



The Border Vidette

Summer/Fall 2022 Volume 2, Number 3



Ink Slinger (editor)

Doug Hocking

doug@doughocking.com or inkslinger@cochisecountycorral.org

Printer's Devil

Jonathon Donahue

jon404@outlook.com

COCHISE COUNTY CORRAL

Sheriff	-	Doug Hocking
Deputy Sheriff	-	Dennis "Nevada" Smith
Recorder of Marks and Brands	-	Gary Smith
Keeper of the Chips	-	Charlie Eyster
Round Up Foreman	-	Liz Severn
Corral Rep	-	Dennis "Nevada" Smith
Corral Rep	-	Doug Hocking
Trail Boss	-	Ilona Smerekanich

The *Border Vidette* is published quarterly by the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners. The Corral meets at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of each month at Schieffelin Hall, Tombstone. Schieffelin Hall was built in 1881 as a theater and lodge of the Freemasons. King Solomon Lodge Number 5 still meets upstairs. The Corral is dedicated to preserving Western Frontier History and Legend and to having a good time while doing so. Membership in the Corral is \$20 and entitles the Ranch Hand to attend talks on the Old West, join us on Trail Rides (by automobile) to sites of historic interest, and to our publications: *The Fremont Street Mail*, a monthly newsletter, and the *Border Vidette*, our journal. More information about the Corral can be found at www.CochiseCountyCorral.org and about Westerners International at <http://www.westerners-international.org/>

The *Border Vidette* accepts **interesting** articles about Western Frontier History no matter how short. Articles should be sourced and accompanied by endnotes. An unlimited number of photos (JPG preferred) may accompany the article. If the author has the rights to the article, the *Border Vidette* is willing to republish it. The journal is only published on-line and may be distributed as a PDF via email. Please contact us if you think you have something interesting to share. Contact us at InkSlinger@CochiseCountyCorral.org

A vidette is the term used in the 19th century for a mounted (cavalry) lookout.

Cover: The headline screams of fiery death as two locomotives collide head on near Tucson while pulling passenger trains

The Border Vidette

Published by the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners

Doug Hocking

Ink Slinger

Volume 2, Number 3

Jonathan Donahue

Printer's Devil

Summer 2022

CONTENTS

The Esmond Train Wreck of 1903 By Doug Hocking	5
Pearl Hart: Bandit Queen or Born Loser By Doug Hocking	22
Geronimo's Skull By Bill Markley	36
Camp Naco By Becky Orosco	41
The Southwest's Big <i>Sundown</i> : A Silent Film From Hollywood, 1924 By Craig McEwan	43
Dutch Oven Rice Pudding with Fruit By Debbie Hocking	73

Book Reviews

Michael Crichton, <i>Dragon Teeth</i> <i>Jon Donahue</i>	75
Farmer, W. Michael, <i>Trini! Come! Geronimo's Captivity of Trinidad Verdin, a Novel</i> <i>Doug Hocking</i>	76
Cogburn, Brett, "The Real Rooster Cogburn," <i>True West</i> <i>Rosanna Baker</i>	76
McChristian, Douglas C. <i>Fort Bowie, Arizona: Combat Post of the Southwest, 1858-1891</i> <i>Rosanna Baker</i>	76
Traywick, Ben T. <i>Camillus Fly: The Man Who Photographed History. Tombstone</i> <i>Rosanna Baker</i>	76

Martin, Douglas D. <i>Tombstone's Epitaph</i>	76
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	
Herwig, Mark. "A Grand Era: Behind Grand Portage, the original center of the great America fur trade. <i>American Frontiersman</i>	77
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	
Ahnert, Gerald T. <i>The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861</i>	77
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	
Davis, Goode P. Jr. <i>Man and Wildlife in Arizona: The American Exploration Period 1824-1865</i>	77
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	
O'Neal, Harry E. <i>Tres Alamos: A Place Forgotten</i>	77
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	
De La Garza, Phyllis, <i>The Story of Dos Cabezas.</i>	77
<i>Rosanna Baker</i>	

The Esmond Train Wreck of 1903

By
Doug Hocking

In the sleepy 3 a.m. early morning, gloomy cold of January 28, 1903, the *Sunset Limited* (No. 9) sped westward toward Tucson and the coast carrying a load of drowsing passengers. Running two hours late, at Vail's Station, Conductor Parker received an order telling him wait on the siding at Wilmot¹ for an extra freight to pass going east. In the cab, Engineer John "Jack" W. Bruce, of Tucson, clicked the throttle up another notch as Fireman George McGrath peered into the inky darkness ahead. "Dark country" they called it, a place without signal lights. George was preoccupied, mostly with thoughts of his coming wedding.

They were proud of their locomotive as the most powerful and fastest engines were used to pull passenger express trains. The train roared through the night toward Esmond, a blind curve and siding where trains were required to blow their steam whistle in warning. Leaving Vail's, the home station for the sprawling Empire Ranch of the Vail family, the train slowly built speed to 50 miles power hour. The juggernaut passed Esmond and entered a sharp curve.²

"Stop dreamin' about your wedding night. We'll make Tucson soon enough," Bruce smiled to McGrath who was to be married to a Tucson girl that coming Sunday.³ George told Jack Bruce about the dreams he'd been having. The *Arizona Daily Star* wrote:

"McGrath was to have been married, it is said, on Sunday to a well-known young lady of Tucson. It is said that he told his fiancée the night before he went out on his last run that he had dreamed the night before that he and Jack Bruce had been in a head end collision. She begged him not to go out that night, fearing his dream might come true. McGrath seemed to have some sort of presentment of a wreck as he told a lady at whose house he was rooming that if he was brought home on a stretcher it would be on account of some careless dispatcher."⁴

Behind them between the tender and the "blind baggage,"⁵ four tramps were casually hitching a ride unconcerned with time and schedules. The ride was free. Among them, Jack Dwyer had boarded at Benson.

The stop at Vail's Station had been hectic. In those days, the men at the controls of a train, like Jack Bruce, really were engineers and mechanics. They were responsible for maintaining the engine. At each stop, and there were many, as the oil-fired, steam engine required its water tank frequently refilled, the engineer walked around his locomotive checking and oiling bearings. He also would receive his train orders from conductor and station operator. The train orders told him what he would find on the track ahead, what other trains his shared it with, and where he must stop and pull out on a siding to let another train pass. While George McGrath attended to the filling the water tank, Jack walked around the locomotive inspecting for leaks and over-heated bearings. With a long-snouted oil can, he manually applied oil at key points. This was before the age of sealed and self-oiling bearings. The men were busy.

Likewise, Conductor G. W. Parker was busy. He, not the engineer, was in charge of the eight-car train. Up front was a baggage car, followed by a mail car; the conductor had to ensure that luggage had been loaded and know what cargo he was carrying. This night in addition to baggage he had an extra boxcar carrying the props, costumes, and scenery for the show “*The James Boys in Missouri*” whose cast was also on board. Behind the mail car came the smoking car, then the day cars, followed finally by two expensive Pullman sleeping cars.⁶ As he approached the tiny station, he noticed the night telegraph operator, E. Frank Clough, loading mail and express matter into the leading car. Clough should have been at his desk where he would have handed the conductor a copy of each train order and had the conductor read them back to him to ensure that the message was understood. The conductor would then sign the duplicate copy kept by the operator. Only then could he go forward to tell the engineer what was coming up.



From the *San Francisco Call*, with pictures of the some of the deceased and injured. Clockwise across the top: Engineer Jack Bruce, Engineer Bob Wilkey, Fireman George McGrath.

Along the road, the conductor would use the bell cord and whistle to signal to the engineer that they would be passing another train, or that they needed to stop and allow the brakemen to dismount in order to throw the switch for the siding to allow the train to enter and then reverse it

so another train might pass. The sector between Vail's and Wilmot was known as "dark territory," as there were no signal lights.⁷



The Night Operator, young C. Frank Clough, only 21 years-old, was conscientious and efficient, everyone said so, but he wasn't at his desk. The boy had four years working as an operator but had only been at Vails working for the Southern Pacific for seven days. Parker grabbed the train order. It told him to wait on the siding at Wilmot for an extra freight to pass going east. Another delay and a slow freight at that. Conductor Parker's train was already two hours late. In such times and under pressure to "make up the time," men skip the delaying silliness of reading back the perfectly clear message and signing for it. The operator would sign for him. It was done all the time. Besides, Clough had two jobs, the mail and the operators key, the *bug*, as trainmen called it. These divided his attention.

According to the Tucson Citizen:

"Conductor Parker rushed in, and, his train being late, it goes without saying that he was in a hurry. He saw the familiar looking order on the operator's table and grabbed it. He swept off one instead of the two. He got the order to stop at Wilmont, and not the one to stop at Esmond. He boarded his train in a hurry."⁸

Operator Clough returned to his desk as the train started to roll away from the station. There he was horrified to see that Parker had failed to pick up a second train order. This one told Conductor Parker to layby at the nearby Esmond Siding while the east-bound *Crescent City Express* (No. 8) passed by his west-bound *Sunset Limited* (No. 9).⁹ It wasn't signed for either, so Clough was pretty sure the conductor hadn't seen it. He rushed outside and shouted to Conductor Parker to hold up.

“Parker, you have left one of your orders on the counter!” he shouted into the night. The conductor had violated company rules by not reading the orders back and signing for them.¹⁰ The telegraph operator would have written the messages by hand on a message form with a carbon copy underneath. Given what hurried handwriting might look like, having the conductor read the message back was a surety that the message was clearly understood.



Metal parts heated red-hot

Parker, perched on the rear landing of a Pullman car waving his lantern, didn't hear him.¹¹

Frank Clough spent the next few moments debating what to do and pondering the enormity of what might happen. About five minutes before the wreck, the young man ran to wake Express Agent H. A. Mann, the day operator, station master, and Frank's immediate supervisor with whom he split the 12-hour shifts. Frank pointed to the train order still lying on the desk.¹² As Mann arose, they saw a fireball in the west and heard the sound of a crash.

“I made a mistake,” said Clough. “I hope I haven't killed anyone.”

Having the telegraph operator responsible for delivering the all-important train orders and for the mail and express matter, seems like poor policy. “People do what the boss checks” is a common expression of a truism. People will do what they perceive as being most important to the boss. Men in a hurry, behind schedule, pushed to get back on schedule, will cut corners. The first place they cut is paperwork. Testimony from Conductor Parker and Operator Clough says that the conductors routinely did not sign the train orders as the rules said they should, nor did they read them back. Conductors grabbed the orders off the operator's desk and hurried on with their other duties. Neither Parker nor Clough disputed this.

Timing and perhaps the neatness of Operator Clough's desk now enter the equation. Why didn't Parker see the second order? We don't know. When did Clough discover that Parker had left the second order behind? This is uncertain, but the newspapers imply that Clough dithered, that he had time to run after the train and hand the order to Parker or that having discovered the error immediately after the train departed, he waited until he heard the crash before doing anything. In fact, he appears to have awakened Mann immediately on discovering the error. With two trains in the dark country, without signal lights, there was nothing they could do but pray, "I hope I haven't killed anyone."

Trainmen seemed to agree that the principal error was Clough's. We don't know why. However, quite apart from the company rule books, which is acknowledged but not precisely followed, there is "the way things are done." Departing from these unspoken rules, which are far more important than the rule book, will cause trouble and all of the trainmen will agree that the one who departs was wrong, even when the rulebook says he was right. Clough had only been on the job seven days and may have departed from the "unwritten rules."



The track climbs about 1,000 feet in elevation over the 15 miles between the Tucson Yards and Vail's Station. Scanning the horizon, one hardly notices the increase, but steam engines on the track pulling a load notice. With only eight cars in tow, the powerful engine of the *Crescent City Express*, No. 8, noticed. Try as he might to make up lost time, Engineer Eugene R. "Bob" Wilkey, nursing the throttle, couldn't push her above 25 miles-per-hour. A large man, he sat in the "hog's head" seat working his controls. Aboard the *Sunset Limited*, Engineer Jack Bruce and Fireman McGrath were plunging downgrade with the throttle wide open. Some accounts said they were making over 60 miles-per-hour, but in reality, they were probably limited by the capability of their locomotive and the tracks to something between 45 and 50. That was amazingly fast for an era when horses were the principle means of transport at 5 miles-per-hour over unpaved roads. Bob Wilkey looked out across the "dark country" and saw an errant dim headlight rapidly approaching.

Engineer Bob Wilkey took in the situation, and screamed to Fireman W.S. Gilbert, "Jump! Save your life! I will hold on to the throttle." Gilbert jumped, as he heard the last words of his heroic chieftain. He was badly cut, and it would be days before he regained his voice to relate the tale.¹³

Meanwhile, Wilkey pulled the emergency brake, and its long handle wedged his thick frame into the hog's head seat trapping him. He threw the lever to reverse the engine and pushed the throttle to the stops. Running in reverse the engine would try to push the cars away from the oncoming calamity, serving effectively as an additional brake even as the air brakes engaged on the cars. Sparks flew and metal screamed on metal. Staying to do this slowed the train and marked him a hero.

On board the *Sunset Limited*, No. 9, Jack Bruce and George McGrath may have remained blissfully unaware of impending doom until the moment of impact. More likely, both stayed aboard going through the same steps as Bob Wilkey, desperately trying to slow their train, but far too late to be effective, rounding the curve and sighting the oncoming *Crescent City Express*, No. 8, only moments before crunching impact.

In No. 9's blind baggage, tramp Jack Dwyer was vaulted into the darkness. He estimated that he flew an unlikely 300 feet. His three companions were not so lucky. They were crushed beyond recognition and then burned in the ensuing conflagration from the rupture of the oil tank on the tender they'd been riding. At that, they may have been lucky as death was instantaneous. The Tucson Citizen would report four dead tramps found on the trucks and tender on the *Crescent City Express*, No. 8. It's unclear if the newspaperman misunderstood where and how many were found these being the three from No. 9, or if seven hobos died that night. With fire and bodily mutilation, Bruce and McGrath had limbs and head torn from torso, while two distinct piles of flesh and bone were claimed to be Engineer Wilkey, the death count would never be certain. The *Tucson Citizen*, perhaps speculating wildly, charged that five bodies were placed in one coffin for transport to Reilly's funeral parlor.¹⁴

The locomotive of No. 9 plunged over the top of the engine of No. 8, and both turned on their sides on either side of the track. Their fuel oil tanks split, and oil rolled downgrade toward the cars of the *Crescent City Express*. No. 8's baggage-express car was demolished in the impact and the crowded smoker telescoped into the day car. Those who escaped would do so through open

windows and openings in the roof. Many were trapped and pinned. The *Sunset Limited*, No. 9, got off comparatively lightly.

The Arizona Republic described the scene:

“The engine on No. 8 lay on the north side of the track and the engine of the limited lay on the south side of the track. The mail car, next to the engine on No. 8 was so badly ground up he hardly remembers recognizing it at all. The baggage car had plowed through it and the smoker climbed on top, or partially so, of the baggage car.”¹⁵

On board the *Sunset Limited* No. 9, Conductor Parker managed to stay on his feet. He dismounted the leading passenger car and ran past the baggage car to the locomotive. There he found the bodies of Engineer Jack Bruce and Fireman McGrath, partially dismembered and already burning in the fire spreading downhill from the split oil tank on the tender. He rushed back to his passengers and remaining train crew. He made sure everyone was off the train and safe.

As the fire spread, Parker set about saving property, both that of passengers and of the railroad company. He directed the passengers and crew in disconnecting the rearward passenger cars and pushing them eastward away from the conflagration. They saved three cars. Although the cast of the *James Brothers in Missouri* survived, their props and scenery were destroyed.

About this time, the *Sunset Limited* No. 7, the other half of the *Sunset Limited*, had completed its climb up from Benson, through Davidson Canyon, and was pulling in at Vail.

According to the *Tucson Star* soon after the impact:

“[Conductor Scriven] the *Crescent City Express* sent Brakeman Lees running the four miles to Vail’s so that word might be delivered to rescuers in Tucson by wire. As Lees arrived at Vail’s, he found Frank Clough standing in the doorway.

“‘Is anyone killed?’ Clough asked Lees.

“‘Yes, a number,’ the brakeman replied.

“Clough broke down. ‘I don’t care so much about the cars being destroyed, but I am sorry I killed anybody.’”¹⁶

The *Sunset Limited* No. 7 detached the cars it was pulling and left them at Vail. The locomotive then went on to Esmond as a relief engine. Arriving on the scene, the engine slowed but still collided with the cars Parker had rescued. They moved back into contact with the burning wreck and had to be pulled away once more.

“Three cars on No. 7 [Conductor Parker’s No. 9] were saved. Two Pullmans and the passengers separated them from the wreck and pushed them up the track some distance. Shortly afterward the relief train coming in from Benson run into these cars and started them down grade again into the wreck which were again saved by the passengers separating

them and pushing them up the track again. McNally [one of the passengers] speaks in words of highest praise of Conductor Parker of No. 7 who worked most heroically and took serious chances in saving passengers from the fire.”¹⁷

While the engineer and fireman were killed, none of the passengers aboard the *Sunset Limited* No. 9, died in the collision on that cold, dark early morning of January 28, 1903.

The eastbound *Crescent City Express* No. 8 was not so lucky. The mail car was completely destroyed, while the baggage car telescoped into the smoking car whose doors and exits were effectively sealed. Only two of the passengers in the smoker would survive the first few minutes after the collision. Fuel oil ran downhill from the ruptured tanks of two tenders and immediately caught fire. The smoker was engulfed in flame.¹⁸

Over a smoke, F.S.M. Glidden, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, had been sitting chatting with his friend J.M. Hilton, a wealthy capitalist come west to acquire mining properties in Tombstone, when the trains collided. He was thrown through a window and badly bruised. Flaming oil flowed and the car began to burn. Seeing his friend in the burning car, he rushed back to try to pull Hilton to safety. Hilton was wedged in tight and could not be freed. Heat, fire, and burns drove Glidden back away from his friend as he endured Hilton’s dying screams.

