Saddlebag Newsletter
July 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. We now have over 8000 subscribers.**

ROUNDUP 2025 RENO, NEVADA, JULY 16-19.

We were able to get the on-line booking deadline of June 24th extended to July 8th. Any member booking their reservation after July 8th are on their own!

During the trip to Virginia City on Friday, WWHA members will have the opportunity to visit historic buildings, saloons and various gift shops. Arrangements have been made, for those interested, to attend the Virginia City Outlaw Theatre at 1:00 pm. The Virginia City Outlaws perform a gunfight, add some comedy and demonstrate gun handling skills. They are owned by the same person who provides the gunfight scenes at Tombstone, Arizona. The show will last approx. 45 minutes. The theatre is approx. one block from the Bucket of Blood Saloon on the main street (C St.).
WWHA will have a private showing and the event will hold approx. 90 individuals. If we exceed that number, there will be another showtime at 3:00 pm. The buses are scheduled to leave shortly after 4:00 pm. Alan and I think it will add to the options during your visit in historic Virginia City.

Shipping instructions for WWHA members who want to mail packages to Circus Circus prior to their arrival to the Reno Roundup.

Silver Legacy Business Center
Guest name (First & Last)/ Convention name
407 North Virginia St.
Reno, NV 89501
(Include phone number for the guest can be contacted)

There is a $5.00 per package fee. If package is over 50 lbs., make arrangements with warehouse (775) 325-7313.

The schedule of events is on the website and the program was mailed with the June Saddlebag.

The video you have been waiting for. Many of you have seen the **John Wesley Hardin** video we made at a winter board meeting in Colorado a few years ago. It will be released on our YouTube channel on July 11. Due to several complications, we had to wait to release it publicly. This was so much fun to make.

We have recently lost a long time member, Nancy B. Samuelson, who was known for her research and writing on the Doolin and Dalton Gangs. More information will be in the September Journal.

about in

WWHA members, Eddie Lanham, Kurt House and David Carrothers working on a WWHA YouTube video the violence, gunfights and revenge killing, Karnes City and Helena, Texas.

After last year's wildly successful day celebrating Doc Holliday historic plaque unveiling, the first annual Prescott Doc HolliDaze is scheduled for August 15-17

FRIDAY NIGHT AUGUST 15:
- Opening Celebration at Western Heritage Center on Whiskey Row (free!)
- Speakeasy "pub" Crawl

SATURDAY AUGUST 16:
- History Forum in AM ("Doc"- umentary with 3 authors/experts)
Light breakfast included at 8.
Emceed by Stuart Rosebrook, executive director of Sharlot Hall Museum.
Bob Boze Bell will be presenting "Finding Doc Holliday in the Strangest Places: My Historic and Artistic Search for the Real John Henry Holliday"
Michael Paul Mihaljevich: "Empire of an Immigrant: How Hugh McCrum Courted Legend in the American West" McCrum has strong ties to the historic Palace Saloon in Prescott.
Victoria Wilcox: "Doc Holliday: Portraits of a Legend"

- Tour at Sharlot Hall Museum in the afternoon
- Holliday Reception/Party With music, contests, food & drinks - EVENING

SUNDAY MORNING:
Brunch at 1927 Salon in Hassayampa Inn. Reservation likely to be required due to limited space.
Whiskey Row History Tour with Brad Courtney for those interested, starting at the "Doc Holliday in Prescott" historical marker.
SAVE THE DATE! We are aiming to make this an annual event!
For more information contact Wendi Courtney - wendiroudybush@gmail.com
Or visit Whiskey Row History, or Prescott Western Heritage Foundation, Inc. on Facebook

WWHA table at the Santa Fe Auction the weekend of June 21, 2025.

Brian Label's Old West Auction in Santa Fe. Tim Hagaman, Paul & Catherine Marquez and Kurt House took care of our two tables which were conspicuously placed in the show to encounter all guests! The WWHA tables were a success and we had a good presence. Catherine's bubbly personality engaged potential members.

FIFTH GRADERS AND THE WILD WEST
Jean E Smith, WWHA Treasurer

Wild West History is still being taught to students across the country. Recently I had the privilege of receiving 61 letters from fifth graders from schools in Wisconsin, Maryland, Nevada, New York, and Virginia. The letters were formally handwritten to the Wild West History Association explaining that they had been reading the book *Along the Santa Fe Trail* and researching Westward Expansion in their writing and social studies classes, The students wanted to learn more about the Wild West and asked for materials and information to be sent to them. There were several questions the children asked, with many being similar in content and actually quite thought provoking. Many of them asked for maps of the west and what kind of food pioneers ate, clothes they wore, animals they saw, diseases and medicine, what kids did while traveling, Indians, what kind of wagons did they had, kinds of money they used, gold rush, journals, on and on. Then there were the questions that only could come from fifth graders:

Why did men sleep under the wagons?
Where did people bury dead pioneers?
How did they manage to carry their toys?
Would the Chinese people have tried harder to work on the railroads because the Americans are not hard workers?
Did the people take a bath while traveling to the West?
What did they do if a buffalo got sick or died?
Where did they use the bathroom?
What was the most annoying thing while traveling to the West in the 1850's?

