

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013 VOLUME 3, ISSUE 8



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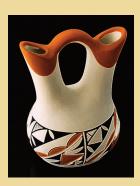
Did You Know?

Rosette on western saddles is a small leather disk with fluted edges and two slits for thongs or saddle strings to pass through, thus helping to secure a skirt to the saddletree.



2Laptop – Where your kitten naps. (A little humor from Cowboy Bob)

A Wedding Vase is a traditional, double- necked vessel used as a ceremonial wedding vessel.



happy holidays



from our
High Noon Family
to Yours

Linda, Joseph, Vanny, Theresa, Audrey, Robin, Curtis, Lynda

Western American Antiques of the Future From a Culture of Mass Manufacturing?

By Jayne Skeff

As we seem to be firmly entrenched now in the 21st century, with 2014 just around the corner, and, with the standard definition of "antique" being something 100 years or older, we need to be seriously looking at what, from a century of mass manufacturing, will be considered antiques? We have been so "spoiled," for lack of a better word, by being able to collect antiques knowing they were

made one-at-a-time by craftsmen whose work sustained the test of time and design.

Now, while it is likely that a large number of us won't be around to see what qualifies as an antique in 2075, with our knowledge and appreciation of quality in craftsmanship and design, we play a pivotal role in influencing younger collectors to help ensure that they understand that "antique" doesn't only mean old.

A visual comes to mind – the date is 2089, and it's the 100th Annual High Noon Western Americana Show and Auction. Linda and Joseph Sherwood are watching from their distant celestial seats as a pair of red and blue cowboy boots bought at Walmart in 1985 hits the block selling for a record \$????. They can't bear to watch this and, to add insult to injury, Sam Walton hovers in the distance, letting out a huge whoop. Is this what we're looking at? Massmanufactured crap taking center stage with record dollars?

See where this could go? YIKES! This has to stop now



before it gets to this point.

It's no mystery that the general American market has lost its appreciation for true craftsmanship and design, erring on the side of mass consumption for lesser dollars – but let's be assured, "these antiques" do not make. That bookcase from IKEA probably has a half-life of 1,000 years old but "old" doesn't necessarily

mean good.

On the positive side, fine art is able to stand aside from this impending debacle with both 20th and 21st century artists already being recognized as masters. But it's the other crafts and trades that are in a frightening position.

If anyone has ever been to the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in New York, a special branch of the Smithsonian, you breathe a small sigh of relief that there are institutions and organizations out there that "get" the problem. The Cooper-Hewitt has taken a strong role in educating what will be the "antiques" of tomorrow. No, it's probably not going to be those Walmart boots, that leather jacket from Macy's or that IKEA bookcase but mass manufactured products will play a substantial role in this picture.

As a rule of thumb, faced with the inevitable, when looking at what to collect from an age of mass manufacturing, they advise, "From all items that were massed, choose those that are out of production and

represent the highest design of the time." The Cooper-Hewitt further suggests that, even while mass produced, try to acquire items whose prototype or initial design, won designs awards, were exhibited in museums



or published in books. And, as always, a big designer name attached helps a lot.

If you think you may have bought an object that fits this criteria, always make sure you save the receipt. IMPORTANT: Oddly enough, the printed receipt will add value 100 years from now so, when you get asked, "do you want a printed receipt or an email receipt," GET THE PRINTED. We can be fairly sure that the paper and ink will last 100 years but who knows about 100 year-old emails...

Now, there's the whole other, more genuine side to what will be the true antiques on the block at High Noon's 100th Anniversary Western Americana Auction. These will be the boots, the belts, the jewelry, the blankets and the furniture made by today's one-of-a-kind and one-at-a-time contemporary craftspeople. This January, as you are walking through the High Noon Show, stop and take a closer look at the TCAA exhibit, for example. Look closer at the new artisans throughout the event, working in the traditions of the masters that came before. You may not realize this, but the works from many of these contemporary artisans are already in the Smithsonian and/or the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. These assuredly will be the antiques of the future. So, when you hear the words "heirloom quality," indeed, take a second look.



Bits & Pieces
High Noon 2014 Dealer
Update from "T"

Howdy High Noon Exhibitors,

The New Year is just a few weeks away and you know what that means! Yep, it's High Noon show time once again! Yeehaw!

Confirmation packets will be mailing soon via the US Postal Service. If you've moved recently or are traveling and need your packet sent to a different address, please let me know asap. Emailing your packet to you is also an option if that would be more convenient. Just let me know.

You can reach me at the High Noon office: 310-202-9010 or e: theresa@highnoon.com

As usual, we are full to capacity and very excited about the upcoming show and auction and seeing you, our High Noon family once again. Happy New Year and I wish you all a great show!

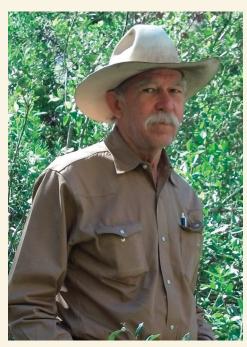
Happy Holidays, T



SHOW DEALER SPOTLIGHT

Milo Marks

Incredible Western Furniture from Meridian, Texas By Jayne Skeff



"It was back in 1984 that Teddi and I decided to start making furniture," said Milo as he was riding his motorcycle and talking on the phone, cruising through Arizona. "We'd been working hard ranching, raising horses and quite a bit

of cattle, but we wanted something that would turn money a little faster so we started making furniture." And indeed, for about 15 years, Milo and Teddi created beautiful, rich and one-of-a-kind Western and horn furniture.

Now, I was warned by his wife, Teddi, that Milo is a man of few words but I did get him to talk a bit about what he and Teddi created and the legacy that lives on today.

As avid antiquers, they were both drawn to the idea of creating furniture with a look reminiscent of the 1880s when longhorn furniture was the rage. They were also determined and very successful in creating furniture that would last generations. In an interview years ago, Milo commented that "our stuff is so sturdy, you could do the *Texas Two-Step* in it."

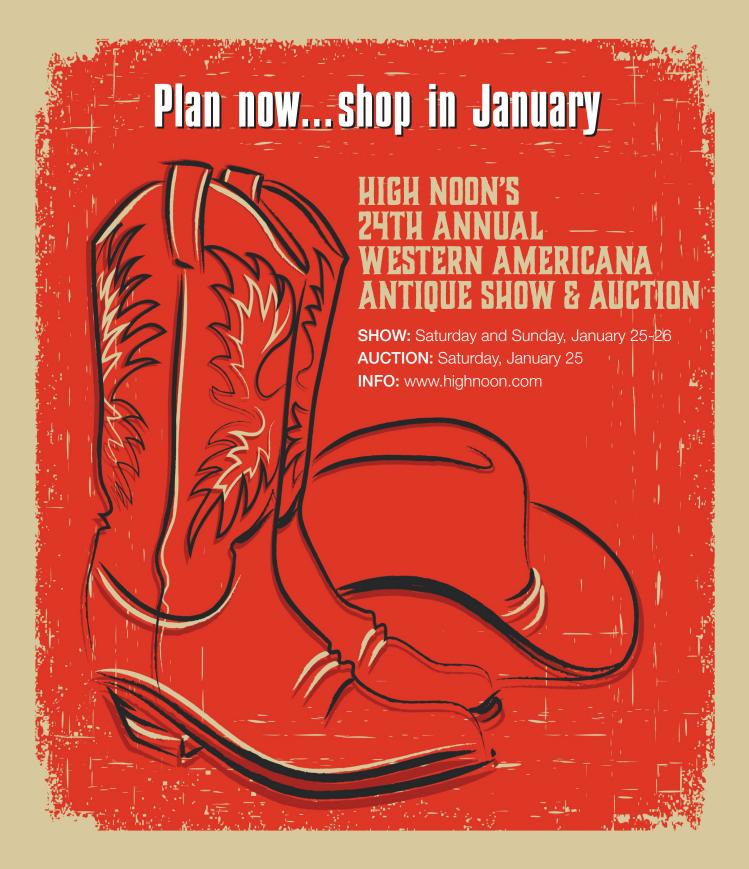
Sturdy, beautiful and truely Western, that is what they sold, by word-of-mouth and at shows across the country. "We mainly sold our work and took orders at cutting shows. "That demographic seemed to really appreciate what we did," said Milo.

