



Volume XXXII no. 1

www.texasjack.org

March 2017

I Wonder As I Wander...

By Randy Golladay



You know, as a mind ages it seems to sometimes wander off in different and puzzling directions. We have terms for this deviation in focus ranging from eccentricity to things medically much more serious. I attribute mine to being easily distracted at times. My mind uses these opportunities to refresh, reboot and see things from another perspective. From the aforementioned, the following commentary was born.

We have researched, explored and celebrated the life of our beloved Texas Jack. We have analyzed and imagined the impact of his life on our great country from his teen years until his premature passing at the age of 33. We have read accounts of how his character and his deeds touched the lives of individuals and entire communities.

This article is meant in no way to diminish the life or the accomplishments of Texas Jack. It is an attempt to join the events in his life with the happenings of a country virtually exploding in growth. In the short life of John Baker Omohundro, Texas Jack, have we taken a few moments to consider all of the ways in which life was changing in our United States of America? I wonder as I wander....

John Baker Omohundro was born on July 27, 1846, in Fluvanna County, Virginia. While life may have been bustling, growing, busy and peaceful at Pleasure Hill, in another part of our country, there was serious conflict. The dispute over the Texas territory had evolved into a full-fledged war between the United States and Mexico. This three year conflict resulted in the permanent acquisition of Texas as a state, and continuing discord within the political machine of our country. High casualties and the staggering monetary cost (over 18.5 million dollars) of this war would provide fuel for future disagreements.

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from the Editor's Desk...



Dear Texas Jack Association Members,

We hope this issue of *The Texas Jack Scout* finds each of you well. It has been an interesting winter from a weather perspective. Virginia has experienced a relatively mild winter from the snow and ice perspective. Temperatures have been above average for the bulk of this winter with multiple periods of 60 and 70+ degree days. Flowers are in bloom and the trees have begun to bud which is causing concern for our fruit growers. March has roared in with six days in the first two weeks sporting sustained winds of 30 miles an hour. Where art thou little lamb, where art thou? We eagerly anticipate the arrival of Spring!

We are also eagerly anticipating the arrival of the 2018 Roundup in Sacramento! If you have not already done so, set those dates (June 20-23, 2018) aside today! Let us each commit to being there to enjoy the fellowship, the reunion and to revel in the local culture, history and scenery.

We hope to see each of you there!

Give Thanks, be safe and have an awesome day!

Randy Golladay, Guest Editor



Sacramento

The Texas Jack Scout

Vol. XXXII, no.1

An Occasional Publication of
The Texas Jack Association, Inc.

A Non-Profit Corporation

www.texasjack.org

Subscription is included in annual membership dues of \$25.00. Contact:

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The Texas Jack Association was founded in 1980 by Frank Sullivan to commemorate John Baker Omohundro, prairie scout, western hunting guide, and Wild West showman.

The Texas Jack Scout publishes articles about John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro, the times and places in which he lived, and individuals who have contributed substantially to maintaining his memory.

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<https://siarchives.si.edu/history/general-history>

Nearer to home, the Smithsonian Institute was established. The journey of the Smithsonian continues today. It has become a national treasure of history and information many of us have enjoyed. Did you know? During the year of Texas Jack's birth, the first organized baseball game was



<http://www.findingdulcinea.com>

played in New York City. The Knickerbockers played the New York Baseball Club and were resoundingly defeated, 23-1. In the Pacific Northwest, Oregon cut its ties with England and 13 years later becomes the 33rd state to join the Union.

The first two years of Texas Jack's life also saw advances in medicine and culture. Chloroform became the "drug of choice" as an anesthetic for almost any type of surgery. Antiseptics were introduced into many hospitals as the medical community focused on cleanliness as a major part of healing. *Jane Eyre* is first published in this country by Harper and Brothers of New

York. Early in 1848, James W. Marshall finds a shiny metal in the tailrace of a Sutter's Lumber Mill in California. This discovery exploded over the next few years as the great California Gold Rush ensued. Oh, how lives were changed. In the north, Wisconsin becomes the 30th of our United States of America.

While John Baker Omohundro was learning to ride, shoot, hunt, fish and the art of skipping school, the country around him continued to grow and change. California becomes the 31st state. Los Angeles and San Francisco establish themselves as gateways to the Pacific. Civility of the East with a West Coast flavor found its niche in American Culture.

The New York Times was established, thus beginning its rise to one of the world's most heavily relied upon news publications, even today. Steinway & Sons opened its facility in Manhattan (1853) and began crafting the most highly acclaimed and esteemed Steinway Grand Piano in this country.



Steinway's factory in Manhattan, New York City, 1876. Wikipedia

Author Harriet Beecher Stowe is published. Her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, skyrocketed to fame as the "most popular novel of our day". Abraham Lincoln credited Stowe for laying the groundwork

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for the upcoming conflict that divided our nation. “So this is the little lady who started this Great War”, was his greeting to Stowe when they met in the early days of the Civil War.

