

Volume XVII, No. 3

Fall 2002

## AN UNFORGETTABLE ROUNDUP in DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA!!

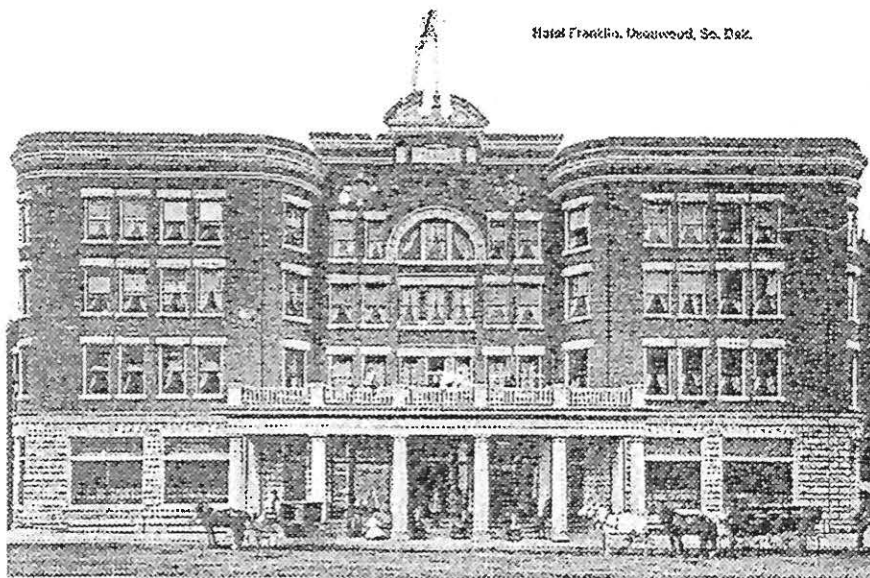
June 26-29, 2002

by Kitty Pelkan

A record number 67 members of the Texas Jack Association gathered in Deadwood, SD for the never-to-be-forgotten 2002 Roundup, June 26-29. Martha Sullivan, daughter of Association founder Frank Sullivan, was the organizer of this roundup, and everyone was

immediately—and continuously—singing her praises for an excellent event.

The whole town of Deadwood is a National Historic Landmark. It is located not far off Interstate 90, situated on the western edge of South Dakota in the Black Hills National Forest. This locale was chosen because Deadwood is where James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok was shot and is buried. From September 1873 to March 1874,



*The Historic Franklin Hotel first opened for guests in 1903.*

*continued on page 3*



Dear TJA Members,

Since assuming the presidency at the Deadwood Roundup, I have been hustling to get up to speed on all things TJA. I'm not quite there yet, so this letter will be brief.

First, I must thank John Omohundro (and his wife, Susan), Edna Nees, and R.C. Omohundro for the great job they did as officers of the organization over the last two years. As Edna and R.C. have agreed to continue as secretary and treasurer for two more years, and John will continue to serve as immediate past president, I look forward to meeting the opportunities of the next two years with a seasoned management team. I have set a number of goals for us already:

1. To review and update the by-laws, which have not been changed since they were issued in 1985.
2. To increase the number of TJA members who are actively involved in the organization. I believe that active involvement is a prerequisite to the development of real interest in and dedication to any effort. Instead of a few doing a lot, I would like to see many doing a little.
3. To establish formal mechanisms for communication among TJA officers on a routine basis.
4. To stay focused on achieving TJA's purpose. I want to subject everything to the "TJ Test," which is "What does it have to do with Texas Jack?"

Look for details in the next issue of the *Scout*. Until then, I'd like to ask all of you who have not been actively involved in the Association previously (or recently) to think about what level and type of involvement might interest you. There is lots to do, and much of it won't take a lot of your time or require you to meet any tight deadlines. How perfect is that?

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Author of *Buckskin and Satin*  
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The Texas Jack Association was founded in 1980 to commemorate John B. Omohundro, cowboy, prairie scout, western hunting guide, and Wild West showman, colleague of Buffalo Bill Cody and Wild Bill Hickok.

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

Wild Bill performed on stage with John Baker "Texas Jack" Omohundro, Josephine Morlacchi (Jack's recent bride), and William Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody in Ned Buntline's play *Scouts of the Plains*. Having visited sites in previous roundups associated with Texas Jack, Josephine, and Buffalo Bill, it was now time to pay respects to Wild Bill.

Headquarters for this, the eleventh roundup, was the Historic Franklin Hotel. Registration began at 4:00 Wednesday afternoon in the upstairs Fainting Room. We were checked in by Edna Nees and Jason Swingle and given hefty registration packets that included a souvenir Texas Jack notepad and pencil.

