Saddlebag Newsletter
May 2025

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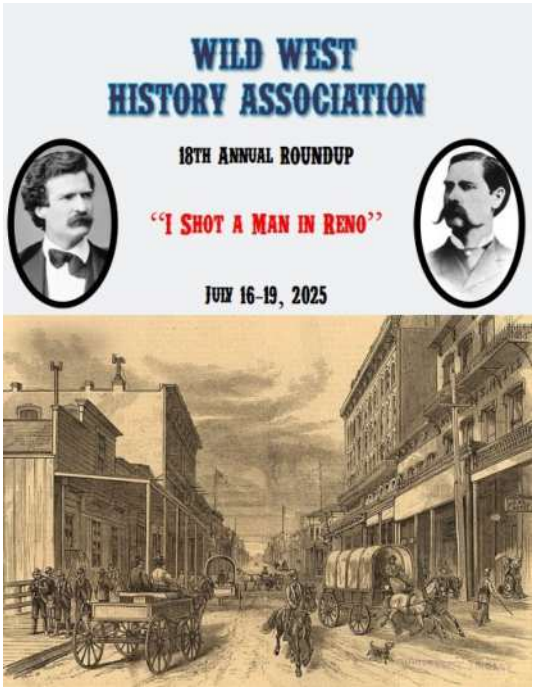
A supplement to the WWHA *Journal*
Available On-Line via www.wildwesthistory.org

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.

Our YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@WildWestHistoryAssociation/videos is now monetized so WWHA gets paid for views**. Please subscribe, watch and like our videos, and you are contributing to WWHA. It is free**



WWHA 2025 Reno Roundup. See our webpage wildwesthistory.org for schedule and details about registration and room reservations.

Some of our WWHA video team hard at work at a cemetery in Texas. David George and Kurt House, “actors”, Eddie Lanham, videographer. We release 4 videos a month.
https://www.youtube.com/@WildWestHistoryAssociation/videos

Save the Date

Let’s go. This looks like a fun event and another excuse to get together with like-minded people.

We have been given a vendors table so hopefully enough of us will attend to fill some slots. Let’s show up and support Wild West history.

Prescott's DOC HOLLIDAZE

August 15-17, 2025

ENJOY A WEEKEND CELEBRATION

WELCOME RECEPTION
WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER - FRIDAY EVENING 5 TO 6:30

FOLLOWED BY A SPEAKEASY CRAWL
SIGN UP WHEN YOU PURCHASE YOUR TICKET!

HISTORY FORUM
FEATURING EXPERT DOC HOLLIDAY
HISTORIANS, AUTHORS AND ARTISTS AND
THE WILD WEST HISTORY ASSOCIATION

INCLUDES A LIGHT BREAKFAST
HASSAYAMPA INN - SATURDAY 9 TO 12
IF YOU'D LIKE TO ATTEND JUST THE HISTORY FORUM,
YOUR TICKET IS $20 FOR THE FORUM ONLY

PRESENTATION AT SHARLOT HALL MUSEUM
INCLUDES MUSEUM ENTRANCE
SATURDAY 1:30 TO 3

GRAND VICTORIAN PARTY!
1880'S ATTIRE ENCOURAGED BUT NOT REQUIRED
REFRESHMENTS AND NO-HOST BAR
OLD WEST ENTERTAINMENT
HASSAYAMPA INN - SATURDAY 5 TO 8

NO HOST BRUNCH HASSAYAMPA INN
SUNDAY 10 TO 11:30
SIGN UP WHEN YOU PURCHASE YOUR TICKET!

$95 INCLUDES:
ALL EVENTS AND 1 RAFFLE TICKET

TICKETS AT
PRESCOTT WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER
156-C S MONTEZUMA, PRESCOTT AZ 86303
928-910-2307 - WWW.VISITWHC.ORG
VISIT OR CALL TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS!

Texas chainsaw massacre, cemetery cleanup, Kurt House, WWHA style. Grave of Captain Phil Shardein, San Antonio, Texas.

