

# AGARITA GAZETTE



**A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society**



Agarita Ranch

December 2014

Lockhart, Texas

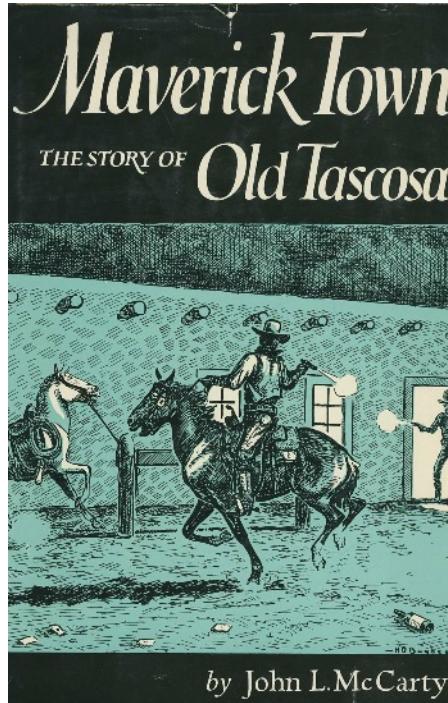
## OLD TASCOSA & THE BIG FIGHT

By Long Juan

Many readers will remember **Tascosa Kid**. He and **Miss Sassi Fras** now live in Santa Fe and shoot in the Four Corners region – New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Nevada. Not too long ago, the Kid sent me a chapter from the book, **Maverick Town** by John McCarty. The chapter he sent told the story of a significant gunfight that occurred in Tascosa, Texas, in 1878. Reading that story sparked a desire to learn more about Tascosa and the Big Fight. Here is what I learned.

### The Town

About 40 miles northwest of what is now Amarillo, Tascosa was once a rival of Dodge City, Kansas. It was located in an area of the Texas Panhandle called Atascosa (Spanish for



“boggy”), where there was an easy Canadian River crossing for cattlemen

driving their herds up the Tascosa-Dodge City trail. Tascosa was no different from other early cowboy towns, with its saloons, red-light district, dancehalls, gaming parlors, boot hill and its share of violence. Lower Tascosa was known as “Hog Town” because its inhabitants “behaved like swine.” Hog Town was separated from Upper Tascosa by a sign that read: “No Shooting beyond This Line.”

Like most of the people buried in its Boot Hill cemetery, Tascosa did not live to enjoy old age. When the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad cut across the

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## Stage Marshal - P.T.

## Flag Marshal - Artiman

## President's Word:

**W**hat a great day we had at our December Monthly Shoot and Christmas Party! I am tired but still smiling after shooting 5 stages of Wild Bunch in the morning, 5 stages of Cowboy in the afternoon and attending the Christmas party in the evening. The weather cooperated this time (after the freeze last year) and delivered a near perfect shooting day with temps in the high 60s/low 70s—overcast in the morning but sunny in the afternoon.



SASS Regulator & PCSS President  
Dragon Hill Dave

We had the opportunity to shoot our brand new shotgun targets, which performed as advertised. We also enjoyed other new targets and target stands that **Delta Raider** and **Lefty Leo** developed—they ring with authority and send the lead right into the ground.

Days like our Christmas Shoot should remind you why it is so important to renew your membership for 2015 or join us as a new member. The strides we are making with new targets and target stands show our commitment to making the our range a must-shoot experience. Our average of over 65 shooters per monthly shoot reflects our success. You want to be a part of that.

And membership is even more of a bargain for 2015 because we are planning to have monthly shoots on both Saturday and Sunday in February and March. Members save \$5 a match over non-members and we are having even more matches for you to realize those savings. It is a good time to start preparing for the **Battle of Plum Creek**, the **2015 SASS Texas State Championship**, which will be held at the Agarita Ranch the first weekend in May.

