

AGARITA GAZETTE



A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society



Agarita Ranch

October 2015

Lockhart, Texas

Charley Parkhurst

Contributed by Big John Mesquite

Western stagecoach companies were big business in the latter half of the 19th century. In addition to passengers and freight, stages hauled gold and silver bullion, as well as mining company payrolls. Stage robbery was a constant danger and bandits employed many strategies to ambush a stagecoach. Thieves rarely met with much resistance from stage drivers because they had passenger safety foremost in mind.

usually after Fargo money valuable



Passengers

were seldom hurt, but they were usually relieved of their cash, watches and jewelry. Before completion of the transcontinental railroad over Donner Pass in 1868, the only transportation through the California Sierras was by stage. Rugged teamsters

The gang was the Wells box with its contents.

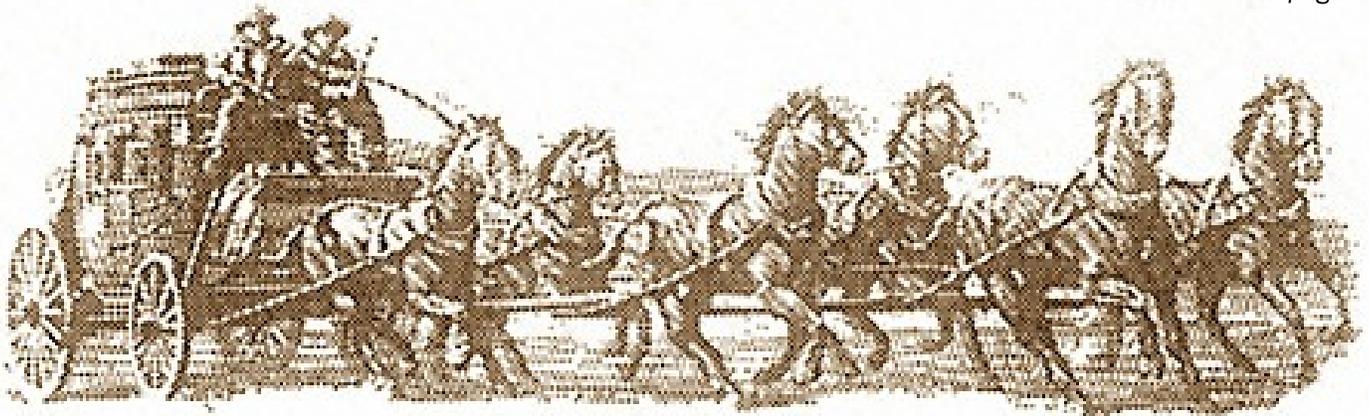
were seldom

held rein over six wild-eyed horses as they tore along the precipitous mountain trails. The stagecoaches were driven by skilled and fearless men who pushed themselves and their spirited horses to the limit.

One of the most famous stage drivers in California was Charles Darkey Parkhurst. Described as a “stout, compact figure with sun-browned skin, a beardless face and bluish-gray eyes,” Charley was a familiar figure around Santa Cruz and on the mountain roads of California. “One-Eyed Charley” wore one patch over the left eye and spoke with a throaty gruff voice. Charley’s patch was the result of an injury caused by a kick from a horse.

Charley spent 15 years running stages in California. He was acknowledged as one of the best *Jehus* in the business. The title, *Jehu*, was taken from a Biblical

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Stage Marshal - **Phantom**

Flag Marshal - **Artiman**

President's Word

We couldn't have asked for more perfect weather for our monthly match this month - both days! We had 66 shooters on Saturday, shooting stages based on the movie, *Open Range*.

Phantom took the first spot overall, but was challenged by **Kit Carson** and **Kickshot**, who finished right behind him. **Ivory Venom**, was our top overall woman.

The top 15, counting down from the top, were **Phantom, Kit Carson, Kickshot, Kettleman, Two Spurs, Skyhawk Hans, Joe Darter, Alamo Andy, Ivory Venom, Dragon Hill Dave, Dutch Van Horn, Frank Longshot, Six Goin' South, Mad Dog McCoy** and **Picosa Kid**.