"But, to be honest, I have to tell you I got tired of the extremely difficult work of sawdust and wood. "When I asked Teddi not to take any more orders, it still took me two more years to finish those pieces that had been ordered." He follows up with a great laugh. "It was a great business though."

When asked how he came to be such a master craftsman, he poo-poos that statement. "Naw, I'm not a craftsmen I don't think." How wrong he is about that. Whether he likes it or not or likes wood anymore, a master craftsman he is.

Today, Milo has moved on to "softer" pastures. "Today, I'm happy around horses, cows and old motorcycles. I love to do a bit prospecting and exploring as I ride."

Milo and Teddi, their personalities are wonderfully irreverent, smart and infectiously funny. After 50 years together, the legacy they have left us in creating some of the finest Western furniture, is what we will look forward to passing on to future generations.





Linda's Feed Bag

Snickerdoodle Bread

From one of our favorite High Noon moms: Elayne McCracken

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 34 cup sour cream
- 1 pkg Hershey's cinnamon chips
- 3 Tb sugar
- 3 tsp cinnamon

Preparation:

Cream butter, sugar, salt and cinnamon until fluffy. Add eggs and mix well.

Add vanilla and sour cream and mix well.

Mix flour and baking powder in a separate bowl. Add to wet ingredients and mix until all combined.

Add cinnamon chips and stir into batter. Set aside.

Spoon batter into 4 mini loaf pans until about ¾ full.

Mix 3 Tb sugar and 3 tsp cinnamon in a bowl and sprinkle over the batter in each loaf pan.

Bake at 350° for 35-38 minutes. Let cool before removing from pan.



Thank you Mama Elayne!



Amy Hoban

(1951-2013) Friend, Designer, and High Noon Family Dealer

TCAA tells us, "It ain't dead, folks!"

The future did not appear promising for those who built custom, handcrafted treasures for horsemen of the West. Even revered Reno, Nevada, bit and spur maker Al Tietjen advised his own son to become a welder rather than eek out a living following in his footsteps."

BUT...

The **Traditional Cowboy Arts Association** recently celebrated their 15th anniversary. Chuck Stormes noted that, "Founding members recognized an urgent need to preserve an appreciation for fine craftsmanship and respond with an aggressive education program that continues to spur a renaissance in functional Western art." Saddlemaker Robert Raber observed that this organization has given him and many other craftsmen a renewed energy. "There never has been a time when there's been this amount of information combined with such openness among saddle makers and other craftsmen."

Though a few contemporary gear shows had received popular acclaim by 1998, the TCAA founders realized that the leadership of an association of craftsmen must come from within to have an impact on the field-the makers needed to lead and be responsible for their own organization. It is intriguing to note that it was a common cause that brought these men together. They all had successful careers and more orders than they could fill, yet, each felt an obligation to change the prevailing course of their trades.

And so the TCAA was born.

After 15 years these Western creations have set a new standard and spurred on many young men and women. There is renewed growth in the time-honored trades of saddle making, rawhide braiding, bit and spur making as well as Western silver-smithing. At major gatherings or auctions you no longer hear talk of "these dying arts" and "work that just isn't done anymore." You are more likely to hear knowledgeable collectors referring to work they have found across the country that reflects "new levels of quality and ability."

The annual fall exhibition at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum also has been viewed as influential as the educational programming. "In a few short years the members of the association," asserts Scott Hardy, "transitioned from their dream of artistic freedom – a release from the shackles of the customer's specific likes and dislikes – to creating an artistic exhibition that revealed new directions for the entire concept of Western craft and equestrian fineries." First and foremost, the intent of the annual exhibition is to place on public view special, never before seen works of national importance.

This emphasis on education is evidenced by the creation in 2012 of an annual TCAA Fellowship program and the Emerging Artists Competition at the High Noon Western Americana auction and sale. In January 2014 the second annual competition will attract rawhide braiders as well as bit and spur makers from across the West. Current TCAA President, Ernie Marsh, observed that, "Given TCAA's focus on the education of our trades from its inception in 1998, Western enthusiasts should expect to see a lot of new talent out there – some of whom may wish to represent the future of the TCAA."

Be sure to visit the FUTURE at the High Noon Show and Auction on Jan 25-26, 2014 in Mesa. Their addresses in the show are: 1 End of the Trail Crossing and 11 Dances With Wolves Pass.

Don Reeves

McCasland Chair of Cowboy Culture National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

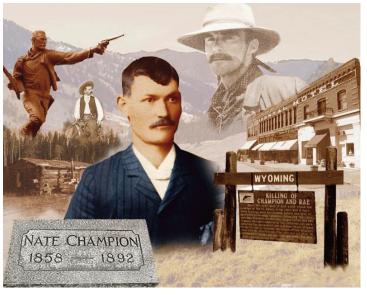
From Our Readers

Hello there, High Noon,

I did not realize that we live in the same town, LA. I like your pictures and the theme of your publication. In Johnson County WY, 1892, there was an invasion by the cattle barons to eradicate so called cattle rustlers. It started and stopped, when they met up with Nate Champion, my great, great, grandfather, at the KC Ranch. They surrounded him and Nic Ray, killing Nik at first and then with hails of

periodic gunfire, they loaded up his cabin with lead shot. He amazingly had the instincts to not only hold off some 50 well-armed gunmen, called regulators, but also to record the days events in his journal as they happened. Unlike any other event of it's type, we are able to actually know what took place during that long 7 hour siege. It culminated with them setting the cabin ablaze and forcing Nate to make his historic *Final Run*. It was 28 bullets that drove him to the ground as he emerged. Due to his actions the invasion failed, saving countless lives of the people in Johnson County. There are many more details to be told, however, I will save those for the film that I am developing about Nate, his life and the Johnson County War, 1892.

Today there is a Bronze of Nate making that final run, it stands tall in front of the Jim Gatchell Memorial Museum in Buffalo, WY. It was named by sculptor, D. Michael Thomas, *Nate Champion's Last Run*.



restless spirit, it may well be the one of Cowboy Nate Champion's. His reputation's been prodded and slaughtered as if cattle baron's beef. The movie Heaven's Gate offered an obscure version of the Johnson County War, depicting Nate as a cold blooded killer/stock detective. Stories of the Century, Nate Champion, indicates Nate as a dangerous man, with

If ever there was a

a nasty attitude.

In some ways, having an Ancestor that was an outlawed cattle rustler, just sounded cool. However, when I started digging for information, I found a Nate Champion that people know nothing about.

I grew up a surfer in Los Angeles, but always felt and looked like a Cowboy. Acting aspirations have given me lots of different jobs in the film business. With my love for Films and Cowboys it seems a no-brainer that I make a film, correctly telling history, as it really was, and perhaps settle the spirit of one restless soul. I would like to hear from folks. Please visit me on Face Book, *The Ballad of Nate Champion*.

So, this is my smoke signal to you, thanks for reading, I hope the signal came through. Thank you!!!

With Warm Regards, Dale Champion

The Curious Career of "Mysterious Dave" Mather

By Ron Soodalter: Author, Artist, & New Grandpa

In the West of the 1870s and '80s, law enforcement was an inexact science, and communities frequently elected or appointed their officials with little or no regard to past indiscretions. Many law officers often spent as much if not more time on the wrong side of the badge as they did defending the law - and "Mysterious Dave" Mather was no exception. Born David Allen Mather in Connecticut in 1851, and descended from the clan that spawned the notorious witch-killer Cotton Mather, Dave traveled west as a teenager, along with his younger brother Josiah, or "Cy," and reportedly joined an Arkansas outlaw gang. By the time he reached his thirties, he had been in and out of jails in Kansas, Texas and New Mexico, served as policeman, deputy sheriff, marshal and assistant marshal in various towns, and developed a reputation as a man not to be fooled with. After one arrest in Dallas, the Dallas Daily Herald referred to him as "the notorious horse-thief, stage robber and murderer, who has been wanted by the officers so long..."