Otis Elevator Company develops the “Safety Elevator”. This significant invention allowed an elevator to stop when a cable broke, as opposed to falling freely to the ground floor. Apparently, cable breakage was a not uncommon occurrence! Thank you, but I’ll take the stairs!

Americans were finding new and different ways to compete with the world. The first running of the America’s Cup took place when Texas Jack was six years old. The original competition took place at the World’s Fair in England in August of 1851. This first winning of the Cup began a 132 year tradition of bring the coveted prize back to the United States.

Back at Pleasure Hill, I wonder if Texas Jack’s mom, Catherine, found her day filled with fussing over all the “boys will be boys” things her young son found himself involved with. Between the inevitable bumps and bruises, the escapades experienced in the great outdoors, I wonder how much time she, or someone, spent repairing rips and tears in britches and shirts. I wonder if the newly invented *Safety Pin* made that task easier.

Through events of the next seven years we see this great nation arrive at the precipice of a conflict of epic proportions. Virginia was certainly not immune nor shielded from the issues that would cause our country to be so severely divided. I have often wondered about the dinner table conversations in those months preceding the Civil War. Many of the younger members in

a family may not have been included in those dinner time talks. I wonder how involved the children of John B. and Catherine Omohundro might have been in the news of the day.

There were strides in machinery and accomplishments in industry in those years just before the Civil War. The Panama Railway completed its first Atlantic to Pacific Coast run in 1854. This eagerly anticipated milestone would result in opportunities and progress that affected every part of our country in some way.

Titusville, Pennsylvania, boasted the drilling of the first drilled oil well while Minnesota and Oregon join these United States as the 32nd and 33rd states. Benjamin Tyler Henry perfected his development of



<http://www.henryusa.com>

the Henry Repeating Rifle. This 44 caliber, 16 shot rifle was produced by New Haven Arms for a little over six years. The rifle was labeled by the Confederate soldiers as the rifle the Union army could “load on Sunday and shoot all week”. The cross country delivery of mail, messages and newspapers achieved record speed as the Pony Express transitioned from the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company to the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company. The Pony Express was deemed unstoppable and its couriers prided themselves on being able to deliver their goods in ten days.

Conflict and disagreement continued within our borders. As a response to the Siege of Lawrence [Kansas], slavery abolitionist John Brown traveled throughout

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the Lawrence, Kansas, area between May 23 and May 25, 1856. Brown along with his band succeeded in executing five members of the proslavery Law and Order Party. This precipitated the bloodiest period in Kansas history as over the next three months twenty-nine additional people died in retaliatory raids and battles. Some three years later, Brown attempted to incite a revolt by armed slave laborers. This attempt began with the capturing of a United States Arsenal in the raid on Harpers Ferry.

Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of The United States. In the months between his election and assuming office, seven states seceded from the Union. The formation of the Confederate States of America was in response to the mounting opposition of slavery in this country. The original Confederate States—South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas were joined by Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina shortly after the beginning of the Civil War.

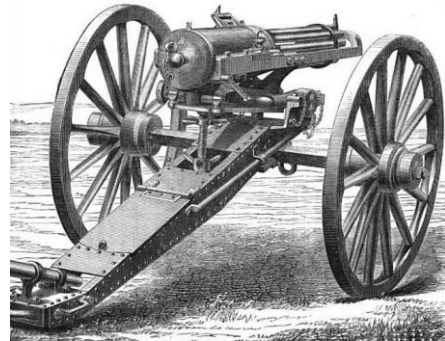
Along with the Civil War, came the United States Congress mandate that the first tax on income be collected. This Income Tax was seen as a way to financially support the Union's efforts throughout the Civil War.

We have explored the battles and skirmishes of the Civil War beginning with the Confederate firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina on April 12, 1861, and ending with General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia some four years later. It has been said that the Revolutionary War created the United States, the Civil War of 1861-1865

determined what kind of nation it would be. The list of battles occurring during the bloodiest war on American soil is extensive. Families, as well as communities and states, were divided. In many parts of our country, they still are.

I am intrigued that while war raged, there were a number of other significant events which were either products of the conflict or products having a bearing upon the conflict. The Homestead Act was signed into law in May of 1862. This law accelerated the settlement of the western territory. The Homestead Act allowed any American, including freed slaves, to file an application, improve the land and then file for title for up to 160 acres of federal land outside the original thirteen colonies. There was one exclusion to this opportunity. Anyone having taken up arms against the United States of America need not apply.

Richard Gatling perfected the forerunner to the modern day machine gun.