After registering, attendees greeted old friends and made new ones while enjoying light refreshments on the second floor verandah. On hand was Association member Thadd Turner dressed as Wild Bill, graciously posing for photographs, answering questions, and selling/autographing his book *Wild Bill Hickok: Deadwood City-End of Trail*. Elsewhere in the hotel one could pick up a copy of the May/June 2002 *Deadwood Magazine* for which Thadd had written an excellent three-page article about Texas Jack. A sidebar in the magazine announced, "Western history buffs pay tribute to a gallant western frontier scout when the Texas Jack Association holds its biennial roundup in Deadwood the last week of June."



*As members arrive from all parts of the U.S., they relax and socialize on the verandah of the Franklin.*

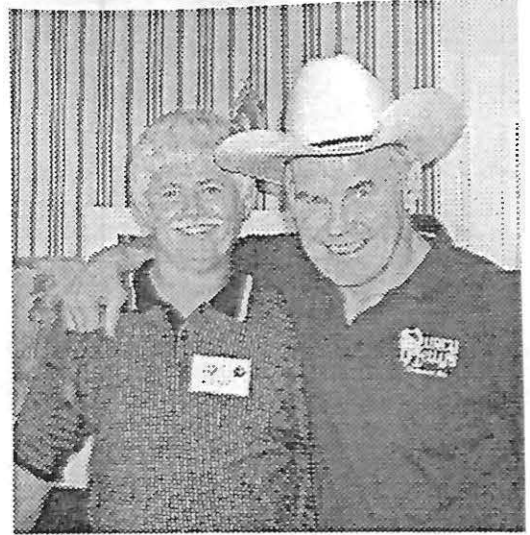
Later that evening many ate dinner in the hotel's 1903 Dining Room. Bill Walsh, the proprietor of the Franklin, welcomed the TJA, pointed out some of the historical features of the room, and invited us to wander throughout the hotel which is a treasure trove of antique furnishings and fixtures.



*Susan and John Omohundro*



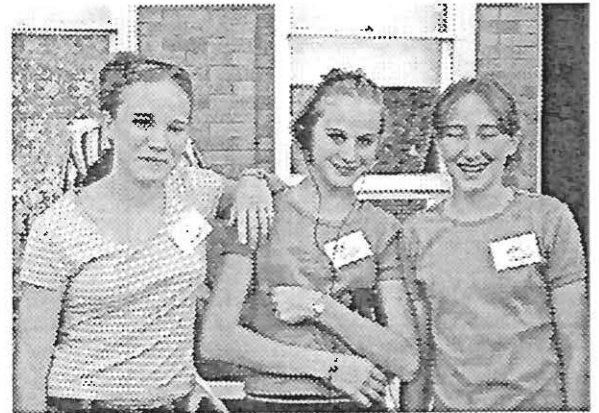
*Dorotha Whalon, Thomas Omohundro, Beryl and Tom Caterson*



*Terry Omohundro with Bill Walsh, proprietor of the Hotel Franklin*



*Charlie and Barbara Curtis with Thadd Turner*



*Laura and Stephanie Greene, Melisa Brown*



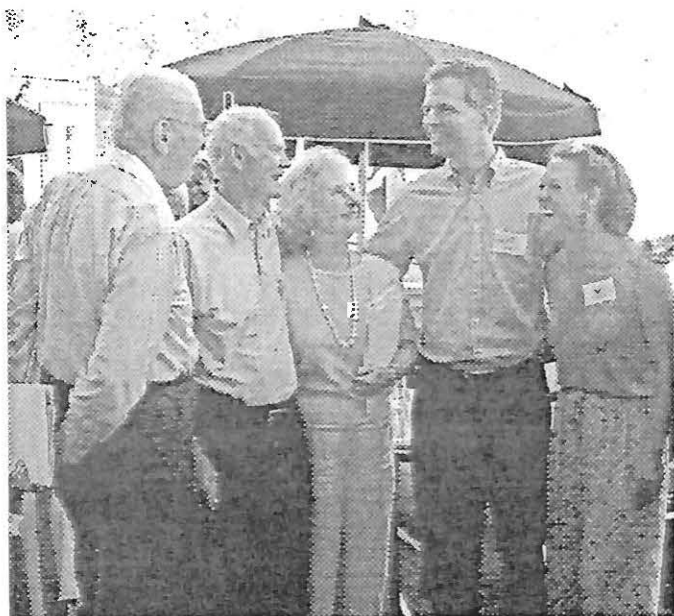
*Carole and Rick Brown, Rand McKinney and fiancée Candice Denton*



