

PART 6 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 Skovlin. Reading their book did not happen by chance.

The Skovlins, 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 Skovlins 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 Skovlins 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, Dec. 7, 14 and 21 issues) about the McCarty Gang summarizes the gang’s activities beginning in the late 1880s and is based almost completely on information in the Skovlin book. Not to leave any stone unturned in writing this series, I have recently looked at all of the Skovlin 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

George and Matt were held for trial in the Kittitas County Jail in Ellensburg, Washington. Meanwhile Bill and Tom, who successfully avoided arrest, fled to their old stomping ground in Eastern Utah. Although some speculate that before heading south they detoured to Ellensburg to help George and Matt escape from jail. Someone, possibly Bill and Tom, managed to smuggle a crowbar to George and Matt. With it they knocked a hole in the bricks big enough to slip through. Once outside the jail they located two revolvers hidden by their accomplice(s) under the jail’s boardwalk. The escape was discovered immediately, gunshots were exchanged, and one of the citizens was wounded. Soon Matt and George were back in jail suffering from buckshot wounds of their own.



George McCarty



Matt Warner

At the end of May 1893, Matt and George had separate trials, one right after the other. On the stand George testified that he was prospecting with his wife at the time of the robbery. A newspaper report noted, “Nellie, his wife, and by the way a woman of fine appearance, sat by her husband all through the trial and when called to the witness stand, corroborated his testimony.” Each trial ended in a hung jury. However, George and Matt were not released from jail. Rather both men were held for retrial. On September 6 the retrials were supposed to take place, but to the defendants’ delight, the cases against them were dismissed, because witnesses were not available. They still faced



Nellie 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.

criminal charges against them for breaking out of jail and wounding a man. Surprisingly the judge also dismissed those cases, this time for lack of evidence. How the judge came to that conclusion is not known. Finally — miraculously — Matt and George were again free men and Nellie was never charged with a crime. It was a sad day for justice in Kittitas County but a joyous day for Matt and George. The McCarty Gang was done with committing crimes in the Northwest. George, Matt, and Nellie paid no penalty under the law. Tom, Bill, and Fred had fled to their old stomping grounds in the La Sal area of Eastern Utah, where they planned another bank robbery to obtain funds for the defense of George and Matt in Washington. They were unaware that, as of Sept. 6, the rest of the McCarty Gang no longer faced

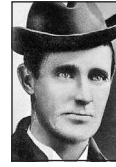
prosecution for the Roslyn bank robbery. The robbery that Tom, Matt, and Fred were planning would be their last, and fateful, robbery. **Delta Bank Robbery — Sept. 7, 1893**  
Delta, Colorado, was a small town less than 30 miles southeast of Grand Junction, Colorado, and about 50 miles as the crow flies from La Sal, Utah. The Farmers and Merchants Bank building, located on the town’s two-block Main Street, was a very unassuming narrow wood-frame structure that also dealt in second-hand merchandise. It must have looked like easy pickings to three experienced bank robbers. At mid-morning Tom, Bill, and Fred rode to the back of the bank, where Bill and Fred dismounted and walked to the front of the building. Tom stayed mounted holding the reins of their horses.

Peering through the front windows, which displayed used items for sale, Bill and Fred could see two customers at the counter. As soon as both customers had left, Bill and Fred entered, drew their revolvers, and ordered the only two employees on duty, cashier Trew Blachly and assistant cashier Harry Wolbert to stick up their hands. Wolbert complied. Fred jumped onto the counter in time to see Blachly reaching for a revolver under the counter. Instinctively Fred fired at Blachly missing him completely, then immediately fired again. The second bullet hit Blachly in the head, killing him instantly.