News butcher,¹⁹ Tim Donahue, was chatting in the smoker with O.M. Stewart, a passenger, when the car crumbled around him and caught fire. All the exits were blocked but he knew of a hatch in the roof and made for it. He struggled to get through the mangled opening as someone within grabbed his legs pulling him back as flames rose around him. He kicked his way loose.²⁰ W.B. Kelly, editor of the *Bisbee Daily Review*, returning home, was a passenger in the day car. He exited the car in time to witness Donahue’s struggles:

“Suddenly a bloody head protruded severed apart and broken woodwork. The head was bloody and was surrounded by flames of intense heat. After the head came an arm and then another arm. The man was fighting for his life, and several of us standing only a few feet away could not render him any help. The man called lustily for help with an occasional damning of somebody to let go of him. We thought that another victim inside the car must be holding to his legs. The bright light made by the burning cars, seemed to turn the night into day. The flames lapping the bloody head of the man made the scene awful in its terror. The man fought fiercely. Soon he got his shoulders out by spreading the broken and splintered boards apart. Then a few more desperate plunges and his whole body worked through, and he rolled to the ground. He was all aflame. I had my overcoat in readiness, and as soon as he struck the ground, I enveloped him and smothered out the flames.”²¹

Donahue and Glidden were the only two passengers to escape the burning smoker and Donahue’s luck soon ran out:

“Tucson, Ariz., Feb 9. - Tim Donahue, a fireman, died last night at the hospital. He is the fifteenth victim of the Esmond wreck. At the time of the collision, he was riding in the smoking car. He was terribly burned and cut when rescued from the burning mass of wreckage.”²²

There may have been another survivor from this smoking car, W. C. Akin, of Colton, California. He said he escaped through an open window and if his story true, there may have been as many as twenty people in the car of whom only three escaped. The *Tucson Citizen* related his story:

“W.C. Akin, of Colton, California who is on his way to the Indian Territory, tells not only of a most miraculous escape but relates that most authentic story of the scene in the smoker of No. 8. He was in the front part of the car when the shock came. Every body was thrown down, many of them being pinioned, and the greatest confusion prevailed. There were about twenty in the car. Akin’s window happened to be open, and he crawled through it. In company with passengers from the cars he pulled one man out through the top of the car and this is the only one whose escape from this car he witnessed.”²³

O. M. Stewart had no luck at all, other than that of being among the dead whose body was identified. He had been on his way to Benson to comfort his recently widowed daughter.²⁴ Stewart’s son-in-law, William Cherry, had been the engineer of a locomotive on the recently completed El Paso and Southwestern Railroad owned by the Phelps-Dodge Corporation. It connected with the Southern Pacific railroad near Benson and ran to El Paso. At 6:26 p.m. on 20 January 1903, Cherry was driving engine No. 53 pulling forty freight cars. He was just pulling into Forest Siding, near Paul Spur between Bisbee and Douglas, when engine No. 18 pulling express train No. 2 from El Paso collided with the freight train. Cherry and five others were injured, he with a compound fracture of his leg.²⁵ Today such an injury would not be especially dangerous and even in 1903 was not thought so, but bone marrow in the blood and infection were not easily treated. On January 23, 1903, Cherry passed away.²⁶

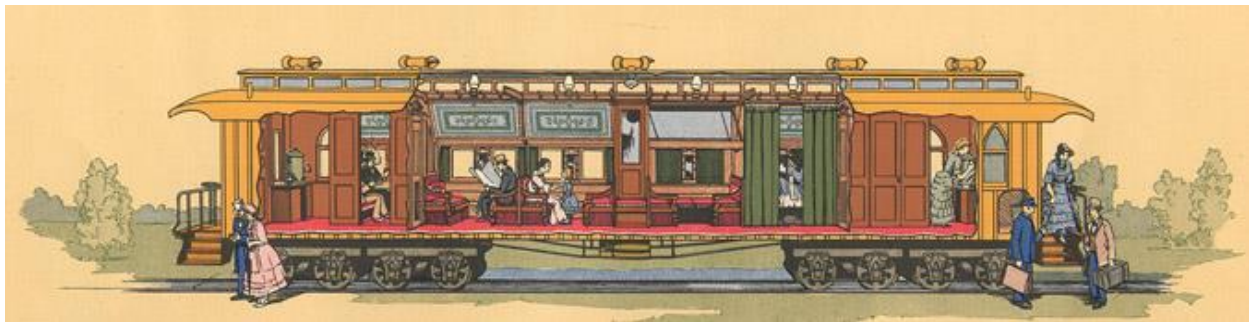
Aboard the day car behind the smoker, Conductor O. H. Scriven had not yet finished collecting tickets. He was just raising his hand to pull the cord attached to the whistle that would alert the engineer that they were approaching the point where they would pass No. 7 when he was thrown down by the collision. He immediately got up as the car began caving in. Perhaps he was in shock, but here there are discrepancies in his somewhat confused count of passengers. There were no children aboard, he was quoted as saying, and no one in the Pullman sleepers. However, Dr. Norton and his son were asleep in one of the Pullmans. He said that there were three women aboard and none of them were killed, but the bodies of two women were reported.²⁷ He got all of his passengers out of the day coach. He thought that most of the passengers were in the smoker, perhaps as many as fourteen. The Arizona Republic reported on Scriven’s subsequent testimony to the coroner’s juries:

“Conductor Scriven of No. 8 testified that there were no passengers in the Pullman cars at the time of the wreck. The day coach and smoker only were occupied. He says that no passengers in the day coach were killed and that there were not to exceed fourteen passengers in the smoker. Of this number he knows that six escaped. At the outside the number killed was not more than 8, he says, including the two engineers and the fireman of No. 8. He says there were three women passengers on No. 8 all of whom escaped.”

Dr. J. C. Norton of Tucson accompanied by his son, Oakley, was asleep in one of the Pullman sleepers of the *Crescent City Express*. Uncertain of what had transpired, he found himself on

the floor, shoeless, and out of his berth. He grabbed his son's hand, and the barefoot pair exited the car hastily, the doctor adjusting his necktie, followed by a Pullman porter bringing their shoes. Once outside, finding a point of safety for his son, the doctor finished dressing the boy and left him to attend to the injured. "The wails and shrieks of the human beings within who could do nothing for themselves and for whom but little could be done were most horrifying."²⁸

Pullman cars were as fancy and comfortable as late nineteenth century technology could make them. They were stationed near the end of a train away from smoke and sparks from the engine. The actions of the conductors of both trains show that they were something worth saving. Those assigned to man these cars were also a special breed proud of themselves and their jobs. Shortly after the Civil War, George Pullman sought out former slaves to work on his sleeper cars. They assisted passengers with luggage, shined shoes, and attended to "their passengers." They were a fixture of the railroads until the end of 1968.²⁹



Pullman Sleeping Car

The *Crescent City Express*, at the very end of the train, was towing a deadhead tourist car, not in use, with no passengers, being moved to a different part of the railway system. In addition to the air brakes, connected all along the train as far as the locomotive from which they drew compressed air, each car had a manual brake operated by a wheel or lever on the platform at the end of the car. Conductor Scriven, with the assistance of passengers and remaining crew, set about saving the surviving Pullman sleepers. On a grade that went all the way back to the yards at Tucson, this could be tricky. He assigned an unnamed Pullman porter to operate the brake on the deadhead.³⁰

The Vail Preservation Society records the incident as follows:

"A Pullman car attached to the end of the *Crescent City Express* was uncoupled from the eastbound *Crescent City Express* by the impact. The swaying of the car was dizzying as it rolled backwards at breakneck speed through the night. With no way to control the car, the terrified passengers' wild ride did not stop until the Pullman reached the Tucson station 15 miles to the west. Three people were on board, SPRR Porter, Dr. Norton, the first veterinarian for the Arizona/New Mexico Territory and his five-year-old son. The veterinarian was on his way to Douglas to inspect cattle from Mexico for hoof and mouth disease. He often brought his young son along with him on official travels around the Territory. The three felt the impact but had no idea of the enormity of what had just happened."³¹

The account goes on to relate that Dr. Norton told the story to his daughter, Katie (Norton) Dusenberry, and we can be sure that both enjoyed the telling immensely. We already know that the state veterinarian remained at Esmond with his young son to treat human patients.

The Pullman car was purposely released from the train with a Pullman porter assigned to work the brake. Once the car was unhitched, the porter discovered that the brake would not work and by then the car was moving downhill too fast for him to jump to safety. He knew the car would not stop until it came to the Tucson yards at a dreadful speed or collided with an on-coming relief train. The porter decided that he wanted to live. "So, he took a lot of the mattresses and built a breastwork in the rear end of the car, then rolled himself in a lot of blankets and arranged to take the shock as easy as possible when it come, for he knew it could not be long delayed . . ." His car struck a switch engine, just emerging from the yards, injuring the engineer and fireman, and continued on until it struck the rear coach of a passenger train. The plucky porter was just fine, while Dr. Norton and Oakley missed out on an exciting ride.³²

The wails and shrieks continued for some time followed by the moans of the injured awaiting evacuation to Tucson. The fires continued to burn into the evening even as relief crew built a *shoo-fly*, emergency temporary track, around the ruins of the two trains. A few horrifying mistakes were made. The ten-year-old son of Engineer Wilkey was allowed to ride to the scene on one of the first relief trains. The Arizona Daily Star wrote:

"The small pile of bones and human flesh claimed to be Wilkey's was minus the head and some limbs, and the remains were burning when found. Another parcel of charred bones was found under Wilkey's engine and this was claimed by some who knew him well to be his remains. One of the touching incidents of the wreck was the presence of Engineer Wilkey's ten-year-old son, who said he was looking for his father. The child's utterance touched more than one heart in the assembled throng of searchers and curious seekers."³³

Reckless reporting by the newspapers didn't help at all in ascertaining the true body count or in the identification of the dead. The *Tucson Citizen* wrote that:

"The wrecking crew is working fast and there is little chance for much investigation. People who watched the men clearing away the debris today say that several spots of pure white ashes were uncovered, but little attention was paid to them. These spots undoubtedly show where passengers had died and their remains been cremated. A little investigation might disclose a trinket of some sort which would lead to identification. Like the conductor of the ill-fated limited the wreckers are in a hurry. They have not the time."³⁴

The same paper also reported that five bodies went into one casket to be shipped to Undertaker Reilly in Tucson. It is unlikely that the fire was hot enough or consistent enough to reduce human remains to mere white ash.³⁵ It is also unlikely that Reilly would have consented to handle five bodies for the price of one. Nonetheless, "[o]ne railroad employee cautioned that many bodies had been charred beyond recognition and that the full count of the dead might never be known."³⁶

In the remains of the smoker the body of a man apparently held a straight razor at his own throat in a desperate attempt to escape the flames. The *Arizona Daily Star* reported that three bodies had been found badly charred, one man and two women. One woman had her hands clasped as if in

prayer perhaps begging for relief as the smoking car burned around her. A pocketknife was found under the man. It bore the name P. Willard. Further details emerged. The three-bladed knife had either a gold or silver case. Under a strong glass the full inscription read Eugene P. Willard. Mr. and Mrs. Willard of San Francisco had stayed at the Adams Hotel in Phoenix that day. This was thought to be proof that these were their bodies. Gates M. Fowler of Phoenix, listed as a mining man and as a rancher, was identified as one of those on the train. He'd been in Tucson just the day before. The charred body of a girl was recovered. J. E. Cassidy of Volunteer, Texas, was listed as having been on the train although the body identified as his was so badly burned his brother decided not to transport back to waiting family in Texas.

It was then that the resurrections began. No little girl had died. It was a dog. The Willards were reported safe in Jerome, Arizona. Fowler wrote a letter from Sonora where he was inspecting mining properties. O.M. Stewart, J. M. Hilton, J. E. Cassidy along with Engineers Bruce and Wilkey and Fireman McGrath were the only victims whose bodies were ever identified by name in the newspapers. A few days later, Tim Donahue would pass away joining this list as the fifteenth official victim only nine of whom were in the smoking car. It is impossible to know if there were more victims. Akin thought as many as seventeen died in the smoker. There probably weren't more than fifteen in total, but only ten were identified by name and three more may have been unidentified hobos.³⁷ The *Arizona Republic* wrote:

“The known death list still hovers around twenty with a possibility of there having been anywhere from five to twenty more killed. Comment has been made on Conductor Scriven not being able to tell how many were on the train. The fact is he had not had time after leaving Tucson to work his way through the train in the collection of tickets. One tramp was riding on the fender of No. 8, so he affirms, and escaped with slight injury. Three of his fellows behind the tender were killed.”³⁸

Twenty-eight-year-old Hugh Mackenzie was a wealthy Australian mining engineer who was reported to have been on the *Crescent City Express*. Presumably he was on his way east to claim the inheritance of an immense estate in Aberdeen, Scotland. He never showed up there and the family began searching for his trail. Ten months later, they concluded that he'd been among those incinerated in the Esmond disaster. In January 1904, the family filed a lawsuit against the Southern Pacific for \$5,000. The railroad resisted and the outcome remains unknown.³⁹

Adding to the confusion, Tucson found itself host to two, competing, Coroner's Inquests. Operator H. A. Mann at Vail, in addition to his other duties, was also the local Justice of the Peace in Vail, responsible for appointing the coroner's jury for the inquest. He did not act in that capacity which would have presented a conflict of interest. In any event, he was much too busy and soon lost his assistant, Frank Clough. One jury was presided over by Justice of the Peace W. H. Culver and met in the courthouse. This jury was recognized by District Attorney Dale. The other was presided over by Justice of Peace O. T. Richey and met in his offices eventually coming to be referred to as the “rump jury.” Both would reach similar conclusions after interviewing the same witnesses. Cost of both was billed to Pima County.⁴⁰

Oil leaking from the tenders had made the conflagration worse, sealing the fate of those in the smoker. Oil burning steam locomotives had come into use on the Southern Pacific railroad in 1900,

replacing coal burning engines, which remained in use on some lines into the 1960s.⁴¹ The *Arizona Daily Star* blamed it all on oil:

“The terrible holocaust which followed the collision of the two passenger trains yesterday morning is a warning that oil is a dangerous and expensive fuel. . . The manner of death of these unfortunate passengers. The sorrow it will cost. The many homes made desolate. Had there been no oil to ignite the flames it is doubtful if the casualties would have been half so great. the one important question which now confronts the railroad corporation is: Is it right? Is it safe? Is it economy to use oil as a fuel?”⁴²

Frank Clough continued to work through the day of January 28, calmly and showing no excitement. The newspaper quoted Operator Mann as saying, “Clough felt very badly about the wreck, but that he displayed no particular nervousness or excitement, that he worked with him till noon taking and answering nearly sixty telegrams, and said that later in the day Clough left for Tucson”⁴³

On the late afternoon of January 28, Frank Clough, as was customary, filed his report with Superintendent Scroufe of the Southern Pacific Railroad in Tucson. There were other railroad officials present. Speculation included Conductor George W. Parker and Train Dispatcher Charles F. Gary who had sent the telegrams to Clough at Vail. The newspapers wrote that initially it was thought responsibility was between Conductor Parker and Operator Clough. “Nothing harsh should be said of either.” The *Arizona Star*, sympathetic throughout to the Southern Pacific, unlike the more critical *Citizen*, wrote “The Railroad will ferret out the cause. Men in the employ of railroads are under great strain and responsibility and they are the last who desire to see or learn of what has happened at Esmond.”⁴⁴ The council, it was speculated, had settled blame on Clough who was said to have confessed. The newspapers wrote that he’d had time to deliver the order after discovering that Parker had left it behind. It seems unlikely that Clough had had time to deliver the order. His expressions of guilt might also only have been remorse at having played some role. It appears that both Parker and Clough both departed from the book of rules equally, though since trainmen seemed to settle on Clough’s guilt, he may have violated the unwritten rules, the procedure actually used. The *Arizona Daily Star* reported:

“A well known official of the road who does not care to have his name used said it looks to me like Clough had carelessly laid his second order down and never thought about it again until No. 7 had come and gone.”⁴⁵

Learning of the tragedy, Frank Clough’s mother, Ethlyn P. Clough of Monroe, Michigan, sent Frank a telegram: “It is horrible. Be Brave for my sake. Everything will come out all right.” But the operator had taken “French leave”⁴⁶ before it arrived.⁴⁷

Frank Clough disappeared. He’d gone to Mexico, it was thought. He failed to appear before either of the coroner’s juries. Rumors were rife. It was said that Clough had asked to draw his pay. Others said he’d been helped with funds by unspecified third parties. Some even thought the Southern Pacific might have helped with his flight. This is not as unlikely as it may sound. Both coroner’s juries settled on Frank Clough as the guilty party. This immediately took pressure off the Southern Pacific. Attention and blame fixed on Clough rather than the railroad.

The Southern Pacific was quick to settle damage claims for lost baggage. The Claims Adjusters Carson and Billy Breakenridge were on the scene by the 1st of February and went to work paying claims. Billy Breakenridge was well-known in the area having been a deputy for Sheriff Behan in Tombstone during the Earp era and subsequently having worked as a railroad detective. The *Tucson Citizen* reported:

“Adjuster Carson has been as busy man since his arrival and his good nature and business-like methods have already made him many friends. The local officials – had compiled a list of those presenting claims before his arrival. He has called each of the claimants into his temporary office here and after a brief conference claims have invariably been settled speedily and amicably. This quick work in this respect has won the company a good word, especially from those personally concerned.

“The adjuster has fixed a settlement of \$100 as the payment for trunks lost in the wreck. The *James Boys Theatrical* settled on this basis and drummers are doing likewise.”⁴⁸

Among those that suing for compensation was Postal Clerk Ben S. Sawyer, who had served on the westbound *Sunset Limited* No. 9. He had been badly knocked about in the car close behind the locomotive where engineer and fireman had perished. He claimed he was now “a physical wreck for life” and demanded \$2,000 in compensation.⁴⁹

Conductor George Parker kept his job only briefly “though his conduct could only be construed as a technical violation of the rules of the company as to the handling the message with Operator E. F. Clough at Vails.” Before 20 February 1903, he was no longer with the Southern Pacific. He had become a conductor on the El Paso and Southwestern (EP&SW) owned by Phelps-Dodge with tracks from Benson through Bisbee and Douglas to El Paso.⁵⁰

As already noted, only days before the El Paso and Southwestern had a wreck that cost the life of Engineer Cherry. In Sonora, just south of Nogales, there was another wreck. On the same front page that blazoned the story of the Esmond Wreck, the *San Francisco Call* reported that twenty-one were dead and two missing in a wreck on the New Jersey Central Railroad.⁵¹ This should have made anyone nervous about riding the rails, especially on those pulled by oil-fired locomotives.

The Southern Pacific reacted promptly to the Esmond tragedy. The new schedule called for passenger trains to proceed at a slower pace in hopes that engineers would be able to adhere more closely to the printed timetable. Train agents drawn from among the brakemen and baggage handlers, were assigned to collect tickets and fares, thus reducing the duties of the conductor allowing him to pay closer attention to operations and the instructions in train orders, the management of the train. Eventually, lights and electronic tracking would provide greatly improved safety. For as freight and passenger agent G. A. Parkyns noted, “plainly, as long as railroads must depend upon the human agency to perform a great part of the work, then there shall be accidents.”⁵²

The author served briefly with the Army’s 714th TBROS&DE (Transportation Battalion, Railway Operating, Steam and Diesel Electric) an oddball collection of drafted railroad employees and

railway enthusiasts. Since 1903, the railroads had come up with the “dead man’s brake.” The engineer had to maintain constant pressure on the throttle, or the brakes would engage. It was thought that this would bring the train to a stop if anything should happen to the engineer. It was uncomfortable to sit on one position all day and limited one’s ability to visit the facilities. Men soon found that a toolbox would provide sufficient pressure. Men find ways around safety measures if they have other priorities and if the boss isn’t watching. Human agency does cause accidents. The railroads made many safety improvements and computers control much of the traffic. We have learn ‘tis human to ere, but really screw up requires a computer.