*Kitty and Karl Pelkan*



*Robin Carmody in Wild Bill heaven! Robin has researched Hickok for nearly 20 years*



*Ben Wyche, Mal and Ann Wyche, Stephen Omohundro, Kelly Wyche*



*Linda Cech, Judith Phillips, Julie Greene, Rick Cech, Stephen Omohundro*



*Thomas and Elizabeth Omohundro*

One can still ride the original Otis manual elevator, operated by Bill Buckholtz. But if “Mr. Bill” isn’t around, Bill Walsh himself will give you a lift, after first parking his cigar in the nearby receptacle.

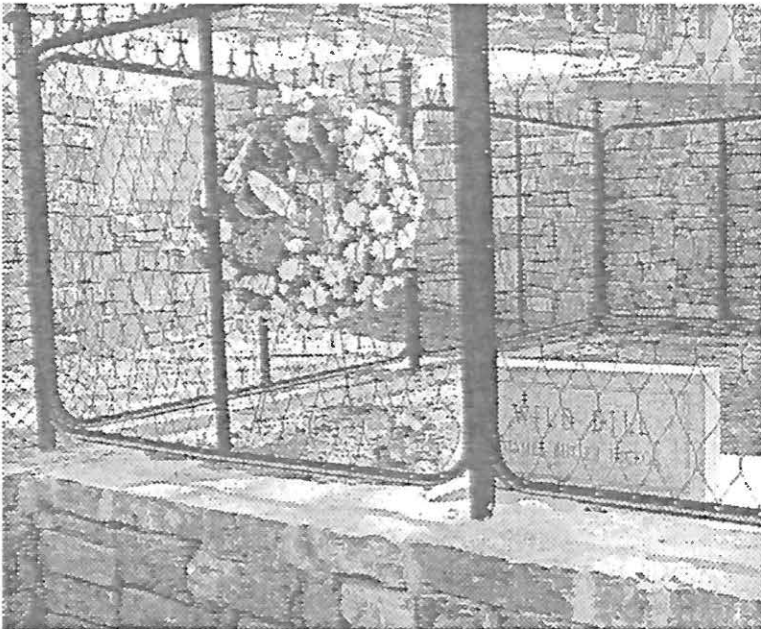
Thursday morning dawned hot and sunny. After a continental breakfast in the Emerald Room, we boarded two open-air buses for a guided tour of the town. A fast-paced narration informed us that the discovery of gold in a gulch full of dead wood led to the town’s first name, Deadwood Gulch. The dead wood was the result of a pine beetle infestation which reoccurs every ten years or so. On a hilltop we could see the Homestake Mining Company in Lead (pronounced “leed”—it’s a mining term) which had operated continuously for 125 years until its closing last year. Riding down historic Main Street we passed an archaeological dig and learned of the large Chinese population that once lived in Deadwood, second only to San Francisco’s at the time.

We heard about the first madam of the town, Miss Kitty, who was shot and killed at age 25 by her fifth husband. We rode past the saloon where Wild Bill was assassinated, and learned that he had lived in a tent on the edge of town for only one and a half months before he met his destiny. Two outdoor sculptures immortalize Wild Bill: a bust created by Korczak Ziolkowski (of Crazy Horse renown) and a bronze statue by Korczak’s daughter Monique and her sculpting partner Jim Borglum (the grandson of the Mount Rushmore sculptor).

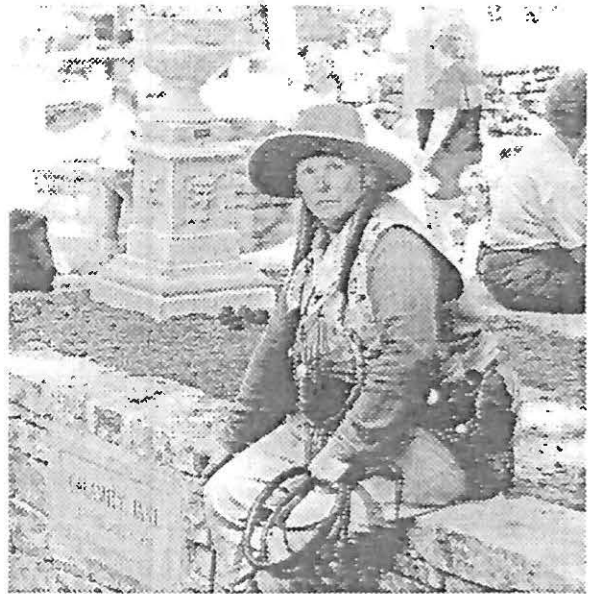
We also learned about the casinos! Deadwood had nearly become a ghost town until 1989, when gambling was legalized once again. There are now some 80 gambling establishments in the area. The money that has poured in has paid for an upgrade of the town’s infrastructure and continues to finance the restoration of many of its 1880’s-era buildings. Tax revenues from Deadwood gaming have also financed historical restora-



