

PART 4 OF A MULTI-PART SERIES ABOUT THE MCCARTY GANG BY BAKER CITY HISTORIAN GARY DIELMAN

Many years ago I heard about what seemed to me a mythical "McCarty Gang" of outlaws that had a "hideout" east of Haines. Recently I found out the McCarty Gang is no myth. I was enlightened by reading "In Pursuit of the McCartys," 2001, 340 pages, including 121 photos and six maps, written by Jon and Donna Skoulin. Reading their book did not happen by chance.

The Skoulins, who lived in Cove, began researching their book about the McCarty family in the early 1970s and finally published it in 2001. Then in 2011 the Skoulins contacted me as curator of the Baker County Library's historic archives. They offered to donate to the library several boxes of research materials, which detail their 30-year



Dielman

journey, including traveling all over the West, as they "pursued" the McCartys. The result, according to history book reviewers, is the very best book about the McCarty Gang. Sadly, the Skoulins both died in the past five years, Jon in 2013 and Donna in 2015. This series of episodes (there likely will be eight, published on Fridays; previous articles were in the

Nov. 23 and 30, and Dec. 7 issues) about the McCarty Gang summarizes the gang's activities beginning in the late 1880s and is based almost completely on information in the Skoulin book. Not to leave any stone unturned in writing this series, I have recently looked at all of the Skoulin research material. If this series piques your interest, I highly recommend you read "In Pursuit of the

McCartys." The book is out of print but available at the Baker County Library and may be found for purchase on the internet. Read the book to discover interesting details about the McCartys in the Northwest and for the McCarty family origins and outlaw activities in several other states, especially in Utah and Colorado, before 1885.

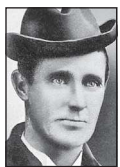
— Gary Dielman

Baker County's Outlaw Family

Wenatchee Bank Robbery — Late spring 1892

After the robberies in Eastern Oregon, Matt and Rose went to Central Washington in early 1892. Matt had already bought ranch property near a siding of the Northern Pacific Railroad, a site that eventually became the town of Ephrata. Besides running some cattle branded 7U, Matt and Rose opened a tent restaurant to feed hungry railroad workers.

Tom went to Central Washington scouting for prospective robbery opportunities. He didn't have to look hard before deciding an easy target would be the bank in the little settlement of Wenatchee, population less than 500, located 35 miles west of Matt and Rose's 7U ranch. Wenatchee sits at the confluence of the Wenatchee and Columbia rivers and on the route of the Northern Pacific Railroad.



Tom McCarty

Tom put the word out to the rest of the gang to meet at the 7U ranch. Soon Bill, his son Fred, George, and Nellie arrived from Oregon to plan the robbery of the Wenatchee bank. Everything went as planned. Almost everything. Nellie held fresh horses several miles outside



Bill McCarty

The McCarty Family

PARENTS

Dr. Alexander G. McCarty b. 1825 in Iowa, and Mary Ann Farmer McCarty b. 1830 in Indiana. Alexander was a physician and surgeon. The parents, after dragging their family all over the Midwest and West, finally settled down for good in 1885 near Myrtle Creek, Douglas County, in the southwest corner of Oregon.

CHILDREN AND SPOUSES

John Thomas "Tom" McCarty, b. in Iowa around 1850, was the leader of the family and the eldest of the McCarty siblings; in 1873 Tom married fifteen-year-old Christina "Teenie" Marie Christiansen; their children: Lewis "Lew" William McCarty, b. 7-4-1874 and Thomas Leonard "Len" McCarty, b. 1868; Teenie's brother was Willard Erastus "Ras" Christiansen, aka Matt Warner, and aka Ras Lewis, who married Rose Morgan, whose sister was Sara Morgan; William "Bill" McCarty, b. in Iowa 1852; Bill married Lettie Maxwell in 1873; Lettie had been previously married to Alexander Brown, by whom she had a son named E.C. "Eck" Brown; Bill and Lettie had two sons: Fred b. 1871 and Pearl b. 1878. Lois McCarty b. in Indiana 1856; Lois married Hank Vaughn in 1875; they had two sons: Jake and Bert; Lois divorced Hank Vaughn, then married Joseph Rhinehart Hunsaker; they lived in Pine Valley, Oregon; their son Joseph Leonard b. 1887. George W. McCarty b. in Iowa 1862; his first marriage to Ruby Cornelison ended in divorce, one child Claude b. 1879; George and second wife, Nellie Blanchette, were married in Utah Territory 1884; Rosa McCarty, b. in 1866 in Montana Territory; Reatha McCarty, b. 1872 in Salt Lake City; Rosa and Reatha played no part in the lawlessness of their siblings.