Speaking of the **Battle of Plum Creek**, be sure to get your application in. Discounts are available until the first of February, so get your application in early. It also helps with event planning to know who is coming and helps finance the efforts to get ready. If you haven't already talked to **Delta Raider** or **Agarita Annie** about volunteering to help with the State

[www.pccss.org](http://www.pccss.org)

Continued next page.

match, please give them a jingle and let them know that you can help. We need folks to help with match set-up, side matches, parking, shooter sign-in, scoring, and general stuff. Even a little time helping out would be appreciated.

A final note on a couple of volunteers who were recently recognized by the club. Last year we announced that we would keep track of those coming out on our workdays assisting to make the range shoot-ready and reward that effort. At our Christmas party we recognized two volunteers who have done extraordinary work over the year to make the range a better place to shoot and to have it ready for you when you come out to shoot.

**Lefty Leo** and **Lightning McQueen** were our two honorees this year for the hard work and dedication they have shown in making this club a success. In recognition of their efforts, we presented them each with a Certificate of Appreciation and awarded to **Lefty Leo** free monthly shooting for 2015 and to **Lightning McQueen** a free entry to the **SASS Texas State Championship**.

Well-deserved by both.

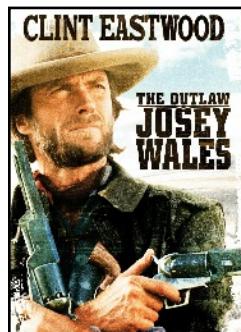
As we approach the end of the year, it is always good to look back to see what we have accomplished. In 2014 we built on the success of the **2013 SASS Texas State Championship** and increased our average number of shooters to 65 per month. We increased our membership to 127 members, 35 of whom are life members. We had a successful annual match in May that drew over 100 shooters. We have been selected to host the SASS Texas State Championship match again in 2015. We have acquired new shotgun targets for several of our stages, and we have begun the process of replacing our target stands with new stands that will further cut down on splatter and ring even more loudly when we hit them.

We've done some good and 2015 promises to be even better. If you are already a member I hope you will renew (and life memberships are only \$225). If you are not, we hope you will become a member. Even if you don't, we want you to be a part of the shooting and camaraderie with us at the **Plum Creek Shooting Society**.

See ya' at the Agarita!

## FIND DELTA RAIDER

**Sterling Sage, Sheriff Robert Love, Hoss Roonwright, Delta Raider, El Sabre, Boon Doggle, Meadow Biscuit Slim, Lincoln Drifter, Hairtrigger Hayes, Six Wire, Leo's Lady, Preacher Man, Kettleman, Big John Mesquite, Jarhead Jake and Artiman** all found **Delta Raider** hidden in **Artie Fly**'s smoke in the



November issue. They are hereby mentioned in the dispatches.

Also mentioned in the dispatches for correctly identifying Josey Wales' firearm in **Jake Paladin**'s column last month as a **Colt Walker** are **Hoss Roonwright, Nueces Ranger, El Sabre** and **Jarhead Jake**.





## Long Juan Here:

At our December match, we held a short club meeting and amended the club by-laws. The only significant revision was to change the President and Vice President from one-year terms to staggered two-year terms like the Secretary and Treasurer already serve. Under the amended by-laws, the President and Secretary will serve two-year terms beginning in even-numbered years. The Vice President and Treasurer will serve two-year terms beginning in odd-numbered years. The staggered terms will ensure continuity on the board from year-to-year. We intended to present this amendment for adoption at our match/meeting in December **2013**. We were iced out and did not remember that we had not adopted the proposed amendment until just before our December match in **2014**.

The revised by-laws will soon be available for download on our website. If you cannot download for any reason or need a copy

sooner than it is posted, please let me know and I will email or mail you a copy.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, just before our monthly match, we will elect a Vice President and Treasurer. Vice President **Joe Darter** and Treasurer **True Blue Cachoo** have both announced they plan to run for re-election. **Whiskey Kid** has announced that he plans to run for Treasurer. If anyone else wants to run for Vice President or Treasurer, please let me know no later than December 24<sup>th</sup> (at least 10 days prior to the election on January 4<sup>th</sup>). All candidates should send me a campaign statement as soon as possible so I can post them on the website and email copies to all club members. Tell us why you think you would be a good Vice President or Treasurer.

