. At daylight on the morning after the twenty-fourth (24) ult. a large band of Sioux warriors surrounded my camp, and endeavored to stampede my animals. My men, turning out promptly drove the Indians away without losing a single animal. One of my men was seriously wounded, by a carbine shot. To Captain Hamilton, Lieutenants Robbins and Cook[e] as well as their men, great praise is due for the pluck, and determination exhibited by them in these, their first engagements with hostile Indians.

G. A. Custer

Bvt. Maj. Genl.⁶⁷

Both Theodore Davis and Custer later provided more details of the Robbins-Cooke fight. Davis reported as many as 800 Sioux and Cheyenne. While Lieutenant Cooke had charge of the wagons and Lieutenant Robbins had charge of Company D, they both worked together in repulsing the Indian attack. Cooke had the wagons moving forward during the battle, keeping them in double columns with the cavalry horses between them, thereby protecting them from the warriors' fire

as they continuously circled the moving train. The men of Company D were placed outside the wagons in skirmish line, which allowed them to fire at the Indians from any direction. The fight continued for 15 miles before relief came.⁶⁸

Custer reported that all of the warriors were dressed in their war paint and armed with, in most cases, a rifle and two pistols. Their strength was estimated at between 600-700 warriors. They came from the very direction that scout Will Comstock had earlier warned the officers on their march to Fort Wallace that the Indians would attack, if the command was to see combat during the escort to or from Fort Wallace. The dismounted soldiers were placed in a circle outside the wagons, protecting the escort. Apparently the Indians' intent was to stampede the horses. Each time they tried to move toward the wagons, the soldiers poured a volley from their Spencer carbines and repulsed the attack. Every time a warrior fell, his comrades immediately picked him up and took him from the field of action. Several Indians were seen shot. The reason they retrieved their fallen was because of "the belief, which generally prevails among all the tribes, that if a warrior loses his scalp he forfeits his hopes of ever reaching the happy hunting ground."⁶⁹

After three hours the Indians lost interest in the fight and began to withdraw to some bluffs in the distance. This was good news to the troopers because they were close to running out of ammunition. Soon another column of men was observed approaching from the north. The soldiers' anxiety increased until it was seen that the

body of men were the companies of Captains West and Myers. No doubt the Indians earlier saw the approaching troopers and ended the fight. The relieved soldiers soon reached Beaver Creek and camped for the remainder of the day. They resumed their march to Custer's campsite on the Republican on the evening of June 26, arriving on the afternoon of June 27.⁷⁰

While this fight was happening with Custer's wagon train there was another big fight going on about 28 miles to the south near Fort Wallace, also on the same morning. In this fight, Captain Albert Barnitz lost five men killed and six wounded of his Company G, Seventh Cavalry. That fight began not long after Custer's wagons left Fort Wallace. The likelihood that both fights were planned by the same warriors on the evening before is certainly possible and cannot be ruled out. While the fight involving Custer's men did not receive immediate national press attention, the Barnitz fight certainly did.⁷¹

After Companies E, D and K returned to Custer's campsite, the command still remained in camp, awaiting the return of Major Elliott's party from Fort Sedgwick.⁷² While in camp the men, both those with Custer and those with the wagon escort, shared stories of their first Indian fight. They were all impressed with the horsemanship of the Indians. Indeed, as Davis noted, when the men took their horses to the river for water later in the day, nearly all of the soldiers tried the horsemanship tricks of the Indians. This included mounting on the right-hand side, and mounting by springing upon the horse from holding the tail. "There was not a trooper in camp who had not made the

effort to ride beneath his horse instead of above him."⁷³

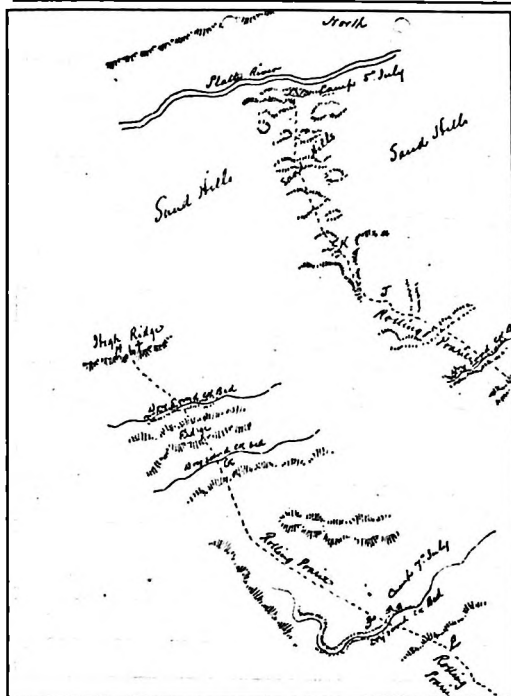
On June 28 Major Elliott and his small detachment arrived back from Fort Sedgwick. Custer learned that Elliott was unable to obtain any new communications from General Sherman. He did receive the aforementioned orders from General Augur, transmitted to Major Elliott at Fort Sedgwick via telegraph, which did not relieve Custer of his orders to proceed to the Platte after scouting around the Republican. Obviously Pawnee Killer's band was not going to cooperate and go north to McPherson and Custer was thus ordered back to the Platte River. To do that, and not retrace his difficult march to Fort McPherson and then to Fort Sedgwick, it was necessary to travel south and then west past the headwaters of the Republican River valley, and then north to the Platte. Probably Comstock so informed him of the direction he would need to march. This march north would cover 142 miles before reaching the South Platte, 45 miles west of Fort Sedgwick.

Custer had his command stay in camp on June 29 until 2 P.M., marching the command just three miles.⁷⁴ On June 30 the command began its journey to the South Platte River. On July 1, Custer arrived in Colorado Territory, his first and only visit with his troopers to the centennial state. They remained in Colorado until July 10.

The march on July 5 was the most difficult of the whole expedition. Custer's scouts would know that the march north would be arduous.

In *My Life on the Plains*, Custer would recall the march this way:

The only incident connected with this march was the painful



Courtesy National Archives, Washington, D.C.

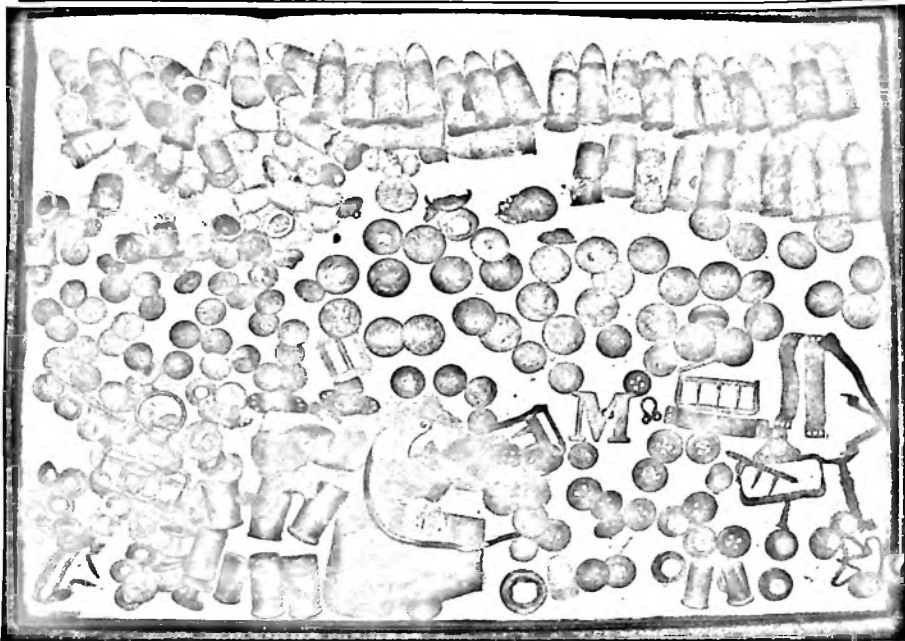
**Lt. Jackson's map showing the July 5-6, 1867 Riverside Station Territory desertion campsite.
34 men deserted here**

journey, under a burning July sun, of sixty-five miles without a drop of water for our horses or draught animals. This march was necessarily effected in one day, and produced untold suffering among the poor dumb brutes. Many of the dogs accompanying the expedition died from thirst and exhaustion. When the sun went down we were still many miles from the Platte. The moon, which was nearly full at the time, lighted

us on our weary way for some time; but even this was an aggravation, as it enabled us from the high bluffs bordering the Platte valley to see the river flowing beneath us, yet many miles beyond our reach.⁷⁵

Custer, however, did not recall his facts correctly regarding this long and hard march. According to Lieutenant Jackson, writing on that day, the command actually left their camp at midnight, in the early minutes of July 5. The moon was in its crescent stage, with only a ten percent illumination, so the journey actually occurred under a heavy darkness. Fifty-nine miles were marched during this long day, and water was obtained at two different stops. After marching north, northwest for nine miles, the command halted for a full two hours, probably to wait for the sun to rise. At six a.m. the journey continued for another 14 miles when a large water hole was discovered. There

the column halted, and the men and animals each received sufficient water. Thus water was had 23 miles into the long march. They marched another 11 miles when another halt was made for water. As Jackson noted, "good water to be had by digging, here we halted and watered." It was the last 25 miles that were miserably dry, "the prairie this day was one mass of cacti." This was the part of the march that the men and horses suffered in the hot sun, a long-enough distance to make all desirous of water. The command continued north-



Author's collection

7th Calvary artifacts recovered from Custer's desertion campsite at Talbot Ranch near Iliiff, CO

ward and finally made it to the Platte River, one mile west of Riverside Station at 8 P.M. that night. There was still an hour of daylight to be had and plenty of water in the Platte.⁷⁶

The men stayed in camp near Riverside Station on July 6. While there has been a dispute as to the actual number of men deserting, it was here on their second night in camp that Custer experienced the largest number of desertions during the campaign. On July 7 Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Potter, commanding Fort Sedgwick, wrote in his report that Custer telegraphed that day to report that "twenty-one (21) men deserted last night from Riverside Station, forty-five miles west of this post."⁷⁷ In *My Life on the Plains*, Custer said

"Upwards of forty men were reported as having deserted during the night."⁷⁸

Earlier, however, writing from Fort Riley, Kansas, on August 6, 1867, Custer stated: "While in the vicinity of the Platte River thirty-five (35) of my men deserted in twenty-four hours."⁷⁹ Theodore Davis wrote: "The stay of a single day on the banks of the Platte River cost the command a loss of thirty-five men by desertion."⁸⁰ Some contemporary historians want to diminish the number of deserters to a much smaller total. For example, Lonnie White, in "The Hancock and Custer Expeditions of 1867," suggests as few as 15 men deserted that night.⁸¹

A careful look at the Seventh Cavalry muster rolls for this period,

however, clarifies the numbers of deserters at Riverside as 34. Indeed, the muster rolls show an additional five men deserting, totaling 39, but this number includes the men who successfully escaped from their noon camp the day after the desertions at Riverside, when the command began to retrace its steps back into Kansas.

A breakdown of the men deserting from each company, and their names, is here given:

Company A (Captain Louis Hamilton)

The muster roll reports that the men "deserted on the Platte River" July 7. Since the command only spent two nights at Riverside, July 5-6 and 6-7, this would mean the men really deserted on the nights of either July 5-6 and 6-7. Because the muster roll said the desertions were on the Platte River, then these are not the men who deserted in the noon camp of July 7. They probably deserted on the night of July 6-7. The privates deserting were James Holmes, William Hunter, John Niro, Geddings Carter, John Holt, Horace Furman, and Joseph Ringwald. Total Company A desertions at Riverside: seven.

Company D (First Lieutenant Samuel Robbins)

No deserters noted at Riverside.

Company E (Captain Edward Myers)

The muster roll reports that the men deserted July 8 "on the Platte River." Like the report for Company A, because the muster roll says the desertions were "on the Platte River," then these must have occurred at the Riverside Station camp either the night of July 5-6 or 6-7. The privates deserting were John Connell, Hugh Dority,

Evan Edwards, Willard Lemon, Thomas Mack, George Stafford, Edward Vaughn, Charles Woods, John Kimball, and Horace Walcott. Total Company E desertions at Riverside: ten.

Company H (First Lieutenant Tom Custer)

The muster roll reports on July 8 that the men, "deserted at camp on Platte River near Ft. Sedgwick, C.T." Whoever wrote the report, probably Captain Benteen, must have meant July 5-6 or 6-7. The corporals deserting were William Brown and John White. Farrier Charles Starr also deserted as did privates Charles Barry, John Casey, John Everett, Albert Gordon, William Miller, William Murphy, and Adam Munn. Total Company H desertions at Riverside: ten.

Company K (Captain Robert West)

This company muster roll reports desertions on both July 6 and July 7. Those on July 6 "deserted from camp in the field." The privates deserting were Henry Beale, George Bunyea, Pat Casey, Joshua Evans, James Marshall, and James McGrady. Those on July 7 who "deserted from camp in the field" included corporal John Donnelly and privates Emil Gaugler and Jacob Walder. Total Company K desertions at Riverside: six.

Because Captain West writes that the men who deserted on both July 6 and July 7 "deserted from camp in the field," and the command left Riverside Station on July 7, then it is probable that the three men listed as deserting July 7 are three of the five men who escaped from the July 7 noon camp after the command left its Riverside Station camp. Total Company K desertions at

and near Riverside: nine.

Company M (First Lieutenant Owen Hale)

The Muster Roll reports that those on July 8 "deserted from camp on the Platte River." By noting the desertions "on the Platte River" they must have deserted from the Riverside Station camp July 5-6 or July 6-7, and not July 8, as reported. The privates deserting were John Kelley (not the Corporal John Kelley or Kyle who earlier deserted with Corporal Ryan and Bugler Anthony), Thomas O'Day and Joseph McGillick. Total Company M desertions at Riverside: three.

Total men reported as deserting from camp near Riverside Station:36, two of whom deserted, along with three other men noted in the Company K muster roll, on July 8 at the noon halt the day the command left the South Platte River. Thus the actual number of men deserting from the Seventh Cavalry camp near Riverside Station was 34. Of the 338 enlisted men who began the campaign with Custer, twenty-one had already deserted near Fort McPherson. This left Custer with 317 enlisted men at the Riverside Station camp. Thus the 34 men who deserted at that camp represented almost 11 percent of Custer's command at that time in the expedition. Without question, such a number of desertions caused serious alarm among Custer and his fellow officers. A subsequent report from one of the first sergeants revealed that a plan was being made for upwards of a third of the remaining command to desert later.⁸² Desperate measures would soon be adopted to prevent any more desertions.

When the command left Riv-

erside Station at 5 A.M. on the morning of July 7, they followed their old trail 24 miles and then camped.⁸³ There was a noon halt of several hours, at the end of which five more men succeeded in deserting, and, finally, severe measures were taken to capture other soldiers also trying to desert. Lieutenant Jackson does not mention the critical noon stop, so one must look to other sources to learn its location.

First Lieutenant Tom Custer testified at his brother's court-martial in the fall of 1867 that the command had marched about 12 miles from their Riverside camp.⁸⁴ General Custer wrote in his official report that the command marched about 30 miles before coming into camp, where the desertions occurred.⁸⁵ However, in *My Life on the Plains* he revises his figure down to 15.⁸⁶ Given that Jackson noted that the command only marched 24 miles that day and the desertions occurred at the noon halt, it makes more sense to determine this noon halt at no more than the 15 miles that Custer indicated in his book, and more probably the 12 miles that Tom Custer testified to. And there were probably no more than five men who successfully deserted on horses, which would be consistent with what the muster rolls indicate. An additional four or five men deserted without their horses and were subsequently captured, three of whom were wounded, one mortally.