One of the students from Joppa View Elementary in Perry Hall, MD said: "I picked you to send the questions to because after looking at your website it seems to be that this association knows a lot about the people that took the long journey to the west and what happened along the way." A compliment from a fifth grader!

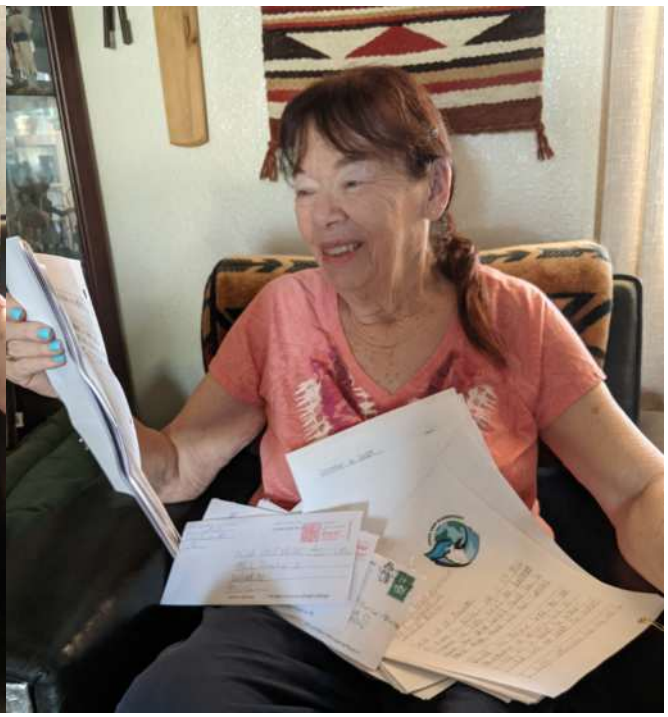
Another student from Randall Consolidated School in Burlington, WI said: "If you don't have anything to send I would still love a letter back."

All of them thanked us for our time and appreciation for reading their letter.

What a joy it was to read through these letters! How could I not answer their requests! Growing up I was always excited to get mail (and still am!), and I could imagine these students being the same. I had thought about asking the WWHA Board to help me, but I have a large library and decided I could answer their questions and send them information on my own. Most had several questions, so I decided to only answer two or three of them. It took some time, but I wrote each of them on western stationery, thanked them for their nice letter, sent them some information they asked for, and included our WWHA rack card and a WWHA sticker, as well as a thank you letter to their teacher for introducing the Wild West to them.

I had also told our WWHA Journal Editor Matt Bernstein about it, and he published one of the letters with an answer in the Letters to the Editor March 2025 Journal. Hopefully many of the readers saw it. I also mailed a journal to the student with their letter in it. Thinking I probably wouldn't hear back from any of the schools, I was surprised when in May I received an envelope from the Randall Consolidated School in Burlington, WI with

letters and pictures from the students. They especially liked the maps and stickers. One student said they didn't think anyone would respond and that it made their day better.
It was a rewarding experience, but if I get inundated with letters next school year, I may ask for some help!



Michael Wallis

Michael Wallis book signing. The launch of *Belle Starr: The truth Behind the Wild West Legend* was so special. Magic City sold all their books and are getting more this week! If you weren't there. You missed an incredible evening.

From WWHA member Brad Courtney. Wild West history on Jeopardy…or not.

On June 23 of this year, I was suddenly inundated with texts and emails and messages that the TV game show Jeopardy had as one of its answers, "Like Wyatt Earp did, you can still get a drink at the Palace Restaurant & Saloon in Prescott in this state." While I was happy for the free promo Prescott and the Palace--an establishment I dearly love--received from it, it was another terrible blow to true history. In one fell swoop, thousands and thousands of people were inadvertently lied to. Like the Bird Cage Theater in Tombstone over the years (thankfully remedied by Mike Mihaljevic), the Palace has been and still is a hotbed of made-up history. First of all, there was no saloon in 1879 going by the name of Palace when Wyatt briefly stayed in Prescott, which was only a week or two at the most. Second, Wyatt was not well-known at that time. There is absolutely no record of what businesses he may have patronized. The same is true of Doc Holliday, although some very clear educated guesses can be made as to what saloons on Whiskey Row he may have gambled since he sojourned in Prescott anywhere from 6 to 8 months. For those interested, the true origins of the stunning Palace Saloon can be learned via https://archives.sharlothallmuseum.org/articles and searching for "The Palace Saloon's Roots Trace Back to 1874, parts one and two."

Yá’át’éehgo nich’oh ha’níi le’, BGC

Since we are going to be in Reno, consider visiting the iconic, famous, ghost town of Bodie, about 100 miles away. It is a beautiful drive. I wrote this after a horseback trip into the Bodie Hills.