<http://www.americancivilwarstory.com/gatling-gun.html>

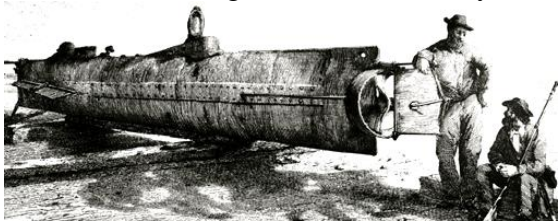
The Gatling Gun was capable of firing 200 rounds of .58 caliber or 400 rounds of .30 caliber ammunition per minute from multiple rotating barrels. This weapon represented a huge leap in firearms technology and saw extensive use during the Civil War.

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January of 1863 saw the issuance of Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation*. By virtue of his authority as Commander in Chief of the United States of America, three million enslaved peoples in this country saw their status changed from "slave" to "free". While emancipation did not occur for many of these slaves immediately, they became free upon Union occupation of the rebellious territories in which they lived.

We also remember that it was about this time that Texas Jack enlisted in the Confederate Army as a courier and a scout under the direction of General J.E.B. Stuart. While many young men may have been eager to join the cause on either side, Congress began to see the need for additional manpower to support the Union's war effort. The *Conscription Act* came into being in 1863. This was the predecessor of our modern day registration with the Selective Service System. With the *Conscription Act*, each male between the ages of 20 and 45 years old was required to do military duty. Unlike today's Selective Service registration, in 1863 you could hire someone to replace you for \$300. Masses of new immigrants in New York rioted over the idea of having to enter a war when many came to escape just that.

Naval warfare took a different turn with the launching of the H.L. Hunley.



H. L. Hunley <http://www.sonofthesouth.net>

The 40 foot long Alabama built submarine sank three times and was raised the first two.

The first combat submarine credited with sinking a warship, the Hunley sank a third time shortly after launching her torpedo. The torpedo breached the hull of the USS Housatonic, which was stationed in Charleston, South Carolina's outer harbor on Union blockade duty. The Hunley and its sailors were all lost in this third and final sinking.

A mere six days after General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia, the United States found itself facing transition to new leadership. The country now faced the huge challenge of binding its wounds, overcoming the differences in philosophy and opinion and beginning to promote healing. There would be people and events that hindered the process overall. The James-Younger Gang began a post-Civil War campaign in Liberty, Missouri, with the robbing of the Clay County Savings Bank. In the Pacific Northwest, the Sioux and Snake Tribes continued to assail the settlers coming into Wyoming and Montana. Carving out an existence in this rugged territory was difficult enough without the opposition from the natives.

The financial structure for the growth and development of the evolving United States of America was set as the New York Stock Exchange opened its first permanent headquarters in New York City.

Congress passed the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The new law declared "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject

to their jurisdiction.” Slavery was officially abolished in the United States of America.

Scientist Alfred Nobel rocked the world upon discovering that nitroglycerin, when mixed with powdered clay and sodium bicarbonate, became an amazingly stable explosive. Dynamite, as we know it today, was actually invented in Sweden by Mr. Nobel, but it soon became the preferred demolition chemical in the United States as well.

John B. Stetson and Company kept the cowboy in style as the Boss of The Plains hat came into being. Crafted in Philadelphia, this lightweight, rugged, waterproof and durable hat was the headgear of choice for many of those braving the prairies and plains of the West.



The American Territory grew by over a half million square miles in 1867. For just about twenty-five cents per acre, Alaska was purchased from Russia. Ninety-two more years would pass before our 49th state would officially enter the union via proclamation of President Eisenhower.

Reconstruction pressed on in the United States. The 14th Constitutional Amendment was ratified by Congress on July 9, 1868. This amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. It also offered protection of citizens' rights and protection under the law. The following year, another victory was claimed by the women of Wyoming as the state granted their women the right to vote. The sport of baseball saw the formation of the country's first professional team. The Cincinnati Reds shortstop, George Wright, was the

highest salaried player on the team earning a whopping \$1400 per season. Just think, you can spend that much in a single game ticket today.

The next decade of Texas Jack's life saw growth and development in every aspect of America. The first "Big Oil" company was born as J.D. Rockefeller forms Standard Oil Company. The company grew rapidly for the 20 years to the point in which it controlled almost 90% of all the refined oil in America.

Government in our country expanded as well. In 1870, Congress created the Department of Justice and ratified the 15th Amendment to our Constitution. This amendment prohibited denying a citizen the right to vote based on race, color or "previous condition of servitude." It however made no mention of gender. Women in most parts of these United States had to wait another 50 years to gain that privilege, unless you lived in a state that allowed it under local law.

The *Indian Appropriation Act* ended the common practice of viewing Native American tribes in the United States and their lands as separate countries. The Ku Klux Klan had been alive and growing in strength and numbers for over five years now. The *Third Force Act* also known as the *Civil Rights Act of 1871*, or the *Ku Klux Klan Act*, empowered President Ulysses S. Grant to declare martial law, impose heavy penalties against terrorist organizations and use military force to suppress the KKK.

