

PART 7 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 journey,



Dielman

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,

21 and 28 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

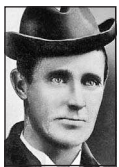
The bodies of Bill and Fred McCarty were buried in a single casket and grave in potter’s field in the Delta, Colorado, cemetery, an undignified burial that showed the town’s disdain for the men who attempted to rob their bank and killed cashier Blachly, a husband and father of eight children.



Bill McCarty

The identities of the killers were not immediately known, although there was speculation that they were part of the McCarty Gang. On the day after the robbery the Denver Times ran a front-page story about the robbery and killing of Blachly. The newspaper reported that Baker County Sheriff Porter Conde, upon reading a news story about the Delta robbery, wired Denver ex-Chief of Police Farley, that members of the McCarty Gang were in the area.

Before burial, the bodies of Bill and Fred were propped upright and photographed. One could see that Fred was obviously the younger and 5 feet, 5 inches tall. The other body looked to be that of a man perhaps 40 years old, 5-foot-7 and about 178 pounds. Persons who knew Tom and Bill had by then arrived in Delta, including Sheriff Conde, who Bill and Tom had made a fool of when he tried singlehandedly to arrest them in Baker County. Conde and one of Tom’s relatives both misidentified Bill’s body as that of Tom. Several weeks later the mistake was cleared up, when Tom started sending menacing letters to Ray Simpson saying he’d get even with Simpson for killing his brother and nephew. The citizens of Delta honored sharpshooter Simpson as a hero.



Tom McCarty

For many years a crude sandstone marker with the engraving “McCarty Bros. 1893” stuck awkwardly out of the ground at the grave of father and son, misidentifying them as brothers. In 2001 a very dignified flat marble stone was set at their grave site with this inscription: “In Memory of William A. McCarty Born 1852 and His Son Fred McCarty Born 1873, Both Died Sept. 7, 1893.”

McCarty Gang parents

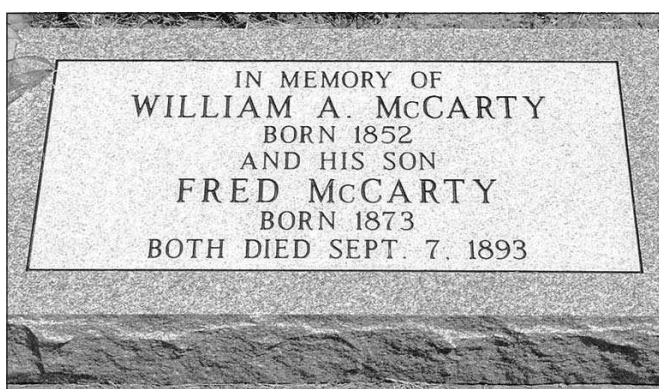
The McCarty Family

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.



Submitted photo

The grave of Bill and Fred McCarty was placed in 2001 at the cemetery in Delta, Colorado.

Dr. Alexander G. McCarty died in 1894 and Mary Ann McCarty in 1913. They are buried beside each other in Myrtle Creek, Oregon.

In 1904 Bill’s wife, Lettie, sold the 600-acre ranch on Powder River. She lived in their two-story house in Baker City, which was on the north side of Madison Street two lots in from Fourth Street, just north across from future site of St. Elizabeth Hospital (today’s St. Elizabeth Towers condominiums).

Lettie’s sons, Pearl and Eck, were also living in Baker City. Eck had married Fannie Anderson of Moab, Utah, where their son, Cornelius, was born in 1897. Pearl married Della Chapman of Baker City. In 1917 Lettie moved to Lovelock,

Nevada, where she lived with Eck and Pearl. She died in 1929. Nothing further is known of her sons or their spouses.

George and Nellie McCarty settled across Snake River from Homestead, Oregon, where George could follow his passion for prospecting for gold. In 1895 George discovered a vein of gold on Flagstaff Hill six miles northeast of Baker City. He and three other prospectors sold their interest in the Flagstaff Mine for \$51,000.

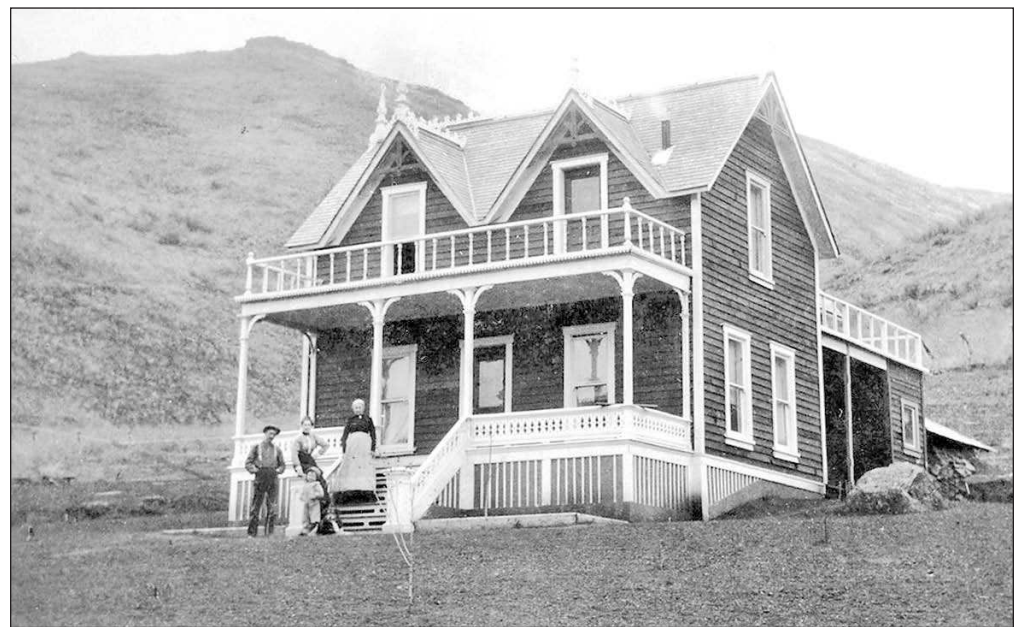
Today the top of the hill above the mine is the site of the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. Apparently George did not sell all of his mining interest in the Flagstaff Hill area. According to this