The three men known by name to have deserted July 7 are all from Captain Robert West's Company K: Corporal John Donnelly and Privates Emil Gaugler and Jacob Wilder. The muster rolls are not helpful in finding the remaining two men who success-

fully deserted from this noon camp. All that can be known is that the muster rolls listing the Riverside Station deserters show two more than actually deserted from that July 5-6 and 6-7 camp. The unidentified two soldiers in all likelihood joined the three men from Company K and escaped on their horses at the noon halt on July 7.

As already noted, according to the muster rolls the total number of men deserting from Custer's camp near Riverside Station was 36. If one accepts the number of deserters at Riverside cited in Custer's court-martial at 34, then two more men need to be subtracted from the record of desertions "on the Platte River" in the Company A, E, H, and M muster rolls and added to the three men who are reported in the Company K muster roll as deserting "from camp in the field." This then makes a total of five men who escaped from Custer's noon camp on July 7, after leaving their camp near Riverside Station. This is a plausible scenario, supported by other accounts.

Theodore Davis reported that after halting for the noon camp on July 7, "ten more men attempted to desert - five mounted and five dismounted.... The *five* mounted men escaped."⁸⁷ Tom Custer testified at his brother's court martial that "five of them (deserters) were mounted and the others were dismounted."⁸⁸ Custer wrote that there were 13 deserters who fled from their July 7 noon camp and that "seven of these were mounted and were moving off at a rapid gallop, the remaining six were dismounted, not having been so fortunate as their fellows in procuring horses."⁸⁹ Custer's account, however, does not correspond with what the mus-

ter rolls indicate, or with what Davis wrote, or with Tom Custer's testimony. There were only five men who escaped on horses, and five men who were captured, three of whom were wounded, one mortally. This all matches very well with the names of each deserter recorded on the company muster rolls. Unknown are the names of two of the five July 7 noon camp deserters, as their names were listed with the 34 other names as having deserted from the camp near Riverside Station.

When the command made its noon halt on July 7, the men remained in camp for a few hours before resuming the march. At some time during the stop several soldiers were observed nearly two miles away, obviously intending to desert. Some were walking and some were riding horses. Custer ordered several officers to pursue them. Elliott, Cooke, and Tom Custer mounted their horses as one party and were the first to reach the deserters who were walking, the deserters on horseback escaping. In addition to these three officers, Lieutenant Jackson, who was Officer of the Day, along with about eight soldiers, also went in pursuit. Elliott and Cooke got to the walking deserters first and three soldiers were quickly shot: Bugler Barney Tolliver was wounded by one bullet which apparently twice pierced his arm, causing a painful wound. Private Alburger was shot once in his shoulder, once in the finger, and a third time in his side between the ribs. Private Charles Johnson was wounded in two places, a flesh wound in his side and a head wound which proved to be fatal on July 17. Surgeon Isaac Coates testified that the bullet entered his head at "the left

temple and coming out below, under the jaw, and passing down into his lungs, the same ball entering again at the upper part of the chest."⁹⁰

A wagon was sent to retrieve the wounded men. With that accomplished, the command then marched about ten miles before going into the evening camp. Custer's desperate measures to control his men from further temptation to desert had not yet ended. He commanded Surgeon Coates, in the presence of the men, not to treat the deserters for their wounds. Custer testified in his court-martial that he did allow Coates to treat the men, but not when the enlisted men could see it.⁹¹

There were no more desertions while Custer led the expedition, but it was less than a week before he left his command with a detail of men to march to Fort Harker. Custer never returned to the expedition. Later that fall he was found guilty of the following charges: "Absence without leave from his command" and "Conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline."⁹² Several specifications were attached to each charge but the gist of the first charge had to do with his going to Fort Riley, where his wife was. The second charge had to do mostly with the shooting of the deserters. His guilty verdict resulted in his suspension from rank and pay from the service for a period of one year. He served nearly 11 months of his suspension before he returned to service and participated in the campaign that included his victory at the Washita in 1868.

There is one more important incident connected with Custer's campaign and that was the discovery of the deaths of Second Lieutenant Lyman

S. Kidder, ten men of the Second U.S. Cavalry, and a Sioux guide, Red Bead. It occurred near the end of the campaign.

When Custer arrived at Riverside Station, he telegraphed Fort Sedgwick, reported his location, and inquired about the orders from General Sherman that he failed to receive when he sent Major Elliott, Lieutenant Leavy and ten men to Fort Sedgwick from his June 22-29 camp near the forks of the Republican River. At Riverside, Custer learned that General Sherman made a reply to Elliott's telegraph for instructions made from Fort Sedgwick on June 25, ordering Custer to proceed down near Fort Wallace and the Smoky Hill Trail. Unfortunately, Sherman's reply came the day after Elliott left to return to Custer's campsite near the Republican. Custer moved from this campsite on June 29. Ironically, that same day Lieutenant Kidder left Fort Sedgwick with his 11-man escort to find Custer's camp and deliver Sherman's new dispatches. Learning this fact at Riverside Station and knowing that Kidder never met up with Custer left all the officers with a nagging dread that Kidder's party was dead.

With his new orders from Sherman, and with his newfound knowledge of the disappearance of Lieutenant Kidder, Custer retraced his trail, marching, as already noted, 24 miles on July 7.

The morning after the deserters were shot, the command left camp at 5 A.M., traveled their old trail for 25 miles and then camped. On July 9 the men traveled 21 miles before camping.⁹³ 35 miles were marched July 10, and 26 more miles on July 11.⁹⁴ By noon on July 12 the command reached

Beaver Creek, where the grisly find of the dead Kidder party was made. Custer wrote a long report, dated August 6, 1867, about the discovery, in addition to devoting much more detail in *My Life on the Plains*. Lieutenant Jackson wrote on July 12, "... here we found the skeletons of Lieut. Kidder and 11 men they showed signs of having been horribly mutilated one of them having been burnt."⁹⁵ Theodore Davis wrote that appearances indicated "one or more of the men had met death by torture."⁹⁶

Custer had the bodies collected together into one grave, "prepared near the point where they gave up their lives."⁹⁷ The nation soon learned about this event when Theodore Davis's etching depicting the dead was published on the front page of *Harper's Weekly* dated August 17, 1867.

After Kidder and his men were buried, Custer's command continued south-southwest another ten miles before stopping for camp. The next morning would be the last day Custer would lead his expedition. The men marched a total of 33 miles before reaching the Smoky Hill River, where they went into camp on the north bank of the river one-half mile west of Fort Wallace. The total distance marched on this 43 day campaign was 704 miles. Custer's actions after arriving at Fort Wallace led to his arrest and subsequent court-martial, which is itself another story.⁹⁸ This ended Custer's 1867 summer expedition.

Epilogue

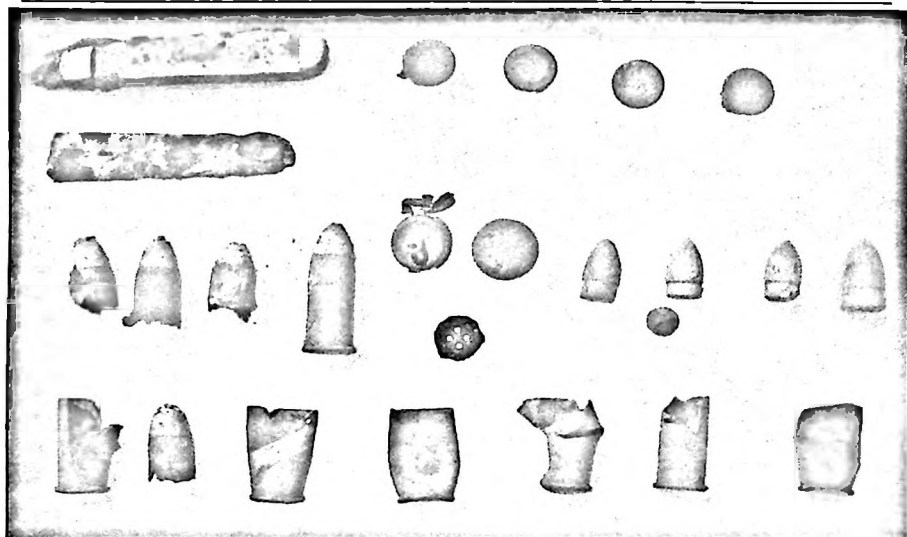
The discovery of the Riverside Station desertion campsite and the June 22-29 campsite.

Lieutenant Jackson's itinerary

report detailing Custer's 1867 expedition proves to be a very useful source for following Custer's trail. The 27 pages of maps, showing each camp site, were extremely well detailed. His report for July 5 said the men camped "one mile west of Riverside Station." His map for that camp site showed that the men camped on bluffs. If the original Riverside Station along the Denver Trail, which followed the south bank of the South Platte River through Colorado and into Denver, could be found, then finding Custer's July 5-6 campsite would be relatively easy.

Glenn R. Scott, retired from the U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior, in Denver, Colorado, has for years diligently studied old U.S. survey notes housed in the Denver office of the Bureau of Land Management. In 1989 he published his research, blending old stage stations and other historic sites onto a modern USGS map of the area.⁹⁹ Scott's research revealed that Riverside Station was in Logan County, Colorado, Iliff Quadrangle, in SE1/4SE1/4, T. 9 N., R. 51 W. Superimposing this onto a modern map, Scott located the station as somewhere on the property of Mildred, Russell, and Bob Talbott south of Iliff, Colorado.

In 2004 I met with the Talbott family and informed them that they probably owned the land of both Riverside Station and Custer's campsite in 1867. They were aware that their land once had a stage station but they had only a vague idea where it might be. They graciously allowed me to use metal detectors on their land, Russ himself purchasing a detector and often assisting me in the searches. The site of Riverside Station was quickly located,



Author's collection

7th Cavalry artifacts found at Custer's June 22-29 campsite near Benkelman, Nebraska

with the evidence of numerous artifacts, which was in fact very close to the family recollection. Historian Greg Michno and his wife Sue then drove me one mile west of the station location, where there are a series of rising bluffs just south of the old trail. Almost immediately relevant military artifacts were found on the bluffs, confirming that this indeed was Custer's 1867 campsite. I personally found more than 100 military "eagle" buttons, along with nearly 80 unfired rounds for the Spencer carbine. In addition, two cavalry spurs were found, one a broken officer's presentation spur popular during the Civil War. It may well have belonged to any of the officers with Custer's command, as each one served as an officer in the Civil War. Many of the eagle buttons showed signs of having been burned, which would indicate that after the enlisted men deserted and left their

military blouses Custer had probably ordered the blouses burned. The ammunition scattered about the camp area would be what fell out of the leather pouches as handfuls of ammunition were collected to be saved. The pouches were also burned. It should not come as a surprise that Custer destroyed this property, as the men who deserted were financially responsible for what they left behind. About a third of the Spencer unfired casings had the headstamp "JG," indicating manufacture for the government through 1866.¹⁰⁰

The artifacts tell a story, and Lieutenant Jackson's map pinpoints the location of Custer's campsite near Riverside Station. Hopefully there will soon be a marker on the site showing visitors where Custer's 7th Cavalry camped in Colorado and where so many of his men deserted.

The location of the week-long

campsite at Benkelman was not difficult to locate, for several reasons. One is the etching that Theodore Davis made in the August 3, 1867 issue of *Harper's Weekly*. But better yet was the detail found in Lieutenant Jackson's well-kept itinerary report. Jackson's map placed the camp alongside bluffs, confirming the Davis etching, but also, he wrote that the command camped on the west side of Spring Creek.¹⁰¹ The bluffs noted in Jackson's map are the first bluffs north of the creek's juncture with the north fork of the Republican River. In March, 2006, my son Evan and I, along with Indian-war author Dr. John Monnett, made two weekend excursions to Benkelman, Nebraska, in an effort to locate and verify Custer's campsite and where he had his first Indian skirmish. Though the campsite has been compromised by many modern intrusions, including two homes, an abandoned pond, a county road and a railroad, there was almost half of Custer's original campsite that was still open field, though subject to decades of plowing and planting of crops. At the present time, wheat covers most of the area not yet lost to modern development. The use of metal detectors resulted in the discovery of enough artifacts to convince me that Custer's men indeed camped there. Significant artifacts recovered were the following: four horseshoes, three fired Spencer cartridges, one headstamped "JG," confirming the year 1867 for use by the military, nine unfired Spencer cartridges, several headstamped "JG," three unfired .44 caliber Remington pistol bullets, two U.S. Army "eagle" buttons, three pocket knives, one pewter trouser button, five various saddle and camp

assortment buckles, and one large brass cavalry horse buckle, stamped "U.S." This campsite is on the opposite side of highway 34 where there is a modern historical marker designating Custer's historic visit. In other words, readers of the highway marker are looking in the opposite direction of Custer's actual campsite.

There will always be mystery in the telling of the Custer story, and there are many pieces of the puzzle of Custer yet to be found in the 11 years after the Civil War leading up to his demise at the Little Bighorn in 1876. One piece of the puzzle regarding Custer's summer Indian campaign of 1867 has been solved.

Endnotes

1. Lawrence A. Frost, *The Court-Martial of General George Armstrong Custer* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), 125.
2. Frost, *Court-Martial*.
3. Muster Rolls, Companies A, D, E, H, K, and M, Seventh Regiment of the U.S. Cavalry. Record Group 94, May-June and July-August 1867, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
4. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 194-195. Second Lieutenant Henry Jackson, *Itinerary of the March of the Seventh United States Cavalry*, Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 2593, Department of the Missouri, Letters received, 1867, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. Muster Roll, Co D, Seventh Cavalry. Entry for June 8.
5. Jackson, *Itinerary*.
6. Marguerite Merington, *The Custer Story: The Life and Intimate Letters of General Custer and his Wife, Elizabeth* (New York, NY: The Devin-Adair Company, 1950), 205. It is not known why Custer had the men arrested and expelled from the expedition, but it may have had to do with liberties taken by them while at Fort McPherson, not the least of which was probably excessive alcohol

consumption.

7. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 13; Frost, *Court-Martial*, 213; Muster Rolls, Co A, D, E, H, K and M; General George A. Custer, *My Life on the Plains, or Personal Experiences With Indians* (New York, NY: Sheldon and Company, 1874), 47.
8. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 168.
9. Headquarters Muster Roll, May-June, 1867.
10. Headquarters Muster Roll. See also Kenneth Hammer, *Men with Custer: Biographies of the 7th Cavalry*, edited by Ronald H. Nichols (Hardin, Montana: Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Association, Inc., 2000), 202.
11. John M. Carroll, edited, *The Benteen-Goldin Letters on Custer and His Last Battle* (New York, NY: Liveright, 1974), 249.
12. The Company K muster roll for May-June and July-August indicate Brewster was present for the expedition; however, the September-October muster roll says he had been on detached service at Fort Hays since June 1. Thus he was not present during the campaign, and accords with Custer's report of June 22 saying ten officers were with the command at the Republican River campsite.
13. Seventh Cavalry Muster Roll, Companies A, D, E, H, K, M.
14. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 1-3, 1867.
15. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 8.
16. Theodore Davis, "With Generals in Their Camp Homes: General George A. Custer."
14. Typed manuscript in the collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. On p. 2 Davis says he was a part of the expedition as a guest of Hancock. This was also published in the Chicago Westerners *Brandbook* for 1947.
17. Brevet Major General George A. Custer, "Headquarters, 7th U. S. Cavalry, Camp near Fort McPherson, Neb., June 11, 1867," Department of the Missouri, Letters Received, Part 1, Entry 2593, Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. Cooper's body would be re-interred from the Fort McPherson Cemetery to the Lexington Cemetery in Lexington, Kentucky on March 18, 1870. See John M. Carroll, "Major Wycliffe Cooper, 7th U.S. Cavalry – Was it Murder or Suicide?" *Research Review of the Little Big Horn Associates*, Vol. III, No. 4, December, 1986.
18. Captain D. C. Poole, *Among the Sioux of Dakota: Eighteen Months Experience as an Indian Agent* (New York, NY: D. Van Norstrand, Publisher, 1881), 104.
19. Custer, *My Life*, 54, italics added.
20. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 125.
21. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 12-16; Muster Roll, Co D, H & K, May-June.
22. Custer, *My Life*, 54.
23. Custer, *My Life*, 55.
24. "Copy of telegram sent to Gen. Custer at Fort McPherson, Nebr., June 1867, from Lieut. General William T. Sherman," emphasis added. McCracken Research Library, MS NO. 62. Don Russell Collection, Series I: N Box 2/FF 26, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY. The document is also stamped "Edward S. Luce, Superintendent, Custer Battlefield Nat'l Cemetery, Act of June 26, 1943, Sec. 206." General Sherman sent an earlier telegram to General C. C. Augur on June 12, informing him that he ordered Custer "to send his train by the road [Platte River], and with his best men make a swoop round by the south to the Republican, and come in about Moore's, fifty miles above here [Fort Sedgwick] for orders and supplies." Entry 3733, Telegrams received 1867, Department of the Platte, Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. This telegram is important in showing that Custer was to send his dismounted men with his trains along the Platte River Road to Sedgwick while he went down into the Republican River valley with his men that remained mounted. Sherman goes on in his telegram to inform Augur that he ordered Quartermaster General William Myers to purchase 150 horses for Custer's men and deliver them to Sedgwick, where Custer would then reunite with the rest of his command after his jaunt down to the Republican. But this telegram was sent before Sherman met with Custer at Sedgwick, where he apparently changed his orders and allowed Custer to take all of his men, with his wagons, down to the Republican and bring Pawnee Killer back to McPherson.
25. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 17-18.

26. Muster Roll, Headquarters, Co D, E, K and M, May-June.
27. Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian War* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 143.
28. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 211.
29. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 201. Muster Roll, Company L, Seventh U.S. Cavalry, January-February, 1867.
30. Muster Roll, Co. L, January-February.
31. Rickey, *Forty Miles*, 150.
32. Lt. Col. G. A. Custer, "Headquarters Fort Riley Kansas March 6, 1867." Letter to "Brev. Major Henry E. Noyes, Actg Assist Adj General, District of Upper Arkansas." Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 2593, Letters received, Department of the Missouri, 1867, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
33. Muster Roll, Co A & D, May-June. It is possible that Sotten deserted the day before, while the command camped at Medicine Lake Creek, as this is where he is noted as deserting from, but on June 19 and not June 18. If he actually left June 18 that would make a total of six men deserting from Medicine Lake Creek.
34. Muster Roll, Co A, E and M, May/June.
35. Davis, "Summer," 302. Company D Muster Roll, May-June, 1867.
36. Sandy Barnard, *Custer's First Sergeant John Ryan* (Terre Haute, IN: AST Press, 1996), 97-99.
37. John Ryan, *Ten Years With Custer: A 7th Cavalryman's Memoirs*, edited by Sandy Barnard (Fort Collins, Colorado: Citizen Printing Inc., 2001), 121.
38. Custer, in *My Life* (55), says the dense fog was experienced the morning after the first day's march away from Fort McPherson, and not the second morning, as noted in Lieutenant Jackson's *Itinerary*. According to Jackson, that camp would have been only 25 miles from Fort McPherson. Assuming that there might have been a hog ranch several miles away from the fort in the direction that Custer was marching, then indeed the command could have camped within a few miles of a hog ranch on the night that Ryan, Kelley and Anthony disappeared. The hog ranch hypothesis, as a motive for the men being absent without leave from camp, remains as a possible explanation for the three men disappearing together. Let's not forget that both Ryan and Kelley were corporals, and as such would have had close contact with each other and with Bugler Anthony. Also, they would not necessarily be suspected of "monkey business" if they were seen outside their tents late into the night. Thus it would have been easier for them to get away from the camp for a night of fun than it would be for a private. The dense fog thus would have got them lost in their journey back to camp. The likelihood that they were close friends, in addition to comrades, seems highly plausible, given that they disappeared together.
39. See Sandy Barnard, in his excellent account of Ryan's career, *Custer's First Sergeant John Ryan*.
40. Ryan, *Ten Years*, 121-124.
41. Fifth U.S. Cavalry Muster Roll, Co I, July-August, 1870.
42. Joe Rosa, *They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 109.
43. A Pawnee Indian scout also received a Medal of Honor during Carr's campaign. Sergeant Co-rux-te-chod-ish (Mad Bear) was awarded the coveted medal, and not Traveling Bear, as Captain Luther North in later years reported. For a complete account of this whole history involving the Indian raids in Kansas in 1868-1869, and including Carr's Republican River Expedition, see my *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War* (Lincoln, Kansas: Lincoln County Historical Society, 2003). The book contains many references to the Seventh Cavalry in Kansas during this time.
44. *The Medal of Honor of The United States Army* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1948), 211.
45. E. A. Carr, "Headquarters Republican River Expedition, Camp Near Fort Sedgwick, C.T., July 20, 1869," Letters Received, 1869, Department of the Platte, Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 3731, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. The military reports under Carr's campaign always list the spelling of Kyle as "Kyle" and not "Kile."

Thus the Medal of Honor was awarded to Corporal John Kyle.

46. Letter, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, August 24, 1869, Letters Received, 1869, Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 3731, Department of the Platte, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

47. Custer writes that he had ten officers with him while the muster rolls show twelve officers. Myles Moylan was with the expedition but not officially promoted to First Lieutenant until July 28. Custer must not have been counting him as an officer in his report of June 22. See also endnote 12.

48. Part 1, Entry 3731, Letters Received, Department of the Platte, Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

49. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 23. Custer wrote in *My Life on the Plains* (p. 56) that Elliott left with ten men and one of his scouts. If indeed a scout accompanied the Elliott party, then the party consisted of thirteen men. And if a scout did accompany Elliott, it was not Comstock, as he was with the party that traveled to Fort Wallace during this time (Custer, *My Life*, 63; Davis, "Summer," 303).

50. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 209, emphasis added.

51. General W. T. Sherman, "Report of the Secretary of War: Report of Lieutenant General Sherman, St. Louis, MO., October 1, 1867". Second Session of the Fortieth Congress (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1867), 379.

52. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 24.

53. Muster Roll, Co H, May-June. Davis, "Summer," 302.

54. Custer, *My Life*, 57-58.

55. Davis, "Summer," 302.

56. Custer, *My Life*, 58-59.

57. Davis, "Summer," 302; Custer, *My Life*, 58.

58. Custer, *My Life*, 58-60, Davis, "Summer," 302-303.

59. Custer (*My Life*, 60) implied it was the whole of Hamilton's company. Lt. Jackson said it was a portion (*Itinerary*, June 24); Davis ("Summer," 303) said it was 20 men. The Company A Muster Roll for May-June, 1867 reported 24 men.

60. Davis, "Summer" (303) says the warrior

party grew to 300. The Company A Muster Roll says the party was 50. Custer, in *My Life* (60) said it was 43. Herein the reports as they are written in the Company A Muster Roll and the Headquarters Staff Muster Roll (50 warriors) are used. This also accords with what Jackson wrote in *Itinerary*, June 24.

61. Custer, *My Life* (62), said two Indians were killed and one cavalry horse wounded. Davis said one horse was killed ("Summer," 303).

62. Custer, *My Life*, 60-61.

63. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 25.

64. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 26-27.

65. Robert M. Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry: Diaries and Letters of Albert and Jennie Barnitz, 1867-1868* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), 64. Company D Muster Roll, May-June, 1867.

66. Company D Muster Roll. Custer sent a report via telegraph of this fight to General Sherman, along with Hamilton's fight on June 24, from Riverside Station. See General U. S. Grant's report to the President of the United States, *Difficulties with Indian Tribes*, Forty-first Congress, Second Session, House of Representatives, Executive Document, No. 240 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1870), 110-111.

67. Part 1, Entry 3734, Telegrams Received, 1867, Department of the Platte, Record Group 393, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C.

68. Davis, "Summer," 303.

69. Custer, *My Life*, 65-66.

70. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 27. The Company D Muster Roll says the men returned to Custer's camp on June 28, but this is surely a mistake, given that they left Beaver Creek on the evening of the fight of June 26. Lt. Jackson's claim that the wagons returned June 27 is certainly accurate, given that it was written on the day of the event.

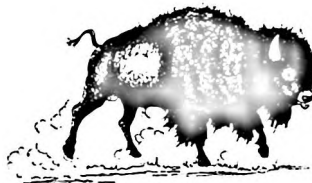
71. Utley, *Life in Custer's Cavalry*, 69-79.

Utley claims that it was the same Indians that participated in both fights, but this is unlikely, as the wagon party had traveled about 28 miles before they were attacked, which was also on the same morning. It seems impossible for both fights to have been on the same morning by the same Indians that many miles

apart.

72. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 28.
73. Davis, "Summer," 303.
74. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 29.
75. Custer, *My Life*, 69.
76. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 5.
77. Bvt. Brig. Gen. J. H. Potter, "Report from Headquarters, Fort Sedgwick, C.T. July 7, 1867," Fort Sedgwick, Letter Sent, Record Group 393, Part V, Entry 1, Volume 3, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
78. Custer, *My Life*, 72.
79. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 175.
80. Davis, "Summer," 306.
81. White, "Hancock and Custer," 371. Not surprisingly, White criticizes Custer for making no effort to find them and bring them back. What could Custer have possibly done to find them and bring them back?
82. Custer, *My Life*, 72-73.
83. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 7.
84. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 150.
85. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 175.
86. Custer, *My Life*, 72.
87. Davis, "Summer," 306.
88. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 151.
89. Custer, *My Life*, 72.
90. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 167. See also the testimony by Tom Custer, Elliott, Cooke and Jackson.
91. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 242-243.
92. Frost, *Court-Martial*, 99-102, 245-246.
93. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 8-9.
94. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 10-11.
95. Jackson, *Itinerary*, July 12.
96. Davis, "Summer," 306.
97. Bvt. Maj. Genl. G. A. Custer, "Report to General C. C. Augur," Fort Riley, Kansas, August 7, 1867, Record Group 393, Part 1, Box 31, Department of the Missouri, Letters received, 1867, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. For more information on the Kidder massacre see Custer, *My Life*, Chapter 8 & 11. Also see Davis, "Summer," 306-307. For modern studies of the Kidder fight see Randy Johnson and Nancy Allen, *A Dispatch to Custer: The Tragedy of Lieutenant Kidder* (Missoula, MT; Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1999), and my "On Locating the Kidder Massacre Site of 1867," *The Denver Westerners Roundup*, July-August, 2000; and

- "Custer, Kidder and Tragedy at Beaver Creek, *Wild West*, June 2002, 37-46. Using Custer's report, and more importantly, Lieutenant Jackson's well defined map of the location of the dead men, I located the death ravine one-half mile west of the trail crossing at Beaver Creek. The 27 maps drawn by Lt. Jackson, along with his itinerary report will be published in my forthcoming *Custer's 1867 Summer Indian Campaign: The Journal of Lieutenant Henry Jackson* (El Segundo, CA: Upton and Sons, Publishers, 2008).
98. See Frost, *Court-Martial*, for all of the testimony of Custer's court martial.
99. Glenn R. Scott, *Historic Trail Maps of the Sterling 1 x 2 Quadrangle, Northeastern Colorado* (Miscellaneous Investigations Series), Published by the U. S. Geological Survey, 1989.
100. Jacob Goldmark, of Brooklyn, New York, contracted with the government to produce Spencer cartridges from 1864-1866. His headstamp "JG" on the bottom of the cartridge precisely conforms with the ammunition that Custer's men would have been issued for their 1867 campaign. See Walter P. Reuland, *Cartridges for the Springfield Trapdoor Rifles and Carbines 1865-1898* (Laramie, WY: Heritage Concepts, 1993), Second Edition.
101. Jackson, *Itinerary*, June 22.



Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ken or the editor, Jim Krebs, P.M. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

THANKS EDI

Posse Member Ed Bathke, who has been the Membership Chairman for the past 18 years, announced his resignation as Membership Chairman. Ed has produced the meeting notice cards, kept the very important membership roll, prepared the new Certificates, and many other duties. The Posse appreciates all that Ed and Nancy have done over the years.

May, 2008 meeting

Following a very nice meal on the evening of May 28, 2008, the Denver Posse was entertained and educated by Kimberly Field who has a degree in Journalism and in Anthropology. She presented an electronic slide show of excerpts and photographs from her book *The Denver Mint*. She told much of the history of the mint along with some interesting pictures. At one time the Denver mint had in storage one-third of all the United States Gold Reserves. One of the most interesting parts of the story was the so-called "Denver Mint Robbery". It took place in 1922 and was actually the robbery of a Federal Reserve truck that was going to make a delivery of \$5.00 bills to the mint. A group of gangsters committed the robbery, one of the robbers was killed but the rest got away. It was some time before the get-away car was found in a Denver garage, only a part of the money was ever recovered and no one was ever arrested for the crime. An interesting question and answer period followed. During this time the Denver Auditor Mr. Dennis Gallagher, who is a frequent guest, told of the battle between the City of Denver and the U. S. Government over the corporate tax of the Mint on West Colfax.

June, 2008 meeting

Seventy-six members and guests enjoyed a program by Amy Zimmer, a Colorado native, as she took us on a tour of "The Lost Mansions of Denver." Amy is a graduate of Denver Community College. As a child she became interested in the mansions of Denver, and would ride her bike along Millionaire Row and the streets as she searched out the mansions. Her program, an electronic slide show, started with the restored Byers-Evans mansion on 14th St. at Bannock St. then showed us many of the old mansions that no longer exist. Some of the interiors with their beautiful stairways and rooms along with snippets of their history were given. Some of the present day buildings now on the same sites were included. There are still a very few of the old mansions left and Amy included them in her presentation. It was an interesting program and you did wondered how they built such large and beautiful homes with mostly hand tools.

August Summer Rendezvous

August 27, 2008. The meeting is open to all members and guests of The Denver Posse of Westerners. It will be at Norm Meyer's historical ranch on Highway 285 near Conifer. The program will be a tour of the historic buildings and site.

New Members

Corresponding:

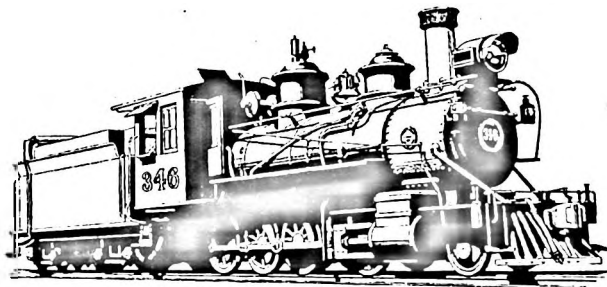
Dick Dugdale, of Littleton. Referred by Max Smith, P.M. Dick lists his interests as Colorado History.

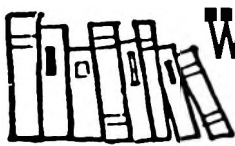
Steve Hansen of Denver, CO. Referred by Tom Noel, P. M. Steven's interests are local business histories. Steve is a designer for "Real West" exhibition.

Charla Shilling of Lakewood, CO. Research Assistant to Stan Dempsey helping preserve history through writing, reenacting, and study. Charla is interested in writing about and preserving history.

Posse:

Norman Meyer, C.M. has been elected to the Active Posse. He has been a member of The Denver Posse for a number of years, is a native of Colorado, and a very active participant in Jefferson County and aviation history.