The city of Chicago saw its greatest tragedy during the fall of 1871. Whether it was the O'Leary's cow kicking over the lantern in the barn, a group of drunken gamblers knocking over the lantern or

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something more sinister, the result was horrendous. An estimated 300 people perished in the two day blaze. Over 17,500 buildings were destroyed and 90,000 people were left homeless. The fire encompassed over 2000 acres of land and the damage value exceeded \$200 million, or almost one-third of the total value of the city. The burned area would take days to cool to the point it could be accurately assessed. The city would take years to recover.

The U.S. Park Service saw its first National Park open early the following year. Yellowstone National Park involved over 3,500 square miles of land and lakes. It remains one of the premier tourist attractions in our country still today. Montgomery Ward begins the first mail order catalogue service in the country in 1872. Over the next 28 years, the firm grew in total sales to over \$8.7 million, rivaling Sears. The company eventually opened its first retail store in Plymouth, Indiana. The number of stores grew to 531 before the Great Depression took its toll.

Some fourteen months after the city of Chicago suffered such great loss in the fire, another great piece of history unfolded. In December of 1872 in Chicago, our own Texas Jack along with Buffalo Bill made their stage debut. The West came alive in the performance of Ned Buntline's drama, "The Scouts of the Prairie". Stars were born as the reviews were outstanding. Jack and Buffalo Bill skillfully defeated forty to fifty Indians, and absolutely no one seemed to mind that each time the curtain reopened, these same Indians were alive and well to fight again! The show briefly involved Wild Bill Hickok and toured extensively.

Throughout the last half decade of Texas Jack's life, most of the civil unrest in our country revolved around the settling of the West. The U.S. Army found its time more occupied with skirmishes involving many of the Native American tribes. The battle of Palo Duro against the Kiowa, Cheyenne, Comanche and Arapaho tribes during the Red River War was significant in that it confined those tribes to land set aside as reservation land. General George Custer's Last Stand at the Little Bighorn all but wiped out his 7th Cavalry. The two day battle saw rare cooperation and the joining of forces by the Lakotas, the Northern Cheyenne and the Arapahos. Custer lost five of his twelve companies, as well as his own life. The U.S. Army casualty count was almost eight times that of the Indians. The Great Sioux War saw Indian chiefs such as Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse continuing to make themselves known throughout the West.



Sitting Bull

Crazy Horse

Pinterest.com

Great strides in technology continued to be made. Communications became amazingly advanced as Alexander Graham Bell patents the first practical telephone early in 1876. Soon after, Thomas Edison announces he has developed a machine that will record sound AND reproduce that

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recorded sound. The Gramophone was born! We identify it more commonly as the phonograph.

The original recording medium was a long way from being vinyl as was so popular for so many years. A “record” was made from tin foil wrapped around a rotating cylinder while a stylus made grooves in the foil. Edison also gave us lighting to set the mood for his recordings. His first incandescent light bulb tested in October of 1879, lasted a whopping 13.5 hours before burning out!



In the world of commerce, two brothers, James and John Ritty, patented the world’s first “incorruptible cash machine.”




The first National Cash register ever used. It was used at the Miners' Supply Co. in Coalton, Ohio.

http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/James_Ritt

They later sold the patent and the business to the National Cash Register Company. Machines manufactured by this company

have handled more cash transactions throughout their history than all other cash register manufacturers combined. Mr. F.W. Woolworth opens his first “Great 5 Cents Store” in Utica, New York. This merchant’s claim to fame was “nothing cost more than a nickel”. What a claim to fame it was! Woolworth’s grew to 1000 stores in a business that prospered for almost 100 years. If you wanted to paint your house, your barn or anything else, you no longer had to wait to have your paint colors mixed. The Sherwin-Williams Paint Company began to market premixed colored paint in cans.

We have spanned some thirty-three years in a few short pages of print. While we have thought about a number of significant achievements and inventions, we have in no way covered them all. I apologize if I have omitted anything you thought to be newsworthy. I do hope we have spent a few minutes thinking not only about the impact Texas Jack had in his life on our country and our way of life, but how the aforementioned accomplishments and events may have had an impact on his.

One final note. I wonder if Texas Jack ever donned a pair of “virtually indestructible, copper riveted overalls”. This fine and serviceable garment was brought to you in 1873, courtesy of Levi Strauss. Yes, we know them today as Levis Blue Jeans. 

Give Thanks, be safe and have a great day!