-
- ¹ The *Star* alternates spelling this as Wilmont and Wilmot. Wilmot is more likely, and the siding was near where the railroad crosses Wilmot Rd. today, closer to Tucson than Esmond, a whistle point and siding.
- ² “One Man’s Carelessness Is Responsible for the Death Dealing Wreck – His Admission,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903, Sunday. The *Star* reproduced the story from the 29th, 30th and 31st of January in its Sunday Edition on February 1.
- ³ I’ve put likely words into the engineer’s mouth here to introduce the idea of McGrath’s impending wedding to a “well known young lady of Tucson.” “The Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903. Although she is well-known, her name is never revealed.
- ⁴ “Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ⁵ The forward end of the baggage car had no door and therefore was “blind.” The baggage car and the express and mail cars were placed behind the engine tender, perhaps a hold over from coal burning days when smoke and cinders would have irritated paying passengers. This was a favorite spot for hobos to hide when stealing a ride.
- ⁶ “Wreckage Take Fire, Thirty Lives are Lost in Collision of Sunset Limited with a Local Express in Arizona,” *San Francisco Call*, 29 January 1903.
- ⁷ Kalt, William D., III. “I’ll Meet You in the Cornfield: Southern Arizona’s Tragic Train Wreck of 1903,” *Journal of Arizona History*, 45/4 (Winter 2004), p 358.
- ⁸ “Many of the Dead Still Unidentified, The Southern Pacific Disaster,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.
- ⁹ No. 7 was the designation for the *Pacific Coast Express* just as No. 8 was the designation for the *Crescent City Express*. However, the *Sunset Limited* or *Flyer* this night was in two parts and the forward half was designated No. 9. “Thirty Lives are Lost in Collision of Sunset Limited with a Local Express in Arizona.” *San Francisco Call*, 29 January 1903.
- ¹⁰ *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903. Kalt, William D., III. “I’ll Meet You in the Cornfield: Southern Arizona’s Tragic Train Wreck of 1903,” *Journal of Arizona History*, 45/4 (Winter 2004), pp. 357-374
- ¹¹ I’ve assembled what occurred at the Vail’s Station from several accounts given by Clough and Parker selecting those parts that aren’t in direct contradiction. Both agree Clough wasn’t at his desk but was attending to the mail and express matter. It is clear that Parker picked up the train order that he saw without reading it back or signing for it as he was supposed to. He couldn’t. Clough wasn’t at his desk. Why didn’t he pick up the second train order? We don’t know, but surely it wasn’t intentional. Clough implied in one of his statements, perhaps attempting to protect himself, that Parker ignored him when Clough shouted after the conductor. It seems more likely that Parker didn’t hear him.
- ¹² “Inquests Being Held, Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ¹³ “Notes on Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ¹⁴ “Many of the Dead Still Unidentified, The Southern Pacific Disaster,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.
- ¹⁵ “Those Who Saw It,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ¹⁶ “Like a Murderer Clough Has Fled,” *Arizona Republic*, 31 January 1903. “Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ¹⁷ “Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ¹⁸ “Clough Broke Down Confessed His Error,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ¹⁹ A news butcher sold newspapers and similar items to passengers on the train. Tim Donahue, the news butcher, was also listed as “a deadheading fireman,” that is, a fireman riding for free between jobs,
- ²⁰ “Death Claims Wreck Victim, Tim Donahue Succumbs,” *Tucson Citizen*, 9 February 1903.
- ²¹ “Kelly, W.B. “Graphic Story of Wreck,” *Bisbee Daily Review*, 29 January 1903.
- ²² “Victim of the Esmond Wreck,” *Fresno Morning Republican*, 10 February 1903.
- ²³ “Incidents of Disaster at Close Range,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.

-
- ²⁴ “Those Who Saw It,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ²⁵ “Freight and Passenger Trains in Collision at Forest Siding,” *Bisbee Daily Review*, 21 January 1903.
- ²⁶ “William Cherry,” *Tucson Citizen*, 30 January 1903.
- ²⁷ “Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ²⁸ “Clough Broke Down Confessed His Error,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ²⁹ “Pullman Porter,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pullman_porter
- ³⁰ “Clough Broke Down Confessed His Error,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ³¹ Lamb, J.J. “Esmond Station.” *Vail Preservation Society*, 2017, <https://artsfoundtucson.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Esmond-Station.pdf>
- ³² “Those Who Saw It,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ³³ “Relief Train to Rescue,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ³⁴ “Resurrections from the Big S.P. Wreck,” *Tucson Citizen*, 31 January 1903.
- ³⁵ “Cremation,” Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cremation>
- ³⁶ Kalt, William D., III, “I’ll Meet You in the Cornfield: Southern Arizona’s Tragic Train Wreck,” *Journal of Arizona History* (Winter 2004), p 364.
- ³⁷ “The Southern Pacific Disaster,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.
- ³⁸ “Clough Broke Down Confessed His Error,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903.
- ³⁹ Kalt, William D., III, “I’ll Meet You in the Cornfield: Southern Arizona’s Tragic Train Wreck,” *Journal of Arizona History* (Winter 2004), pp 370-371.
- ⁴⁰ “Coroner’s Squabble for the Dead,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.
- ⁴¹ “Oil burner (engine),” Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_burner_\(engine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oil_burner_(engine))
- ⁴² “The Danger and Cost of Oil As Fuel,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ⁴³ “Inquests Being Held, Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ⁴⁴ “Operator at Vail’s Could Not Stand Cross Examination,” *Arizona Republic*, 30 January 1903. “The Revelations of Today Briefly Told,” *Tucson Citizen*, 29 January 1903.
- ⁴⁵ “Friday, January 30, Story of the Esmond Wreck,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ⁴⁶ This may seem insulting to the French. The expression was common in 1903 and used in newspaper stories. The author includes it here as a quote.
- ⁴⁷ “A Mother’s Love,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 1 February 1903.
- ⁴⁸ “Aftermath of the Esmond Tragedy,” *Tucson Citizen*, 2 February 1903.
- ⁴⁹ “Ben S. Sawyer, postal clerk,” *Tucson Citizen*, 18 March 1903.
- ⁵⁰ “G.W. Parker,” *Arizona Daily Star*, 20 February 1903.
- ⁵¹ “List of the jersey Central Wreck’s Dead,” *San Francisco Call*, 29 January 1903.
- ⁵² Kalt, William D., III, “I’ll Meet You in the Cornfield: Southern Arizona’s Tragic Train Wreck,” *Journal of Arizona History* (Winter 2004), p 372. *Arizona Bulletin*, 13 February, 1903; *Los Angeles Times*, 31 January 1903.



Pearl Hart after Cosmopolitan gave her a makeover

Pearl Hart
Bandit Queen or Born Loser

By
Doug Hocking

*This started as a chapter in my book **Southwest Train Robberies: Hijacking the Tracks Along the Southern Corridor** due out in May 2023. It didn't really fit. Pearl never robbed a train although twice she tried to escape by train and was captured at Tres Alamos in Cochise County. Alas, the publisher said, "shorten the book."*

*I note in passing that John Boessenecker has recently released a book about Pearl Hart, **Wildcat: The Untold Story of Pearl Hart, the Wild West's Most Notorious Woman Bandit**. **Wildcat: The Untold Story of Pearl Hart, the Wild West's Most Notorious Woman Bandit**. John's research is usually pretty good, but I've got to wonder how he found enough for a lengthy book. At first, I wondered about the title, but I have to agree that she was notorious if not successful. She only committed one robbery. Secondly, I've found that almost everything Pearl ever said about herself was untrue and the same applied to the **Cosmopolitan** article about her while the stories carried by newspapers in the 1960s and 70s were fairytales. That didn't leave a lot of meat on the bones. The Pearl Hart I came to know was a less than attractive opium fiend with a personality so unpleasant that she couldn't make it as a prostitute and even Yuma Territorial Prison was glad to see her go. With this in mind, I decided my investigation had gone "deep enough."*

We all may recall the book **The Happy Hooker** which busted stereotypes of all prostitutes being unhappy, drug-addled street walkers. Many are quite happy in their work. The Playboy Clubs of the 1960s are gone. The women who worked as Bunnies certainly wouldn't see themselves as prostitutes. They were young ladies looking for wealthy husbands willing to use their bodies to land one. Prostitutes, on the other hand, might well liken themselves to Bunnies. To find customers or attract a rich husband, a lady has to be happy in her work. At the other end of the scale are women immortalized in sailors' songs like Maggie Mae, who would drug a man and steal his money and clothes. They were happy to see her go when she was convicted and sentenced to transportation. The song *Blow the Man Down* immortalizes a "mingin' old strumpet who hobbled on by with hair like a scarecrow and a rolling glass eye." Pearl Hart belonged to this latter class. Although she was not ill-favored in looks, she was unhappy in her work and drove customers away.

The stories she provided about herself were fanciful and, when compared with others' accounts, untrue. She had a little girl's dreams of a knight in shining armor coming from some far off, exotic land, possibly Canada, to whisk her away. At an early age she ran away with her dream knight and discovered that he was a bounder of humble origins. It seems likely that he convinced her to sell herself "temporarily" to support him during his time of trouble. She did but was not happy about it and turned to laudanum, opium in alcohol, to ease the pain. The first laws restricting opium's use did not come until 1909 and 1914. It was readily available. Her man may have returned off and on with new requests. Her bad attitude made it difficult for her to find customers and she fled

from one town to another. Eventually, at the nadir of her existence, she sought work near Mammoth, Arizona, in what turned out to be a brothel catering to African Americans. She decided she hadn't sunk quite that low and sought other employment settling on stage robbery. With her very first marginally successful heist she became the Queen of Arizona Stagecoach Robbers.

She never held up another stagecoach, nor a train, nor robbed a bank. Twice she tried to escape by train. She was captured at the Tres Alamos School in Cochise County just north of Benson. Benson, hoping for a train robbery to make it famous, couldn't quite pull it off, nor could Pearl. She was on her way there to catch the train. She broke jail in Tucson and escaped, through Benson, to Deming where she was captured again.



Dressed up in jail

The Queen of Arizona Outlaws, Pearl is just too cool to pass up. At her first trial, although guilty beyond any sort of doubt, reasonable or otherwise, an all-male jury acquitted her. The judge promptly fired the jury and had the district attorney file new charges. The eastern press turned her into a suffragette although it's unlikely she knew what that meant. Finally, she was released early from infamous Yuma Territorial Prison with time off for bad behavior.

It's hard to know which of life's disappointments brought Pearl Hart to the lower circle of prostitution in Phoenix where one usually found ladies addicted to laudanum. Laudanum was often the last refuge of used up soiled doves on their way to that undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns. Perhaps a bad man had mistreated and abandoned her. According to the Phoenix newspapers in 1894 she was already considered an infestation rather than a resident.

“Pearl Hart who infests block 41 went to Justice Johnstone for relief yesterday. She was weeping, drunk and well dressed and had a specification with the sort of relief she wanted. She complained that her lover had abused and struck her. “I told him,” said she, “that I

would have him sent to Yuma one year for every blow he gave me. Now that's all you've got to do. Send for him right away and have him sent down to the pen tonight.'"¹

Perhaps she'd run away from home in the mistaken belief that he was a Canadian knight in shining armor come to whisk her away on his charger to exotic Montreal having discovered her to be a lost Canadian princess. After her arrest she would claim to be from Ontario, her idea of an exotic land.

Since she is already described as infesting the neighborhood, perhaps she was several steps down the ladder of her ambition.

Pearl provided several stories concerning her origins. In October 1899, the New York *Sun* had a version of her life story. She had drifted from mining camp to mining camp throughout the west changing her associations as often as she changed her habitat. At 16 she had eloped from boarding school with a man named Hart. They had a child. Two years later, because of his cruelty, she left him, and they were separated for three years. He begged for another chance, and they traveled to Tucson where he abused her and then enlisted to go to war. She was thrown on her own resources and went to the bad. "After living a disreputable life for several months, she attempted suicide. Saved she went to Mammoth where she was promised a job as a cook. The work was hard and life in a tent more than she could stand."²

The *Baltimore Sun* described her as a runaway.

"Not many years ago Pearl Hart, dressed as a boy, was shining shoes in the downtown district of Chicago. Her sister, a year younger than herself, was with her. These two young girls, then in their early teens, slept in the box cars out along State street, in the Washash avenue livery barns, in lofts, or wherever they could sneak in unnoticed. In Chicago Pearl was arrested for the first time. It was there she was first sentenced for crime. Still her history during the time she was there has always remained until now a blank."³

The *Sun* went on to describe her as a daredevil and natural tramp who when she was 13 years old ran away from home in Lindsay, Ontario, taking with her a younger sister. They worked in a factory but were found by the family. They escaped to Chicago but ended up in reformatory. They escaped and traveled west. The family found her again and placed her in a boarding school in Montreal. There she met Harry Bordeman and four months later eloped with him at age 16. The pair quarreled and broke up. She went to Trinidad, Colorado, and then to Phoenix where she ran into Bordeman and the two lived together until he enlisted to fight in the Spanish-American War. That war ran from April 21 – August 13, 1898.⁴ We already know that Pearl was in trouble in Phoenix in 1894. This calls this whole series of fanciful adventures into question. Pearl was happy to share her many imagined adventures, even though her sense of the exotic seems a bit limited. In 1909, the *Chickasha Daily Express* stated that she was then thirty-six and had two children who lived with their grandmother in Toledo, Ohio.⁵ Toledo was probably her true home and origin.⁶ The *Bisbee Daily Review* had the story in 1903:

"According to the best information here, the girl's name was Caroline Hartwell, and she is about 31 years of age. She was educated in the Toledo schools and has a fairly good

knowledge of the studies taught in the city high schools. She finally eloped with a man by the name of Baldwin. Dick Baldwin they called him, and he was a devil may care sort of fellow, with just enough dash and ginger about him to win a girl like Caroline Hartwell.”⁷

The story rings true and speaks of relatives and lawyers from Toledo that came to her aid.⁸ Hartwell took to drink and neglected his young wife. He took everything she had and left her dispirited, down-hearted, and broke. She turned to laudanum in her disappointment and to reliance on her last asset.



Pearl Hart, the tiger of Tres Alamos schoolyard; Joe Boot wouldn't fight

She was plain, but not ugly, and still young. That should have worked in her favor and gotten her a billet at a quality parlor house instead of an opium den and brothel. On November 26, 1898, she and her lover, Frank Miranda, were acquitted of running an opium den, while he was convicted of vagrancy. She and a witness claimed that neither of them had ever seen anyone except Pearl smoking opium there and thus, she avoided a conviction.⁹ Shortly after the acquittal, that she was in the hands of the law again.

“The police have discovered that the prostitutes who were driven from the city last spring are breaking in again. Two of them, Pearl Hart and Violet Cameron, who were found

occupying rooms in the old block, were in police court yesterday afternoon. They had rented those rooms temporarily, maintaining their permanent abodes on the reservation.”¹⁰

Many soiled doves turned to opium as they found their position in the oldest profession in decline. Pearl may have turned to opium first and then to prostitution to support her habit. In the 1890s, opium and cocaine were still legal and would be for many more years although running an opium den was a misdemeanor in some towns. Legal, the drugs were not expensive. Addiction, however, may have left a person unsuitable for any form of employment that did not primarily involve laying on one’s back. Maintaining a permanent address on a nearby Indian reservation and renting a temporary crib in the city appears to be little above street walking. Whichever of life’s disappointments brought her to this point, Pearl Hart seems to have been bitter about it and to have taken singular joy in starting fights and watching others suffer.

In 1899, Pearl Hart was described as being about 25 years old, small and slight weighing less than 100 pounds. In male attire she looked like a sullen, homely boy of sixteen. She was little, perhaps around five feet tall with light hair and blue eyes.¹¹ Until the eastern press lionized her in October of that year, she was quiet and morose in her behavior. Since finding herself the object of so much curiosity, she came to regard herself as a heroine and posed as a martyr allowing that she would never submit to be tried by laws which, as a woman, she had no hand in making.¹² Perhaps she went to Mammoth, or nearby Globe, with the intent of bettering her situation by abandoning prostitution for cooking. She did not abandon laudanum, but one challenge at a time. On the other hand, she had a different story for Sheriff Truman who arrested her:

“She said she came from Phoenix to Mammoth some time ago in response to a letter from a woman who wanted inmates of a **sporting house**, but when she found the writer of the letter was a negro woman she refused to have anything to do with her and secured a tent and went into business for herself.”¹³

She left for Mammoth within a few months of wearing out her welcome in Phoenix. Cooking may have been too difficult for her or, with her sullen disposition and homely boy appearance, perhaps she couldn’t make it as a shady lady. One thing is clear, she could spin more fairy stories than Mother Goose. Globe wasn’t far from Mammoth. Her stay there was short as well even though Globe was a mining town, and mine laborers weren’t known to be particularly picky about their women. A sullen, resentful lass doesn’t attract much repeat business.

Despite what Easterners believed about the Wild West, not everybody had a horse, in fact, very few of those who lived in towns did. Cowboys and Indians had many, and the cavalry had fewer than they would have liked, but townsmen found the cost prohibitive, and horses took up space. They had to be fed and cleaned up after. Most folks who needed a horse borrowed one at a livery stable much as you or I might borrow a car from Avis. Once borrowed, the horse had to be fed and watered. You might assume that the horse could be left to graze at night, but the horse came with something Avis could only dream of, a self-driving, homing device. Left on its own the horse was likely to wander back to its home corral. So, it had to be hobbled, corralled, or picketed all of which cut down on grazing and required additional equipment.

The escape route for Pearl and her accomplice was south, up the San Pedro River to Benson about 80 miles distant where they hoped to board a train going east. The river is an intermittent stream, flowing in some places, dry in others, and seldom more than knee deep. Where there is water, there are ranches, farms, towns, and mines. They would be avoiding those. Still, the river wasn't at all difficult to follow. The cottonwood trees growing along the bottom were easily seen from a distance. Once the posse had seen their trail, their destination should have been obvious.