It was while he was residing in Dodge City, Kansas, that Mather most notably showed that he was not a man to be fooled with, especially after he lost his job as assistant city marshal. A long festering feud between Mysterious Dave and the new assistant marshal, Tom Nixon, came to a head in two July 1884 altercations. In the first, no blood was spilled. The second clash, on the 21st, was the deadly one, though hardly the kind of showdown that epitomized classic Hollywood Westerns. In those sagebrush sagas, as well as in traditional Western novels, shootouts between two antagonists are generally conducted face-to-face, in the middle of Main Street, at dawn or high noon. Life hinges on the comparative speed of the combatants' draw, but fair play is the underlying premise upon which the duel is conducted. Not so in the historic West, and for good reason. Common sense dictated

that if you resented a man (especially a skilled pistoleer) enough to take his life, it was the height of foolishness to allow him an equal chance at ending yours. Most of the renowned gunmen who died violently were shot either from behind or from ambush. Consider the following: Wild Bill Hickok,

John Wesley Hardin, Bill Doolin, Ben Thompson, John King Fisher, William "Billy the Kid" Bonney, Jesse James and Pat Garrett. Thanks to Mysterious

Dave's actions on the night of July 21, 1884, you can add the name "Thomas Clayton Nixon" to that list.

Mather – also known as "New York Dave"

– was a frequent companion and cohort
of such nefarious characters as "Dirty
Dave" Rudabaugh and John Joshua
Webb, and was a prominent
member of the so-called "Dodge City

Gang," a criminal band that ruled East Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1879-80. At the same time, he served as the town's assistant marshal, and it was in this capacity that his first recorded killing took place. When an apparently inebriated former telegraph operator named Joe Castello made what the Las Vegas Daily Optic described as the "wrong play" and pointed his pistol at Dave, Mather did not hesitate; he swiftly drew his sidearm, and dispatched Castello with one shot.

The town eventually grew weary of the gang's shenanigans, and assembled its own vigilance committee. A note of warning published by the local newspaper, and addressed "To Murderers, Confidence Men, [and] Thieves," promised that all those offenders who failed to leave town forthwith "will be summarily dealt with...if [we] have to HANG...every violator of the law in the country." The warning had the desired effect. Within a short time, the members of the gang which the Optic had described as "the most desperate men on the plains" – and which included Dave Mather – departed for less finicky venues.

May 1883 found Dave in Dodge City, Ford County,

Kansas, during a feud between a saloon owner and the "reform" element of the city. It has come to be dubbed the "Dodge City War." One of the primary players was the mayor, Lawrence Deger, and opposing him, a diminutive gambler appropriately named Luke Short, co-owner of the Long Branch Saloon. While Deger collected an assortment of townspeople on his side, Short aligned to his cause such luminaries as Wyatt Earp, W.B. "Bat" Masterson, and Charlie Bassett. Anticipating violence, and seeing the need for a neutral assistant marshal to work with non-partisan city marshal Jack Bridges, the city fathers appointed Mysterious Dave to the post – despite the fact that four years earlier, The Ford County Globe, Dodge's major newspaper, had named him as a regular associate of notorious horse thief Dutch Henry Born. Dave also managed to win election to the post of Ford County deputy sheriff, under Sheriff Pat Sughrue.

The "war" was resolved without bloodshed, and Mather continued to serve relatively effectively as assistant marshal. However, the opposing political party won the next election, and the new mayor, George Hoover, fired both Mather and Bridges and appointed his own party choices, Bill Tilghman and Thomas Clayton Nixon, as marshal and assistant marshal respectively. Both had reputations as tough, capable men, but Tom Nixon was something of a local legend.

Nixon had been a fixture in the region since the only structure to break the horizon was Fort Dodge. A Southerner by birth, he had come west and tried his hand at prospecting before moving with his family in 1870, to the site of what would soon become Dodge City. He built a ranch in the area, and made a name for himself as one of the most skilled buffalo hunters on the Plains. Loath to stay at one job for very long, Nixon went into the wagon repair business, but in a political turnaround in 1881 (apparently, this was a fairly common occurrence in Dodge City), he was tapped to replace the existing assistant city marshal. He held the post for the next two years, during which time he and an associate named Orlando "Brick" Bond bought a saloon and dance hall.

After briefly losing his badge to Dave Mather in 1883, Nixon reclaimed it after Hoover's election as mayor. Jack Bridges, Mather's former boss, seems to have accepted the fact of his replacement with relative equanimity. Mather, however, harbored a deep resentment toward Nixon. It was the first step in a dance that would leave one of the men dead and the other on trial for his life.

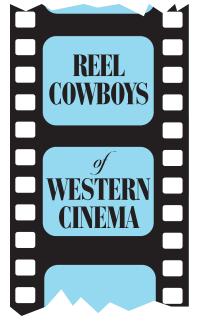
In May 1884, while still serving as Ford County deputy sheriff, Dave Mather bought the Opera House Saloon, in partnership with one David Black. They immediately set about converting it into a dance hall, an "improvement" that the new mayor was determined to stop. He and his city council met specifically to address the issue, and passed a new ordinance, stating, "[I]t shall be unlawful for any person or persons to keep or maintain in the city of Dodge City, Kansas, what is commonly known as a dance hall...where lewd women and men congregate for the purpose of dancing or otherwise."

To Mather, the ordinance itself was bad enough; what poured fuel on the flames was the glaring fact that, while directing the ban at Dave and his partner, the city fathers did nothing to enforce the new restrictions on a rival saloon and dance hall, the Lady Gay. Further exacerbating the situation, the Lady Gay was owned by none other than Dave's newly appointed replacement, Assistant Marshal Tom Nixon.

To his credit, Dave left his pistol in its holster this time, and sought retribution through commerce. He and his partner dropped the price of beer to five cents a glass – considerably less than the Lady Gay and the other city saloons were charging. In response, Tom Nixon got the Dodge City saloon owners to band together and put pressure on the brewers and wholesalers to withhold sales from the Opera House, effectively causing Dave's beer supply to dwindle to nothing.

The recent election and the saloon war were sufficient reasons to create the bad blood between Dave Mather and Tom Nixon; however, according to Mather biographer Jack DeMattos, there were contemporary reports of further animosity between the two men, over the affections of a woman. Zoe Tilghman, Bill Tilghman's widow, later wrote that the femme fatale who had won Mysterious Dave's heart, or at least his attention, was none other than Nixon's wife, Cornelia.

Continued on page 16



A Century of Silver Screen Heroes on Horseback

No. 17 in the Series

By Gary Eugene Brown

Born a Southerner, he was a true gentleman; protector of children and the weaker sex; always displayed proper manners; was dignified; had a private prep school education; married into a wealthy, high society family; was a principled, yet private man; and a patriot who served his country. His family assumed he would eventually head up the major textile company where his father was a partner; however, he surprised everyone, including himself, as he ended up in Hollywood, destined to be an actor. He became a major star in cinema for 30+ years, the majority of which was spent filming westerns, 60 of them. He rose to being among the top 10 actors at the box office four years in a row. On location, he would read the Wall Street Journal until his next scene. Unlike many

others, our featured actor knew when it was time to leave the sound stage lights and pancake makeup behind. After all, he had invested wisely which enabled him to retire comfortably. He went on to live another 27 years. His prolonged absence from filmdom and the overall decline in traditional values portrayed on the screen prompted the question in 1974, by the Statler Brothers: Whatever Happened to:

RANDOLPH SCOTT

George Randolph Scott entered this world on January 23, 1898 in the wrong place, no fault of his own. His mother, Lucille Crane Scott, during the late stage of her pregnancy, left their home in Charlotte, North Carolina to visit relatives in Orange, Virginia. George Randolph decided he didn't want to wait any longer and by birth, not by choice, he became a Virginian. However, he would tell others he was born in North Carolina. Lucille and her husband George, a textile engineer, would raise four daughters and their only son in a comfortable environment befitting "southern royalty." Randy as he preferred to be called, attended the prestigious Woodberry Forest School during his prep years (1914-1917), where he participated in baseball and football. Randy also was heavily involved in social activities on campus.



As related by Robert Nott in his well-researched and detailed book: *The Films of Randolph Scott*, Scott's high school chum Andrew Hariss in an article written in 1987, shared that the two joined the US Army in WW I (1917-18) as Artillery Observers with the 2nd Trench Mortar Battalion in war-torn France. They would serve by themselves in remote locations on 24-hour shifts. Hariss recalled, "Each new noise coming out of the tense

darkness of the long nights released our adrenalin and accelerated our blood circulation, resulting in the tightness of our trigger fingers." "After every close call - and there were many - we ended with a labored and thankful smile, the reading of our personal pocket Testaments, and the blessing of our dog tags and the St. Christopher crosses on our necklaces." Hariss also commented, "As close as we were, we always reserved a sort of privacy between us. I always felt Scotty was not comfortably designed to be an actor, which he most certainly became. My realistic evaluation of him based on the very hard and intimate conditions we jointly endured in the lines with infrequent rest periods from May to November 1918 enabled me to observe the patriotic Christian realist he was."

