



Hunting the Big Horn

by John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro

The following is from the November 27, 1879, issue of the magazine Forest and Stream (vol. 13, p. 852). Thank you to Bill Milstead for telling me of the existence of this article. Thank you also to Steve Shadle and Andrea Horvath for their help in finding the article at Washington State University library.

The subjoined sketch, which is fresh from the pen of an experienced Black Hills hunter, vividly delineates the almost inaccessible character of the country where the mountain sheep resort, and the difficulties and hardship of their pursuit. It is the first account we have ever read from such a source; that is, coming from one who has "been thar," and writes his experiences in the mountain vernacular. The writer is "Texas Jack."

Some distance further back in the mountains we struck a rough region and came to a high peak called Old Baldy. I had never seen Baldy before, and I never want to see him again. We camped near

the foot of the hill, and I proposed to climb on top and see what it looked like. None of the party seemed disposed to tackle him, so I shouldered Kate (a favorite rifle) early next morning and started up alone. It was a long, hard climb, and when I got on top I found out what it looked like--a dead jump-off of some fifteen hundred feet! That's just what it was on the other side. As it wouldn't be healthy to go further in that direction I concluded to lay there and gaze on the valley and scenes below (a long way below, I found out afterwards). It wasn't

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Dear TJA Members,

Start making your plans today for the 1998 Roundup to be held in Cody, WY on July 1, 2, 3, and 4. I hope that having the Roundup over the 4th of July will not prevent anyone from attending. Several other weeks were discussed while Edna Nees and I were in Cody this August. This was, however, the only week in which rooms were available and schedules of those helping us could be met.

Remember each of you are responsible for making your own hotel reservations. A block of rooms has been set aside at the Holiday Inn in Cody. These rooms will remain ours until 30 days prior to our arrival. It is extremely important that you make reservations prior to that time. This is also the same week as the Stampede Rodeo in Cody and once these rooms are released they will be sold quickly and rooms will then be nearly impossible to get.

One of the activities Edna and I looked into was a trip to Yellowstone. The trip took us 12 hours to complete. This did not include time for an evening meal and there was much of the park that we did not see. This is an activity that probably should take two days minimum. This trip was very tiring and we therefore concluded that those that want to visit Yellowstone should come early or stay late and do so at their own pace. For those who wish to stay in the park you can call 307-344-7311 for reservations and information. Call early because rooms are really hard to get and are often booked a year in advance.

If you have never had the opportunity to witness a rodeo, this will be your chance. You will not only see a rodeo but you will see the biggest and best. The country's top riders will be in Cody that week and one of the planned events will be to attend one of the sessions.

Cody will be bustling with activities because of the Stampede Rodeo. One of the town's events will be a parade in which the TJA has been asked to participate. Everyone should bring their western wear and TJ shirts.

More detailed information is listed on the "Roundup Information" sheet. Remember to

make your plans early and I look forward to seeing you in Cody.

One last thing... Texas Jack now has a web site. Thanks go to Dennis and Julie Greene for the materials supplied and to our VP Dick Omohundro for the tremendous amount of time and effort put forth in creating a nice looking site we can all be proud of. The address for this site is www.texas-jack.org. Any and all comments and/or suggestions are welcomed.

