

'DIRTY COWARD' WHO SHOT JESSE JAMES LAID LOW

(Continued from page one)

to take her note. Just a loan between friends, he explained, but cautioned her to be sure and secure the deed before she paid over the money.

Riding down the road he concealed himself in some woods where he could see the hard-headed blood sucker pass on his way to the widow's house where, much to his surprise and chagrin the money was ready for him. Waiting patiently until the fellow had received his \$800 and was on his road back, Jesse met him, relieved him of the cash and whatever more he had, and went on about his business. Deeds like this served to make him in the hearts of thousands who otherwise would have regarded him as a public enemy.

Some time before his death he had apparently vanished and only a very few of his most intimate friends knew that he was living quietly under the name of Captain Howard with his wife and child in a secluded spot where he would not be liable to be molested. Bob and Charlie Ford were living with him as members of his family and were daily recipients of his hospitality and kindness, in spite of which they were simply waiting their opportunity to kill him and reap the reward. Being deathly afraid of his ability with shooting irons, they dared not tackle him even two against one in a gun fight, so waited until they could catch him unarmed. Then one day the chance came. Jesse laid his belt and guns aside and, mounting a step-ladder, proceeded to hang a picture on the wall. Trembling with fright, these two assassins fired bullet after bullet into his back as he stood on the ladder too far from his guns to reach them.

Some months later, smarting beneath the outspoken contempt of the whole country, Charlie killed himself. Bob came west, where he managed to find a few friends of his own ilk, though thoroughly despised by the country at large.

I was talking to Mary Pease, the proprietor of a dance hall in Trinidad, Colorado, one afternoon, when a rather pretty girl came in and borrowed a dollar from Mary, saying that Bob was going uptown for awhile. Mary asked me if I had

ever met Bob Ford and I said I had not. She said, "This is Bob's girl," and introduced me. Then she said, "Annie, tell Bob to come in a minute before he goes, will you?" So in a little while Bob came in and I was introduced to him. The minute I grasped his hand I knew he was a dope fiend. His hand shook like he had the palsey.

Next time I saw him, about a dozen of us had come to Trinidad some weeks later and were dancing and drinking in the dance hall, when Bob happened to come in. Those days there was a long song about the death of Jesse James going the rounds and every little while a reference was made to "that dirty little coward, who shot Captain Howard, and laid Jesse James in his grave." And the utmost contempt was laid on the words, "dirty little coward," as it was sung. Seeing Bob enter, we all in unison began singing this song. Bob took several quick steps, grabbed his forty-five and pulled it around in front with a threatening gesture and three or four of his cronies grabbed him and led him out, begging him not to start anything. Pretty soon they came back in and said to us, "You fellows had a close call that time." "What do you mean we had a close call?" we asked them. "Why," they said, "that was Bob Ford, the fellow who killed Jesse James, and he was pretty mad."

We said, "Don't we know it? Just tell Bob Ford for us he can go straight to hell. Tell him if he don't like our style, to turn his wolf loose any time he wants." "All of us also had belts and guns on and we watched the door for awhile to see if Bob would come back in, but that was all there was to it. Just a big bluff by a guy who had a yellow streak on his back.

Though Jesse James, in his life, had perpetrated numberless crimes against the law, Bob Ford's method of bumping him off by shooting him in the back failed signally of making a hit with westerners, and they lost no chance to let him know they disapproved of him.

From Trinidad, Bob went to Las Vegas, where he opened a saloon, and it was there I ran into him a second time. It appears that the bank in Las Vegas was situated directly across the street from Bob's saloon. One day the bank people became aware there was some tunneling being done under their building. Quietly making an investigation, they discovered that a tunnel had been driven from the basement of Bob's place to a point beneath the bank. Raising a posse, they descended into Bob's cellar and surrounded the mouth of the opening. After some time a man came running out and tried to escape, paying no attention to their efforts to halt him. So several of them shot at him and he fell dead. Bob swore by everything good and holy that he knew nothing of what had been going on, but as the tunnel had been started from his basement, it caused so much suspicion to fasten on him that he was given 24 hours to leave town. I arrived in Las Vegas the very day that Bob left.

