

Local

Huckleberry Productions starts work on new documentary

• McCARTY GANG DOCUMENTARY IN THE WORKS

BY GINA K. SWARTZ
Gina@TheBakerCountyPress.com

It was a long ride back to Baker City from Eugene that found Dennis Dorrah stopping at the Dayville Mercantile for a notebook.

He had been listening to Country music for hours and decided he could write a song too. “They may be different musically, but the lyrics are all very similar—they’re about cryin’, dyin’ or going someplace so I figured I could do that,” he said.

He continued on his journey and had lyrics to a song by the time he reached John Day.

A few short weeks later, right after Dorrah sold York’s Park Grocery, he saw an advertisement for the “We Like ‘Em Short” film festival here in Baker City.

Dorrah, along with fellow Huckleberry Jam band member and personal assistant Stefannie Gordon, decided since they

were into photography and had recently began doing some videography, the next logical creative step was to make a movie.

The movie they chose to make was about a about a guy writing a song.

He said, “So that was our short movie. We sat down together and kinda worked out the music to the lyrics I’d written, the melody, the tune—and then we started making the movie.”

Because Dorrah had purchased the notebook he wrote the song lyrics in at the Dayville Mercantile, they returned to shoot footage of buying the notebook.

They also shot highway scenes along the way.

Dorrah and Gordon got to talking to the store owner who saw the instruments in the car and asked them to play a little music. “It was a beautiful day. We sat on her front stoop and played, had a lot of fun, drew a little bit of a crowd,” Dorrah reminisced. “We came home and about a couple weeks later we were called and asked to come back over Memorial Day to play a benefit for a family that

had just lost everything in a fire. We (The Huckleberry Jam band) did, and were able to raise over \$4,000 thousand dollars for the family. Then the Huckleberry Jam Band was booked for Dayville’s Centennial Celebration the following year over the 4th of July.”

Dorrah said he had given the Mercantile owner a copy of the movie they’d made for the Baker City film festival inspired by the notebook he’d purchased at her Mercantile, and she told him that she’d like a movie of the Community’s Centennial Celebration.

In the meantime, Dorrah and Gordon had shot video of the Gold Rush Bandits robbing the Sumpter Valley Railroad.

The Gold Rush Bandits were also booked at the Dayville Centennial Celebration, so Dorrah and Gordon got footage of them robbing the Dayville Mercantile.

Dorrah explained, “While we were there, we got to talking to the Gold Rush Bandits, and they were the ones who asked us if we’d heard about the McCarty’s. We said ‘no’



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Dennis Dorrah and Stefannie Gordon of Huckleberry Productions.

and they said we should read up on them.”

After several visits with the Gold Rush Bandits and them talking about the McCarty gang, Glen Edmondson brought Dorrah a book to read about the McCartys—and, “We were hooked,” Dorrah said.

He smiled. That was the beginning of this venture.

Dorrah said, “Tom McCarty was absolutely amazing. The nerve. The gall. He was something else.”

One of Tom McCarty’s sidekicks was Matt Warner.

A book was written by Murray E. King based on stories told to him by Warner titled *The Last of the Bandit Riders*.

According to Dorrah a copy of that book is available in the Baker County Public Library—and of course he highly recommends the read.

According to Dorrah, Tom McCarty was a mentor to Butch Cassidy, teaching him the ropes.

The McCarty gang was a highly active gang that robbed trains, banks and casinos throughout the Northwest.

Dorrah said it is estimated that they stole, during the course of their reign, over what would be two million dollars in today’s economy.

He said that very little was publicized about the McCarty gang because they were in a sense “Robin Hoods” often giving some of what they stole to families in need to get them through tough times. Therefore when authorities contacted people looking for the “criminals,” they were met with an unwillingness to help with their capture.

Dorrah also said that the McCartys were smart and had horses that were very fast.

Tom McCarty had travelled to Kentucky to purchase very expensive thoroughbred horses unlike any other horse in the area. These horses aided in the ability to outrun the law and in essence get away with so many heists. It was documented that when pulling a heist, the wives would wait away from the heist location with additional horses and a change of clothes for the men aiding in the ability to escape capture.

Dorrah speculates the McCarty gang while probably more successful than other outlaws, were not as infamous as others from the era like Jesse James or the Younger Brothers because they were not violent and operated fairly low key.

One of the McCarty brothers owned a 600-acre

ranch near Halfway that was often used as a hideout and served as a place to keep stolen cattle being transported elsewhere to be sold.

The area in which the ranch was located is still today known as McCarty Bridge Road.

Dorrah is expecting to complete this documentary in the fall of 2016.

He is shooting indoor scenes during the winter months, and will get the outdoor scenes in nicer weather.

He did say, “Sometimes we find a building that will work great for an outside shot but it is in shambles inside or vice versa.”

That is a challenge he is taking in stride and just hopes that in the finished product it will be seamless and no one will be able to notice if the inside and outside building don’t match exactly.

He is getting help from students studying art-related fields in photography and cinematography at Eastern Oregon University.

Dorrah also says he has received grants from both Wallowa and Baker City, both areas that are being used a filming locations, in the amount of \$2,500 each to aide in his filmmaking efforts and while the EOU students currently are only volunteers. He hopes that somewhere along the lines of this process more money will become available to compensate those volunteering.

For those wishing to learn more about the rise and fall of the McCarty gang and their ties to our community and surrounding areas, Huckleberry Productions’ documentary should be available sometime in late 2016.

The story is worth waiting for.

Wonderful Food and Good Spirits
7 a - 10 p Daily



HOLIDAY HIGH TEA	CHRISTMAS DINNER	NEW YEAR'S EVE DINNER
Make memories over a 3-course luncheon. December 12 & 19, 2 p	Incredible food served next to the two-stories-tall sparkling tree. 1-8 p	Elegant & romantic; lobster special. Champagne toast at midnight!

GEISER GRAND HOTEL

Standing proudly on Main St. in Baker City since 1889
GeiserGrand.com
Facebook.com/GeiserGrand
• Reservations please •
541.523.1889

Books make great Christmas gifts!



A Kindled Winter
by Rachel L. Demeter
Fate takes an unexpected turn when Jeseca is left stranded in the mountains' vast, untamed wilderness in the arms of a mysterious stranger.



Dev's Christmas
by Keith Salisbury
When Devlin Walker decides to make some Christmas magic for his friend Nadine and her little girl, he winds up receiving something magical himself: a kind family Christmas.

Go to Amazon.com or your local bookstore

NORTHWEST SHOW
12PM - 3PM



KLBM 1450
KBKR 1490



THE LARS LARSON SHOW