Scott attended Georgia Tech where he played football until an injury halted his gridiron prowess. Later he transferred to the University of North Carolina where he obtained a degree in Textile Engineering and Management. Scott worked as an accountant with the Scott-Charnley textile company; however, he realized that he was not cut out to be a "green eye shade" bean counter type and told his parents, to their chagrin, that he wanted to become an actor. Scott and his friend Jack Heath traveled to tinsel town along with a letter of introduction from his father to the industrialist Howard Hughes, whom his father had previously met. Bobby J. Copeland, dedicated to keeping the memories of the reel cowboys alive, in his biography RANDOLPH SCOTT, Dignity in the Saddle shared a reflection from Scott regarding the elusive Mr. Hughes: "My friend Jack Heath and I finally met Howard Hughes, and we played a lot of golf with him. We'd been acting like a couple of hick tourists anxious to see the inside of a big studio, so I asked Hughes if he could get us on a movie set so we could watch how films were made. Instead of doing that, he got us jobs as extras working four days on a George O'Brien comedy film (Sharp Shooters, Fox, 1928)." Shortly thereafter Scott was asked to be a dialogue coach for Gary Cooper in Owen Wister's The Virginian, an all-talkie western (Paramount, 1929). Hughes, after seeing the O'Brien film with Scott as an extra, arranged a meeting for him with legendary director C.B. DeMille.

DeMille gave Scott a bit part in his upcoming film *Dynamite* (1929) and recommended he first hone his craft at the Pasadena Playhouse. After two years of working on stage plays, Scott decided that perhaps an actor's life was not for him. Hollywood didn't come calling. He was going to return to the textile company of his father;

however, Margaret Fawcett, daughter of actor George Fawcett, encouraged the frustrated thespian that he should read for a part in a play Under a Virginia Moon, that her mother was producing (1932). Reluctantly, Scott canceled his plans to return home and got the part. Actor Leo Carrillo saw Scott in the play and cast him in an uncredited role in his next movie The Broken Wing (1932). After the release of the film, four different studios wanted Scott to do a screen test. However, Paramount signed him to a \$400 a week contract...a tidy sum in 1932!

Paramount cast Scott in several nonwestern roles; however, the studio was perplexed in terms as to how best to showcase their new, tall, blond Adonis. After all, they also had Gary Cooper under contract. As such, they decided to use Scott in low budget westerns beginning with the Zane Grey story - Heritage of the Desert (1932), directed by Henry Hathaway. The director recognized that these films were made to only serve as one part of a double feature which reduced the running time to approximately 60 minutes. After a few more melodramas, Paramount remade Zane Grey's Wild Horse Mesa (1932). Scott was asked to grow a mustache for these Grev remakes so they could use stock footage from A westerns filmed during the 20s, starring the mustached, major Western star Jack Holt. The third Zane Grev film The Thundering Herd (1933), sandwiched between non-cowboy movies, could have been an A western if it were not for being only a 59 minute film. More melodramas and comedies followed and then another Grev outing Sunset Pass (1933). It was the first role for Scott as a villain, which he did only a few times in his career. However, the film wasn't noteworthy. Man of the Forest, story by Grey, followed shortly thereafter, also directed by Hathaway. The film



had an all-star, supporting cast including Harry Carey, Noah Berry, Barton McLane, Big Boy Williams and a young Buster Crabbe. During the filming a so-called trained cougar attacked Scott sinking his claws in the actor's back and his teeth into his shoulder. Scott was smart enough to play dead. When asked why the trainer didn't stop the attack immediately, he replied "It was a good take and I didn't want to spoil the scene." The Hollywood Reporter noted: "Better-than-average Western entertainment. Everybody in the cast shows Scott up as an actor, but he's good-looking, rides a horse well and acts the he-man without chewing scenery." His leading lady Verna Hillie validated the review by saying, "He really set the tone as a gentleman. He was impressively handsome. Those close ups where I stared at him are for real."

Zane Grey's novel *To the Last Man* (1933) followed. However, Paramount provided Hathaway additional resources to make a quality western with an extended running time of 74 minutes. The story was a theme not

Continued on page 20

Mysterious Dave - continued from page 13

Conjecture aside, events soon took a violent turn. On the evening of July 18, 1884, Dave Mather was standing at the top of the stairs of his Opera House saloon, when Tom Nixon, standing at the foot of the stairs, took a shot at him. According to a report in the next day's *Dodge City Democrat*, "The bullet went wild, and struck the woodwork of the porch. Mather's face was considerably powder burned, and the little finger of his left hand was injured by a splinter." In retrospect, Tom made two serious mistakes: he shot at Mysterious Dave, a shootist of some renown – and he missed. According to Zoe Tilghman, the marshal made this fact clear to his assistant: "You ought to shoot straight, or not at all, with a man like Dave. Watch out, now. He'll get you."

These were prophetic words indeed. Sheriff Sughrue immediately arrested Nixon, but Mather refused to lodge a complaint – which should have caused Tom to be especially alert. It was clear to many of Dodge's citizens that the affair was not over; three nights later, Dave proved them right.

In the classic Western novels and movies, shootouts between two antagonists are generally conducted faceto-face, in the middle of Main Street, at dawn or high noon. Life hinges on the comparative speed of the combatants' draw, but fair play is the underlying premise upon which the duel is conducted. Not so in the historic West, and for good reason. Common sense dictated that if you resented a man - especially a skilled pistol fighter - enough to take his life, it was the height of foolishness to allow him an equal chance at ending yours. Most of the renowned gun men who died violently were shot either from behind or from ambush. J.B. "Wild Bill" Hickok, John Wesley Hardin, Bill Doolin, Ben Thompson, John King Fisher, William "Billy the Kid" Bonney, and Jesse James were just some of the more prominent pistoleers whose deaths came as a complete surprise. On the night of July 21, 1884, was added the name of Thomas Clayton Nixon.

Under the banner, "The Murder," the *Globe Live Stock Journal* of the 22nd reported that "while assistant Marshal Thos. Nixon was on duty at the corner of Front street and First Avenue, Mysterious Dave, (Dave Mathers [sic]), who keeps a saloon in the Opera House, came down stairs and deliberately shot him

through." The account goes on to say that Mather "called to Nixon...and as Nixon turned around Mather commenced shooting at him, firing four shots...killing him instantly." Apparently, the shooting took place in the same spot as Nixon's attempt on Mather's life three nights before. True to form, Dave shot straight; the coroner would later report that at least three, and possibly all, of the shots were fatal. One of the rounds that passed through Tom struck a nearby cowboy in the leg. Mather was immediately arrested, and as he was marched off to jail, uttered his sole regret: "I ought to have killed him six months ago."

When a violent situation suddenly erupts to the accompaniment of several staccato explosions, the accounts of the eyewitnesses will vary. Predictably, in the preliminary investigation, witnesses gave differing versions of the shooting. Fred Boyd, who testified that he stood "about 8 rods and 10 feet distant" at the time of the shooting, swore that Nixon was leaning on the saloon door, watching a game inside. Mather twice called out, "Tom!" whereupon Nixon started to turn, followed by "the report of a revolver." Nixon, said Boyd, exclaimed either "Oh! I am shot!" or "Oh! I am killed!" Boyd reported that Dave fired the first shot into Tom while Nixon was standing, and the last three rounds as Tom lay on the ground. "Tom Nixon," swore Boyd, "neither drew nor attempted to draw any weapons."

A second witness, Andrew Faulkner, testified that he heard the first shot, then watched as Dave Mather, standing only four or five feet from Tom Nixon, fired three more shots into Nixon's prone body. Holding his revolver – reportedly a "Colt's .45 calibre" – in his right hand, Mather then "walked to the foot of the stair and came up the steps."

Following Boyd to the witness stand, H.V. Cook swore that Nixon was not leaning on the door, but was "walking toward the door of the saloon," when he heard Mather call, "Oh, Tom," and "wheeled" just prior to taking the first shot. Mather advanced to within four feet of Nixon as he continued to fire.