From there Bob went to Denver, Colorado. Strutting into the swell Windsor hotel with his big cowboy hat on the back of his head, he wheeled the registration book around and wrote BOB FORD in large letters all over the page. The clerk was watching him curiously and immediately spun the book back to see what had been written. As soon as he saw the name Bob Ford he called a couple of the hotel attaches and said, "Throw that son of a—out in the street. We don't need his trade."

When Creede, Colo., was established, Bob went there and started in the saloon business, with a dance hall attachment. And it was reported he was making a lot of money. It so happened I was living only eight miles from Creede when Bob was killed. A fellow named Kelly walked into the dance hall with a shotgun and called to Bob, "Lookout, Bob, I'm going to shoot," and discharged a load of buckshot into him at close range. Bob died instantly. Kelly was tried and sentenced to a long term in the pen, but was pardoned out in a couple of years and I have never heard of him since. And that was the end of "the dirty little coward, who shot Captain Howard, and laid Jesse James in his grave."

N. C. Creede, after whom the town of Creede, Colo., was named and where Bob Ford ended his career, was a man very similar to myself in many ways. He was about my size, build and age and,

like me, had prospected in every new mining camp in the Rocky mountains, as well as in some other places. As a seeker for hidden riches he knew his stuff all right and had made several discoveries of value, though none that had caused him to be enrolled with the top-notchers of mining fame up to that time. It was he who had found and opened up the apparently rich ground at Bonanza, from which he received a few thousand dollars before it petered out. Prowling around on the upper Rio Grande river and its tributaries, he ran onto two Swedes running a tunnel on a ledge of amethyst spar, a formation closely resembling quartz, and often mistaken for such by new beginners. These Swedes had not the slightest idea of what they were trying to do; were simply digging because they thought the stuff was pretty, as indeed it is, much of it being of a rich purple color which, when flawless, is used extensively for ring settings and other jewelry ornaments. They were totally ignorant of the fact that the spar in which they were mining might be rich in silver, which in those days commanded a good price on the market. But N. C. Creede realized the possibilities in a glance, even though this section had previously been examined by government geologists, who had given it as their opinion that the general formation of the rocks there was not favorable for the existence of valuable ores of any kind.

Right there he made the Swedes stop work and define their claim limits, after which he located the ground both ahead of them and behind, and took a string of claims on each side. Eventually in the operations that ensued, the claim of the Swedes was purchased and added to the group, thus presenting a considerable area in one compact mass, that in time proved to be the richest silver producer in the west. The first claim was named the Amethyst and when Creede saw the one next to it, he exclaimed, "Holy Moses," and it was named that. Having bit off a much larger chew than the average prospector could handle, Creede enlisted the backing of Dave Moffat, the promoter of the famous "Moffat railroad" at a later date, a man who had made his millions by backing prospectors and playing square with them, and who always was willing to take a chance on anything that looked good in the mining game. When Moffat saw what Creede had uncovered he proceeded to get busy at once.

The venture paid well from the first. Creede retained a fourth interest in the property and in a few months his dividends amounted to \$5000 per week. Later, when the mines were working at full capacity, Creede's income was in excess of \$5000 per day. In the course of time he sold out entirely and retired from work with a half million dollars, going to California with the intention of taking life easy as long as he lived. What happened there is hard to believe of a man as intelligent, practical and seasoned as he was.

In fact, I positively refused to believe it, until it had been proven to me. Someway he became enamored of a 13-year-old girl and because he could not win her, committed suicide. And that was the last of N. C. Creede, who it would seem had everything he wanted to make life agreeable.

However, that is the history of mining in the west. Nine out of every 10 men who have struck the big bonanzas have lived only a short time afterward. So apparently Creede was no exception to the rule.

"People who spend half a day saving a dime probably are placing about the correct valuation on their time," says The Jacksonville Miner. Which reminds us that Olin Miller spends a whole day every day in not even earning a dime,—Weston Leader.

\$4000 Nugget Was Largest of Southern Oregon, Says Miner

To the Editor:

In refutation of the recently published assertion that the \$1000 nugget on exhibition in Medford is the largest ever found in southern Oregon, permit me to call your attention to a lump of pure gold, weighing 17 pounds (not ounces), found at the forks of Althouse creek above Tigertown in the early fifties, and valued at over \$4000, at the commonly accepted figure of \$240 per pound for this metal in those days. This can be verified by any of surviving old-timers of Josephine county. Also a full and complete account of the finding of this small fortune can be found in the columns of the mammoth New Year's edition of the Grants Pass Courier of 1928.