Richard W. Omohundro
President - TJA
PO Box 91
Salt Lick, KY 40371

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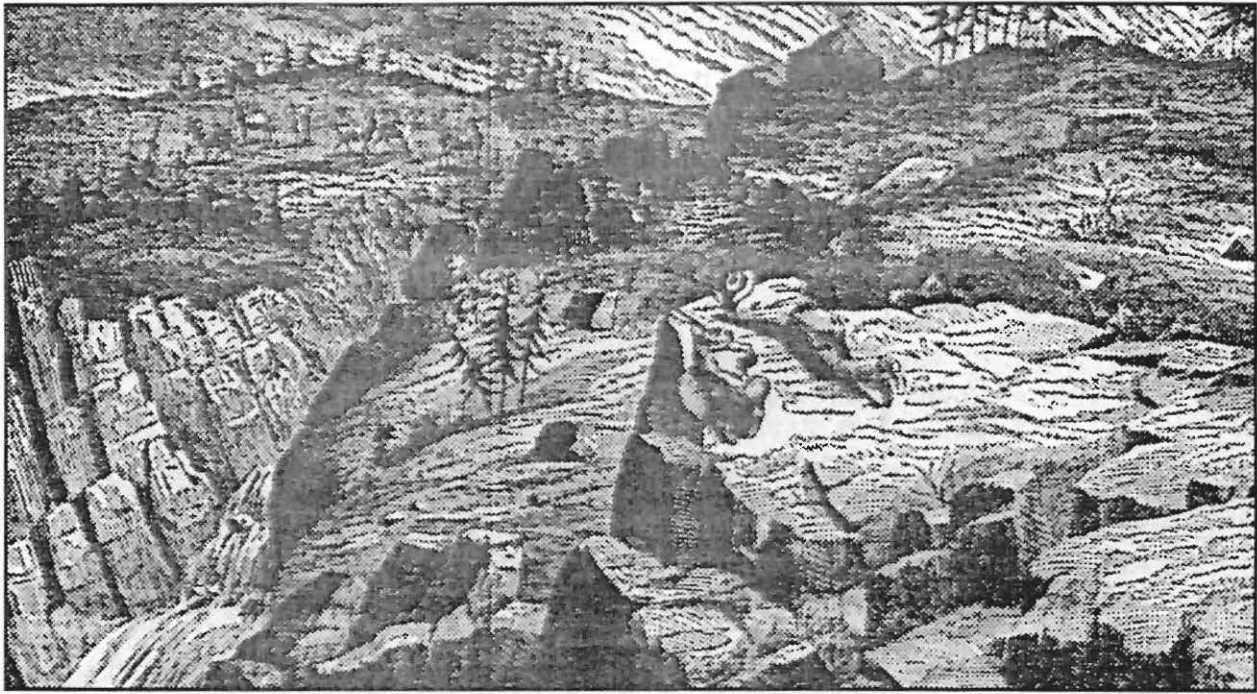
The Texas Jack Association
R. C. Omohundro, Treasurer
P.O. Box 5
Fork Union, VA 23055

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Detail from lithograph in Omohundro's *Field and Stream* article

Hunting the Big Horn

(continued from page 1)

wards). It wasn't such a bad lay-out after all, provided a fellow was fond of looking over a heap of country at one time. Eventually I discovered a small band of sheep grazing by a little lake in the valley. They seemed almost straight down from where I lay, but how to get at them was something else. I meant to try it on anyway, so crawled along the edge of the precipice for a long ways, going down many rough, steep places, until I came to the lowest gap there was, and it looked mighty scaly[sic], some eighteen or twenty feet nearly straight down; but there was snow to light on. I could get down, perhaps, but not up there again that I knew of. It was a go, any way, so I reached Kate out clear of the rocks and let her drop. She struck, but foremost, turned over and started down the snow-bank; at first slow, but she soon went out of sight some two hundred yards away, going at the rate of about a mile a minute. Next I came, but not to go coasting with Kate, for I struck square on my boot heels and stuck fast. It was kind of

an edging job from there down. The snow was a little harder than I had counted on, and I had to stamp several times before I could get hold enough to risk taking up the other foot. It was no nice place to play sliding down the hill, all by myself, especially when I didn't know exactly about where I was agoing to haul up. At last I came on to Kate. She was lodged up against some loose rock at the end of the snow bank, and no bones broke. I now hurried on, sure of a sheep, but I felt sheepish enough when I found they were at least a mile further than I had calculated, and before I reached the place they had moved camp and were asleep perhaps somewhere up in the rocks.

The next thing was to get back to where I had started from. I thought it all over, and decided to try it round the other side of old Baldy, thinking it would be a better chance to scale the ridge; but how much I was mistaken--I can't tell you how much, just here, but it was the roughest place on earth, except one, and I don't think anybody has ever found