*On behalf of the TJA, Julie Greene presents a wreath in memory of Wild Bill Hickok. Martha Sullivan, who arranged the event, looks on.*



*The wreath stands on the gravesite of Wild Bill. The flowers are red carnations and white daisies, decorated with a pistol, red kerchief, and the famous "aces and eights" card hand. The message: "In Memory of Wild Bill Hickok from the Texas Jack Association 6/27/2002." To the left, in the terrace above, is the gravesite of Calamity Jane, whose dying request was, "Bury me beside Wild Bill."*



*Dianne Gleason as Calamity Jane*

tions in other cities and towns in South Dakota. Many members of the TJA contributed to this worthy cause by playing the slot machines that were everywhere one went—including our hotel lobby!

The bus tour continued to nearby Mount Moriah Cemetery where Wild Bill, Calamity Jane, and other colorful characters of the past are buried. Located on a wooded bluff overlooking Deadwood, the cemetery is undergoing extensive restoration. We negotiated



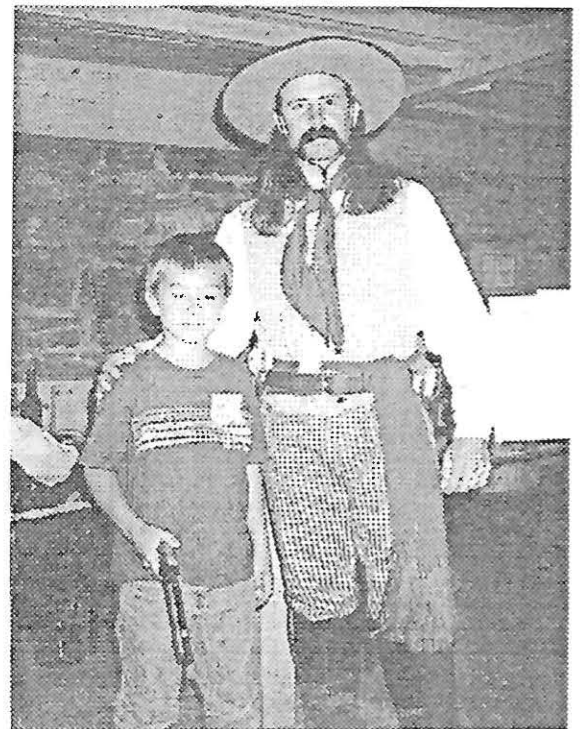
*In the foreground: (left) Susan Omohundro, Thomas Omohundro (right) Elizabeth Omohundro, John Omohundro, Ann and Armond Spencer*

one can read the life story of Wild Bill written, in large part, by Thadd Turner. Wild Bill's brief association with Texas Jack is mentioned and accompanied by the formal photograph of Jack standing behind Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill.

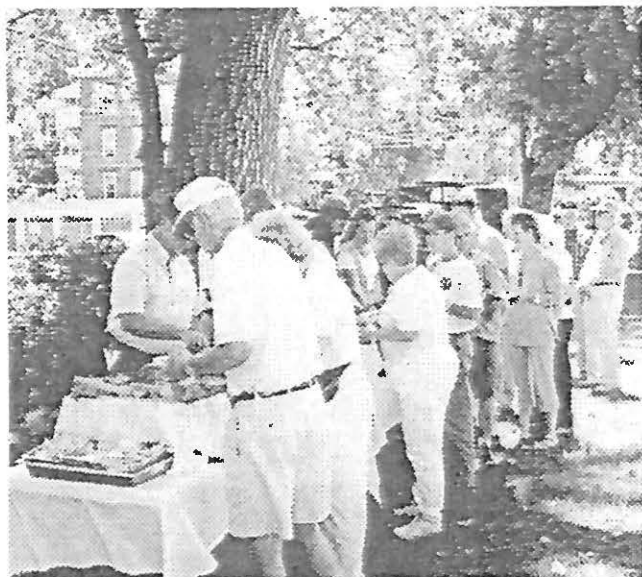
Thadd has done extensive research on the circumstances surrounding Wild Bill's assassination

the steep and dusty terrain and gathered at Wild Bill's gravesite. Our tour guide recounted the story of Wild Bill's and Calamity Jane's tenure and demise in Deadwood. Afterwards, the Association held a wreath-laying ceremony which included readings and remarks by Thadd Turner and a visit from Calamity Jane. The occasion was covered by local television and radio stations. We then walked back down to our buses for a short ride to the edge of town where we disembarked at a wonderfully shady park and feasted on a scrumptious catered lunch.

