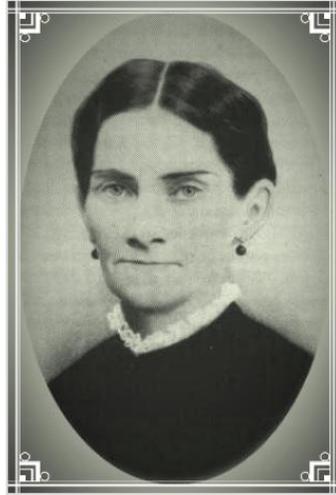
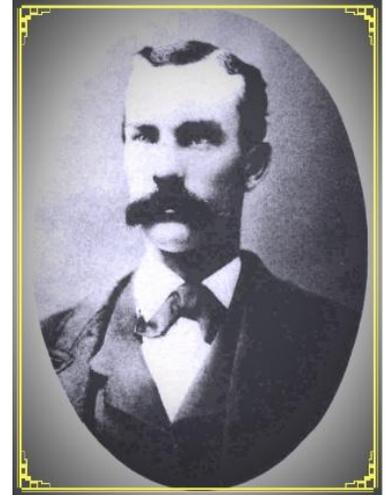


# Johnny Ringo's One Dollar Inheritance

*Wayne Sanderson*



**Mary Peters Ringo**



**John Peters Ringo**

On July 16, 1876 a woman died in bed at her home in San Jose, California. She had reached the age of fifty and was attended by three of her four surviving children. Her passing was expected and inevitable as she had been suffering from a chronic and ultimately fatal disease for as long as a decade. On July 5, 1876, her health declining, she set her affairs in order and prepared for the end. In readying her estate for administration and probate and to provide for her surviving children she made her last will and testament. Her will, signed and dated July 5, 1876, just eleven days before her death was short and succinct, for beyond the family home and the land it sat on there was little in the way of property that needed any detailed description nor were there a large number of heirs or bequests. After her debts were settled, her four surviving children would split her estate.

The estate was not to be split equally. To her daughters Fanny Fern, Mary Enna and Mattie Belle, she bequeathed to each one third of the remaining estate after all debts were settled and a specified sum of money was to be paid to one other heir, with no distribution or liquidation of the assets to take place until her youngest daughter reached the age of 21.

The single remaining bequest to the fourth heir was a bit peculiar and raises a number of questions today, over a century after the fact. In the words of Mary Ann Peters Ringo as set down in her will: "*My son John Ringo having been heretofore provided for, I bequeath him the sum of One Dollar.*" How exactly Mary Ringo had "heretofore provided for" her only surviving son John Peters Ringo, the will does not reveal. In fact, there is no mention anywhere else in

legal papers that have thus far been discovered, in the newspapers of the day nor in the family stories recorded by Ringo biographer Jack Burrows, or exactly to what Mary Ringo was referring.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of this article is to bring to light new government records previously unexamined or considered by Ringo's several biographers and to present their possible ramifications. In addition to showcasing these documents, the article will use the new data as a colored lens through which a reexamination will be made of prior known sources and information about the life of John Peters Ringo and his family. It will also examine certain new indicators that provide, if not hard evidence, reason to suspect there were issues and motivations in his life that have not heretofore been suspected by historians or covered by his biographers. This article will attempt to look beyond the factual information and examine some of the speculative directions to which they point while making every effort to link any speculative statements to hard evidence, factual information and/or strong indicators.

A look at the circumstances of Mary Ringo's death reveals one telling fact, one that leads to a different picture of Johnny Ringo, along with raising a host of new questions. Mary Ann Peters Ringo's death was reported in a newspaper in Clay County, Missouri, her old home, where a number of relatives and friends still resided. The transcribed obituary that survives in part says, simply, "*Died at her residence in San Jose, California, July 16th of Consumption, Mrs. Mary Ringo, widow of the late Martin Ringo and dau sic of the late John R. Peters of Clay County, in her 50th Year.*"<sup>2</sup>

In the name of God Amen!  
I, Mary Ringo of the City of San Jose  
in the State of California, being of sound  
mind and disposing memory, but knowing  
the uncertainty of this transitory life,  
do make & publish this as my last  
willed testament, hereby revoking any  
last will or codicil of wills heretofore  
made by me.

Item 1<sup>st</sup> I desire all my just debts paid  
Item 2<sup>nd</sup> I have four children, viz John Ringo  
Fanny Fern Ringo, Mary E. Ringo & Mattie  
B. Ringo.

Item 3<sup>rd</sup> I do hereby bequeath to my daughter  
Fanny F. Ringo, Mary E. Ringo & Mattie B. Ringo  
the Homestead, together with the furniture  
to share & share alike, but with the un-  
derstanding that the same shall not  
be sold, until Mattie B. Ringo my youngest  
daughter shall have attained the age of  
twenty one years. My son John Ringo having  
been heretofore provided for I bequeath him  
the sum of one dollar.

Item 4<sup>th</sup> I do hereby nominate & appoint my  
friend Phil Bodley the executor of this  
my will sharing confidence in his integ-  
rity I desire that he accept the trust with-  
out being required to give the bond usual  
as such. And do appoint the said Bodley

Mary Ringo's Will, page bearing the names of the heirs.

twenty one years. My son John Ringo having  
been heretofore provided for I bequeath him  
the sum of one dollar.

Image of will, lines showing John Ringo \$1 bequest.

REGISTER OF DEATHS,								SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CAL.			
Date.	NAME	Color or Race.	Age.			Sex.	Married or Single.	NATIVITY.	CAUSE OF DEATH.	PHYSICIAN OR CORONER.	REMARKS AS TO OCCUPATION, ETC.
			Yrs.	Mos.	Dys.						
1873 Apr 28	Adler, Annie	White	1	3		Female	Europe, America	Conjestion of lungs	Clinton Kunsen	Germany, Cal.	
May -	Russell, Joseph G.	"	54	6		Male		Consumption	Rev. J. J. Collins	Santa Clara	
July 1	Rayner, Edwin	"	31			"	England	Heart diseas	C. L. French	Lawyer	
Aug 29	Ringo, Martin A.	"	19	7		"	Indiana	Consumption	Prof. C. Sherman	"	
1874 June 1	Rogues, Charles	"	3	3	19	"	Cal.	Croup fever	D. Leroy	Santa Clara Co.	

**Martin Ringo Jr., Register of Deaths, Santa Clara County, California**

Mary Ringo’s cause of death, Tuberculosis (referred to as consumption in the 19th century) is a fact that has not appeared before in connection with any history or biography of John Peters Ringo. John Ringo’s younger brother, Martin A. Ringo, Jr. who died in 1873, also succumbed to Tuberculosis. Jack Burrows 1987 biography, *John Ringo, The Gunfighter Who Never Was*, in addition to revealing that John Ringo’s father, Martin, contracted Tuberculosis in California when he was serving with the U.S. Army during the Mexican-American War mentioned that Martin Jr. probably also died from TB, his source being anecdotal information shared with him by Ringo descendants.<sup>3</sup> Records of Santa Clara County, California reveal that Martin Jr. did indeed die of consumption, as family members said.<sup>4</sup>

Because of his tragic, premature demise in 1864 while on the emigrant trail to California, TB played no part in the death of Martin A. Ringo, Sr. He died from an accidental discharge of the firearm he was carrying. When he jumped down from the family wagon a jolt to the weapon or to Ringo himself served to accidentally fire his shotgun. Accounts from the time relate that the charge entered one eye and blew off the top of the elder Ringo’s head.<sup>5</sup>