Westerners Bookshelf



MAGGIE'S WAY: The Story of a Defiant Pioneer Woman, by Lucinda Stein. Montrose, Colorado: Western Reflections Publishing Company, 2005. 192 pp. 9 illustrations in pen and ink. No bibliography or index. Paper back. \$13.95.

Maggie's Way is historical fiction. It is peopled with a number of well-known Colorado historical figures and real mining towns of the 1870s. The author has captured the smell and feel of New York as thousands of immigrants poured into the city in the 1850s and the difficulty an Irishman had in finding a decent place to live and work for his family. Margaret married Thomas O'Malley, another Irishman, who decided that the real riches and freedom they were looking for were to be found in the West, where they could own their own land. The trip west was like any other hardship story of wagon trains, where death in the form of Indians, disease and accidents stalked everyone daily. Unfortunately Thomas died of cholera two days before they reached Denver, and Margaret found herself with a 3-month-old daughter, and no husband, home or job.

Mother and daughter lived in Denver for the next 17 years, until Maggie, the daughter, realized that she wanted more out of her life than cooking and cleaning for other people. Her heart was in the outdoors, not indoors. Once gold and silver were found in the San Juans she felt that was where she wanted to be. So she asked her mother to go farther west with her, where she could experience the outdoor life she loved. This is where the heart of the story lies.

The pioneer women in the West could branch out in many more directions than women back in the "civilized world" could ever dream about. There were few occupations that women didn't do, some out of necessity, others because they loved a particular occupation. They ranched, worked as cowgirls, blacksmiths, mule-skinners, miners, opened boarding homes, and sometimes made more money than miners by doing their laundry for them. If a woman had the disposition and drive to do it, anything could be done in the West. Women in the West tended to be greater mavericks and freer spirits than any cowboy riding off into the sunset of an old Western movie. When Maggie and her mother arrived in the town of Ouray they felt their adventure was ending, however little did they realize that it was really only the beginning of a new life and adventures for both of them.

--Winnie Burdan, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

September - October 2008



Author's Collection

Scotty's Castle
Death Valley's Fabulous Showplace
by Dorothy Charles
(presented January 23, 2008)



Our Author

Dorothy Charles was born and raised in central California, just east of San Francisco. She graduated from Humboldt State College in Northern California in 1966 with a B.S. in natural resources. Dorothy began her National Park Service career as a seasonal naturalist at Grand Canyon State Park in 1965. She worked mainly summer seasons until 1969. She began winter seasons in Death Valley and held various jobs including Park Ranger, Park Technician for the next 8 years. She worked at Scotty's Castle between 1971 and 1975.

After marriage to Kent, Dorothy worked at Furnace Creek Headquarters and the N.P.S. Seattle Region Office. She has resided in the Denver area for the last 28 years. Dorothy retired from government service in 1994.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXIV NO. 5



September - October 2008

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Scotty's Castle

Death Valley's Fabulous Showplace by Dorothy Charles (presented January 23, 2008)

In the 1920s, wealthy Chicago insurance man Albert Johnson built a desert vacation home for himself, his wife Bessie, and their colorful friend Walter Scott. Albert and Bessie named their home Death Valley Ranch. But Walter Scott, who loved publicity, told visitors and reporters that it was his "shack" or "Castle"—so soon it became known as Scotty's Castle.

To help you feel the ambiance of Scotty's Castle, I want to introduce you to the California desert that is about 150 miles northwest of Las Vegas, NV, and then introduce you to Walter Scott and his benefactor Albert Johnson.

Death Valley is formed by a graben. The valley floor is slipping downward along the Furnace Creek Fault system at the foot of the Black Mountains creating the lowest dry point in the Western Hemisphere. Badwater Basin is 282 feet below sea level.

The valley floor receives less than two inches of rain a year. The summer temperatures can stay in the 100s, both day and night. The high temperature of 134 degrees-F was recorded in 1913. In 1972, on a warm day of 128 degrees, I recorded the high ground temperature of 201 degrees.

To the west of Badwater is the Panamint Range with Telescope Peak at over 11,000 feet where it is cooler and has more moisture.

The valley was named by the 49ers taking a "short cut" to the Califor-

nia gold fields. By the time a small group of men, women, and children reached a spring on the side of the valley, they had little food or water and were very weak. William Manly and John Rogers volunteered to seek a way out and to find food. For the next several weeks the party stayed in camp, not knowing if they would ever make it out of the valley. Manly and Rogers finally returned with food, and soon the party was heading out of the valley. As they paused on a ridge and looked back into the valley, someone said "Good-bye Death Valley."

In the 1870s into the 1900s, prospectors returned to the Death Valley searching for gold, silver and other minerals. Towns like Tonopah, Goldfield, and Skidoo in the Panamint Range sprang up where there was sufficient ore.

In the 1880s Borax or "white gold" was discovered on the valley floor. Harmony Borax Works refined the ore (cottonball) that the Chinese workmen gathered. The processed borax was then transported 165 miles by 20 mule team to the railroad. Borax and Talc are still mined in the vicinity of Death Valley. Mining is one thing that Albert Johnson and Walter Scott, also known as Death Valley Scotty, had in common; another is that both of them were born in 1872.

Walter Scott was born in Kentucky and was the youngest of six children. He was raised on a farm where his father bred and trained trotting horses. At the age of 11, instead of go-

ing to school, Scott headed to Nevada to become a cowboy with his brothers. Scott held a variety of jobs over the next several years. Possibly his first visit to Death Valley was when he was a water boy on the survey party for the California-Nevada border.

He also worked at Harmony Borax Works, caring for the teams of the 20-mule team wagons that hauled borax from Death Valley to the rail line at Mojave. How many, if any, of the 165-mile trips he made with the 20-mule-team Borax Wagons is anyone's guess. He soon returned to the cowboy trade with his brothers.

In 1890, a talent scout for Bill Cody discovered Scott and hired him to work as a cowboy with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Scott spent the next 12 years as a sharp shooter and a trick rider touring the US and Europe. While in New York for a show, Scott met his wife Ella, a candy store clerk.

Albert Johnson was born in Ohio to a very wealthy and religious family. After graduating from Cornell University with an engineering degree in 1895, he worked in the family enterprises. In 1896, he married Bessilyn Penniman of Walnut Creek, Calif., who had been a classmate at Cornell. She was a genteel woman and very religious. Both Johnson and Scott had a connection to Colorado. In 1899, Albert and his father made a trip to Colorado to look over mining prospects. They were passengers on a Denver and Rio Grande narrow-gauge train when it was hit by another train. Albert's father was killed instantly and Albert, then 27 years old, suffered a broken back.

He spent over a year in the hospital at Salida. He finally regained his

ability to walk before returning to Ohio. He walked with a limp, and suffered partial paralysis and other related ailments the rest of his life. Because of his injuries, Albert Johnson was unable to continue a career as a practicing mining engineer; so Bessie and he moved to Chicago. He became a one-third partner in the financial firm of E.A. Shedd and Co. Mr. Shedd had been a friend of Albert's father. In 1902, they purchased the National Life Insurance Company, and Albert quickly worked his way up from treasurer to President to Chairman of the Board, and he eventually gained 90 percent of the corporate stock.

Walter Scott was drawn to Colorado during the off season of the Wild West Show to "learn" gold mining. It was the winter of 1900, just nine days after his marriage to Ella that she was put on a train to return to New York and Scott headed to Cripple Creek. The following winter Scott and Ella returned to Cripple Creek. While on a tour of the mine, Ella begged the superintendent for an ore sample to show the girls back in the New York candy store. She received two samples, but didn't show Walter until they were packing to return to NY. Ella reported that his eyes nearly popped out! After leaving the Wild West show in 1902, Scott borrowed the ore samples and started a new career that brought him even more fame and riches— gold prospecting!

Over the next few years, he convinced several wealthy businessmen that he had a gold mine claim worth a fortune in Death Valley and agreed to split the profits, provided they first offer money to extract the ore.

After receiving money, Scott often returned to one of his Death Valley



Gaylord, financed the trip. All the press that Scott was getting about the Coyote Special sparked Johnson's interest in Scotty again.

In 1906 Johnson made his first attempt to visit the Scott's gold mine in Death Valley. Scotty and his brother Warner took Johnson and other investors to a wash in the south end of Death Valley where some of Scotty's friends had hidden themselves, disguised as bandits to scare off the investors. During the mock gunfight (known as "The Battle of Wingate Pass"), Warner was shot and badly injured and Scotty had to call the whole thing off. Most of Scotty's investors realized they'd been fooled and pulled out of Scotty's

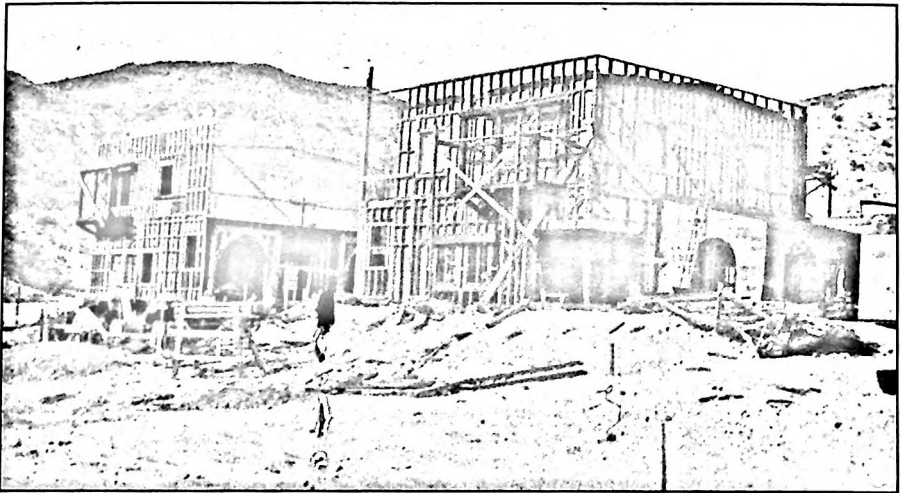
scheme. Johnson, however, felt that there might still be a chance that Scotty had found gold and decided to pursue the matter further.

In 1907, Scotty and Johnson became partners. To start with, Johnson gave Scotty over \$22,000 in cash plus equipment and supplies. Finally in 1909, Johnson made his first of many trips to Death Valley with Scotty.

From their camp at the north end of Death Valley near Grapevine Canyon, Scotty took Mr. Johnson on a grueling trek by horseback through Death Valley. Scotty figured a few days in the desert would be too much for the city slicker who was not in the best of health. Surprisingly, Johnson enjoyed Death Valley so much that he stayed nearly a month,

camp, with his mules. And after a week or more, he would then turn up at the finest hotels and saloons in California and Nevada and go on one of his legendary spending sprees—with money, of course, from his Death Valley mine—thus he soon became known as Death Valley Scotty. In 1904 Scotty met with Mr. Shedd and his partner Albert Johnson and they grubstaked him \$2,500.

The next year, Death Valley Scotty went to the Santa Fe Railroad office in Los Angeles and said that he would pay anything to get to Chicago in 46 hours. The Coyote Special made it in 44 hours and 54 minutes. Of course, Scotty said the money for the trip was from his Death Valley mine! Later it was revealed that a real-estate speculator, E. Burdon



and his health improved dramatically in the dry, sunny climate. But, still there was no evidence of the mine he had been financing. However he did find Death Valley Scotty was an outstanding cook, a fascinating yarn-spinner, and a first-rate horseman, not to mention the finest guide in the area.

Death Valley Ranch had its real beginning about 1915 when Albert Johnson began buying up old homesteads and mining claims along Death Valley's northern edge. An abundance of water, ideal climate at 3,000 feet elevation, and a nearby railroad helped make this area ideal. Over the next dozen years, he bought some 1500 acres, consisting of two separate tracts known later as Upper and Lower Grapevine.

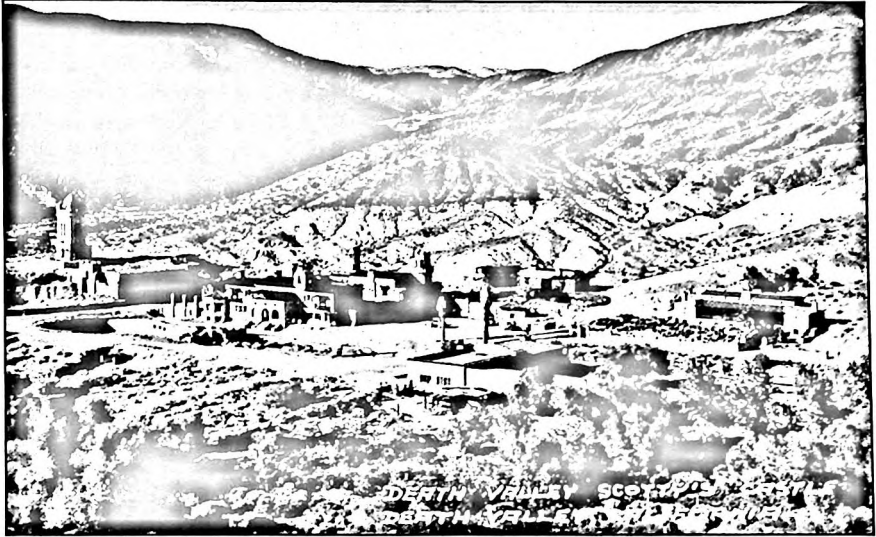
The most important purchase was the former Staininger Ranch where Johnson put up three wooden-sided tents; and these along with existing ranch shacks, became his Death Valley headquarters. By 1922 prodded by his wife's desire for more civilized accommodations, Albert Johnson decided to

construct permanent quarters.

A small work crew built three structures. The house was two-stories with the Johnson apartments on the upper floor, and the kitchen, store rooms and a bedroom for Scotty on the lower floor. A large garage and workshops were built to the east and a cook house on the hill. Now they had a comfortable place to stay, but the buildings were very plain. So, Johnson had several architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright, present designs to improve the appearance of the ranch.

The Johnsons choose the Spanish-style designs by Charles McNeilledge for their Death Valley Ranch. Renovation began in 1925. The Death Valley Ranch would be made up of nine buildings. Roughly the order of construction was: the main house, annex, guesthouse, stables, cookhouse, garage, gas station, chimes tower, powerhouse, and gatehouse. They also had planned a 260-foot swimming pool and a courtyard.

Building materials, food, work-ers, everything but water and gravel,



had to be hauled in. The Bullfrog and Goldfield Railroad had a station at Bonnie Clare about 20 miles east of the ranch. Once unloaded at Bonnie Clare, everything had to be hauled by truck to the site. Johnson, with his engineering background, found it a challenge to harness the power from the nearby spring and bring modern conveniences to his ranch. The spring just east of the Castle maintains a continuous flow of about 200 gallons per minute. A reservoir of 44,000 gallons was built in the early 1920s with a water main laid from the reservoir to the ranch.

The basement underneath the main house is the center of about a quarter mile of tunnel system that runs between the Hacienda, the gas-tank house, and the powerhouse. It carries piping for the water, plumbing and electricity for each area, and was a storage area for tile for the swimming pool and the other unfinished tile areas.

Matt Roy Thompson was the gen-

eral superintendent and lived at the site. Bessie and Thompson had known each other during her one year at Stanford University in California. On page six you see the Main House under construction. The Johnson apartment is closest to us, on the second floor. The lower floor is the dining room and kitchen. On the far section, the second story was to be a guest apartment and on the ground floor the lower music room, solarium and a room for Scotty.