The stage robber

In Mammoth, meeting little success on her back, Pearl met a man seemingly lacking in character and ambition. In disgust at his lack of gumption, she told others that his name was Joe Boot, and that is the only name history, and the Territory of Arizona, ever knew for him. Pearl told so many conflicting stories that it's difficult to know what to believe. While in jail she spoke to Royal Johnson of *Cosmopolitan* about the shift from Mammoth to Globe. She is quoted as saying:

“I was tired of life. I wanted to die, and tried to kill myself three or four times. I was restrained each time, and finally I got employment cooking for some miners at Mammoth. I lived there for a while, living in a tent pitched on the banks of the Gila river. The work was too hard, and I packed my goods in a wagon and started to go to Globe. I had to return to my old camp because the horses were unable to pull us through. A man named Joe Boot wanted to go to Globe, too, and we made an arrangement with two Mormon boys to freight the whole outfit to Globe for eight dollars. We camped out three miles from Globe, and

next day moved in, and I went to work again in a miners' boarding-house. Then one of the big mines shut down and that left me with nothing to do.”¹⁴

In December 1898, Pearl was in trouble with the police in Phoenix. According to the *Cosmopolitan* story, she shifted operations to Mammoth and then to Globe. In Globe, first her brother found her and then her recently discharged husband did as well. The husband was too lazy to work and wanted her to support him and they quarreled, and he left. Finally, she received the heartbreaking news that her mother was ill and wanted to see her daughter, Pearl, before she died. She needed money to travel to Canada. Almost nothing in this story rings true. The real time frame is very short, and her mother was in Toledo and not ill.

Joe Boot said they would work his claim to get money. But there was no “color” in the claim so Pearl decided they must rob a stage. Joe resisted but had the firm backbone of a jellyfish. Pearl said: “On the afternoon of the robbery we took our horses and rode over the mountains and through the canons, and at last hit the Globe road. We rode along slowly until we came to a bend in the road, which was a most favorable spot for our undertaking.”¹⁵ This was the Globe-Florence Road and they chose a spot where the stage was just completing the ascent of a grade.

Pearl dressed herself in men's clothing with her short hair tucked under a sombrero. She armed herself with a “thirty-eight” and Joe held a “forty-five.” As the slow moving stagecoach approached, they emerged from hiding and Joe called out, “Throw up your hands!” While Pearl kept the passengers and driver covered, Joe ordered them off the stage. He ordered Pearl to search the folks for guns. She found none. However, in searching the stage, she found two guns had been left behind and stole them. Now she went over the passengers looking for money and found the fellow shaking the most was carrying \$390. A dude with his hair parted in the middle begged to keep his money but she relieved him of thirty-six dollars, a dime and two nickels. She searched a Chinaman, but he had only five dollars. The driver yielded a few as well. They gave each passenger a dollar apiece so they wouldn't arrive broke at their destination.

Now it was time to head south. Pearl's story in *Cosmopolitan* continues:

“It seems to me now that nothing but the excitement of the hour could have carried me through this awful ride, over the perilous trails and the precipitous canons. To-day I cannot tell how we ever got through the ride that day. Many noises in the great mountains and canons led us to believe that our pursuers were at hand, but these turned out to be the workings of our guilty consciences.”¹⁶

Pearl Hart's journey southward was a litany of her hardships and suffering as she was forced to take to the roughest ground to backtrack and hide her trail from the posse. According to the *San Francisco Call*:

“The bandits pressed on over lonely and somewhat circuitous roads and trails, traveling at night much of the time, getting as they could something to eat and drink and some to pack along and sleeping part of the day in the sheltered nooks in canyons.”¹⁷

Rain obliterated the trail near the scene of the robbery. Sheriff Truman soon picked it up becoming convinced that the outlaws were lost and going in circles. The public, meanwhile, to judge from the press was more outraged that Pearl had worn men's clothing than that she was a notorious prostitute. Eventually, their horses and themselves exhausted by their arduous flight, the pair stopped for an afternoon siesta at the edge of the Tres Alamos schoolyard, 8 miles north of Benson, their goal. The newspapers said that Pearl fought like a tigress.

“Sheriff Truman and his bandit hunters may thank their lucky stars that the bandits took a nap on the afternoon of June 24, for without that nap there would probably have been several dead or wounded among the posse. Pearl and her desperado lover, wearied and sore, had gone to sleep in the afternoon in a shady gulch near Benson, a town on the Southern Pacific railroad. . .”¹⁸

Joe, realizing that he was outnumbered, outgunned, and stood no chance surrendered meekly. Pearl fought her captors like a tigress. Once the pair were subdued, Sheriff Truman asked for their names. Pearl, apparently disgusted with her companion's lack of spunk, responded disdainfully that he was “Joe Boot.” This insult was the only name by which Arizona and the world ever knew him. He would serve time as Boot.¹⁹ She had already achieved national notoriety and the *National Police Gazette* named her Queen of the Bandits and attributed to her a lengthy career in crime.²⁰

The sheriff took the pair to the Pinal County jail in Florence. With Pearl still clad in masculine attire, Joe and Pearl made a preliminary appearance before the court. She was photographed with various weapons and enjoyed the attention. The newspaper wrote that Joe reached through the bars so that she might caress his hand and they seemed happy.²¹ It was soon realized that there were no accommodations in the jail for a woman, so she was packed off to the Pima County jail in Tucson. On June 20, 1899, she was booked in by famous lawman, Bob Paul.

“Paul and Sheriff Wakefield lodged her in a comfortable private room, which was used for female prisoners, located on the second floor of the courthouse, above the recorder's office. Pearl Hart sprawled on a sofa, tossing and writhing in pain. The officers summoned the jail doctor, and he recommended that she be given morphine twice a day. Although shocking to modern sensibilities, morphine was then legal, and Undersheriff Paul saw to it that Pearl got a dose every morning and evening.”²²

They feared what might occur if she went into withdrawal. Pima County lacked “jail” accommodations for a lady. Their “comfortable room” had formerly been a large closet under the stairs. One has to wonder if her mail was addressed to “Pearl Hart, Cupboard-under-the-stairs, Church Ave.” It was not a barred cell and so was probably “comfortable” by comparison and it afforded her a great deal of privacy. On July 27, 1899, the *Arizona Silver Belt* had this to say about her stay at the Pima County Courthouse:

“It is said that the officers at the Pima county jail find it necessary to keep a close watch upon Pearl Hart, the female bandit, to see that she does not secrete enough morphine to kill herself. She has already attempted to remove herself from mundane affairs by means of an overdose of the drug. She alternates between blissful slumber in the morphine period and wild ravings when the drug is not to be had. She continues to tell a pathetic story how she

robbed the Kane Springs stage to get enough money to go east and see her poor, sick mother in Canada. The Canada tale is a fake. The woman is from Toledo, O., where her parents, well-to-do people, still reside.”²³

It was at the Pima County Courthouse that Royal A. Johnson interviewed Pearl for *Cosmopolitan* and Francis Reno took photographs to run with the story. Pearl Hart got a makeover. In addition to being photographed with her hair done up and clothed in pretty dresses, she was supplied with a kitten and a book, anything to make her look feminine and a little better looking. They softened her image from the cigar smoking, laudanum guzzling, harlot in men’s clothes toting a shotgun. Pearl told Royal her fanciful stories of exotic upbringing in Canada. He, in turn, gave her a new image. She was now a suffragette standing up for women’s rights refusing to be tried by a court of men under laws made by a legislature composed entirely of men.²⁴ She had already become a national celebrity, now she became a heroine. The *Baltimore Sun* wrote:

“[S]he came to regard herself as a heroine, she was quiet and morose in her behavior. Since then she has found herself an object of much curiosity, and has posed as a martyr. Of late she has been announcing that she would never submit to be tried by laws which, as a woman, she had no hand in making. It now looks as if she would make good this asseveration.”²⁵

On Thursday, October 12, 1899, perhaps true to her word for once, broke jail and was seen shortly after 3 a.m. boarding an eastbound train. Her absence was not detected until 5:30 a.m. when she missed her dose of morphine. Ed Hogan, a trustee, helped her dig through the plaster and lath of the cupboard-under-the-stairs, so that she might depart down a back stairway. No bars could hold Pearl since there were none on her cell.²⁶



Joe Boot and Pearl, welcome to Yuma Territorial Prison

A few days later, having escaped by train from Tucson, Pearl Hart and Ed Hogan were captured in Deming and returned to Tucson. George Scarborough made the arrest after she was identified by a drug clerk who had seen her photograph in the press. The *Sierra County Advocate* said she was quite bold while in New Mexico, identifying herself in several mining camps and boldly stating her identity. She was enjoying her celebrity.²⁷

Sheriff Wakefield of Pima County claimed he knew the pair were headed for Deming even as they left his jail. He telegraphed Deputy Sheriff George A. Scarborough to alert him of their pending arrival, asking him to shadow Pearl until Hogan might arrive and then to telegraph him so he might come and make the arrest.²⁸ The *Deming Headlight* and Scarborough thought the story of the arrest provided by the Tucson press was a “Mass of Misstatements.”

“Now the facts are: Pearl Hart and Ed Hogan was in Deming for two days and nights, and only one man in this town was aware of their presence, and Geo. Scarborough never received a telegram from anyone regarding them, until he wired to Tucson to know if they were wanted, and in a short time he received instructions to arrest them at once, and that telegram was signed by ROBERT PAUL.”²⁹

The newspaper went on to speculate that spoils, the reward, might have motivated Sheriff Wakefield. Embarrassment at losing his famous prisoner might have played into it. The *Deming Headlight* said: “No doubt Sheriff Wakefield is a smart, energetic officer and a nice fellow all round. But the HEADLIGHT is inclined to the opinion that his powers of imagination are, at times, altogether out of proportion, with the rest of his make up.”

Back in jail, Pearl Hart was soon transported back to Judge Doan’s court in Florence for her trial where she appeared before an all-male jury. Despite the overwhelming evidence of her guilt, the case running entirely against her, until she made a passionate plea to the jurors. She spoke:

“in a passionate and eloquent manner, pleading her desire to return to Toledo, O., and get one last look at her mother, who was not expected to live long, and whom she has not seen in years.”³⁰

After a full three minutes of deliberation, the jury balloted 11 to 1 for acquittal. Judge Doan promptly discharged the jury for the rest of the court term. The men were highly indignant. The judge ordered Pearl held. The Grand Jury had brought in two true bills. She had been tried on one for robbing Oscar J. Neill of \$390 and acquitted. She would now be tried for robbing the stage driver, Henry Bacon, of a six-shooter. At the second trial, playing to the jury’s sympathy didn’t work and within thirty minutes the jury brought in a verdict of guilty. She got five years while Joe Boot, described variously as a half-witted Frenchman and musician, got thirty. Other sources say Joe’s sentence was ten years, which seems more likely.³¹ They were packed off to Territorial Prison at Yuma.³² The *Coconino Sun* had this to say:

“Pearl Hart, the female bandit, is now in the territorial penitentiary, where she will likely remain for the next five years, less time for good behavior, which she will not earn unless she adopts a mode of life different from any she has followed since she came to Arizona. A fool jury of Pinal county having acquitted her of a charge of holding up a stage and

having been discharged by Judge Doan in disgrace, another jury found her guilty of robbing Henry Bacon, the stage driver, of a revolver and other property. She was sentenced to five years at Yuma. Passengers who came in from Maricopa yesterday said she was taken past there early in the morning with a big cigar in her mouth rivalling [sic] the efforts of the locomotive to charge the atmosphere with smoke.”³³

Yuma was nowhere near the hellhole of legend. It stands on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River and Yuma, Arizona. On the California side, the bluff continues and although now the headquarters of an Indian reservation was once home to Fort Yuma. Cells had hard bunks stacked three-high accommodating six felons in a cell six by ten feet. The cellblock was two storied and allowed ventilation. Prisoners were not kept below ground even those few whose cells were carved into bedrock looked out on the exercise yard. The heavy stone construction, shade, and ventilation would have kept the cells at reasonably comfortable temperatures. Sanitation was handled by “thunder mugs” as was common in the 19th century. There was a special cell block for incorrigibles, which would have been mostly the insane and mentally unstable. There was an exercise yard and the prisoners had jobs and medical care. The Indians tasked with bringing in escapees did not kill them. Instead, they made them walk back to prison. Dead bodies stank and were hard to carry. After the prison was abandoned, the cellblock was used as classrooms by the Yuma High School.



Pearl's Cell and cellmates at Yuma

The women's cell was at the back of the prison on the side overlooking the town. It was carved into bedrock opening on the men's exercise yard on one side and on the women's small exercise yard on the other to which the women seem to have had constant access. It was designed to house two women. Pearl always had company. The bedrock slowly heating in the sun and cooling at night would have kept the cell at a constant temperature in the low 70s. Photographs show one of Pearl's cellmates had a guitar.

Joe Boot did well and soon became a trustee. The superintendent's quarters were a few yards from the prison gate and Joe worked there as a cook. He was trusted to walk the few steps back to the prison under the watchful eyes of guards at the gate and a lowering water tank topped by a guard tower. In February 1901, after little more than two years in jail, one night after dinner, Joe cleaned up, washed the dishes, put everything away and then, I presume after having borrowed a suit of the superintendent's clothing, calmly walked away from the prison never to be seen again. For a half-witted, French musician who lacked gumption, Boot made a remarkable escape.³⁴

“After dinner had been served at the superintendent's residence Wednesday evening, “Boots” placed the kitchen and dining room in order and then threw up his job, without giving the usual notice of a dissatisfied servant, and left, presumably in search of a more congenial situation. His absence was discovered in a short time, but his whereabouts have not yet been learned.”³⁵

Pearl would serve three years of her five-year sentence. In May 1902, already planning for her release, Pearl was visited by Mr. and Mrs. C.P. Frizzle of Silver City, New Mexico. Mrs. Frizzle claimed to be an actress, playwright, and Pearl's sister. She had written a play in which Pearl was to play herself. Buffalo Bill had done it and so had Wild Bill, although not as successfully. It never came to pass. Pearl expected to be released in 1904 and hoped she would still be a celebrity.³⁶ After her release, the story of the sister and the stage play appears again but so far no record of a date and place where such a play might have appeared has been found.³⁷

The prison had no female guards or matrons. Pearl Hart's behavior in prison was not exemplary, but neither was it enough to get her disciplined, only disliked. The *Arizona Sentinel* wrote that “Pearl Hart's cussedness is manifesting itself in a more alarming direction than holding up stages. She has taken to writing poetry and is unwinding it by the yard.” Ira Smith, an assistant superintendent owned Judie, a fox terrier. The women in the cell like to play with the dog and her pups, but Ira is quoted as saying:

“Judie is a lady, and her pups are well-bred and he doesn't propose to have their morals contaminated by Pearl. Any horse thief or Mexican murderer can fondle the pups, but Ira draws the line at Pearl.”³⁸

Among Pearl's issues besides general cussedness, she like to provoke fights between the other ladies in the cell for her personal amusement.

Pearl's release came early. On December 15, 1902, Governor Alexander O. Brodie paroled Pearl Hart. In 1954, his former secretary, George Smalley, revealed the secret reason for her early release. She was pregnant and the only men who had had access to her were the prison chaplain, the governor, and the superintendent.³⁹ The story is almost undoubtedly bogus. Pearl doesn't seem to have had a baby, nor would these three men have been the only ones with access to her. The *San Francisco Call* said that Pearl got time off for good behavior at the rate of 6 days per month served.

“Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 13. - The spectacular and notorious Pearl Hart, female bandit and stage robber, who was sentenced to five years in the Yuma penitentiary November 18,

1899, from Pinal County, was paroled to-day by Governor Brodie on condition that she live without the borders of Arizona till the expiration of her original sentence.

“The prison superintendent recommends her for good conduct during her term of service, and it is announced that a relative has written a wild western play in which she will go upon the stage as a star.”

It is far more likely that the superintendent and the governor were glad to see Pearl go because she was disagreeable and caused trouble. In 1902, there were four women prisoners: Pearl, Elena, who had killed her lover, Alfrida, an adulteress, and 16-year-old Rosa Duran who was in for grand larceny. Rosa and Elena spent three days in the “dark cell” for fighting perhaps provoked by Pearl.⁴⁰ On October 24, 1902, Bertha Trimble arrived. She was 5’3” tall, 200 lbs. and 37 years old. She was convicted of helping her husband rape her daughter. There were now five women in a cell designed for two.⁴¹

Jesus Chacon entered the prison suffering from smallpox. In crowded conditions authorities feared its spread.

“Pearl Hart continued to make trouble at every opportunity. She was sorely disliked by the other female prisoners. The officials of the prison sought paroles for the women, citing impossibly crowded quarters. It was suggested they be paroled after disinfecting or destroying all possessions that might carry the smallpox from the prison.”⁴²

Key elements are left out of the story of misconduct by the authorities resulting in Pearl’s pregnancy. She wasn’t pregnant. There was a smallpox scare. Rosa and Pearl were both paroled, not pardoned, to relieve overcrowding. Pearl got time off for bad behavior.

On May 14, 1904, she was arrested in Kansas City, Kansas, under the name of E.P. Keele, which may have been her real or married name. She was suspected of belonging to a gang of pickpockets.⁴³ She was last heard of in 1909 when she was reported as owning a cigar store in Kansas City and as having two children who resided with their grandmother in Toledo, Ohio.⁴⁴ Stories of her return to Arizona are built on smoke and hot air.

¹ *Arizona Republican*, 11 August 1894.

² “Pearl Hart, Stage robber.” *The Sun*, 15 October 1899.

³ “Strange Things In Life of the Only Woman Stage Robber.” *Baltimore Sun*, 20 April 1904.

⁴ “Strange Things In Life of the Only Woman Stage Robber.” *Baltimore Sun*, 20 April 1904.

⁵ Reno, Francis. *Chickasha Daily Express*, 7 September 1909.

⁶ “Why Pearl Became Outlaw.” *Bisbee Daily Review*, 20 January 1903.

⁷ “Why Pearl Became Outlaw.” *Bisbee Daily Review*, 20 January 1903.

⁸ “Pearl Hart Keeps Her Life Story from Her Family.” *Tombstone Prospector*, 27 November 1899.

⁹ “Raided An Opium Joint.” *Arizona Republican*, 24 November 1898. “The Pipe Hitters.” *Arizona Republican*, 26 November 1898.

¹⁰ “Breaking In Again.” *Arizona Republican*, 9 December 1898.

¹¹ “The Woman Bandit.” *Arizona Republican*, 5 June 1899.

¹² “Pearl Hart, Stage Robber.” *The Sun*, 15 October 1899.

¹³ “The Bandits in Hoc.” *Florence Tribune*, 10 June 1899.