that one. It looked easy enough when I started in, but before I got out--wait till I tell you. The farther I went along the mountain-side the worse it got, and more of it, until I came to a point where I could see neither bottom nor top! I was just sticking up among the stones like something that had growed there! I had but one chance to go ahead, and that was to jump down off the rock, some ten feet. If I did that I should have no chance at all to go back. It is strange how a fellow will press forward when he gets into trouble, though he may know it will take him deeper and deeper into it. I dropped Kate first; then swung myself down. I had but a few feet to drop, but that rolling business was what worried me the most. I struck all right. There was some earth and small timber ahead, and I was hurrying along as fast as possible, when all of a sudden the rocks commenced rolling down all around me. Looking up, I caught sight of an old ewe's head and neck stuck out over the rock some two hundred feet above me. Up went Kate and down came the ewe clear over my head, and lodged against some fir bushes quite a distance below. I crawled down and took off a quarter. I was pretty tired, but had rather pack meat than go hungry. I had already made some calculations on doing like a dog on a deer hunt--eat and drink nothing, and lay out that night. After a good deal of hard climbing, nearly straight up, I reached the top of the ridge, or backbone, as we call it. One step would put me on the descent either way. I sat Kate down, straddled the rock, and dropped into meditation for a moment. It was a strange scene; the sun had long since gone behind the mountain, and that peculiar yellowish green light (such, I believe, can be seen in no other part of the world), shone over the sky; that is, what I could see of it for the high peaks around. Not a sound to be heard, save the faint roar of the torrents far down in the deep dark hollows below! I looked to Kate, my only companion.

Thinks I, "old girl, this ain't no good place to be in; if I drop to sleep and tumble off this rock I shan't wake up much before Gabriel toots his horn." These thoughts put me astir! I hastily gathered up my little outfit and struck down the mountain; I was in for it now. The further down I went the rougher it got, more the ledges, and the greater distance I had to drop from one to the other. I got kind of desperate, and hardly stopped to look for a better place--just peep over, drop Kate, (always but foremost) then the sheep, and I would follow. Darkness was gathering fast, the weather was turning cold; I was nearing the valley and hope began to brighten a little, when I came to a dead sticker. It was the last ledge! All below was loose stone that slanted away to the cañon below. I looked over--no use talking--over fifty feet in the clear; no pair of legs in America could jump down there and ever come out with a whole bone in them. I scrambled along the ledge some distance one way; it got worse! Tried it the other, and found but one chance, and that a mighty slim one. It was where the water had cut a narrow crevice through the main ledge. If I could only hold on, it would take me within a reasonable distance of the loose stones below. It beat no chance at all; so over went Kate, meat next, and I commenced my descent bear fashion, (tail foremost, of course, the same as I do everything) holding on in any way, or to anything that was fast, as long as there was anything, and then I went about half as far as I expected and hit twice as hard as I ought to. The loose stones began to slide, and away went me, Kate, sheep, stones, and all, some twenty yards down the hill. It was quite dark now, but I managed, by feeling around, to find Kate and the sheep, and rustled off up the hollow, through the darkness and over the rocks, with a few tumbles and skinned shins.

I reached camp, that is, where camp

ought to be; but it wasn't there. Although it was very dark, I knew I was within a few steps of the right place, and there I stood, dumfounded for a moment, thinking to myself, if this is not me, who in thunder can it be? I knew I was not lost; the camp must be lost. Presently I saw a little spark, and crawling under some logs came on to a heap of smouldering embers, the only sign of human existence. I gave the coals a kick, and a dim light glared around that made the old white logs loom up like so many ghosts. Whilst gathering some brush forty different imaginations rattled through my brain. Indians? I thought first; somebody shot accidentally [sic], or fell off the rocks and broke a leg; horses stampede; everything; until I got a big light, when all was explained. Right over the fire hung a big flask half full of the best!--with a note attached saying, "Come into the river, party started at 3 P.M." Old Whity, my pony that was tied to a tree near by and had been quiet all this time, now began to snort and tear around as much as to say, "get that saddle and outfit on here, and let's be off," and you bet I did, and was off in a hurry, and didn't [sic] forget the flask either. Whity took a near cut, and Kate

took her chances along with me, through the thick timbers, up and down the steep rocks. Which ever way we went I don't know, (as I was very busy settling up with the flask), but I do know that I was the first in to Bartler's Ranche on the Yellow Stone River, some eighteen miles from where we had camped.

Ed. Note: Texas Jack was known for his storytelling! The Earl of Dunraven wrote in his book The Great Divide (in which he chronicles his exploration with Texas Jack of the newly created Yellowstone National Park), that around the campfire, "Jack, who is of course also smoking - he always is smoking, except when he is eating, and the few minutes he is obliged to devote to mastication are grudgingly given - is holding forth to the rest of us, telling us some thrilling tale of cattle raids away down by the Rio Grande on the Mexican frontier; graphically describing some wild scurry with the Comanches on the plains of Texas; or making us laugh over some utterly absurd story narrated in that comical language and with that quaint dry humour which are peculiar to the American nation."