As building continued and more visitors came to the Death Valley area, many of them also traveled to see the desert castle—even though the roads were poor to nonexistent in the north end of the valley. Scotty was often there to entertain them by telling them that he was building the two-million-dollar home with profits from his gold mine. When Johnson was questioned by the reporters, Johnson would agree that Scotty owned the place, and simply said that he was “Scotty’s banker.” Scotty told visitors

and reporters that it was his "shack" or "castle"—and thus it became Scotty's Castle.

The cookhouse has the largest kitchen on the ranch. It also had a dining area for workers and guests and sleeping quarters for the cook. Below the cookhouse are the gas-tank house and the service station. Later the service station was moved down closer to the garage. The gas tank house was later converted to a snack bar and curio shop and later for displays. The garage building contained an office and sleeping quarters for Matt Roy Thompson. The Hacienda or guest house has two guest apartments and a joining kitchen. The annex houses the pipes for the organ. To the left is the cook house. A little beyond is the Hacienda. And then in the distance are the stable and the open shed.

Gates connect the stables and an open shed. Precise detailed blueprints were drawn up for the main structures, and also for each piece of wood and iron furnishing. Johnson hired English and Austrian woodworkers and German ironsmiths to work in his shop in Los Angeles as well as at the castle. Skilled craftsmen received \$11 a day. The fortress houses the Pelton water wheels and Diesel engines that were used for electricity on the castle grounds.

The clock or chimes tower was originally going to house water tanks, but was converted to a clock with deacon chimes. Keyboards are located in the tower and in the lower music room so that tunes can be played on the chimes.

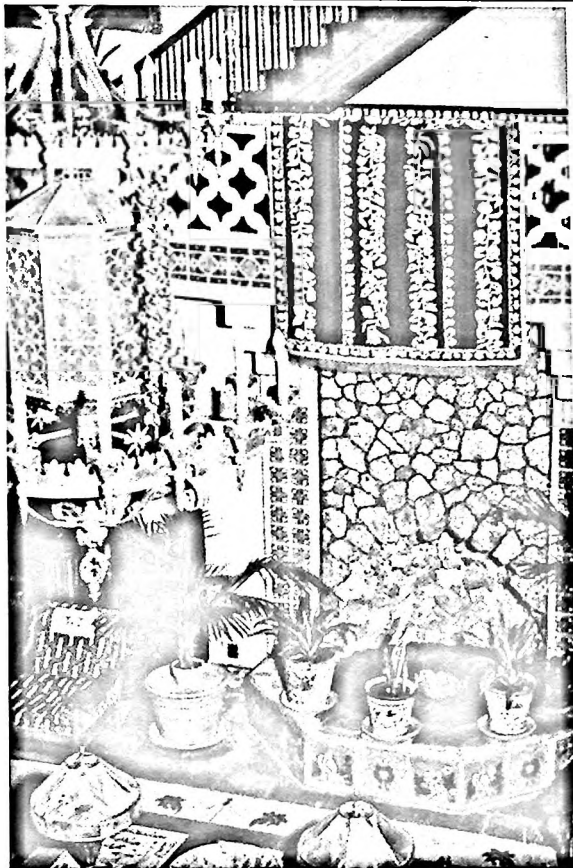
Rail service north of Beatty, Nev., was discontinued in January 1928. Anticipating the closing of the rail service, Johnson stockpiled great quantities of

heavy items such as cement, tile and plaster during the final months of operation. Included in the last shipment was the Welte organ for the upper music room. Rail service continued to Beatty, Nev., but that was 50 miles away from the castle. And it's said that burros even brought supplies from Barstow, which was 180 miles away!

Albert Johnson bought the railroad ties and bridge timbers from the abandoned Bullfrog and Goldfield RR to supply the numerous fireplaces in the castle. He paid \$1500 for more than 100,000 ties and then spent another \$25,000 to haul and stack them in Tie Canyon, just west of the castle. It turned out the ties were too dry and burned too fast.

By 1931, Johnson's fortune had declined, although he was never a poor man. The Castle closed in 1931, and work was stopped with about 80% completed. Still left to be completed was the garden between the main house and the fortress or powerhouse, most of the landscaping, the final touches on the gate-house, walls prepared for stucco and never finished; a half-tiled bathroom, and the 260-foot swimming pool. The main buildings were far enough along to be used.

Cement fence posts surround the castle property—each one with the initials "S" and "J." During the preliminary survey for Death Valley to become a National Monument, it was found that the land that the Castle sat on did not belong to Johnson. Death Valley became a National Monument in 1933, but it took several more years before legislation in the US Congress was passed to allow Johnson to purchase the 1500 acres in question for \$1.25 an acre.



The gates to the castle were once again opened and this time to regular guided tours at \$1 a person. The tours began in the patio area between the main house and the annex and ended in the vaulted-ceiling music room with a selection played on the pipe organ.

The entrance to the main house has a sign "Death Valley Ranch" carved above the main door and also the elaborate iron work.

The two-story great hall or living hall is filled with furnishings from Europe as well as those made especially for the Castle. The water fountain was on one side of the great hall and the fireplace on the other.

The lower music room has one of the many Majorcan rugs that was made for the Castle. Also notice the intricate woodwork in the ceiling and the pictures of Scotty and Johnson over the fireplace. The solarium with another water fountain is at the far

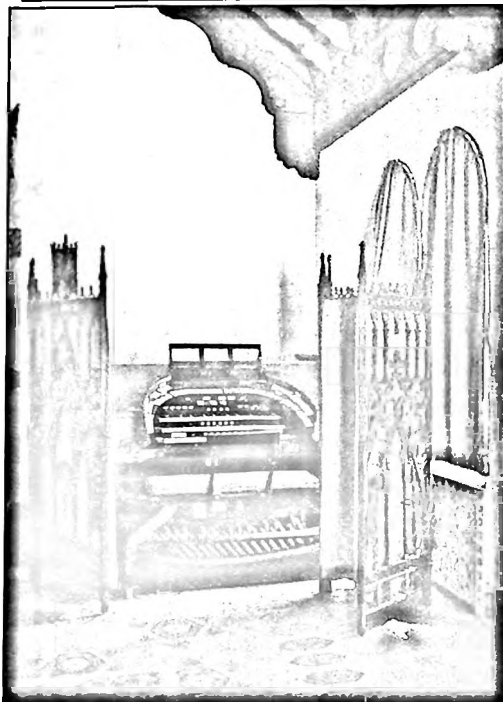
There was also a provision that stated that the government had the first right of purchase should Johnson ever sell the Castle.

By this time the Johnson's vacation spot had become a popular hotel and tourist attraction due to the fame of Death Valley Scotty. Thousands of tourists, along with Hollywood movie stars and reporters from around the country, flocked to the Death Valley each year to see "Scotty's Castle" and hopefully visit with one of the world's richest gold miners, Death Valley Scotty.

end.

Scotty spent little time in his bedroom, preferring to stay at Lower Grapevine. The dining room was the scene of many happy occasions. Some of the best-known people in America were house guests, and they were entertained in this room. During banquets Scotty would sit at one end of the table and Johnson at the other.

The unique dishes were made in Italy for the Castle. On each dish is the inscription J. and S. for Johnson and



and an unfinished bathroom with shower.

The music room is perhaps the finest room in the castle. And it's the best example of the wood craftsmanship that was used specifically for the castle.

The Welte organ console is in the corner behind the iron grille. The player piano on the left is quite unusual. You can play it like any other piano, but if you press the piano stops on the organ, the piano keys will respond to the organ keyboard. Neither Johnsons nor Scotty could play, but they enjoyed music and had an automatic roll player put in so they could enjoy music anytime. The organ pipes range in size from a pencil to 11 inches diameter and 16 feet tall. The tours end by descending a spiral staircase in the tower.

After the Johnsons moved to Hollywood in 1933, they spent more time at the Castle. Johnson always enjoyed relaxing and sharing a good laugh with Scott.

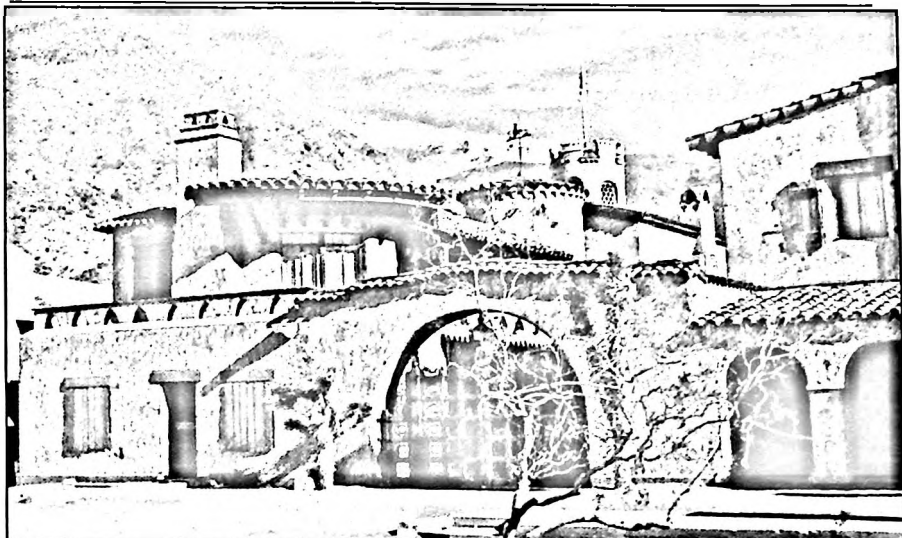
Bessie Johnson died in a car accident just west of Death Valley in 1943. Bessie and Albert had no heirs, so in 1946, Albert formed the Gospel Foundation of California to oversee their property and continue in his charitable work. Albert died in 1948. Both of them are buried in Oberlin, Ohio. Scotty was able to remain at the Castle telling his stories to visitors and then retreating to Lower Grapevine Ranch that Johnson had built for him, about five miles away. Scotty lived in the Castle the last two years of his life. He died in 1954, and was laid to rest on the hill overlooking the famous home that now bears his name.

Scott, DVR for Death Valley Ranch, and the Latin phrase which means "By our perseverance we will succeed."

The main-house kitchen also had a breakfast nook. A Spanish inscription was carved into the backs of the benches around the table. It reads "Serve yourself to all that you desire. Be seated. You are welcome." Most of the meals were prepared in the cookhouse and then brought down here to be kept warm before serving.

In the main house annex on the ground floor was the patio apartment, a commissary, and on the far end an office for Albert Johnson. The second floor had several guest rooms and the upper music room.

The patio apartment had a kitchen and dining area, a bedroom,



The Gospel Foundation of California managed Scotty's Castle until July 1970 when the National Park Service purchased the 1500 acres for \$850,000. The Land and Conservation Fund Act of 1965, which provided the funds for the purchase, made an exception to buy the buildings, however, they were not able to buy the furnishings and these were donated to the National Park Service by the Gospel Foundation of California.

I spent several years in the 1970s working in the Death Valley's north district that included Scotty's Castle. Part of that time I lived in the patio apartment in the castle. I supervised the castle guides when the National Park Service took over the guide service. And with the Castle manager, maintenance staff, and other professionals, we researched the history and preservation of the European and handmade furnishings. We also explored the land, hiking or driving to Lower Grapevine, which is where Scotty stayed most of his time.

In 1973, Bill Bolton, the Castle maintenance leadman, and I collaborated on a book that documents the construction and history of Scotty's Castle.

Today, living history programs are given in the Castle. Ranger tours are given through the tunnels and several times a year to Lower Grapevine.

There is a hand-carved Spanish saying in the beams around the ceiling in the lower music room. To me, it sums up the story of Scotty's Castle. Translated, it says: "In the far desert there is peace and tranquility. One feels the force of the sun and the mysterious silence of the night. Much treasure will be found hidden beneath these high mountains and great will be the recompense for those who look for this treasure by their hard labor."

I hope that if you have not had the opportunity to see and feel the wonders of Death Valley and Scotty's Castle, that you will soon have the good fortune to do so.

Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ken or the editor, Jim Krebs, P.M. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

Another award for a Denver Posse author

Westerners International, Inc. has informed the Denver Posse that Active Posse member Robert W. Larson has received its prestigious Co-Founders Award for the best nonfiction book for 2007. Larson's book GALL, LAKOTA WAR CHIEF had previously received the Silver Spur award as the best nonfiction book of 2007 from the Western Writers of America. Larson presented a paper in September to the Museum of the Rockies in association with the University of Montana on the subject of Chief Gall's role in resisting Jay Cooke's Northern Pacific Railroad. The Westerners Co-Founders Award will be presented to Larson at the annual meeting of the Western History Association in October. We have been extremely fortunate to many Westerners International award winners due to Ken Gaunt submitting member's articles in the Roundup, as well as books authored by members.

Board meetings

Sheriff Burdan called meetings of the Board of Directors for June 17 and August 20, primarily for the purpose of considering updates to the corporation's bylaws. Upon completion of the updating process the revised bylaws will be submitted to the Active and Reserve Posse members for their consideration and a vote.

August 2008 meeting

Any of us who has traveled U.S. Highway 285 near Conifer has probably noticed and admired the 100-year-old-plus yellow frame ranch house and the old barn and hangar with a Cessna plainly on view inside. That was the setting for the largest group ever to visit Norm Meyer's P.M. historic Midway House home and outbuildings containing museums. This was a great and historic setting for the Denver Posse's Summer Rendezvous. After self-guided tours of Norm's home, barnful of artifacts, shed with a vintage car and, of course, the hangar, the attendees gathered in a protected glen to

enjoy an elaborate barbeque with chicken, beef, pork and lots more, thanks to stand-in Chuckwangler George Krieger's efforts. Deputy Sheriff Steve Weil introduced remarks by local historians Paula Hutman Thomas, C. M. Barry Sweeney, C. M.; Tom Noel, P. M.; and Norman Meyer, P. M. Norm was presented with his Active Posse Certificate of Membership. It was a fascinating journey into the past. Thanks, Norm.

July 2008 meeting

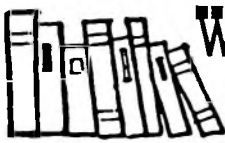
The annual business meeting of the Active and Reserve Posse members was held at the home of Bob Staadt, P.M. (deceased) and Florence Staadt, P.M. The Staadts have hosted this meeting nineteen times and Sheriff Burdan presented Florence with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of her hospitality. A gift certificate from the posse was also presented to her by Bob Lane, P.M. Amidst a veritable museum of antique agricultural machinery and equipment in the Staadt's spacious backyard (which backs onto the Highline Canal in Aurora), all the officers and committee chairpersons presented reports on the activity or status of their areas for the past year. At the business meeting, the Active and Reserve Posse members voted to have introductions of everyone at the regular Posse meetings – a tradition of the organization. Thirty-six Active and Reserve Posse enjoyed the perfect weather and Florence's famous steaks, corn on the cob, and all the trimmings. Thanks again, Staadts, including son Don and his family, for the hospitality.

Denver Westerners Posse member honored

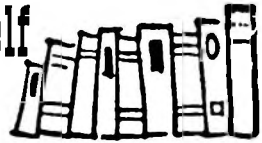
Reserve Posse member Joan White was inducted into the Denver Press Club Hall of Fame, along with four other journalists, at the 13th annual Hall of Fame banquet, Oct.3, for achievements in Colorado journalism and service to the Denver Press Club. Congratulations, Joan!

September Posse meeting

Following the regular meeting, at the written request of members, the Sheriff held a meeting of Active and Reserve Posse members. By majority vote the bylaws distributed by the Sheriff were declared invalid and the balloting procedure improper. The Roundup Foreman was authorized to certify the bylaws, and a motion was passed to put the bylaws voting on hold until that is done.