Congratulations to our clean shooters **Alamo Andy, Anna Long Longshot, Frank Longshot, Jake Jones, Kettleman, Kickshot, Kit Carson, Phantom, Scooter** and **Three-Fingered Dutchman**. On Sunday we had 13 shooters come out and shoot the same 6 stages, although we had several Wild Bunch shooters who shot some extra magazines and some extra shotgun targets.

Remember next month we will shoot on Saturday and Sunday again. We hope to see a larger turnout for the Sunday shoot. I had to leave shortly after the shooters' meeting this time, but I will be there on Sunday in November, ready to blaze away. November is our Thanksgiving shoot. If you plan to stay for lunch on Saturday, November 7th (a fantastic turkey dinner is on tap), please let our cook **Lefty Leo** know you are coming so we will be sure and have enough food.

Good news for the club was **General Burleson** stepping up to take over score-keeping duties from

our soon-to-be ex-Secretary **Long Juan**. **Long Juan** has done a wonderful job handling scorekeeping so we can announce results at lunch. It's great to have someone stepping into his shoes. The other nice thing about **General Burleson** becoming our Scoring Marshal is that it lightens the load for the person who will step up to be our next secretary. Elsewhere in the *Gazette*, **Long Juan** outlines the duties of our Secretary, which are several



PCSS President Dragon Hill Dave

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Continued next page

bullet points fewer with **General Burleson's** help. As **Long Juan** notes in what he wrote, it would be great to be able to split the bullet points further, among a number of different people. We could use more people to help with scoring and we would love to have volunteer to take over responsibility for the website.

We will be electing a President and Secretary at our annual meeting on December 5th. Nominations are due at least 10 days prior to the election. Self-nominations are fine. If you are nominating someone else, please be sure they are willing to serve, if elected. Please send nominations to **Long Juan**. He will contact each person nominated to obtain a campaign statement that will be sent to all members prior to the election.

Time to start thinking about our annual match - the **Battle of Plum Creek**. There will be many opportunities for members to help put that match together. We need volunteers. Please contact **Delta Raider**, **Long Juan** or me if you are interested in helping. Don't be surprised if I give you a

call to lend a hand as we get closer to the match.

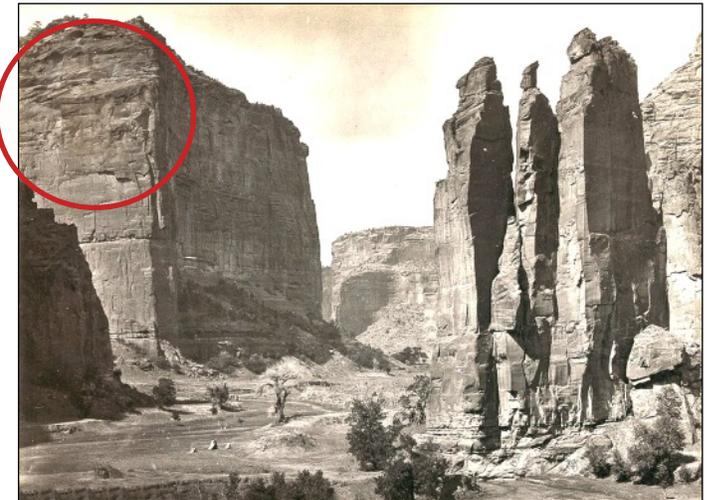
Finally, I looked over our club records the other day and enjoyed seeing all the folks who are members or who have shot with us. Lots of good friends and old friends on the list, friends I wouldn't have met or known unless I was a SASS shooter. If you have a friend or acquaintance that you think might be interested in our sport, tell them about it, bring them out and get them involved. It's a great way to share experiences and stories and to meet new folks.

Until next time, then, See ya' at the Agarita!



FIND DELTA RAIDER:

Long Juan here! Well, I clearly made it too hard for most to find **Delta Raider** in last month's issue. He's cliff-side in the photo to the right. I thought his hat would be the giveaway. Many of you guessed he was in the locomotive smoke. If he was, I didn't put him there. Only **Hairtrigger Hayes** gets mention in the dispatches for finding him in the cliff and it took him a couple of tries. I've tried to make it easier this month. Hope to see many of you mentioned in the dispatches next month.