of Wenatchee. Around 10:30 Tom, Bill, Matt, George, and Fred rode up in front of the bank in Wenatchee. The first three dismounted and entered the bank. Fred held the horses and George remained mounted in front of the bank. Inside the bank Tom, Bill, and Matt commanded everyone

to raise their hands, whereupon a portly banker began yelling loudly. Told to be quiet, the man yelled even louder. So Matt knocked him in the head with the butt of his rifle, which had the desired effect. The man ceased yelling and slumped into his chair. The banker's silence came

too late. His yelling had been heard by people outside the bank. George and Fred were soon faced with keeping a gathering crowd under control. Inside the bank Tom, Bill, and Matt quickly put all the money from the open safe and from the counter into a saddlebag. Within a few minutes the three inside men ran out the front door and mounted their horses. As the five gang members galloped down the street, they could hear shots being fired at them. They turned the first corner and headed out of town and out of range of the armed citizens.

A quickly-formed posse was soon chasing after them. The gang members, riding superb horses, had no trouble staying ahead of the posse. After meeting up with Nellie several miles out of town, the robbers, mounted on fresh horses, easily stayed just out of range of the posse's rifles. Toward evening the posse, riding tuckered-out horses, gave up the chase and returned to Wenatchee. The identity of the robbers was not known until much later.

Roslyn Bank Robbery — Sept. 25, 1892
Around 1 p.m. on Sept. 25,



George McCarty



Matt Wamer

1892, five cowboys rode up in front of the Ben E. Snipes & Co. Bank in the little town of Roslyn, Washington, about 50 miles northwest of Yakima. Three of the riders dismounted (probably Bill, Fred, and Matt), gave their reins to the other two (probably Tom and George), and entered the bank. They immediately drew their revolvers and announced the stickup. One of the robbers proceeded to jump into the cage area and began loading loot into a bag.

Outside people began to sense that something was going on at the bank. A crowd began to assemble. The third man inside the bank went out to make sure the two gang members in front of the bank could handle the situation. Citizens alerted the town marshal, who, quickly assessing the situation, shot at the two horsemen, who returned fire. Other men, who came running with their guns, were fired on by the robbers on horseback, wounding two of them. Upon hearing the gunshots, the three men inside the bank rushed out, jumped on their horses, and all five raced out of town as fast as they could. A posse was assembled and headed out of town on their trail. After meeting up with Nellie and jumping on fresh horses, the fleeing robbers increased their lead on the posse, which gave up the chase as night fell.

The McCarty Gang had made off with about \$5,000 (valued today at \$170,000). After riding about 50 miles they reached the Columbia River, where they found an old rowboat but no oars. They found planks of wood to use as oars, which made rowing across the Columbia very slow. During an all-night operation requiring many trips back and forth, they managed to get men, Nellie, and horses to the other side of

the river. As was their usual escape routine, they split up. George, Nellie, and Fred went north, Matt returned to his 7U ranch, and Tom and Bill headed south to Bill's ranch in Oregon.

A month after the robbery the gang learned that three men from the Pendleton area had been arrested based on eyewitness identifications. The McCartys celebrated, thinking they were free of any suspicion of having committed the robbery of the Roslyn bank.

Several months later the State's case against the Pendleton defendants was falling apart. The trial of the first defendant ended in a conviction. But he appealed when new evidence came to light. A second defendant's trial ended in a hung jury. By the end of February 1893, charges were dropped against all three Pendleton men. Any relief the McCarty Gang experienced upon learning of the charges against the Pendleton men was about to end.

Bill's outlaw life, and that of most of his siblings, did not come to the attention of Baker County authorities until early April 1893. That's



Nellie McCarty

when Baker County Sheriff Porter Conde received warrants for McCarty brothers Tom, Bill and George, plus their brother-in-law

Ras Christiansen, aka Matt Warner. All four were suspected of the Sept. 25, 1892, bank robbery in Roslyn. If authorities had known that Nellie Blanchette McCarty, George's second wife, held fresh horses for the robbers several miles out of Roslyn, there would have been a warrant for her also. Months went by before authorities connected the McCarty Gang to the robbery.

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