Scores for the December match have been emailed to all shooters and are posted on the website. Congratulations to top overall Cowboy, **Phantom**, top overall Wild Bunch, **Joe Darter**, all category winners and all clean shooters (17 Cowboys) and one Wild Bunch, **General Burleson**.

## 2014 in Review

**El Sabre** and **Lincoln Drifter** found **Delta Raider** in 11 of 12 issues, beginning in December 2013. They each are hereby awarded a free monthly match in 2015. **Meadow Biscuit Slim** was next, having found **Delta Raider** in 8 of 12 issues. A total of 41 readers found him at least once last year. Thanks to all for participating. We start a new contest this month. Who can find **Delta Raider** this month and who will find him most during the next 12 months?

While I am talking about what happened in 2014, a special mention in the dispatches is owed to **Dodge City Mike** and **Lightning McQueen**, both of whom shot in each and every one of our monthly matches and the annual match. **That's 100% attendance!** Well done! Eight others shot in all but one match: **El Sabre, Frank Longshot, Hopalong Herbert, Jake Jones, Kickshot, Long Juan, Scooter** and **Six Goin' South**. Thanks to everyone who shot with us during 2014, even if just once.



## Stories from Jake (Paladin that is):

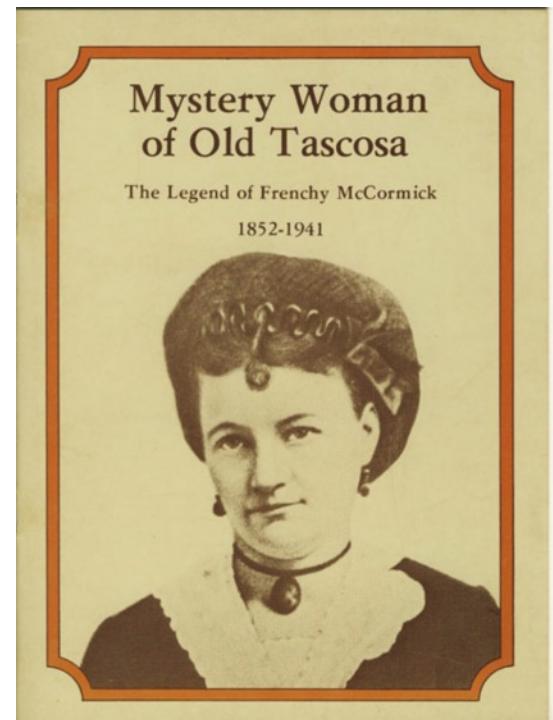
*"No one will ever find out who I am!" - Frenchy McCormick*

Blue eyed, black haired "*Frenchy*" McCormick was of Irish decent. Born near Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1852, she refused to talk about her background for her entire life, intending that no one would ever know who she really was. As a teenager, *Frenchy* ran away from home to perform on the burlesque stage in St. Louis and in the dance halls and saloons of Dodge City. All who knew her agreed that she well educated, had a certain refinement and that her handwriting was a beautiful script. She acquired the name *Frenchy* from cowboys and soldiers at Fort Dodge, Kansas, because of her Louisiana background and her ability to speak French fluently. When *Frenchy* heard there were herds of buffalo hunters and cowboys in the Texas Panhandle and that Mobeetie (Hidetown), near Fort Elliott, was a prosperous soldier town, she packed her beautifully elaborate dance dresses, plumes and satin slippers and caught the stage to Texas.

In Mobeetie, *Frenchy* met Mickey McCormick, an Irish gambler, hunter and livery-stable owner from Tascosa. Mickey claimed he always won with *Frenchy* was by his side and she quickly became his good luck charm at the gaming tables. She followed Mickey back to Tascosa, where they married in 1881. *Frenchy* quickly became belle of the town. She dealt Monte in the gambling rooms that Mickey operated and entertained the colorful personalities who frequented Old Tascosa.