Westerners Bookshelf



Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876 by Jerome A. Greene. Foreword by Paul Hedren. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 384pp. Photos, bibliography, map, index. Cloth \$34.95)

June 25, 1876 is the date most commonly remembered in the Indian war era. It was on this date that Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer, along with two of his brothers, his nephew and brother-in-law, and more than 260 members of the 7th U.S. Cavalry met defeat on the banks of the Little Bighorn River. It was both the greatest victory for Native Americans and their greatest defeat, for it signaled the beginning of end of their era of free roaming among the western and central plains.

The site where this famous battle took place has itself become a famous place. Stricken Field is all about chronicling this important battlefield. There could not be a better or more appropriate historian to produce this work than Jerome Greene. His first book in 1973 was about the Custer battle (*Evidence and the Custer Enigma*), and now, more than two dozen books later, nearly all focusing on either Custer or the Great Sioux war of 1876, Greene gives the reader a well-written and extensively researched history of the battlefield itself. Himself a one-time park ranger at the battlefield (pay particular attention to the second photograph on p. 141), Greene began this study while ending his distinguished career as a Research Historian for the National Park Service.

This is not just a book for Custer aficionados. It is equally a book for anyone interested in better understanding the complex issue of park management and the difficult task of both preserving important historic sites and making those sites available to the American public.

Chapter One takes the reader into the Little Bighorn battle, giving a perspective from which to understand the remaining chapters, viz., a history of the battlefield. What emerges in the ensuing pages is a struggle between preservation and interpretation against an American public seeking access onto the site. To better understand this, records kept at the National Park site show a low annual attendance rate during World War Two of 14,046 in 1943 to a high of 446,052 in 1993 (records go through 2003). How has the NPS managed such visitation numbers in such a small confined site?

The first National Park Service Superintendent was Edward S. Luce in 1941, one of 16 NPS superintendents (the last one recently resigning and a new one awaiting appointment). Prior to that, the battlefield was under the supervision of the War Department (beginning in 1893). In addition to superintendents there have been National Park Service historians assigned to the site since 1953, with the present historian (John Doerner) holding the longest tenure (10 years).

Greene masterfully traverses the reader through all the complexities associated with the management of this historic site, beginning with the attempt to recover the exposed remains of the dead in 1877 to the 1879 declaration of the site as a

National Cemetery along with the erection of the famous obelisk on the spot where Custer fell (no doubt still the most compelling "intrusion" upon the famous battlefield).

The War Department years of management (1880-1940) are covered in two separate chapters, as is the case with the National Park Service administration from 1940 through 2000. A separate chapter deals with NPS interpretation. Greene also covers, in individual chapters, the research and collections at what is today called the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (the change from Custer Battlefield National Monument was made in 1991); support and interest groups affiliated with the battlefield; and last, the additional "intrusion" onto the battlefield, the controversial Indian Memorial in 2003. As Greene notes throughout his study, with each intrusion upon the battlefield there is a change of the battle site. Indeed, intrusions are more than the battlefield's integrity can handle. Add to this battlefield management and one begins to understand the complexities associated with this important historic site.

--John Hutchins, P.M.

Sand & Smoke, A Mile By Mile Guide for the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, by Osterwald, Doris B. and Becky Osterwald. Western Guideways, Ltd., Lakewood, Colo., copyright 2008. Soft cover, 87 pages, extensively illustrated, 24 maps, tables, bibliography, index, \$12.95.

In February 2006 Colorado's newest tourist railroad inaugurated the run of the San Luis Express between Alamosa and La Veta. Witnessing that maiden journey, Westerners Active Posse member Doris Osterwald, as the author of the very successful railroad guide *Cinders and Smoke* (first published in 1965), was encouraged to produce still another guide for this railroad as she had for other Colorado tourist railroads. With *Sand & Smoke*, she stepped up to the plate, and hit a home run. The large 8 1/2x11-inch page size showcases the visual attractiveness of the format, combining history, old and modern photos, maps, and a mile-by-mile informative guide to the rail route. The well-chosen historic photos not only complement the history text, but provide comparisons to the modern images, many taken by co-author Becky, and actually provide helpful insights to the track guide as one rides the train. The many maps provide excellent detail for successive sections of the route. There are botanical and geologic chapters, with maps and tables, as well as tables on the railroad and its rolling stock. A guide for the 29-mile trip from Alamosa to Antonito is included. These are just the highlights, since there are many details packed into this attractive book.

We have ridden the San Luis Express twice this summer, and find *Sand & Smoke* an indispensable guide for the trip. We recommend that readers have a copy in hand as they board the train, and even if you are unable to ride this tourist railroad, the book will still be good reading in your easy chair (and may whet your appetite when planning next year's Colorado outings).

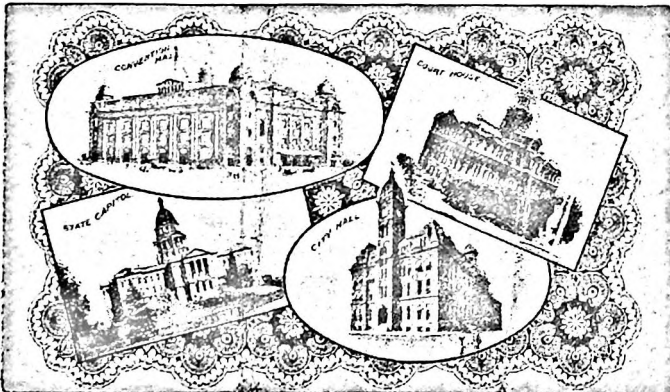
--Ed & Nancy Bathke, P. M.

Democratic National Convention, 1908 and 2008

In 1908 Denver, the Queen City of the Plains, proudly hosted the Democratic National Convention. The attendees enthusiastically nominated William Jennings Bryan as their presidential candidate. But, that November the nation elected the Republican candidate, William Howard Taft, as its next president. A century later historians search for memorabilia of that event. Someone saved his ticket (pictured below), when he sat as a guest in the balcony on July 7, 1908.



The back of this souvenir ticket is also shown, displaying Denver landmarks, the Convention Hall, Court House, State Capitol, and City Hall:



Now, a full century later, Denver again hosted the Democratic National Convention. What are the souvenirs from this epic event? What have you squirreled away, that someone will uncover decades from now, and preserve and cherish, so that the historian in 2108 can appreciate a piece of memorabilia a century old?



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

November - December 2008



Western Songs and Western Visions

Folk music and its changing view of the West

by Paul Malkoski

(presented March 26, 2008)



Our Author

Paul Malkoski was born in Pennsylvania near Valley Forge, and raised in West Virginia and Kentucky.

Paul moved to Colorado in 1973 and worked for 30 years for Mountain Bell, US West, and other telecommunications and computer companies. After losing his management job in 2002, his life took a strange twist. He returned to school at the University of Colorado at Denver to study history where Paul received his BA in 2004 and his MA in American History in 2006.

Paul teaches American History at the Community College of Aurora and works as a researcher and editor on special projects at the Colorado Historical Society. He lives in Aurora with his wife Mim, a teacher in the Cherry Creek Schools district, and their two French bulldogs. He suffers from a severe case of the incurable disease GAS – Guitar Acquisition Syndrome. Don't ask his wife about it.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

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Western Songs and Western Visions

Folk music and its changing view of the West

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The cowboy is, arguably, the foremost image in American folklore and popular culture. More than any other medium, movies popularized the cowboy who came to personify not only the West but also all America as movies found their ways into theaters worldwide. Ultimately, television would enforce the image further. Hollywood did not create the cowboy image, but it surely shaped his image. One of the more enduring representations popularized by film was the singing cowboy, the carefree, white-hatted good guy who traveled Western trails, saving damsels from distress and putting the bad guys away. He was the hero horseman who was quick with a gun, sure with a rope, and always had a song to sing.

While the real cowboys from the late nineteenth century did indeed sing, they seldom carried guitars or rode silver-studded saddles as portrayed in the movies. Cowboys often sang around the campfire as a way to pass the time and entertain each other. They frequently sang when they rode the night shift; it let the cattle know they were there and kept them calm. Their music was usually that which they brought with them into the West, typically rooted in English-Scotch-Irish traditions, and had little in common with the jazz-tinged confections screen stars crooned. The songs of the real Old West, as well as those of the best modern Western writ-

ers, reflect much about the cowboy and his way of life, and often convey a more accurate representation of the West as it was and as it is. Here is a song from the late nineteenth century that serves as an introduction to authentic cowboy work songs.

Whoopie Ti Yi Yo

As I was a-walkin' one morning for
pleasure
I spied a cowpuncher ridin' along
His hat was thrown back and his spurs
was a-jinglin'
And as he approached he was singin'
his song

Chorus

Whoopie ti yi yo, get along little dogies
It's your misfortune, ain't none of my
own
Whoopie ti yi yo, get along little dogies
You know that Wyoming will be your
new home

Your mama was raised way down in
Texas
Where the Jimson weed and the sand-
burrs grow
But we'll fill you up on prickly pear and
cholla
Until you are ready for Idaho

It's early in the spring when we round
up the dogies
We mark 'em and we brand 'em and
bob off their tails
Round up the horses, load up the chuck
wagon

Send them little dogies out on the long trail

For you'll be stew for Uncle Sam's
Injuns
It's beef, "Heep beef," I hear them cry
Get along, get along, get along little
dogies
This time next week you're gonna boil
and fry

This cowboy is decidedly upbeat and carefree as he sings about his vocation and his bovine charges. His hat is jauntily thrown back on his head, and while he is happy enough to be singing his song, he is painting some realities of life. He lets the listener know that the cattle he is about to drive up to Idaho originated in Texas, which is generally accurate. The great cattle ranches of Texas supplied most of the seed herds that eventually populated the West. An interesting time marker appears in the last verse when the cowboy cheerfully sings about the dogies's fate: "For you'll be stew for Uncle Sam's Injuns." As the Indian Wars came to an end in the 1880s and '90s, the government moved Native Americans to reservations throughout the West, and they could no longer roam freely or hunt. To replace the buffalo that had previously played such an important role in the lives of Native Americans, Indian agents and the Army purchased herds of beef cattle to feed their charges. The reference is one indication that this song probably emerged in the 1880s or '90s.

The great cattle trails themselves set the backdrop for many Western songs, perhaps the most famous of which is "The Old Chisolm Trail."

Another less well-known song is "The Goodnight-Loving Trail," which is less about the trail named for two of the more famous cattlemen – Charlie Goodnight and Oliver Loving – than it is about the issues of growing too old to sit a horse and drive cattle. Goodnight was among the first to bring cattle up to Colorado from the Texas Panhandle and is credited with inventing the chuck wagon, a rolling kitchen and larder on wheels. A lovely, but less known song is "The Colorado Trail." This song accurately reflects the sense of weariness and the hardships of the cowboy life. Drovers worked long hours – when they could find work – for very little pay, usually about \$25.00 a month in the 1870s. And there was a Colorado Trail. It came up out of the Texas panhandle and terminated near present-day La Junta. A few outfits used it for a brief period shortly after the Civil War to replenish the herds used to feed Colorado miners.

The Colorado Trail

Ride all the lonely nights
Ride through the day
Keep the herd a-movin' on
Movin' on its way

Chorus

Weep all ye little rains
Wail winds wail
All along, along, along
The Colorado Trail

Eyes like the morning star
Cheeks like a rose
Laura was a pretty girl
God almighty knows

Ride through the stormy night
Dark is the sky

I wish I'd stayed in Abilene
Nice and warm and dry

The song also points out the fact that most women did not find cowboys – that is, the workers, not the herd owners – a particularly attractive match; they were often away, always poor, and not considered reliable. They were, in short, saddle bums. This cowboy yearns for a girl he left behind, a common theme in old songs.

The Cowboy's Work in Song

Work was frequently the subject of folk songs from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Men and women were proud of the work skills that set them apart from others in society. For example, miners and mining folk songs, in particular, praise the bravery of the men who dug coal, who risked their lives deep underground. It is interesting to note that early nineteenth century English mining songs were replete with such images. But as the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum, as pressure mounted on the workers to produce, such paeans fell out of favor. Miners replaced them with songs bemoaning the capitalist system, which many believed enslaved them and took advantage of their labor. In America, folk songs often reflected a growing distrust of new technologies that devalued human labor skills. Like many older folk songs, "John Henry" appears in multiple versions; in some the hero is a miner, in others he lays railroad track. In all of the versions, however, the crux of the story is the hero's contest against new technology that can drill or hammer faster than men.

In the West, cowboys admired those who possessed better than average skills. All cowboys could ride, of course, and many were handy with a rope. Contests pitting cowboys against one another eventually evolved into rodeos. Some songs told the stories of prodigious skills brought to bear against almost mythical critters. "Windy Bill" is just such a tune.

Windy Bill

Well, Windy Bill was a Texas man,
And he could rope, you bet
The steer that Windy hadn't tied
He hadn't met him yet
But the boys they talked of a little black steer
Who was kind of a bad outlaw
Who lived way down in the bottoms
At the foot of a rocky draw

Well, this old black steer, he stood his ground
With punchers from everywhere
The boys gave Windy two-to-one
He couldn't quite get there
So Windy takes out his old roan horse
Whose withers and back were raw
And prepares to tackle that little black brute
Who lives down in the draw

With his Sam Stagg tree and his Brazos bits
And his chaps and taps to boot
And his old maguey tied hard and fast
Bill goes to tackle the brute
And the little rope horse, he saunters around
That steer begins to paw
Then he stuck his tail straight up in the air
And he heads down through the draw

Well, Windy's horse went after him
 Like he'd been eatin' corn
 Windy stuck that old maguey
 Right around the black steer's horns
 And the little rope horse, he shut it right
 down
 And the cinches bust like straw
 And the old maguey and the Sam Stagg
 tree
 Went driftin' down the draw

Well Windy lands in a big rock pile
 And his face and hands were scratched
 Well, he said he could always rope his
 steer
 But he guessed he met his match
 And he pays his debts like a little old
 man
 Without no bit of jaw
 And allows that old black steer was the
 boss
 Of everything in that draw

Well, the moral of this story, boys
 Is very plain to see
 When you go out to rope your steer
 Don't you tie hard your maguey
 But you takes your dallies like a man
 To the California law
 And you won't see your old rimfire
 Go driftin' down the draw

This story song is not so much about technology as it is about running into a bad steer and using bad technique. It is plain that Windy is a Texas cowboy of some repute with a rope, but he fails to come out on top in this story. What makes "Windy Bill" appealing is that it is packed with interesting cowboy lingo. In the third verse, as Windy prepares to go after this ornery steer, he makes ready his gear: his Sam Stagg tree, Brazos bits, chaps, taps, and his

old maguey. A "tree" is the front part of the saddle where the horn is. Sam Stagg was a saddle maker, probably from Texas, though we know little about him. He had developed a method of draping leather over the wooden saddle frame to make the tree, and his saddles were popular with cowboys who roped. (An interesting personal anecdote fits in here. I learned "Windy Bill" from a 1965 Elektra recording by Tom Rush, who had learned his version from Ian Tyson. In that version, Windy uses a "Sam Slick tree." Indeed, that is the way the lyrics are printed on the liner notes of Rush's album and Tyson's own 1983 recording of the song. When researching this song, I could find no reference anywhere to Sam Slick and saddle making. Searching the Internet, I discovered references to Texas saddle maker Sam Stagg. On the other hand, this song appeared in print originally in Jack Thorp's *Songs of the Cowboy*, published in 1908. In that version, Windy is riding a "sand slicked tree." All this seems to point to the inaccuracy of human hearing when collecting or learning songs, part of the charm of the oral tradition or what Pete Seeger called the "folk process.")