Brown Bowen Grave Cleanup, Smiley, Texas.

Professional vs Amateur Historian by Eddie Lanham

Since the word “professional” has a rather broad meaning, I consulted with Mr. Google, Mr. Webster, and several other sources. So what is the difference between the professional, academic, and amateur historians, other than professionals normally get paid?
The amateur by no means should be taken to mean lesser or inferior quality. There is a local amateur Creek Indian War historian whose work I trust more than several noted professional historians.
An amateur is someone who writes for the love of the subject. It is a terrible and foolish mistake for professional and academic historians to try and shut out amateurs from the discussion.
I always considered the term professional to mean that the individual has been trained to a certain level, work to at least a certain standard and get paid for it. A lot of people may claim that they are professionals, this does not make it true.
An amateur is, quite simply, someone who does a particular job, hobby or whatever without getting paid for it. Amateurs may be as good as or better at doing a particular job than many professionals. They may also be as well trained and they may have the “gift.”
No matter at what level, a true historian must keep an open mind and admit when he or she is wrong.

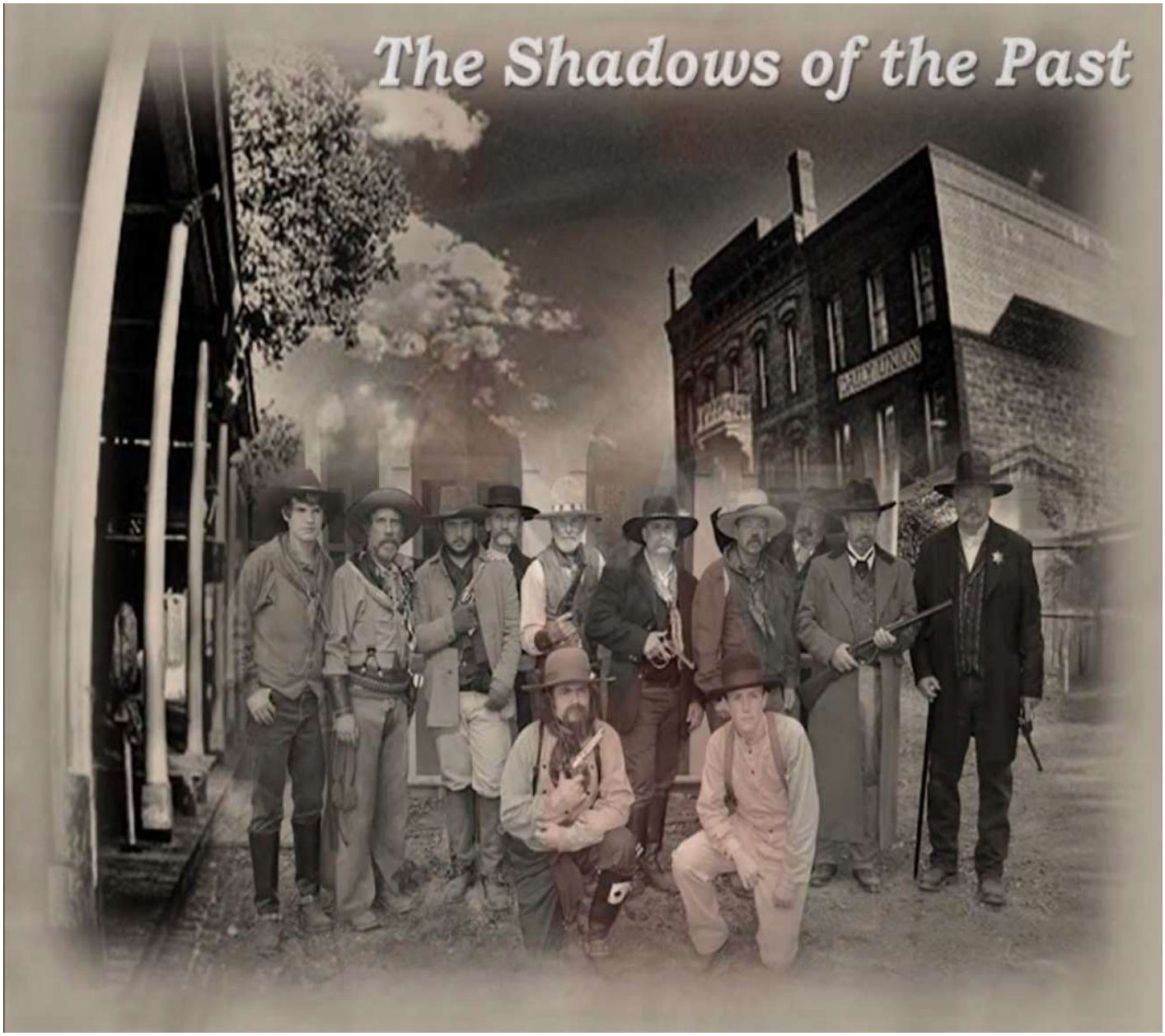
Properly prepared crow wrapped in bacon and cooked over an open fire tastes like chicken. I should know.
Another glass of whiskey may produce even more useful and entertaining labels for the various species of historians. Pardon me partner while I get a refill.