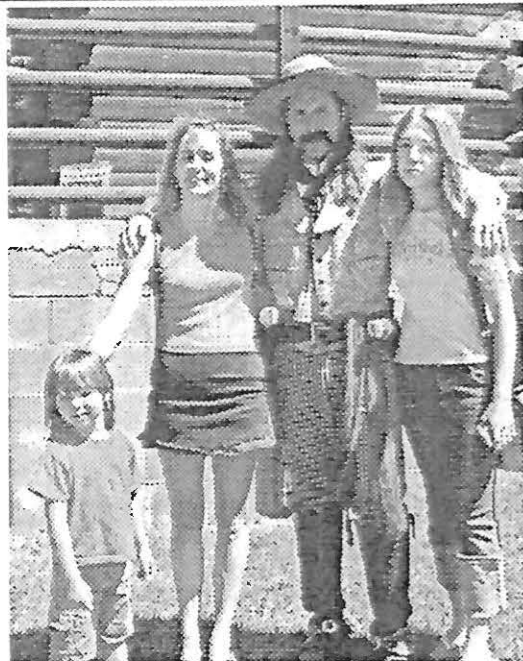
Later we regrouped at the Wild Bill Hickok Interpretive Center, located within the Wild West Casino and Entertainment Complex. On the walls of this small museum



*At the Wild Bill Hickok Interpretive Center Marshall Brown holds one of Thadd's pistols.*



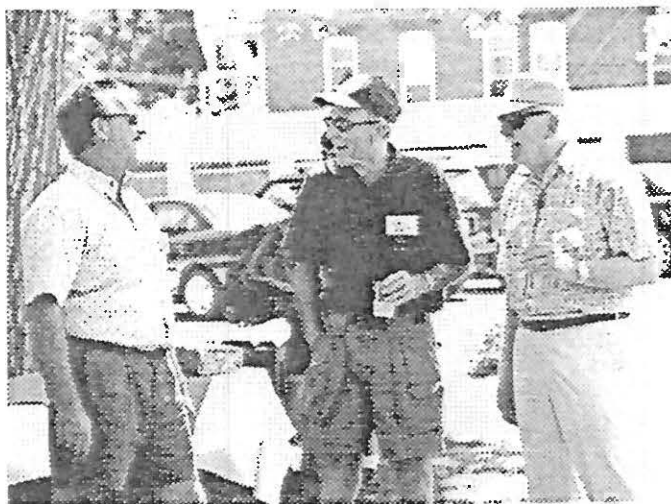
*Mal Wyche heads the buffet line for our luncheon in the park—a first-class affair!*



*Wyatt “Action Figure Star” Turner, with parents Cindy and Thadd and sister Tanya*