-
- ¹⁴ Johnson, Royal A. "An Arizona Episode." *Cosmopolitan*, 27/6, October 1899, pp 673-77. Google Books <https://books.google.com/books?id=Dq7NAAAAMAAJ&dq=pearl%20hart&pg=PA673#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- ¹⁵ Johnson, Royal A. "An Arizona Episode." *Cosmopolitan*, 27/6, October 1899, pp 673-77. Google Books <https://books.google.com/books?id=Dq7NAAAAMAAJ&dq=pearl%20hart&pg=PA673#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- ¹⁶ Johnson, Royal A. "An Arizona Episode." *Cosmopolitan*, 27/6, October 1899, pp 673-77. Google Books <https://books.google.com/books?id=Dq7NAAAAMAAJ&dq=pearl%20hart&pg=PA673#v=onepage&q&f=false>
- ¹⁷ "The Woman Masqueraded As A Bandit." *San Francisco Call*, 11 June 1899.
- ¹⁸ "Fought Like a Tigress Against Her Captors." *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 5 August 1899.
- ¹⁹ "Woman Bandit Resists Arrest." *San Francisco Call*, 5 June, 1899; "This Woman Masqueraded As a Bandit." *San Francisco Call*, 11 June 1899.
- ²⁰ "Queen of Bandits Captured at Last." *National Police Gazette*, 29 June 1899.
- ²¹ "Preliminary Examination of the Stage Robbers." *Arizona Silver Belt*, 15 June 1899.
- ²² Bossenecker, John. *When Law Was in the Holster: The Frontier Life of Bob Paul*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012..
- ²³ "Suicide Risk." *Arizona Silver Belt*, 27 July 1899.
- ²⁴ Johnson, Royal A. "An Arizona Episode." *Cosmopolitan*, 27/6, October 1899, pp 673-77. Google Books <https://books.google.com/books?id=Dq7NAAAAMAAJ&dq=pearl%20hart&pg=PA673#v=onepage&q&f=false>; "Pearl Hart." *Sierra County Advocate*. 20 October 1899.
- ²⁵ "Pearl Hart Stage Robber." *The Sun*. 15 October 1899.
- ²⁶ "Pearl Hart Breaks Jail." *The Border Vidette*, 14 October 1899.
- ²⁷ "Pearl Hart Captured." *Sierra County Advocate*, 3 November 1899. "Pearl Hart Captured." *Albuquerque Citizen*, 23 October 1899.
- ²⁸ "Both Are Caught." *Tucson Citizen*, 21 October 1899.
- ²⁹ "Mass of Misstatements." *Deming Headlight*, 28 October 1899.
- ³⁰ "Pearl Hart Won Their Hearts." *The Argus*, 25 November 1899.
- ³¹ "The Cook Quite His Job." *Florence Tribune*, 16 February 1901.
- ³² "Pearl Hart Convicted." *Florence Tribune*. 18 November 1899.
- ³³ "The Female Bandit Smoked Strong Cigars." *Coconino Sun*, Nov. 25, 1899.
- ³⁴ "Joe Boot Escaped." *Guardian*, 22 February 1901.
- ³⁵ "The Cook Quit His Job." *Florence Tribune*, 16 February 1901.
- ³⁶ "Pearl Will Act." *Bisbee Daily Review*, 22 May 1902.
- ³⁷ "Governor Brodie Pardons Pearl Hart, the Female Bandit." *Tucson Citizen*, 15 December 1902.
- ³⁸ Brown, Wynne. *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Arizona Women*. Guilford, CN: Twodot Press, 2003, p 64.
- ³⁹ Brown, Wynne. *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Arizona Women*. Guilford, CN: Twodot Press, 2003, p 64.
- ⁴⁰ Klugness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in Petticoats: The Yuma Territorial Prison and Its Women*. Yuma: Sun Graphics Printing, Inc., 2016, p 142.
- ⁴¹ Klugness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in Petticoats: The Yuma Territorial Prison and Its Women*. Yuma: Sun Graphics Printing, Inc., 2016, p 152.
- ⁴² Klugness, Elizabeth J. *Prisoners in Petticoats: The Yuma Territorial Prison and Its Women*. Yuma: Sun Graphics Printing, Inc., 2016, p 156.
- ⁴³ "Kansas News." *Topeka State Journal*, 14 May 1904.
- ⁴⁴ Reno, Francis. *Chickasha Daily Express*, 7 September 1909.

Geronimo's Skull

By
Bill Markley

*This is a sidebar for Bill Markley's book **Geronimo and Sitting Bull: Leaders of the Legendary West** published by TwoDot May 2021. The book is available from Amazon and booksellers everywhere or you can get a signed copy from Bill at the Amigos and Ladies of the West booth at the Tucson Festival of Books in March 2023.*

Geronimo died of pneumonia in the Apache hospital at Fort Sill the morning of February 17, 1909. The funeral was held February 18, after his son Robert and daughter Eva arrived. The funeral procession was nearly a mile long with Apaches, residents of the nearby town of Lawton, and the soldiers from Fort Sill participating. His grave was dug next to his wife Zi-yeh's in the Apache prisoner of war cemetery located three miles from the fort.¹



Geronimo's Grave at Fort Sill, OK

One Apache custom was to kill a deceased warrior's favorite horse so he could ride it into the afterlife. Geronimo's wife Azul planned to kill his racehorse but was stopped from doing so. However, his nephew Daklugie said, "We could not bury his best war horse with him, but I saw that he had it for the journey." A graveside Christian funeral service was held and then he was buried with his greatest treasures including jewelry, blankets, and weapons.²

For months Chiricahua warriors, two at a time, took turns guarding Geronimo's grave each night. The Chiricahuas were concerned grave robbers would attempt to take his treasure and head just as Mangas Coloradas's head was taken. As time went on and there were no attempts to rob his grave, the guard was reduced to twice a week.³



Geronimo in 1886

Then there was a report that two Apaches had dug into Geronimo's grave taking his valuable possessions, and decapitating and removing his head. Daklugie said the Chiricahuas watched those two men for years, but if they had taken Geronimo's things and his head, the Chiricahuas never found any evidence of the theft.⁴

In 1931, Fort Sill's Field Artillery School covered Geronimo's grave with a slab of concrete and built a rock monument topped by a stone eagle at the head of the grave.⁵

Rumors began circulating that back in 1918, Geronimo's grave had been robbed and his skull and several bones taken by members of a secret society at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. The society is called the Order of Skull and Bones, and the members, called Bonesmen, hold their meetings in a windowless house they call The Tomb. The story goes that six Bonesmen army officers broke into Geronimo's grave, stealing his skull, femur bones, and artifacts. One of those officers was Prescott Bush, the father of former President George H. W. Bush and grandfather of former President George W. Bush, both of whom were also Bonesmen.⁶



Skull & Bones building at Yale.

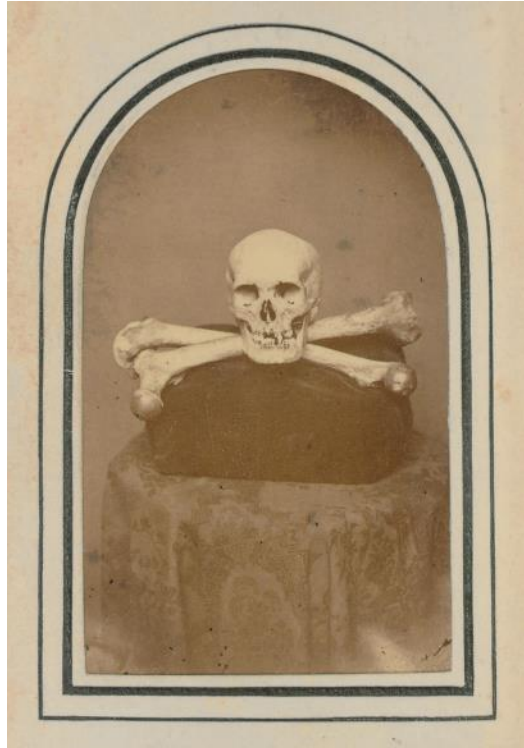
In 1930, Skull and Bones produced a publication "Continuation of the History of Our Order for the Century Celebration" commemorating its hundred year anniversary. In the document it says the six army officers had to be careful in planning their robbery of Geronimo's grave. If they were caught it would not look good in the newspapers.⁷

The publication went on to say, "The ring of pick on stone and thud of earth on earth alone disturbs the peace of the prairie. An axe pried open the iron door of the tomb, and Pat Bush entered and started to dig." Bonesmen referred to each other as Pat which was short for Patriarch. The robbers removed the skull and bones and took them to one of their rooms to clean them.⁸

In 2005, author Marc Wortman was in Yale's archives researching the experiences of Yale army officer aviators during World War I when he found a letter referring to the theft of Geronimo's skull and bones. The letter from Winter Meade, Class of 1919, in part reads, "The skull of the

worthy Geronimo the Terrible, exhumed from its tomb at Fort Sill by your club and Knight Haffuer is now safe inside the T[omb] — together with his well worn femurs, bit and saddle horn.”⁹

In 2009, a descendant of Geronimo brought a lawsuit against the Order of Skull and Bones to return Geronimo’s skull and bones. Attorney Ramsey Clark, who formerly served as US attorney general, represented the plaintiff in the case. Skull and Bones said it did not have Geronimo’s bones, and they won the case in US District Court. The judge held that the law under which Skull and Bones was sued, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, only applied to grave robberies that took place after its enactment in 1990.¹⁰



Photographer unknown. This purports to be an artifact at Skull & Bones

What Marc Wortman and others believe is the Bonesmen did steal a skull and bones, but they robbed the wrong grave because the 1930 Skull and Bones publication states “An axe pried open the iron door of the tomb.” Geronimo was not in a tomb, but in a grave and there was no iron door at his grave.¹¹

The evidence is inconclusive. Is Geronimo’s skull in his grave or is it somewhere else?

¹ W. Michael Farmer, *Geronimo: Prisoner of Lies, Twenty-three years as a Prisoner of War. 1886-1909*, (Guilford, CT: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2019), 185-186, 187. Sharon S. Magee, *Geronimo! Stories of an American Legend*, (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Highways Books, 2002), 136, 138.

² W. Michael Farmer, *Geronimo: Prisoner of Lies*, 186. Sharon S. Magee, *Geronimo! Stories of an American Legend*, 138. Eve Ball, *Indeh*, 182.

³ Eve Ball, *Indeh*, 182.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Angie Debo, *Geronimo*, 443-444. W. Michael Farmer, *Geronimo: Prisoner of Lies*, 187.

-
- ⁶ Ross Goldberg, "Letter fuels speculation that Skulls have Geronimo's skull," *Yale News*, May 2006. Accessed January 10, 2020. <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2006/05/09/letter-fuels-speculation-that-skulls-have-geronimos-skull/> W. Michael Farmer, *Geronimo: Prisoner of Lies*, 187.
- ⁷ Leo W. Banks, "The Strange Saga of Geronimo's Skull: A century after his death, the Apache leader's remains continue to make news" *Santa Fe Reporter*, June 30, 2009. Accessed January 10, 2020. <https://www.sfreporter.com/news/coverstories/2009/07/01/the-strange-saga-of-geronimos-skull/>
- ⁸ Leo W. Banks, "The Strange Saga of Geronimo's Skull."
- ⁹ Ross Goldberg, "Letter fuels speculation that Skulls have Geronimo's skull."
- ¹⁰ Martha Neil, "Yale Secret Society Skull and Bones Wins Lawsuit Over Geronimo's Remains," *American Bar Association Journal*, August 2010. Accessed January 10, 2020. http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/yale_secret_society_skull_bones_wins_lawsuit_over_geronimos_remains
- ¹¹ Marc Wortman, "The Bin Laden of His Day? A New Biography of Geronimo," *The Daily Beast*, July 2017. Accessed January 10, 2020. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-bin-laden-of-his-day-a-new-biography-of-geronimo?ref=author> Leo W. Banks, "The Strange Saga of Geronimo's Skull."

Camp Naco

By
Becky Orosco

Camp Naco was built in 1919 by the US War Department's Mexican Border Defense Construction Project, a response to unsettled conditions along the US/Mexico border resulting from the Mexican revolution. Part of a 1,200-mile chain of thirty-five permanent military camps along the border from Brownsville, Texas, to Arivaca, Arizona, Camp Naco was one of only two constructed of adobe. When the camps were decommissioned in 1923, most were deconstructed so that materials could be used elsewhere, but Camp Naco, built of adobe, remained in place and passed into private hands. As a result, it remains the only camp to retain its historic integrity today.



In 1910 a tent camp manned by the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry of Buffalo Soldiers was established at the point where the El Paso and Southwestern railroad line crossed the border to link the American-owned mines at Canonea, Sonora, to processing facilities in Arizona. Its mission was to protect the railroad, prevent the smuggling of arms, cattle and other supplies across the border to rebel forces in Mexico, and restrain any lawlessness and banditry that might spill over the border into Arizona. In 1919 a permanent camp was constructed. In the 1930s it was a Civilian

Conservation Corps camp. In 1950, ownership reverted to the Newell Family. Today it is owned by the City of Bisbee.

Today Camp Naco is the physical reminder of a decade of border unrest as opposing Mexican forces battled for control of their country, as plans were hatched to reclaim the American Southwest for Mexico, and as Germany attempted to enroll Mexico as an ally in World War I. It also illuminates the important role of the Buffalo Soldiers as effective peacekeepers within the segregated military of the period.



This is the link to the story map for the camp:

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/9ed6bde290734fa2a798bec4f5f3a66a?fbclid=IwAR0-XtusOIUcYUzZc0e7sQINvMIDn7-wKar-Zjfv-CUzFf_GUequaZc

The Southwest's *Big Sundown*: A Silent Film From Hollywood, 1924

By
Craig McEwan



This movie single-frame still of an oil-burner engine and train was published in the novel *Sundown*, most likely from the footage filmed near Chiricahua Station, Cochise County, Arizona, in April of 1924.

With the Great War and the great Spanish Flu Pandemic so recent in memory, the 1920s could not be titled “Great” out of a sense of redundancy. The moniker that stuck was “Roaring,” but the adjective could have been “Big.” Big: humming with rapidly expanding technology and economic prosperity. Big, in benefitting from advancements in automobiles and airplanes. Agriculture made big use of better tractors and farming machinery, and an increasing number of landowners changed the nation’s vast West into ever-expanding, but still limited, cultivation and had subdivided much of the open range with the use of barbed-wire fencing. Motion pictures continued to become a bigger segment of the entertainment sector of the economy, as well.



A poster for the 1924 motion picture *Sundown*. The scenes in the movie that correspond to the poster's quote in the lower-right corner, "Quick! The prairie is afire!" were filmed near Chiricahua Station.

By the mid-20s the film industry had already hit pay dirt years before with the cowboy or Western silent movie genre. Five and a half years after the German surrender, a segment of the movie industry arrived in Douglas, Arizona, to film scenes for an expected Western epic, a grand and expensive narrative entitled *Sundown*. It depicted in fictionalized fashion the end for some of the large cattle spreads in the American Southwest.

A group of first-run theater owners had formed First National Exhibitors' Circuit in 1917. Seven years later the burgeoning company that had financed a series of Charlie Chaplin films for distribution was ready to get into the film production business. By May of 1924, the company would change its name to First National Pictures, Inc. and have *Sundown's* open-range scenes from Texas and along the eastern side of the Chiricahua Mountains "in the can."

The decade that invented the word "hype" did not disappoint in typical Hollywood and newspaper fashion when the *Douglas Daily Dispatch* wrote on Friday, April 4, 1924, of the expected fun:

One of the largest crowds of Douglas people that ever attended any event is expected to go out Sunday morning to Chiricahua station to witness the taking of the climax scenes for "Sundown" the movie being filmed here by the Associated First National Pictures corporation.

A special train chartered by the company will carry the crowd or such of them as do not care to drive to the station. The hour at which the train will leave here has not been definitely set at this time. Opportunity to take part in the filming of one of the big scenes will be offered the people who go out Sunday as the officials of the company in Los Angeles have just wired the directors here that they want a large group in the picture.

Arrangements have already been completed for the working into the pictures of a number of local scenes and a number of prominent citizens of the city.

Arrangements for the holding of a barbecue and picnic to feed the throng are going forward and the plans will probably be completed by Saturday morning.¹

Chiricahua Station was a train siding along the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad, whose remnants can still be seen from Route 80, at the turnoff to Tex Canyon-Rucker Canyon Road, 30 miles northeast of the border and former smelter town of Douglas. A round concrete structure, rising several feet above ground, is what is left of a cistern that used to provide water to the iron horses thirsty for power-generating steam. In the copper-hauling railroad's heyday, Chiricahua



A number of hills to the east of Chiricahua Station lead to the Peloncillo Mountains, close to where the last Apaches to surrender to the U.S. Army gave up their weapons in Skeleton Canyon less than 40 years before the filming of *Sundown*.

Station would have been a picturesque stop in the San Bernardino Valley, situated between the Peloncillo and Chiricahua Mountain ranges. Passengers could board at the small station or be dropped off for an excursion into the southern parts of the Chiricahua Mountains, about 5 miles to the west.



All that is left of Chiricahua Station is this cistern cap. A crumbling sidewalk to the right leads to a dark slag-filled berm; this elevated bed carried trains along the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad from 1903-1961. The Chiricahua Mountains, north of Tex Canyon, are in the background.



One of the countless photogenic images of Juanita Horton, aka Bessie Love.

The *Dispatch's* competitor, the *Douglas International*, grabbed the social angle of the hubbub that hit the border on that Friday in April,

“Local Dance at Speer Hall Last Night Attracts Great Crowd: Movie Stars Appear,” Bessie Love, Hobart Bosworth, and Charlie Murray here for filming of “Sundown” – First National picture at American Legion dance. Lots of people.²

First National started shooting the motion picture 60 miles northeast of El Paso. Jack Jungmeyer, a reporter who made it out to the desolate site in early March of 1924, said the plateau, where the crew lived in tents, was part of the Lane Ranch. He possibly was referring to ex-Texan Joe Lane who had extensive grazing lands in nearby New Mexico and would eventually buy a ranch outside of Willcox, Arizona.