For those of you who can't get enough of Wyatt Earp, a presentation by Judi Leff of the **San Francisco Historical Association,** will soon be available. It is titled " *Wyatt Earp and Josephine Marcus Earp in San Francisco.* It will feature research by such WWHA luminaries as Casey Tefertiller, Roy Young, Roger Peterson and Peter Brand. With the help of Judi's husband, Kevin Brown, old tapes have been converted and put on the cloud. We will let you know when the full presentation is available. You can listen to them at https://tinyurl.com/Peterson-Earp-Interviews

collaboration

https://westtexasarcheologicalsociety.website/wtas-friends-and-collaborators If you go to the collaboration page of the West Texas Archeology Society you will see our logo and a link to our webpage. We need to do more of this. If you are involved in a group that promotes Western history, let's think about partnering and getting our name in more places. Thank you to Eddie Lanham for making this connection.

Can you identify the three WWHA members in this group?



Hello WWHA members,

It’s Springtime in the Rockies

The rivers are swollen from the snowpack run-off coming down the Rocky Mountains, this is such a beautiful time of year when Colorado’s peaks are covered with snow while temperatures reach 70 degrees.

Not too far off we’ll all be meeting in Nevada for our annual Roundup this July, I hope everyone is getting their registrations in soon and making their Circus-Circus Reno Hotel plans from the link below:

https://book.passkey.com/event/50821448/owner/7270/landing

I want to welcome all our new members and say Thank You.
You will find so many new cherished friends here at WWHA while sharing your common interests of the Old West. Our March Journal has turned out to be another spectacular print full of the best factual stories of those amazing Wild West events and characters we all find so interesting, enjoy.

Yours truly,

Paul Marquez

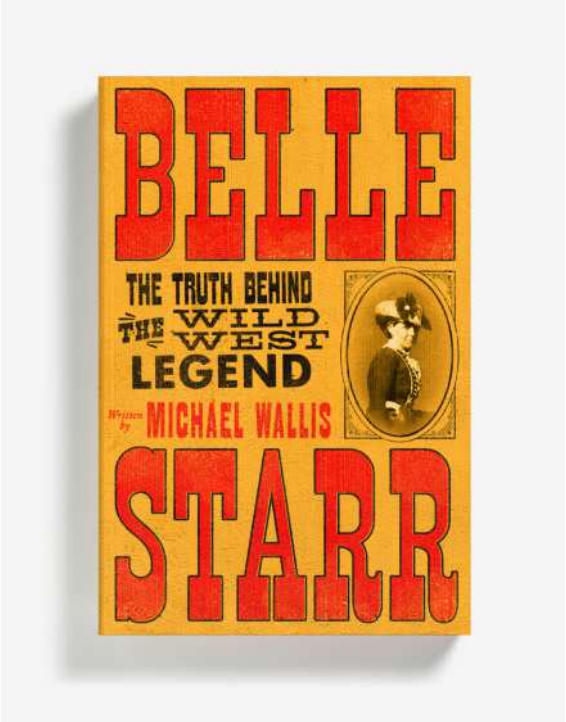
WWHA President

Belle Starr: The Truth Behind the Wild West Legend Hardcover – June 24, 2025 Launch Event

by Michael Wallis (Author)