WHISPERIN' COWBOY...December 2010

By: Driftin' AaronG

*He sat tall an' quiet in the saddle as he rode across the plains on his ol' bay
horse*

Driftin' along this Whisperin' Cowboy followin' his wand'rin' course

*He came outa Kansas ridin' slow an' easy a-headin' West
Toward the Rockies he rode headin' down the trail that was best*

*Jus' he an' his bay horse, they'd been together for a very long time
The bay horse an' the Whisperin' Cowboy that was so quiet, strong an' fine*

*He'd been workin' ranches for the past three years
Jus' workin' through all the long days a takin' care o' them ol' steers*

*But now it was time to be a wantin' to ride toward home this very day
To see all the West as it unfurled itself while he slowly made his way*

*O'er the Rockies an' 'cross the great divide he rode with many a smiles
Seein' all the high country an' low valleys through all the long miles*

*He an' the old bay were pals an' were aces like a perfect western pair
The horse did whinny with delight, while the Whisperin' Cowboy would grin an'
stare*

*For it was on a special day that they arrived at the ol' homestead
The place where the Whisperin' Cowboy became a man an' his boyhood was
shed*

*He stepped outa the saddle an' walked slowly to the grave site
Where his Ma an' Pa, an' little sister an' brother ended their lifelong fight*

*Three years had gone by since that day he rode away
Jus' him in grief and pain on his friendly ol' bay*

*His voice was a whisper an' his heart was empty with an anger that was real
For on that day so long ago he'd been shot in the throat an' he rode away to heal*

*He was back now an' his vengeance he would fulfill
For on the morrow he would meet the evil one an' make his vengeful kill*

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*But tonight he would be with his loved ones and rest in some strange peaceful
hate*

*An' with sadness and anger in his heart he would soon meet his heavenly
proclaimed fate*

*The morning came an' he mounted his ol' bay, then rode into the town
The folks they saw him a comin' as he rode with anger an' a hateful frown*

*The evil one with two six guns at the ready stepped out onto the wide dusty
street*

*Waitin' with a snarl on his angry face an' on that hot summer day they could all
feel the heat*

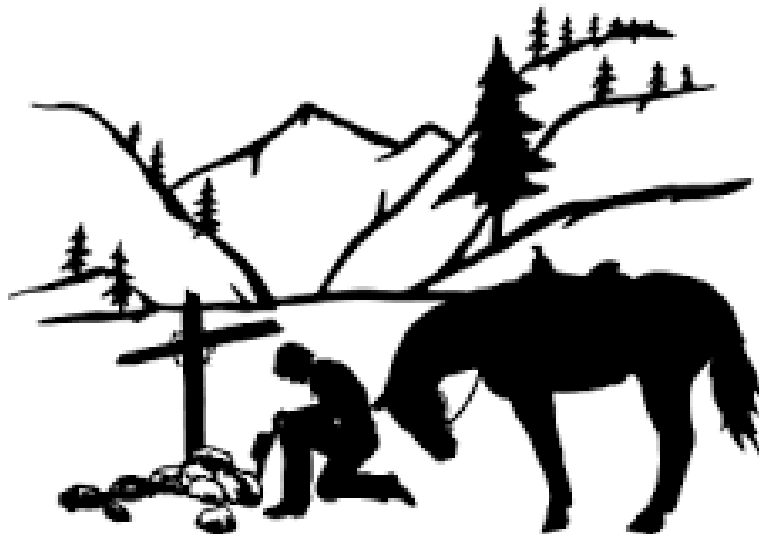
*The Whisperin' Cowboy stepped down from his saddle an' looked to the face that
was evil an' grim*

*It was time he whispered with a smile an' began his long walk directly toward
him*

*The gunfight was remembered an' talked about for years an' years
The evil one was buried and the Whisperin' Cowboy rode away with tears*

*Back to the homestead he rode badly wounded an' ready for death to be
He made it to the grave site an' turned his ol' bay to run away free*

*The Whisperin' Cowboy sat down by the family grave where he did pray
His love an' vengeance an' his life is what he gave that last warm summer day.*



In Memoriam



DOROTHA WHALON 1926-2017



Dorothea grew up in Texas during the Great Depression. She lived and worked most of her adult life in Southern California as a quality control inspector for Litton Industries inspecting circuit boards used in defense and household appliances.

She and her late husband Chuck Whalon moved to Lake Havasu in 1990 for retirement.

Dorothea enjoyed a quiet but satisfying retirement writing poems, keeping her mind sharp with crossword puzzles, and occasional travel and cruises. She cruised to Alaska and through the Panama Canal with Chuck and then again with Beryl. She was a generous person who shared with those in need without hesitation.

Dorothea is survived by her daughter Beryl Catterson, grandchildren Kirk Brennan, Denee Scribner and Lena Holub, eight great-grandchildren: Madeline Brennan, Joanna, Micah, Mikaela, Josiah, Joshua, Ketsia and Joel Holub, sisters Nan Tewes and Sue Parker, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Dorothea was a devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Her steady and witty presence will be missed more than words can describe. One of her gifts was sending cards for special occasions and making family members and friends feel loved and remembered.