George McCarty

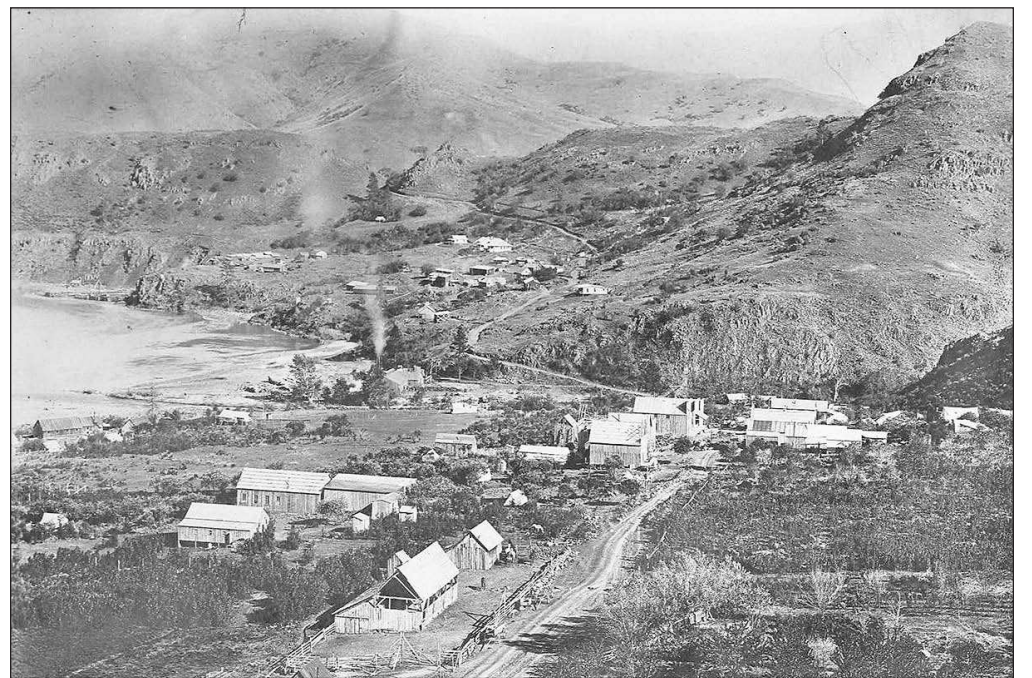


Lettie McCarty



Submitted photo

Jake Vaughn’s ranch house near the confluence of the Snake River and Pine Creek.



Submitted photo

Copperfield, Oregon, on the banks of the Snake River.

news item in the Nov. 11, 1909, edition of the Morning Democrat, “George McCarty of Homestead, part owner of the Friday Mine east of this city, is in town after doing assessment work.” The Friday Mine was located on Ruckles Creek about two miles southeast of Flagstaff Hill.

The same newspaper wrote that George was visiting in Baker City on Nov. 3, 1909. He was probably visiting his sister-in-law, Lettie. George’s wife, Nellie, died in Halfway in 1937, and George in 1948. They are buried beside each other in the Pine Haven Cemetery at Halfway.

Lois married Hank Vaughn in 1875. They had two sons, Jake and Bert. After divorcing Hank Vaughn, Lois married Pap Hunsaker. Son Joseph was a product of that marriage. Also living with them was Hunsaker’s son, William, by a previous marriage. They lived on Pap Hunsaker’s ranch in Pine Valley. Lois died in 1896.

That’s the same year Jake and Bert discovered a copper

ledge, which they named Iron Dyke Mine, since they were actually looking for iron. They sold it in 1897 for \$40,000. Bert bought with his share a ranch on the edge of Halfway, mining interests in Cornucopia, and he had a saloon in Homestead.

With his share Jake bought ranch land he called The Copperfield located at the confluence of Snake River and Pine Creek below the Oxbow of Snake River. In the spring of 1907, anticipating the influx of workers to the Oxbow area due to construction of two tunnels through the Oxbow, one for power generation and the other for a railroad, Jake Vaughn sold his 160-acre farm to James Harvey Graham, a Baker City realtor, who then platted the land for the town called Copperfield. Graham soon sold out to Baker City bankers John Schmitz and William Pollman, the then current

mayor of Baker City.

In 1896, Matt Warner was involved in a shooting near Vernal, Utah. Two men died. He was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to five years in prison.

In January 1900 Matt was released for good behavior after serving only three years. For a while he ran a saloon in Green River, Utah. Matt’s wife, Rose Morgan McCarty, whom he married in Utah when she was 14, gave birth to a child and died while Matt was in prison. The child was given up for adoption.

In 1902 Matt married Elma Zufelt and they had five children. After release from prison, Matt had vowed to leave his outlaw life behind. Proof that he kept that vow is the fact that he worked as a city marshal, deputy sheriff, and justice of the peace in Price, Utah, where Matt and Elma lived beginning in 1915.

In 1937 a writer named Charles Kelly helped Matt write his memoirs, which were published serially in January 1938. Matt died later that year.



Matt Warner