In this definitive biography of the most infamous female American outlaw of the nineteenth century, Michael Wallis challenges a notorious legacy.

In the annals of Wild West desperadoes, Belle Starr is remembered as the Bandit Queen. Now Michael Wallis parses over a century of mythmaking to reveal the woman behind the renegade legend.



Starr was born Myra Maybelle Shirley in 1848 and was educated to be a Southern belle. Her early years were characterized by the chaotic violence of the American Civil War—she was traumatized by the death of her brother while riding with a guerilla group supporting the Confederate Army and she swore revenge against all Yankees, becoming a "friend to any brave and gallant outlaw".

Turning a redemptive eye to Belle Starr's legacy, Wallis crafts portrait of a woman demonized for refusing to accept genteel Victorian ideals, who chose to live her life outside the law, riding with a pearl-handled Colt .45 strapped to her **hip.**

If you feel some people are getting more attention than others in the Saddlebag. it is because they are the ones who send me material. Or, I have to go out and look for it. If you have anything you think would be interesting to our members, please send it to me @spiritwind2@hotmail.com. It can be activities, photos, book launches and signings, articles or announcements of upcomming events.

Don't forget to register for the **Roundup** and get your room reservations. The price goes up July 1 for registration and the deadline for room reservation is June 24. Alan Blanchette and Doc Shores (Gerald Schaefer) have been workng really hard to bring you a fantastic Roundup. Be sure and check the website for the schedule and other announcements.

Frances Abell of Tombstone

By Don Chaput & David D. de Haas, MD

[From a series of articles drawn from and supplementing their latest book, *Tombstone, Arizona Mystique*]

Wilbur and Frances Abell lived in Mesa, Arizona where he operated a thriving hardware store. Looking for a different life and place, the family moved to some land a few miles south of Benson in 1900. Wilbur put in a well and developed decent vegetable and fruit gardens, which he intended for the Bisbee market. He died shortly after his new business started, in April 1902. Mrs. Abell kept the farm, but was soon in Tombstone. She received an appointment as a notary public and became one of the most well-known women in town. Frances was an excellent stenographer and took dictation at various functions, then was appointed secretary/treasurer of the Gibson Abstract Company. Mrs. Abell also did considerable work for the First National Bank of Tombstone.

The decision of Frances Abell to enter this aspect of professional life came exactly at the time of the Tombstone "era 3" 1st mining revival (second bonanza) in the early 1900s and she was indeed busy. The local population grew considerably, there was much work involving land titles, mortgages, and other real estate developments, and her notary work and stenographic projects also flourished. In addition she was the treasurer of the First Congregational Church and was an inspector at many of the precinct elections.

Even after the mining decline following 1910, the Abell family thrived in the Tombstone environment. Her son Norman served as a deputy recorder for Cochise County, and following World War I served a term in the Arizona Legislature. The Abell's still retained the farm, and Frances did her share of the work. In September 1913 she was hospitalized for a few days after a wind storm there slammed a barbed wire gate into her left side. She died in Phoenix while enroute from California to Tombstone on November 20, 1925, and was buried in Tombstone.

Her death certificate described her as a "housewife," a very inadequate word that ignored her many successful occupations and contributions to the resurging town.[i]

[i] File on Wilbur Abell, Wills and Probate, Cochise County, Arizona State Archives. The farm accident is detailed in *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, September 21, 1913. There is a useful obituary in *Arizona Republic*, November 21, 1925.

Roundup 2025
Reno, Nevada July 16-19, 2025