Martin Sr.’s violent, sudden death notwithstanding, the family of John Peters Ringo was deeply affected by the dreaded disease, Tuberculosis. Three of his immediate family members were sufferers; two of them ultimately died from the disease. Martin Sr., had he not accidentally shot himself would undoubtedly have been a third TB casualty in the Ringo home in San Jose. An historical faux-pas in the movie *Tombstone* is how Johnny Ringo, as played by Michael Biehn, derided Val Kilmer’s Doc Holliday as a "Lunger" and generally ridiculed his suffering from tuber-

culosis. It seems somewhat unlikely that John Ringo, who's brother Martin and mother Mary Ann Peters Ringo both died from that wasting disease would be heartless enough to make light of the suffering of someone else afflicted with Tuberculosis.<sup>6</sup>

Were Martin Sr., Martin Jr. and Mary Ann Ringo the only members of the Ringo household who contracted Tuberculosis? It can be inferred from the lifespan of the three Ringo sisters, Matty Belle Ringo Cushing, Mary Enna Ringo and Fanny Fern Ringo Jackson that either they never contracted TB or they were hardy enough to withstand it. One of the three sisters lived through to the 1930s, the other two into the early 1940s. How then did three family members contract TB while they did not? As the initial sufferer in the family, Martin Sr. would be most likely to infect the persons closest to him with his wife, Mary, topping the list. His sons would be those next highest at risk for infection due to the fact that while on the farm in Missouri and later on the trail to California the men would have frequently been in close proximity, often sleeping, washing and working as a group while Mary saw to the girls. Later on in San Jose as young Martin Jr. sickened, it would be natural for Mary to spend time caring directly for him while the girls would have been housed in a separate room. That would have presented a window of opportunity for Mary to become infected with TB, if she weren’t already. However, as young Martin died from the disease in 1873 and Mary succumbed three years later it is likely she became infected years before Martin Jr. began to deteriorate in the early 1870s. Despite Ringo family information in Burrows’ biography that paints the younger Ringo boy as sickly, the 1870 federal census entry for Martin Ringo, Jr., reveals that he may not have then

been so ill he could not function. That census entry lists Martin as a printer, a trade that usually required an apprenticeship and work outside the home, hardly a pursuit for a bedridden boy.<sup>7</sup> As for the girls, given the age difference between them and their brothers as well as other factors such as sleeping arrangements and differences in work around the homestead between the boys and girls, it's plausible that they escaped infection from their father, mother and brother Martin simply because they were not in as close contact with each of those individual sufferers as much as others in the family who did contract the disease.

One alarming and gruesome manner in which many if not all of Martin Ringo, Sr.'s family were exposed to his TB all at once occurred at the moment of his death; the manner of transmission to his immediate family members may have been simultaneous. TB is normally transmitted through airborne means when the sufferer coughs and the bacteria laden mucus droplets enter another person's respiratory system. In Martin Ringo's case, he had probably been exposing his family to TB infection through his coughing for years. However, when he accidentally blew his head off with his shotgun while stepping down from the wagon on that early morning along the emigrant trail in Wyoming, that tragic occurrence spread not only infected mucus but blood and tissue infected with the disease into the air as well. John, his younger brother and his mother. They may all have inhaled TB laden droplets blasted out of Martin Ringo's shattered nasal cavity in a far greater quantity at one time than a TB sufferer could ever distribute through a coughing fit. Current medical precautions warn that TB can be spread through blood exposure as well. When the shotgun blast passed through Martin Ringo's head it almost certainly created a cloud of blood, tissue and mucus droplets that covered everything and everyone nearby. The Ringo family members near where Martin Ringo exited the wagon were undoubtedly exposed to the infected bodily fluids and atomized tissue of the elder Martin Ringo as the splatter settled over them in the moments after the shotgun fired. It would take only a blood laden droplet or two in their eyes to have sealed their fate.

This raises an interesting question: Why wasn't John Peters Ringo infected with TB along with his mother and younger brother? Or, was he? Due not only to the number of immediate Ringo family members who are confirmed to have been sufferers, the graphic death of Martin Ringo Sr. and the likelihood that the manner of his death created a great danger of exposure to TB infection for his entire family, especially anyone physically near him when he was shot and anyone who handled the body afterward, it would be more of a surprise if John Peters Ringo, who was near his father when he died and buried him afterwards, managed to escape being infected with Tuberculosis than if he ultimately did contract the disease. This calls for an examination of some other primary sources, and a reexamination of some facts that have long been known about John Ringo.

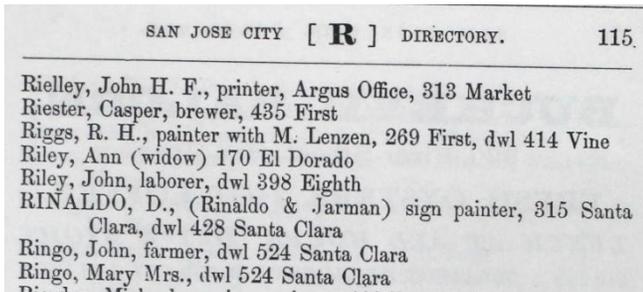
14	490	615	Ringo Mary	25	F	W	Keeping house	2000	400	Missouri
15			John	20	M	W				Indiana
16			Albert	16	M	W	Printer			"
17			Fannie	13	F	W				Missouri
18			Emma	10	F	W				
19			Mattie	8	F	W				

1870 Census cropped image-Ringo family entry

In Burrows' biography, he wrote that John Ringo left home and set out for Texas in 1869.<sup>8</sup> It appears this date was obtained by Burrows from interviews with Ringo family descendants. The 1870 federal census indicates this date is in error because John Ringo appears on the enumeration sheet along with the surviving Ringo clan in San Jose when the census taker recorded them on July 25th.<sup>9</sup> Martin Jr.'s occupation is listed as printer, while John has no occupation listed. However, that same year he appeared in the *San Jose City Directory*, which listed his occupation as that of a farmer and his address the same as that of his mother.<sup>10</sup> Based on these two sources, John Ringo was still in San Jose at least as late as the middle of the summer of 1870, working on a farm and living with his family. Burrows relates in his Ringo biography that John P. left home in 1869 and "left the family in the lurch." Had he been drinking or neglecting his duties around the family farm prior to his departure from home for parts elsewhere? What prompted him to be remembered in this manner without actually having physically left the area in 1869? Family lore

has as much of a tendency to get facts wrong as it does to get them right; John Peters Ringo may have been unfavorably remembered by his family for good reason, even as their recollection of the date at which he left home was actually off by a few months to a year.

When did he leave and where did he go after San Jose? We have one tantalizing clue: On May 3, 1871, John Peters Ringo turned twenty one and was eligible to vote for the first time. To do so he first had to register, an act that many young men at the time looked on as a rite of passage into full cit-