Fred jumped behind the counter, stepped around Blachly’s body, and grabbed a sack of gold coins from the open safe, plus some currency. Then Fred and Bill left out the bank’s back door, mounted their horses, and with Tom in the lead raced down the alley behind the bank. In mounting his horse, the sack of gold coins slipped from Fred’s hand, but in his panic to get out of town he did not stop to retrieve it. The two gunshots alerted the town that the bank was being robbed. Young Ray Simpson was working in Simpson’s Hardware Store, owned by his father, located across the street from the bank. Hearing Blachly cry out and then two gunshots, Simpson grabbed his .44-70 caliber single-shot Sharps rifle and ran to the corner of Main and Third streets in time to see the robbers fleeing down the alley with Tom in the lead, followed by Fred, then Bill. Before Bill could disappear across the intersection of the alley and Third Street, Simpson drew a bead on him and fired. The shot hit Bill in the



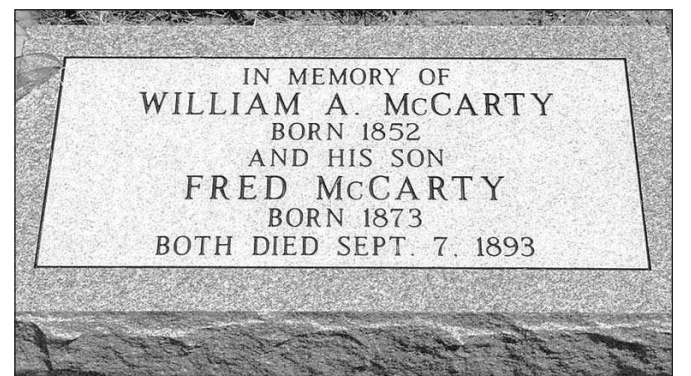
Bill McCarty



Tom McCarty



Submitted photo  
Bill McCarty, left, and his son, Fred, were killed after robbing a bank in Delta, Colorado, on Sept. 7, 1893.



Submitted photo  
The grave of Bill and Fred McCarty.

back of his head. He dropped from his galloping horse and was probably dead before he hit the ground. Simpson ran to the alley where he could see that Fred had stopped a block away to look back for his father. It was just enough time for Simpson to load another bullet into his rifle and fire. His bullet hit Fred in the side of the head knocking him from his horse. Simpson, anticipating that Tom would turn left out of the alley toward Main Street, ran back to Main, where he spotted Tom racing down the street as fast as his horse would carry him. Simpson fired and reloaded several times. The bullets went whizzing by Tom but none hit its mark. Tom rapidly receded in the distance. The local sheriff organized a posse to pursue Tom. But Tom had too much of a lead and the posse never made contact. Contemporary accounts of the Delta bank robbery do not mention the likelihood that there was a fourth person who participated by hold-

ing relay horses several miles outside of Delta. That was perhaps the most important step in Tom McCarty’s escape plans in other robberies. George McCarty and Matt Warner could not have participated, since they had just been released from jail in Washington the day before the Delta robbery. Nellie McCarty, who usually filled the roll of minding the relay horses, was also still in Washington. Whether there was a fourth person and how it might have been is still not known.

## Rogue wolf pack kills seventh cow

MEDFORD (AP) — Authorities say gray wolf OR-7s Rogue Pack has killed another cow at a northeastern Jackson County ranch, marking the seventh confirmed livestock kill attributed to the pack since late October. The Mail Tribune reports that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reports that the dead and partially consumed cow was found Sunday on a ranch in the Boundary Butte area where the Rogue Pack has killed before, but a report did not identify the ranch.

The Boundary Butte area is in the vicinity of rancher Ted Birdseye, who has lost at least four cows and a guard dog that were confirmed as wolf kills in the Rogue Pack’s home range so far in 2018. In Sunday’s case, a livestock producer discovered one of his 8-month-old, 550-pound calves dead in private-land grass pasture that morning, and an ODFW biologist estimated it had been dead anywhere from 12 to 48 hours, according to an ODFW report. Extensive feeding was discovered on

the hindquarters and internal organs, but the carcass and hide were largely intact, the report states. Tooth scrapes and bite marks were found on the hind legs and multiple deep bites on the neck, the report states. Along with other evidence, the biologist concluded the wounds and muscle trauma “are clear signs of predator attack and the size, number and location of the bite injuries are similar to injuries observed in calves attacked by wolves,” the report states.



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