MINING THE PAST

Pam Potter

Ten well mounted riders, traveled across the sage from the Mono Basin. We were headed to Bodie, a mining town where gold was first discovered in 1859 in the forsaken hills between the eastern Sierra and the state of Nevada. The cloudless, azure sky contrasted with the brown and green of the mildly undulating land. We rode up until we reached the old railroad bed built in 1880-81. Here trains replaced wagons, transported wood for the mines and buildings and for firewood that burned almost constantly in a town where the temperatures reach freezing almost every evening of the year. As we climbed toward the hills that led to Bodie, the landscape became rocky and the pinion pines became thicker. Several miles in the distance lay Mono Lake, the still snow covered Sierras reflecting in the blue glass of the quiet lake. We stopped to blow the horses then continued up and over the hill into the verdant valleys of meadows, streams and wildflowers. From a distance the bleak Bodie hills hide the contrast of trickling water, and green lush meadows. Wild horse

tracks punctuated the ground, the depressions left by their hooves in the mud next to the stream and the piles of old and fresh manure, the only sign that these wild range horses still roam. Star-shaped pink and white wildflowers contrasted with purple and lavender stocks of lupine and wild iris in a quilt of color extending from vale to vale. I pictured families picnicking on Sundays (the only day the mines were shut down). I visualized baskets of food and children scampering in the grass. The scene was one of beauty and peace. The landscape of a summer day was a stark contrast to the harsh freezing winters and howling winds known as Bodie zephyrs that could and did trap and kill many men including, the man for whom the town was named, W.S. Bodey.

Bugs, lots of them. They buzzed around your ears letting you know they were there and ready to feed. Their little feet tickled your skin and you wished you could wiggle your skin like a horse to flick off the nasty little pests. How did the miners and their family deal with the flying insects? It is bad enough in an era where we have repellent but what did those families I visualized picnicking in the meadow, do to keep the flies off their food, and the no-see-ums from biting their face, and the mosquitoes and gnats out of their ears? It must have been a problem but not something you often read about.

The first gold discovery in the area of the Bodie hills was made in 1859. It was ten years before the camp experienced the birth of its first child, Daniel Horner. By early 1878 the population in Bodie had grown to twelve hundred and by 1880 was somewhere around six thousand. Bodie was a typical mining camp with the comforts of “society”. There were restaurants, stores, banks, a school a Chinese district, and plenty of saloons and bordellos to keep the miners happy and busy when not on their shift.

The country through which we rode was beautiful, rugged and dangerous. It could alternate between wet and dry, hot and cold, flat or undulating, steep slopes to cliffs. We rode over a trail on the side of a hill that was completely washed out and followed cattle trails that became little more than rabbit tracks. We crossed rock strewn faces of a hillside where the horses either had to traverse through and around boulders, trees, wild rose bushes that scratched their legs, or slide straight down the hillside scattering rocks beneath their hooves as they dug into the soft dirt for purchase. The smell of sage as the horses broke the brush was strong and the dirt had an ancient earthy odor that transported us back to the time of miners, cowboys and stage robbers. Traveling through that country was no easy task and we were cloaked in the dangers of a lost era. It was exhilarating.

Nine horsemen, two abreast hit the old stage road, chasing ghosts of antiquity. I felt like a member of a posse, the horse's hooves hitting the ground in the cadence of a fast trot. My bandana blew behind me and the wind in my face blew visions of Western drama through my mind as we passed red rock formations carved in the hillside. I wondered "were we passing the site of a stage holdup?" We were headed to the town of Bodie.

Around a bend the town was in sight, only to disappear with the next curve in the road. Finally, the road straightened and we cut left to enter town east of the jail. Tall in the saddle we sat, feeling very western in our chaps, spurs and silk bandanas. We must have cut quite a contrast to the other tourists clad in shorts, tank tops and Hawaiian shirts and open toed shoes. We tied the horses to a high line and strode into town, our spurs jangling as we walked and our boots echoing on the weathered planks of the old boardwalk. We thought we were pretty cool until someone asked "what are you all dressed up for?" The question burst the bubble we had inhabited. In our minds we were back over 100 years ago, a group of cowboys or maybe a posse, riding into town to hurrah or to save the community. We were knights of the sage on our trusty steeds. Horseman, superior to the pedestrian who walked the streets in awe of the tourist town. We belonged here, represented another era, and embodied the spirits, fleetingly, trailing the sounds of the stamp mills, saloons, and the clack of hooves, creak of leather and jangling of traces of the large teams as they brought the huge deliveries of wood and supplies. We could only stay awhile and then rode out of town the opposite way from which we came, disappearing over a hill past mines, breastworks and dark holes in the earth.

Although there are still mines in the Bodie hills we saw nary a miner. There are pvc pipes sticking out of the ground in what appear to be odd out of the way places, marking someone's claim. The clank and rumble of the stamp mills is silenced. The hills are quiet except for cars and trucks bouncing over the dirt road traveling back in time to the booming camp in the desolate hills. We ride out like specters climbing back to the future.