*Peggy Greene and Martha Sullivan*



*Rick Cech, Mark Greene, Dennis Greene*

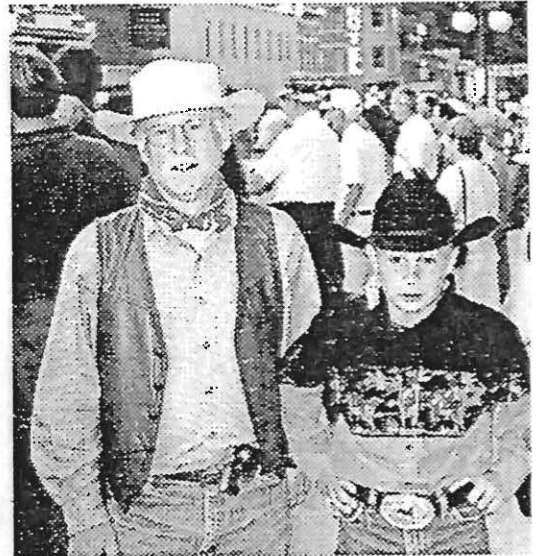


*Michael and Carol Foster and Little Boy Omohundro*

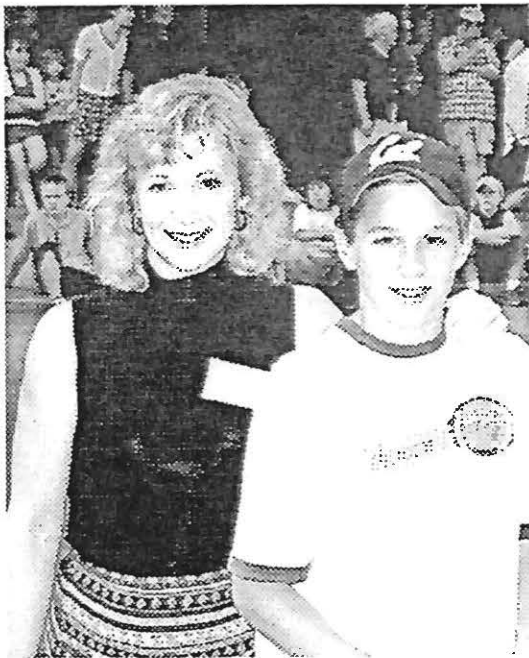
by Jack McCall on August 2, 1876. He has carefully sifted fact from fiction and logically reconstructed the story of what happened that fateful day. We were spellbound as we listened to his retelling of the famous poker game, the tragic shooting, the quick capture, the two trials, and finally the hanging.

Later in the evening we attended a re-enactment of the capture of McCall out on Main Street in front of the Old Style Saloon #10. It had been rumored that some of the TJA members would be participating. Our first surprise was the eye-popping sight of Edna Nees in 1880's regalia!

Next we walked to the Deadwood Theater to witness "The Trial of Jack McCall." The Judge warmly welcomed the TJA and led everyone in singing "Happy Birthday" to



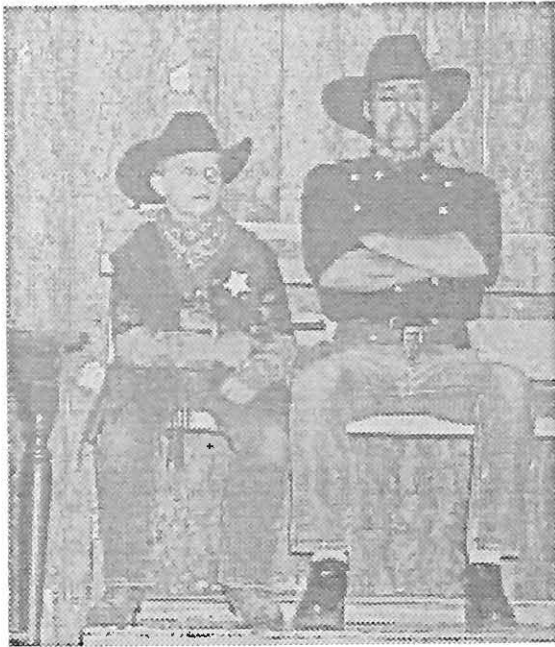
*David Maus and Kyle Bacon are ready to play their parts in The Trial of Jack McCall.*



*Cindy and Andy Bacon*

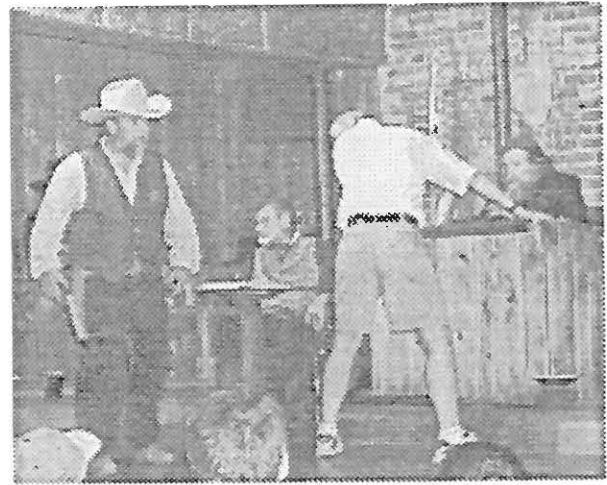


*The Judge and "Miss Edna" sashaying down Main Street!*



*Deputy Kyle Bacon keeps diligent watch over the hotheaded Jack McCall.*

Isabella Willard, whom he had called to the stage. Soon the trial began and we had our second surprise of the evening when Kyle Bacon entered the scene as a deputy in charge of guarding—at gunpoint!—the dangerous Jack McCall. The audience was encouraged to hiss and boo throughout the play, and we did so with increasing gusto. The next surprise came when David Maus joined the actors and kept up a running gag with his hat. Later, jurors were called from the audience: John Omohundro, Dennis Greene, Terry Omohundro, and Mark Greene. Each was searched for weapons and then questioned by the Judge. This little segment produced some priceless moments and even the Judge lost his composure when Dennis gave his deadpan answers. The whole crazy play was a lot of fun for everyone!



