



# The Border Vidette

Fall 2023

Volume 3, Number 3 & 4



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**Printer's Devil**

## COCHISE COUNTY CORRAL

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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](http://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](mailto:InkSlinger@CochiseCountyCorral.org)

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

**Cover:** General Nelson Miles

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Published by the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners

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## CONTENTS

**George Parsons: A Miner's Life in Tombstone**

By C. Gilbert Storms

5

**Incident at Apache Pass, 1861**

By Doug Hocking

23

***"The Deserters Have Forfeited Their Medals" The Army Adjutant General's Office (1877):  
The Case for Recognizing the Revocation of the Medals of Honor of Private John S.  
Donelly and Private Charles H. Montrose***

By Michael C. Eberhardt

38

**Poetry**

By Aeolus, Edgar Allen Poe, & Rhonda Lomeli

47

**Old West Recipes**

By Debbie Hocking

53

## Book Reviews

ADAMS, JOHN A., JR.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>William F. Buckley, Sr., Witness to the Mexican Revolution, 1908-1922</i>	56
CLAGGETT, THOMAS D.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Blood West</i>	56
GALLAGHER, MARSHA V., ed.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Travels in North America, 1832-1834, A Concise Edition of the Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied</i>	56
HUNT, GREG.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>On Savage Ground: A Mississippi Valley Novel</i>	57
LANNING, MICHAEL LEE  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Patton in Mexico: Lieutenant George S. Patton, The Hunt for Pancho Villa, and the Making of a General</i>	57
MCBRIDE, ANDREW  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Cimarron</i>	57
McCAULEY, TERRENCE  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Born to Hang: A Jeremiah Halstead Western</i>	58
PAPPAS, NICK  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Crosses of Iron: The Tragic Story of Dawson, New Mexico, and Its Twin Mining Disasters.</i>	58
RAY, ROBERT J.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Murdock Rocks Sedona, A Matt Murdock Murder Mystery</i>	58
SANTIAGO, MARK  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>A Bad Peace and a Good War: Spain and the Mescalero Apache Uprising of 1795-1799</i>	59
SHEA, WILLIAM L.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Union General: Samuel Ryan Curtis and Victory in the West</i>	59
WARREN, KEVIN  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>Ride a Fast Horse: A Captain Tom Skinner Western</i>	60
WEST, CHARLES G.  <i>Doug Hocking</i>	<i>To Hell and Gone: The Hunters</i>	60

## GEORGE PARSONS: A MINER'S LIFE IN TOMBSTONE

By C. Gilbert Storms

Historians of the frontier Southwest know George Parsons chiefly as the persistent diarist of Tombstone, the man to whose writings we have turned repeatedly to get a glimpse into the life of the mining town in its early years. But that view has led us to overlook Parsons' own story as a Tombstone miner and the invaluable insight he has given us into what mining was like in the turbulent environment of early Tombstone. Parsons' narrative is compelling, a coming-of-age story of a middle-class young man, a lawyer's son and a tenderfoot from the East, who, like many, came to Tombstone to get rich by mining silver and had to learn not only the technology and business of mining but how to survive in the chaotic and violent world of the mining camp.

In Tombstone, George Parsons did everything from pick-and-shovel mining to mine speculating, managing claims, and brokering the sales of claims. He was part-owner of several claims in Arizona and Sonora, and owner and operator of a small reduction mill. However, he also was a banker, a mining company executive, a founder of the Tombstone Mining Exchange, clerk of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors, a politician (Republican), a vigilante, a singer, an actor, and an avid participant in Tombstone's middle-class social life.

George Whitwell Parsons was born in 1850, in Washington, D.C., and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. As a young man, he worked in the law offices of his father, a Wall Street attorney. But he seemed uninterested in a lawyer's career or a settled life in New York. Instead, he sought adventure and a chance to make his own way in the world,

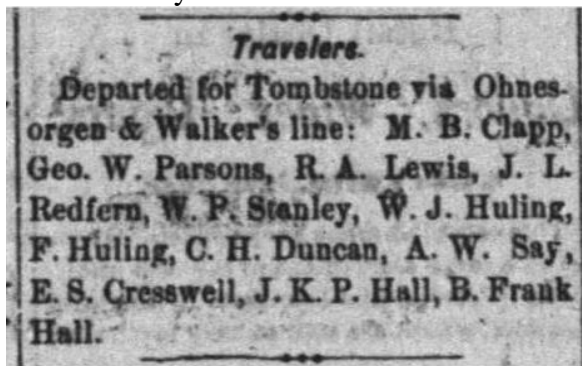
even when it involved dangerous pursuits in which the chances of success were uncertain. The first evidence of this was when George left New York in 1874 for Key Biscayne, Florida, where he made a living salvaging and reselling lumber from boats wrecked on the Florida coasts. It was rough, hazardous work, and once Parsons severely injured his foot trying to strip lumber from a wreck off Cape Sable. It was an injury that tormented him for years afterward, including his years in Tombstone.<sup>12</sup>

After his injury, George returned to New York City but in 1876 left again, this time for San Francisco, where he found less dangerous work as a teller in the National Gold Bank and Trust Company. Unfortunately, just as Parsons arrived, the silver mines of the Comstock Lode in Nevada began to decline. The decline destroyed many of California's banks, which had loaned large sums of money to mine investors, operators, and suppliers. The National Gold Bank hung on for three more years before it failed in 1879, throwing George out of work.

On December 19 of that year, Parsons wrote in his diary that he was discouraged because he was thirty years old and saw "nothing ahead" for him. The gamble he had taken by leaving a secure and comfortable future in New York and setting out on his own seemed to have failed. Friends of his youth were married and getting ahead, and he had nothing—no money, no job, and no prospects. However, in San Francisco, he was at the hub of economic activity in the West. In particular, George was hearing and reading daily about gold and silver strikes in the West. It was now decades since the celebrated gold rush in northern California

and the fabulous silver strikes in Nevada. Still, mining seemed an exciting adventure and a way to wealth. And the ambitious and energetic young New Yorker wanted to get in on it. However, lacking capital, connections, or experience in the mining industry, the only way he could get in was by starting at the bottom, as a pick-and-shovel miner.

In late 1879, San Francisco was buzzing with stories of the new Tombstone silver discoveries. In mid-January 1880, Parsons and Milton Clapp, a friend from the Gold Bank, decided to go to Tombstone and try their luck working as common miners. Reflecting the naïve enthusiasm of the uninitiated, George announced in his diary that he would “learn the business and stick to it.” He and Clapp left San Francisco on February 4 and arrived in Tombstone on February 17. Realizing that a miner’s life would be far more challenging physically than life as a banker, Parsons and Clapp began to toughen up—by rowing on San Francisco Bay.<sup>3</sup>

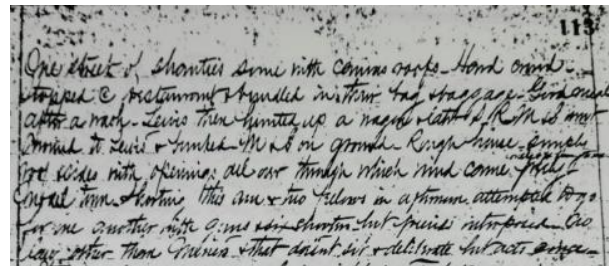


Notice in the February 17, 1880, *Tucson Citizen* announcing George Parsons’ travel to Tombstone.

Parsons’ and Clapp’s journey led by train to Tucson, then by stagecoach to the mining camp at Tombstone. As a notice in the February 5, 1880, *Tucson Citizen* shows, Parsons and Clapp traveled from Tucson with Robert Lewis, one of the early settlers in the Tombstone Mining District and son of Alpheus Lewis, the founder of Richmond.

Richmond was one of the several small mining camps that grew up around the Schieffelin brothers’ silver discoveries in the hills east of the San Pedro River. The Lewises promoted Richmond as the principle townsite for the Tombstone District, although Tombstone eventually emerged as the dominant site. Also traveling with Parsons and Clapp were Joseph Louis Redfern, who later became Parsons’ business partner, and W. P. Stanley, who bonded mining claims in Tombstone and helped Parsons get his first mining job.<sup>4</sup>

Parsons arrived in Tombstone on March 17, 1880, and his diary records his first days in the mining camp. Tombstone, he said, was just “one street of shanties, some with canvas roofs.” He, Clapp, Redfern, and Stanley bunked at the younger Lewis’s cabin in Richmond. The building, Parsons said, was a ramshackle affair, “simply roof and sides with openings all over.” They shared the cabin with a population of rats and mice, which scurried back and forth over Parsons at night as he slept on the dirt floor and tried to stay warm as winter winds blew through the cabin walls.<sup>5</sup>



Entry from George Parsons’ diary recording his first impressions of Tombstone (George Parsons Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson).

In Tombstone, George mingled with the miners, who, he said, often talked of killing and occasionally went for each other with six-shooters. Most of the quarrels were over jumped claims. It was a “hard crowd,” Parsons said, and everyone went armed. “No

law other than Miner's," he added, "and that doesn't sit and deliberate, but acts at once."<sup>6</sup> Of course, Tombstone did have law in 1880. Fred White was village marshal, and though Parsons speaks of "miner's justice," there were no miner's courts such as sprang up in the gold rush years in northern California. However, law enforcement in Tombstone's early days was uneven, and Parsons, who had never been in a mining camp, was shocked by the frequency of violence on Tombstone's streets and the atmosphere of lawlessness that prevailed because of it.

Despite the noisy disorder in the saloons and on the streets, Parsons noticed that commerce was thriving in Tombstone and that the opportunities for starting in business were good if one had the money and ambition to do it.<sup>7</sup> Parsons had the ambition, but no money. And, like almost everyone else in Tombstone, he was bent on making his fortune in mining. So, on his third day in Tombstone, he began his mining education, climbing over the hills outside of town, visiting mining claims, learning about the different ores that could be found, and looking for ground he could claim for himself. This would have been hard travel through a hellish landscape. There were not yet established roads through the district, and as George explored the area, he would have had to scramble over hills and fields of large boulders, around miners' tents, supply caches, and open mine shafts. He would have seen holes and trenches in the ground with men digging in them and other men using windlasses to haul dirt and rock up out of the ground. He would have heard loud explosions and felt the ground shake as miners blasted out shafts and tunnels.<sup>8</sup>

Parsons looked over the Prompter, Ruby, and New Constitution mines, the Merrimack, Three Brothers, Bassett, Crown, Anchor, Revenue, St. Louis, and True Blue, searching

for opportunities to buy into those properties. But he found investment beyond his means. He talked with seasoned investors—mining entrepreneur Thomas E. Farish and real estate speculator Michael Gray—about purchasing lots in or around Tombstone. George expected the town would grow out to embrace those properties.<sup>9</sup> But although Parsons' judgments about the value of mining claims and Tombstone real estate were astute, especially for a newcomer, he did not have the money to invest in mining claims or town lots.

He also had no luck looking for ground to claim as his own. He found, to his dismay, that virtually every foot of ground around Tombstone had been filed upon, and that no claims seem to have been abandoned. "Everything's been taken up," he lamented in his diary on February 20, and on March 1, "Out of 2500 locations, I don't know of one abandoned."<sup>10</sup> Frank S. Ingoldsby's 1881 map, "Tombstone Mining District," illustrates the truth of Parsons' statement about the lack of ground available.<sup>11</sup> And Geologist William Phipps Blake, who was in Tombstone in 1882, wrote that by that year, over one thousand claims were located in the Tombstone District.<sup>12</sup> In the face of this saturation, and a lack of cash to buy into existing claims, Parsons finally gave up the talk of investing money he did not have and resigned himself to a miner's life: "I see work ahead for me. Must get to work now in earnest."<sup>13</sup>

Although Parsons' friend Clapp had, at first, bunked with Parsons, Redfern, and Lewis in Richmond and joined Parsons in scrambling over the Tombstone hills, scouting for mining claims, Clapp quickly discovered that he was not cut out for a miner's life. Instead, he took a job clerking in the Safford & Hudson Bank in Tombstone. But Parsons chose to take the path he had originally decided on: "I prefer to

take my chances roughing it. Am strong and vigorous with muscular physique and will work as well as the best.”<sup>14</sup> Parsons did, but his work was far from easy. Rowing on San Francisco Bay had hardly prepared Parsons for a miner’s life, and George’s descriptions of the brutal difficulty of mining work are among the most vivid and detailed of the period.

On March 9, Parsons took up a pick and helped dig the shaft in the Bassett Mine. Two days later, he got easier work as a chain carrier for a surveyor surveying the Bassett claim, for \$3.00 a day. On March 18, he helped a friend, Frank Gallup, work at the Merry Christmas Mine. His first job was one befitting a novice miner—leveling the mine dump, the pile of refuse dirt and rock taken out of the mine shaft. However, he then had to help Gallup deepen the shaft. Parsons was double-jacking, a process used to dig holes for placing explosives in rock before pneumatic drills were available. First, he had to hold a drill at just the right angle to the rock as Gallup struck the drill repeatedly with a long-handled, eight-pound sledge. The hammerer’s task was made more challenging because the narrowness of the shaft did not allow him enough room to get a good backswing and strike hard on the drill head. Then there was the problem of being on the other end of the hammerer’s swing. “Some nerve required to hold hands just under the pound of the hammer,” Parsons wrote. “One little slip [by either party] and one’s hands, arms or legs might be smashed to a jelly.” Things were not much better, Parsons found, when he switched places with Gallup and became the hammerer. It required courage to swing the hammer with all of your strength and strike the three-quarter-inch drill head. “One must bury all fear,” he wrote, “and strike boldly.” But if you were just a little bit off, or if your partner flinched at the last second, you would risk inflicting serious

injury or worse on your partner. Parsons also did “single-jacking,” in which you held the drill in one hand and struck it with a short-handled, four-pound sledge held in the other. Parsons did get “clipped” from time to time, he said, but not seriously.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to learning single- and double-jacking, Parsons was introduced to Giant Powder,<sup>16</sup> a potent mix of nitroglycerin, sorbents (such as powdered shells or clay), and stabilizers used by miners to blast out rock from mine shafts and tunnels. After drilling holes in the rock, miners would tamp Giant Power into the holes along with blasting caps and light a fuse to set off the dynamite. One had to tamp the blasting cap and powder into the hole very carefully or the cap would explode, and one would “go flying out of the shaft.”<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Parsons worked a windlass, hauling large ore buckets full of rock and dirt from the bottom of a shaft to the surface. This, he said, was “much easier than throwing dirt ten feet to the surface after being shoveled up another ten feet from the bottom of [the] shaft.” However, it also was brutally wearing, not only because the loads to be raised were extremely heavy but because one might be struck by the spinning handles of the windlass as the bucket went down. Parsons said that his arms were repeatedly “thumped” by the windlass handle when he first started work on this equipment.<sup>18</sup>

On March 27, Parsons began work at the C. H. Bassett claim on a contract with a veteran miner named J. C. Kinney. Their job was to deepen the shaft by forty-three feet and widen it by two and a half feet, for which they would be paid eleven dollars a foot. In addition, in a separate agreement with W. P. Stanley, who was contracting work on the claim, Parsons would receive fifty dollars and a one-twentieth share in the claim. Parsons got his



fifty dollars up front, but the deed to his one-twentieth share of the Bassett was put in escrow until the contract was completed.<sup>19</sup>

On the Bassett job, Parsons was breaking rock, shoveling dirt and rock into an ore bucket, making mortar (to cover ledges inside the shaft), handling both a drill and a sledge, and, of course, working the windlass, sometimes raising as much as one hundred buckets of dirt and rock a day. In the warm weather, he worked with sleeves rolled up, with the result that his arms were badly sunburned. It is “hard, hard work,” he said. “I used to think the laboring man’s life a hard life at the best, but their work is child’s play alongside of this. . . My poor hands and arms are in [a] terrible state.” Also, Parsons and Kinney had to keep at their work because they were being paid by the foot and had to complete their work in a given period of time. So, Parsons explained, “every moment is used to fullest advantage to make as much per day as possible.”<sup>20</sup>

Parsons said that in addition to working daily at the mine, he was walking ten miles a day—three from the Richmond cabin to the Bassett Mine and three miles back, and then to Tombstone and back at night to pick up mail and eat an evening meal at a restaurant.<sup>21</sup> When he and Kinney finally finished their contract at the Bassett, he declared, “I shake my own hand and congratulate myself upon being freed at last from the severest experience of my life. A harder trial of patience and self-control than of physical endurance.” And there was time to take stock of what he had accomplished:

Physically, . . . I am a different man. I could not possibly be in better health. Three objects have been attained. Bodily improvement, mining knowledge, and a fine mining interest. First, I am broader and fuller chested, have well developed muscles, hard

flesh, rounded arms and legs—quite brawny arms, in fact—tough and brown like my hands. My back is strong and my whole being has been so thoroughly aroused by the tremendous physical exertions endured that I feel myself clearer and better in mind as well as body. . . Can swing a sledge all afternoon, polishing drills. Can strike a hundred blows without stopping and hold drill in all positions. My rock knowledge is limited yet, of course, but more than it was. My 1/20 interest [in the Bassett Mine] is worth \$1,000. . . I truly think, and not egotistically, that I have accomplished what none of my friends could have under the same circumstances.<sup>22</sup>

George was proud that he had ventured into a life that few middle-class young men would have known: “This is a trial . . . that very, very few of my condition in life have ever experienced. . . Why even these rough miners themselves—men used to manual labor all of their lives—are sometimes laid up for weeks at a time when they first try the mines.”<sup>23</sup> Parsons had been disheartened at first by his hard life, and Kinney taunted him about how he would never make it as a miner. But Parsons did become an able miner and took satisfaction in being gradually accepted by other miners. Miners, he said, are “a rough, rude, uncouth lot of men but good hearted. . . I was eyed curiously at first—but [they] are accustomed to me now.”<sup>24</sup>

Parsons’s self-congratulation reveals his class prejudices. In his early years in Tombstone, he inhabited two worlds—that of the miners and that of the middle-class merchants and entrepreneurs of Tombstone. Economic necessity threw him in with the former, but he identified with the latter. Once he was able to make his way out of daily labor as a miner, he endeavored to live a middle-class life in the mining camp despite his working-class financial circumstances. After a day of climbing over the hills outside of

Tombstone and descending into mineshafts and down drifts, he was a frequent visitor at the homes of middle-class Tombstonans, often for dinners or hands of euchre or whist. He regularly attended services at the early churches in Tombstone, eventually becoming a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He participated in theatrical productions and sang in musical concerts that would have appealed mainly to middle-class audiences. Parsons was a child of the Eastern middle-class, a lawyer's son, a banker, and a tenderfoot from New York and San Francisco. He was proud of having been accepted by miners because it validated his sense of manhood—his physical toughness and determination. But in his description of this “rough, rude, uncouth lot of men,” he drew a clear line between them and him.