Ditties from Jake (Jones that is):

HOGWASH. Steamboats carried both people and animals. Pigs smelled so bad they were washed before being put on board. The mud and other filth that was washed off was useless "hog wash".



Long Juan Here:

Below is a general list of the things I have been doing as Secretary of the Plum Creek Shooting Society. Instead of one person trying to do everything listed, I suggest the breakdown listed below. **General Burleson** has already agreed to be our “Scoring Marshal.” He needs at least one, preferably two assistants. It would be really nice if we could find a tech-savvy person to be our webmaster, although I will continue serving in that capacity for a while longer, if no one else volunteers. I plan to continue as editor of the *Gazette*, so what we really need is someone to be Secretary. I have a more more detailed list of what I do that I will share with anyone who is interested in being either the Secretary or webmaster. I will be happy to help train anyone who is willing to take on any of the work listed below and will be happy to help at the matches when I can. Hope some of you will step up and volunteer. We will have our annual meeting and elections at our monthly match on December 5th. Official notice will be sent to all Plum Creek members at least 30 days prior.

Secretary

- Club communications
- Maintain club records, including membership database, email list(s), etc.
- Keep minutes for club meetings, board meetings
- Create and update club forms – waiver, bylaw, etc.
- Assist with match registration
- As-assigned, e.g., annual or State match committee

Scoring Marshal (needs 1-2 deputies)

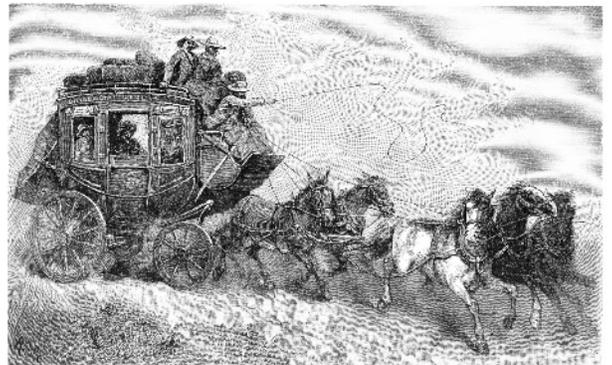
- Match scoring
- Maintain scoring system database

Webmaster (competency with Word Press would be a good qualification)

- Keep everything current and accurate: news, scores, photos, calendar, downloads, updates, etc.

Editor Agarita Gazette

Annual TG Conference. In December our Territorial Governor will be voting on proposed rule changes. Club members have been sent an email and there is a News item on our website where you can download what is being discussed and the proposed changes. TG **Jake Paladin** would appreciate your input on each of the items. Space constraints prevent re-printing the entire document here, but everyone is encouraged to take a look at your email or online and let Jake know what you think. Thanks



Stories from Jake (Paladin that is): Cowboys wore cowboy hats, right?



The curved brim, those dips in the crown, the band -- the Stetson is about as cowboy-iconic as clothing gets. In reality, lots of people wore hats in the Old West, but they seemed to wear everything except what we think of as "cowboy" hats. Billy the Kid wore a messed up top hat. Wild Bill Hickok wore a flat pancake hat. But, what you would have seen most in the Old West were bowler hats. They were popular because they were a more versatile in various social situations, especially in a time when all men wore hats all the time. Famed Western historian Lucius Beebe went so far as to call it, *"the hat that won the West."*