Coming out of Texas, Windy favors a "Brazos bit," a unique style of bit – the part of the bridle that goes in the horse's mouth – favored by Mexican cowboys, the vaqueros. (Buckaroo is a corruption of the word vaquero.) Windy dons his chaps, the leggings used by cowboys. Chaps come in a variety of styles: batwing, shotgun, chinks, and woolies, to name a few. They all serve the same purpose, that is, to protect the rider's legs from brush in rough country. Perhaps more importantly, cowboys

do much of their work on the ground. At roundups in the spring, they bring the steers into pens, where they rope them, one at a time, and stretch them out so they can brand and doctor them as needed. No cowboy wanted a stray hoof or horn in the leg, so chaps were a necessity to protect the legs. "Taps" refer to "tapaderos," the leather hoods over the front of stirrups that protected the rider's foot and kept branches from catching in the stirrup. The vaqueros favored taps. Finally, his "maguey" is his lasso, usually a light rope made from the fibers of the maguey plant, another corruption of a Spanish term.

Windy had no difficulty roping this bad black steer. His troubles began when his horse put on the brakes and the rope went taut. Since Windy had tied his maguey tight around his saddle horn, the steer was able to pull it tight and break the saddle's cinches, and Windy winds up on the ground while his rope and saddle trail after the steer as it makes its way down the draw. Thus the moral in the last verse: Don't tie hard your maguey, but take "dallies" – loose turns – around the horn like they do in California. Some modern-day cowboys might argue that taking dallies around the saddle horn is a good way to lose a finger.

Love, Longing, and Nostalgia

If one is to believe the songs, cowboys loved their West, the wide-open prairies that came to symbolize the early visions of the Western landscape, at least until John Ford's wonderful Western movies used Monument Valley as a mythical backdrop in such classics as *The Searchers* and other John Wayne vehicles. But many of the

old cowboy tunes conjure up images of freedom. One such song dating from the late nineteenth century is "Leavin' Cheyenne."

Leavin' Cheyenne

I ride an old paint, I lead an old dan
I'm goin' to Montana for to throw the houlihan
They feed in the coulees and they water in the draw
Their tales are all matted and their backs are all raw

Chorus

Goodbye old paint, I'm a-leavin' Cheyenne
Goodbye old paint, I'm a-leavin' Cheyenne
I'm leavin' Cheyenne I'm goin' to Montana
Goodbye old paint, I'm a-leavin' Cheyenne

Now old Bill Jones had two daughters and a son
The son went to Denver and the daughters went wrong
His wife she got killed in a poolroom fight
He still keeps a-singin' from mornin' till night

Now when I die take my saddle from the wall
Put it on my pony, lead him out of the stall
Tie my bones on his back, head our faces to the west
And we'll ride the prairie that we love the best

Like other traditional songs, this one combines components of a story song, as in the second verse about

Bill Jones, and personal reflections on the cowboy life, and closes with a nostalgic view of the West. This version of "Leavin' Cheyenne" is really a combination of two different songs. The first verse portrays the life in simple terms, and the cowboy here looks to Montana as the last free range in the West, the last place a man might still ride and rope for a living. And when he dies, he wants to be tied to his pony and allowed to roam the prairies, a rather romantic and unrealistic view. In short, the song is more about the end of the frontier and the taming of the West than anything else.

Cowboys lived rough, lonely lives. Even after the day of the great cattle drives came to an end, most people held them in low regard. They were, after all, working men of little substance, who moved from one job to the next. They had a hard time settling down in one place not because they were tied to a roaming life style, but rather because they were driven by economic necessity. In that regard they were not much different from the miners who dug for coal and precious minerals in the Western states. But because of their disreputable nature, women did not see much future in settling down with a cowboy, who most often owned no land and had few prospects. One rather obscure song points it out rather bleakly.

Rambler Gambler

I'm a rambler, I'm a gambler
I'm a long ways from my home
And if you don't like me
Just leave me alone

For it's dark and it's rainin'
And the moon gives no light

And my pony can't hardly travel
On this dark road at night

You know, I once had me a true love
Lord, her age was just sixteen
She was the flower of Golden
And the rose of Saline

But her parents, they didn't like me
Now she's just the same
If I'm writ on your books, gal
Just blot out my name

Oh there's changes in the ocean
And there's changes in the sea
And there's changes in my true love
But there ain't no change in me

In this song, we find the cowboy lamenting the loss of his one true love. Well, was she really true? Perhaps she was the one he wanted, but it is clear that her parents did not think much of this cattle bum, and eventually got through to the girl. It is the same old unrequited love story, in many ways, but it gives a strong indication as to the cowboy's social standing, or rather the lack thereof. Most cowboys, of course, did eventually settle down in some fashion. Many were able to start their own ranches, settling in ever more remote places, or they simply remained working for others on the big spreads, like the King Ranch in Texas, once the largest ranch in the country before economics made large-scale cattle ranching difficult.

A final example of a love story reflects the proximity of cowboys and Hispanics in the old Southwest. When the United States acquired much of the Southwest from Mexico via the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo after the war of

1846, there were thousands of Hispanics already living there and across the border in Mexico. As cowboys came into the area, it would not be unusual for them to encounter Mexican women. Credited to one Charles Badger Clark, this song originally appeared in the second edition of Jack Thorp's *Songs of the Cowboy*, which appeared in 1921. Thorp had traveled around New Mexico and Arizona and other parts of the West collecting cowboy tunes. He would ask cowmen to sing any songs they might know while he listened. Thorp, though not a folklorist or academic, wrote them down as best he could and learned the tunes. His small folio was the first collection of cowboy tunes to appear in print, predating Texas folklorist John Lomax by some 20 years.

Spanish is the Loving Tongue

Spanish is the loving tongue
Soft as music, light as spray
'Twas a girl I learned it from
Living down Sonora way
I don't look much like a lover
Yet I say her love words over
Mostly when I'm all alone
"Mi amor, mi corazon"

On those nights when I would ride
She would listen for my spurs
Fling the big door open wide
Raise them laughing eyes of hers
How the hours get to flying
All too soon I'd hear her sighing
In her little sorry tone
"Adios, mi corazon"

I ain't seen her since that night
I can't cross the line, you know
Wanted for a gambling
Like as not it's better so
Yet I've always sort of missed her

Since that last sad night I kissed her
Left her heart and lost my own
"Adios, mi corazon"

This version appeared on a 1963 Vanguard recording *Early Morning Rain* by Ian & Sylvia, a Canadian couple who achieved some fame in the '60s. It was not until 1990 when I encountered a version on a recording by Michael Martin Murphey that restored the original lyrics. In that version, the last two verses are:

But one time I had to fly
For a foolish gamblin' fight
And we said a swift goodbye
In that black unlucky night
When I'd loosed her arms from clingin'
With her words the hoofs kept ringin'
As I galloped north alone
"Adios, mi corazon"

Never seen her since that night
I can't cross the line, you know
She was Mex and I was white
Like as not it's better so
Yet I've always sort of missed her
Since that last wild night I kissed her
Left her heart and lost my own
"Adios, mi corazon"

It appears that Ian & Sylvia may have considered the term "Mex" offensive and elected to avoid any controversy during the Civil Rights era. It is also possible that they merely felt the song to be too long for recording or performance, but that seems unlikely since they recorded a number of story songs (e.g., "The Pride of Petrovar" and "Brave Wolfe") that were as long or longer. While the term may be offensive to some, the original version illustrates that there was indeed racial prejudice

at the time and that an affair between a white man and a Mexican woman would not find approval among many.

Shifting Views in the New West

When someone mentions cowboy music today, one of the first images that comes to mind is cowboy poetry featured at events like the Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering which attracts big numbers of visitors to that small Nevada town each January. The best of the modern-day cowboy singers and songwriters also attend and perform at Elko. They have recorded extensively, even though their work is not widely known to the broader community. Cowboy songwriters continue to address many of the same topics cowboys did years ago: work, love, and loneliness (or joy) in living a life away from the city. The work is still hard, the hours long, on ranches. A skilled rider and roper – if he’s young and tough – might actually make a living rodeoing, which has become a subject of many a song. Ranchers still ride horses, but more often than not one finds them mounted on ATVs and sporting baseball caps. Such is progress.

One of the finest Western singer/songwriters is Ian Tyson, formerly of Ian & Sylvia. After their act and their marriage broke up in the 1970s, Tyson bought a small ranch outside Calgary, Alberta, where he raised champion cutting horses. He also applied his considerable writing and singing talents exclusively to Western and cowboy topics, turning his back on much of the music he had made in the '60s. His most famous song, "Someday Soon," was a hit for Judy Collins in 1967, and later reprised by country art-

ist Suzy Boguss. One of Tyson's more enduring images is "The Navajo Rug" co-authored by Tom Russell.

Navajo Rug

Well, it's two eggs up on whiskey toast
Home fries on the side
Wash her down with roadhouse coffee
Burns up your insides
Just a Canyon-Colorado diner
And a waitress I did love
I sat in the back 'neath an old stuffed bear
And a worn out Navajo rug

Now Old Jack, the boss, he left at six
And it's Katie bar the door
She'd pull down that Navajo rug
And she spread it 'cross the floor,
Hey, I saw lightening 'cross the Sacred Mountains
Saw woven turtledoves
I was lying there next to Katie
On that old Navajo rug

Aye aye aye, Katie,
Shades of red and blue
Aye aye aye, Katie,
Whatever became of the Navajo rug
and you?

Well I saw Old Jack about a year ago
He said the place burned to the ground
And all I saved was there here bear tooth
And Katie she's left town
But Katie she got her souvenir too
Jack spat a tobacco plug
You should've seen her comin' through the smoke
A-draggin' that Navajo rug

So every time I cross the Sacred Mountains
And lightening breaks above

It always takes me back in time
 To my long lost Katie love
 But everything keeps a-movin'
 And everybody's on the go
 You don't find things that last anymore
 Like a double-woven Navajo

The song uses the appealing image of a Navajo rug to recall a time and a girl in the more recent West, yet also conjures up some of the same nostalgia and myth that permeates our vision of the West. The West as it once was seems to be slipping further into the past and only strong memories seem to hold on tight and keep it alive.

Tyson does not ignore the traditions, stories, and legends of the West. On many of his recordings (see the bibliographical essay below) he includes updated versions of traditional songs along side his own compositions. But he is quite adept at storytelling in his own way. His song, "The Gift," recalls the life and work of the great Western artist Charles M. Russell. Russell is in a category nearly by himself when it comes to capturing the spirit of the closing American frontier. He arrived in Montana in 1880 and worked as a wrangler for a number of ranching outfits. By his own admission (see the foreword to his book of prose *Trails Plowed Under* he was never much of a cowboy, but he respected the men who lived that life. Russell had a unique painting talent, which he developed on his own and was able to make a living as an artist. His wife Nancy was his business manager, though Charlie was something of fun-loving handful. He preferred to spend his evenings sitting at the local saloon with his old cowhand buddies, listening to their stories and lies. He

was known to have traded a painting for a bottle of whisky on more than one occasion so that he could sit by the fire with his chums. Needless to say, Nancy was not keen on Charlie giving away his art. Tyson gives this song plenty of local color: Judith Basin is the area of central Montana drained by the Judith River; the Piegan are a tribe of the Blackfoot Indians who inhabited parts of Montana in Russell's time.

The Gift

In old St. Louis over in Missouri
 The mighty Mississippi it rolls and flows
 A son was born to Mary Russell
 And it starts the legend every cowboy knows

Young Kid Russell he was born to wander
 Ever westward he was bound to roam
 Just a kid of sixteen in 1880
 Up in wild Montana he found his home

God made Montana for the wild man
 For the Piegan and the Sioux and Crow
 But he saved His greatest gift for Charlie
 Said, "Get her all down before she goes,
 Charlie
 You gotta get her all down cause she's
 bound to go"

God hung the stars over Judith Basin
 God put the magic in young Charlie's hand
 All was seen all remembered
 Every shining mountain every longhorn brand

He could paint the light on horsehide
 shining
 Great passing herds of the buffalo

And a cowcamp cold on a rainy morn-
ing

And the twisting wrist of the houlihan
thrower

When the Lord called Charlie to His
home up yonder

He said, "Kid Russell I got a job for
you,

You're in charge of sunsets in old Mon-
tana,

'Cause I can't paint them quite as good
as you

And when you're through – we'll go
out and have a few

And Nancy Russell will make sure it's
just two"

The modern cowboy, like his historical counterpart, is a workingman, typically hiring on for meager wages, working long hours in poor conditions. Yet there is something powerful about the work and environment that strongly calls to some. Perhaps no one has done a better job of capturing the meaning of this life better than Coloradan Gary McMahan. McMahan operates a ranch outside of Fort Collins and is known for being one of the finest yodelers extant. He writes first-rate songs, but none better than "The Old Double Diamond," which captures the spiritual meaning of the cowboy way of life. Interestingly, he strikes his song around a modern cowboy who is leaving the ranch where he learned his trade because it is being auctioned off, an all-too-common occurrence in today's West. Economics have made it difficult to maintain privately-owned working cattle ranches, which often are sold off and divided into building lots of 20 acres or so, or end up in corporate hands as trophy

ranches.

The Old Double Diamond

Now the old Double Diamond lay out
east of Dubois

In the land of the buffalo

And the auctioneer's gavel, how it
rapped and it rattled

As I watched the old Double Diamond
go

Won't you listen to the wind

Mother Nature's violin

When I first hired on to the old Double
Diamond

I was a dammed poor excuse for a man

Never learned how to aim when the
spirit was tame

Couldn't see all the cards in my hand

And the wind whipped the granite
above me

Blew the tumble weed clean through
my soul

Well, I fought her winters and I busted
her horses

And I took more than I thought I could
stand

But the battles with the mountains and
the cattle

Seemed to bring out the best in a man

I guess a sailor he needs his ocean

And a mama her babies to hold

And I need the hills of Wyoming

And the land of the buffalo

Now she's sellin' out, I'm movin' on

But I'm leavin' with more than I came

'Cause I got this saddle, and it ain't for
sale

And I got this song to sing

Find a new range to ride, new knots to
tie

In a country where cowboys are king

I turn my tail to the wind, and the old

Double Diamond

Just disappears into the sage

While private ranches seem to be going the way of the Model T, cowboys still work cattle, ride fences, and rope and brand. There are a few things that have not yet been fully mechanized. Michael Burton, like Gary McMahon, is a rancher and songwriter. Burton lives in southern Arizona where he doesn't have to put up with snow and -30° F wind chills while feeding livestock in the winter. But he knows that the pull of the cowboy life is something that simply cannot be explained to some city folk.

Night Rider's Lament

Last night while I was out ridin'
The graveyard shift, midnight till dawn
The moon was bright as a readin' light
For a letter from an old friend back home

And he asked me:

"Why do you ride for your money?
Why do you rope for short pay?
You ain't gettin' nowhere, you're losin'
your share,
Boy, you must've gone crazy out there"

He tells me:

"Last week I run onto Ginny
She's married and has a good life
Ah, you shore missed the track when
you never came back
She's the perfect professional's wife"

"She asked me:

Why does he ride for your money?
Why does he rope for short pay?
He ain't gettin' nowhere, he's losin' his
share
Aw, he must've gone crazy out there"

Well they never seen the Northern lights
Never seen the hawk on the wing
Never seen the spring hit the Great
Divide
Ah, they never heard old camp cookie
sing

Well, I read up the last of my letter
Tore off the stamp for Black Jim
When Billy rode up to relieve me
He just looked at my letter and he
grinned

And then he said:
"Why do they ride for your money?
Why do they rope for short pay?
They ain't gettin' nowhere, they're
losin' your share,
Hell, they must've gone crazy out
there"

A final, and somewhat wry look at the modern cowboy West comes again from Ian Tyson. Here Tyson compares the ways of the coyote and cowboy, both survivors in a modernizing world. Some might say that the coyote has done the better job of adaptation. At least he is not deep in debt to the bank and worrying about how much rain is going to fall this season.