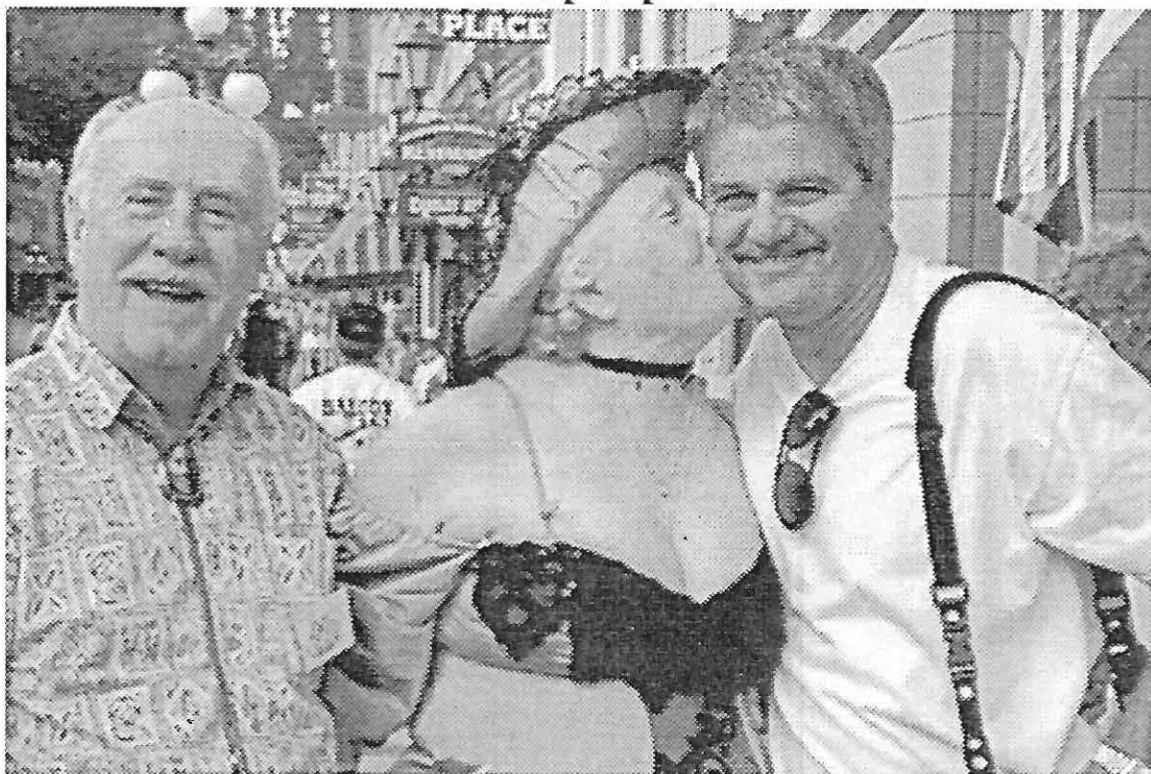
*John Omohundro is searched for weapons and then questioned by the Judge. His bare legs were so shocking, the Judge ordered they be covered with the prosecuting attorney's coat!*

The next day was Friday and another hot, hot day. At 9 am we boarded two air-conditioned coaches and headed up Highway 385 to Hill City. En route, our bus driver told us some of the history of the region.

The Black Hills, older than the Appalachian Mountains, were named by the Lakota Sioux because of the dark appearance of the mountains from a distance. The Black Hills spruce is the state tree of South Dakota. Ponderosa pine, aspen, and birch also grow in the Black Hills. This region has provided Christmas trees for the White House several times.

In 1874, the U.S. government sent Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer to the Black Hills ostensibly to survey the land, but really to check out the rumors of gold. When the rumor proved to be true, news of its presence leaked to the public and sparked a gold rush. This became a problem (or was it the

**The men were a-linin' up to pose with "Miss Edna!"**



*Dennis Greene and Rick Omohundro*



*Thomas, Tipton, and John Omohundro*



*Charlie Curtis and Richard  
Bond Omohundro*



*Edna and Gus de la Houssaye, Jane and Jack Omohundro, Joyce and Richard Omohundro. Jack and Richard are descendants of Texas Jack's brother, Orville.*

plan all along?) because the Black Hills were part of the Great Sioux Reservation set aside for them in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Federal troops were not able to keep out the hordes of white men who flocked to the Hills. A series of miscommunications then ensued, ultimately leading to the Battle of Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. Wild Bill Hickok mourned the death of his friend Custer, only to be dead himself less than two months later. Neither man had yet reached age 40.