1870 San Jose Directory cropped image.

No. of Register	NAME	No.	Country of Nativity	OCCUPATION	LOCAL RESIDENCE	VOTED	NATURALIZED	Date of Registration
							Date. Place.	
1	Rawlings, Joshua Scott	35	Missouri	Miner	Havilah			Aug. 15, 1866
2	Roberts, Joseph Vincent	40	Ohio	Farmer	South Fork			Aug. 21
3	Ruggin, George Washington	64	Kentucky	Farmer	South Fork			Sept. 5
4	Rund, George Peffer	40	Pennsylvania	Miner	Kelso			Aug. 21
5	Rund, Andrew	32	Pennsylvania	Miner	Greenhorn			Sept. 23
6	Rosemyer, James Vincent	35	Wisconsin	Ranchero	Tejon Ranch			Oct. 29
7	Ryan, James Johnson	42	Mississippi	Farmer	Luna's Valley			Oct. 29
8	Randolph, Hamilton	39	Missouri	Millwright				Oct. 29
9	Raney, William Esling	45	Vermont	Farmer	Bakersfield			Oct. 29
10	Randley, Lewis Richard	35	Alabama	Farmer	Bakersfield			Oct. 29
11	Rison, Michael Alfred	27	Virginia	Miner	Havilah			Nov. 16
12	Rothels, Theodore	35	Germany	Miner	New El Dorado			Aug. 9, 1866. Los Angeles County
13	Runk, Walker	38	Pennsylvania	Ranchero	Walker's Basin			June 27, 1867
14	Rund, Thomas	36	New York	Miner	Havilah			June 27
15	Rose, Allen Edward	35	Kentucky	Miner	Havilah			June 27
16	Rupp, John	40	Dalen	Miner	Havilah			June 27
17	Rackiff, Benjamin Cushing	40	Texas	Gardener	Walker's Basin			July 9
18	Reinhold, Philip	22	Germany	Builder	Havilah			July 18
19	Robinson, Benj. Franklin	35	Texas	Farmer	Havilah			July 18
20	Rund, Samuel Ellsworth	38	Pennsylvania	Blacksmith	Luna's Valley			Oct. 2
21	Rund, John Calley	54	United States	Farmer	Havilah			July 30, 1868
22	Robinson, Sylvester	31	Virginia	Farmer	Havilah			Aug. 21
23	Riddle, Joseph	23	Missouri	Farmer	South Fork			Oct. 2
24	Ryan, John	33	Missouri	Farmer	Walker's Basin			June 16, 1869
25	Ryan, James	36	Ireland	Miner	Havilah			Aug. 2
26	Rog, George	32	Massachusetts	Farmer	Havilah			Mar. 17, 1871
27	Ringo, John	21	Missouri	Farmer	Walker's Basin			May 16
28	Ringo, John	21	Missouri	Farmer	Walker's Basin			May 16
29	Roberts, Thomas	36	Rhode Island	Farmer	Bakersfield			May 16

1871 Kern Great Register cropped image from book

zenship and adulthood. There is no record of John Peters Ringo ever registering to vote in Santa Clara County, California. There is, however, a record of a John Ringo, age 21, native of Missouri, occupation 'Farmer' who registered to vote in California on just one occasion, on May 16, 1871, less than two weeks after the 21st birthday of John Peters Ringo. His residence was listed as Walker's Basin, Kern County, California.<sup>11</sup> The age, occupation and nativity fit. Historical sources state that John Peters Ringo was born in Indiana, but his father was from Missouri,

and the family moved back to Clay County Missouri while John was a small child. Missouri is where he remembered his early childhood. He may have wished to be known as a Missouri Ringo and used that as his nativity during his travels, or he may have never known he was originally from Indiana. In the absence of a birth certificate recorded when he was born (none were issued in Indiana as early as 1850), he probably grew up believing Missouri was where he was born. The fact that a John Ringo, born in Missouri, appears in Cochise County in the 1882 Arizona Territorial census and appears to be that of John Peters Ringo, tends to reinforce the notion that he claimed to be from Missouri and not from Indiana after he left home and struck out on his own.<sup>12</sup>

Is this young man Johnny Ringo? And if so, what was he doing in Kern County? One possible answer is provided in the book, *History of Kern County, California*.<sup>13</sup> Within this book, along with a history of the earlier years of Kern County, are a number of biographical sketches of the prominent citizens of Bakersfield and other communities of Kern County, many settling in that area about or before 1870. While the name of Ringo is not to be found anywhere within this publication, many other persons are mentioned by name, with a good bit of personal information as well. The biographical sketches spell out why a number of the prominent citizens chose to move to Kern County, many for reasons of their health. The book indicates over and over that people who were sick, and specifically who were suffering from pulmonary conditions, relocated to Kern County for the dry, clean air. Some had traveled to California and settled on the coast, only to hear of the salutary effects of living above Bakersfield and decided to pull up stakes, yet again, and settle there. In short, word was out that Kern County communities at higher altitudes, like Walker's Basin, were good places for Tuberculosis sufferers to live. Kern County later had a TB sanitarium that opened early in the 20th century and closed after 1950 when antibiotics had all but eradicated the disease and obviated the need for TB hospitals in mild climates. The biographical sketches also contain a surprising number of persons with ties to San Jose.

If the May 1871 voter registration in Kern County, California is indeed John Peters Ringo, and

the author believes that it is, his presence in that place, as opposed to San Jose would be explained had he contracted Tuberculosis from a family member and later sought a healthier climate in which to live than the often cold, damp and foggy San Francisco Bay area. He may have heard about the place from others, perhaps a doctor in San Jose who told him about the healthier surroundings down in Kern County. How he may have been able to afford to make such a journey and hope to have a start in Walker's Basin may be revealed by the unexplained one dollar bequest that was recorded in his mother's will five years later. Mary Ringo may have given her eldest son a sum of money to relocate that was close to what she later believed to be a quarter of her estate, or maybe she previously deeded some of the family land to him to farm on his own which he later sold off to secure his funding. She could even have taken out a mortgage in order to provide John with money to start out somewhere else; this is, of course pure speculation. However, if any of the above is true, she might have considered John Ringo to have received his due and left him no more, or at least no more than that one dollar. Another possibility for the one dollar bequest is that Ringo and another man were tried for the murder of Charley Bader in Texas in the mid 1870s and, according to Burrows, while the other defendant was convicted and sentenced to 99 years in the state prison, John Ringo appears to have served no prison time and was possibly acquitted.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Such a feat would have required expert legal counsel, which would have cost money. Mary Ringo might have paid a lawyer to help get John free of the Bader murder charge and considered that her final duty to her son. This is also speculative, but the wording of the one dollar bequest in her will is a strong indicator that Mary Ringo made some sort of financial distribution to her eldest son that led her to decide that he would receive only one dollar more upon her death. In the absence of hard evidence, the above possibilities are the most logical choices.

In his Ringo biography, Burrows relates family information about letters that had been sent to John Ringo by his family in San Jose but went unanswered.<sup>16</sup> Did the family know where to reach him in Kern County? Without access to any of those letters, there is no way of knowing for certain, but it makes sense that Ringo lived in one place long

enough for his family to have a reasonable expectation of reaching him, rather than, as Burrows suggested, that Mary Ringo, and perhaps the sisters as well, had tried to send mail to him via relatives in Texas.<sup>17</sup> If the sisters wrote to John in Walker's Basin letting him know about their mother's declining health in the summer of 1876 urging him to return before the end, he would not have received them if they arrived after the spring of 1875 and they may have been returned as undeliverable, or not returned at all. Had he moved on without letting his family know that he was pulling up stakes they may have assumed he was still in Kern County when their mother began to worsen in 1876. If he intended to relocate and then send word where he could be reached, he may never have gotten around to it, either because he never settled in one place, he was running on the shady side of the law and felt he couldn't afford to have a contact point for fear of capture, or both. His sisters, had they tried to reach him in Walker's Basin by letter or telegram and heard nothing back may have taken that as a rebuff on the part of John. In their eyes he had left home years before when the family could have used his help with the farm. He failed to answer them and return home to be with family and with their mother at the end. The sisters, in giving the cold shoulder to John Peters Ringo when he returned to visit about 1880 may have been reciprocating his rejection of them, as they saw it, with no knowledge on their part of any of his unsavory activities in Texas or Arizona. He may have heard nothing of his mother's death prior to his arrival in Arizona in 1879 or even his visit to San Jose, had it been unannounced. The meeting with his sisters at the door to the family home may have been strained on both sides, for John Ringo the sudden sorrow of learning of his mother's death and for the sisters, their ire over his failure to keep in touch. Many family rifts begin with misunderstandings and personal grudges without any of the relatives having taken the outlaw trail. Breckenridge's line from Ringo in his autobiography *Helldorado* that related that his sisters thought him a successful businessman and knew nothing about his nefarious dealings may be accurate. All of this is purely speculative, but quite plausible.

Included in Mary Ringo's estate was an old, men's gold pocket watch with an appraised value of

twenty dollars.<sup>18</sup> As her only surviving son it would have been logical for that watch, likely his father's or even his grandfather's, to have been left to John. It was not. That his mother did not do so raises questions about the relationship between Mary Ringo and her eldest child, and whether the situation with the Ringo sisters when John visited in the years after Mary's death was a carryover from bad times when their mother was still alive. The one dollar bequest and the pocket watch he didn't get may have been Mary's last word on the matter of her relationship with her eldest son, and that last word may not have been a good one.