The most interesting testimony came from Archie Franklin, the cowboy whom Mather had inadvertently wounded in the leg. His statement was taken as he lay in bed, "still suffering pretty severely." According to

Franklin, who had been leaning against a nearby post, Nixon "was walking along" as he approached Mather. "Both spoke," stated Franklin, "but I did not understand either one." Franklin testified that Nixon "did not fall after the first shot. He fell between the second and third shots. The second shot hit me." Franklin further stated that as the two men had walked toward each other, "Mather told him before he shot that he was going to kill him....I kind of think he said 'you have lived long enough." No other witness testified that either man spoke, other than for Mather's peremptory "Tom!" And yet, Archie Franklin, whose involvement in the shooting was perhaps more intimate than that of any other witness, described his position at the time of the shooting as close enough to have "heard them exchange words."

The next witness was something of a local celebrity: buffalo hunter, gun fighter, and former Ford County sheriff W.B. "Bat" Masterson – and there is an interesting aspect to his testimony as well: "I was among the first to get to the body of Nixon after he was killed...He had his revolver on him. He was lying on it. It was in his scabbard. It looked as if it might have fallen partly out or *had been drawn partly out*." [author's italics] Assuming the pistol hadn't been dislodged from its heavy leather holster as he struck the ground, Nixon might have been trying to answer Mather's attack, even as he lay dying.

The August 4 edition of the *Topeka Commonwealth*, whose reporter sat beside the defendant during the proceedings, portrayed Mysterious Dave in detail for its readers: "He was calm and collected, and...the best observer of human nature could not have selected him as the man whose life was in jeopardy." The reporter described – somewhat inaccurately – Mather's career in law enforcement, and went on to state that Dave "is reported to have killed several men...It is said that at Las Vegas he came near hanging by a mob..."

The reporter's first-hand description of Mather shows a man cool under pressure: "During the trial, Mather sat quietly and apparently little concerned, whittling the edge of his chair, but to a close observer, taking in every word. Observing a reporter of the *Commonwealth* present [no doubt the writer of the article], he turned and advised us to give him a fair show when the other side of the story came to be told.

This remark was made in as nonchalant a manner as if we had been reporting [a] bull fight."

Dave was released on bail near the end of the month, and two months later, he was given a change of venue to Kinsley, Edwards County, with a trial date set for late December. Despite a rumor that he had been shot and killed in the meanwhile, Mather showed up for his trial. After hearing the evidence, the jury took "a very few minutes deliberation" to acquit him. According to the *Dodge City Times* of January 8, 1885, "The verdict was undoubtedly a proper one as the weight of the testimony showed that Nixon was the aggressor in the affray and that Mather was justified in shooting."

Mysterious Dave Mather had been acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. In retrospect, the verdict somewhat stretches the letter, if not the spirit, of the law. The fact that three days had passed between Tom's attempt on Dave's life and Mather's lethal response, and that Mather had earlier refused to pursue a legal means of removing Nixon as a threat, apparently had no influence upon the jury's decision. The justification was simple: Tom had tried to kill Dave, and had Dave not eliminated Tom as he did, sooner or later Tom was likely to try again. This was Old West justice in its most pragmatic form.

One would think that the anxiety of going through such a legal ordeal for several months, with his life hanging in the balance, would have caused Mysterious Dave to reflect on his good fortune, and perhaps exercise some restraint. This he did – for four months, at which point he and his brother, Cy, became involved in another shootout. The fight took place at the Junction Saloon on May 10, with another pair of brothers, John and David Barnes. The Barnes brothers had come to Dodge to "prove up on some land." By the end of the day, David Barnes would be lying dead on the floor of the saloon – which stood next door to the Opera House, and mere feet from where Dave had killed Tom Nixon the previous year.

By all reports, the row had begun when Dave Mather, who had lost a small amount of money to David Barnes at a game of seven-up, took the pot anyway, and threw the cards at Barnes. When Barnes complained, Dave struck him. At that point, pistols were drawn, and a melee ensued. According to the

Globe Live Stock Journal's May 12 coverage, David Barnes was killed, two bystanders were shot in the legs, and Mysterious Dave himself was "cut across the forehead..." The May 16 edition of the *Dodge City Democrat* reported that "every body who had a pistol was firing," and attributed the saving of additional lives to the fortuitous presence of Sheriff Sughrue.

The sheriff arrested the Mather brothers before the smoke had cleared. Ironically, Mysterious Dave's pistol was fully loaded, indicating that – although he had started the ruckus – he had not participated in the actual shooting. Nonetheless, both Mather boys were indicted for murder. Three weeks later, Dave was back in Kinsley's court, where he and Cy were allowed to post bond. Unwilling to try his luck in court a second time, on July 29 – months before their trials were scheduled to commence – Dave left Dodge City and Kinsley far behind him, taking Cy with him, and defaulting on the \$3000 bonds their friends had posted for them.

The brothers split up, never to meet again. Cy went to Colorado, while Dave briefly visited Topeka, and then traveled to the South Kansas town of New Kiowa. The August 20 edition of the *Dodge City Times* reported on Dave's appearance in New Kiowa: "Dave Mather, on Friday last was appointed City Marshal of New Kiowa, and at once entered upon the duties of the office. Dave was marshal at Dodge City, and also assistant marshal for a long time. Dave makes a good officer."

In those three short sentences, the newspaper made a record number of factual errors. In fact, Dave had not been appointed city marshal; the job was already taken, by one Mike O'Shea. Mather had never served as marshal of Dodge City, and his stint as assistant marshal was notably short-lived. And finally, there were many who would have questioned his qualities as an officer of the law, if not as a human being.

When Mather made his appearance in New Kiowa, it was in the company of Dave Black, his former partner in Dodge City's Opera House Saloon. The pair immediately made their presence known. Within days of his arrival, Dave Black shot and killed a soldier in a saloon fight, and the authorities spirited him out of town a few jumps ahead of a lynch mob comprised of

some 100 soldiers. Although the killer had eluded the mob, word soon spread that the soldiers considered Mysterious Dave an equally satisfactory guest at a necktie party. Upon word that the mob was about to seek him out, Mather, who had raised a few hundred dollars for his friend's defense fund, allowed discretion to play the better part of valor, and fled. True to character, he took the defense fund with him.

It is here that Mysterious Dave Mather lives up to his nickname. He disappeared completely from the annals of western history. There continued to be reported sightings, as well as accounts of his death. A snippet in a May 17, 1886, Dallas newspaper reported an unidentified body found beside a railroad track, with a bullet wound in the head. Some came to believe the dead man was Dave Mather. This was never proven. According to biographer DeMattos, who has run every conceivable iteration of Mather's demise to ground, there were some who claimed that Dave lived "well into the 1920's and beyond," and that he committed crimes in New Mexico and California in the late 1880s under the name "Mysterious Dave" Taylor. One story had him serving as a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as late as 1922 - by which time he would have been 71. The Mounties' records refute this claim. Some accounts have him dying in Alberta, Canada, in 1916. One old acquaintance swore that Mather succumbed in Blaine, Washington, while serving as a U.S. Customs officer; neither the U.S. Customs Service nor the town of Blaine possesses a single mention of Mather. The stories persist. One improbable account appeared in Frontier Times magazine, in 1963. The most recent story did not describe Dave's death, but rather his capture by aliens! A publication called Weekly World News ran an "eyewitness" story in February 1988, titled, "UFO Shocker: Did Aliens Kidnap Old West Lawman in 1889?"

They might as well have; to date, no reliable records exist that trace Mather's movements from the day he left New Kiowa on the run. Until and unless such records surface, the life and death of David Allen "Mysterious Dave" Mather – lawman, badman, conman, gambler, thief, and killer of Tom Nixon – must remain...well...mysterious!