Wild Bill Hickok

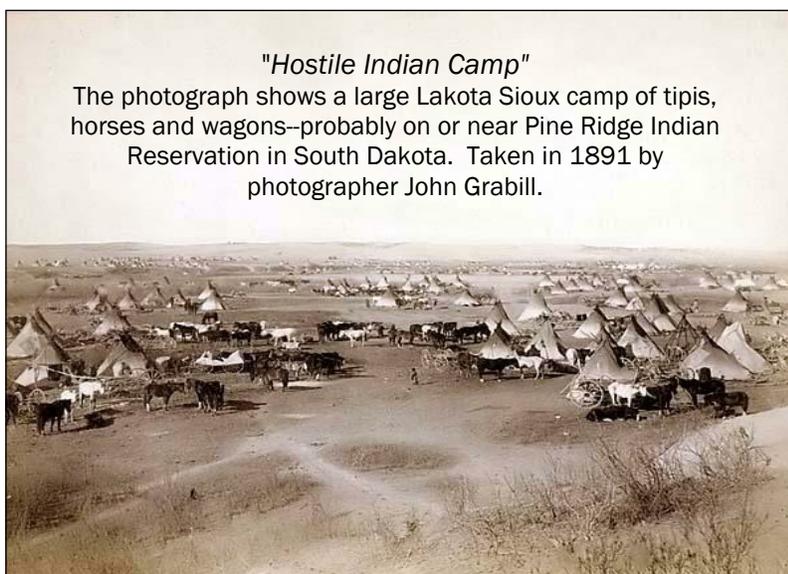


Bat Masterson in his bowler



Billy the Kid

Even the cowboy hats that Stetson made in the late 1800s didn't look like the Stetson hats we call "cowboy" hats today. Originally designed in 1865 for the demands of the Old West, it was intended to be durable, waterproof and elegant. That hat was "the Boss of the Plains" and it looked more like modern Amish hats than a "cowboy" hat. All of the curling and ornamentation came later, but this hat is the granddaddy of every cowboy hat in the world today



Boss of the Plains

quote in the Old Testament, "...and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously." 2 Kings 9:20. Charley certainly lived up to that title when driving his stagecoach. He once drove onto a rickety bridge spanning a storm-swollen river and looked back to see the section just crossed being washed away. Driving his horses furiously, he reached land just before the entire bridge collapsed. On another trip, Charley was driving down from Carson Pass when the lead horses veered off the road. A wrenching jolt threw him from the rig. He hung on to the reins as the horses dragged him along on his stomach. Somehow he managed to steer the frightened horses back onto the road and

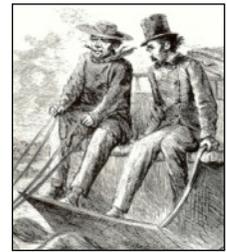


save all his grateful passengers. Charley was also skillful with a whip. From 20 feet away he could slice open the end of an envelope or cut a cigar out of a man's mouth.

During the 1850s, bands of surly highwaymen stalked the roads. These bandits would level their guns at stage drivers and shout, "Throw down the gold box!" Charley Parkhurst had no patience for the crooks, despite their demands and threatening gestures. One day the notorious bandit "Sugarfoot" ordered Charley to give up his strong box. Charley obeyed, but resolved to settle the score. As luck would have it, Sugarfoot soon stopped the stage again on the same route. It would be his last hold-up. Charley defiantly cracked his whip and fired his revolver at Sugarfoot, who was later found dead with a fatal bullet wound in his stomach. In appreciation of his bravery, Wells Fargo presented Parkhurst with a large watch and chain made of solid gold.

In the late 1860s, Charley stopped driving stages and opened a stage station and saloon between Santa Cruz and Watsonville, later selling it and moving further into the woods. He worked as a lumberjack for a while, but had to stop because of poor health. He died on December 29, 1879 and was buried in the Pioneer Odd Fellows Cemetery in Watsonville, California. Because Charley had become nationally known as a stagecoach driver, he was quickly praised and immortalized in an obituary that appeared in the *Ohio Daily Star*.

He was one of the most dexterous and famous of the California drivers, ranking with Foss, Hank Monk, and George Gordon, and it was an honor to be striven for to occupy the spare end of the driver's seat when the fearless Charley Parkhurst held the reins of a four or six in hand.