The 1871 Kern County voter registration record does not reveal whether John Ringo was a landowner in that locale or whether he was a hired farm hand, which could have been the case if he went to Kern with little or no money in his pocket. No subsequent voter registrations appear for any earlier or later years. Starting in 1872, California law decreed that all county clerks publish an updated voter registry at least every two years. John Ringo appears in three updated sections of *The Great Register of Kern County* but always showing that same 1871 initial registration.<sup>19</sup> Whether registration sections were refreshed each year or once every two years is not made clear in the book. As it seems unlikely the county would go to the trouble of compiling a fresh copy of the Great Register more often than once per year, the appearance of the name John Ringo in that register three compilations in a row indicates that he was registered to vote in Kern County at the very least in 1871, 1872 and 1873. If the new Great Register was compiled every two years in accordance with the mandated state minimum requirement for maintaining that record and given that congressional and state legislative elections took place no more frequently than every two years, John Ringo may have been registered to vote in Kern County from the spring of 1871 through the spring of 1876, and must have voted in Kern at least as late as the fall 1874 or a spring 1875 election. The fact that his name is not listed in the 1878 edition of the Kern County Great Register or any thereafter indicates that John Ringo failed to vote or otherwise renew his voter registration at or after the 1876 elections. This places Ringo's departure from California for (ultimately) Texas between the fall of 1874 and the summer of 1875.

Two years after his May 16, 1871 voter registration came the Panic of 1873, one of the worst and most brutal depressions the United States ever endured. Millions were thrown out of work, factories closed, businesses and banks collapsed and small farmers everywhere went belly up. If Johnny Ringo started out in Kern County with a small farm bought with a down payment obtained from sources previously described, or if he was a hired hand on a financially vulnerable farm, the depression that began in 1873 might have wiped him out or left him unemployed as it did millions of others around the country.

The 1871 Kern County John Ringo must have been a recent arrival. A search of the 1870 U.S. Census reveals not only that there was no John Ringo or any person by that last name recorded in Kern County, California in that year, but nationwide there was only one John Ringo recorded with the precise age and nativity to be John Peters Ringo, and that was the John Ringo listed with the family of Mary Ann Peters Ringo in San Jose. Mary or the person interviewed told the enumerator, on that last occasion that he was recorded in any census along with his family, that John was born in Indiana. A search of the name John Ringo nationally, through census and voter registration databases does bring up a few men born in places such as New York and Kentucky named John Ringo, but these men are not close to the correct age, are accounted for in 1870 and/or have no ties to Missouri, Indiana or California. Neither does the Kern County John Ringo, nor anyone by the surname Ringo appear in the 1880 census in that place. Also, the Kern County voter registry does not show anyone else named Ringo as having registered to vote there in those years, which tends to rule out the 1871 Kern County John Ringo as being the scion of a different Ringo family living in that area at the time. These census entries, or in the case of 1870 and 1880 in Kern County the lack thereof, indicate that the 1871 John Ringo who registered to vote in Walker's Basin arrived there sometime between the taking of the 1870 census and May of 1871, and left before the taking of the census in 1880. To have been in Texas when he first appeared in the newspapers there, John Peters Ringo had to have left California no later than the beginning of the summer of 1875.

The foregoing information and accompanying speculative statements cover most of the five year time period during which John Peters Ringo has heretofore been unaccounted for and only assumed to have been in Texas beginning in August, 1875. If true, Ringo did not make his way to Texas until several years later than the 1869 date previously thought to have been that of his departure from San Jose. He probably tried to make a go of farming at Walker's Basin for a few years, lost his livelihood after the Panic of 1873 and the resulting depression wrecked the economy and drifted away, penniless. Burrows wrote that it appeared that John Ringo may have gone down to Texas to visit relatives there and thence took up with the Cooley Gang, later to become entangled in the Mason County or "Hoo Doo" War sometime in 1875, then spent a short time before leaving Texas as a constable. After this, he was more or less known as a gunman and bad character through to the time of his death in 1882, and beyond. None of the above challenge Burrows' and other historians' Texas findings but does serve to fill in several years before the summer of 1875 where history has heretofore been silent on the precise movements and whereabouts of Johnny Ringo.

over any study of the repercussions of living with the disease in the 19th Century unless it is the disease itself that is being studied. The great exception to the above was, of course, Dr. John Henry Holliday, DDS.

It appears that Ringo never mentioned having TB to anyone who subsequently wrote of it or recounted that fact to later chroniclers. Thus, it would be fairly easy to see how history may have missed such a thing; he didn't live long enough to enter the final, very obvious phase of the illness, the so called "Galloping Consumption" when the body begins to fail in an unmistakable, graphic fashion. If Ringo was showing any of the common chronic symptoms of TB in Texas and Arizona they may have gone unnoticed by those around him. Before antibiotics and modern medicine, many people walked around sick and coughing all the time and drew hardly a glance from those around them except possibly their spouses and close family; Johnny Ringo had neither in his life after he departed San Jose in 1870-71. If any of his friends and close contemporaries in Texas or Tombstone had any knowledge of such an illness, they didn't pass it along and by 1882 most of them were either dead, gone elsewhere or didn't write about it if they did know, as opposed to Holliday who made no secret of his status as a sufferer of the affliction and who had contemporaries who wrote or dictated stories about him later. Of the undoubtedly great number of TB sufferers in the Old West we are left with Doc Holliday in popular culture as practically the sole face of the disease on the frontier. Given his openness about his condition, to say nothing of his well documented antics, shooting scrapes, the mythology that has grown up about him in the last century or more, and Holliday's most notable and well remembered act, his participation in the Tombstone street fight of October 26, 1881, it is not hard to understand how Doc would be well remembered as a consumptive and a tragic figure while other, more private and circumspect TB sufferers have flown under the radar, Johnny Ringo possibly among them.

Was John Peters Ringo acting like a man who knew that he had TB? Burrows' biography of Ringo mentions that the family remembered him being a heavy drinker prior to leaving home.<sup>21</sup> This taken along with the timing of his departure from San Jose