*

A special thanks goes out to the following members who have made contributions for the fence erected around Texas Jack's grave site:

Century Club (\$100 or more)

M.H. Omohundro
Harvey Willard
Benjamin Wyche
Richard W. Omohundro
Edna Nees

Donors

Elmer A. Omohundro
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Kitty Pelkan
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Julie Omohundro
Chip Larson
Dan C. Omohundro
LeRoy Maxey
Paul Perkins

Total to date- \$ 860.00

Leadville As It Is

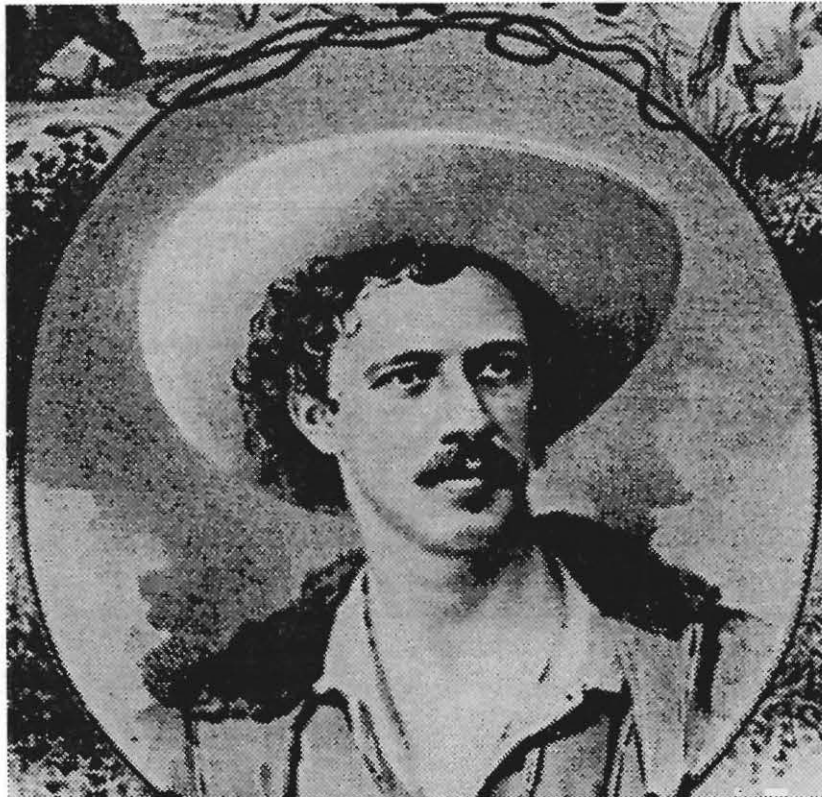
It is known that Texas Jack died in Leadville, CO of pneumonia, but it is not generally known how someone so young and strong could have caught this deadly disease. The article below, from the Lowell Daily Courier and datelined Saturday, June 26, 1880 (two days prior to the demise of Texas Jack), sheds some light on the subject. This article was uncovered by Peter Alexis and was one of many displayed in the excellent exhibit he prepared for the 1994 Texas Jack Roundup in Lowell, MA. Peter kindly sent me a copy for reprint here.

Last year the newspapers teemed with reports of Leadville. This year the discovery is made that only one side of the story has been told. A correspondent of the N. Y. SUN, writing from that city, says:

Leadville, Colorado's fair city of pneumonia is unhealthy. Strangers just arrived at the headquarters of throat and lung diseases are astonished to see and hear everybody, almost, coughing, and with little effort raising great quantities of phlegm. The inhabitants of Leadville claim that the town is healthy. In the presence of from twelve to thirty sheeted corpses

that are daily prepared for burial, they, with effrontery that is remarkable and untruthfulness begotten by speculations in carbonate pocket mines, say, "Whiskey killed them," "Exposure killed them." If among the unfortunate ones lying their rough coffins there should be one whose hair is tinged with gray, caused by loss of money and incessant worry over the whereabouts of the pocket on the claim he bought, the men of Leadville say: "He was old. It was time for him to die."