George Parsons in 1881. George had this picture taken at Camillus Fly's photography studio in Tombstone to send to family and friends in the East. He said that he was dressed in miner's garb, though it is doubtful any miner would have carried a rifle down into the mines

or worked with a pistol, knife and cartridge belts strapped around his waist and spurs on his boots. George was dressing up “western” for the folks back east (C. S. Fly Photograph Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson).

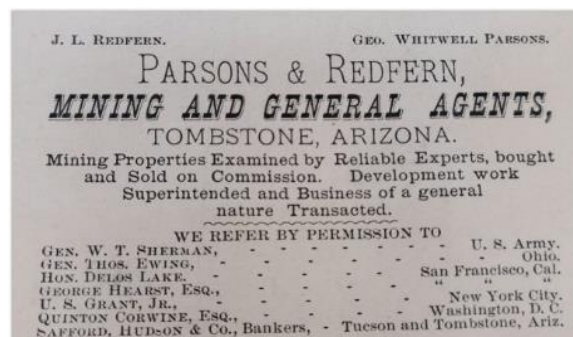
Parsons did not want to stay a miner. He wanted to own mining property and spent all his free time inspecting claims and looking for opportunities to invest in those that looked promising. He was shocked by the amount of claim-jumping and legal challenges to claims in the Tombstone District. “Considerable trickery here,” he wrote. “I was never in a place or business before where there was so much channaniging carried on. It seems impossible almost to believe anyone. One must rely entirely upon himself and trust no one else.”<sup>25</sup>

By spring 1880, Parsons' hard work as a miner and his persistent investigation of mining properties seemed to be moving him closer to middle class status as a mining entrepreneur and away from brute labor as a hard-rock miner. His work at the Bassett mine gave him, in addition to his wages, a one-twentieth share in the claim, which share he valued at \$1,000.<sup>26</sup> In addition, on March 15, Parsons finally staked a claim of his own on an abandoned claim four miles from Tombstone. He called it the “Whitwell.” A month later, he and Redfern established a joint claim on an adjoining property and called it the “J. L. Redfern.”<sup>27</sup> The General Mining Act of 1872 established that one could claim mining properties that had not been developed for a period of one year.<sup>28</sup> Whether the properties Parsons and Redfern claimed met this requirement is not known. On September 25, 1880, Parsons and Clapp purchased a one-fourth interest in the Cedarburg claim (one-eighth each) from John Connell, and on November 15, Parsons, Redfern, and Clapp purchased another one-fourth interest in the Cedarburg from John Wyse—one-twelfth of a share each—giving

Parsons a five-twenty-fourths interest in the Cedarburg Mine.<sup>29</sup>

That summer, Parsons had filled in as a clerk and teller for his friend Clapp at the Safford & Hudson Bank. And by mid-September, Parsons and Redfern had decided to create an agency that would help miners secure titles to their claims, keep mining records and accounts, and book and manage contractual work on claims. For Parsons, it was ideal work because it could produce income and even lead to ownership of mining claims, but it required no capital to start.<sup>30</sup> Lynn R. Bailey, editor of Parsons' diaries, explains that such entrepreneurs were common in western mining districts at the time and that while Parsons and Redfern were willing, at first, to do any sort of work involved in developing a claim, what they really wanted was to bond and sell mining claims and raise capital to develop claims into productive mines.<sup>31</sup>

Parsons and Redfern rented an office in John Vickers' building on Fremont Street and took on projects. They were aided by Clapp at the Safford & Hudson Bank, who tipped off the pair to business opportunities and referred bank customers who were potential mine investors to the new agency. The two drew on family and other contacts in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco to list in their newspaper ads endorsements by Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman (obtained by Redfern's sister); Sherman's brother-in-law, Gen. Thomas Ewing; Ulysses S. Grant, Jr.; D.C. and New York City attorney Quentin Corwine; and San Francisco judge Delos Lake, who acquired for them the endorsement of mining magnate George Hearst. Parsons met Grant and Ewing when they visited Tombstone in September 1880. He met Hearst in January 1882, when Hearst came to Tombstone to look at mine and ranch property.<sup>32</sup>



Parsons and Redfern's ad for their mining agency, showing the endorsements they had obtained for their business (George Parsons Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson).

Parsons and Redfern's first projects were to find a buyer for a one-tenth interest in the Bassett Mine and to sell the Blacktop group of claims, which consisted of the Rose, Black Top, Blue Top, Grand Portage, and Last Chance claims. Parsons did the latter by buying the Blacktop group for \$500 (which he got by selling the one-tenth share in the Bassett) and then selling the Blacktop claims for \$1,200, giving him a profit of \$700.<sup>33</sup> Parsons and Redfern continued to build their business, doing assessment work on the Fragment claim for Rod Price (digging a shaft to ten feet for \$8.00 a foot) and then, when the dig had to go further, subcontracting the work to another miner. They also subcontracted an assessment job at the Maryland Mine to Fisher and Harwood, let a contract for assessment work on the Crown Point and Cedarburg claims to Fisher, arranged for assessment work on the Blue Top, Grand Portage, and Last Chance claims, and accepted a commission to sell the Mizzen Top claim.<sup>34</sup>

With his change to becoming a mining entrepreneur, Parsons moved out of his Richmond cabin into Tombstone. This enabled him to participate more often in evening card games at the homes of friends and attend theatrical and musical performances. After spending the evening of

November 19 at the Clapps and singing duets with Mrs. Clapp, he remarked that it was the first time since leaving San Francisco that he had enjoyed himself in that way: "Am getting civilized again." And after treating himself to a new pair of boots on December 18, he declared, "Am gradually recovering my normal condition."<sup>35</sup>

Almost from the start of his stay in Tombstone, George had wanted to buy town lots. "I'm willing to buy lots," he declared on April 28, 1880, "as many as I can afford to."<sup>36</sup> But he could not afford any. Later, in May 1880, when he had learned how to purchase property without cash, he and Clapp acquired two adjoining lots on the southwest corner of Safford and Second streets. Clapp put up the cash for his half, while Parsons paid for his half with a loan from Clapp at one percent a month.<sup>37</sup>

However, this was the time when the Townsite Company of James S. Clark and Michael Gray was claiming title to most of the lots in Tombstone and either making the current lot holders pay for the lots or hiring men to seize, or "jump," the lots, tear down or remove any structures on them, and forcibly evict the owners. When, on the night of December 3, 1880, Townsite Company thugs pushed the house of Judge James Reilly off its lot and partly into the street, Parsons and two other men, Lowrey and Wesley Fuller, armed with pistols and a shotgun, guarded the house through the night to prevent its being destroyed or moved any further away from the lot. Parsons and his companions were acting for the Citizens Protective League, a political organization formed to oppose the Townsite Company.<sup>38</sup> In March 1881, when a carpenter named Shepherd jumped a lot Parsons and others had claimed for the Tombstone Mining Exchange and started putting up a house on it, Parsons (wielding an ax) and others rushed

to dismantle the house and drag its timbers into the street. They then immediately erected a fence around the lot, stacked lumber on it for a ten by sixteen-foot house, put up a tent, and hired a "fighting man" to guard the property. Clarke and Gray, Parsons was convinced, were at the bottom of the attempt to jump the lot. To avoid a similar incident, Parsons and Clapp put up a twelve by fifteen-foot house straddling their own two lots on Safford Street. In this way, they demonstrated ownership and made it more difficult for Townsite Company ruffians to jump the lots.<sup>39</sup>

Parsons became an outspoken foe of the Townsite Company. But he, too, jumped lots when he thought the law allowed it or when he thought the previous claimant might make a deal. George discovered that a mining claim covered part of his and Clapp's lots. But he was certain the claimant would not interfere since there was no evidence of an ore body on the property ("no ledge can be found"). The claim was obvious. The owner's monument was on the lots. But the owner had not begun digging. And Parsons decided that if the owner asserted his rights, he and Clapp would offer to pay fair value for a patent to the claim (the right to use the property). The owner did not contest the move.<sup>40</sup> Apparently, George discovered that a little "channaniging" was what it took to prosper in Tombstone.

Though he was always short of cash, Parsons was clever at finding partners, like Clapp, who could help him. On July 19, he and Rev. Joseph McIntyre claimed two lots on Safford Street, between Seventh and Eighth, right next to two lots owned by *Tombstone Epitaph* editor John Philip Clum. McIntyre not only helped as an investor; but when Parsons' and McIntyre's claim was challenged in court by Gilded Age Mine owner Edward Field, Parsons thought that having a partner as

respectable as the minister would be “a great protection” to his interest.<sup>41</sup> Six months later, Parsons, with Henry G. Howe and D. G. Heylman, claimed another six town lots (two each), probably on Fourth Street. Parsons is not specific about the location. They jumped the lots since there was nothing but a broken-down fence around them. Howe, a civil engineer, performed the required survey of the lots, and Parsons fenced them, working armed, he said, to protect himself against other lot jumpers.<sup>42</sup>

The next day, John Vickers, a major Tombstone real estate and mining claims broker (and Parsons’ and Redfern’s landlord for their office), appeared and declared that the lots were his. The encounter must have been surprising and embarrassing since Vickers and Parsons were friends—and allies in their opposition to the Townsite Company. Still, George justified his action by referencing his own poverty and Vickers’ wealth and showing that Parsons had learned to be thoroughly unsentimental about business transactions: “Business is one thing and friendship another. I am poor and don’t propose a friend shall make capital out of me who is well off.” He also cited the law, which allowed him and his partners to claim unused lots. The next day, Parsons, his partners, and Vickers met, and Parsons offered other property to Vickers for the lots. Vickers declined. Parsons and Heylman quickly framed two houses on the property so as to reinforce their claim. Vickers did not pursue the issue. Moreover, he and Parsons must have shared ideas about business and friendship since the two men remained friends and were involved in business transactions together in subsequent years.<sup>43</sup>

Though now a Tombstone property owner, Parsons, in mid-1880, still was cash-poor—and in debt to Clapp for the loan that had enabled him to purchase his first town lots.

He had given Clapp the deed to his one-twentieth share of the Bassett Mine as security for the loan. So, although George was proud of the fact that he had purchased his first lots with only ten dollars in his pocket, he still was “broke” and had to return to work as a miner to earn a living.

He went back to digging the shaft at the Bassett Mine, a tunnel at the Prompter (he owned an interest in both) and working the windlass at the True Blue Mine. He also continued to visit other mines, looking for work and investment opportunities. With his return to the life of a miner, he suffered, again, the hardships of that profession—day-long exposure to the Arizona sun, dehydration, bad water, dysentery, and spending nights in a tent at the True Blue, fighting off scorpions, centipedes, and rattlesnakes.<sup>44</sup>

At the True Blue, he worked with other miners at the windlass, hauling a full ore bucket up from one hundred twenty-five feet, the sun so hot, they had to cover the iron wheelbarrow and windlass handles. Parsons burned his hands on the windlass. He complained to management that they needed a shed over the windlass to shade the workers and threatened to quit if the shelter were not built. He also proposed that the owners use a horse-driven windlass (called a “whim”) to haul ore to the surface. They got the shelter the next day but not the whim. And Parsons did not quit. He needed the money. He continued to propose improvements to the mine operation. Parsons discovered that the handle of the ore bucket, which was made of rawhide strips, was wearing away and insisted that it be repaired. He covered (“caulked”) the stages in the mine shaft with mortar, preventing dirt and rock from breaking loose and showering the men below. He proposed greasing the windlass rope, and the windlass worked more smoothly. He

estimated that his ideas saved some serious injuries and made the work go faster.<sup>45</sup>

By spring 1881, Parsons had been in Tombstone for over a year and, though he still had little money or property, was beginning to be recognized as a leading citizen. On April 8, 1881, he was elected a director of the Mesa Consolidated Mining Company and on May 2, a director of the Tombstone Mining Exchange, a brokerage organized to promote and capitalize mining in the Tombstone District.<sup>46</sup>

His reputation grew when, on June 22, fire swept along Allen Street, destroying many buildings between Fourth and Fifth Streets. Parsons risked death rushing into the burning Safford & Hudson Bank on Fifth Street to save Clapp, who he thought was trapped inside. Parsons did not know it, but Clapp had already escaped the bank when the fire approached. Parsons then was seriously injured wielding an axe to separate a burning balcony on the Abbott House hotel from its roof so the roof could be pulled down. Parsons had gone upstairs in the burning building, climbed out on the balcony, and cut through three of the four posts holding the balcony roof in place. Ropes were thrown up to pull the roof down. This effort was unsuccessful, so people shouted for Parsons to cut the fourth post. Fearful that the roof would fall while he was on the balcony, Parsons shouted to the crowd below to stop pulling on the ropes. Parsons had chopped halfway through the fourth post, when the roof collapsed on him, and he fell to the ground with debris from the burning roof landing on top of him. He lost consciousness and was carried first to Shaffer & Lord's general store at the corner of Fifth and Fremont Streets. There Milton Clapp found him and took him away in a buggy to Clapp's house, where Milton changed Parsons' bloody clothes and put him to bed.<sup>47</sup>

At Clapp's house, Dr. George Goodfellow put an estimated thirty stitches in Parsons' face. The doctor also performed multiple surgeries during the following weeks, repairing Parsons' crushed nose and shattered jaw, injuries sustained when a stick was driven through his upper lip and the left side of his face, tearing his upper lip away from his face and piercing his nose by the bridge. After a few days' recuperation, George was back at work, weak but keeping the books at the Sycamore Water Company.<sup>48</sup>

With Parsons' growing presence in the Tombstone mining community came involvement in local politics. In September 1880, Parsons had joined the Tombstone Republican Party, probably as much for social as political reasons. The Republicans, he said, were a "mighty respectable crowd"—the sort of people with whom he wanted to ally himself. He also joined the Citizens Protective League, the organization that opposed the Townsite Company.<sup>49</sup>

When he was appointed Chairman of the League's executive committee, he organized a meeting of the committee, at which it was decided that the candidate the League had chosen to run for mayor in the 1881 city elections, Robert Eccleston, was "not . . . strong enough" to win. Parsons left the committee meeting, went to Eccleston, and persuaded him to decline the nomination, an embarrassing task since Eccleston was a friend and Parsons had just had dinner with him and his family that evening. Parsons then went back to the committee and suggested his friend John Clum as the nominee while maneuvering to block the nomination of Charles Glover, a local merchant proposed by Oriental Saloon owner Milt Joyce. Parsons did this after studying the League's by-laws and arguing that the committee did not have the right, by itself, to change a nominee

chosen by the entire League membership. There was “much opposition” on the committee to the outspoken and controversial Clum. But at a meeting of the full League the following night, Eccleston’s resignation was offered and accepted, and Clum’s name was proposed for mayor and approved unanimously.<sup>50</sup> After a hectic election day, on which the indefatigable Parsons had Citizens Protective Party tickets printed when the opposition stole the original ones, thwarted a plan by the opposition to bring in Mexicans to vote illegally, and had village marshal Ben Sippy clear the vote-counting room when it appeared that the ballot box might be stolen, Clum and all of the League candidates swept the election.<sup>51</sup> So George was instrumental to the Citizen’s Protective Committee candidates’ takeover of the Tombstone City Council, and he was now a “player” in Tombstone politics.