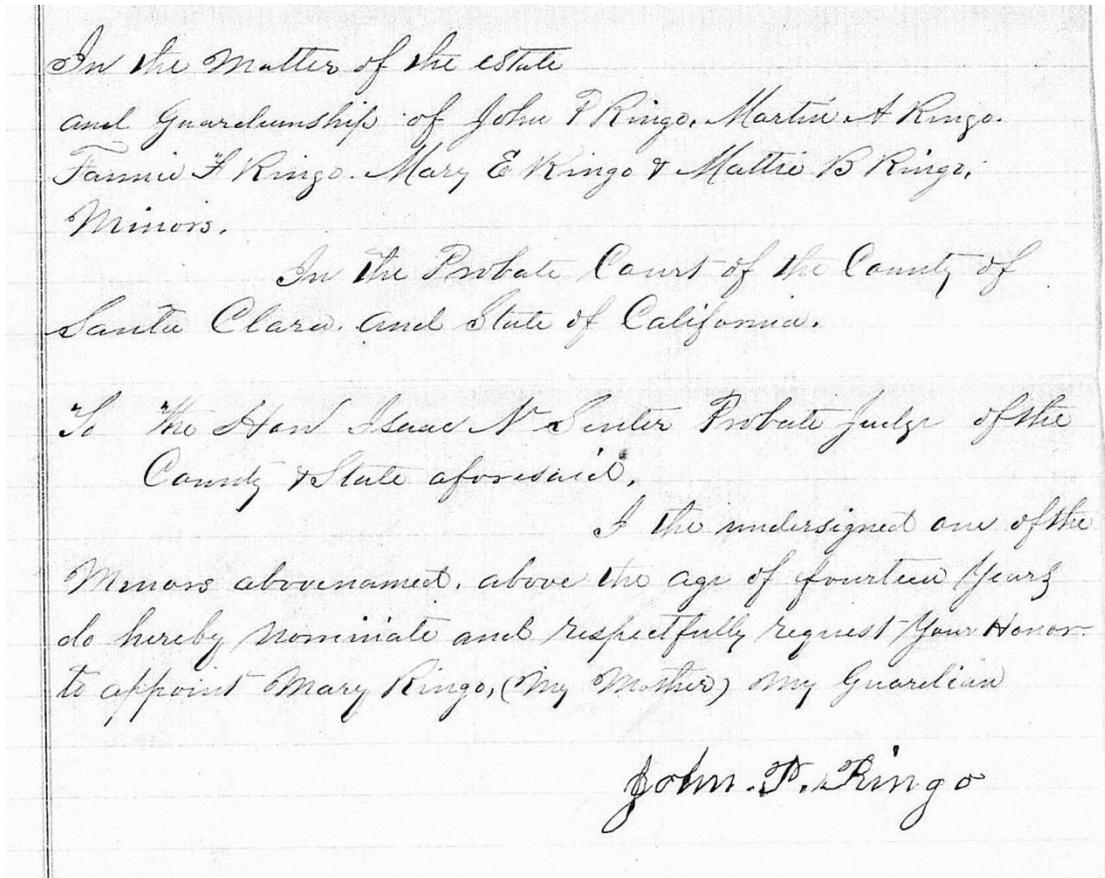
1st Judicial District, Cochise County, Arizona		
No. 170	In the matter of the Inquest held on the body of	Inquest held by
Year 1882	<i>John Ringo</i> Deceased.	<i>Cottigans</i> Coroner.
PROCEEDINGS.		
Dr. Cr.		
<p><i>Jan 14 Inquest held. (Statement of John Ringo, dated July 17, 1882)</i>  <i>Nov 3 H.C.A.</i>  <i>Cause of death, "unknown"</i>  <i>But supposed gunshot wounds.</i></p>		

### John Ringo Death Record, Cochise County AZ

Might Ringo have been a Tuberculosis sufferer and that fact escaped the notice of historians all these years? Perhaps. The death record of John Peters Ringo in Cochise County, AZ indicates that he officially died of a self inflicted gunshot wound to the head in the summer of 1882; that death record makes no mention of consumption.<sup>20</sup> It is useful to note that history has a general tendency to simply mention the deaths of TB sufferers and skip

in the year he turned twenty one and had full adult control of his own life, to include property ownership, and where he apparently wound up after 1870, namely a place reputed to be better for TB sufferers than San Jose, as well as his subsequent wanderings across the arid Southwest are possible indicators that he did. One has to wonder whether the man did many of the same things for the same reasons that Holliday did; left his family behind for a better chance of survival in the long term, attempted

but failed to make an honest living, thereafter lived a devil-may-care, violent, dissipated life in a seemingly self-imposed exile, by all appearances drank to excess while using liquor to medicate a consumptive's chronic cough, adopted a fatalistic and increasingly suicidal outlook as time wore on... In short, many things that one can identify in the documented movements, actions and attitudes of Doc Holliday.



In the matter of the estate  
and Guardianship of John P. Ringo, Martin A. Ringo,  
Fannie J. Ringo, Mary E. Ringo & Mattie B. Ringo,  
Minors.

In the Probate Court of the County of  
Santa Clara, and State of California.

To the Hon. Isaac N. Center Probate Judge of the  
County & State aforesaid,

I the undersigned one of the  
Minors abovenamed, above the age of fourteen years  
do hereby nominate and respectfully request Your Honor  
to appoint Mary Ringo, (my Mother) my Guardian

John P. Ringo

1865 Ringo Guardianship Petition showing the signature of John P. Ringo.

As for waiting until he was twenty one years of age to leave home, John Peters Ringo may have had no choice in that matter. Included in the document package containing the 1876 estate papers and will of Mary Ringo is an earlier filing from the year 1865. It is a guardianship petition made to the Santa Clara courts nominating Mary Ringo to be appointed guardian of her five minor children, including John.<sup>22</sup> The guardianship order not only gave Mary Ringo full custody but also spelled out that estate and financial control over her children were part of

the award. Legal guardianship at that time and place gave Mary Ringo physical and financial control over John Peters Ringo until his 21st Birthday. He may not have had any option to move away or own property in his own name in the State of California without his mother's consent until May 3, 1871. The story of him originally abandoning the family in 1869 might be true if he tried to leave home that year and Mary Ringo had the 19 year old John picked up as a runaway and returned to her at San Jose, which the guardianship papers probably

entitled her to do. This also opens up the possibility that John Ringo may have been forced to stay in San Jose and work the family farm against his will, thus creating the rift with his family when he came of age, he could no longer be held and made to work on the family farm and he subsequently departed. The voter registration in Kern County seems likely to be that of John Peters Ringo, as he could easily have journeyed from San Jose to Bakersfield in thirteen days, assuming that Mary made him stay at home until the very last day before he turned twenty one. The guardianship petition listed the names of all five minor Ringo children, but it was made on behalf of the four youngest by the eldest. At the bottom of the handwritten petition can be found the legible signature of a fourteen year old John P. Ringo.

Jack Burrows relates in his Ringo biography that somewhere in a 30 month time period between 1880 and early 1882, John Peters Ringo made a journey home to San Jose, California<sup>23</sup> and tried to reconnect with his three surviving siblings, his sisters Matty Belle & Mary Enna Ringo, who were still living at the old family homestead, and Fanny Fern Jackson, who had married a jeweler and moved a few towns away. This journey is likely to have occurred in 1880 while the U.S. Census was in progress that spring, as John Ringo does not appear in the 1880 returns for Arizona, California or anywhere else. He may have been one of the few people in every census year who fell through the cracks, leaving one place before an enumerator arrived and arriving in another after the local population had already been recorded. The family lore of the reunion recounts that John Ringo was rejected and sent away by his sisters, who supposedly knew all about his dubious exploits in Texas and Arizona and allegedly wanted nothing more to do with him. Reportedly, they even refused to allow him to enter the old family home. He probably stopped in to visit his Aunt Augusta, his late mother's older sister, who was married and living on a nearby thoroughbred horse farm with her family. There is no reason to believe that he would not be welcome in the home of his Uncle Coleman and Aunt Augusta and he probably enjoyed visiting with his younger cousins in that family with whom he had played and grown up,

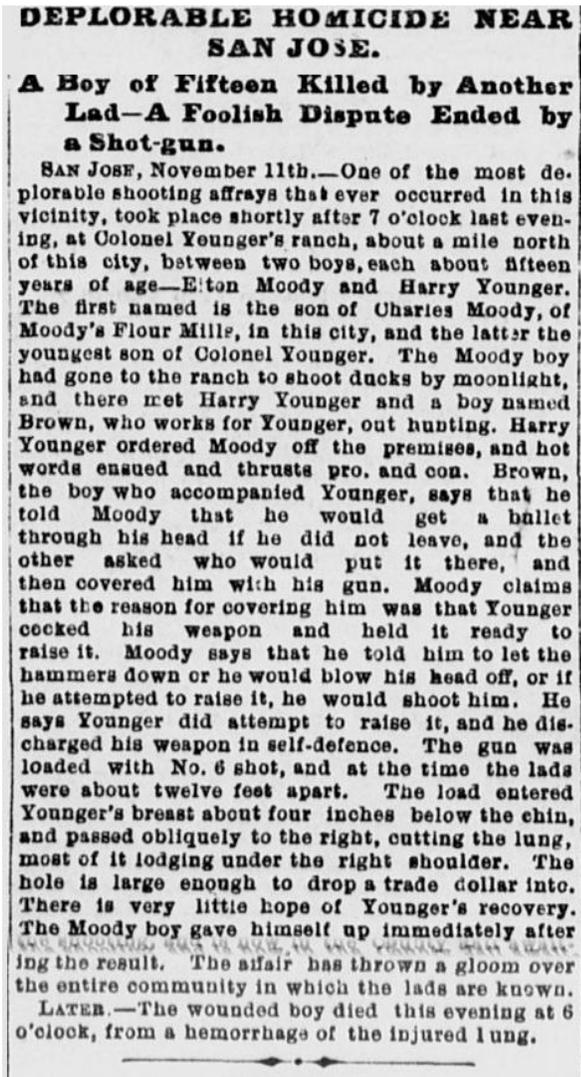
except for one who was sadly missing from the home.