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOW thru January 4, 2014 **Basketry Treasured** Tucson, AZ

NOW thru March 16, 2014 Cowboys Real & Imagined Santa Fe, NM

December 5-14, 2013 Cowboy Christmas Gift Show Las Vegas, NV

December 13-15, 2013 Monterey Cowboy Poetry & Music Festival Monterey, CA

December 18 - April 13, 2014 **The American West in Bronze, 1850-1925** New York, NY

January 1, 2014 **Tournament of Roses Parade** Pasadena, CA

January 16-19, 2014 Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering Golden, CO

January 25-26, 2014 **High Noon Show & Auction** Mesa, AZ

February 12-23, 2014 Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show Scottsdale, AZ

February 13-16, 2014 **10th Annual Spirit of the West Cowboy Gathering** Ellensburg, WA

February 19-23, 2014 **14th Annual Saddle Up Celebration** Pigeon Forge, TN

February 21-22, 2014 **Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering** Alpine, TX

March 8-9, 2014 **Tombstone Western Music Festival** Tombstone, AZ

April 24-27, 2014 Santa Clarita Cowboy Gathering Santa Clarita, CA



unlike that of Romeo and Juliet or the Hatfield and McCoy's. Esther Ralston was the leading lady, Noah Berry and Jack LaRue the villains and a soon to be megastar, four year old Shirley Temple in an uncredited role. Filmed on location at Big Bear Lake, it was the best of the Zane Grey stories to date. The Last Roundup (1934), based on Grey's The Border Legion, co-starred Joan Randall, Monte Blue, Fuzzy Knight and Fred Kohler. The film was well received as a B western with the *Hollywood Reporter* commending it in their review: "The Last Roundup is one of the best of the best Westerns. It packs a wallop that is high, wide and fancy." Scott also began showing signs of his being the strong, silent type Westerner he would portray throughout his lengthy career. Wagon Wheels (1934) was basically a remake of Gary Cooper's Fighting Caravans (1931), and they used much of the stock footage from the earlier film. Rocky Mountain Mystery (1935) with beautiful Ann Sheridan followed. However, it was the last of the Paramount Zane Grev westerns. Randolph Scott, in a rare interview as he did not like doing them, was appreciative of the

apprenticeship he received while making the films at Paramount. He said, "The work is hard, terribly hard. They usually make them in fourteen days working all hands six days a week and on Sunday. You get up at 4 o'clock and work all day under a broiling sun...when the sun sets you have a brief recess for supper and start making interior scenes which keep you going until about midnight...But I believe it is the finest training in the world...I faced every obstacle that a film actor or production unit can find."

The next six films were non-westerns with a new studio - RKO. However, a few are worth noting. Roberta (1935) a Pedro Berman picture, starred Irene Dunne, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Scott received fourth billing. The musical comedy led to a lifetime friendship with one of Scott's closest friends, the one and only Fred Astaire. Randy was tall (6'3") and muscular and Fred was smaller (5'9") and graceful. The two became avid Los Angeles Dodgers fans after the team moved from Brooklyn. Both men were always classy gentlemen; however, at the ball park, they yelled and harangued the umpires with the best of them. She (1935) was produced by the legendary Merian C. Cooper, the creator of King Kong. The adventure story was based upon the novel by H. Rider Haggard, who previously wrote King Solomon's *Mine*. A popular Broadway singer/actress Helen Gahagan was selected to costar with Randolph Scott. It was her only film role. The actress was married to the wonderful actor Melvyn Douglas. Helen Douglas went into politics and served two terms in Congress from California. The next noteworthy RKO film was Follow the Fleet (1936), produced by Pandro S. Berman, directed by Mark Sandrich, music and lyrics by Irving Berlin and choreography by Hermes Pan. It starred Fred Astaire and Ginger

Rogers. Scott was the third lead and his love interest was big band singer Harriet Hilliard (later Harriet Nelson). Scott played the womanizing, love 'em and leave 'em sailor on shore leave. Fred Astaire, in his memoir Steps in Time, recalls a scene where he was to swing and hit Scott for his personal transgressions. He was apprehensive as he didn't have the experience that his costar had in pulling one's punch. "When the time came for me to swing, I got carried away and brought one way up from my shoe laces that really clipped Randy on the mouth, bringing blood and almost flooring him. The 'Sheriff' had every reason to be annoyed with me, but if he was, he never showed it. Always the Southern gentleman." In 1936, Randolph Scott was cast as Hawkeye in an United Artists production of James Fenimore Cooper's popular novel Last of the *Mobicans*. He was supported by Binnie Barnes, Heather Angel, Henry Wilcoxon, Phillip Reed, Robert Barrat and Bruce Cabot as the treacherous Magua. It is an A film in every aspect and a financial hit. Regarding Scott's performance, the London Times said, "Mr. Scott almost succeeds in making something human out of Hawkeye." The New York Times review included, "Young Mr. Scott is properly dashing as the heroic Hawkeye."

On a personal note, Randolph Scott along with Cary Grant were two of the most eligible bachelors in Hollywood in the 30s and early 40s. Both were also known to be legendary tightwads when it came to spending their own money. They became very good friends and roomed together to save money in a popular bachelor's pad at the beach. Actress Carol Lombard, commented on their being thrifty: "Cary opened the bills. Randy wrote the checks. And if Cary could talk someone out of a stamp, he mailed them." In 1936, Scott married Marion du Pont

Somerville, the heiress to the Du Pont chemical empire with their family home being Montpelier, former residence of President James Madison. His wife was not by any means attractive; however the saying is "love is blind." The marriage only lasted two years. Scott spent the majority of his time on movie sets in Hollywood and Marion was reluctant to leave her Grand National Steeplechase championship horses for a domestic life in make-believe land.

Scott co-starred in Mae West's *Go West, Young Man* (Paramount, 1936) and then with Irene Dunne and Dorothy Lamour in *High, Wide and Handsome* (Paramount,1936), a major studio film with well-produced musical interludes. It was a stretch for

Scott; however, under the direction of Rouben Mamoulian, he proved he could play a character which was completely foreign to his previous character roles. Adolph Zukor, Paramount's CEO, after previewing the film, told Oscar Hammerstein, who provided the lyrics (and Jerome Kern the music), "That's the greatest picture we ever made." However, Zukor changed his opinion when it was not a financial success. The New York Daily News noted, "Randolph Scott's

performance is outstanding because it fits the fine actor to a T...it was as purely a piece of Americana as the Declaration of Independence." The *New York Times* described it as a "richly produced, spectacular and melodious show...Mr. Scott's portrayal of (Peter) Courtland is resolute and consistently natural."

Scott was teamed up with Shirley Temple, who had become the most popular star in Hollywood, in Fox's *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1938). The female costar was Phyllis

Brooks, who was dating his pal Cary Grant at the time. The director, Alan Dwan, ordered Grant off the set, so Brooks would concentrate on her role. Scott would end his contract with Paramount and freelance, as soon as he completed an above average western – *The Texans* (1938) with Joan Bennett, Robert Cummings and Walter Brennan. In 1939, Scott played in an even better A western for 20th Century-Fox – Jesse James starring Tyrone Power as Jesse and Henry Fonda as Frank James. Produced by Darryl Zanuck and directed by Henry King. Only Gone with the Wind, The Wizard of Oz and The Hunchback of Notre Dame made more money at the box office in 1939 than Jesse James, Hollywood's greatest boom year for

cinema. Scott had fourth billing as a US Marshall; however, his part received several positive reviews. Susannah of the Mounties (1939) starring Shirley Temple followed, and then Frontier Marshall (1939) with Randolph Scott as Wyatt Earp and Cesar Romero as Doc Holiday. Directed by the veteran Alan Dwan, it is a solid B+ western, even though it stretches the Earp legend somewhat. Alan Dwan said later, "I liked Randolph Scott and practically everyone in the cast; I think it was well done." The New York Times

agreed: "Frontier Marshall is a cracking good Western, and in the movies there's nothing much better than that."

Scott's next western was a costarring role in Warner Brothers Virginia City (1940) with Errol Flynn and Miriam Hopkins, produced by Hal B. Wallis and directed by Michael Curtiz. Humphrey Bogart even joined the allstar cast. Flynn was not the most agreeable of actors and he was not enamored playing in westerns, having once referred to himself as the "Rich man's Roy Rogers." Hopkins complained too and Bogart was not happy either. However Randolph Scott remained the consummate professional. Curtiz complimented him by saying, "Randy Scott is a

complete anachronism. He's a gentleman. And so far he's the only one I've met in this business of self-promoting sons of bitches." The picture received mixed reviews.