Or so he thought. Parsons’ own political ambitions were denied. “I have done my best to defeat corruption and fraud,” he wrote, “and have won. . . Several prominent men want me to be clerk of the city.”<sup>52</sup> He meant “village recorder” and, *ex officio*, “clerk of the council.” Parsons had had encouragement for his political ambitions before the election. On December 15, he wrote that “a number of friends” had proposed to nominate him for the Tombstone mayoralty. And on December 25, he recorded that San Francisco attorney, J. W. Oates, a friend who was influential in the Democratic party, had told George that he would support Parsons for county recorder.<sup>53</sup>

But Parsons discovered that there were political forces at work over which he had no control, and he suffered the same fate as the unfortunate Eccleston. “Well, my men are in,” he lamented after the election, “but I’m out.” At its first meeting, on January 12, Clum’s new city council chose as recorder A. O. Wallace, a saloon keeper and judge of the

Tombstone police court.<sup>54</sup> Parsons wrote about this in his journal the night *before* the council meeting, suggesting that the choice had been made before the meeting and that he had been undone by the same sort of backroom politicking that had sunk Eccleston. Trying to salvage his pride, Parsons declared that he would try for the Cochise County recordership, as Oates had suggested. But unlike the Tombstone city recorder, who was appointed by the council, the county recorder was elected. And Parsons admitted that he did not have the money to campaign for the office.<sup>55</sup> George Parsons’ brief career in Tombstone politics was over.

Parsons continued to pursue his mining interests, although, as before, his fortunes rose and fell. His and Redfern’s mining agency failed. For this, Parsons blamed his partner’s carelessness in business matters and Redfern’s failure to find Eastern investment in Tombstone mining properties. Suffering again from lack of money, Parsons gave up his lodgings in Tombstone on May 31, 1881, and returned to Richmond: “Money gone anyway,” he lamented, “and I am again busted and broke financially, but being used to that situation do not mind it much now. I propose to take my chances here and can work again if necessary.” Richmond he found completely depopulated: “We are the sole occupants . . . of Richmond now, it is a deserted village.” However, on June 1, 1881, he started temporary work keeping the books for the Sycamore Water Company as a replacement for a sick employee. He also was able to find a cabin in Tombstone for \$4.00 a month and moved back into town.<sup>56</sup>

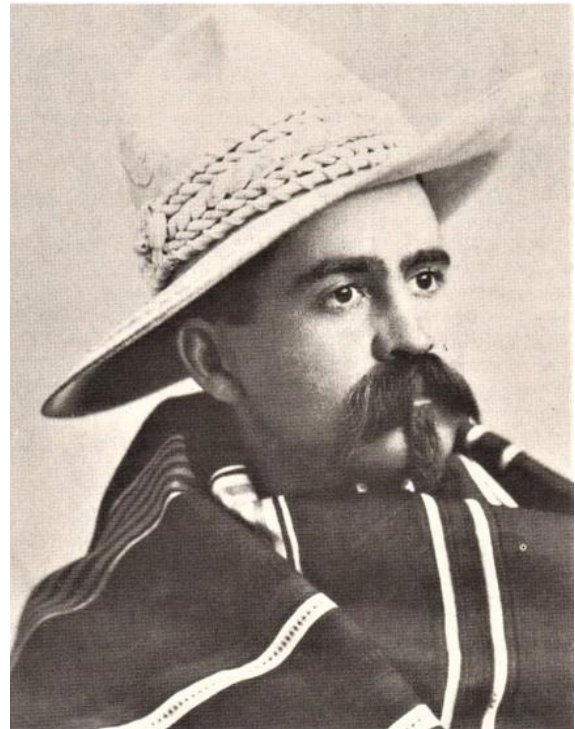
On June 28, 1881, along with his brother Samuel and Charles Hansen, Parsons bought an interest in a four-stamp quartz mill and mill site in Tanner’s Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains. It seemed a smart business move since small mine owners in the Huachucas

needed a mill nearby.<sup>57</sup> In late summer and fall 1881, Parsons spent most of his time working at the mill and inspecting mining properties in the Huachucas.<sup>58</sup> Parsons lived in a small cabin and watched and learned as much as he could about how the mill worked. He also kept the books. However, typically, Parsons did not confine himself to these activities. He broke rocks to keep the hopper at the stamp machine full, and not having done this sort of work for months, his hands were badly cut.<sup>59</sup>

The mill did a good business at first, processing gold ore from the White West Mine in the Huachucas. From this work, the partners got a small gold bar and about \$300. But the mill seemed not to generate much business beyond that. Parsons wanted Hansen to go east to find investment with which they could capitalize the mill. The terms were to be \$4,000 for a half interest in the mill and stock in a company to be formed with \$10,000-\$20,000 in working capital and a few thousand dollars for the partners. However, as with the mining agency, Parsons' visions of financial success were undermined by incompetent partners (Hanson was an alcoholic and drunk most of the time), and nothing came of George's plans. Instead, Parsons spent much of his time in the Huachucas visiting other mines and collecting ore samples that could be assayed in Tombstone. He hoped to arrange financing for purchase of shares in the most promising claims.<sup>60</sup>

On November 28, 1881, Parsons wrote that Hansen wanted to move the mill to Sonora, where he thought they could make more money. Leery of Hansen's judgment, Parsons was reluctant. But after encouragement from others, including his father, he agreed. And in late May 1882, the mill, including some ten tons of machinery, was moved by ox-drawn

wagons to a location on the Sonora River, south of Santa Cruz.<sup>61</sup>



George Parsons in 1886. This photo also was taken by Camillus Fly in Tombstone. Here George is dressing in Mexican style, with serape and broad-brimmed hat (C. S. Fly Photograph Collection, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson).

Increasingly, in 1882, Parsons spent time at his mill in the Huachucas and, later, in Sonora. However, he found that he had to work just as hard in the new locations as he had in the Tombstone District and that the risks from bandits and Apaches in the Huachucas and Sonora were as great as those from claim jumpers in Tombstone. In the Huachucas, Apaches moving along the trails at night made travel between Tombstone and the mill an anxious business. "Didn't feel very comfortable while crossing the mountains," Parsons said on May 1, 1882. "Various noises in the woods startled me occasionally. This Indian business is not pleasant." Even in camp, there was danger of Indian attack. Parsons and Redfern found that Apaches were watching their camp, so that even the songs of birds could be the



precursors of an attack. “Whippoorwills close and lively this evening,” he wrote on May 3. “Didn’t like it.”<sup>62</sup>

Parsons met Mexican border smugglers and made friends with them. On one occasion, while transporting supplies from Tombstone, he found himself being eyed by some rough-looking characters at the border customs station at Palominas. He walked directly toward them, and they disappeared into the brush. Still, he waited for his workers to arrive from the mill to escort him and his cargo to their camp.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to his interest in the mill, Parsons kept the books at Thomas Farrish’s gold mine in Sonora, clerked at Farrish’s company store, and worked a promising gold claim that he and friend Maurice Clark found near the bottom of a Sonora canyon.<sup>64</sup> However, though Parsons prided himself on his physical toughness and his emotional resilience, he found life in Mexico primitive, felt isolated, and missed the social life of Tombstone. Worse, the mill seemed not to be fulfilling the promise that Hansen had forecast. Parsons, planning a trip home to New York City, hoped to find investment in the business there. “Must do something with that mill,” he wrote on January 18, 1883. “It’s making and keeping me poor.”<sup>65</sup> Once again, he felt that his partners were not sufficiently engaged, and on July 10, 1884, he leased the mill for \$100 a month and other considerations.<sup>66</sup>

He was drawn back to Tombstone and hoped not to return to Mexico: “I am sick of Sonora and will sacrifice to get out. I haven’t any more money nor time to fool away there, nor do I propose to risk my life there any more.”<sup>67</sup> In town, he kept the books for the Huachuca Water Company, worked as a legal copyist, became certified as a Notary Public, and opened another mining agency with Maurice

Clark. They rented an office and placed their business card in the *Epitaph* and *Arizona Republican*.<sup>68</sup>

However, Parsons was lured back to Sonora by the prospects of the gold claim he and Clark had found. The ore assayed at \$90 per ton for gold and \$45 per ton for silver. “This is the best thing yet,” Parsons wrote in his diary on July 28, 1884, and he agreed with his partners to work on site at the mine for \$150 a month.<sup>69</sup>

Predictably, life at the mine was hard. Parsons and a crew of Mexicans worked two sites—the mine, from which they extracted ore, and another site a half-mile away, in the bottom of a canyon near water, where they placed a mule-driven arrastra. Mules also packed the ore from the mine to the arrastra and then to a mill. Parsons worked mostly at the mine site, digging ore from a ledge near the surface of the claim. However, Parsons predicted that to get all of the gold and silver out of the mine, they would have to sink a shaft to over five hundred feet and then dig a tunnel to find all of the ore-bearing ledges. Also, water in the creek was too low to make the arrastra an effective method of processing ore. “Must work our mine with machinery,” Parsons concluded on September 20, 1884.<sup>70</sup>

George was determined to work the mine but found the experience an emotional rollercoaster—some days finding rich ore and other days finding nothing: “Hopes are high and low. Hope this seesaw business will soon end.”<sup>71</sup> Parsons also was disappointed at finding himself having to return to the brutal grind of pick-and-shovel mining: “Hope[d] the last adios to the class of work four years ago was final, but it seems not. It’s all right though I can stand it and will fight it out on this line if it takes all winter until I know what I want to.”<sup>72</sup>

What Parsons wanted to know was whether the claim could be truly profitable. However, contributing to his discouragement was harsh winter weather for which he and his Mexican crew were unprepared. In the cold, the rock was hard to penetrate. The crew had a tent-type shelter which could partly protect them against the frequent rain. But they could not place their campfire near the shelter because the wind would blow the flames into their tent and set it on fire. So, Parsons found himself going back and forth between the shelter, where he could stay dry, and the campfire, where he could get warm. "Fine existence this," he wrote. "Picture three of us huddled up together, getting warm and wet at times. Wind howls." It was almost Christmas, and he added, "Hard work to be very merry."<sup>73</sup>

On Christmas Day, 1884, Parsons assessed his progress: "I said upon leaving California for Arizona I would try mining life for five years and the five years are nearly up. I think that a little more perseverance will win me the day and I shall stay with the present mining enterprise to the bitter end and probably decide things by this test."<sup>74</sup> However, George found the difficulties of working the mine in such a remote location, the challenges of supply, the weather, digging and processing the ore so difficult that in February 1885, he abandoned the mining camp and returned to Tombstone and "civilization."

Now mostly avoiding the hard, physical work of his younger days, he subsisted by keeping the books for businesses and writing out mine location notices in the Cochise County recorder's office. He also located some mines for clients early in 1886.<sup>75</sup> Summing up his Arizona adventures on April 10, 1885, he did not find much to boast about: "Well, perhaps another world may bring me better luck. I'm certainly out of it in this. Have been through a fire, been banged about, narrow escapes

from Indians and bullets, never home [in New York City], have toiled long and hard at hardest kind of labor, and starved and bore all kinds of hardships, and it seems thus far, all for nothing. This kind of thing has got to stop. My disgust has grown extensively. I'm down to bedrock once again with chances against me."<sup>76</sup> Once again, he immersed himself in whatever refined social life Tombstone had to offer, visiting the homes of friends for card parties and dances. His visits provided physical as well as social benefits. "Make calls every evening," he wrote on November 20, "as my shanty is too cold and cheerless for anything but sleeping."<sup>77</sup>

Although he had not prospered as a mine owner or succeeded in local politics, Parsons was now known to mine owners, lawyers, and judges as a person who could be relied upon to maintain the social and economic fabric of the community. In January 1886, he was elected secretary of the board of the Prompter mine.<sup>78</sup> In June, he agreed to join a party surveying the Pima-Cochise County boundary.<sup>79</sup> In July, he was named acting clerk of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors and on October 1 was listed as a co-vice-president of the Cochise County Republican Central Committee.<sup>80</sup>

One reason for these appointments is evident in events surrounding the Tombstone miners' strike of 1884. In May of that year, mine owners reduced miners' wages in response to falling silver prices. The miners threatened to strike, and mine owners responded with a lockout. Rumors circulated that angry miners would attack the Grand Central Mining Company works. Parsons was asked to be part of a vigilante posse to protect the works.

Though a former miner himself, Parsons sided with the owners, and declared himself "at the front every time on law and order

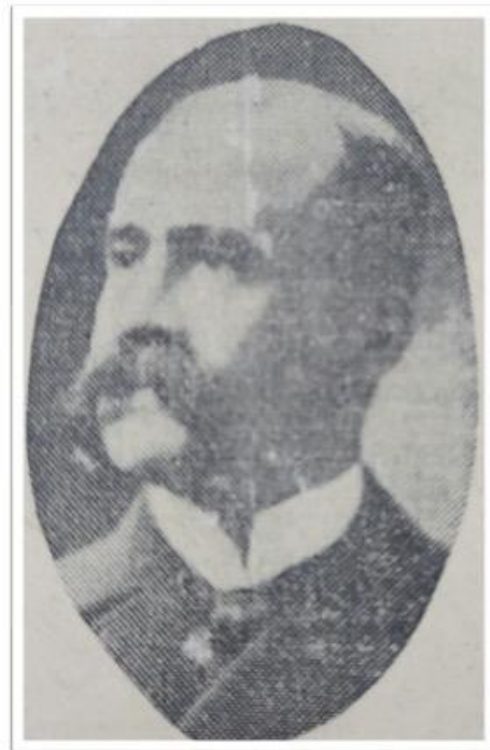
business.” Law and order, in Parsons’ view, was critical to the growth and prosperity of Tombstone, and, in this respect, he allied himself with the monied interests of the community. So, on May 7 and 8, 1884, Parsons stood guard at the Grand Central hoist at night, ready to protect the works against miners, but no attack ever took place.<sup>81</sup>

From late 1885, George Parsons had wanted to return to California. Opportunities to become wealthy in Tombstone had diminished. And in any case, Parsons had always been a small-timer. Almost from the beginning, the original mine discoverers—the Schieffelins, Richard Gird, Thomas Walker, and others—had sold their interests or partnered with big-money investors from New England, Pennsylvania, and California, who now controlled mining in the district.<sup>82</sup> The larger mining companies gradually expanded and consolidated their holdings.<sup>83</sup> The day of the independent mine or mill operator and the broker of small claims and labor contracts was passing.

Also, life as a miner and small mill operator had been hard. Parsons was now thirty-seven years old and finding it less easy to spend days digging out a mine shaft or operating a windlass and nights sleeping on the ground. All through his Tombstone years, George rode an emotional pendulum, swinging between self-congratulation for his achievements and despair at his failure to be more successful. Now George hoped, as he had when he first came west, to find his fortune in California. On his birthday, August 25, 1886, he remained characteristically hopeful that he would succeed in different circumstances: “Thirty-six years old today. . . Am in full flush of manhood and think that in civilization I can make myself felt. Have [come] close [to] that here and can and will

do it elsewhere and where chances won’t be so against me.”<sup>84</sup>

On September 10, 1886, he visited the mill in Mexico and found it in good condition. The next day, he engaged Johnny Hohstadt as agent to sell the mill in return for a one-twentieth interest in it. On November 6, he spoke with Beau de Zart about being the agent for selling his properties in Sonora, including the gold mine.<sup>85</sup>



George Parsons in later life (George Parsons Papers, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson).

On January 14, 1887, George boarded the stage from Tombstone, headed for Los Angeles. There he spent the rest of his life and was active in mining and civic affairs. On New Year’s Eve, 1896, just two weeks before he left Tombstone for the last time, he wrote, “I hope on and hope ever and believe my day will yet come.”<sup>86</sup>

George Parsons never got rich in Tombstone, as he had hoped, never made the big strike or

prospered as a mining broker or mill owner. Historians consider his most significant achievement to be his diaries, which we value for what they tell us about other people and about Tombstone in its heyday. But they are most valuable, I think, for what they tell about George Parsons, this eastern, middle-class young man—like so many, seeking to make his fortune in the frontier West and throwing himself, headlong and without experience or money, into the midst of a chaotic, thriving mining camp and trying to make his way by his own energy and wits. It is a great frontier story, full of hope, disappointment, struggle, success, and failure. Parsons is richly informative about the technical and business aspects of silver mining. But he is fascinating, as well, about the life of a young miner, trying to make his way in the wildest of Arizona's frontier mining camps.

## NOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> George W. Parsons, *A Tenderfoot in Tombstone. The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons, Volume I: The Turbulent Years: 1880-82*, ed., Lynne R. Bailey (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1996), 194.
- <sup>2</sup> George W. Parsons, *A Tenderfoot in Tombstone. The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons, Volume I: The Turbulent Years: 1880-82*, ed., Lynne R. Bailey (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1996), 194.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2-3.
- <sup>4</sup> Lynn R. Bailey and Don Chaput, *Cochise County Stalwarts*, Vol. II (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 2000), 137.
- <sup>5</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 18.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Arizona Weekly Star*, October 24, 1878.
- <sup>9</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 19, 21-24.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 24.
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/2012586611/>
- <sup>12</sup> Blake, *Tombstone and Its Mines: A Report Upon the Past and {Present Condition of the Mines of Tombstone* (New York, 1902), 15; Lynn R. Bailey and Don Chaput, *Cochise County Stalwarts: A Who's Who inn the Territorial Years*, Volume 1: A-K (Tucson: Westernlore Pres, 2000), 29-30.
- <sup>13</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 27.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 31-32.
- <sup>16</sup> Dynamite was first manufactured in the US by the Giant Powder Company of San Francisco, California, whose founder had obtained the exclusive rights from Nobel in 1867.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 34-35.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-37.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-37.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.
- <sup>26</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 46.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30, 39.
- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/30/28b>
- <sup>29</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 103.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, ix.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 87, 104, 106.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 77, 96.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, 110, 112-13, 115.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 106, 111.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-08.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-33.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 64, 66; Roy B. Young, *Cochise County Cowboy War: A Cast of Characters* (Apache, Oklahoma: Young & Sons Enterprises, 1999), 46.
- <sup>42</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 120.
- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-21.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 138, 143.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 155-56.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-15. Parsons' diary entries suggest that Clum may have been proposed at a League meeting the night before the committee meeting but that the more moderate Eccleston had been chosen instead: Monday, December 27<sup>th</sup>, "Meeting tonight of certain members of league—not as open-handed as it should have been. Ticket nominated finally with Eccleston at its head" (*Ibid.*, 114). Parsons now offered Clum as a candidate "again" and produced a telegram from Clum, "accepting the nomination which was before delayed." George's notation is cryptic, since it does not make clear what was "delayed," the nomination or the telegram, or in what way either was "delayed." After Clum was chosen as the League's candidate, Parsons had his executive committee discharged and a new one appointed with himself as chair, effectively eliminating opposition to Clum among the organization's leadership.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-17. An election "ticket" was a card or paper listing a party's candidates and the offices for which they were running. Parties would distribute these on or before election day to promote their candidates.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 40n45, 111, 122. Oates, Parsons said, "held high authority in Arizona" (122). Since Oates did not hold political office in

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Arizona, it is likely that Parsons meant in the Democratic Party.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 118; *Minute Book, Common Council, Village of Tombstone, September 10, 1880 thru January 16, 1882*, ed. Ben T. Traywick (Tombstone: Red Marie's Books, 1999), 36; Roy B. Young, *Cochise County Cowboy War*, 131.

<sup>55</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 118-19. Later, on April 7, Parsons claimed that he had been deprived of another city office by an apparently ungrateful Clum: "I have been cheated out of the City Auditorship which I was assured positively was mine and Clum has gone back on me in favor of his chum [Seward B.] Chapin. (*Ibid.*, 138). Minutes of the Tombstone City Council record that Chapin was approved as city auditor at the council's April 6 meeting (*Minute Book, Common Council*, 58).

<sup>56</sup> *Tenderfoot in Tombstone*, 150-51.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 159, 159n114. Parsons says he paid \$1,600 to Mark Shaffer and Frank Lord (Shaffer & Lord) for the mill. It is not clear where Parsons got the money, but it likely was from his father since he telegraphed his father immediately after hearing of the opportunity to buy the mill. The signature of Sam Parsons, George's brother, appears on the partnership agreement, but George makes no mention in his diary of his brother being in Tombstone. Sam Parsons probably was acting as a surrogate for the family in this matter, but whether he actually showed up in Tombstone to sign the document is in question.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-76.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 175-77, 189.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 226-28.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>63</sup> George W. Parsons, *The Devil Has Foreclosed. The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons, Volume II: The Concluding Arizona Years: 1882-1887*, ed., Lynne R. Bailey (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1997), 7, 22.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 132-33. Maurice was the son of James Clark of the Townsite Company and brother of the beautiful, 15-year-old Daisy Clark, with whom Parsons was infatuated in 1881.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, 91.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 118, 120.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 187, 189.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 232; *Tombstone, Arizona: 1886 Business & Professional Directory*, ed. Lonnie E. Underhill (Gilbert, Arizona: Roan Horse Press, n.d.), 87.

<sup>81</sup> *The Devil Has Foreclosed*, 106-07.

<sup>82</sup> William B. Shillingberg, *Tombstone, A.T.: A History of Early Mining, Milling, and Mayhem* (Spokane: The Arthur H Clark Company 1999), 43-52.

<sup>83</sup> Blake, *Tombstone and Its Mines*, 19.

<sup>84</sup> *The Devil Has Foreclosed*, 238.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 241, 249.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

# Incident at Apache Pass, 1861

By Doug Hocking

## Sources of the Popular Legend

A version of the events at Apache Pass and Arizona in 1861 has appeared in newspaper and magazine articles, and sadly, in early histories of Arizona. Since the 1960s, with easier access to archival material and the discovery of some previously unknown material, historians have been trying to weed out the elements that didn't make sense and arrive at a version of what actually happened.

In 1869, Reuben Bernard, now captain, previously a sergeant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons assigned to Fort Breckinridge on the San Pedro at Aravaipa Creek, returned to Arizona. Shortly thereafter the story of the Wise Sergeant and the Stubborn Lieutenant began to circulate with Bernard as the hero and Lt. Bascom as a right villain. The story went through his command, Col. Thomas Devin, Governor A.P.K. Safford, and Fort Bowie sutler and Arizona historian, Sidney DeLong. Soon after Charles Poston and former military musician Hubert Oberly added startling new elements. Although in Arizona in 1861, none of these gentlemen were present at Apache Pass.

One thing historians look for is corroboration from multiple sources. Repetition is not corroboration. Oberly, Poston, and Bernard all give widely differing accounts and do not corroborate each other. Historians also look to things that should and should not show up in the record. For instance, Johnny Ward maintained two long-term business partners.



*t Lieutenant Reuben F. Bernard, 1st Cavalry. Photograph taken at Washington, D. C., probably in 1864.*

This is not something we would expect to see from a hopeless drunk. The Post Returns very accurately show when patrols were out and what officers led them.

The Apaches tell a campfire story called Cut-the-Tent which captures some details from an oral tradition recorded more than 70 years after the events from people who weren't there. Many of the elements of these stories can be shown to be just wrong. Geronimo, who probably wasn't present, gave a very confused account that replaces Cochise with

Mangas Coloradas and conflates the events of two years into two weeks. This may have been due to not being there, being senile, or confusion induced by the translator and the historian who recorded the account.

### **The Black Legend**

This historian refers to the magazine/newspaper accounts arising from Bernard/Poston/Oberly as the Black Legend since it is a legend, not history, and paints Bascom as a black villain with details and events that can be shown to be completely untrue. It goes something like this:

In October 1860, drunken Johnny Ward's stepson disappeared. Perhaps he just ran away to join the Apache to avoid beatings delivered by Johnny. According to Poston, this was not a stepson, but rather Ward's natural son by his Mexican common law wife. The boy would have been at least 18 months old when he ran, so let's stick with 12-year-old stepson. Twenty head of cattle went with the boy and Johnny wanted them back, so he complained to the Army at Fort Buchanan and the military did nothing until January 1861. Drunken Lieutenant Bascom, fresh from West Point, while leading a patrol of 12 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoon cavalymen including Sgt. Reuben Bernard happened upon Cochise and some of his followers near the Whetstone Mountains. Under a white flag of truce, Bascom lured in the unsuspecting Apache. Cochise was a man who never told a lie, never stole anything from Americans and who had a contract to protect the Overland Mail. Bascom demanded the return of the boy and Cochise responded that he didn't have him, so Bascom took the Apache hostage violating a flag of truce. Cochise was bound and tied, but Bascom forgot to take away his knife, so he cut himself free of bonds and then cut the tent, escaping. He attacked an Overland Mail stage which went so fast that

it flew over a chasm just like in the movies but Cochise caught it anyway and took Wallace captive. Returning to Bascom's camp, Cochise had a rope tied around Wallace's neck leading him behind his horse. Cochise offered to trade Wallace for the people Bascom was holding. Bascom refused demanding the boy as well. Sgt. Bernard became insistent that Bascom had to make the trade to save Wallace. The lieutenant had the sergeant court martialed for insubordination. Cochise dragged Wallace to death. Bascom was ready to hang his hostages when other officers showed up and said that this was a bad idea, the lieutenant suggested a game of 7-Up to settle the matter. He won and hanged six Apaches. In retaliation, Cochise attacked a Texan wagon train at Apache Pass killing 200 men women and children. Cochise then went on to slay 150 more at Doubtful Canyon.

To paraphrase another historian, the only problem with this is that not one word of it is true; no wait, they spelled the names correctly.

### **Sources**

Lieutenant George Bascom was the commander of Company C, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, assigned to Fort Buchanan, about three miles west of where Sonoita is today. Sergeant Daniel Robinson, who later became a captain and who was assigned to train lieutenants in Indian warfare, wrote two versions of the events at Apache Pass, one of which was used in training. This version is so complete that it seems likely the sergeant kept a diary.



Surgeon Bernard John Dowling Irwin, assigned to Fort Buchanan, wrote an article for *Infantry Magazine* specifically defending Bascom against some of the accusations made against the lieutenant.

Lieutenant Bascom wrote two reports and Lieutenant Isaiah Moore, 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, who came to the rescue, wrote an official report.

Superintendent William Buckley, of the Overland Mail, wrote a report soon after the events and a letter that appeared in the *Mesilla Times*. William Oury, Tucson agent for the Overland Mail, who brought replacement mules from Tucson for the for the stranded wagons at Apache Pass, arrived with Lieutenant Moore. Years later, he wrote an account of the affair. Soon after the events, Thompson Turner wrote an account in the Tucson based *Arizonian*. His source was probably Oury.

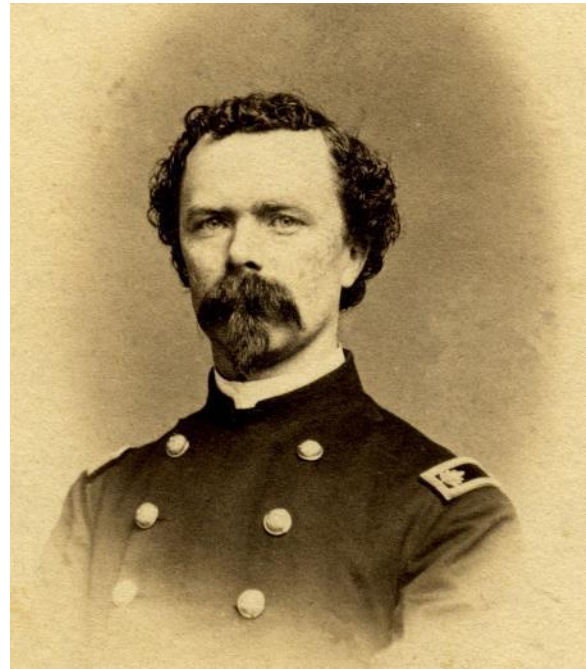
Nelson Davis, paymaster and possibly conductor of the “flying stagecoach,” wrote a letter to his wife part of which was published in a Utica newspaper. Others from the stage also wrote.

These sources are quite consistent with the differences we should expect based on perspective and which events they participated in as opposed to those they only heard about. Robinson’s story, for instance, has a gap between the time he was wounded and when the soldiers left Apache Pass.

### **Cochise**

Cochise was the greatest leader the Chiricahua Apache, a tribe that produced many wily tacticians, ever produced. He was leader of the Chokonan Chiricahua who dwelt in the Dragoon, Chiricahua, Dos Cabezas, and Peloncillo Mountains of what is today Arizona. He was not the chief of all

Chiricahua nor was his position hereditary.



Surgeon Bernard John Dowling Irwin

The Apache “recognized” a leader. If a man was considered a wise judge, people would gather around him accepting his wisdom. If he was successful in raids, he would be seen as a good war leader and people would join in his war parties accepting his leadership. If he failed, they would turn away. Where most could only call a handful of followers, Cochise could call on hundreds. Apache society was egalitarian and people were free to go their own way. Tribe and band were not political entities. They were ephemeral. Success was the only source of authority.

In addition to recognized leadership, Cochise was perhaps the only Chiricahua who thought strategically. That is to say, he thought about how to win the war and not just the next battle or raid.

Unlike George Washington who never told a lie, Cochise did tell lies in the context of negotiation and confrontation as any war leader would. However, he was a man who was very good about keeping his word. He

did not protect the Overland Mail; he tolerated it and his women sold hay and firewood to the stations. He stole mules and other livestock from the U.S. Army, the Overland Mail, and from farms and ranches along Sonoita Creek. He had exchanged gunfire with Captain Richard Ewell, 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, who wrote that if he ever had to deal with Cochise again, there would be bloodshed.

### **What Primary Sources Say Happened**

On January 27, 1861<sup>1</sup>, Felix Martinez Tellez Ward, about 12 years old, was tending his stepfather's herd of 20 cattle along the banks of Sonoita Creek. Johnny Ward's ranch was about three miles south of present-day Patagonia. His Mexican wife had two children by a previous liaison with Tellez and she and Johnny had two infant children together. He had two partners, Nickerson and Cole, a wheelwright and a blacksmith. One of them, Cole, who was lying on his sickbed too weak to lift his rifle, observed nine Apache capturing the boy and the herd. The Apache tried to break into Johnny's house where the wife and other children sheltered. The approach of neighbors McCarty and Wilson scared them off.

The next day, Johnny Ward returned from a business trip and went straight to Fort Buchanan, nine miles to the north, and told Col. Pitcairn Morrison, commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry and senior officer in Arizona<sup>2</sup>, that he wanted to Army to recover his stepson and his cattle. Morrison sent Lieutenant George Bascom, commander of Company C, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, to look for the trail.

Bascom made an unsuccessful attempt. We might conclude that this was because he searched north of the fort along Cienega Creek for the significant trail 20 cattle would have left. The most common raiders were

Aravaipa, Coyotero, and Western Apache who usually went north along the creek before crossing over to the San Pedro River to make their way to their home country. However, in October 1860, two companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons<sup>3</sup>, were relocated from Fort Buchanan to Fort Breckinridge at the mouth of Aravaipa Creek where it flows into the San Pedro near the Gila River. The cavalry was patrolling the area and raiders were avoiding the dragoons, choosing to go north through the Sulphur Springs Valley.



Johnny Ward's Ranch ca. 1900

Bascom returned to the fort and went out again with an escort of dragoons. They located a trail that led east along the Babocomari River. Experience taught that this was the way Chokonon Chirichahua went when returning to Apache Pass.

On January 29, under orders from Col. Morrison, Bascom headed out to confront Cochise at the head of a column of 54 infantrymen of Co. C mounted on mules. They had more than 20 days supply of rations and so may have had some wagons as well. Along with them, as interpreter, went Johnny Ward.<sup>4</sup> This was an expedition, not a patrol, and Cochise was the target, not the victim of an accidental meeting.



Lieutenant George Bascom

Lieutenant George Nicholas Bascom who grew a beard so he would look older

On Sunday, February 3, shortly ahead of Bascom, Sgt. Dan Robinson arrived at Apache Pass returning from Fort McLane with four wagons and 11 men after delivering supplies. Upon arrival, Bascom now had a command of 66 infantrymen.

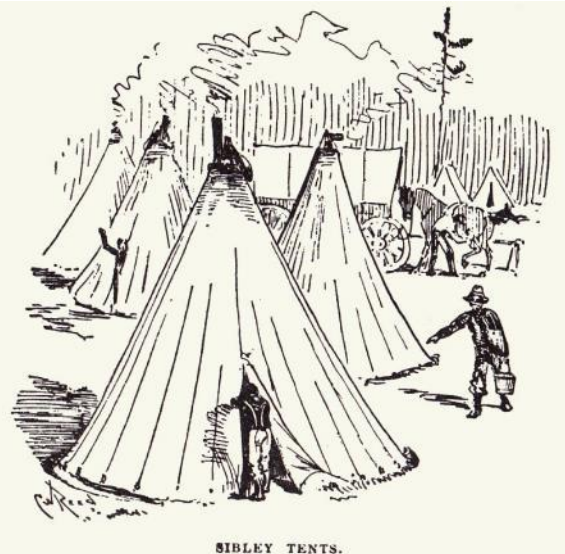
He camped about ½ mile from the Overland Mail Station on the distant side of Siphon Wash. The lieutenant went to the station where two Apache women loitered.<sup>5</sup> They were asked to go to Cochise's camp in Goodwin Canyon, about a mile and a half to the north, and invite Cochise in for parlay.

They left and did not return. Late in the afternoon, Bascom asked James Wallace, stage driver, who claimed to be on good terms with the Apache, to go and talk with Cochise. Wallace returned with the news that Cochise would arrive the next day, Monday, February 4.

Bascom's camp was arrayed with one wall tent, his, and as many as 12 conical Sibley tents<sup>6</sup>. His sentries patrolled with fixed bayonets<sup>7</sup> and instructions that when the Apache arrived none would be allowed to leave camp until they all left together.<sup>8</sup>

Cochise arrived at noon with his wife, two boys, his brother, Coyuntura, and two warriors.<sup>9</sup> As was customary, the visitors were fed lunch with the woman, boys, and two warriors going into one of the soldiers' tent and Cochise, Bascom, Coyuntura, and Johnny Ward going into Bascom's wall tent.