Dorothea fought cancer for two years and was able to celebrate her 90th birthday with her family before peacefully passing.

“If love could have saved you, you would have lived forever.”

Musings from Dorothea

Sometimes the day goes by
And nothing has been done
I wasn't working or having fun
Wasn't reading or paying bills
Or solving problems or curing ills
On those days, like a train
Words and lines run thru my brain
And arrange themselves in countless
ways

Until some lines or clever phrase
Fall into thoughts I must convey
So for better or for worse
I finally have a finished verse
Sometimes silly, sometimes formal
And for a while I'm back to normal
Till the next time, that urge, perverse,
Bids me, write another verse.

Thoughts and condolences can be sent to the Whalon family at www.lietz-frazefuneralhome.com.

Randall Lee Omohundro

1963 - 2016

Hendersonville, TN

Randall Lee Omohundro, age 53, passed away on November 28, 2016. He is survived by his parents, Richard and Joyce Omohundro; daughters, Shelbi and LeAnna Omohundro; brother, Rick and wife, Marsha Omohundro. Visitation was held on Wed., Nov. 30 from 4-8 PM as well as Thurs., Dec. 1 from 11AM-1PM with services following at 1 PM at Spring Hill Funeral Home. Burial followed in the Historic Spring Hill Cemetery.



Published in *Tennessean* on Nov. 30, 2016

Our sincere condolences and prayers go out to the friends and families of Dorothea and Randy. They were both active members of the TJA.

Black Elk As “Show Man”

by

John Thomas Omohundro

Three years after Texas Jack Omohundro died of pneumonia in Leadville, Colorado, Buffalo Bill Cody, his old stage partner, launched his first Wild West Show, in 1883. Others such as P. T. Barnum had experimented with western extravaganzas since 1848, but no one until Cody included a large Native American cast. At first he hired Pawnees, a relatively pacified Plains people, but by his second season he enlisted the notorious Lakotas, including Sitting Bull, and the Oglalas.

The Indian fighter Cody who had vowed to avenge Custer rapidly became a promoter of Indian culture and a defender of his Indian cast. He was well-known for decent treatment of native employees. That doesn't mean that working the Wild West show was just summer camp for the Indians. The experience of one remarkable performer, Black Elk of the Oglalas, reveals the turbulent life they lived as performers.

I was familiar with John Neihardt's *Black Elk Speaks* from years of teaching anthropology. Neihardt the poet attempts to deliver Black Elk's story in his own words. What I had forgotten is that Black Elk joined Cody's Wild West Show for three years. A new biography, Joe Jackson's excellent *Black Elk: The Life of an American Visionary* (Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2016), expands upon Neihardt's telling and provides good context. Two chapters are devoted to Black Elk's show business career.

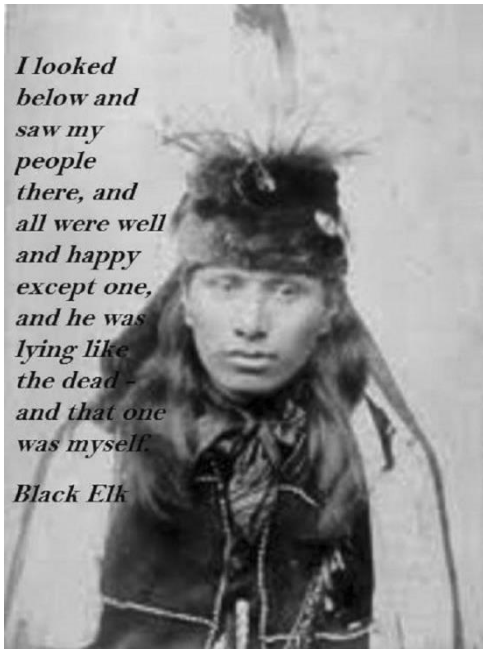
Black Elk would be deservedly famous even if he never performed in Cody's show. He reached maturity in violent times. A second cousin of Crazy Horse, he fought in the ambush at Little Big Horn. For decades he was a healer and visionary for his people at Pine Ridge Reservation, in South Dakota. He was active in the Ghost Dance movement of the 1890s, an attempt through religious revival to preserve native ways. *Black Elk Speaks* has been in print constantly since it was published in 1932 and at times has acquired the status of a cult classic.

But in 1886, Black Elk, 23 years old and already practicing as a healer and visionary, had grown discouraged at declining conditions at Pine Ridge. He told Neihardt,

...when I thought of my great vision, which was to save the nation's hoop and make the holy tree to bloom in the center of it, I felt like crying, for the sacred hoop [a metaphor for the integrity of his people] was broken and scattered.