Next, a non-western that was quite popular at the box office was RKO's *My Favorite Wife* (1940) with Scott playing second fiddle to his close friend and roommate Cary Grant and the regal Irene Dunne. Scott was able to show a rare, humorous side. The Boston Post stated,

"Slick, smart and sophisticated. The plot is preposterous, of course, but there is a laugh a minute." The *New York Post* gave kudos to Scott: "Randolph Scott as a muscular vegetarian is a pleasing departure from type-casting." As an aside, Scott and Grant had a beautiful home at the beach, referred to as "Bachelor's Hall," which drew a lot of attention from young starlets who were frequent visitors. Sadly, after the death of these two super stars, which were not able to defend themselves, they were characterized in smut

gnals

publications of their living an alternative lifestyle. Some ill-advised photos taken of the two, evidently staged by studio photographers, were used later to inflame the rumors. Former wives, family members and working colleagues of the two. vociferously denied these accusations. The best, direct response to these hurtful rumors, was uttered by the no nonsense director of Scott's last westerns, Budd Boetticher -"Bullshit!" The rumors probably surfaced earlier which sadly may have played into the two actors not keeping close in the later years of their life. However, when Randolph Scott was informed of the death of Cary Grant, he broke

When the Daltons Rode (Universal, 1940) received favorable reviews with the New York Times which referred to the film as a "titanic western...the picture itself is straight, fast Western fare, and for folks who like plenty of shootin', here is your gunpowder." Zane Grey's Western Union (20th Century-Fox, 1941) was produced by Harry Joe Brown and directed by Fritz Lang, and starred Robert Young and

down and sobbed.

Randolph Scott. Filmed on location in Kanab, Utah (Little Hollywood), it was truly an A western and was one of Scott's best performances. The *New York World Telegram* summed it up: "No matter how many Westerns you may have seen, *Western Union* is certainly one of the best of them...Randolph Scott's performance could scarcely be improved upon." The film was a financial success. *Belle Starr* (1941), which followed, on the other hand, was panned by the critics.

One of the most interesting roles for Scott in the early 1940s was *The*

Spoilers (1942), based on Rex Beach's novel, starring John Wayne and Marlene Dietrich, with Scott playing a sinister, yet charming con artist. The film is worth watching just to see the bare knuckle brawl between the Duke and Scott. The three stars, based upon the public's response to the film were immediately reunited in Pittsburgh (1942). The Desperados (Columbia, 1943) starred Scott, however the best roles went to Glenn Ford and Evelyn Keyes. Randolph Scott began to play the lead in war films during the early 40s with Corvette K-225 (Universal, 1943) being the best of the lot. He also

ventured forth as the co-star to Charles Laughton in United Artists Captain Kidd (1945). He should have stuck to westerns.

Earlier in 1942, Scott met attractive, Beverly Hills socialite, Patricia Stillman, who was twenty years younger. She had inherited a sizeable sum upon the death of her father. They were married in 1944. The two made a perfect couple and remained together for over 40 years, until his death. They had a home built in Beverly Hills adjacent to the Los Angeles Country Club (LACC). The two could not have children of their

own so they adopted two infants, son Chris and daughter Sandra. Scott, had a passion for golf. He didn't play just for the fun of it; he was a student of the game and became a scratch golfer. An amusing story was that the LACC at the time had a long standing policy of not allowing "actors" to join the exclusive, private golf club. Scott's response, supposedly to them was, "I'm no actor and I have a 100 films to prove it!" He also enjoyed gardening and loved to follow football and baseball. Scott remained a private person and rarely gave interviews.

> Abilene Town (United Artists, 1946), based upon a story by Ernest Haycox, was one of Scott's finest westerns. After making two more contemporary films, sometime in 1947, Scott decided to do what he did best, make only western movies. Routine oaters which followed were Badman's Territory (RKO, 1946); Trail Street (RKO, 1947) the first in the partnership between Scott and veteran producer Harry Joe Brown; and Albuquerque (Paramount, 1948). However, Coroner Creek (Columbia, 1948),

another Scott-Brown production, was a critically acclaimed western. Robert Nort claims it was one of Scott's best performances ever. Return of the Bad Men (RKO, 1948), costarring Robert Ryan, Anne Jeffreys and Gabby Hayes, was an above average cowboy movie. The offbeat The Walking Hills (Columbia, 1949), filmed on location in Death Valley and the Alabama Hills, included Ella Raines, John Ireland, Arthur Kennedy, Edgar Buchanan and the great folk singer Josh White. Also, Stan Jones, a Park Ranger and Technical Advisor on the film, wrote the popular Ghost Riders in the Sky.

Canadian Pacific (20th Century-Fox, 1949) was a pedestrian film as was Fighting Man of the Plains (20th Century-Fox, 1949) and The Doolins of Oklahoma (Columbia, 1949). The Nevadan (Columbia, 1950) fared better and was supported by a strong performance by Forrest Tucker. Colt .45 (Warner Brothers, 1950), The Cariboo Trail (20th Century-Fox, 1950), Sugerfoot (Warner Brothers, 1951), Santa Fe (Columbia, 1951, and Fort Worth (Warner Brothers, 1951) were only run of the mill films. Man in the Saddle (Columbia, 1951), however, was a notch above the routine western. Andre DeToth at the

helm would go on to direct several more Scott-Brown westerns. The cast included Joan Leslie, Ellen Drew, John Russell, Cameron Mitchell and Alexander Knox. Joan Leslie, regarding her leading man said, "A man like Scott - and I'd have to put him in a category with Gary Cooper and Joel McCrea - was a total professional, and a real Southern gentleman." DeToth would direct the next Scott western – Carson City (Warner Brothers, 1952) which did well for the studio and may be the best of the

Warner Brothers outings. Hangman's Knot (Columbia, 1952) written and directed by Roy Huggins, costarred close family friend and godmother to Scott's son Chris - Donna Reed. It was a good script and was supported by a fine cast including Lee Marvin. Later in 1952, Scott starred in Man Behind the Gun for Warner Brothers and then in 1953 The Stanger Wore a Gun for Columbia. Neither film was particularly noteworthy, however they were cheaply made and rendered a profit. Likewise, Thunder Over the Plains and Riding Shotgun, both in 1953 for Warner Brothers, were mediocre as well. The last of the

DeToth westerns for Warners, *The Bounty Hunter* (1954) was a commendable film. The *Hollywood Reporter* said, "Scott gives a driving, hard-boiled performance that makes you hope this film will do for him what *High Noon* did for Gary Cooper." *Ten Wanted Men* (Columbia, 1955), *Rage at Dawn* (RKO, 1955), *Tall Man Riding* (Warner Brothers, 1955), and *A Lawless Street* (Columbia, 1955) were nothing to brag about and in some people's minds, Randolph Scott was getting "long in the tooth."

Budd Boetticher was brought in to



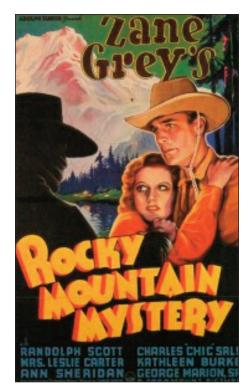
direct a story and screenplay by the versatile Burt Kennedy, entitled Seven Men from Now (Warner Brothers, 1956). It is considered one of Scott's finest works. Once beautiful Gail Russell, who was fighting the curse of demon rum, perhaps as a favor for the Duke whose Batjac Films produced the movie, played the heroine. Lee Marvin and Don "Red" Barry were the villains. Filmed in the Owens Valley, the movie, which cost \$700,000, ended up bringing in \$1.7 + million at the box office. As such, Ranown Productions (Scott-Brown) signed Boetticher and Kennedy for other Scott westerns. Motion Picture

Daily said, "You've got to go back to the late William S. Hart, greatest of the motion picture West's strong, silent men, for a full precedent with which to compare this story and its star, Randolph Scott. Like all of Hart heroes, Randolph Scott is a stern, unsmiling, straight-shooting avenger who makes no apology for killing his men." Variety reported the film was: "one of Randolph Scott's better Western entries. Scott delivers a firstrate performance." The Cincinnati Star said, "Randolph Scott is the greatest living phenomenon in motion pictures. The man must be 200 years old and he still looks young enough

> to be John Wayne's son." I'm sure Batjac Films was not too pleased with that review! 7th Calvary (Columbia, 1956), directed by Joe Lewis was not a commendable film. However, Budd Boetticher and Burt Kennedy were brought back to work on the next Scott film, based on a story *The Captives* by Elmore Leonard. It was entitled The Tall T (Columbia, 1957). A dark, violent film for the day, it received favorable reviews and again turned a profit. The cast included Maureen Sullivan (Tarzan's Jane) and the outlaws were first rate -

Richard Boone, Skip Homier and Henry Silva. Arthur Hunnicutt provided the comic relief. *Variety* reviewed the film, "There's a wealth of suspense in the Burt Kennedy screenplay. Scott impresses as the strong, silent type."