The red “X” marks the approximate location for *Sundown*’s camp while filming in Texas.³

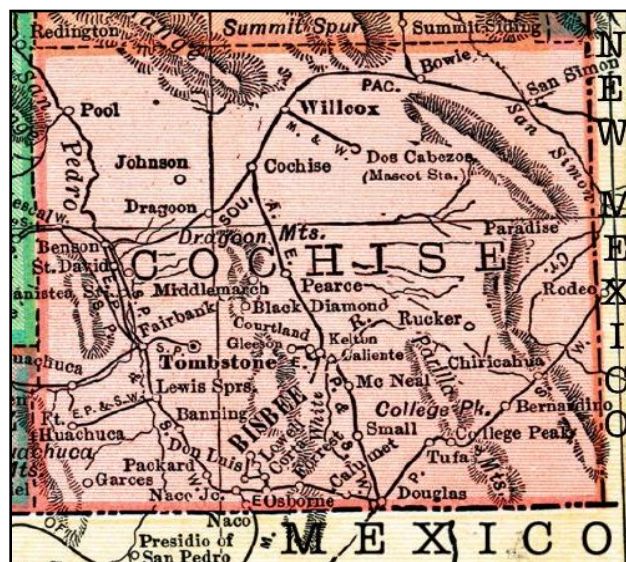
From Jungmeyer’s descriptions the area was likely part of the southwestern end of the Otero Mesa, west of what is now Dell City, Texas.⁴ Farmers founded Dell City in 1948, after an underground water supply had been discovered, which supported a surrounding infrastructure of new cropland, but in 1924 First National Pictures hauled drinking water from 30 miles away.⁵ Bessie Love, the female lead in *Sundown*, recalled 42 years later, in an article for the *Christian Science Monitor*:

At last my “moonlighting [working on Sundown and other screenplays at the same time in Hollywood]” for “Sundown” was finished and I could leave with the rest of the company

for Texas – big, big Texas with all those hundreds of miles, very level, very flat, with absolutely nothing on it and we were right in the middle.⁶



Sundown's camp at the cold and windy West-Texas shoot in March of 1924.



Douglas and Chiricahua Station can be seen along the solid black-line track of the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad that runs diagonally in the southeastern corner of this map of Cochise County, Arizona. The Chiricahua train siding would have been about 30 miles from Douglas and 160 miles west of El Paso.⁷

A snowstorm hit the area in mid-March, plummeting temperatures to below freezing and covering surfaces with snow. Bessie Love kept her co-workers from deep despair by mesmerizing them with hours of singing and playing on her ukulele. Later, the film's cast and hands were overwhelmed with wind and blowing sand, shutting down work for three days. "The sandstorm

always came up about ten,” Love recalled, “when we would knock off until it stopped, sometime in the afternoon.” She continued:

Anyway, at noon no Cameraman will work with the sun directly overhead, casting black shadows under everyone’s eyes, making the leading lady look 106 and the leading man a gorilla.

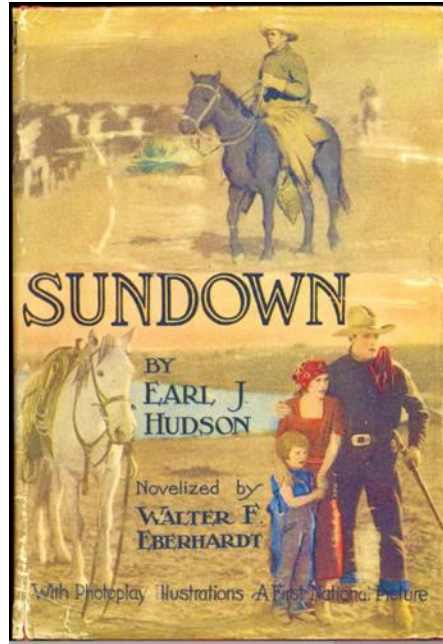
We had left home with the idea of being gone eight days. We stayed eight weeks. . .

They had had a terrible drought in all the Southwest for seven years and we had difficulty in finding enough cattle in any one place to meet our needs. The story was about the last big cattle drive up the Chisholm Trail. At one time, looking down from a mountain, we had 7,000 head in one shot slowly winding their way presumably to Kansas City. And the train sequence of the city family moving to the West was shot on the train itself while we were traveling.⁸

“Middle” in this sense must have meant in the middle of a desolate region or plateau because Love was camping in about as far west a county in Texas as one could go, and she was most likely including the crew’s stay in Arizona in the eight weeks.⁹



A comedic publicity photo of ever-funny actor Charles Murray, Jr., spraying Bessie Love’s feet in a galvanized tub for hoof-and-mouth disease, a problem virus of livestock and people.



Dust cover for the novel *Sundown*.



First National Pictures filmed a large number of cattle from a “mountaintop” in the San Bernardino Valley. The lone hill in the center, to the west of Chiricahua Station, could be a candidate for the hosting of a movie camera 98 years ago.

First National Pictures also published the novel *Sundown* in 1924. It had been adapted from the original screenplay by Earl J. Hudson, who was also *Sundown*'s producer and much later would be vice president of the American Broadcasting Corporation. The book included eight photographs extracted from the film as single-frame stills. By studying the novel and newspaper accounts of the movie's filming, one can surmise that some of Love's memories were not altogether accurate.



The novel *Sundown* opens with this sentimental still of the two main characters, Hugh Brent and Ellen Crawley, actors Roy Stewart and Bessie Love.

The novel's cattle drive did not follow the Chisholm Trail, and the meat on the hoof was not destined for the Kansas City stockyards. Since the West Texas shoot lacked varying topography, Love must have been referring to filming on a Chiricahua Mountain hilltop because Cochise County folks flocked to the station to see the shoot for the livestock scenes. She went on to write:

There was one enormous ranch out from Douglas, Arizona, many miles from anything except a small shack – the usual one or two rooms, as near I can remember, which was used when the cowhands happened to be working the cattle out that way. It was stacked with provisions, as are all such shacks in that kind of country. An unwritten law is that whoever comes along can go in – the door is never locked – and use whatever food is there. You can help yourself to anything you need BUT you leave the dishes washed and the place clean. The idea is that someone else is doing the same thing in your shack while you are away.

. . . My mother always went with me no matter what kind of location it was. On this particular day Charley [sic, Charlie] Murray [playing Pat Meech in Sundown, a restaurateur and relapsed outfit cook], with a straight face, told her that I wanted to know if she had found the doughnut flour. My mother was a very good cook. Doughnut flour? She said there was no such thing. Did I want some doughnuts, she wondered.

Charl[ie] said he did not know, that was all I had said.

Why, yes, Mother said, she would make some doughnuts. Whereupon she went into that shack and did. From scratch. And she made them for all of us. It never would have entered her head to make them just for me. With all those people around. After that we had hot doughnuts every day out in the middle of that great platter of a place. She knew this country and its customs. My father had been a cowboy in Texas when she was a small-town school teacher there. She also had run various small restaurants in her life . . .¹⁰



Charles Murray, Jr., as Pat Meech, with what could be a San Bernardino Valley backdrop.¹¹

Besides Miss Love, *Sundown* included other silent film stars like Roy Stewart, Charles Murray, Jr., and Hobart Bosworth. The screenplay had been rewritten by famed names in the industry: Kenneth B. Clarke, a *Saturday Evening Post* contributor, who had been penning Westerns for years, and two of the biggest female authors in the business: Frances Marion and Marion Fairfax. Laurence Trimble and Harry O. Hoyt directed, the latter being the younger brother of Arthur Hoyt, who played Henry Crawley, Ellen's father. Some of this team would go on the next year to create *Lost World*, again hiring the dependable box office star, Bessie Love, in an Arthur Canon Doyle story that helped pioneer the latest special effects, such as stop-motion photography, for this dinosaur-infused "ahead of its time" black and white silent film.



One of the well-known *Sundown* screenplay authors, Frances Marion.

Love wrote in her 1966 *Monitor* article,

*Tall, broad-shouldered Roy Stewart was the leading man. He knew more dialects and laughed harder at his own funny stories than anyone else. Little Arthur Hoyt played my father; Charl[ie] Murray from Keystone Kops who had turned straight actor was with us, and Hobart Bosworth – tall handsome screen idol of a former day. He was still a pin-up, with his strong, sunburned features and thick white hair, slightly rumpled.*¹²

Hobart Bosworth (1867-1943), had been acting for almost 40 years by the time he played ranching patriarch John Brent in *Sundown*. This was not his first film working opposite Bessie Love. They had starred together in 1921's *Sea Lion*. During the filming of director Frank Capra's *Dirigible* in 1931, the actors were asked to place small cages of dry ice in their mouths to mimic cold breath in a frozen climate. Exasperated with the slow pace of filming, Bosworth popped a piece of dry ice directly into his mouth. The frozen carbon dioxide burned the inside of his mouth, causing him

prolonged excruciating pain and destroyed a section of his jaw, mouth tissue, and a number of his teeth. He slowly recovered and performed in another 36 movies before he died a dozen years later.

Whoever picked Chiricahua Station as a film site may have ridden the El Paso & Southwestern through this awe-inspiring terrain. Hobart Bosworth had contracted tuberculosis in his younger days; he successfully improved his health by living to the northwest in Tempe before World War I. Miss Love and her mother, Jessie Horton, although not in supervisory roles in the National Pictures corporation, could have seen the country before.¹³ In 1900, as an infant, Juanita Horton, and her parents, were living in Silver City, New Mexico, 95 miles northeast of Chiricahua Station, at least long enough to register there for the census. Bessie Love claimed to have been born in Midland, Texas, on September 10, 1898. In the *Albuquerque Morning Journal* of November 1, 1916, the newspaper said Bessie had been born Juanita Horton in Albuquerque and that her father, John Cross Horton, “was one of the artists that performed behind the counter for the Graham Brothers,” which was newspaper humor relating that Mr. Horton tended bar at the Grahams’ saloon. Love’s memoir portrays her father as a ladies’ man, who moved his wife and daughter to many towns across the Southwest. Bessie said he worked as a cowboy, a bartender, and as a chiropractor, a profession he took on for a time in California.



Actor Hobart Bosworth, 1924.

In November of 1902, when Juanita was four, she made it into the *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*, showcased as “Puck” in the Brownie minstrel troupe at Colombo Hall.¹⁴ The Horton family left Albuquerque around 1904 and moved to Williams, Arizona – near the Grand Canyon. Juanita attended school in Williams until the family uprooted to California in roughly 1912. The *Williams News* announced the return of “their Juanita” in August of 1917. By this time the skyrocketed

career of young Juanita, now Bessie Love, had warranted her a vacation, where she and her mother convalesced for at least a few days. Bessie Love even rode horseback with an old classmate while she took a break from the unending start to a stressful occupation.¹⁵

Juanita's acting career started in June of 1915, with advice from cowboy movie star Tom Mix. No stranger to Arizona, Mix advised Jennie Horton that Juanita should become an actress. Mrs. Horton sent her daughter to Biograph Studios, where Mom instructed her daughter to wait outside and, when given the chance, introduce herself to the great filmmaker D.W. Griffith. Instead, Juanita knocked on Griffith's door, and he invited the 16-year-old inside for an impromptu interview. Griffith asked Juanita why she wanted to be in movies. After mentioning that she came from a poor family, and that she needed a summer job, Juanita impressed him with, "Mama said I wasn't trained to do anything, so there was nothing left for me but acting." However, judging by her early career in New Mexico, the young lady had been dabbling in acting since she was practically a baby. This director of the hit *Birth of a Nation* liked her and gave her a bit part in his four-volume study on prejudice in which she played the biblical bride in the Wedding of Cana chapter of what became 1916's *Intolerance*. Griffith's collaborator, Frank E. Woods, in front of everyone on a movie set, renamed the young lady "'Bessie,' because any child can pronounce it. And 'Love,' because we want everyone to love her."¹⁶



A postcard photograph of a young, rising star, Bessie Love.

Love's first big role came in *The Flying Torpedo*. She also acted alongside Douglas Fairbanks in three 1916 films: *The Good Bad Man*, *Reggie Mixes In*, and *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish*.

When Love and her mother rode into Douglas less than nine years after the beginning of her career, she was a celebrity that had waited out one career downturn and was in the beginning of her second wave that would last past the start of talking pictures, which exploded across the country during the last two years of the “roaring” decade.¹⁷

Douglas’s Saturday *Dispatch* explained more of the filming event for Sunday, April 6, 1924:

The special train which will convey the crowd from Douglas to Chiricahua station Sunday morning to witness the filming of the big scenes for “Sundown” will leave the station at 10 o’clock. It was announced last night. That it will not be possible for the movie company to serve luncheon to the great number who are to be present was also decided yesterday and the committee of citizens who tried to arrange for the feeding of the crowd have announced they did not have the necessary time in which to make arrangements. Everyone must bring his own lunch.

The never-ending problem of limited finances seemed to affect the promise of free food by the big studio even in this early day of “filmdom,” and it was up to municipal authorities to find local dignitaries and musicians hungry for the limelight:

The chamber of commerce has secured the band which the directors of the company will use in the big scene. Others interested have arranged for the presence of a number of well known persons of the community who are to take prominent parts in the picture.

Everyone who goes out Sunday will be given an opportunity to get “shot” by the camera men, as one of the scenes requires the filming of a very large number of people.



This still from *Sundown* most likely was filmed north of Douglas. A mountain (or large cloud) can be seen in the background. Herefords were favored livestock on some area ranches at the time, but they were also a prominent breed in West Texas.¹⁸

Cowboys, Indians and ranchers have been retained by the company for some of the principal settings of the work and an opportunity to see the “shooting” of the scenes of one of the year’s greatest pictures will be afforded.

“Sundown” is not a slapstick comedy. It is an epic of the west. It is being timed with an eye to detail and is to be true to life in every effect. The Associated First National Pictures corporation is spending half a million dollars¹⁹ on this picture alone and they are demanding the very best of everything for it.

The actors and actresses are at the top of the ladder of fame in the world. The story was written by one of moviedom’s foremost authors and the picture has already been billed as the sensation of the year. The company working here is rated at the top of the film industry and what the people of Douglas will see on Sunday will be the cream of picturedom.²⁰

Sundown’s leading man, 6’2” veteran cowboy actor John “Roy” Stewart, was born in 1883 in San Diego. Stewart debuted in films before the beginning of the Great War and was a star by 1916. He made hundreds of two-reel cowboy films by the time the industry premiered its first significant “talkie,” *The Jazz Singer*, in October of 1927. Stewart lost the lead roles once sound became standard. He died in Los Angeles in 1933 of a heart attack.



Roy Stewart was a cowboy screen legend until the film industry switched from silent movies to “talkie” pictures. He did take smaller movie parts until his death in 1933.

That Saturday in April of 1924, the newspaper wrote in “Big Film Will Be Shot Today at Chiricahua,”

Final preparations have been made for the shooting of the big scenes in “Sundown” at Chiricahua station today. The special train which will take any from Douglas who wish to see the movie company in action will leave the station at 10 o’clock this morning. The directors of the picture say the shots will be made regardless of the weather as it is imperative that this work be completed at once.

The Associated First National Pictures corporation believe that “Sundown” will be the greatest picture of the year. It depicts the history of the cattle industry in the west showing the rise of the great herds and the free range which extended for miles unfenced. The picture carries the spectator on down to the time of the homesteader and the fencing of land which drove the cattlemen further west and south until they drive all their herds together and arrange to leave the United States for new pastures in Mexico.

The big scenes to be “shot” today are the farewell of the people who are to stay behind, to the cattlemen who are leaving and the holding up of the limited [train] in order to drive the cattle to water without delay.

A large number of cowmen and others who are well known here will take part in the work and everyone who goes out will be permitted a place before the camera in one of two scenes.²¹

The *Dispatch* was describing two separate train scenes in the movie. The farewell filming would have been from the beginning of the cattle drive, when New Mexicans, including Native Americans, turned out to say goodbye to the great land barons and their herds at the fictional central-New Mexico town of Randall. The train holdup came near the end of the movie.



A 1924 advertisement for the Pantheon Theatre, originally found in Toledo’s long-running *Blade* newspaper.²²

The novel *Sundown: An Epic Drama of To-day* opens with father and son ranchers, John and Hugh Brent, riding the train back from the East to their ranch in New Mexico. Son Hugh meets a fetching Ellen Crawley on the train. Ellen's family left a struggling life in an Eastern city (New York?) to establish a homestead in what turns out to be part of the shrinking grazing land where the Brents ranch.



Mrs. Brent (Margaret McWade) meets her husband, John (Hobart Bosworth), in front of the neighboring New Mexico ranchers in this still shot from the movie as seen in the novel.

As narrator the novel's author, Walter F. Eberhardt, wrote in the book:

For years their cattle had roamed unrestricted over thousands of acres of free pasturage. Now the land was being settled and claimed by private owners, – homesteaders to whom the government was generously giving the land that these men had subdued. For the homesteaders it meant ruin. If their herds were to be barred from free pasturage it entailed buying fodder. Buying fodder meant the difference between profit and loss. They could not go on such a basis. The market was low. To sell at present figures also meant disaster.

They needed help more than the persecuted Pilgrims had ever needed the freedom of new shores. They needed, at least, a momentary respite to see them through the next winter. Their credit at the local banks had been stretched to its limits. Their only hope lay with the Eastern capitalists and it was to perfect arrangements for a loan that they had delegated John Brent and Hugh [Brent's son] to make the journey.²³

The Brents get back from their long journey and are late to a meeting of ranchers at their family's hacienda. They announce to their friends that they had no success in persuading politicians and bankers to save their large ranches from the progress of improved infrastructure and smaller-

acreage farmers. One of the novel's ranchers, Billy Treadwell, condenses the problem in a speech to his fellow cattlemen:

"No need to tell you what the situation is," he announced curtly. "We're all in the same stampede. You've followed the market. As far as selling our cattle goes, we might as well give them away and get just as much for our labors as shipping 'em east at the present prices. We've simply got to stick it out until things go up; but how in hell are we going to do it without money?"

There isn't enough free grazing country left to feed a measly hundred thousand head on the year round, let alone the herds we represent. The power companies and settlers have clean vamoosed us out of it. If we've got to buy feed for them animals this winter we might just as well . . .

With my range pinched down to nothing it means buying feed or selling half my herd on a busted market . . ."

John Brent then broaches the forbidden subject of driving their combined herds into Mexico, where there is plenty of forage. The others balk at such a proposal, but in the end the Brents have the other ranch families in on the plan to start a new life with their animals in Chihuahua.

Locals sign up as cowboys for the drive, as does cafe owner Pat Meech. The novel includes a movie-star cowboy, Will Major, who leaves Hollywood's glamor to get in on America's last great drive, as well as a cameo appearance by *Sundown's* original writer and producer, Earl Joseph Hudson pseudonymously recreated as Carl J. Maxon. The town of Randall turns out its residents to wish the cowboys well and say goodbye. A band plays for the sad celebration. That scene was most likely filmed at Chiricahua Station, since the *Douglas Daily Dispatch* announced that Douglas would provide a band.



Funny even in a straight part, actor Charles Murray, Jr., with chef's hat, played Pat Meech, who is reading an advertisement to policeman character Jim Dugan for cowhands needed on a big cattle drive into Chihuahua.



A promotional photo of Bessie Love's character, Ellen Crawley, at her new New Mexico homestead.

Early in the great migration – halfway through the book's pages – the bovines stampede and destroy the shack of the impoverished Crawley family. An irate Ellen Crawley has no choice but to tag along with her family behind the drovers and cowboys who hate her family for being part of the human migration that is filling up New Mexico with “nesters” or small homesteaders.