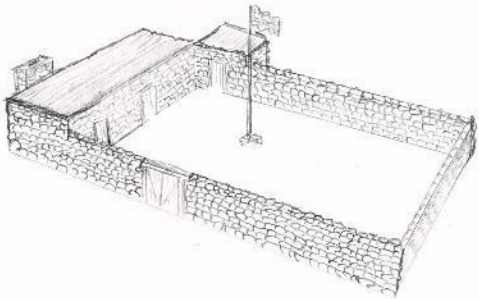
After lunch, Bascom announced his purpose demanding the return of Felix Ward and the cattle. Cochise said he didn't have them but thought he knew who did. If Bascom would give him ten days, he would go and try to get them. Bascom implied that he accented to this.



SIBLEY TENTS.

Bascom's camp would have looked a bit like this

Upon hearing Ward's translation, Cochise leapt to his feet drawing his knife and cut through the ties in the tent flap.<sup>10</sup> As he ran, Cochise screamed to his people to run. Coyuntura cut his way out the back and tripped over a guy line. A sentry's bayonet pinned him to the ground. Johnny Ward emerged and fired two shots after Cochise. In the crowded camp, Cochise's people ran into soldiers and became unintended captives. After some minutes, four surprised soldiers were able to load their weapons and fire at the fleeing Cochise. But he was far away, up Overlook Ridge, perhaps still holding Bascom's coffee cup.<sup>11</sup>

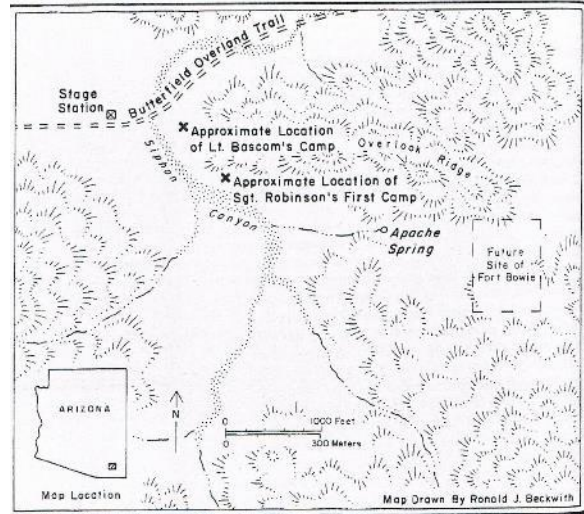


Apache Pass Station

Recognizing that he now had a problem, Bascom moved his camp to the Overland Mail Station, creating a parapet with grain sacks and pulling his wagon up in front and having his soldiers dig fighting positions under them so that they would have overhead cover from arrow fire. They had 20 day's rations, 66 infantrymen, 3 Overland Mail employees, at least 66 Army mules, and 14 Overland Mail mules crowded into the station. Water was a half mile away in the canyon.

That night they saw signal fires on the mountainsides. Cochise was calling in help.

On Tuesday, February 5, Cochise arrived with Francisco of the Coyotero and two other Apache as escort for parlay. Bascom went out with Ward as interpreter, Sgt. Dan Robinson



as lookout and Sgt. William Smith holding the flag of truce. Robinson observed a number of Apache working their way down the arroyo to the front holding branches as camouflage but said nothing assuming Bascom saw them, too.



Naiche and his wife, 1880s. He may have been one of the boys and his said to have resembled his father, Cochise.

Cochise made a long speech pleading for the return of his people.<sup>12</sup>

Bascom noticed Charles Culver, Robert Walsh and James Wallace emerging from the station. At the arroyo the two women that often visited the station were waving to them. Bascom cried out, "Get back. I haven't got anyone I'll trade for you." They didn't listen, ignoring the Army. At the arroyo, warriors suddenly emerged and tackled Culver and Walsh while one of the women grabbed Wallace around the neck and dragged him into the wash. Culver and Walsh broke away and ran for the station.

Francisco shouted to his people to take action.<sup>13</sup> Apaches and soldiers opened fire. Bascom's party ran to the station at an oblique angle avoiding weapons fire. Culver was wounded in the shoulder by an Apache bullet as he reached the station. Walsh ran into a bullet and fell dead. At the time, no one questioned whether it was friendly or enemy fire that had felled him. They barely knew his name and some accounts don't mention him.

On Wednesday, February 6, the stock was watered at Apache Spring. In the afternoon, the westbound stage came in four hours early with A.B. Culver,<sup>14</sup> and Moses Lyons up front and a man and his wife as passengers. They found the entrance to Siphon Canyon barricaded with a pile of brush and drove around it and arrived safely at the station. The woman would bravely begin tending the wounded.

Cochise was busy at the other end of the pass preparing a welcome for the Montoya Wagon Train bound for Pinos Altos with flour and supplies. There were eight Mexican drivers with the four wagons and three American guards, Sam Whitefield, William Sanders,

and Frank Brunner. They had just made camp at dusk when Cochise attacked.

Six Mexicans were killed in the assault. Two Mexicans and the three guards were taken captive. The Mexicans were tied to wagon wheels and the wagons ignited.



Overland Mail stagecoach, Celerity Wagon

Cochise had Wallace write a note which said that Cochise now had four hostages and they would be treated well as long as Cochise's people were treated well, but Wallace was freezing and begged for help. The note was attached to a tree near the station to be found by the soldiers.

A few hours later, at 1 a.m. Thursday, 7 February, the eastbound stage came in with nine on board including, King Lyons,<sup>15</sup> driving, Nelson Davis, beside him outside the coach,<sup>16</sup> inside were William Buckley, superintendent of the line between Tucson and El Paso, and Lieutenant John Cooke.<sup>17</sup> The Apache struck killing a lead mule and mortally wounding another. The passengers leapt out and took cover, driving the Apache back while the dead mule was cut from the traces. King Lyons was wounded in the leg and someone, possibly Buckley, took over driving. The trip was slowed as they had to keep stepping down from the wagon to remove stones placed by Cochise's men from the road. At one point they passed a bridge whose planks had been taken up.<sup>18</sup>

On the morning of Thursday, February 7, Cochise came in with Wallace. There was a shouted parlay between Bascom in the station and Wallace outside with Cochise. The Apache leader offered to trade Wallace for the six hostages Bascom was then holding. The lieutenant insisted that he could not make any trade without all four of Cochise's hostages being included. Cochise would not budge, nor would Bascom. The parlay broke up. At the time, no one, including the Overland Mail employees, criticized Bascom for this. All agreed that it would have to be all four.<sup>19</sup>

Snow fell on the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> and throughout the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>, soldiers and mules drank melted snow.

By afternoon on the 7<sup>th</sup>, there was need to water the mules and bring water from the spring to the station. Sgt. Dan Robinson was put in charge of a 15-man detail. He assigned one man as sentry to mount Overlook Ridge. Four men were sent to the spring in overwatch, their rifle-muskets loaded and ready to protect the others. He went to the spring to direct operations. The remaining men were to bring out water vessels and half of the livestock.



*Daniel Robinson,  
c. 1880.*

At the spring, Dan Robinson looked up to see his sentry signaling that Apaches were

attacking from the south. At the same time, he saw Moses Lyons riding a mule in the midst of the entire herd of Army and Overland Mail mules. The Apache attack surged through the herd to the spring where Robinson was shot. Unable to move, he lay by the spring while his four men in overwatch kept the Apache at bay. They were unable to get to him.

At the station, Lieutenant Bascom had his own problems. He saw a large body of Apaches lying in wait in the arroyo to his southwest. He knew that if he emerged with his entire force, he would be overwhelmed and taken in flank. It was then that Lieutenant Cooke volunteered to lead a ten-man relief force to salvage the herd and rescue the sergeant.

Cooke succeeded. However, 42 Army mules and 14 Overland Mail mules were lost to the Apache. Between the station and the spring, Moses Lyons lay dead.



Uniform of an infantryman of Company C, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Regiment, United States Infantry

That evening, Lieutenant Bascom would send out three messengers, two of his own men and A.B. Culver. The two infantrymen were bound for Fort Buchanan with a message from Bascom saying that he was surrounded by 500 Apache and had wounded that needed a surgeon and ambulance.

Managas Coloradas and his followers, Francisco and his Coyoteros, and Cochise's Chokonen had gathered to his cause.

In the afternoon of Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, Company B, 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, late of Fort Breckinridge, was marching on orders to the Rio Grande to defend New Mexico from Confederate unaware of Bascom predicament. The afternoon they raised dust as the crossed the San Simon Valley. The dust and their blue wagons with white canvas would have been visible from Apache Pass. Bascom had no further encounters with the Apache.

It seems likely that seeing the wagons and dust cloud, the Apache concluded that this was some unhandled attempt to surround them. Sensing danger and a betrayal, they killed their hostages and departed. They were not seen again.

That evening messengers arrived at Fort Buchanan and Tucson. In Tucson, Overland Mail agent, William Oury, gathered a herd of mules to replace the ones lost and sent a messenger to Fort Breckinridge where post commander, Lieutenant Isaiah Moore, 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, would wait for instructions from Col. Morrison before responding.

At Fort Buchanan, Surgeon Bernard John Dowling Irwin, volunteered to lead 11 men of Co. H, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and Corporal Fraber who brought the message to the relief of Bascom

at Apache Pass.<sup>20</sup> Joining Irwin as a volunteer was Paddy Graydon.<sup>21</sup>



Captain Paddy Graydon, New Mexico Volunteers

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, the relief party rested at Dragoon Springs Station. On Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup>, while crossing the Sulphur Springs Valley, they spotted a dust cloud and pursued it. After a six-mile chase, they captured three Apaches of a Coyotero raiding party escorting stolen livestock taking 13 steers as well and two horses. Irwin and Graydon decided they would stampede the steers into Apache Pass to break the cordon of 500 Apaches.

They charged in but encountered no further Apache.<sup>22</sup> Six adult Apache males were now

captives along with one woman and two boys. During the next three days all was quiet on this western front.

On February 14, Lieutenants Isaiah Moore and Richard Lord, 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons, and 72 mounted cavalrymen met up with William Oury at Ewell Station in the Sulphur Springs Valley. They proceeded to rescue Lieutenant Bascom and his men at the Apache Pass Station without encountering any Apache.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, the cavalry rested. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Moore led a reconnaissance in force with all of the cavalry and many of the infantry in search of the Apache. They found the remains of an Apache village and burned it. They then discovered the burned wagon train and the bodies of Cochise's four hostages. They saw no Apache.

On the 18<sup>th</sup>, equipped with fresh mules, the stagecoaches departed under military escort. At San Simon Station they discovered that Apache had visited and departed with six mules, 300 sheep, and a lot of beef.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, leaving behind a small guard force, the Army headed for home stations passing the site where the hostages had been slain. Outraged, Surgeon Irwin proposed that they hang the six adult male hostages.

Lt. Bascom countered that this was not a good idea, and it would be appropriate to let Col. Morrison decide what should be done. Irwin countered that three of them were his hostages and he would hang his three thus putting Bascom in an untenable position. All of the officers present were senior to Bascom. Lt. Moore, who claimed to have only been in command of all of the soldiers during the reconnaissance, was, in fact, in command as the senior officer present. He could have stopped the proceedings at any time.

The cavalrymen provided lariats and the six Apache were hung from trees at Apache Pass.

### **Postscript**

During March 1861, four Overland Mail employees disappeared between San Simon Station and Tanks Station.<sup>23</sup> In March the Army stopped running patrols in pursuit of Apache raiders. Soldiers were ordered to wait and conserve supplies for a big campaign that never happened. On March 12, Congress voted to move the Overland Mail to the central route.<sup>24</sup> The last Overland Mail stage ran through Arizona on April 1. On this date as well, the Postmaster General awarded a contract to the San Antonio and San Diego Mail, common called the Jackass Mail, to carry mail across Texas and Arizona to California. On April 27, J.J. Giddings of the SA&SD and four Overland Mail employees passed by Tanks Station headed west inspecting facilities for takeover by the SA&SD. They were ambushed by Cochise at Stein's Peak, and all died. In June, Cochise struck at Fort Buchanan with a stock raid and was pursued by Bascom, Irwin, Robinson, and Graydon. They escaped an ambush in the Whetstone Mountains. In July, the seven men of the Freeman Thomas party were slain at Cooke's Canyon by Cochise and Mangas Coloradas. Years later Cochise described them as the bravest men he ever met.

Shortly after Bascom's return to Fort Buchanan, Cochise's wife and the two boys were released.

Captains Bascom and Moore would die in connection with the Battle of Valverde, Bascom as a hero who held the line in the hottest spot. It was said to be, man-for-man, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Lieutenant Lord died in 1866 of health broken by the war.



Surgeon Irwin and Captain Dan Robinson went on to write about the events at Apache Pass defending Lieutenant Bascom.

Felix Ward, taken by the Aravaipa Apache, was traded to the Coyotero Apache where he grew up forgetting his name. In 1872, he volunteered as an Apache scout. His Apache name was unpronounceable, so the soldiers picked him out a new moniker. With reddish hair and one grey eye, they thought he resembled the roguish servant in the then popular novel, *Charles O'Malley, The Irish Dragoon*. They dubbed him Mickey Free.



Mickey Free a.k.a. Felix Ward

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<sup>1</sup> *Hesperian*, believed to be newspaper editor Thompson Turner, provided this date and January 21. Historians have believed that the 27<sup>th</sup> is correct and 21 a misreading of handwriting. However, Berndt Kuhn credits an article by Charles K. Mills, published in the *Cochise Quarterly* (now the *Cochise County Historical Journal*) in 1993. The article has neither footnote nor bibliography, so locating Mills's source is problematic. Mills says he has found the record of a court martial at Fort Buchanan and that on January 22, Lt. Bascom was excused from the proceedings to search for Felix Ward. It is possible that this did occur. There was a court martial at this time which included officers from Fort Breckinridge, 90 miles to the north, and may have included Sgt. Bernard as escort. However, the article ascribes information to the court martial record that would have been highly unusual and then goes beyond

this presumed evidence to draw unwarranted conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> From 1856, when the United States took possession of the Gadsden Purchase, until 1863 when the U.S. Congress created the Territory of Arizona with a north-south boundary from New Mexico as we know it today, everyone called the Gadsden Purchase Arizona. Morrison was the senior officer in this area.

<sup>3</sup> Dragoons are cavalry. They were armed with saber, musketoon, a shortened musket that could be reloaded on horseback, and pistol. They were trained to fight both mounted with saber and pistol, and to fight dismounted. The first regiments were formed in the 1830s and shortly afterward a regiment of mounted infantry was formed. Mounted infantry was armed with rifle and Bowie knife and rode to the battle to fight dismounted. Dragoons were not mounted infantry.

<sup>4</sup> Both Cochise and Johnny Ward spoke some Spanish.

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<sup>5</sup> Apparently, this was a frequent occurrence. Stage driver Wallace who had a wife in Tucson is said to have been having an affair with one of them. They may have been Mexican captives.

<sup>6</sup> Designed by Major E.S. Sibley and adopted by the Army, these were inspired by tepees and slept 8 men.

<sup>7</sup> Bascom's men were equipped with muzzle loading rifle-muskets that fired the new Minié ball. The only way to unload the weapon was to fire it and this wasted ammunition. Weapons were not loaded unless trouble was expected.

<sup>8</sup> This was standard procedure as it was felt that if Indians were allowed to come and go as they pleased, they would steal things, hide them in the brush, and return for more. Even in the present day, access to military camps and facilities is controlled.

<sup>9</sup> Some sources say one boy. This may be a matter of perception due to age or size. If two, they were almost undoubtedly Cochise's son, Naiche, and his nephew, Chieh, Coyuntura's son.

<sup>10</sup> Cochise had lost his father when he was killed in a parlay with Mexicans. He was undoubtedly nervous and on the watch for treachery.

<sup>11</sup> What did Johnny Ward translate? It's clear that he was unhappy about letting Cochise go as evidenced by his firing at him. Bascom includes the mention of the 10-day grace period in his report suggesting that he agreed to this concession. Clearly, Bascom was not expecting trouble.

<sup>12</sup> We might conclude that since Cochise no longer wanted the 10 days but instead made a long plea, that this was due to the presence of Francisco, who lived far to the north in the White Mountains. Apparently, Francisco was returning from a raid into Mexico. Cochise knew that his friend often came this way and may have thought Francisco had the boy. If Francisco didn't have Felix Ward, then Western Apache did, and Cochise had no friends in that quarter.

<sup>13</sup> Robinson says Francisco yelled, "Aqui!" That is Spanish for "here" or perhaps "to me." There is no reason why he would have shouted in Spanish rather than Apache, so perhaps Robinson was recording an Apache word he did not understand. In any event, it was a signal to take action.

<sup>14</sup> Brother of Charles Culver who had been wounded the day prior.

<sup>15</sup> Some sources say Lyon. He was the brother of Moses Lyons.

<sup>16</sup> He is on the Butterfield roles as paymaster, but since he was beside the driver, he may have been conductor as well.