In the middle of May, with an almost vertical sun pouring its heat into the middle of this camp, the condition of the atmosphere is this: On the sidewalk exposed to the full glare of the sun the heat is uncomfortable. People walking there open their coats. They fumble with their vest buttons. One by one they are unfastened. At length, to escape from the heat, they cross to the other side of the street. The change is as from Florida to Iceland. The sidewalks in the shade are slippery with ice. The air is moist and icy, having a peculiar quality that chills instantly, as a plunge into ice water does. Vest and



coat are quickly buttoned, hands thrust into the pockets, shoulders elevated, and the sidewalkers hope no harm has been done. Vain hope! Daily men meet death by simply crossing the streets of this town. Death in the form of pneumonia lurks everywhere in Leadville.

That whiskey indirectly causes the death of many men is true. Men get drunk, recklessly expose themselves, catch cold, and soon die with pneumonia. The whiskey does not kill them. It is the colds caught after drinking it, which in a town of moderate altitude could be easily cured, that in this camp on the carbonates result in death. If a person addicted to the use of alcoholic liquors is attacked by pneumonia, the result is almost always fatal.

Another disease that is gradually coming into prominence in this town is lead poisoning, commonly called "leading." Men who are working about the smelters, especially those who charge the furnaces with ores, are most liable to this direful disease. Men who are "leaded" become partially paralyzed and in many cases insane. There is no escape for a man who pursues the work of feeding a furnace. It is a question of time only when he will be ready for the hospital, and probably the undertaker. Why will men accept work of this health and life-destroying character? They are hungry. The miners tell me also that some of the mines are poisonous, men working in them being subject to arsenical poisoning.

This camp, this famous camp, is the most overrated the world ever saw. The frauds of Frazier river, of Peace river, of Kootenay river, or Sun river, are nothing in comparison. In placer mines (the only mining a poor man should engage in) money is plentiful, and the miners, though rough, are bound together sympathetically. They do not allow their comrades to die of starvation or disease,

unattended, like brutes. In this camp on the carbonates, the men, ground down by want, by cold, by hunger, by the poverty of the mines, are hard and cold toward one another. With indifference they see their comrades die. They are too poor to help them if they wish to.

The population of Leadville is about 45,000. Most of these men are young. They came to this camp to work in hope of bettering their condition. The streets are crowded with men in search of work. Daily great gangs of men wander from mine to mine, from smelter to smelter, asking for employment. None is to be had.

The average American is of no use in a mine. Daily they return to town, hungry and discouraged, and the little money they may have is apt to be expended for mean whiskey or at the gaming tables. So numerous are the unemployed that the mine managers talk of reducing the wages of the miners. The miners are organized, and say they will strike if the attempt to cut their pay is made. Of the 45,000 men here, about 10,000 are employed in the mines; 35,000 men are doing nothing to earn a living. Of course, there are very many shopkeepers, boarding-house keepers, and gamblers. I do not write of them. The entire city depends for support on a few mines. A few mines only yield a profit, and that profit goes into the pockets of but few persons. The other mining companies spend money - do not make money. It is safe to state that three dollars are expended in this camp for every dollar obtained from the mines.

*



A History of Heraldry

by Myra Vanderpool Gormley, C. G.

In light of the recent discussions regarding an Omohundro coat of arms, I thought this article from the December 1996 Colonial Homes would be of interest to readers. It is reprinted with kind permission of the author.

Between A.D. 1130 and 1160, heraldry appeared almost spontaneously throughout Europe. At that time, knights began to wear multi-piece fine-plate armor that covered their entire bodies and encased their heads in helmets. In warfare, the only way of telling one combatant from the next was by the marking on the triangular shields the warriors carried. Various marks and designs such as vertical and horizontal lines decorated the armor.

Also in the 12th century, seals began to be used to authenticate documents. A man of the rank of knight or above would show on this seal a figure dressed in armor and upon the shield would appear the personal emblems the knight had adopted.

By the 13th century, knights were wearing emblems (also called arms or bearings) such as lions, boars, trees, and flowers on their shields and surcoats, the garments worn over a coat of metal to prevent direct sunlight from heating it.