Below this film still: “Something new for her arms to hold.” If the word “hokum” was indeed invented circa 1917, then the caption is too young, by seven years, to be the cause for the origin of the term.

On the 12th day of the drive, the herd of 200,000 crosses the Rio Grande north of Socorro, headed southwest to the Mexican border at Columbus, New Mexico. Soon thereafter, a prairie fire forces the drovers to reroute, and Hugh Brent rescues his father from ravenous flames. Hugh saves his own life from blinding smoke, burning clothes, and certain death by running and accidentally jumping into the salvation of the waters of the Rio Grande.



Campfire scene from the movie, extant as a still in the novel.

Of course, the less irate and now compassionate Ellen is willing to help her open-range adversary. She bandages the handsome hero and nurses him back to health while secretly cleaning up the mess wagon and fixing the best food the cowpunchers have ever put to lips and tongue.

Near the international border, Hugh, Ellen, and company hold up a train for ten hours so that the mighty parade of beeves can pass peacefully across the tracks. The train occupants change from aghast at the illegal train stoppage to sympathetic for this great exodus of man and beast from the United States. Just when things look promising for a cowboy wedding, Hugh tells Ellen that he is leaving her and her two brothers and father with a good storekeeper's family in Columbus, that in real life had been attacked by Pancho Villa's soldiers eight years prior.

The Brents and the other cattlemen push their combined herds into Chihuahua, Mexico, where, one day, Hugh Brent will call for the hand of Miss Crawley when the new ranches are settled and prosperous.

Sundown's creators claimed that the premise of their movie was true and historically accurate, that ranchers in southern Utah, central New Mexico, and eastern Arizona were forced to move their herds because small landowners, or "nesters," and the power companies that invaded the vast territory, to support the growing population, were ruining the open range for the big outfits. While

this may be true to a certain extent, the novel, however, ignored the biggest historical reason for Southwesterners driving their cattle and entraining them across the international border: *Mother Nature*. A multi-year lack of precipitation and the subsequent decrease in grass production were the biggest causes for the exodus. This cyclical problem had been festering since the wet years of the mid-1910s had evaporated, as explained by “Driving Cattle to Mexico,” in the November 30, 1917, issue of *The Copper Era and Morenci Leader* (Arizona):

Joe Olney of the valley has reasoned the cattle situation at the present time that “stock is better alive and running a chance of living in Mexico than dying on the range in the United States,” and acting upon this hypothesis started his cattle the first of the week railing to Mexico, about ten miles east of Douglas, Arizona, where he has leased a tract of land containing 70,000 acres of excellent grazing land. The cattle moved from the Animas Valley belong to Mr. Olney and Chas. C. Tyson. Bond was given by the Mexican government that the cattle could be moved back into the United States after the drouth, without duty.

Several New Mexico cattlemen on the Arizona border have moved their stock into the neighboring state but Mr. Olney’s is the first shipment into Old Mexico.

Two years later, on September 28, the *Tombstone Epitaph* declared:

. . . Cattlemen will remember that last year [1918] when grass was scarce on this side of the international line many head of cattle was taken to Mexico. It is believed that there were many herds taken across the line lawfully and that on this side there remained remnants of these herds . . .

The drought was relentless, as described by the *Casper Daily Tribune* (Wyoming) on October 19, 1922. Ranchers were transporting cattle to Mexico to avoid the cattle’s starvation in New Mexico:

Albuquerque, N.M., Oct. 19 – The movement of cattle from drought stricken sections of New Mexico to old Mexico has begun. Stockmen near the border are driving the cattle through while further north near Magdalena and Socorro empty stock cars are being loaded as fast as they arrive.

More than 100,000 cattle will be moved according to W.R. Morley, of Magdalena, who represented the War Finance corporation in arranging details for the transfer to Mexico . . . He said a force of at least 200 American cowboys would accompany the cattle to Mexico and remain as guards of the herds.

If the reader considers several years of cattle migration into Mexico, then it is not hard to figure that *Sundown*’s estimate of 150,000 head in one large drive, circa 1924, is not a stretch of the imagination. Arizona ranchers were transporting cows to Chihuahua but not in large numbers from the southeastern corner of Cochise County; otherwise, the *Sundown* cinematographer would not have been able to rely on the local herds to reach a filmable herd size of between five-and seven-thousand head.²⁴

The *Douglas Dispatch* gave the public a synopsis of Sunday's filming at Chiricahua Station:

April 8, 1924, "Children Hurt in Auto Crash as Big Film Scenes Taken"

A bit of drama which was not play acting and not on the schedule was produced at Chiricahua station Sunday afternoon during the filming of the big scenes for "Sundown" when, as the result of a head-on collision between two cars, Lois O'Brien and Louis[e] O'Brien were injured. Dr. "Jerry" Austin, a member of the cast of "Sundown" placed little Lois on an improvised operating table on the rear of a truck and dressed a deep glass cut in the child's forehead.

Austin wore the paint and the cowboy outfit required for the picture while he exercised the skill of a surgeon in dressing the wound.

In the excitement of seeing the movie shots and driving through the large crowd, Mrs. J.F. O'Brien, mother of the children, neglected to watch the road ahead and drove her car into the front of another car. According to spectators, both cars were on the wrong side of the road and the accident happened as they started to regain the right side. The other child, Louise O'Brien, was cut about the lips but not seriously hurt.²⁵

According to census records, Lois and Louise O'Brien were both born in about 1921. The young girls were probably twins, and their mother, Christine O'Brien, had recently been divorced from James O'Brien. She had been born in Albuquerque in 1896, 20 years and one day after Jere Austin. Could Christine have known Bessie Love from 20 years before in a bustling Albuquerque? Maybe her haphazard driving was caused by trying to shout to her former neighbor, "Hey, Juanita, remember me?" "My daughters can dance and sing!" Bam! "Oh, no!"

Born in Minneapolis on March 24, 1876, John "Jere" or "Jerry" Van Akin Austin was playing the part of John Burke in the movie. His character's name is not found in the novel, which does not mean his character was not in the book. He could have been playing the novel's Columbus, New Mexico, grocer, Ike Anderson, who takes in the Crawleys as Roy Stewart's Hugh Brent leaves his love interest behind north of the border. Since Jere was not a doctor, the article should have placed quotation marks around "Dr." Mr. Austin lived less than four years after his good deed that took place somewhere near the unprecedented commotion that had not been so prevalent since cavalry chased Chiricahua Apache in the vicinity a half-century prior.

For the same day's excitement, the *Dispatch* included another article:

Characterized by the directors of the First National Productions, Inc., as their first entirely successful day since the start of the filming of "Sundown" Sunday, at Chiricahua station, with more than 5000 Douglas people present, marked the filming of some of the most costly and remarkable scenes ever "shot" by a motion picture company.

The long train, chartered by the company for the day, left Douglas at 10 o'clock in the morning, loaded to the guards. Many persons were unable to get aboard and were taken

to the station by the cars hired by the film company. At Chiricahua a line of automobiles on each side of the road reached for nearly a half mile along the right-of-way.

Directors of the company expressed heartfelt gratitude for the spirit of co-operation of the citizens of Douglas in coming to see the work . . .].

The crowd out for a holiday frolic, and intensely interested in the work of the movie people watched the taking of the scenes with rapt attention but complied with good spirit with the requests of the company to keep out of range of the camera. But one scene was spoiled by the appearance of automobiles where they were not wanted.

The article does not go into detail about whether or not the spoiling automobiles were those of Christine O'Brien and the car she collided with, which were both on the wrong side of the road.

The stopping of Southern Pacific passenger train No. 2 which was held for the crossing of the great herd of cattle, for 20 minutes, is a thing not recorded in past history of filmdom. Four trains were used in the work two being passenger and two freight.

While rain and clouds of a typical April day, alternated with bright sunshine, almost every one of the great number of "shots" made was reported successful.²⁶

Yet, filming was proceeding at a slower pace than originally expected. While First National wanted to be out of Arizona in a week, the company was in Douglas another seven days, judging by this *International* article for the next weekend:

*Tomorrow will see the last of the First National film stars in Douglas for this trip during which time they filmed the feature scenes for their picture *Sundown*. Today a scene was taken at the old Spanish church in Pirtleville.*

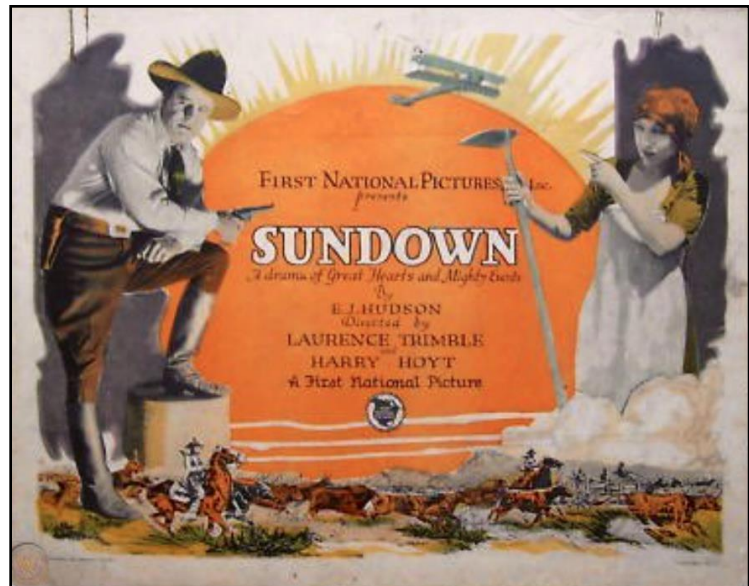
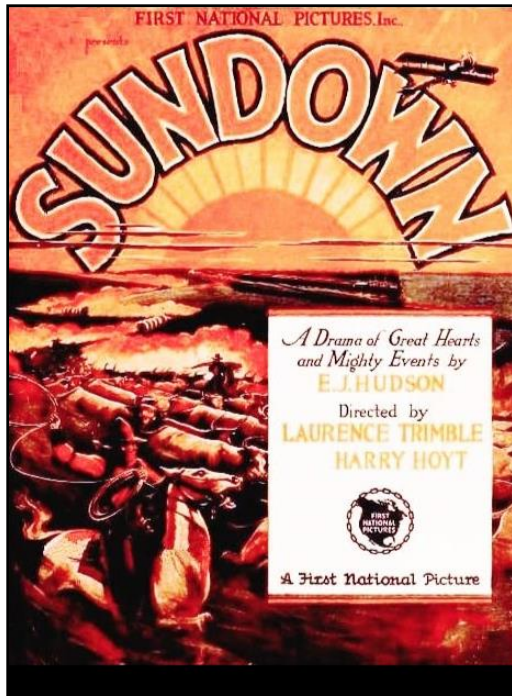
Roy Stewart and Hobart Bosworth were burned about the face, although not seriously, during the filming of the prairie fire yesterday afternoon. The shifting of the wind after the fire had been started is said to have caused the fire to temporarily get out of control.²⁷

Examples of First National Pictures' push to make their big modern-day Western a success can be found in the cinema trade's periodical *Moving Picture World*: "The Strand in Syracuse [New York] . . . used a balloon last week floating high above the theatre and advertising the coming of *Sundown*,"²⁸ and "*Sundown* . . . opened so good that it doubtless will be held for a run. A big exploitation campaign was placed in back of it."²⁹

Theaters, such as the Pantheon in Toledo, Ohio, charged 25¢ for matinees and 35¢ for the evening showings of *Sundown*.³⁰ Ticket sales looked promising at the beginning of the film's run. The *Washington Post* stated:

Earl Hudson's epic of the trials of American cattle raisers surpasses anything in the line of Western pictures that has been shown here for some time. The opening yesterday was to

full capacity houses in the afternoon and evening. The picture is one of the best put together in years.³¹



The airplanes in these two *Sundown* promotions symbolized “the modern” aspect in a movie portraying one of the last big cattle drives in U.S. history.

Also, from the nation’s capital, the *Evening Star* opined:

*A tremendous stampede of what must have been thousands of cattle, which actually wreck an entire house; a sensational prairie fire; long, long trails of cattle, winding off into the distance, so far as the eye can reach; the story of a great love developed in the face of dire hardships - these elements all fuse into a whole which breathes of the grandeur of heroics. The love element is clean and strong.*³²



Earl Joseph Hudson, ca. 1924.³³

But the *Washington Daily News* seemed a bit unconfident or confused in explaining the Western:

*There are big moments. There are some impressive scenes. There is an effect of a river rising to flood in the start of the big drive of 150,000 cattle from the plains of Wyoming or Nevada or somewhere like that to Mexico. We see motionless herds, and then a gradual gathering of momentum as the moving herds behind push those in front on in irresistible flood. That's big. The effect of it is big. . .*³⁴

Another movie tradesmen seemed to be taking both sides as a movie critic wrote: "Took Mrs. Service to see it with me at a private screening, and her comment was "There's a real picture."³⁵ Now that is ambiguity at its best!

Indeed, the fractures in the industry's promotions of this promised Western masterpiece began to reach the public by December, about four weeks after the movie began screening across the country. The newly hired British film critic for the *New York Times*, Mordaunt Hall, who would work for the newspaper another ten years, summed up *Sundown* in his irreverent but informing way in "Cattle by the Thousands, *Sundown*":

. . . [I]t obviously was the hope of the producers to make "Sundown" an epic of the cattlemen and cowboys, to vie in its way with those inspiring productions "The Covered Wagon" and "The Iron Horse."³⁶ This hope, however, is far from realized, even with the impressive scenes of thousands and thousands of cattle which are photographed from the mountains and from the plain level. There is a sequence showing a stampede of cattle which is quite effective, as are many other stretches dealing with the animals on the arid plains. It is interesting and satisfying to see the steers and cows plunging into the river and enjoying the water. But as soon as one gets back to the story in this production it becomes unusually boring, especially when a comedian endeavors to imitate the really excellent efforts of the players in "The Covered Wagon" and "The Iron Horse." In the course of this sketchy and uncertain narrative, two of the cattlemen go to see the President in the White House.

In this sequence E. J. Radcliffe, in a frock coat and striped trousers, impersonates the late Colonel Roosevelt, and while one naturally recognizes the character, it is only due to the eyeglasses and the imitation of Roosevelt's way of smiling. Mr. Radcliffe is not as deep-chested or as heavy as the Colonel was when he was in the White House. The comedy character in this film makes a lot of unnecessary fuss over a calf whose mother is killed. The actor treats the calf with all the affection one might a dog, even to feeding it with condensed milk run through the punctured thumb of a glove. The narrative is supposed to be concerned with the efforts of cattlemen to stem the nesters and modern conveniences. The cattlemen eventually drive their great herds across the border into Mexico. The story of this production was written by Earl Hudson, who is now producing manager for First National Pictures, Inc., in the Bronx studio. It was directed by Laurence Trimble and Harry Hoyt. Bessie Love does the best she can with the part Ellen Crawley, and Roy Stewart is seen as Hugh Brent. Hobart Bosworth is not an impressive cattleman. As we heard some one say, this picture is all very well if you like cows.³⁷

Ouch!



The Teddy Roosevelt scene in the silent film was a flashback to when ranchers approached the President about stopping the influx of homesteaders. This still was used for promotional purposes but did not make it into the novel's pages.

Hall's critique opened the floodgates to less prominent critics, some simply trying to make a living in the theater business:

Sundown . . . A very good picture but one reel too long. The cattle get too big a showing. Needs correct music to put it over. Won't please young folks and "flappers;" or "fans" with brains. Tone okay. Sunday, yes. Audience appeal okay. Family and student class, town of 4,000. Admission 10-25[¢]. Star Theatre (600 seats), Decorah, Iowa.³⁸

Another saddle-sore New Yorker chimed in shortly after Christmas about multiple films fatiguing big-city sophisticates and the working class:

. . . [S]everal thousand cows have been giving a continuous performance beginning with . . . "Sundown," and "North of 36" . . . As the music in every case is about the same "Western Allegro" or some theme built around it, the element of variety in the motion picture entertainments on Broadway has been somewhat neglected. The crowds in almost all the houses have been small, which of course is nothing new at this time of the year. It is possible that too many cows may have had its effect on the attendance. It has been observed on more than one occasion that when the principal attractions showed outstanding points of resemblances there followed a falling off in the patronage. The fact is that the one theatre which kept away from this orgy of cows had the best audiences.³⁹

“Orgy of cows!” Who says the folks from a hundred years ago were kinder and gentler? Nevertheless, one can see the trouble with having the same theme in multiple pictures playing in theaters at the same time.



The quote in this *Sundown* poster says, “The cattle kings are leaving for Mexico,” as father (actor Arthur Hoyt) and daughter look on from their homestead.

Anyone interested in who attended the filming of *Sundown* at Chiricahua Station will be disappointed to realize that the newspapers may be all there is to verify that this rare event occurred in the early heyday of Douglas, Arizona. As already noted in the *International*, Bessie Love danced with the Douglas locals while lodging in the city for at least two weeks. Today, she is credited as the first person to dance the “Charleston” on film, in 1925. Since the dance first hit in 1923, it is possible that she showed the Arizonans how to do it while in Cochise County. In 1929, she married William Hawks, director Howard Hawks’s brother. That same year the Academy of Motion Pictures nominated her for her work in her first “talkie” musical, *The Broadway Melody*. With her three-year-old daughter, Patricia, and her mother, Jennie, Bessie Love resettled in the United Kingdom in 1935. She divorced Hawks two years later. She lived out the rest of her days in London, performing on stage and later on British television and acting in such movies as *Ragtime*, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, *Reds* (all in 1981), and *The Hunger* (1983). She died in 1986.

The biggest disappointment to this story is knowing that *Sundown* no longer exists. Celluloid film is highly flammable, and many a movie house burned to the ground from combustible reels lying around the projection room. Silent movies thought to be long gone, however, have resurfaced over the years. First National did send *Sundown* on a tour of Europe. Hopefully the eight or nine canisters, measuring 9,000 feet of highly flammable celluloid film,⁴⁰ are still entombed in some sub-arctic Scandinavian (or Canadian or Alaskan) village’s garbage dump, where the fragile film will be perpetually preserved by cold temperatures until found by some excavator. Such finds have happened before, along with discoveries of film in basements or upon some unstudied shelf in an enormous archive.

One can only speculate that *Sundown* may not have been safeguarded for preservation because the epic drama had been a big let-down at the theaters. The show had historical accuracy problems and may have bored a nation still so closely intimate with the raising of livestock. If the movie did fall flat, it seems obvious that First National Pictures fought the negative publicity with promising promotional stories and ads about their big Western. The *Omaha Morning Bee* wrote on November 30, 1924:

Bessie Love's new starring vehicle is "Sundown," which is showing at the Rialto. It is an original story by Earl Hudson, supervisor of the First National productions, which unfolds the dramatic theme of the passing of the old west before the advance of cultivation. This is, incidentally, current history, since the encroachment on the unfenced ranges of the southwest recently caused American cattlemen to unite their herds and drive them across the Rio Grande into Mexico.