<sup>17</sup> Lieutenant Cooke's orders promoting him to captain were en route. He had served with Co. B, 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry, that between March 1860 and October 1860, built Fort Breckinridge. He was the son of Col. Philip St. George Cooke, and to his father's embarrassment, was returning home to Virginia to resign his commission and become a Confederate general.

<sup>18</sup> Only Davis's account mentions this, and it doesn't say if they went around, made repairs, or somehow bounced across. With a dying mule in traces, they would not have been moving very fast.

<sup>19</sup> Some secondary writers "suspect" that this was because Cochise had not taken the hostages himself and they were the "property" of another Apache this being Apache "culture." This writer suspects that Cochise believed there would be additional negotiations and that he had the moral authority among his people to persuade them to give up the three hostages. Further, it is probable that he saw the opportunity to hold out for additional "gifts" from the Americans. Perhaps he even believed that his people were safe enough with Bascom as the Americans, although they frequently took hostages, normally treated them quite well.

<sup>20</sup> Only 11 men of Co. H, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry, went with Irwin, Fraber, and Graydon. There were additional men available from Co. H. however, there weren't enough mules left to provide them with mounts. Co. C was already with Bascom. Sgt. Oberly, musician, was at the fort nursing a sick child left behind when the rest of the band was reassigned to Fort McLane.

<sup>21</sup> Paddy Graydon had been discharged from the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons several years prior to this. Later he would serve as a volunteer officer in the Civil War. He owned an establishment known as Casa Blanca where soldiers could find forms of entertainment not available on the military installation. Paddy volunteers for every posse and Apache chase that came along.

<sup>22</sup> This was the earliest engagement for which the Medal of Honor was awarded. In this case to Surgeon Irwin. The medal was not

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authorized until 1862 and then only for enlisted men. It was not awarded until 1863. In the 1890s, the rules changed, and officers could receive the medal. Irwin received his award in 1894.

<sup>23</sup> Tanks was near modern Lordsburg.

<sup>24</sup> Not because of Apache trouble. This was a response to Texas and Arkansas joining the Confederacy making it unsafe to send mail by this route. The central route was along the California Trail through South Pass in present day Wyoming.

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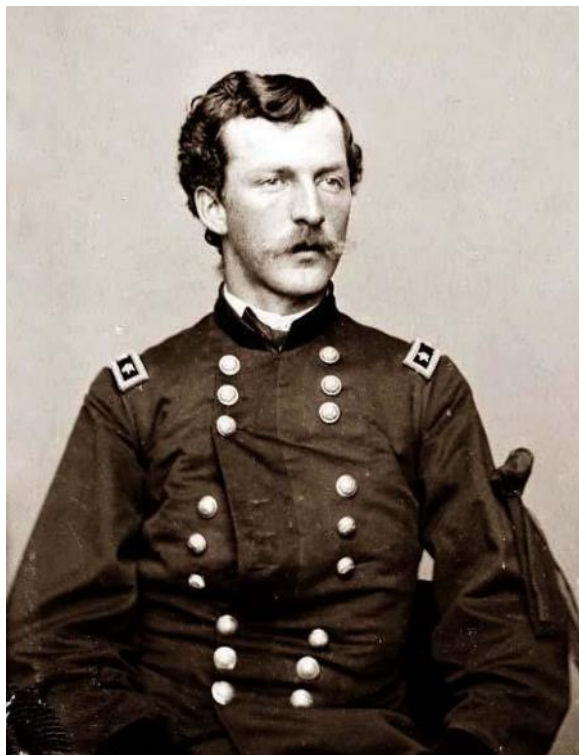
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## ***“The Deserters Have Forfeited Their Medals”***

The Army Adjutant General’s Office (1877)

### **THE CASE FOR RECOGNIZING THE REVOCATION OF THE MEDALS OF HONOR OF PRIVATE JOHN S. DONELLY AND PRIVATE CHARLES H. MONTROSE**

**By Michael C. Eberhardt**



General Nelson Miles

In the pre-WWI history of the Medal of Honor, there was perhaps no single United States military officer more inextricably woven into the Medal’s history and its evolution than General Nelson A. Miles. Consider the following:

- He was wounded four times during the Civil War; then Colonel Miles was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Chancellorsville on May 2-3, 1863.
- He was one of almost six hundred Civil War soldiers who were awarded their Medals during the frenzied submission of Medal of Honor

recommendations during the late 1880s and 1890s. Many “applicants” for the Medal were rejected—some because they involved self-nominations with no supporting witnesses or documentation. Nonetheless, almost 40% of all Civil War recipients of the Medal of Honor were awarded their Medals during this period, some twenty-five plus years after the end of that war.

- He served as a commanding officer in the Civil War, the Indian Wars, and the Spanish American War. These three conflicts saw approximately two thousand Medals of Honor awarded. During the Spanish American War, he served in that conflict with other general officers who had also previously received the Medal of Honor--- Generals William Shafter, Henry Lawton, and Leonard Wood.
- He was personally responsible for the recommendations of Medals of Honor for thirty soldiers who served during the Great Sioux War, specifically for actions in Montana between October 1876 and January 1877 at Cedar Creek, Redwater Creek (Ash Creek), and Wolf Mountain. Colonel Miles’s adjutant during the Great Sioux War was Lt. Frank Baldwin, a two-time Medal of Honor awardee (three times recommended) who later served in the Spanish

American War, the Philippine Insurrection and WWI, and who retired as a brigadier general. Those thirty soldiers, including Privates John S. Donnelly and Charles H. Montrose, are listed as Medal of Honor recipients in official records.

- He was also involved in the recommendation process for a number of other Medal of Honor recipients, including twenty-one soldiers who were issued Medals on April 23, 1875, for actions at Washita River, Texas in 1874.
- As a retired Lieutenant General, Miles served as the President of the 1916 Medal of Honor Board ordered by Congress to review the validity of all 2,625 Medals of Honor previously issued, with the result being the rescission of 911 Medals of Honor (most of which involved the Medals of Honor dubiously issued to the 27<sup>th</sup> Maine Infantry during the Civil War). The rescissions also included twenty-nine recipients who served as President Lincoln's funeral guards, as well as several private citizens --- including three recipients who were otherwise historically well-known, William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Dr. Mary E. Walker, and Indian scout William "Billy" Dixon. The Medals for those three individuals were later reinstated.
- In his service from 1895 to 1903 as the last soldier to serve in the position of "Commanding General of the Army," General Miles oversaw the process of issuing Medals of Honor for not only the Civil War awards in the later part of the 1890s, but also

awards during the Philippine Insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion.

### **The Great Sioux War Awards**

It was General Miles's actions regarding two soldiers, Privates Donnelly and Montrose, who were on his Medal of Honor recommendation list from the Great Sioux War, that stirs controversy, in this author's opinion, based on a review of documents recently uncovered in Medal of Honor files at the National Archives.

On February 9, 1877, Colonel Miles listed thirty soldiers, including Private John S. Donnelly (Donnelly), Company G, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and Private Charles H. Montrose, Company I, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, in his Medal of Honor letter of recommendation to Brigadier General Edward Townsend, the Adjutant General U.S. Army, Washington, D.C. The thirty listed soldiers were cited for "conspicuously gallant and meritorious services" for actions during the October 1876 to January 1877 period. Medals of Honor for all thirty soldiers, including Donnelly and Montrose, were approved on April 3, 1877. Engraving orders were issued, and the thirty Medals of Honor were delivered to the Adjutant General's Office on April 27, 1877, for shipment to Colonel Miles for presentation in the field by the Commanding General of the Army, General William Sherman. General Sherman's presentation occurred on July 18, 1877, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Headquarters, Cantonment Tongue River, Montana to the twenty-three recipient soldiers who were present. Significantly, on the very same date, a General Order issued "By Command of Col. Nelson A. Miles" listed the names of those twenty-three soldiers as having been "bestowed" Medals of Honor for "gallant" service. The General Order also lists the names of five other soldiers "awarded" Medals of Honor, describing them as one soldier "since dead"

and four others “since discharged.” The General Order therefore accounts for twenty-eight Medals of Honor; there is no mention of Donelly or Montrose in the General Order.

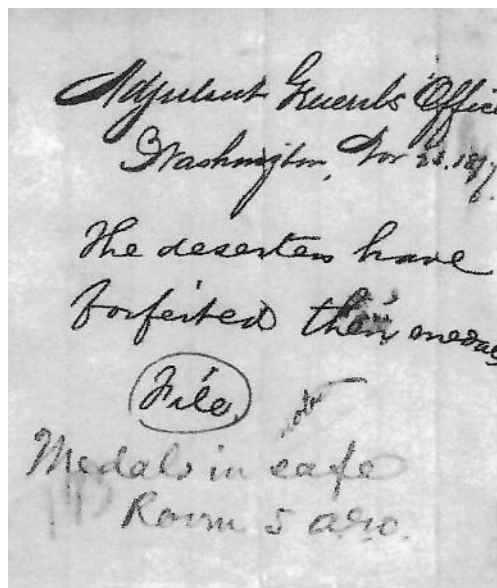
By the date of the General Order on July 18, 1877, Colonel Miles had determined that Donelly and Montrose had been deserters, and he returned their Medals of Honor to the Adjutant General’s Office (AGO) in Washington, D.C. (He also returned the Medals of Honor of those soldiers who had been discharged and not present for Sherman’s presentation. This was a customary practice for discharged soldiers whose whereabouts might be subsequently located.)

Miles sent two letters to the AGO announcing his action not to present the Medals to Donelly and Montrose because of their desertion. The second letter from Miles to General Townsend of November 5, 1877, reads in part: “I have the honor to return herewith the medals of honor awarded to Private John S. Donnelly Co “G” 5 Inf and Private Charles W. Montrose Co “I” 5 Inf to whom the medals were not given because of their desertion....”

The Donelly and Montrose Medals of Honor, upon receipt by the Adjutant General’s Office, were placed in “File Room # 45” according to an AGO note. There is also a handwritten note in the file with a heading from “The Adjutant General’s Office, Washington, D.C.” and it reads “**The deserters have forfeited their medals.**” (Emphasis added)

### Donelly and Montrose

The records show that Donelly enlisted on May 16, 1876, in Jersey City, New Jersey. His occupation was listed as a blacksmith. He deserted on May 7, 1877. There is no record of his capture, and little is known about him



except that he and several relatives had previously emigrated from Ireland, arriving on June 16, 1851, on a ship named *The Mannering*. Donelly was about one year old upon his arrival in the United States. Following his desertion there is no discovered record of him in census records or other materials, although some of his relatives settled in New York City. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, there are several persons named “John Donnelly” living in the New York City area, some with similar birth years and birth places; none however can be linked directly to the deserter, John S. Donelly.

Charles H. Montrose (not his real name) is quite another story. He enlisted under his real name, Alexander D. Munson, on June 12, 1875, in New York City and was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. Three months later, he deserted on September 28, 1875. During Munson’s desertion from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, he went to St. Louis and enlisted on June 21, 1876, under the fictitious name “Charles H. Montrose.” The 1875 enlistment record for Munson and the 1876 enlistment record for Montrose show the same age, the same birthplace (St. Paul, Minnesota), and the same physical descriptions of “Blue Eyes,” “Brown Hair” and height of “5’ 9 ½.”



Montrose was discovered by the Army as the deserter “Munson” on October 11, 1876, and he was arrested. The enlistment record for Charles H. Montrose includes a note that, because of this deception, his enlistment under that name was “cancelled.” Another document indicates this cancellation “as per Descriptive List A.G.O. June 15, 1877.”

The enlistment record for Alexander D. Munson not only shows his desertion date of September 28, 1875, and his apprehension on October 11, 1876, while serving under the name of “Montrose,” but it also shows a discharge date for Munson as of January 24, 1877.

The curious circumstances that allowed the fictitiously named Montrose to participate in the Great Sioux War battles from October 21, 1876 (Cedar Creek) to January 8, 1877 (Wolf Mountain), notwithstanding his false identity, his desertion, and his apprehension on October 11, 1876, are likely explained by the letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. J.H. Whitten, Commanding Officer of Co. “I,” 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Frank Baldwin, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry. It is dated November 28, 1876, five weeks after the Battle of Cedar Creek. Whitten’s letter reads:

*“I have the honor to request that any charges already preferred or that may be preferred against Private Charles H. Montrose, Co. “I” 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, alias Alexander D. Munson, Co. D, 2d Cavalry, on account of desertion from the latter company, may be withdrawn because of his very meritorious conduct during ... Oct 17 and Nov. 6, 1876. Already diligent and attentive to his duties, I think if the above request is granted, he will become one of our most useful men in the Company. This Descriptive List has been forwarded to his late Commanding Officer with a request for a*

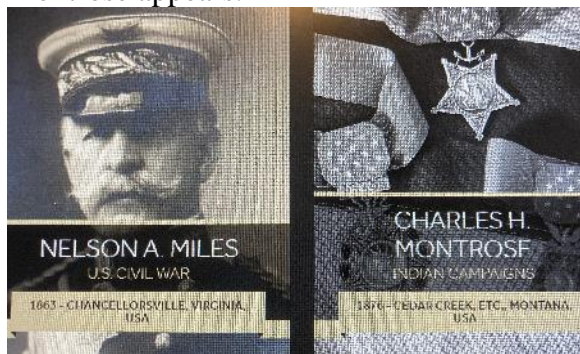
*copy of charges, but up to date no reply has been received.”*

Thus, it seems because of Lt. Whitten’s intervention, with no countermanding order, Montrose (true name Munson) apparently ably served in the battles at Cedar Creek, Redwater Creek (Ash Creek) and Wolf Mountain, as cited in the February 9, 1877, letter of Colonel Miles recommending the thirty Medals of Honor. Because of Montrose’s actions in those battles, his name (its fictitious nature certainly known by February 9<sup>th</sup> by Lt. Whitten and Lt. Baldwin) nonetheless found its way onto Miles’s Medal of Honor recommendations list. Apparently, Miles was not aware until much later that Montrose --- under the true name of Alexander D. Munson--- had been discharged two weeks prior to Miles’s February 9, 1877, recommendation letter, and that as Munson he had deserted after his first enlistment. Miles nonetheless felt that the desertion, when he discovered it and reported it to General Townsend, was a sufficient basis not to present the Medal of Honor to Montrose.

Following his discharge, the true original enlistee, Alexander D. Munson, went on to live a public life. An 1878 city directory from his hometown of St. Paul, Minnesota shows him there working as a “hack driver.” Census records of 1900 and 1910 show him living back in New York City where he first enlisted in 1875. Those records show his profession as “house painter.” He was married with three children. Records reveal that he died in 1917 and his body was cremated with the ashes given to his family.

At some point after the return of the “Montrose” Medal of Honor by Miles to the AGO, the Medal ended up being transferred from the AGO File Room to the Smithsonian Museum; it is currently held there along with

several other Medals of Honor, including that of Nelson Miles. Quite bizarrely, when one queries the Congressional Medal of Honor Society (CMOHS) website for the names of those recipients whose Medals of Honor are held by the Smithsonian, the box with Nelson Miles's photo appears alphabetically next to the box where the name of Charles H. Montrose appears.



The location of the Medal of Honor awarded to Donnelly and returned by Miles has yet to be discovered.

### **The 1916 Medal of Honor Review Board**

The intersection of circumstances involving Miles and the deserters Donnelly and Munson (Montrose) does not end with the return of their Medals by Miles to the AGO in 1877. As noted above, then retired General Miles served as President of the 1916 Medal of Honor Board reviewing all Medals awarded up to 1916. As part of the review process, each Medal recipient was assigned a case number by the Recorder for the Board, Major O. J. Charles. Donnelly's case number was 2260 and Montrose's case number was 2373. Over the period from October 1916 to January 1917, General Miles and his Board of four other retired general officers, along with the Recorder Major Charles, met thirty-one times to review case files. These review sessions were fairly summary in nature; for example, on October 18, 1916, Miles and his Board reviewed eighty cases submitted by the Recorder. The meeting lasted two and ½ hours---which was the typical length of most

case review sessions. (One commentator, who has examined the times recorded for each review session, estimates that each case file received about two minutes of consideration by the Board.)

While it does not appear from the official Board report that all the numbered cases were reviewed in great detail by the five-member Board, that report does contain a listing of all the case numbers assigned to the 2,625 recipients. For some Board sessions where there was a review of a particular action or battle involving multiple recipients, the Recorder listed all the individual case numbers associated with that action to facilitate Board review. In some case file descriptions, the Recorder also included a list of documents that were contained in the file prepared for the Board.

In the file prepared by the Recorder for all the Medal of Honor recipients from the Great Sioux War, the list of recipients includes Donnelly (Case No. 2260) and Montrose (Case. No. 2373). The list says the Medals were "approved on April 27, 1877." A few documents are also listed as part of the case file for the thirty recipients, but the Recorder to the Board failed to include several critical documents such as those that reflected the communications between Miles and the AGO regarding the return of the Medals of Donnelly and Montrose, or the AGO note that "the deserters have forfeited their medals." The case file also did not contain the most important document --- the General Order issued by Miles on July 18, 1877, where the names of Donnelly and Montrose were conspicuously absent.