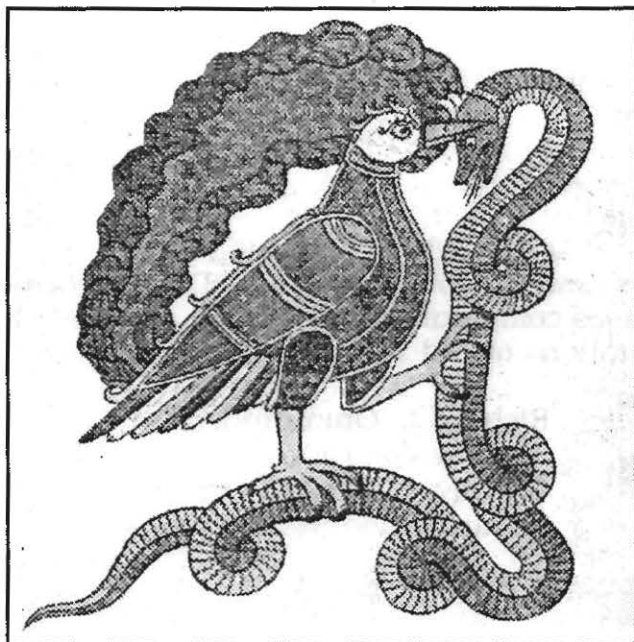
The designs adopted by the knights were jealously guarded and became the objects of pride, much like the emblems and colors of today's sports teams. The social importance and pageantry of heraldry grew with the popularity of medieval jousting tournaments, which were held to give practice in the use of the lance. At these jousts, heralds would introduce contestants with fanfare

and pomp, and describe to the spectators the bearings on the shields of the participants. The heralds often were employed by knights who rewarded them with gifts of horses and armor. Heraldry traveled from country to country proclaiming venues and dates for future tournaments. Because of their long association with tournaments and their ability to identify many bearings, heralds were in demand throughout Europe. Barons, dukes, princes, and kings eagerly sought to use their skills in recognizing patterns and devices on banners and shields.

Arms in stone and on stained glass, silver, and other furnishings provide clues for historians in dating and identifying buildings and objects. There are no designated meanings assigned to the charges (a pictorial representation or geometrical shape) and tinctures (the metals, colors, and furs) used in arms. Consequently, there is no way to look at a set of arms and decipher the designer's intended symbolism. In some instances, the heraldic designer left notes explaining why a certain charge was chosen for someone's arms. In the absence of specific information, some informed guesses can be made. Crosses were probably intended to express Christian devotion, while lions and eagles have almost always represented nobility. Merchants and craftsmen often included the tools of their trades in their arms or an attribute of their patron saint. For example, hammers, anvils, and pincers might be used in the arms of a smith.

Frequently, the family name of the original owner of the arms sounds similar to the name of one of the charges used in the arms. This practice is called "canting."

Sometimes the cant is easy to recognize: a lion for Lyons; a fox for Fuchs. But sometimes it is not so obvious. The fish in



the "de Lucy" family arms is a pike; an archaic name for a species of pike is "luce." The cant also may involve another language. For example, the arms of the English "Harrison" family bears a hedgehog, "herisson" in Middle French.

The right to display a certain coat of arms became hereditary about 1390. Originally, a knight chose his own device, but by the 15th century, the steady increase in the numbers of arms resulted in the need for a complete systemization of the practice. In England all armorial bearings came to be granted by the king and were registered with the College of Arms in London. The college grew out of the Herald's College, which was established in 1488 by Richard III to trace ancestry, approve coats of arms, confirm titles of honor, and examine claims to armorial rights.

The use of coats of arms in the United States is a matter of personal choice. There is no law by which you can obtain a coat of arms, as the American government has never recognized them. The right to display

arms in the States is limited to those families who can show a direct descent from an arms-bearing ancestor. A coat of arms is usually granted, certified, or otherwise registered as belonging to one individual alone—not a family—and only his direct descendants with proven lineage can be recognized as eligible to inherit the arms. There are some exceptions, but they are rare.

Be aware that there is no such thing as "the arms of Smith," or any other family, for that matter. Many unrelated families share the same surname, but sharing a surname does not give someone the right to the same arms. Arms are associated with families or lineages, but a specific coat of arms was inherited by a child from parents, either intact or somewhat modified. Any claim to use a specific historical coat of arms rests on a family link with an ancestor acknowledged to have used those arms at one time.

There is no complete record of all arms used throughout history. Discovering whether a family has an armorial ancestor is a time-consuming challenge. Anyone who claims to be able to find a specific coat of arms or "family crest" simply by looking in a reference book or a database is mistaken.