After the railroad by-passed the town in 1887, Tascosa steadily declined and the McCormicks lost their business. They continued to live in a small adobe house on Atascosa Creek. Their devotion to each other acquired an aura of romantic legend. Mickey died in 1912 and was buried near their home. Tascosa was deserted by 1915, but *Frenchy* refused to leave her husband's graveside. She lived alone in the ghost town, without

electricity or running water, steadfastly insisting that Tascosa would come back some day. With her health failing and her home crumbling in ruin, *Frenchy* allowed herself to be moved to nearby Channing in 1939, on the condition that she be brought back to join her husband in death. She died on January 12, 1941, and was buried beside Mickey in Old Tascosa.



You can read more about Frenchy in ***Mystery Woman of Old Tascosa: The Legend of Frenchy McCormick, 1852-1941*** by Pauline Durrett Robertson. Available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

Panhandle, its tracks bypassed Tascosa. The once lively and deadly cowtown faded away as the nearby railroad town of Amarillo grew. By the 1930s, Tascosa was almost deserted. After its last resident died in 1939, Cal Farley established the Cal Farley Boys' Ranch at the old town site to provide "the boy nobody wanted" with "a shirttail to hang to."

Tascosa had more than its share of clashes settled by fast guns. Noted

outlaws, including Billy the Kid and Dave Rudabaugh, walked its streets, as did lawmen Pat Garrett, Charlie Siringo and others. It was the site of the famous Tascosa Gunfight, also known as the "Big Fight at the Jenkins Saloon" or simply the "Big Fight." The gunfight is little-known today, but it was more famous than the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral at the time. The Big Fight occurred on March 21, 1886, between LS Ranch "Rangers" and a

group of small ranchers and rustlers known as "The System."

### The Big Fight

Background. In the spring of 1884, Pat Garrett came to the Texas Panhandle as newly appointed captain of the Texas Rangers. His job was to organize a company of Rangers and put a stop to rampant rustling of cattle in the area. He set up headquarters at the LS Ranch. Garrett and his men, locally known as the "LS Rangers," were successful. In early 1885, the company disbanded and Garrett returned to New Mexico. His "rangers" continued to work for the LS Ranch, but they were no longer Texas Rangers and their hard-drinking, arrogant ways stirred local resentment. Former Texas Ranger Ed King was especially cantankerous when drunk. He was quick to draw his pistol at the slightest provocation. Sally Emory, who worked at the Jenkins Saloon in Tascosa started the trouble that led to the Big Fight. She dumped her boyfriend, bartender and part-time rustler, Lem Woodruff, and took up with Ed King. Woodruff was a System Man. After taking up with Sally, the "ranger" called Woodruff "Pretty Lem" and did everything he could to



The long paneled counter. The large mirror behind the bar. The brass foot rail for hard-working cowhands to rest their feet on. Patrons taking shots of "firewater." Erwin E. Smith's image "Settling the Dust," taken in Old Tascosa, Texas, depicts everything you'd expect in an Old West saloon. But something's missing: Not one of the patrons is carrying a gun. Tascosa Sheriff Caleb Berg "Cape" Willingham banned guns within the city limits in 1880, 27 years before Smith shot the picture.

Continued next page.

humiliate and embarrass Woodruff.

The Fight. The evening of March 20, 1886, King and three other LS cowboys, Johnny Lang, Frank Valley and Fred Chilton, rode into Tascosa for a night on the town. Just after midnight,