While the Board reviewed a very large number of cases during sessions of short duration, it remains puzzling that Miles may not have remembered his return of the Donnelly and Montrose Medals due to

desertion, or his General Order. He certainly was adamant about their cases some forty years prior.

### **The requirement of “Honorable Service”**

The requirement of “honorable” service (e.g., no desertion) by a recipient and its effect on the Medal of Honor process was first officially addressed by the Army in General Order No. 28, dated March 12, 1903. Issued from AGO Headquarters, it provided that “neither a Medal of Honor nor certificate of merit will be awarded in any case where the service of the person recommended, subsequent to the time when he distinguished himself, has not been honorable.”

In 1918, Congress passed legislation that provided more direction and guidance regarding eligibility for the Medal of Honor (40 Stat. 870-873). It provided that “no medal...shall be awarded or presented to any individual whose entire service subsequently to the time he distinguished himself shall not have been honorable.” (Note the distinguishing use of the words “awarded” and “presented.”) Language similar to the 1918 legislation still exists in 10 U.S.C. Section 3744(c).

Before the 1903 General Order there were situations, other than that of Donnelly and Munson (Montrose), which resulted in deserters being approved for the Medal of Honor. In one case, the Medal was awarded to a soldier who had deserted twice before returning to service and receiving the Medal during the Indian Wars with the Apaches. In another case involving a soldier engaged in the Indian Wars in Texas, he received the Medal and then deserted. In both cases, Medals had been physically “presented” or delivered to the soldiers. This “presentation” circumstance (discussed in more detail below) is an important consideration because

it did not occur in the cases of Donnelly or Montrose. And unlike the cases of Donnelly and Montrose, these two other cited cases did not involve any efforts to revoke the Medals. In another Indian War period case most analogous to the Munson/Montrose situation, a soldier named Charles Hoover had deserted and re-enlisted under the fictitious name, John Baker. Under the Baker name he was included on a list of thirty-six men recommended for the Medal of Honor by General Crook in 1875. This was done as part of any overall Army review of several military engagements with the Indians during 1872-1873, primarily the Apaches in Arizona. Before the list was transmitted to General Townsend as the Adjutant General for concurrence, and then to General Sherman for final approval, a clerk caught the fictitious Baker name, and connected it to Hoover, the deserter. Baker’s name was struck from General Crook’s list. Dutifully, it appears that the same clerk checked the remaining proposed list and found the names of two other deserters, Thomas Hanlon and Albert Bross. Both had deserted after the actions for which they had been recommended. Their names were then struck from Crook’s recommendation list.

The Hoover/Baker, Hanlon and Bross cases vary from Munson/Montrose and Donnelly cases in only one way: the disqualifying actions of Hoover, Hanlon and Bross as deserters were caught before General Sherman could approve them. However, in the case of Donnelly, he deserted on May 7, 1877, two weeks after the issuance of the April 7, 1877, approval list with Donnelly’s name on it. Likewise, it appears the desertion involving Munson/Montrose was not known by Miles until after the same April 7, 1877, approval. However, Miles caught these desertions before Sherman’s presentation of Medals on July 18, 1877, and Miles’s General Order of the same date.

While the Army adopted no regulations relating to the Medal of Honor until 1897, and nothing that addressed the “honorable service” requirement until the 1903 General Order, the Navy took a different approach. The Navy Medal of Honor statute passed in 1861 was distinct from the Army Medal of Honor statute passed in 1862, and as early as 1865 the Navy issued regulations governing the Medal, including a provision that allowed for a general order to be used for the erasure of a Medal of Honor recipient’s name from the Navy registry for acts of treason, cowardice, felony, or any infamous crime. The Navy used this general order process to rescind over a dozen Medals of Honor, including some for desertion. For example, by means of General Order No. 11 (April 3, 1863) and General Order No. 59 (June 22, 1865), the Navy ordered the forfeiture of five Medals of Honor for desertion, and two for misconduct.

A later 1914 Navy TJAG opinion --- issued prior to the 1918 legislation---reinforced the implications of the effect of a desertion when it noted that “...medals of honor, **awarded but not delivered**, should be refused in cases of men who have subsequently deserted during the enlistment in which the award was made, even though they were not tried therefore by court-martial and dishonorably discharged.” (Emphasis added)

#### **Analysis of actions taken against Donelly and Montrose**

While the Army in 1877 had not yet issued Medal of Honor revocation regulations like the Navy, the absence of Army regulations did not diminish the practical need (as the Navy had formally addressed with its regulations) to rectify cases that involved undeserving soldiers. The absence of regulations also did not cancel the effect of

the lawful and specifically worded General Order of July 18, 1877, where the names of Donelly and Montrose were consciously excluded. This is particularly true in the context of other well documented facts, i.e., Miles’s action in returning the Medals of Donelly and Montrose thereby precluding any “presentation,” and the ensuing note by Townsend’s office that “the deserters have forfeited their medals.”

While General Sherman was the approving military authority, there is nothing in the records that show an explicit action by him to overturn the earlier approvals of Donelly and Montrose. However, Miles’s General Order was issued on the same date, July 18, 1877, as Sherman’s field presentation of the other Medals. Considering what Miles had discovered prior to that date, it was no simple oversight that only two soldiers, namely Donelly and Montrose, were not included by Miles in that General Order. Even though Miles was not the approving authority for the Medals in the first instance, he was the source of the recommendation for Donelly and Montrose, and he certainly had the duty and right to correct the mistakes made regarding their approvals, once he was informed of their actions as deserters. That duty and right underscore the significance of the General Order he issued on July 18, 1877. It was a revocation.

In a 2021, in an article published by Dwight Mears in Volume 229 of the *Military Law Review* entitled *Medals Ridiculously Given? The Authority to Award, Revoke and Reinstate Decorations in Three Case Studies Involving Executive Clemency*, the author offers a critical and insightful analysis of the authority of the military to revoke awards. He notes that Army regulations regarding revocation of awards did not begin to evolve until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but one Army regulation of that period states that

“any award for meritorious service may be revoked if facts subsequently determined would have prevented original approval of the award.” Clearly, these are the very types of facts that Miles confronted in 1877. Mr. Mears is also the author of the highly acclaimed 2018 book entitled *The Medal of Honor --The Evolution of America’s Highest Military Decoration*, which also recounts the history of Army and Navy revocation authorities. Even though the Army regulations regarding revocation were not in existence in 1877, Mr. Mears’s analysis of 20<sup>th</sup> century revocation regulations is nonetheless quite useful in retrospective consideration of the factors that drove Miles’s actions.

Also relevant in considering whether Miles’s actions constituted an effective form of revocation is the fact that no “presentation” of a Medal of Honor was ever made to either Donnelly or Montrose. With no written regulations in place in 1877, the revocation implications regarding the absence of a Medal “presentations” to Donnelly and Montrose are best analyzed by the actual practices of the Army during that period. For example, two soldiers approved for the Medal of Honor by General Sherman in 1869 were never presented their Medals because they had been killed; they are therefore not recognized as recipients. Likewise, three soldiers, who were approved by the President in 1906 for Medals of Honor for actions during the 1899 Philippine Insurrection, were never presented their Medals since the War Department never located the soldiers; the Department used incorrect mailing addresses for their Medal notification letters. These three soldiers are also not listed as Medal recipients in official records. It therefore is clear that the Army requirement of a ‘presentation’ most certainly had a detrimental consequence for other soldiers

approved for the Medal, but who have not been recognized as recipients.

## Conclusion

Decades before the formulation of the Army’s 1903 regulation regarding honorable service and its later regulations governing revocation, Colonel Miles was unquestionably focused on the same underlying considerations to those regulations when he issued his General Order on July 18, 1877. Although the General Order does not state that the Medals of Donnelly and Montrose were revoked, the absence of their names in the General Order is nonetheless consequential in that regard. Likewise, while no other records exist that characterize the actions taken against Donnelly and Montrose as “revocations,” the decision not to present their medals due to desertion and the “forfeiture” language in the AGO’s records are consistent with the policies underlying the subsequent regulations that provided for denial of Medal of Honor awards and revocation. While later-issued regulations cannot be applied retroactively, is there any doubt that Miles acted in 1877 with admirable motivation to ensure that ill-deserved soldiers were not recognized as Medal of Honor recipients? This is precisely what motivated General Crook when actions were taken two years prior in 1875 to strike the names of three deserters from his list of Medal recommendations.

Beyond the revocation effect of the 1877 General Order and the absence of any Medal presentations to Donnelly and Montrose, there is also the question of how can “Charles H. Montrose” be recognized as a recipient under any circumstance when that is a fictitious name and his enlistment under that name was cancelled? CMOHS has acknowledged the duplicity between the Medal recipient recorded as “Montrose” and the real

Alexander D. Munson since its published records note that Montrose was “also known as Alexander D. Munson” --- implying that Munson is the fictitious name when that is not the case.

Curiously, the CMOHS records also show a “Presentation Date” of April 27, 1877, for the Medals of Honor to Donnelly and Montrose. In fact, that is the date that all thirty Medals were sent to Colonel Miles by the AGO from Washington, D.C. It most certainly should not be used to indicate that there was ever a “presentation” of Medals to Donnelly and Montrose.

As the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye, himself a Medal of Honor recipient, once said” It is never too late to do what is right.”

Why is it important to re-examine the cases of Donnelly and Montrose almost 150 years later? The answer is simple. As the nation emphasizes the importance and recognition of its Medal of Honor recipients through a new National Medal of Honor Museum in Texas and a planned Congressionally approved monument to all recipients near the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the service of over 3,500 otherwise deserving recipients should not be tarnished by including the names of men like Donnelly and Montrose at those locations.

## Poetry

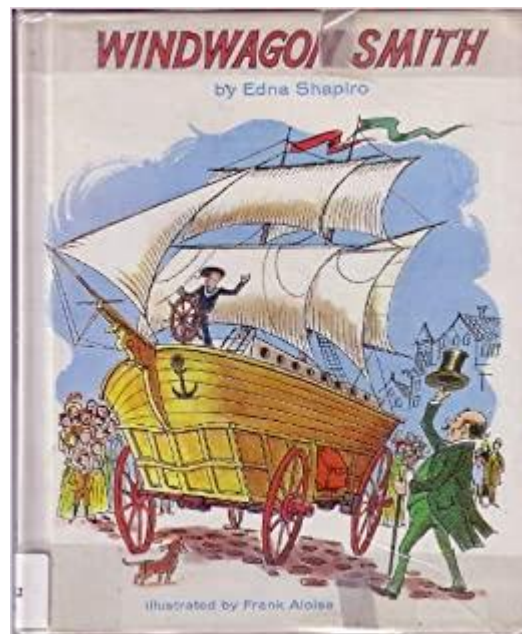
***As crazy as it sounds, wind wagons were a real thing. Wind Wagon Thomas succeeded in making it from Independence, Missouri, 120 miles to Council Grove, Kansas, before the wind took him apart. A four-man wind wagon traveled across Kansas and arrived in Denver.***

“The Mystery is Solved,” *St. Joseph Gazette*, 11 December 1846

The Mystery is Solved - the thing is Practicable - the wind wagon works. - During the past week Mr. Thomas having completed all his apparatus, run up his main sail and off the machine started. He ran up and down across the plains with his wagon at pleasure. It is his determination to remove here with his family as soon as possible, and his partner who is likewise coming, will in conjunction with himself and an old TAR, go to word and have three wind wagons ready by the first to 10th of April next, to traverse the plains across to Bent's Fort and back again. The resistance his vessel has to overcome is far less than a vessel at sea and there can be no doubt of its complete success - his resistance is only at starting while a vessel at sea is after it is under way. He expects to carry freight and passengers and will now engage and bind himself to take it through to Bent's Fort or to Santa Fe in a reasonable time at \$6 per hundred pounds. He intends having a depot at Bent's Fort and thence across the other side of the Arkansas will run another car within 60 miles of Santa Fe. At Bent's Fort he will have a car to run to Fort Laramie on Big Platte, to convey passengers and freight to Oregon, and will ultimately extend it across to California. - Independence Expositor.

“Wind Ship,” *Boon's Lick Times*, 12 July 1847.

Our enterprising fellow-citizen, Mr. Wm. Thomas, says the Independence Expositor, has just returned from a trip of 12 days on the prairies with his Wind Ship, and says it works well, and he is now willing to make a tour to the buffalo country, if a sufficient number can be raised to justify him in making the expedition. He takes one 6-pounder, a beautiful stand of colors, tents, &c. He will start in a few days if he can be successful in getting a company. As this is something new under the sun, we suppose that many of our citizens will embrace the opportunity.



Walt Disney's Interpretation

“Wind Wagon Poem,” *The Weekly Western Argus*, 4 June 1859.

Respectfully Dedicated to E. M. McCarty, of the *Border Star*

Where is the Ship of the Prairie now,  
Wind Wagon, Brig of the Plain,

Pairie Schooner, what not, (for “what’s in a name,””  
We’ve asked, and we’ve asked it again.

O! thou Border man, of the Border State,  
And Chief of the Border Star,  
Is it climbing the hills, threading the vales,  
Or skimming the desert afar?

You’ve puffed it loud and you’ve puffed it  
long,  
And pray have you puffed it in vain?  
With such a very “stiff breeze” in its sails  
Yet standeth it still on the Plain!

Why do not the ponderous wheels revolve?  
And why idly flappeth the sail?  
For surely you’ve furnished it WIND enough  
-  
What need of a stronger gale?

McCarty, you’ve given the key to it all,  
The reason is readily told,  
No Yankee has lent his aid to construct,  
And - you’ve been egregiously sold.

Let “Jonathan” only have “guessed” out the  
thing,  
Have “whittled a spell” with his knife,  
Steaightway, you’d have seen such a model  
machine,  
‘Twould have “run” like a creature of life.

Aeolus.

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Respectfully Dedicated to E. M. McCarty, of  
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‘Twould have “run” like a creature of life.

Aeolus.

*The following poem is a favorite. James Caan  
recited it in the John Wayne movie  
appropriately titled **Eldorado**. Published in  
1849, it may have been dedicated to the 49<sup>ers</sup>  
describing their perils.*

## **Eldorado**

By Edgar Allen Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.



But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—

"Shadow," said he,  
"Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,"  
The shade replied—  
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

Supper Spoon

Rhonda Lomeli

Wagons  
rolls to  
a stop,  
the mules  
unhitched.  
The snap  
of twigs  
the toss  
of a log.  
A bucket  
is carried  
to stream  
not too  
far. Water  
sloshing  
over the  
sides as it returns. A  
dutch oven is filled a skillet  
is readied. Time for me to start  
my work. A hungry family awaits.  
I dive in! Then stir and wait on the  
edge. Scraping and stirring. An  
aroma drifts. A triangle clangs.  
Come and get it! Supper.  
supper, supper!

## BRAVING OUT

Rhonda Lomeli

An idea forms, takes root.

A canvas cover shelters dreams too.

The brave set out, so much courage in hand.

The magnificence of the day commences with the dawning.

An excitement fills **the air. The journey begins.** Wagon wheels roll,  
canvas covers sway **with the rocking of progress.** The squeaking and  
creaking of the wagon, **metal on wood. Jingling reins** and plopping hooves.  
Prairie begins to pass. **Chop, chop, chop of the axe** keeps us warm and safe.  
Sweet-smelling aromas of **fresh Dutch oven cooking** wafts through the air.  
Campfires release their **fragrant scent as they crackle,** pop, and snap all the  
while breaking the cold. **Laundry flaps from a rope** or lounges lazily on a  
bush. Trees sawed **and shaped keep wagons rolling** along. Bang, bang,  
bang, our blacksmith's **hammer repairs. Turns of the wheels,** miles  
traveled. Grass **waves a gentle, beckoning greeting.** Rivers coil,  
ripple, twist, tumble, **and drop. Impressive, formidable.** Beware!  
Beware, they will **swallow the daydreamer.** Several die. A fall,  
an illness, or accident. Some fall in love. A few marry.  
Sunlight is extended. Colorful flowers sprout. The chilled  
mornings warm earlier each passing day. Darkness falls  
later each night. Tough travel, no simple day—ever.  
Relentless exhaustion. Barely moving ahead. The  
**endless dust, hunger, thirst, and roasting sun. First**  
**cries of a newborn bringing hope and strength. At**  
**last, at last! We have arrived. A new beginning, a**  
**place for fresh roots. Sweet delight. Triumphant!**

**51,000**

Rhonda Lomeli

51,000

July 1 July 2 July 3 1863

So many killed, missing, wounded.