On the evening of November 11, 1878 about a mile north of San Jose, California, Elton Moody was poaching on a farm, hoping to bag a few duck by moonlight. He ran across the son of the landowner, Harry, and a friend, who were lawfully hunting duck on the property. Harry and Elton had some hot words, Harry ordered Elton off the property, and then it escalated to the point where Elton Moody shot the other young man in the upper chest with his shotgun. Harry suffered a wound "Large enough to drop a Trade Dollar through" according to the newspaper article detailing the affray published the next day in the *Daily Alta California*.

Elton Moody quickly made his way back to town, had a friend take his shotgun home and then went to the county sheriff and turned himself in for the shooting. He was immediately locked up in the Santa Clara County Jail. In the morning he received word that young Harry had died. Within days the Santa Clara county coroner convened an inquest which resulted in a finding that the killing of fourteen year old Harry at the hands of Elton Moody was willful murder, and he was held pending the ruling of the Grand Jury. A few days hence on November 25th, an indictment was handed down by the Santa Clara County Grand Jury against Moody for the crime of manslaughter, and he was held for trial on that charge.<sup>24</sup>

Elton Byron Moody could breathe only a bit easier having been charged with Manslaughter, a conviction for which would carry a prison sentence of many years rather than the possibility of being hanged if found guilty of murder, even though such a sentence was unlikely due to his age; Moody was also fourteen. He was able to breathe only a bit easier still after he went on trial on January 27, 1879 and after two days of testimony was acquitted and walked free. The reason he still had to worry: the young man Elton Moody shot and killed was named Henry Lee Younger. He was the youngest son of Colonel Coleman Purcell Younger, uncle of the notorious Younger Brothers, and Augusta Peters, the older sister of Mary Peters Ringo. Elton Moody killed the first cousin of Johnny Ringo, Cole Younger, Bob Younger and Jim Younger, the latter three of James-Younger Gang fame. It can be arguably stated that with that one gunshot, Elton

Moody made enemies of some of the most dangerous men in the Old West.



*Daily Alta California*, November 12, 1878

It would have been only somewhat comforting to know that after 1876 the Younger Brothers who rode with Frank and Jesse James were in the state penitentiary at Stillwater, Minnesota serving life sentences for their part in the Northfield, Minnesota debacle. As the turn of the century approached, the surviving Younger brothers were increasingly being considered for pardons or for parole and if Moody was wise, he would have been just a bit nervous about those notorious first cousins of his victim getting out and paying a visit to their Uncle Coleman and Aunt Augusta in San Jose.

Of more immediate concern to Elton Moody would have been the fact that Johnny Ringo, the dead Harry Younger's first cousin on his mother's side was not only still out and about, but one fine day he stepped off of a train in San Jose, California, presumably armed. Whether Ringo knew about his younger cousin's violent death and who was behind it when he arrived in town and if he had that on his mind when he decided to journey home to San Jose is unknown, but the likelihood that he did know is high because the news story about young Harry's death was carried in newspapers in every corner of the country including at least one paper in every major city; Johnny Ringo could easily have spotted it in any newspaper that made its way to wherever he was at the time. Had his sisters suspected that he was in San Jose to kill Elton Moody, that alone may have prompted them to turn him away for fear of being thought complicit in a revenge killing.

If John Ringo didn't already know about the sad demise of his cousin Harry, he certainly would have gotten an earful upon arrival at his Aunt Augusta's house. Elton Moody had to be well aware of the gunmen in the extended Younger family, and unless he was a complete dullard he probably looked over his shoulder for the rest of his life. If he was smart, the minute he heard that Johnny Ringo was in San Jose, Moody would have packed a bag, grabbed his shotgun and made immediate plans to go duck hunting... in Canada!

If Ringo ever met Moody in San Jose and had words with him, both history and the Ringo family are silent on the matter. When Ringo left San Jose to return to Arizona, Moody was still alive. Elton B. Moody continued to appear in census returns, voter registries and city directories as a resident of San Jose up until the year 1896, after which the records of his existence in that place run out.<sup>25 26 27 28 29</sup>

After a January 1906 newspaper mention, Moody vanishes altogether. He may have left his affairs in his brother Edward's hands and went North to Alaska and the Klondike between 1896 and 1899 or thereafter and stayed there, or died along the trail as so many other Stampeders did; he was certainly of the right age and demographic, and in a good place to have felt the pull that came from reports of gold in the North and set off to try his hand as a miner in the Yukon or later in Alaska. He

could have been among the many dead in the 1906 earthquake that leveled much of that area of California and his body was never found or identified. Perhaps he moved away and changed his name so that he didn't have to worry about any delayed vengeance on the part of the Younger family. Or one of the brothers, cousins or friends of Harry Younger found him alone in a dark alley one night and settled the family blood debt, then quietly disposed of his body in the river or an unmarked grave. It may never be known what ultimately became of Elton Byron Moody.

After John Peters Ringo returned to Tombstone his movements and activities are not difficult to follow. More than one source has stated that he descended into melancholy and increasing alcohol abuse in his final years. Some accounts tell of his receipt of at least one letter from one of his sisters at some point between his arrival in Tombstone in 1879 and his death in 1882 that had a telling effect on him. That letter may have been his first knowledge of Mary's passing, or perhaps his family sent word about the shooting death of his young cousin Harry and the subsequent acquittal of his killer. There is no way to know how close Harry Lee Younger and John Ringo were, but the families lived close to one another; Cole and Augusta Younger took Mary Ringo and her children in when they arrived in San Jose in 1864 and put them up in their carriage house until Mary could make arrangements to acquire the farm on which she and her children settled.<sup>30</sup> There is no reason to believe that John Ringo did not have a warm family relationship with the Youngers of San Jose or that he did not feel the grief from the tragic death of Harry Younger every bit as keenly as any of his other close family members did. Had he been quite close with Harry as a little boy, played with him and looked upon him as a second younger brother, news of Harry's tragic death would have had a noticeable effect on John Ringo, as would the news of his killer going free. It may even be that Ringo received word of both Mary and Harry's deaths in the same letter. Johnny Ringo steadily lost family members under tragic circumstances while he himself continued on, living life on the wrong side of the law.

In his Ringo biography, Burrows told of how John Ringo was said by family members to have gone back to Tombstone where he planned to sell

off his interests and then return to San Jose; he never did so.<sup>31</sup> Maybe he wanted to return home, although if he was indeed a TB sufferer his reasons for leaving San Jose in the first place would not only still be valid, they might even be more pressing a decade later. Untreated Tuberculosis only goes into remission or worsens with time, it doesn't improve. Perhaps he planned to convert all of his Cochise assets to cash, return to San Jose and, rather than live there among family and friends, John Ringo might have planned to kill Elton Moody and then go on the run, something he knew how to do. His plan to sell off his assets in Cochise County, Arizona may not have worked out as well as he thought it would. Perhaps he returned to find that the livestock he planned to sell had been appropriated by others, which was a chronic problem in Southern Arizona at the time. Anyone who owned livestock of any sort in the Tombstone area in the 1879-1882 time period knew quite well that rustlers and stock thieves were legion in those parts. Had Ringo owned any horses or cattle and left them in Cochise County in the care of others while he went back to California to visit, there is no reason to assume that those animals would be immune to the depredations of rustlers when no one else's were. Johnny Ringo might have discovered by the summer of 1882 that he no longer had the means to leave Tombstone and start over elsewhere if that was his wish, which would certainly be a depressing realization. As Ringo ran with the Cochise County Cow Boys in those years, a notorious band of known stock thieves that would steal anything with a hoof, there would be a sort of poetic justice in the above circumstance!