Shoot-Out at Medicine Bend (Warner Brothers, 1957), unfortunately did not have the team of Boetticher and Kennedy going for it. The director reappeared for Decision at Sundown (Columbia, 1957); however the script was not written by Burt Kennedy. As such, it was the weakest of the Boetticher's and Scott's



westerns. The same was true for the next film he directed of Scott's Buchanan Rides Alone (Columbia, 1958). Kennedy's writing skills were truly missed. Ranown resolved the problem and got Kennedy back with Boetticher on Ride Lonesome (Columbia, 1959). The cast included Karen Steele, the director's main squeeze at the time, Pernell Roberts, James Coburn, James Best and Lee Van Cleef. The film captures the stark beauty of the Alabama Hills and the beautiful backdrop of the Sierra Nevada. Variety noted, "Another good western from the Ranown Production Team. Budd Boetticher, who produced and directed, had a tough, honest screenplay by Burt Kennedy, and he has given it perception and tension...Scott does a good job as the taciturn and misunderstood hero." Westbound (Warner Brothers, 1959), a film made before Buchanan Rides Alone, was another misfire as Kennedy and Harry Joe Brown were not involved. That problem was resolved with the final picture Comanche Station

(Columbia, 1960), as all hands were onboard for the last of the Ranown films. Burt Kennedy in his book *Hollywood Trail Boss*, recalls Ranown productions asked him to write two original screenplays. "I had no idea what to do. I was getting \$15,000 a script. I sat down and wrote *Ride Lonesome*, then *Comanche Station*. They were made for little money – I mean really little money – but they were well received, and have a cult following here and in Europe. They're good pictures. Randy was very good, and Budd did a great job."

Filmed in their favorite location, the Alabama Hills in Lone Pine, the cast included Nancy Gates as the heroine and Claude Akins, Skip Homier and Richard Rust as the small outlaw band. Variety said, "Comanche Station...is by any standard a good picture. There must be an audience for these films, despite the plethora of such fare on television, an audience now with little from which to choose." A close friend of this range reporter, Sylvia Martinez (now Sylvia Durando) was the double for Nancy Gates and did the stunt work for her role. During her six weeks location shoot, Sylvia got to talk to Scott on a few occasions. Sylvia said Mr. Scott was not pretentious, was very caring and gracious. She shared a story of an Indian who was an extra in the film who was injured on the set. He was transported to the nearest hospital in Bishop. He returned to the set after treatment and told the cast and crew about being wheeled into ER wearing his full Indian costume. A young boy was there, a victim of a horrific traffic accident on 395 in which his entire family was killed. The boy asked him if he was truly an Indian. He also said he wished he had a real bow and arrow. Hearing this, unknown to others, Randolph Scott went to the prop department and commandeered a bow and arrow. Scott then got a driver to take him to Bishop, one

hour away. He visited the boy to comfort him, probably reminded him of his son Chris. He also gave him the bow and arrow hoping to brighten his spirits somewhat. After spending some time comforting the child, Scott returned to the film location to get ready for the next day's shoot. That was the real Randolph Scott!

At the conclusion of Comanche Station, Scott officially retired. He was 61 when the film was made. He also was hard of hearing, due to the many ammo blanks being fired close to him over 30 years. Scott returned to his golf game with his links partners Bing Crosby, Freeman Gosden (creator of Amos and Andy), former President Dwight Eisenhower and the Reverend Billy Graham; monitored his investments which included oil exploration (he became one of the richest men in filmdom); watched the Dodgers play with his good friend Fred Astaire and his son Chris, and tended to his elephant ears, ivy and pampas grass. Retirement life was good; however, it only lasted two years.

Scott was notified by Burt Kennedy that there was a screenplay floating about, regarding two aging, former lawmen that was just suited for him and his longtime friend and colleague Joel McCrea. The title of the would be film was Ride the High Country (MGM, 1962). The preliminary discussions had McRae playing the character Gil Westrum, a sometimes good guy, however with a little larceny in his heart. Scott was to play the part of Steve Judd, a principled man with a strong, religious faith. After the roles were determined, both actors had second thoughts. Fortunately, they recognized that the roles should be reversed and we're glad they did. Selected to direct the film, to be shot on location in the Sierra Nevada, was the young director Sam Peckinpah. Also, cast were

veterans R.G Armstrong, John Anderson and Edgar Buchanan. Stage star, 22 year old Mariette Hartley was the female lead in her first motion picture. Also, included were some young actors who would go onto have successful film careers -James Drury, L.Q. Jones and Warren Oates. The film was shot in 24 days with a budget of only \$813,000. However, an early winter forced the crew to move to Southern California after only four days of filming. Peckinpah, at the time, said he treated the well-seasoned, leading men with the respect they deserved. "I work very close with them on the set. They want to work, they are looking...I won't say for help, but they give a lot on the set and they expect a lot, which is exactly the way I like to work." Newsweek's review said, "Pure gold." Time magazine opined the film "has a rare honesty of script, performance and theme – that goodness is not a gift but a quest." Variety said the two aging, major cowboy stars were "better than they have ever been." The movie was selected as the Best Picture for 1962 by both Newsweek magazine and Film Quarterly, plus won two major awards at foreign film festivals. Later, Joel McCrea said, "We got the best notices, both of us, of our entire careers, because we were playing

ourselves, at our age. We liked each other. When we worked together, it was one of the most pleasant experiences I ever had because he was a Southern gentleman. I tip my hat to him." "Randy came to me near the picture's end and said, 'Now we've probably done the best picture we've done for a long time and probably the best we'll ever do. So why don't we both get out while we're lucky?' I should have taken his advice." Ride the High Country was featured at the recent Lone Pine Film Festival. Popular film historian and respected movie critic Leonard Maltin interviewed two of the cast members after the film – Mariette Hartley, still beautiful at 72, and the accomplished character actor L.Q. Jones. Both were very proud of the film; felt it still holds up well after 50 years; complimented both Scott and McRae and indicated it was a pleasure watching them work; and agreed that Sam Peckinpah was brilliant, but certifiably insane!"

Once again, Randolph Scott returned to a serene lifestyle filled with his wife Pat, their two children, golf, Dodger games, exercising his "green thumb" and assessing new business ventures. He would go on to live another 25 years and died in his sleep on March 2. 1987, due to an ongoing

heart condition and bouts with pneumonia. The Reverend Billy Graham called the family and asked if he could give the eulogy. The family was honored by his thoughtful gesture. At the memorial service, Billy Graham said, "I never knew a finer character in my whole life than Randy. He was devoted to his family, deeply spiritual, and he shared his wealth with charitable organizations." Randolph Scott was buried in the family plot in Charlotte, North Carolina. Pat is there with him. Chris Scott, wrote a book Whatever Happened to Randolph Scott, borrowing from the song title, which described growing up with his famous father. He concludes the book with an answer to the now philosophical question – Whatever Happened to Randolph Scott? "I know what happened to Randolph Scott: 'he is alive and well in the hearts of all who's lives he touched. Those of us who remember are richer for his having done so.' He may have ridden off into the sunset to receive his final reward that I am sure was grand, but my reward was having the opportunity to have shared so much of my life with him."



GARY E. BROWN

is the retired Police Chief of Monterey, California; Ashland, Oregon and San Clemente. However, his avocation is collecting western art and memorabilia including many Tom Mix items. Tom Mix was his father's hero, so he is Gary's as well. Gary wrote an article on Tom Mix for *The National Film & Collectors Magazine* – *Hollywood Studio Magazine*, as well as a recent article on Tom Mix's final day for *American Cowboy* magazine. He has also written articles on the Western Photoplays of the Golden Era and lectured on the Western Heroes of the Silver Screen. He can be reached at montereycowboy@hotmail.com or found, most mornings, at his son Jordan's Mavericks Coffee House in Visalia, California...the site of "possibly the best coffee in the world" with walls of vintage cowboy movie posters and a collection of 66 original, autographed photos of yesterday's cowboy heroes.

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Our magazine was founded in 2010 from our desire to share thoughts and facts with and from our High Noon family. We write about what we know (cowboy and Indian artifacts), highlight dealers and collectors, their thoughts and memories. We also love to feed our readers with great recipes. We offer free western music, a look at factoids intrinsic to our interests, give you insight into the newest books and tell you what is going on across the United States.

And hopefully we educate along the way.

Linda Kohn Sherwood, Editor

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Chief Publisher: High Noon Western Americana
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