Days pass. Weeks to months then to years

51,000 Not true What of the other wounded

The mothers, fathers the grandparents brothers

and sisters Who cites the beloved! The children

neighbors playmates. And the friends so near too

close during the battles. Never ceasing noise, heat,

smoke and suffering. No food no water no painkillers

no doctor. Glowing skyline Green trees Black cannon

balls Grey smoke Pale bodies Clear tears Crimson dirt

The end too late...1863 Gettysburg. Real lives crushed

Forever transformed The departed Not merely numbers

The spirits wander Some say haunt, but who really knows

The Address 272 the number of words. Words of wisdom

Words with implications Words to ponder What of the *one*

**the person, the most important. Given only one life significant most to one, the *one***

## THESE OL' BOOTS

Rhonda Lomeli

Brand spanking new. Black's the color,  
heel functional, but a bit high. Instep  
is just right. V cut on the top. Thick  
leather with stitching, and two handy  
loops. A little stiff. A beautiful girl.  
Vows. Kickin' 'em up, smiles of joy!  
Nudging horses, muckin' stalls.  
Rivers and many miles. Movin' hay  
bales. Brandin' cows. Walking the  
porch planks, forth and back, *at last*  
two newborns cry! Late night strolling,  
fall asleep little ones. Plowin' more to feed  
the young'uns. Building onto the log cabin.  
Large barn, acres of pasture, one productive well. Grass tall.  
The river is steady, game is a plenty. Summers not too hot or dry.  
Four great horses, three good canines, two feral felines, and one  
surly mutt. Boots worn  
out as me. Yup! Yup!

## Old West Recipes

By Debbie Hocking

*If you have a heritage recipe (we define that very broadly from they used it on the trail to Grandma's receipt), please send it in!*

### Chili Rellenos

Debbie's Recipe

*Chili Rellenos are a staple of New Mexico cooking where they make them with the long chilis we call Anaheim or Big Jims and paisanos just call chili. Literally, relleno means stuffed. The chilis are stuffed with either a meat mixture or with cheese and then coated with a layer of breading and deep-fried. Getting the breading to stick is a trick and deep frying is, well, deep frying. So, Debbie worked out a way to get the same effect with a baked casserole. Hope you like it.*

#### Ingredients:

1 lb	Lean ground Beef
2 cloves	Garlic, grated or chopped
1	Onion, chopped
2 Tbs	Olive Oil
12	Green Chili, roasted
3 cups	Cheddar Cheese, grated
4	Eggs
1/4 cup	Flour
1-1/2 cups	Milk
Salt	To taste
Black Pepper	To taste
2 cups	Flour
4	Eggs
2 cups	Milk
1 tsp	Salt
1 tsp	Baking Powder

Preheat the oven to 350°

In a large pan heat olive oil. When hot, add garlic and onion. Saute until onion is translucent and then add beef and cook until well browned. Set aside.

Split chilis open length-wise and remove stem and seeds. Set aside.

Combine and beat well 4 eggs, ¼ cup of flour, 1-1/2 cups milk, salt and pepper. Set aside.

Sift together 2 cups flour, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp baking powder. Beat together 4 eggs and 1-1/2 cups of milk. Slowly add milk mixture to flour mixture while stirring. Do not blend smooth. This should be lumpy like pancake batter.

Grease a deep dish, 2-quart pan with a little olive oil. Add half of the batter just made. Place in the oven for ten minutes until it just starts to rise and brown. Remove from oven.

Lay out evenly ½ of chilis in the deep dish just baked. Add ½ of the cheese. Cover with all of the meat mixture. Add the remaining cheese. Arrange the remaining chili peppers on top. (You might add more cheese if you really like cheese.)

Slowly pour the mixture of 4 eggs, ¼ cup of flour, 1-1/2 cups of milk over the chilis. Finally, add the remaining batter on top and place in the oven for 50 to 60 minutes until top is lightly browned.

Cut and serve in squares.

### **Corn Chili Pudding**

2 Tbs	Butter
½	White Onion, chopped
1	Red Bell Pepper, chopped
3	Anaheim Chilis, roasted & seeded & chopped
4	Eggs
3 dash	Red Chili Sauce
2 cups	Corn, frozen
1 tsp	Sugar
½ tsp	Salt
½ tsp	Black Pepper
1 cup	Milk
1 cup	½ & ½
1/3 cup	All-purpose Flour
½ cup	Cheddar Cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 325° F, or warm your Dutch oven. Melt butter in a frying pan or Dutch Oven. Stir in onion and bell pepper and cook two or three minutes over low heat. Add green chili and corn and cook for three minutes more. If using a baking dish, grease or butter it and spoon the vegetables into it. In a bowl, whisk together eggs, chili sauce, sugar, salt and pepper until well beaten and smooth. Add milk and ½ & ½ and beat until combined. Add flour and mix until smooth. Pour this mixture over the vegetables either in the baking dish or Dutch oven. If using a Dutch oven, place over coals in the fire and put coals on top. Bake for 45 minutes until pudding is set. Remove from oven or fire, sprinkle grated cheese over the top.

### **Stewed Hen in Red Chili**

Chicken, whole  
2 Onions chopped  
3 Garlic cloves chopped  
2 Bay leaves  
½ tsp Oregano  
Pinch Thyme  
Salt to taste  
3 Red Chili pod crumbled  
1 cup Olives, ripe  
2 cups Dry Sherry  
3 tbs Corn starch mixed w/ cold water  
Cooked rice

Cut up chicken and place in water to cover. Heat to a boil and boil about 15 minutes. Add onion, garlic, bay leaves, oregano, thyme, and salt. Simmer covered until nearly done, perhaps 30 to 45 minutes. Add dried crumbled chili pod. Leave the seeds in if you like it hot. Add 1 cup of olives, 2 cups of dry sherry and cook uncovered for another 10 minutes until chicken is tender. Add cornstarch mixed with water, simmer while stirring to thicken the gravy.

Serve over rice.

Even at Bent's Fort they ate chicken. Throughout New Mexico fowls were on the menu and all of the ingredients would have been readily available.

## Book Reviews

ADAMS, JOHN A., JR.

*William F. Buckley, Sr., Witness to the Mexican Revolution, 1908-1922*

Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2023.

Softcover, pp. 320, 6x9, 17 B&W Illus. and one map, 1 graph, 5 tables, \$29.95.

ISBN 978-0-8061-9182-9

William F. Buckley, Sr. grew up speaking Spanish in close contact with Hispanic culture. He took up a license to practice law in Mexico. Between 1908 and 1922 he was in close personal contact with the confusing array of leaders of Mexico's long revolution, a tragedy extended by the action and inaction of the Wilson Administration. Buckley left a trove of records of his own dealings and of the documents prepared in relation to Senator Fall's committee investigation. That his small company survived and prospered despite efforts of both the Mexican government and big oil to crush it, make his observations and opinions worth study by anyone interested in Mexico's revolution or the Wilson Administration. The story is told as an exciting tale of danger, intrigue, and bold action.

*Doug Hocking*

CLAGGETT, THOMAS D.

*Blood West*

New York: Five Star Publishing, 2022.

<http://www.gale.cengage.com/fivestar>

The setting is the wild west of railroad enlivened Las Vegas, NM, once prowled by the likes of Billy the Kid and Doc Holliday where "people who won't be missed" are disappearing or are found with throats torn out and completely drained of blood. An enormous, black wolf is suspected, and the wolf hunters gather. A Texas Ranger arrives hunting a murderer and a bounty along with one of Pinkerton's undercover lady "Pinks." A photographer is puzzled by his negatives. The action moves to the nearby Montezuma Hotel, a spectacular, huge, Harvey House that by the end of the story has burned down and been rebuilt twice. The hotel is still there. The action is quick paced as suspicion settles on three "lungers," a gambler, a deeply conflicted gentlemen, and a lady in a wheelchair.

*Doug Hocking*

GALLAGHER, MARSHA V., ed.

*Travels in North America, 1832-1834, A Concise Edition of the Journals of Prince Maximilian of Wied*

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017

Hardcover, pp. 573, index, illustrations, bibliography, editorial notes, \$34.95.

<http://www.oupres.com/>

Prince Maximilian traveled across the United States and ascended the Missouri River as far as what is today western Montana conducting a broad scientific survey of the country. It was a grueling journey up a narrow, shallow channel by steamboat and flatboat in 1832-33. Along the way he collected flora and fauna and ethnographic and economic information on the Indian tribes



he met and on the fur trade. He saw the world with a eyes of an educated child – everything was new and wonderful and so he noted details others overlooked. His accounts of Indians and wildlife are fascinating catching them in a transitional era when manufactured goods were just becoming available to them.

*Doug Hocking*

HUNT, GREG.

*On Savage Ground: A Mississippi Valley Novel*

New York: Five Star Publishing, 2022.

Hardcover, pp.,

ISBN

<http://www.gale.cengage.com/fivestar>

Dueling and pirates and Indians, oh my! *On Savage Ground* is a wonderfully exciting tale of 1720s New Orleans on the edge of savage wilderness and at the mercy of the weather and the river. There is plenty of love, lust, depravity, deception, corruption, and deadly violence as Marc Lafitte makes a new life for himself and his true love. Hunt makes us feel the fear, grit, and suffering that was life on a very wild frontier while giving insight into the conflicted emotions and decisions involved in what it's like to be owned as a slave and to be a slave owner. The concluding duel will have the reader on the edge of his seat knowing that something just isn't right.

*Doug Hocking*

LANNING, MICHAEL LEE

*Patton in Mexico: Lieutenant George S. Patton, The Hunt for Pancho Villa, and the Making of a General*

Essex: Stackpole Books, 2023

Hardcover, pp. 255, 1 Map, BW Illus., \$31.95.

ISBN 978-0-8117-7072-9

<http://www.rowman.com>

Early in the morning of March 9, 1916, 500 of bandit-revolutionary Pancho Villa's men descended on sleeping Columbus, NM, murdering 20 Americans, losing 80 of their own. On March 15, Wilson's Punitive Expedition led by General John Pershing crossed into Mexico. It was the last great cavalry force of the United States and its first mechanized army, proving the worth of aircraft, motor vehicles, and radio. Second Lieutenant George S. Patton accompanied Pershing as an aide de camp keeping a diary of the action that Pershing relied on in compiling his own account. Thus began a friendship between the two. Patton observed Pershing as he led a field army and learned mechanized warfare and how to be a general. The author provides insight into a developing military leader and into the success and frustration of an expedition, both important and underrated.

*Doug Hocking*

MCBRIDE, ANDREW

*Cimarron*

New York: Five Star Publishing, 2022.

Hardcover, pp., Mc

ISBN

<http://www.gale.cengage.com/fivestar>

Cimarron is gripping Western action of the best kind from beginning to end. It will be surprising if this isn't the beginning of a saga in which the protagonist descends by steps to the very depths of hell and somehow against all odds works his way back. Choctaw, a highly skilled Army scout trained among the Chiricahua Apache, is a man of integrity and moral standards who finds his values are in a conflict that takes him down the road to becoming a cold-blooded killer. His love for an Apache maid makes him an outsider. His skill makes him dangerous. McBride does not disappoint.

*Doug Hocking*

McCAULEY, TERRENCE

*Born to Hang: A Jeremiah Halstead Western*

New York: Kensington Publishing, 2023

Paperback, pp. 316. \$8.99

ISBN 978-0-7860-5006-2

Deputy U.S. Marshal Halstead commented, "It would be nice to go a day without shooting someone." His days seldom go nicely. His enemies, old and new, have convinced a judge to swear out warrants on trumped up charges of murder. An army of mercenaries and half-baked bounty hunters are out to kill him and even the Montana winter weather is cooperating as he runs for the high and lonely. His friends rally to clear his name but tension mounts as it remains unclear that they will have any success against overwhelming political strength. A woman with surprising powers to cloud men's minds increases the drama as only Halstead seems impervious to her wiles. The story left me with a desire to read the earlier books in this series.

*Doug Hocking*

PAPPAS, NICK

*Crosses of Iron: The Tragic Story of Dawson, New Mexico, and Its Twin Mining Disasters.*

Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2023

Paperback, pp. 223, 25 B&W Illus. & 1 map. \$21.95

ISBN 978-0-8263-6628-6

At 3:00 p.m. on April 28, 1950, the last carload of coal from the Dawson mines was dumped at the tipple. Within months the once thriving town of 6,000 had been erased except for the hundreds of graves marked by iron crosses in its cemetery and these by 1980 had almost disappeared from memory. The cemetery and its hundreds of iron crosses were accidentally rediscovered by men in search of a ghost town. In 1905, the Phelps Dodge Corporation acquired the mines to feed coke to its mills in Douglas, AZ, and fuel to its railroad, the El Paso and Southwestern. They built a model town with schools, libraries, and legitimate entertainment and ran model mines employing all the latest safety features. However, in 1913 and again in 1923, these were the scene of two of the worst disasters in American mining history adding over 400 graves to the growing cemetery. This is the enthralling story of the growth and death of a town that once provided a significant percentage of all the coal used in the United States, and a history of almost forgotten disasters.

*Doug Hocking*

RAY, ROBERT J.

*Murdock Rocks Sedona, A Matt Murdock Murder Mystery*

Seattle, WA: Camel Press, 2016, pp. 347, \$16.95.

Warning! Due to severe geriatric lust, the reader should come equipped with Viagra and Geritol. This crime novel is extremely fast-paced sucking the reader into the world of billionaires, high finance, low politics and murder, 18 at a rough estimate. The author seldom finds time to stop and finish a sentence, but it works and the reader cares what happens to his characters in this Kafkaesque world. Murdock's method consists of asking 'what if' and letting his girlfriend, Helene, shoot the bad guys; there are at least five from different teams. One, who has committed five murders for hire, survives and returns to working as a barista in Sedona. Read it so you can brag to your friends that you survived.

*Debbie made me be kind with this. Understand that most of the action takes place in a 10-story hotel in Sedona where the tallest building is two stories. From his penthouse in the hotel, the bad billionaire can see Phoenix; never mind that there are two mountain ranges between Sedona and Phoenix. The action ends with Murdock rappelling down the side of the hotel on torn bedsheets, shooting at least one bad guy on each floor as he passes by.*

*Doug Hocking*

SANTIAGO, MARK

*A Bad Peace and a Good War: Spain and the Mescalero Apache Uprising of 1795-1799*

Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018

Hardback, pp. 264, \$32.95.

ISBN 978-0-8061-6155-6

[www.oupress.com](http://www.oupress.com)

Mark Santiago takes us to a forgotten war between 1795 and 1800 in prose so stirring one can almost smell the horses' sweat. Because the Chiricahua were at peace and fighting was along the fringes of the Spanish empire, the war that took the lives of a quarter of the Mescalero tribe has been overlooked until now. Meticulously researched, he reports on battles, skirmishes, and policies remarkably similar to those of the US three-quarters of a century later. The Spanish used total war, the equivalent of reservations, tribe against tribe, and Mescaleros at peace against those at war. The war was good because the Spanish won the battles and the peace bad because no one was happy with it.

*Doug Hocking*

SHEA, WILLIAM L.

*Union General: Samuel Ryan Curtis and Victory in the West.*

Lincoln: Potomac Books, University of Nebraska Press, 2023.

8 photographs, 3 maps, biblio., index, 368 pages.

ISBN 978-1-64012-518-6, \$34.95 (hard-cover).

Engagingly and intelligently written, the work brings light to the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi. General Curtis won great victories at Pea Ridge and Westport, preserving Missouri and Kansas for the Union. He was the eighth most senior general in the U.S. Army. While he was not dashing or flashy, he was a brilliant general, calm and efficient and also the engineer on some of the greatest infrastructure projects in the West. So why have we previously heard so little about him? Is the author an enthusiast? General Philip Sheridan, who knew him well, thought he

deserved better, writing: “I was always convinced that Curtis was deserving of the highest commendation, not only for the skill displayed on the field, but for a zeal and daring in campaign which was not often exhibited at that early period of the war.”

*Doug Hocking*

WARREN, KEVIN

*Ride a Fast Horse: A Captain Tom Skinner Western*

New York: Kensington Publishing, 2023

Paperback, pp. 314. \$8.99

ISBN 978-0-7860-5026-0

Captain Tom Skinner, an orphan who grew up hard on the Arizona frontier, has a wonderful way with horses. He rides Too Tall, a horse of amazing speed and stamina, while serving in the U.S. Cavalry. He’s agonizing over having offended the girl he loves when Colonel Brickman sends him out on patrol with only 12 men. Twenty or more of the worst of the worst outlaws have invaded Arizona and Tom can see they’re headed for the Mogollon Rim where his lady lives, but his orders are to go south. Heading for the Mogollon will cost him his career, but he might arrive in time to save his sweetheart. It’s non-stop action as Tom undertakes one Herculean feat after another.

*Doug Hocking*

WEST, CHARLES G.

*To Hell and Gone: The Hunters*

New York: Kensington Publishing, 2023

Paperback, pp. 313. \$8.99

ISBN 978-0-7860-5019-2

Orphaned by a Blackfoot war party, Crazy Wolf grows up as Crow warrior who becomes a U.S. Army scout. A captain’s grown daughter is captured by Sioux. Crazy Wolf kills all seven to rescue the lass only to return to face humiliation from the corporal who turned back. Crazy Wolf exonerates himself humiliating the corporal who kills his Crow brother. The former scout gets revenge and returns to his Crow stepfather who soon dies telling him that his life as a Crow must end and he must resume his life as Cody Hunter. Heading west to where his family was slain to pick up their journey, he faces one adventure after another rescuing children from Blackfoot and making friends while leaving the trail strewn with dead outlaws. In the west, a surprise awaits where his life almost ended. It changes everything.

*Doug Hocking*