Another possibility: It has been widely reported and written about that Ringo ran with the faction that made a living rustling livestock in the border area of Northern Mexico and Southern Arizona during his time in Cochise County between his arrival in 1879 and his death in 1882. What no one has ever clearly shown is exactly when he turned to rustling livestock or otherwise began stealing for a living in Arizona. Absent some compelling evidence that establishes a firm date, there is as much reason to believe that he fell in with the stock thieves later on after he went home to visit his sisters and returned to Tombstone as there is to simply assume that he began his life of crime in Arizona as soon as

he arrived. Perhaps he really was speculating in livestock and legitimately owned cattle when he arrived in Tombstone in 1879, only to lose them to thieves and rustlers while he was away in San Jose or after his return from California, and finding himself broke he fell into the shadowy life of a cattle rustler and robber. If true, the cold shoulder he received from his sisters when he went home to visit really may have had nothing to do with the life he was leading in Arizona. Perhaps he tried to explain that he was doing well at making an honest living but his sisters wanted to hear none of it and slammed the door in his face anyway. This is of course speculative, but no more so than the assumption that John Peters Ringo was a badman in Arizona from day one.

The several accounts of the personality and demeanor of Johnny Ringo during his three years in Southern Arizona seem somewhat at odds. His acts and reputation in Texas and Arizona seem to indicate that he was a bandit, killer and thief while the statements of people who knew John Ringo in Tombstone tend to mitigate the impression that he was a crude or a cruel man. Several accounts from people like William Breakenridge, Mary Katherine "Big Nose Kate" Horoney and others of a well spoken, seemingly educated man fallen into a dissipated life but still evincing good manners and even compassion on occasion when he wasn't drunk lead us to ask how both premises can be true when speaking of the same man. Then again, maybe they weren't the same man.

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**Census Enumeration of Cochise County, 1882**

NAME.	AGE.	PLACE OF BIRTH.	RESIDENCE.
J. H. Behan	34	Mo	Tombstone
J. E. W. Prude	32	Ohio	
Ah Ban	20	China	
Ah Sam	20	do	
Jno Ringo	39	Mo	
W. Hallaw	21	Mass	

1882 Census Enumeration for Tombstone showing Jno Ringo, 39, Missouri

**Census Enumeration of Cochise County, 1882**

NAME.	AGE.	PLACE OF BIRTH.	RESIDENCE.
Henry M. Houten	31	Pa	Willcox
John Ringo	28	do	
W. H. Millaw	39	Texas	

1882 Census Enumeration for Willcox showing John Ringo, 28, Pennsylvania

A check of the *1882 Arizona Territorial Census* reveals the rather interesting fact that there were apparently two men named John Ringo in Cochise County that year. One was recorded in Tombstone as 'Jno Ringo'; age: 39; place of birth: 'MO.' The other was recorded in Willcox as 'John Ringo'; age: 28; place of birth: 'do', meaning ditto to the entry above it, which was 'PA.'<sup>32</sup> Lest we believe that the entries were made by two different census takers or that the same enumerator simply entered Ringo twice without realizing it, there is one way that we can be sure that this is not the case. The handwriting for both entries is that of the same man, and that census enumerator was none other than Nashville Franklyn "Buckskin Frank" Leslie, who was a known drinking buddy of Ringo in 1882 and who was not only known to have been one of the two enumerators who took the Territorial Census in Cochise County that year; he was the one who covered Tombstone and the nearby settlements.<sup>33</sup> It is known Leslie knew Ringo well, to presumably include the approximate age and place of birth that John Peters Ringo claimed, we can infer that Leslie would not have inadvertently double entered Johnny Ringo in the census record nor would he have taken down his name twice with two different ages and places of birth. He either deliberately did so for reasons of his own, or, as seems more likely, there really were two men named John Ringo in the Cochise County area at the time of the 1882 census. Those two entries could simply be a clerical error, despite the unlikely possibility of Frank Leslie making a mistake and recording a friend twice with different ages and states of origin, or it may be one of the several other men named John Ringo from New York, Indiana, Kentucky or elsewhere who were a few years younger than John Peters Ringo and who would match the entry. Southern Arizona saw a large number of transient businessmen, miners and opportunists pass through between 1879 and 1882, and one named John Ringo may have been in the area on business briefly or for some time, at least long enough for Frank Leslie to record him in the 1882 Arizona Census. Who that second John Ringo was may never be explained. (The author does not believe that it was a clerical error.)

The two Ringos recorded in the census records in Cochise County in 1882 force us to consider whether the two differing images we have been handed down of the Johnny Ringo of screen, print,

myth and legend are not the same man. Perhaps both men were handy with a gun, trafficked in livestock and did business in and around Tombstone. We have to wonder whether those two men named John Ringo, one known and liked by the better element in town, the other running around in the back country stealing livestock and generally living the life of a badman were, over time, turned into a single Johnny Ringo as the result of a conflation in the collective memory of the Tombstoners of the 1880s of those two different men of the same name, one kindly and well mannered, the other a killer, bandit and drunk. If there truly were two men named John Ringo in Tombstone in 1882, which one was John Peters Ringo? Was he the soft spoken, well read gentleman remembered fondly by Billy Breakenridge, Kate Horoney and others, the drunkard, hardened thief and gunman described by other contemporaries and subsequent biographers, or were the two men alike in some of their ways and were mistaken for one another, eventually to be fused together over the years into a single, mythical character?

An observation on the cordial relationship between Big Nose Kate and Johnny Ringo: That social interaction may have simply been interest between two people, but considering that a good case has been made above to suspect that John Peters Ringo may have been a TB sufferer, Kate and Johnny's brief friendship may be explained on Ringo's part by Kate's relationship with Holliday. Ringo may have been very interested in making the acquaintance of a woman who was previously known to have tied herself to a Tuberculosis sufferer, for obvious reasons.

In time, perhaps more hard evidence will emerge. Will the Ringo letters that Burrows described as allegedly being in the possession of the Cushing family finally come to light and confirm or refute some or all of the above deductions and inferences? Perhaps it may be found that the John Ringo in Texas from 1875 through 1878 and John Peters Ringo were not the same man but two different men, one who served as a constable and one who ran with the Cooley Gang. Considering the above new information as examined in this article and the ramifications thereof, anything previously said or written about him should be questioned. History hasn't yet spoken it's last secret whisper about John Peters Ringo.

Three years after John's death, the Ringo sisters finally came into their inheritance. Records indicate that the original executor named in the will by the late Mary Ringo had died in 1878, two years after she did, leaving the estate without an administrator. The youngest Ringo sibling's 21st birthday came and went and the estate was still unresolved. In 1885, after the girls petitioned the court to appoint a new

administrator the will was finally probated and the sisters received their due. Not so for the fourth sibling. In the final probate papers<sup>34</sup>, after mention was made of the three sister heirs appears the following notation: 'and one son, John Ringo, now deceased.' In the end, Johnny Ringo didn't even get that last buck.