When a coroner examined Charley's body, it was discovered that *he* actually was a *she*. An autopsy determined that Charley had given birth. The baby was believed to have died young. A few days later, the *Sacramento Daily Bee* published a different obituary:

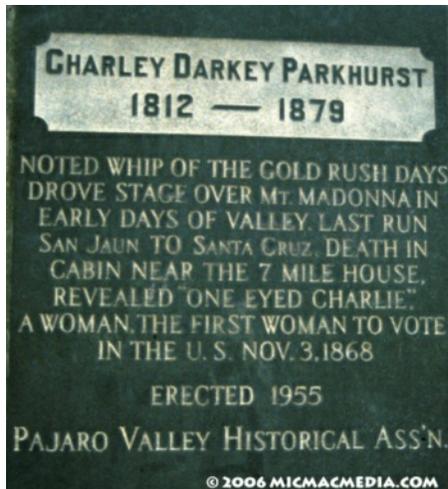
On Sunday last, there died a person known as Charley Parkhurst, aged 67, who was well-known to old residents as a stage driver. He was in early days accounted one of the most expert manipulators of the reins who ever sat on the box of a coach. It was discovered when friendly hands were preparing him for his final rest that Charley Parkhurst was unmistakably a well-developed woman!

Charley's story slowly came out. Her given name was Charlotte Darkey Parkhurst. She was born in Lebanon, New Hampshire in 1812. Abandoned as a child, she was raised in an orphanage, unloved and surrounded by poverty. She ran away

when she was 15 years old and soon discovered that life in the working world was easier for men. So she decided to masquerade as one for the rest of her life.

Ebenezer Balch, the owner of a livery stable in Providence, Rhode Island, met young Charley in New Hampshire. Charley was dressed in boy's clothing, so Balch assumed she was a boy and took "him" back to Rhode Island to rear as his own son. Balch, who drove a stage in Rhode Island, taught his "son" how to ride horses and drive wagon teams. Charley soon left New England to seek opportunities out West. She sailed on a steamship from Boston to Panama. In Panama she met John Morton, who owned a drayage business in San Francisco. Morton convinced Charley to come to California, where she quickly became of full-time stagecoach driver.

Charley had never volunteered clues to her past. She stood 5'6", weighed 175 pounds and could handle herself in a fistfight. She drank whiskey like one of the boys. Loose fitting clothing hid her femininity and the eye patch over one eye helped conceal her face. Charley always slept in the stables with his beloved horses. He never had had a girlfriend.

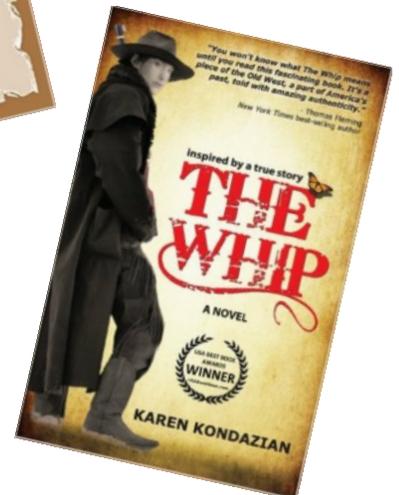
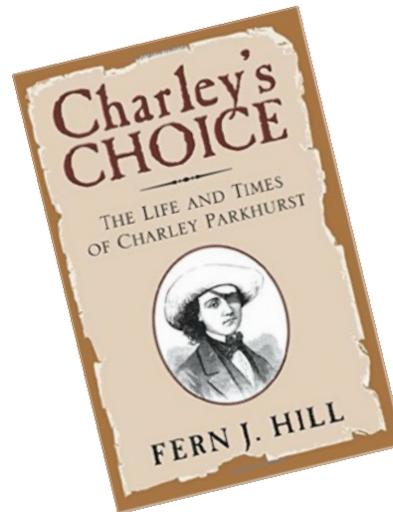


There is a really interesting side note to Charley's life, perhaps true; perhaps not. In 1867, Charley signed the Great Register to vote in California, when women did not have

the right to vote. On November 3, 1868, Charley is reported to have cast her vote in the national election dressed as a man. If so, she was the first woman to vote in the United States, 52 years before the 19th amendment gave American women that right.