*I looked
below and
saw my
people
there, and
all were well
and happy
except one,
and he was
lying like
the dead -
and that one
was myself.*

Black Elk



*Black Elk, about 23 years old overlaid with an excerpt of one of his visions.
Photo from Google.*

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In spite of his parents' pleas, he, along with reservation buddies One Side, He Dog, Little Big Man, Eagle Elk, and Standing Bear signed contracts to become actors in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. He would go into *wasichu*'s (white man's) world to discover what kind of people whites were and whether the Sioux should emulate them. Altogether, 119 men, women, and children from Pine Ridge signed the two-year contract. Men were paid \$25 per month, which was low by North American standards but more than twice what one could earn on the reservation. Besides, Cody provided room, board, transportation, shelter, clothes, and medical expenses. He facilitated their sending most of their cash home to Pine Ridge.

***Oskata Wicasa* (“show man”)**

In 1886, Black Elk boarded the “iron road” in Pine Ridge and traveled 1,600 miles to step down in Manhattan, where the company performed for three months at Madison Square Garden. Cody enlisted playwright James Morrison Steele Mackay to script the show as “The Drama of Civilization,” with scenes of pre-Columbian life evolving into the arrival of settlers and the “taming” of the West. There was even a re-enactment of Little Big Horn.

I liked the part of the show we made, but not the part that the wasichus made.

Black Elk participated in camp scenes, mock raids, and stagecoach chases, but he loved dancing the most. He and his fellows were very popular with the Eastern fans. Cody gave his Indian actors much latitude to accept invitations to theaters and parties in the city, because their appearance at events generated excellent public relations for the show. Black Elk and his fellow actors also visited many standard tourist attractions. He told Neihardt that he was not impressed with the *wasichu*, who could allow children to become street urchins or imprison the insane.

I could see that the Wasichus did not care for each other the way our people did before the nation's hoop was broken.

To Europe

The show shipped across the Atlantic for the first time in March, 1887. More than one half of the 209 performers who braved seasickness on the stormy crossing were Indians.

I had not seen anything good for my people yet; maybe across the big water there was something to see, so I did not go home, although I was sick and in despair.

In London the Wild West set up in the West End and played to enthusiastic crowds. This was an exciting time in London: Queen Victoria was celebrating her Golden Jubilee, and Americans funded an “Exhibition of America,” a world fair-type spectacle, in tribute. The Wild West show was the biggest draw in that exhibition and very profitable. Again, the Indian cast members were much sought-after as special guests in the city. Prince Albert enjoyed the show more than once, so soon his mother commanded a private showing. Black Elk was one of five native dancers who performed the Omaha Grass Dance for the Queen. At the conclusion, “Grandmother England,” who reigned over the largest empire in world history, shook Black Elk's hand and supposedly said something to the effect,



Left - a studio portrait made in London in 1887 of Black Elk and an unidentified man, both in Wild West show costume. Photo from <https://www.pinterest.com/>

“I have seen all kinds of people, but today I have seen the best looking— the Indians...If I owned you Indians, you good looking people, I would never take you on a show like this.” She invited the cast to her anniversary celebration at Windsor Castle.

When she came to where we were, her wagon stopped and she stood up. Then all those people stood up and roared and bowed to her; but she bowed to us. We sent up a great cry and our women made the tremolo. ... Maybe if she had been our Grandmother, it would have been better for our people.

Missing the Boat

Cody moved the show to Birmingham in November, 1887. He edited the script to remove some of the anti-

Indian scenes such as Little Big Horn. In the north, the Indian performers were loosely supervised. They were restricted to a cash allowance, but were free to visit the city. They discovered pubs. Black Elk and his chums were sometimes carried home in an alcoholic stupor.

In January 1888, when the show was playing in Manchester, Black Elk wrote a letter home that was published in the Pine Ridge newspaper in Oglala language. He announced that his travels so far had convinced him not to fear or hate *wasichus*, but their ways and landscapes were not his. He found England dark and was homesick for the prairie.

During celebrations at the conclusion of the Manchester run, a (probably) inebriated Black Elk and fellow revelers High Bear, Two Elk, and Charles Pin Picket more or less got lost and missed the troupe’s departure for America. Altogether, six orphaned Indians, only one of whom spoke English, made their way on the charity of admirers back to London.



The city was host to many Western entertainments. The boys joined "Mexican Joe's Western Wilds of America" to support themselves. Colonel Joseph "Mexican Joe" Shelley had built up a thicket of tall tales about himself and launched a successful show business career touring his Wild West show around Europe. He toured wider and longer than most, visiting Scotland and Greece and operating until 1894. He paid the Indians better than Cody, but his company was wild in and out of the arena, corrupting local damsels, going bankrupt, hauled into court, and suffering fires and injuries. "A spirit of chaotic malignancy was its presiding genius" wrote one newspaperman. This did nothing to increase Black Elk's hope for insight from the white man's culture. But the troupe's recklessness was catnip to Europe's Victorians, and it prospered.