That said *Mary Ringo* died — testate, in the County of Santa Clara, State of California, ~~leaving him surviving~~ *That Thomas Bodley Esq* was named executor in her will, and that letters testamentary were issued to him Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> 1876 That said executor died about the month of September 1878 leaving said Estate unadministered That said deceased left her surviving three daughters *Fannie Jackson formerly Fannie Ringo*, <sup>Mattie</sup> ~~Emma~~ *Ringo* and *Mattie B. Ringo* and one son *John Ringo* now deceased

Mary Ringo Will, final mention of John as deceased

**Endnotes:**

1. *Santa Clara County (CA) Probate Records*, File No 74 10190-74 10204 (will of Mary Ringo)
2. *Liberty Tribune*, Liberty, Clay County MO, August 4, 1876
3. *John Ringo: the gunfighter who never was*, by Jack Burrows; The University of Arizona Press, 1987; Burrows references *The Journal of Mrs. Mary Ringo*, published privately in 1956 by Frank M. Cushing (Mary's grandson) which was a transcription of Mary Ringo's handwritten journal from the time of the family's emigration from Missouri to California in 1864.
4. *Santa Clara County, California, Register of Deaths, 1873-1896*, Pg 167-168, Line 4, Martin Ringo
5. *Liberty Tribune*, Liberty, Clay County MO, August 26 & Sept 16, 1864; eyewitness account of a fellow traveler in the wagon train contained in a letter, W. Davidson to R.H. Will, subsequently published by the newspaper.
6. *Tombstone*, Hollywood Pictures, 1993; Directed by George Cosmatos, screenplay by Kevin Jarre
7. *1870 United States Census, Population Schedule, City of San Jose, Ward 1, County of Santa Clara*, Pg 55, line 16
8. *Ringo*, Burrows, pg 129; Burrows' reference: letter from Charles R. Ringo to "Will" (Ringo, Cushing? Burrows uncertain) 1970
9. *1870 United States Census, Population Schedule, City of San Jose, Ward 1, County of Santa Clara*, Pg 55, lines 14-19
10. *San Jose City Directory & Business Guide of Santa Clara County, 1870*, W.J. Colahan & Julian Pomeroy, Pg 115

11. *Great Register of Kern County, California*, Pg. 20
12. *Arizona Territorial Census Records, Census Enumeration of Cochise County, Arizona 1882*, Pg 80, line 5
13. *History of Kern County, California* by Wallace M. Morgan, Historic Record Company, Los Angeles, California, 1914.
14. *San Antonio (TX) Express*, October 6, 1875, Austin (TX) *Daily Statesman*, October 17, 1875.
15. It also appears that he escaped prosecution for the murder of a man named Cheyney at about that same time: *State of Texas v. John Ringo, George Gladden et als*, District Court, Mason County TX.
16. *Ringo*, Burrows, pg 137
17. *ibid*, pg 137
18. *Santa Clara County (CA) Probate Records*, File No 74 10190-74 10204, (Estate Inventory & Appraisement, 1885)
19. *Great Register of Kern County, California*, pp.. 20, 34, 52
20. *Register of Actions and Fee Book, District Court, 1st Judicial District, Cochise County, Arizona*, case #170, John Ringo, inquest held July 14, 1882. Cause of death "unknown" but supposed gunshot wounds.
21. *Ringo*, Burrows, pg 129; Burrows' reference: letter from Charles R. Ringo to "Will", 1970
22. *Santa Clara County (CA) Probate Records*, File No 74 10190-74 10204, (Guardianship Petition, 1865) John P. Ringo and minor siblings request Mary Ringo to be appointed guardian.
23. *Ringo*, Burrows, pg 141; Burrows' reference: letter from Charles R. Ringo to "Will", May 9, 1970. The letter gives

an 1881 date for John Ringo's homecoming to San Jose. As stated in the body of this article, 1880 during the Census is also a good possibility considering the absence of any John Ringo in what would soon be Cochise County in the 1880 U.S. Census.

24. For a selection of news stories that give the account from start to finish, see: *Daily Alta California*, November 12, 1878; San Francisco (CA) *Bulletin*, November 13, 1878; Sacramento (CA) *Bee*, November 13, 1878; San Francisco (CA) *Bulletin*, November 14, 1878; Sacramento (CA) *Daily Bee*, November 16, 1878; San Francisco (CA) *Bulletin*, November 25, 1878; Sacramento (CA) *Bee*, January 27, 1879; Sacramento (CA) *Bee*, January 28, 1879. These are far from all of the available examples; at the beginning, this story was carried coast to coast in just about every major paper- I even found an account in a Philadelphia German language paper (WHS)

25. There is no death record for him by that name in San Jose or anywhere else in California. He went from job to job, working in his father's flour mill in 1880: *1880 U.S. Census*, Population Schedule, City of San Jose, Santa Clara (CA), Supv. Dist. 1, Enum. Dist. 243, Pg 46, Line 47

26. Moody was listed as being employed as a glove cutter in 1890: *Copy of the Great Register of Santa Clara County* (CA) 1880-1890, pg 267

27. In 1894 Moody was listed as being employed as a carpenter in 1894: *Copy of the Great Register of Santa Clara County* (CA) 1894, pg 169; This is the last first-person public record of Elton Moody. There is no record of his having served in the Spanish-American War.

28. When Martha J. Moody, his mother made out her will on December 26, 1899 she listed him as a living heir: *Santa Clara County, Will Books, Vol. M-N, 1904-1909*, (Will of Martha Moody)

29. Martha J. Moody died in 1904 and the heirs received their shares of the estate in January, 1906. A January 1906 mention in a Santa Cruz newspaper of Elton B. Moody having deeded a piece of property to his brother Edward "et als" after inheriting it from their mother Martha appeared directly under the distribution notice of the land from the estate to all of the heirs. That land transaction may not have required Elton Moody to be present in California at all; his brother may have simply had a deed recorded that bore his signature, however it was obtained: Santa Cruz (CA) *Weekly Sentinel*, January 27, 1906

30. *The Journal of Mrs. Mary Ringo*, published privately in 1956 by Frank M. Cushing, final entry in the original diary, made by Mattie Belle Cushing to provide an ending as the journal stopped before the journey ended.

31. *Ringo*, Burrows, pg 141; Burrows' reference: letter from Charles R. Ringo to "Will", May 9, 1970

32. Arizona Territorial Census Records, *Census Enumeration of Cochise County, Arizona 1882*, Pg 77, line 2; Ibid, Pg 80, line 5

33. Arizona Territorial Census Records, *Census Enumeration of Cochise County, Arizona 1882*, Pg 1, Leslie's name is listed as one of the two enumerators.

34. *Santa Clara County (CA) Probate Records*, File No 74 10190-74 10204 (Estate of Mary Ringo, Decree of Settlement of Final Account & Distribution, 1885)

## WWHA Six-Shooter Awards Presented at Cheyenne Roundup

WWHA's annual awards luncheon was held at the Little America Hotel & Resort in Cheyenne, Wyoming during the 12th Annual Roundup. An audience of some 150 witnessed the presentation of five "special" awards plus five writing awards for work completed in 2018.



### Special Six-Shooter awards were presented to:

**Gary L. Roberts:** Lifetime Contributions to Wild West History.

**Mike Bell:** International Award for Outstanding Writing and Research Accomplishments.

**Bob & Cheryl Sobba:** Outstanding Single Contribution to Wild West History - Regional Roundups in Idaho.

**Bill & Norma Yager:** Outstanding Single Contribution to Wild West History - Regional Roundups in Idaho.

**Greg Lalire:** Special Award for Outstanding Contributions to Wild West History - Editor *Wild West* magazine.

### Six-Shooter writing awards were presented to:

**John Boessenecker:** Best Book on Wild West History - *Shotguns and Stagecoaches: The Brave Men Who Rode for Wells Fargo in the Wild West*, Thomas Dunne.

**Jerry Lobdill:** Best Article on Wild West History - "How Jim Miller Killed Pat Garrett," *Wild West*, August, 2018.

**John C. Russell:** Best Scholarly Article - "Holding the Herd: Nelson Story's 1866 Cattle Drive," *Montana, The Magazine of Western History*, Winter, 2018.

**Roy B. Young:** Best *Journal Article* - "The Allen H. Parmer Story: Quantrill Guerrilla, Outlaw, Cattleman, Solid Citizen," *WWHA Journal*, September 2018.