The Coyote & The Cowboy

The coyote is a survivor
I reckon he's got to be
He lives in the snow at 40 below
And Malibu by the sea
And I'm just an old cowpuncher
I love to listen to his tune
As I get high on a bottle of rye
The coyote gets high on the moon
As I get high on a bottle of rye
The coyote gets high on the moon
Well the cowboy is a conundrum

A contradiction in this age
 Well he says he's doing fine
 On the poverty line
 With a working cowboy's wage
 The whiskey bottle costs 13 bucks
 The prairie moon is free
 So who is the dumber son of a bitch?
 The little coyote or me
 So who is the dumber son of a bitch?
 The little coyote or me

So with thoughts of reincarnation
 Well I drifted off to dream
 I mated for life with a coyote wife
 A bushy tail coyote queen
 Away down in the valley
 At the old Longview Saloon
 The cowboy got high on a bottle of rye
 We got drunk on the moon
 The cowboy got high on a bottle of rye
 We got drunk on the moon

Bibliographic Essay

No one collection of cowboy songs – written or recorded – sufficiently covers the topic. The first collection of cowboy songs was Jack Thorp's *Songs of the Cowboy* originally published in 1908. A reprint of the original is now available in hardback (Kessinger Publishing, 2007). Of potentially more interest to the non-musician is a new collection that draws 16 songs from the originals. Jack Thorp's *Songs of the Cowboys* was edited and introduced by Mark L. Gardner (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2005). For those looking for authenticity, this may be the best place to start. Gardner thoroughly researched both the 1908 edition, as well as the second edition of 1928. This beautiful volume includes the lyrics of sixteen songs, with illustrations by Western artist Ronald Kil. Like

the original editions, Gardner includes no musical notation. However, Gardner and fellow musician Rex Rideout perform all the songs on an accompanying CD, on which they use period instruments, primarily banjo, mandolin, and parlor guitar, played in appropriate styles.

Folklore, as a professional and academic pursuit, only came into being in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. John Lomax from the University of Texas also collected and published cowboy songs, as well as many other folk song types and forms. *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, by John Lomax and Alan Lomax, (New York City: MacMillan, 1948) became the sourcebook for many young singers during the Folk Revival from 1940 to 1970. It is out of print today, but the 1948 edition is generally available and still provides both great songs and insightful annotation.

Tracking down the meanings of cowboy terms can be a challenge for the city slicker, but *The Cowboy Handbook*, Bruce Dillman, (Lincoln, NE: Lone Prairie Publishing, 1994) does a pretty good job. Dillman's work is light hearted but researched and includes a glossary of terms that was indispensable in ferreting out the meaning of cowboy lingo. It is highly recommended to anyone wishing to talk like a real cowboy.

Discography

As a child growing up in the 1950s, I watched the Saturday morning shoot-em-ups with great interest. Gene Autry and Roy Rogers were heroes of the first rank. Their brand of cowboy music was more jazz-influenced pop music, some of which

found a home on the Grand Ol' Opry and other "Country/Western" music outlets. The term "Country/Western" came about when *Billboard Magazine*, the recording industry's weekly business organ, lumped "western" music in with country because it had no other easy way to categorize it. Like many others, however, my first introduction to authentic cowboy music came during the Folk Revival in the 1960s. Canadian singers Ian & Sylvia flirted with the big time and appeared on the ABC television series *Hootenanny* in 1963. They recorded six albums on Vanguard Records, each of which contains at least one cowboy or Western-oriented song. The first four albums are indispensable. Vanguard recently reissued remastered CD versions of these long-out-of-print classics, and even put out a boxed set that also includes a wonderful and informative booklet. The first four albums are: Ian & Sylvia (1963), *Four Strong Winds* (1963), *Northern Journey*, (1964), and *Early Morning Rain* (1965).

No one does traditional tunes better than Don Edwards. Born and raised in New Jersey, Edwards fell in love with folk music and soon found himself drawn to Western songs. He moved to Texas and over the last 40 years has carved out a career as a purveyor of cowboy tunes, from the traditional to Gene Autry to Marty Robbins. He dedicated his life to collecting anything and everything that related to traditional Western songs. Edwards possesses an outstanding grasp of the songs and their origins. He has a strong, clear tenor voice and is a deft guitar player. *Saddle Songs* (Dualtone Music Group, 1997) is a 2-CD set of traditional tunes, many drawn from Thorp's collections,

including "Little Joe the Wrangler," "The Old Chisholm Trail," and "The Streets of Laredo," all done with just vocal and guitar. Edwards takes a slightly more modern approach on *Moonlight and Skies* (Dualtone Music Group, 2006) that includes his version of "The Long Trail" and his own delightful "Coyotes." He has recorded extensively and it is all good.

No one captured both the old and the new better than Ian Tyson. After settling onto his ranch near Calgary, he began recording albums focused on cowboy music. The place to start is *Old Corrals and Sagebrush* (Vanguard, 1994), which contains nearly all of two earlier releases on a single CD. Traditional tunes like "Windy Bill" and "Sierra Peaks" fit comfortably side by side with new songs like "The Old Double Diamond" and "Will James." Tyson is a gifted singer and the arrangements are spot on. Tyson's masterwork, however, is *Cowboyography* (Vanguard, 1994). Here Tyson presents a collection of eleven self-penned new cowboy classics, including "The Gift" and "Cowboy Pride." Since its original release on vinyl in 1987, enthusiasts have recognized it as perhaps the finest single collection of modern western songs.

In an earlier lifetime, Michael Martin Murphey was a country and folk artist who managed to chart a few big hits ("Geronimo's Cadillac" and "Wildfire"). When the hits ran out in the 1980s, Murphey relocated to Taos and immersed himself in Western songs and lore. He has since recorded a number of albums of Western songs, new and old, backed by some of Nashville's best sidemen. *Cowboy Songs 1* (Warner Bros., 1990) is particularly charming

as he covers "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and "Happy Trails." One of the album's highlights is the spookiest version ever of "O Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." Murphey sings it, appropriately, as a dirge, backed by nothing more than a harmonium. Hearing it will make you understand why a cowboy did not want to be buried out alone, away from town. I am particularly fond of *Cowboy Songs III – Rhymes of the Renegade* (Warner Bros., 1993), which finds Murphey focused on nothing but bad guys and outlaws, a rich vein of western music. Songs include "The Ballad of Jesse James" (one of the baddest of bad guys), "El Paso," and "Cole Younger." Murphey's CDs also include one dedicated to horse songs, *Horse Legends*, (Warner Bros., 1997) and a *Cowboy Christmas* (Warner Bros., 1991). Something for nearly everyone.

There are many other voices and artists worth listening to, from the Sons of the Pioneers to Marty Robbins to Johnny Cash. All of them and more have left their marks on western music. In the end, it is mostly a matter of taste.

Westerners Bookshelf



Stricken Field: The Little Bighorn Since 1876 by Jerome A. Greene. Foreword by Paul Hedren. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. 384pp. Photos, bibliography, map, index. Cloth \$34.95)

June 25, 1876 is the date most commonly remembered in the Indian war era. It was on this date that Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer, along with two of his brothers, his nephew and brother-in-law, and more than 260 members of the 7th U.S. Cavalry met defeat on the banks of the Little Bighorn River. It was both the greatest victory for Native Americans and their greatest defeat, for it signaled the beginning of end of their era of free roaming among the western and central plains.

The site where this famous battle took place has itself become a famous place. *Stricken Field* is all about chronicling this important battlefield. There could not be a better or more appropriate historian to produce this work than Jerome Greene. His first book in 1973 was about the Custer battle (*Evidence and the Custer Enigma*), and now, more than two dozen books later, nearly all focusing on either Custer or the Great Sioux war of 1876, Greene gives the reader a well-written and extensively researched history of the battlefield itself. A one-time park ranger at the battlefield (pay particular attention to the second photograph on p. 141), Greene began this study while ending his distinguished career as a Research Historian for the National Park Service.

This is not just a book for Custer aficionados. It is equally a book for anyone interested in better understanding the complex issue of park management and the difficult task of both preserving important historic sites and making those sites available to the American public.

Chapter One takes the reader into the Little Bighorn battle, giving a per-

continued on page 20...

Over the corral rail

Compiled by Ken Gaunt, P.M., Bob Pulcifer, P.M. and Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to one of the above. Deadline is the 10^h of the first month in the date of publication.

Denver Westerners Mourn Loss of Stalwart Member Hank Toll

Henry W. Toll, Jr. has been a part of the Denver Posse of Westerners since its inception in 1945. His father was a charter member of the Posse, and Hank often joined him at meetings. He has been an active member since 1976, and served the organization as Tallyman, Deputy Sheriff, and in 1987 as Sheriff. In 2001 he was honored by the Posse with the Lifetime Achievement Award in Western History.

Hank Toll was born on Dec. 20, 1923, and attended Graland School, Corona (now Dora Moore) School, Morey Junior High and the Randall School. He graduated from Deerfield (Mass.) Academy in 1941, and received his BA from Williams College in 1945. Following service in World War II as a Naval gunnery officer, Hank returned to Denver, and graduated from the University of Colorado Medical School in 1950. Henry was a pathologist, serving at various hospitals; among his accomplishments were Denver County Deputy Coroner, president of the Denver County Medical Society, as well as a member of the staff of Denver General Hospital and also of the faculty of the University of Colorado School of Medicine during the period 1957 to 1993.

Such an accomplished career would be a lifetime for most, but Henry also attended the University of Denver Law School, receiving an LLB in 1946, later a JD, and being admitted to the Colorado Bar in 1956. Subsequently he enjoyed a legal career with the firm of Shafroth and Toll, a firm founded in 1927 by H. W. Toll, Sr. and Morrison Shafroth.

But a second distinguished career was not enough for this man. He was an avid "river rat", and this interest is indicated by his Denver Westerners' presentations, "River Running in Seward's Ice Box" (Roundup, May-June 1981), and "Canyons of the Colorado Revisited" (Roundup, March-April 1986).

Henry Toll was a third-generation Coloradan, and his presentation to the Denver Westerners on January 25, 1995, (the 50th anniversary of the organization), "Letters of a Young Lawyer", told of his grandfather Charles H. Toll's experiences as a lawyer in Western Colorado and then in Denver as a public servant. Charles Toll married Katharine Wolcott, and the family relationship then included U. S. Senator Edward O. Wolcott. Also a member of this prominent family was Roger Toll, early superintendent of Rocky Mountain National Park (Hank's brother Giles documented Roger Toll's career in the Sept.-Oct. 2005 issue of the Roundup).

Visualizing Dr. Toll leading rafters down the Colorado River, few would guess that he was a most illustrious physician, attorney, outdoorsman, philanthropist and Westerner whose humility and humor hid tremendous, varied and selfless lifetime achievements.

In Memoriam

In November the Denver Westerners lost two family members of the Posse. Freda Rizzari, the widow of Posse member Francis Rizzari, died just two weeks after her 97th birthday. Francis was a long-time member, holding many offices, editing the 1964 Brand Book and the Roundup, and presenting at least 16 programs to the Posse. He was a well-known Colorado historian and collector, and was recognized by many awards, including the Denver Westerners' Lifetime Achievement Award in Western History in 1992 and induction into the Jefferson County Historical Commission Hall of Fame. Francis was known for historical reprints, including the Crofutt Grip-Sack Guide. Freda had shared in his historical endeavors. She had written historical papers as well, and had been a proofreader for all of the late Posse member Bob Brown's books.

Just five days later, Frances Ronzio passed away, just 13 days before her 96th birthday. Her husband Richard Ronzio was the 1973 Sheriff of the Westerners, held many other offices, and was the editor of the 1967 Brand Book. He had an outstanding collection of Colorado photographs and other memorabilia, and provided many photos for Colorado on Glass, for the publications of Sundance, and in the book he authored, Silver Images of Colorado. He was one of the trio of Posse members (Charles Ryland, Francis Rizzari and Richard Ronzio) who comprised Cubar, the publisher of the 1966 edition of the Crofutt Grip-Sack Guide, and the reprint of the Williams Tourist Guide to the San Juans.

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Publications by Denver Westerners

We note that several members have recently authored books. John Monnett's book, *Where a Hundred Soldiers were Killed, the Struggle for the Powder River Country in 1866 and the Making of the Fetterman Myth*, was published in 2008 by the University of New Mexico Press, and very quickly the first printing is nearly sold out.

Vonnie Perkins' *D. C. Oakes, Family, Friends and Foe*, published by Stony Ridge Press in October, was featured at book signings at the Colorado Historical Society on three dates in November and December.

The Pikes Peak Library District has published the proceedings of its third annual Pikes Peak Regional History Symposium, "*To Spare No Pain*", *Zebulon Montgomery Pike and his 1806-1807 Southwest Expedition*. Included articles are "Aaron Burr, James Wilkinson, Zebulon Pike and the Great Louisiana Conspiracy", by John Hutchins, and "The Pike Centennial Celebration 1906", by Ed and Nancy Bathke.

The Pikes Peak Posse of the Westerners has published its second volume of "Occasional Papers", *Pikes Peak Legends*, and it includes the paper "Harry Orchard, the Man God Made Again", by Denver member Ed Bathke.

Jeff Broome's next book, *Custer into the West*, is being published by Upton and Sons, as part of the Custer Trails Series, and should be available in January 2009.

Sandra Dallas' next novel, *Prayers for Sale*, set in Middle Swan, Colorado, and modeled after Breckenridge during the 1930s, is expected in April 2009. Mining buffs note: it is about gold dredging.

Information on other publications by members of the Denver Westerners is welcomed.



..book review continued from page 16

spective from which to understand the remaining chapters, viz., a history of the battlefield. What emerges in the ensuing pages is a struggle between preservation and interpretation against an American public seeking access onto the site. To better understand this, records kept at the National Park site show a low annual attendance rate during World War Two of 14,046 in 1943 to a high of 446,052 in 1993 (records go through 2003). How has the NPS managed such visitation numbers in such a small confined site?

The first National Park Service Superintendent was Edward S. Luce in 1941, one of 16 NPS superintendents (the last one recently resigning and a new one awaiting appointment). Prior to that, the battlefield was under the supervision of the War Department (beginning in 1893). In addition to superintendents there have been National Park Service historians assigned to the site since 1953, with the present historian (John Doerner) holding the longest tenure (10 years).

Greene masterfully traverses the reader through all the complexities associated with the management of this historic site, beginning with the attempt to recover the exposed remains of the dead in 1877 to the 1879 declaration of the site as a National Cemetery along with the erection of the famous obelisk on the spot where Custer fell (no doubt still the most compelling "intrusion" upon the famous battlefield).

The War Department years of management (1880-1940) are covered in two separate chapters, as is the case with the National Park Service administration from 1940 through 2000. A separate chapter deals with NPS interpretation. Greene also covers, in individual chapters, the research and collections at what is today called the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument (the change from Custer Battlefield National Monument was made in 1991); support and interest groups affiliated with the battlefield; and last, the additional "intrusion" onto the battlefield, the controversial Indian Memorial in 2003. As Greene notes throughout his study, with each intrusion upon the battlefield there is a change of the battle site. Indeed, intrusions are more than the battlefield's integrity can handle. Add to this battlefield management and one begins to understand the complexities associated with this important historic site.

Stricken Field is upon its publication a Western history "classic," not to be outdone until additional history can be written one or two generations from now. Anyone interested in Western history will both want this book in their library and will want to glean from its pages the important knowledge presented in the book. It's a must own and must know history.

--Jeff Broome, P.M.

*The book review above was printed last issue and
mistakenly credited to John Hutchins*