February Saddlebag Newsletter

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

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Welcome to the *Saddlebag* Newsletter. Here is the latest information from WWHA. Previously posted Saddlebag newsletters will be found by date further down this section in the list of available newsletters. All earlier information will be retained for reference.

If you have Wild West news, please contact the editor at the e-mail address shown at the top of the *Saddlebag* page. We reserve the right to include or not include any materials submitted to us.

Visit us on Facebook, Instagram and our YouTube page https://www.youtube.com/@WildWestHistoryAssociation/videos please like and subscribe, then you will receive notification when one of our videos is released.

We have lost a valued friend of WWHA, longtime friend and New Mexico/ Billy the Kid researcher, Drew Gomber.

Drew passed away on December 15, 2023 in Lincoln, New Mexico.

Drew Gomber (Andrew Joseph Gomber)

Born: 5/18/1951, Waldwick, New Jersey, U.S.A.

Died: 1/15/2024, Lincoln, New Mexico, U.S.A.

Drew received the WWHA “Special Award” for Outstanding Contributions to Wild West History at our Roundup in 2015.

Below is a remembrance from Kurt House.

Drew was an unusual guy, a great historian with fantastic historical recall and knowledgeable about so many facets of Old West history, the Lincoln County War and Billy the Kid being his specialty. Many of us were benefactors of this knowledge which he freely imparted and I always found him helpful whenever I called about any project. Although I had known Drew for years, the first of these was in 2004 when we did the Gunfighter Exhibit at the Buckhorn Saloon under the inspiration and guidance of Director Dave George, also a WWHA member and we wanted to do justice for the Billy the Kid section. At the time, Drew was also planning an exhibit at the Hubbard Museum in Ruidoso where he was a Director, if my memory is correct. What could have been a competitive unreceptive relationship blossomed into a mutually beneficial relationship which only improved through the years during our meetings at various historical venues and we became good friends. Often featured on the History or Discovery Channel programs as a "talking head", Drew never failed to teach, and many of us learned from him in a pleasurable way as he made the study of history fun. Adios Amigo, we appreciate you and your health sacrifice in Viet Nam for us too as an honorable veteran. Kurt House

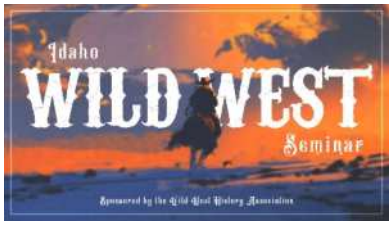
The WWHA wishes to acknowledge a generous grant provided by the William I. Koch Foundation to develop our video and media program. The $10,000 grant which was presented in December, 2023 will enable the Video/Media to continue in the documentation and preservation through video, of the history of the Wild West. The V/M program has now purchased one additional camera, lapel microphones and other necessary equipment in order to preserve and document history via interviews, photography of threatened sites, etc. The social media committee was struggling to maintain their goal of keeping up with competitive demands and without grants cannot maintain our standard of excellence. The grant follows several other by the Koch Foundation demonstrating support of these effective programs. In some cases, these are rare opportunities because either the person interviewed or the site photographed will someday no longer be available. The WWHA video program (2022) is an important recruiting device, along with Facebook (2013) and Instagram (2023). Some of the videos have thousands of views and have thus spread the message of education,

preservation and membership. Five members of the WWHA founded Team Upson, which was the group that instigated the investigation and located the grave of Lincoln County War veteran and ghost writer of Pat Garrett's Authentic Life of Billy the Kid, Ash Upson, whom the team discovered in an unmarked grave in Uvalde, Texas, purchased by Pat Garrett. Since then, the program has documented preservation efforts of several graves, and recorded the present state of various historic sites, previously thought lost to history. We have been able to reach a wider audience with newly discovered documentation.

Time marches on, and it is the belief of the program members that some opportunities will not last and there is historical value in preserving the sites at least on film for future researchers. Be sure to visit the WWHA YouTube videos https://www.youtube.com/c/wildwesthistoryassociation/video, now over 104 with 28 more in the editing phase and plans to visit and record more sites.

Thank you again to the William I. Koch Foundation for their continued support of the Wild West History Association.

Don't forget our two upcoming regional Roundups.



The annual Idaho Wild West event will be held Saturday March 9th, 2024 at 9:00 am at the Owyhee County Museum in Murphy, Idaho the event is free. There are no restaurants in Murphy you can reserve a catered lunch on the Owyhee County Museum web page or by calling 208-495-2319.