In this connection, I will mention the fact that large amounts of Oregon gold, shipped to the San Francisco mint during many years, were surreptitiously credited to the California output, by the jealous native sons, thereby causing considerable complaint by Oregonians, though to no avail.

Incidentally, we are asking the editor of this paper to discover (if possible) and inform us of the exact manner in which the valuation of a \$1000 nugget is arrived at, which seems to be such a well-guarded secret that no one seems to really know precisely how it is accomplished. Are the number of ounces appraised at the old standard value of \$20.67 per ounce, or at the present selling price to local buyers of from \$27.50 to \$28 per ounce, or at the government figure of \$35 per ounce?

To be worth \$35, the gold must assay 1000 fine. As a matter of general information, will say the Applegate gold in this vicinity will run about \$65 fine and commands \$28 per ounce. Will be pleased if the answer to the aforesaid secret can be unearthed by our wide-awake editor and passed on to us through the columns of The Miner.

J. C. REYNOLDS, Applegate, Oregon.

having been in there that year, and it was then late August. Fishing at the outlet was fine, and we soon had several of the coming meals. Next morning, while we were eating fish with one hand and fighting off tallow birds with the other, a bear came down to the fringe of the timber to see what it was all about. Our saddle ponies had been hobbled and turned loose down the meadow. The horses smelled bear and were gone like a flash, running in the hobbles as if they weren't there, and soon disappeared in the direction of our camp. There was nothing to do but finish eating, for it looked like a long, long trail a-winding down the line. Very luckily for us, the ponies ran right into the ranger coming up the trail and he caught them for us. He was looking for a horsethief who had very, very recently stolen his best saddle-horse. It just happened that a few days before we came up a mighty tough-looking fellow had run into us, riding a good bay horse and leading a sorry-looking Indian pony with a pack. He had been rather insistent that we trade horses as we also happened to be on some real top ponies. Later on, in coming back to town, we learned that the fellow had been caught the other side of Ashland and was convicted of the theft. A few days later we started back for camp, going by way of the Pomous desert and down through the park.

The desert was then untouched by auto—just a narrow bridle trail down the middle. It just had to be Ben Sheldon who took the first auto across that desert; someone probably told him it couldn't be done. We passed through government camp during the night and made a dry camp a bit beyond. Next morning, in passing through Anna Springs, we were stopped by the ranger, to discover that we had no permits to bring firearms into the park. Nothing to do but to go back and talk to the superintendent. This was our first meeting with one of the very finest men we have ever known, Alex Sparrow.

We have known a great many men: good, bad and indifferent, during our more or less worthless life, but Alex will always stand out in our memory as a most magnificent man among men. That we knew him and enjoyed his warm friendship will always be to us a great joy. Alex allowed us to go on without giving up our Winchester and we made it back to camp that night.

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By XIT

The forest service has, within the last year, opened up to the people of southern Oregon some of the finest hunting and fishing country to be found anywhere on the coast. The new road, now in the final stages of construction which leads from the Crater Lake highway and heads for Diamond lake, will be a very beautiful piece of work, with long, broad stretches, gentle curves and grades. It follows the river mostly, coming out in the old Beaver dam meadows near the lake. The present cutoff road from the highway isn't at all bad, but no comparison to the new one. It was only about a dozen years ago that the writer and a friend were camped at Crater Lake, riding herd on a bunch of cattle. Never having seen Diamond lake, one morning we threw some blankets and grub on a pack pony and started off up the old John Day military road. To those who now drive this same road in safety, comfort and speed, that old road would certainly seem like a nightmare. Impossible for even wagons; thick disused, overgrown with thick brush, and with down timber across it, rocky and badly cut by heavy rains. Reached the lake that night, after fighting our way through a lot of slickleaf that the previous snows had beaten down.

There were at that time just two buildings at the lake, a rangers' cabin at the south end, and a sort of fish hatchery at the outlet. There were no signs of anyone



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