Johnny Lang

King and Lang ran into Sally outside the Jenkins Saloon. She and King embraced. A gunshot rang out and King fell to the ground. Woodruff stepped from the shadows and shot King again. King died and Sally ran screaming back to Hog Town. Lang, joined by the other two LS cowboys, ran to the back of the Jenkins Saloon just as Woodruff, John Gough (a/k/a the Catfish Kid), Louis Bousman and brothers Charley and Tom Emory exited the back door. Gunfire erupted. Woodruff and Charley Emory were killed immediately. Frank Valley was shot in the head and a local restaurant owner, Jesse Sheets, who stepped

out of his restaurant to see what was going on, was shot by Chilton. Chilton was then shot in the chest. Lang found himself alone and caught in a crossfire. He fled, firing as he went, while bullets tore into the ground and through the air around him. The sheriff and a deputy arrived on the scene. Lang offered to assist and together they walked to the Jenkins Saloon. As they arrived, John Gough, the Catfish Kid ran out. Shots were fired and the Kid fell to the ground, groaning and choking. It was a ruse. As soon as the others left the area, he ran away, unhurt.

Aftermath. The fight left John Lang with a bullet through his coat, but without a scratch. His three friends from the LS Ranch and restaurant owner, Jesse Sheets, were less fortunate. All four were buried on Tascosa's Boot Hill. Murder charges were filed, but after two trials, the survivors were acquitted.

### Movie Connection.

Tascosa was the setting for the showdown between Lin McAdams (Jimmy Stewart) and Dutch Henry Brown (Stephen McNally) in the 1950 American Western film, "**Winchester 73**".



Tascosa circa 1900

# Thanks to three of our most prolific photographers in 2014



"Santa Grandpa" Dutch Van Horn and his  
newest "Elf" Isabella



Glamorous Six Goin' South



"Goofy Santa" Lincoln Drifter

## December Match Photos

Thanks to Six Goin' South and Lincoln Drifter for contributing photos this month. See more of the Photos page of the Plum Creek website. [www.pccss.org](http://www.pccss.org)



Shooting Iron Miller showing the Wild Bunch form that earned 1<sup>st</sup> in Lady Wild Bunch Modern and 6<sup>th</sup> overall.



Cimarron Jones and his "Hat of the Month"



Night Horse, fka Doug the Kid and Creek Johnson



Whose firearms - for a mention in the dispatches?



Gunfighters Kit Carson (above) and Charlie Reynolds (left) showing how it's done. Kit prevailed, but not by much.



Bunkhouse Bob

What is all that stuff  
hanging on whose  
derriere?

Correct answers  
gets a mention in the  
dispatches.



The spotters called one miss.  
Rogue Heeler asked what he  
missed and did not believe it when  
the spotters and TO told him he left  
a cowboy standing. Instant replay  
showed cowboy pistol target still  
standing after RH had moved on to  
the rifle. Call on the range  
confirmed!



Texas Sarge making smoke



Capped and ready



Lucky Nickel and his 1911



TO Phantom tells scorekeeper Shooting Iron Miller  
that the shooter had two misses



Joe Darter shooting;  
Phantom running  
the timer



Wildcat Bob watching for misses and P's

Fighting Parson's better half, Stephanie, has GREAT glasses. She says she's not much into cowboy shooting, but she is patriotic. That works!

General Burleson grabbing some instant natural energy



Lucky Nickel and Texas Reb relive the previous stage.



The Shamrock Hotel and Lucky Lady Saloon at the Agarita Ranch looked great at sunset during our Christmas party.

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	105	FP	33	66
	125	RNFP	35	70
	125	FP	35	70
	130	RNFP	36	72
	158	RNFP	39	77
	158	FP	39	77
	158	SWC	39	77
.380	100	RNFP	33	65
.38-55	245	RNFP	59	117
.41	215	SWC	49	98
.44	180	RNFP	41	81
	240	SWC	52	104
.44-40	200	RNFP	45	90
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	46	92
	180	RNFP	41	81
	200	RNFP	45	90
	250	RNFP	53	106
	9MM	RN	35	70
	124	CN	35	70
	125	FP	41	81
40 S&W	180	FP	41	81
.45ACP	200	SWC	45	90
	200	RN	45	90
	230	RN	51	101
45-70	405	FPT	111	222

\*Price increase because of higher cost of lead. Sorry for any inconvenience.