AGENDA

9:00 – Welcome

9:10 -10:00- History of Wild West Guns- Joe Hickey

10:00-10:15- Women's Fashions of the West –Marie Clyne

10:15- Break

10:30-11:15- Idaho's Fur Trading Posts-Jerry Schaefer

11:15-11:30- Fashions –Marie Clyne

11:30-12:00 – 1880 Idaho Prison Break-Bob Sobba

12:00-1:00 –Lunch

1:00-1:15- Fashions -Marie Clyne

1:15-1:45- Butch Cassidy in Argentina – Bill Betenson

1:45-2:30- Hank Vaughn: Outlaw-Mike Youngman

2:30- Break.

2:45-3:00- Fashions- Marie Clyne

3:00- 3:45 – A Frontier Soldier's Life- Corey Clyne

Fred Dodge, Wells Fargo detective

Wells Fargo Archives

Regional Roundup

Saturday March 23, 2024

Boerne, Texas

Fred Dodge

No registration fee, no cost and box lunch included. RSVP by March 5, 2024. Viewing of the Fred Dodge exhibit anytime after the library opens at 9 a.m. Event: Box Lunch (11:30am-12:30pm) in the Patrick Heath Public Library. Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

for the Fred Dodge Exhibit (12:30pm -12:45pm) in the PHPL, Three Talks in the PHPL's Community Room (1:00pm-Frank Graves, 2:00pm-Kurt House, 3:00pm-Ron Woggon & Jean Smith), Fieldtrip to Boerne Cemetery (4:15pm-5:15pm), and then End the Evening with a tour of the local bars in Boerne (5:30pm-9pm).

After taking in the sights along the *Hill Country Mile* in Beautiful Downtown Boerne, attendees can view the Fred Dodge exhibit at the library and are invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony for the new historical exhibit at the Patrick Heath Public Library located at 451 N. Main St. The collection of family photos, letters, and documents have not been seen since they were sold by Fred Dodge Jr. in 1963 to a San Antonio collector. Recently purchased at an estate sale by Boerne resident Duke Key in 2023, the collection provides insights into the life of Captain Fred Dodge, who worked as a gambler in Tombstone during the Earp Era of the early 1880s, and later, as a fulltime detective for the Wells, Fargo Express Co. from 1890 to 1918. From 1920 until his death in 1938, Capt. Dodge and his family lived on their Kendall County Ranch outside of Boerne, where Fred Sr. reminisced on his past as a frontier gambler, lawman, and express detective. Those recollections were later edited by Carolyn Lake and published by Houghton-Mifflin in 1969. Titled *Under Cover for Wells Fargo: The Unvarnished Recollections of Fred Dodge*, the book is one of the most important sources of first-hand accounts from Tombstone's early days. Yet, the book, due to the controversy surrounding Dodge's alleged undercover status in Tombstone, has never been updated, nor has Fred Dodge's life ever been fully investigated by historians of the Wild West.

Following a box lunch, the Patrick Heath Public Library will host three presentations in the library's community room. The first talk will be given by Frank Graves on "Samuel Colt and the Evolution of Today's Revolver." Frank, past president of the Texas Gun Collectors Association will also have on exhibit examples of Colt weapons and their competitors. Kurt House, award winning Wild West History Association Board member, and also past president of the Texas Gun Collectors Association, will next narrate the story behind the "Latin Colony Settler Ernst Kapp and the Sisterdale Revolver." Kurt is currently a dealer in arms and western antiques who frequently loans parts of his extensive collection to museums for special exhibits. Finally, two other Wild West History Association members,

Ron Woggon, and Jean Smith, will present an overview of their research into the life of Fred James Dodge, which they have titled: “Detective Fred Dodge and his Wells, Fargo & Co. Shotgun.” Following their talk, Ron and Jean will take attendees to visit the memorial for Fred Dodge and his wife Jessie Dodge that was erected by local historian John Dunkin and WWHA member Doug Dukes at the Boerne Cemetery in 2008.

For questions or more information reach out to: Pam Potter
spiritwind2@hotmail.com

2024 WWHA 17th Annual Roundup, July 17-20th, Fort Smith, Arkansas, the site of Judge Parker’s court and the U.S. Marshals Museum. U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves gained fame here. The conference will be held at the Wyndham Hotel, Fort Smith City Center.

Photo by Shane MCoy U.S. Marshals Museum

Research Tip

Did you know, the view is better from the air?