Left-a Mexican Joe program from London
<http://www.snbba.co.uk/mj.html>

Love Interest

Mexican Joe's show opened in London in May, 1888. Other popular performers in the show included Chief Black Hawk and Running Wolf, and indeterminate characters with handles like Lasso Mack, Senorita Manuela, Texas Jack (perhaps the orphan whom John Omohundro mentored), Suspender Charlie, Texas Rosy, Black Mountain Daisy, and Wild Horse Henry.

In June Mexican Joe took his company to Paris, probably the first of its kind to do so. The mademoiselles loved the Indians. Black Elk even acquired a girlfriend, Charlotte, about 20 years old, who took him to meet her well-educated and wealthy parents in the suburbs.

They liked me too and were good to me. I could not talk their language. I made signs, and the girl learned a few Lakota words.

He left Charlotte to follow the company to Brussels in August, then Naples and Pompeii, then to Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool in the fall. In Manchester, a second catastrophe struck him: Mexican Joe's arena caught fire, destroying their gear and costumes and some of their animals. In April, Black Elk also suffered injury when his horse trampled him. He returned to Paris, perhaps to recover in Charlotte's company but also because he heard that Buffalo Bill was coming to town.

One morning at Charlotte's, dressed in the latest Parisian fashions for breakfast, Black Elk collapsed. He had a vision that he flew home and found conditions bad. He was in a coma for 24 hours. Charlotte's parents even purchased his coffin and placed it in his room. But he rose up, convinced he must return to Pine Ridge.

The Texas Jack Scout

His opportunity approached. Buffalo Bill arrived in Paris preceded by a hysterical build-up in May 1889. This was his first French venue. Black Elk attended the show and met Cody backstage afterwards. Cody offered to send him home. The 26-year-old Black Elk then left Charlotte and Europe on June 10 and was back in Pine Ridge on June 21. He resumed his healing and religious duties. He never returned to the show, or *wasichu*'s world, or Charlotte in Europe. He died in 1950 at the age of 89.



An older Black Elk poses dressed for a ceremony at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Photo from Google.

Lessons learned

What did Black Elk learn about white man's world from his three-year road trip? Enough to convince him that his people should not emulate them. He stayed at Pine Ridge and devoted the rest of his life to helping Plains cultures cope with change and find their own way. 🏹

NEXT SCOUT ISSUE INFORMATION

The deadline for the July 2017 issue of the *Scout* is **July 1, 2017**. Please send ideas and materials to our Guest Editors:

Carole Brown

barnlion@gmail.com

Peggy Greene

mgreene39@hotmail.com

Correction: This is a "correction" to our article, "The Gem" in the November 2016 issue, page 7, first paragraph. It should read Moline, ILLINOIS.

Jean & Mike King <kingkasa10@yahoo.com>

The Texas Jack Scout



Happy Spring! I hope everyone is doing great.

I would like to take this moment to plug our Facebook page. As promised, I have been posting tidbits of information on Facebook and Rene Tyree has been promoting our page. We currently have over 660 followers and thousands more have viewed our page. Wow! Anyone is allowed to join the group and post on any Texas Jack or western related topics. Comments are always welcome! Some posts and comments have been quite engaging. You may also tag our page or just provide a link from your personal page to the TJ Facebook page.

The next Roundup is in Sacramento, CA and is scheduled for June 20-23, 2018. I encourage you to join us at this event as it's

guaranteed to be another fabulous and fun filled Roundup! More information and details to come as they become available. You do not want to miss this one!

In our next issue of the *Scout* we will hear from a new contributor whose research has uncovered exciting, undocumented and interesting archives of Texas Jack documents, writings and information. This is going to be so fantastic!

Until then, run and go places you've never been before.....you end up seeing things you've never seen before!

Your president,
Carole Brown
barnlion@gmail.com

~~~~~**MAILBAG**~~~~~

**Jean & Mike King** <kingkasa10@yahoo.com> Jan 30 at 10:16 AM  
Hi Cousins,

If you've had a chance to read the November issue of the Scout hopefully you read our article starting on page 7. This Buffalo Bill museum in LeClaire, IA is indeed a "Gem." Thanks to Larry Tyree for adding them to the Scout mailing list. As you will read in the following e-mail response, the folks at this museum are excited to know that current cousins of TJ are interested in what they're doing and will hopefully visit them. <http://buffalobillmuseumleclaire.com>

We plan on making a Spring trip to LeClaire and spending some quality time with Connie and Bob. We'll also visit other historic sites in the area. i.e. BB's birth place. We're wondering if we can entice any [members] to join us and make it a mini reunion? We only have e-mail addresses for [a few members]. Please share this with anyone you think would be interested.

Hope to see you in the Spring.  
Jean & Mike King

Kalamazoo, MI  
269.270.3272

**The Texas Jack Scout**

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