Never again will such huge herds be seen in the United States. More than 100,000 head of cattle are seen in the picture, winding their way in a huge line half a mile wide. "Sundown" is a picture which took six months to make at a tremendous cost. A part of the story is unfolded in the crowded tenement districts of New York but for the great part the tale is spun "on the trail." Scenes were taken in Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Chihuahua and Sonora – with interior scenes taken at the [Hollywood,] California studios. Hobart Bosworth [sic, Roy Stewart] is cast in the leading male role.⁴¹

In February of 1924, Producer Earl Hudson sent a number of “wireless” communications from the filming location in Texas seeking writer Marion Fairfax’s input on the progress of several First National projects. He wrote to her about the film that they were immersed in for the moment, “I feel keenly that we will have a production of which we both may be mighty proud as one of the biggest if not the biggest thing with which [we] have ever been identified.”⁴²



A giant among writers for early motion pictures, Marion Fairfax.

With Hudson's infatuation for "big," one can speculate that he may have also penned the advertisement for the movie found in the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, for January 17, 1925: "It's Big! Big with the throbbing life of the sturdy pioneers—Big with the fire that pulses through our own veins—Big with the stirring events that conquered a continent and cemented a race."

The "big fire" was literal, it having burned actors Stewart and Bosworth near Chiricahua Station. As the cliché goes, "Sometimes bigger isn't better." However, posterity is not *better* for no longer being able to see this motion picture that tried to tell the little-known story of an early twentieth century phenomena: the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of bovines from the drought-stricken U.S. Southwest to greener pastures in Chihuahua, Mexico.

¹ *Douglas Daily Dispatch*, April 4, 1924, "Large Crowd Expected to See Filming," Douglas Public Library, sent to the author on May 2, 2022, from Library Manager Margaret White.

² "Local Dance at Speer Hall Last Night Attracts Great Crowd: Movie Stars Appear," *Douglas International*, April 5, 1924, from the collection of Cindy Hayostek.

³ The map was altered by the author from a map accessed on July 5, 2022, at www.weltkarte.com, <https://www.weltkarte.com/nordamerika/texas-usa/politische-karte-texas.htm.png>.

⁴ West-Texas terrain details provided by Bobby Jones of Dell City, in a phone conversation with the author on July 7, 2022.

⁵ Jack Jungmeyer, "Movie Players Good Troupers: Hardship for the Reel is the Real Thing," *Seattle Star*, March 18, 1924, p. 17. Information about Joe Lane was also provided by great-grandson Walter Lane and grandson Carl Johnson, ranchers in Cochise County, Arizona, and Roswell, New Mexico, respectively. Bessie Love remembered the plateau was 75 miles from El Paso and that staff hauled water from 12 miles away and wood for cooking, eight miles. She slightly changed those last two numbers in her autobiography published in 1977.

⁶ Bessie Love, "Moonlighting For *Sundown*," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 1966, p. 8.

⁷ This map is a segment of a 1904 C.S. Hammond & Co. map of the Territory of Arizona, singling out Cochise County. The map was accessed on July 5, 2022, at <https://www.american-rails.com/az.html>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Proof of going back to California. I can't find my source for the moment.

¹⁰ Bessie Love, "Moonlighting For *Sundown*," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 12, 1966, p. 8. Bessie corrected her misspelling of Charles Murray, Jr.'s, nickname in her mildly revised version of events from the spring of 1924 in her autobiography: *From Hollywood With Love* (London: Elm Tree Books, Ltd, 1977), pp. 88-90.

¹¹ *The Standard*, Vol. 2, No. 7, p. 15, "Spotlight on Directories," Margaret Herrick Library Digital Collections, accessed on July 4, 2022, at digitalcollections.oscars.org.

¹² Love, "Moonlighting," *Christian Science Monitor*, p. 8.

¹³ Emma Jane "Jennie" Horton did have a slight pull in the industry because of her close relationship to Bessie Love. She submitted a number of screenplays, and at least two were made into motion pictures, one being *Nina the Flower Girl*, as related by Love in *From Hollywood With Love*, pp. 67-68.

¹⁴ *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*, November 27, 1902, p. 8. The newspaper referred to the Knights of Columbus as the "Christopher Colombo society."

¹⁵ "Film Favorite in Williams This Week: Returns to Home Town to Pass Few Days Vacation – Fondly Visits Old Scenes – Heart Remains True to Arizona," *Williams News* (Arizona), August 23, 1917, p. 2

¹⁶ Love, *From Hollywood With Love*, p. 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁸ According to Carl Johnson, Joe Lane's New Mexico herd included Herefords, as related in an email to the author on June 25, 2022. Bill Kimble – whose family ranched in the region between Rodeo, New Mexico, and Douglas – told this author that his grandfather, Floyd Kimble, raised Herefords and sold registered Hereford bulls in the lobby of Douglas's Gadsden Hotel, as related in a phone conversation on June 13, 2022. Bobby Jones of Dell City, Texas, also remembers Herefords being a preferred breed in his area of the West.

¹⁹ In today's dollars that 1924 half-a-million bucks would equal \$8,546,666.67 at 1,609.3% inflation. Statistics were calculated on U.S. Inflation Calculator, accessed on July 7, 2022, at <https://www.usinflationcalculator.com>.

-
- ²⁰ *Douglas Daily Dispatch*, April 5, 1924, “Movie Special Leaves City at 10 Sunday Morning for Scene of Western Thriller.”
- ²¹ *Ibid*, April 6, 1924, “Big Film Will Be Shot Today at Chiricahua.”
- ²² *Moving Picture World*, No. 4, November 22, 1924, p. 337.
- ²³ Earl J. Hudson (original screenplay) and Walter F. Eberhardt, *Sundown: An Epic Drama of To-Day* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1924), pp. 26-27.
- ²⁴ *Sundown's* cinematographer was David Thompson, his only motion picture credit.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, April 8, 1924, “Children Hurt in Auto Crash as Big Film Scenes Taken.” Parents James F. O’Brien and Christine Briechle O’Brien were divorced as early as 1922. Christine Briechle married James F. O’Brien on November 10, 1915, in El Paso. Information found on familysearch.org.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, April 8, 1924, “All Douglas Helps Filming of Big Picture: Thousands Travel by Auto and Train to Chiricahua to See the Event.”
- ²⁷ “Shooting Final *Sundown* Scenes: Tomorrow is Expected to See Wind Up of Film Company’s Stay Here,” *Douglas International*, April 12, 1924, p. 6, from the collection of Cindy Hayostek.
- ²⁸ *Moving Picture World*, Vol. 71, No. 1, November 1, 1924, p. 36, Museum of Modern Art. All the issues of *Moving Picture World* cited in this article were accessed on July 8, 2022, at <https://archive.org/details/movingpicturewor71novd>.
- ²⁹ *Ibid*, No. 5, November 29, 1924, p. 417.
- ³⁰ *Ibid*, No. 9, December 27, 1924, p. 827.
- ³¹ *Ibid*, No. 1, p. 154.
- ³² *Ibid*.
- ³³ *Ibid*, No. 8, December 20, 1924, p. 733.
- ³⁴ *Ibid*.
- ³⁵ *Ibid*, No. 3, November 15, p. 222, excerpted from “Service Talks on Pictures,” *Exhibitors Herald*, November 1, 1924.
- ³⁶ 1923’s *The Covered Wagon* was directed by James Cruze and tells the story of pioneers migrating from Kansas to Oregon. The next year another silent Western, *The Iron Horse*, caught the attention of moviegoers interested in the sort of the expansion of the railroads across the vastness of western America. It was directed by John Ford. Like the hands working on *Sundown*, Ford and crew experienced a winter storm while filming *The Iron Horse*, but in the barren flats of Nevada instead of Texas.
- ³⁷ Mordaunt Hall, “The Screen,” *New York Times*, December 1, 1924. Accessed on July 7, 2022, at <https://www.nytimes.com/1924/12/01/archives/the-screen-mr-griffiths-new-picture.html>.
- ³⁸ R.J. Reif, “*Sundown*, (9,000 feet),” within a column by A. Van Buren Powell, ed., “Straight From the Shoulder Reports: A Department for the Information of Exhibitors, Between Ourselves (A Get-Together Place Where We Can Talk Things Over),” *Moving Picture World*, No. 8, p. 752.
- ³⁹ W. Stephen Bush, “Ideas! Gathered Along Broadway: ‘Too Many Cows on Broadway,’” *Moving Picture World*, No. 9, p. 812. *North of 36* is another Western and is preserved within the Library of Congress.
- ⁴⁰ The length of the film is taken from multiple pages within *Moving Picture World*, such as No. 2, November 8, 1924, p. 176.
- ⁴¹ *Omaha Morning Bee*, November 24, 1924, “‘Sundown,’ Current History,” p. 5.
- ⁴² Jack Jungmeyer’s article in the *Seattle Star* corroborates that the *Sundown* camp in Texas had a radio for communicating to the outside world. Tom Slater, “Marion Fairfax,” Jane Gaines, Radha Vatsal, and Monica Dall’Asta, eds., *Women Film Pioneers Project*, Columbia University Libraries, New York, accessed at <https://wfpp.columbia.edu/pioneer/ccp-marion-fairfax/> on July 4, 2022.

Dutch Oven Rice Pudding with Fruit

By
Debbie Hocking

I found this recipe in a book at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum in Wickenburg, Arizona. The museum is well worth a visit as is the old downtown of Wickenburg and the drive from there to Prescott is magnificent. The book was a collection of ranch recipes.

Ingredients

4 cups cold cooked rice
2 cups sugar
2 cups of diced cooked apricots, peaches, or apples (rehydrated dried fruit may be used.)
1 cup boiling water

In a well-seasoned Dutch oven, start with a layer of fruit and alternate layers with rice sprinkling each layer with sugar. Pour the water over the top and bake in the Dutch oven with medium coals, above and below, until done. About 20 minutes.

Double this recipe for round-up crew of 10 to 12.

Here's another:

Albondigas

Ingredients

1 lb. tenderloin steak, boiled
Or
1 lb. chicken breast, boiled
3 egg yolks
Salt to taste
Pepper to taste
1 small onion, diced
2 Anaheim chilis, diced
1 lb. masa
3 cloves garlic, diced

Reserve the water from boiling the meat. Set aside to cool. Grind the chicken or steak very fine. Beat the yolks of eggs with salt, pepper, onion, and chili until creamy. Add the masa and beat again adding the diced garlic. Roll in little balls the size of marbles, and in a Dutch oven boil in the jelly from meat or water left from boiling the meat. Make a cream sauce and pour over them and garnish with parsley.

To make cream sauce:

Ingredients:

- 1 tbs chopped thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tbs butter
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp cornstarch

In a frying pan, melt the butter, add thyme, salt, and pepper. Add cream and heat until ready to bubble. Add cornstarch, stirring constantly until thickened. Serve hot.

Book Reviews

Michael Crichton, *Dragon Teeth*, 2017.

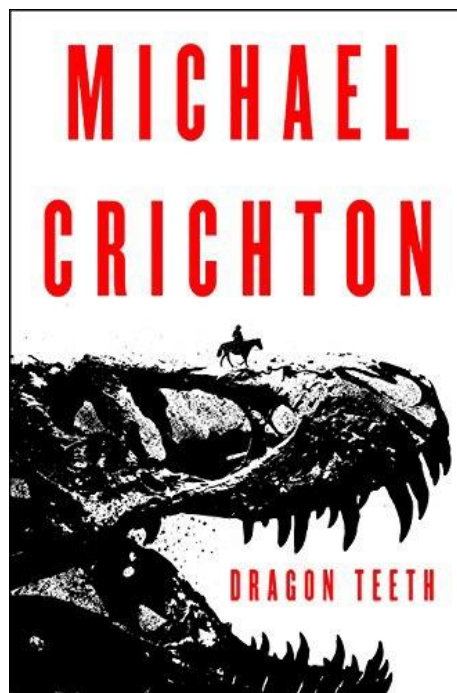
Not since Jurassic Park has digging up the past been so dangerous — this time in Deadwood! The legendary number one New York Times bestselling author returns to the world of paleontology in this vivid novel—a thrilling adventure set in the Wild West during the golden age of fossil hunting.

The year is 1876. Warring Indian tribes still populate America’s western territories, even as lawless gold-rush towns begin to mark the landscape. While the civilized East debates Mr. Darwin’s heretical new theory called evolution, two monomaniacal paleontologists pillage the Wild West, hunting for dinosaur fossils while surveilling, deceiving, and sabotaging each other in a rivalry that will come to be known as the Bone Wars.

Into this treacherous territory plunges the arrogant and entitled William Johnson, a Yale student with more privilege than sense. Determined to survive a summer in the West to win a bet against his archrival, William has joined world-renowned paleontologist Othniel Charles Marsh on his latest expedition. But when the paranoid and secretive Marsh becomes convinced that William is spying for his nemesis, Edward Drinker Cope, he abandons him in Cheyenne, Wyoming, a locus of crime and vice.

His honor at stake, William joins forces with Cope and soon stumbles upon a discovery of historic proportions. With this extraordinary treasure, however, comes exceptional danger, and William’s newfound resilience will be tested in his struggle to protect his cache from some of the West’s most notorious and wily characters. Trapped in Deadwood, he joins forces with Wyatt and Morgan Earp to fend off the bushwhackers. It’s a great summer read, available from Amazon and other vendors. Recommended!

Jon Donahue



Famer, W. Michael, *Trini! Come! Geronimo's Captivity of Trinidad Verdín, a Novel*, 2022.

This is a fast-paced story of courage, drama, and family told with great sympathy as it reveals the lives and motivations of both Apache and settler. Michael Farmer has a true depth of understanding of the Apache. Without apology he tells of Geronimo's 1886 raids through the eyes of a captive girl who wins the Apache leader's respect and love. The tale is real; I've stood in the ruin of Peck's rancho. Trini escaped to tell her story.

Doug Hocking

Cogburn, Brett. "The Real Rooster Cogburn," *True West*, April 2022.

Brett Cogburn tells the story of his great-grandfather's role in the creation of a classic Western fiction and film character, John Wayne in *True Grit*. There really was a Rooster Cogburn nicknamed Rooster by his uncle, although his original name was John Franklin Cogburn. This fascinating history of Rooster may entice you to watch *True Grit* or embellish it again if you have already seen the movie.

Rosanna Baker

McChristian, Douglas C. *Fort Bowie, Arizona: Combat Post of the Southwest, 1858-1891*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.

This is a true history book for the serious historian that relates in detail how Fort Bowie came to be from the beginning progressing through the Civil War and the factions that were vying for Apache Pass because of the spring in that location. The story includes four decades of events that surround the fort including extensive references, a list of Commanding officers, stationed units, and notes.

Rosanna Baker

Traywick, Ben T. *Camillus Fly: The Man Who Photographed History. Tombstone*, Red Marie's Bookstore, 1985, 2008.

This is the story of C. S. Fly, the photographer of Tombstone during the mining years. His personal history is not extensive but the facts are written down from newspaper articles and old letters. Many pictures by C.S. Fly are included in the book. I think you will enjoy books written by Ben Traywick, our past Tombstone historian. He has written over 35 books and published 1300 articles.

Rosanna Baker

Martin, Douglas D. *Tombstone's Epitaph*. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1951.

This is a newspaper that was published in the 1880s and is still available today for subscribing. The Pulitzer Prize Winner Douglas Martin wrote the news that was printed by Editor John Clum as he saw it. These news articles are unretouched and tell the story of Tombstone's recently discovered files thought to have been destroyed in one of Tombstone's famous fires. Ninety per

cent of this book contains the newspaper articles and the rest is a correlation of the news as evidence to prove or disprove what has been Western legend.

Rosanna Baker

Herwig, Mark. “A Grand Era: Behind Grand Portage, the original center of the great America fur trade. *American Frontiersman*. Athlon Publications, Winter 2022.

This article tells how the fur trade started at Grand Portage in northern Minnesota where the Pigeon River empties into Lake Superior. The Grand Portage trading post was the cross roads of North American fur trade. Two hundred tons of fur a year was transported from the western interior through Grand Portage to the east. We think of the fur trade beginning on the upper Missouri River, but actually the fur trade began in the 1600s. Later the fur trade continued out West, but it is interesting to read the story of how fur trade began. Today the fort is gone, but the National Park Service stages a rendezvous and the tribe holds a pow-wow in August at the national monument.

Rosanna Baker

Ahnert, Gerald T. *The Butterfield Trail and Overland Mail Company in Arizona, 1858-1861*. New York: Canastota Publishing, Co. Inc., 2011.

Gerald Ahnert has written about his forty years of experience researching and walking the Butterfield Overland Trail through Arizona. Stories are added of incidences that happened along the trail as well as the display of many maps and coordinates. This book is a wealth of information for the serious historian and anyone that would like to hike some of the trail. A few of our own Cochise County Corral members have hiked parts of the trail and visited all of the Stage stations through Arizona. (Corral Ranch Hand Gerald Ahnert is working on a new version of this book with newly discovered information. For now, if you can find a copy, this is the best and most accurate work on the Overland Trail in Arizona.)

Rosanna Baker

Davis, Goode P. Jr. *Man and Wildlife in Arizona The American Exploration Period 1824-1865*. Somers Graphics, Inc., Scottsdale, 1982.

In 1982 the Arizona Game and Fish Department examined Arizona by trained naturalists while still in a rather pristine condition. The information about wildlife, flora and conditions were extracted from journals, reports and books that were written while on Military expeditions, boundary surveys and exploration of railroad routes. A review of history is included along with the recording of what the explorers witnessed along the trails. This book is a good reference for anyone interested in Southwestern natural history.

Rosanna Baker

O’Neal, Harry E. *Tres Alamos: A Place Forgotten*. Douglas: Cochise County Historical Society.

Tres Alamos was the largest settlement in all of what became Cochise County. In 1875 Tres Alamos was the largest settlement in all of Cochise County. Information is written in a continuous

narrative from the ancient ones through the 1880s. Tres Alamos played an important part in Cochise County history and deserves to be remembered.

Rosanna Baker

De La Garza, Phyllis, *The Story of Dos Cabezas*. Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1995.

This history will take you from the beginning of Ewell springs on the Overland Trail to when gold was found at the base of Dos Cabezas Mountains. Ewell Springs eventually became a milling center. Many minors came and tried their luck while filing claims. The village grew to 4,000 residents. There were various investors hoping to be successful. Ore was shipped and sold, but not enough to satisfy the stockholders and investors began selling their stock coupled with the 1929 depression, Dos Cabezas gradually declined. The story takes one through the beginning, development, people and happenings through to the end.

Rosanna Baker