To all of you researchers who may deal with lost graves and/or unmarked graves, old forts or roads/trails. There are 3 tools that will help.
1. Drone. See example below from my drone taken about 100' above grade. This section of the Griffin Cemetery, where the graves date to around the 1850s, is about 90% without headstones. The burials were recorded and mapped, but all records were lost in a fire. You will note at the bottom of the picture, in black, is a historical marker at the grave of Doc Holliday's sister's grave. If you look close, even after 170 years, most other graves can still be seen from the air.

2. Google Earth. In many areas, the more recent Google Earth photos are a much higher resolution than in the past and will show the same as with the drone, but at a lower resolution. See below the outline of the foundation of an 1813s Star Fort, which was abandoned one year after it was built in 1814 which was 209 years ago. The owner of the property had no idea it was there.

3. USGS Hillshade Maps. They are useful as all structures, trees, fences, and others are not shown. See below of the old Tombstone AZ. Racetrack.

East Texas Historical Association

ETHA 2024 Fall Conference
September 26-29 | Nacogdoches, TX

CALL FOR PAPERS

The East Texas Historical Association invites proposals for papers, sessions, roundtables, and poster sessions for its 2024 annual fall meeting to be held in Nacogdoches, Texas, from Thursday, September 26 through Saturday, September 29, 2024. The host hotel for the meeting is the historic Fredonia Hotel & Conference Center.

The program committee supports topics that cover all aspects of East Texas regional history, including, but not limited to, social, economic, political, cultural, preservation, and material culture, along with topics that address Texas history generally but are aligned to East Texas. We hope to receive sessions that are focused on a wide area of inquiry about East Texas history from teaching and curriculum, historiography, biographical, underrepresented regional communities, literature, publishing, and historical consciousness in a new century.

To see the Call for Papers and Program Proposal form go to the ETHA website for more information.

We will appreciate you sharing this with friends and colleagues and look forward to seeing you in September

For more information please visit www.easttexashistorical.org.

Yvonne Frear, Program Chair

Scott Sosebee, Executive Director

News From New Mexico

Hermit of La Cueva Festival – Feb. 24-25
Rio Grande Theatre
Las Cruces, New Mexico

The Hermit of La Cuevsa Festival will be held in the Rio Grande Theatre February 24-25, 2024. The ticket price is $12, which is good for entry into all events, both days. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online at the Rio Grande Theatre web site: www.riograndetheatre.org.

Program Schedule

Saturday, February 24, 2024

3:00 pm - SING THE LEGEND. A live musical presentation by the iconic CROW AND KARLA featuring Dan Crow, Karla Steen, and Sweet Mary Hattersley. Includes original songs about Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, Stagecoach Mary Fields, The Fountain Mystery, Deacon Jim Miller, and more.

6:00 pm - Movie, THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY (A MARAVILHA DO SÉCULO), Directed by Marcia Paraiso. Produced by Helio Levcovitz and David G. Thomas.

A documentary film about Giovanni Maria de Agostini, born in Italy in 1801, who combined two seemingly contradictory aspirations: a fervent desire to devote his whole life to “perfect solitude” and an astonishing urge to travel incessantly.

Following extensive travel in Europe, Agostini takes vows revocable only by formal dispensation from the Pope. He immediately leaves forever his “beloved Italy” for South America. Twenty-one years he spends traversing that, at the time, greatly unexplored continent, visiting Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and Chile – and so doing multiple times. Seeking change and another continent, Agostini leaves South America for Mexico, passing through Panama and Guatemala, and then Mexico for North America, passing through Cuba. In Cuba, he is hailed as an extraordinary adventurer, his photograph is taken, and he is proclaimed “The Wonder of Our Century.” After arrival in New York, he walks to Canada, where he spends almost a year, then “goes west,” eventually reaching, in the midst of the American Civil War, the Territory of New Mexico, where he meets his merciless fate, at La Cueva, in the Organ Mountains, above the Mesilla Valley.

After the Play – Agostini will appear in person and give an interview and answer questions from the audience.

Sunday, February 25, 2023
2:00 pm - Movie, THE WONDER OF THE CENTURY (A MARAVILHA DO SÉCULO), matinee performance.

After the Play – Agostini will appear in person and give an interview and answer questions from the audience.

Rio Grande Theatre
211 N Main St
Las Cruces, NM 88001
Sponsored by the Doña Ana Historical Society and The Friends of Pat Garrett