*

WELCOME

to new members

Following is a list of new members that have joined during 1997 and were not listed in the last issue of the *Scout*:

1. Russell F. Bath - Worcester, MA
2. Eleanor T. Dovel - Lynchburg, VA
3. Barry D. Omohundro -
Winchester, KY
4. Mary O. Shuman - Richmond, VA
5. Dorothy Jean O. Sorrells -
Nashville, TN

News...



A Near Lynching

Karl Pelkan noticed the following in L.M. Boyd's column, "The Grab Bag," in the San Francisco Chronicle, July 26, 1997.

Ned Buntline wrote "Scouts of the Prairie," the first stage play to feature Texas Jack and Buffalo Bill Cody as actors.

"Q. Wild West dime novelist Ned Buntline once was lynched, then cut loose and revived. What was the crime?"

"A. The fatal shooting of the husband of his alleged mistress. His real name was Edward Zane Carroll Judson. By age 15 he'd earned a U.S. Navy midshipman's commission. By 21 he'd published his own magazine. Later he tracked down two murderers in Kentucky. Then the lynching. Much later, he was sent to jail for a year in New York City for leading a deadly riot. He started several magazines, and wrote about 400 dime novels."

Readers who wish to follow the many adventures of the dubious Mr. Buntline will find them in Jay Monaghan's The Great Rascal (NY: Bonanza Books, 1951)

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The Texas Jack Website is Up and Running!

TJA vice-president Dick Omohundro has created a Texas Jack Web site, located at

<http://texas-jack.org>

The site is still under construction, but is ready for public viewing. Dick encourages comments, suggestions, and contributions of Old West graphics. Send to:

Richard L. Omohundro
33 Lakeside Drive
Granby, CT 06035
richard.omohundro@mail.snet.net

*

Did You Know?

The world's oldest national park, Yellowstone, turned 125 this year. On March 1, 1872, President Ulysses S. Grant signed the law that set aside 2.2 million acres of land "for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

Two years later, the Earl of Dunraven explored Yellowstone with Texas Jack as his guide, and wrote about it in *The Great Divide*. Today, the road from Canyon to Tower Falls goes through Dunraven Pass.

TJA members have been working to have a mountain peak in Yellowstone named for Texas Jack. This has been an ongoing project for some years now, started by Sue Omohundro, passed on to Bill Milstead, and now in the hands of John and Susan Omohundro. Watch for developments in future issues of the *Scout!*

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Roundup Information



July 1-4
Cody, Wyoming

Where will we stay?

at the Holiday Inn - For reservations
call 1-800-527-5544

Group room rates are:

Single - \$79.92

Double - \$85.32

Triple - \$90.72

Quad - \$96.12

All rates include an 8% tax

Children 19 and under stay free with
adults.

Don't forget to tell them you are with the
TJA in order to receive the group rate.

How do we get there?

If flying: Connections to Cody out of Salt
Lake City can be made with Delta.
Connections out of Denver can be made
on United Express.

The Cody Airport is 5 minutes from
downtown Cody. Complementary
shuttle service is available to the Holiday
Inn. Car rentals are also available but
reservations should be made in advance.
Hertz and Avis are available but a better
deal with Thrifty can be made if you
mention you are staying at the Holiday
Inn. The Thrifty car rental reservation
number is 307-587-8855.

What is there to do?

Planned events for the group:

- Visit the Buffalo Bill Historical Center
and attend a session of the Stampede
Rodeo.
- Banquet Saturday, July 4

Free time activities:

- Whitewater rafting is available for all
ages.
- A visit to Old Trail Town, a unique
record of more than 20 historically docu-
mented buildings of the late 1800's, only
takes one to two hours.

- A visit to the Irma Hotel for dinner and
to witness a shoot out on the streets of
Cody featuring Wild Bill Hickok.

There will be many other activities going
on during Stampede Rodeo week which
will be unique to this week only.

Join us to witness Cody during one of its
most interesting and lively weeks of the
year!



from the Editor's Desk...



NEW EDITOR!

The next edition of the *Scout* will have a new editor.

He is:

Rand McKinney
1138 Settle Ave.
San Jose CA 95125

Submission Deadline: December 15, 1997

Mark your calendars...

For the next

Texas Jack

Roundup

Cody, Wyoming,

July 1-4, 1998

see p. 11

Texas Jack Scout
Kitty Wyche Pelkan
6021 37th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98126



To:

Kitty Wyche Pelkan
6021 37th. Ave. SW
Seattle WA 98126 (1997)