For those interested in reading more about Charley Parkhurst, you might try two books of historical fiction: *Charley's Choice: The Life and time of Charley Parkhurst*, by Fern J. Hill and *The Whip*, by Karen Kondazian. *Charley's Choice* is an award-winning fictional biography. In *The Whip*, the reader follows Charley as a young woman in New England, where she falls in love with a runaway slave, marries and has his child. When her husband is lynched and her child is killed Charley heads to California, dressed as a man, to track the killer. She becomes a stagecoach driver for Wells Fargo. For the rest of the story, you will have to read the book.

A big thanks to **Big John Mesquite** for contributing this story.





Phantom Says: "Instructions" vs. "Sequence"

"Instructions" can equal "Sequence" if there are no options for the shooter in the instructions. If the instructions say, "Rifle is Double Tap sweep from the left," the two words are equal because the shooter has no option. If, however, the instructions read "Double Tap sweep from either direction, the two words are not equal because the instructions are not setting a sequence. The sequence is defined once the shooter has shot the string. If the stage instructions then say to repeat rifle "sequence" with Pistols and the rifle sweep was shot from left to right, the pistol sweep must also be shot from left to right. If the stage instructions for the pistols say to engage using rifle "instructions," then the shooter again

has a choice. The direction of the pistol sweep does not need to be the same as the rifle since because rifle instructions allowed for starting on either end. *Editor's Note: Remember what Phantom has said many times when reading stage instructions, "Words have meaning and don't read anything that's not there."*

October Match Photos

*Contributed this month by Dutch Van Horn, Kettleman, Tacoma
Two Fingers & Six Goin' South*



Six Goin' South always gets a good photo of her posse!



Who has the best legs?



Six Goin' South & Manchacha Kid worked hard at a work day this month



Charlie ("Hollywood") Reynolds



Jim-Bob's Mary kept great score at the match!



Gunfighter Kettleman & Photographer Dutch Van Horn



Nueces Ranger & Annalong Longshot



Tacoma Two Fingers



Squib (aka Cowboy) Small



We miss Will Johnson, but we're happy Flo still comes to watch.

Marshal's Office & Jail - a stage we did not shoot this month, but it sure looked good in the morning sun.





Three-Fingered Ducthman



Sunny & Two Spurs



Long Juan welcomes A.D. Texaz & Tombstone Mary back to the Agarita Ranch



It was good to have Artiman back following his motorcycle accident, even if he was not shooting



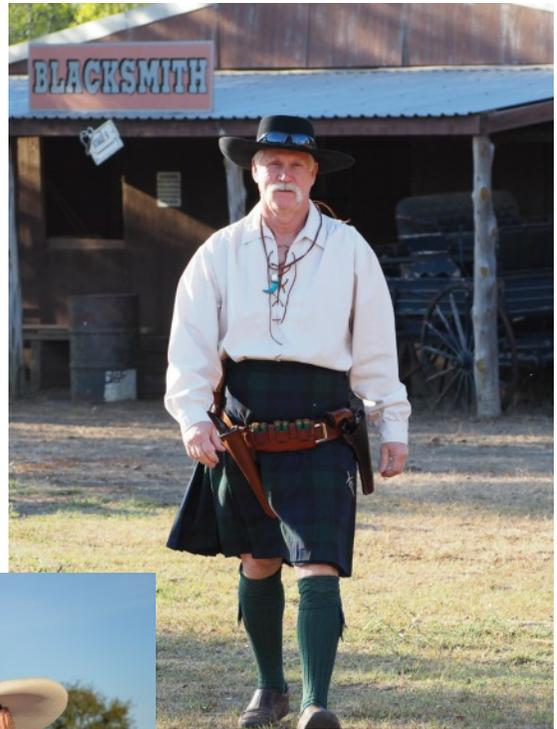
New Scoring Marshal
General Burleson and Range
Deputy Lefty Leo



From the Agarita Ranch October Holiday Tree



Three-Fingered Ducthman, Mad Dog McCoy,
Incorrigible & Doc O'Bay



Nueces Ranger in his "Black
Watch" Kilt



Texas Two Step



Texas Trinity Kid



A moment of prayer before
the match



Kidd James & Smoke Jensen



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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	124	RN	35	70
	125	CN	35	70
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.