As we rode up Highway 385 along Strawberry Hill, the driver mentioned that the region is in its fourth year of a drought. It's so severely dry, in fact, the Fourth of July fireworks display at Mount Rushmore,

one of the top fireworks shows in America, had been cancelled. In addition, a \$5,000 fine will be levied on anyone caught displaying fireworks of any kind, even hand sparklers.

We made a rest stop at the visitor center on Pactola Reservoir, constructed in the early 1950's under the federal CCC program. An unexpected find: a photograph on display that included Texas Jack!

The next stop was the Alpine Inn in Hill City where Monika and her capable staff were immediately ready to serve us a most delicious lunch. The Inn was started by Monika's mother who came to the U.S. from Stuttgart, Germany; thus the Bavarian theme in this former mining town.



*Martha Sullivan peering from a vintage rail car of the "1880 Train."*

After a little browsing and shopping, we boarded the "1880 Train" of the Black Hills Central Railroad. This collection of restored steam engines and railcars has for 45 years carried tourists along the same route once used by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad to service the mines and mills between Hill City and Keystone. Our hostess pointed out landmarks and wildlife and informed us about the area. Over 50 kinds of minerals have been found in the Black Hills. It is a semi-arid region, typically getting 18 inches of moisture per year, but not recently. Once again we were told about the four-year drought. We passed a meadow which allowed us a view of Harney Peak, "the highest point between the Swiss Alps and the Rocky Mountains," claims a tourist bro-

chure. Normally, on a clear day, one can see five states from atop Harney Peak (elev. 7242'): South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Kansas. But today there is a forest fire in the area and the mountain is closed to hikers. Even from this distance we can see the heavy mass of smoke hanging in the sky.

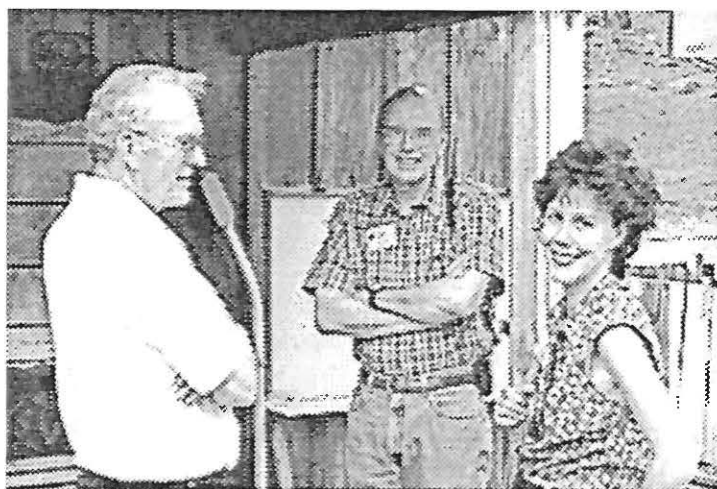
Our hostess also taught us the language of trains: two toots of the whistle means "go," one toot means "stop," three toots signals "backing up." There is an interesting story behind that familiar sound of 2 long-1short-1long blasts of the whistle: This sequence represents the letter "Q" in Morse code. The British Navy used this signal to alert the harbor when the Queen was arriving in port. After a time it began to be used whenever she arrived by train, as well. Today the signal is used universally, by law, to warn that a train will be crossing a roadway. We heard this sequence 16 times in one hour!

Upon arrival in Keystone we reboarded our buses and headed for Mount Rushmore National Memorial. This amazing sculpture, carved out of granite on the side of a craggy, pine-covered cliff, was completed in 1941 by Gutzon Borglum and a team of 400 men. The project took 14 years to complete, most of it spanning the Great Depression, for a total cost of about \$1 million dollars. The faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln are each 60 feet high and represent 120 years of American history. Considered by many at the time of its creation to be a

project of pure folly, Mount Rushmore now attracts nearly 2.7 million visitors yearly including, today, the members of the Texas Jack Association. The Grandview Terrace gave an excellent straight-on look at the Faces and the winding half-mile Presidential Trail provided dramatic views from other angles. As we were leaving, the bus stopped at a look-out point off the highway that gave a spectacular view of Washington's profile.



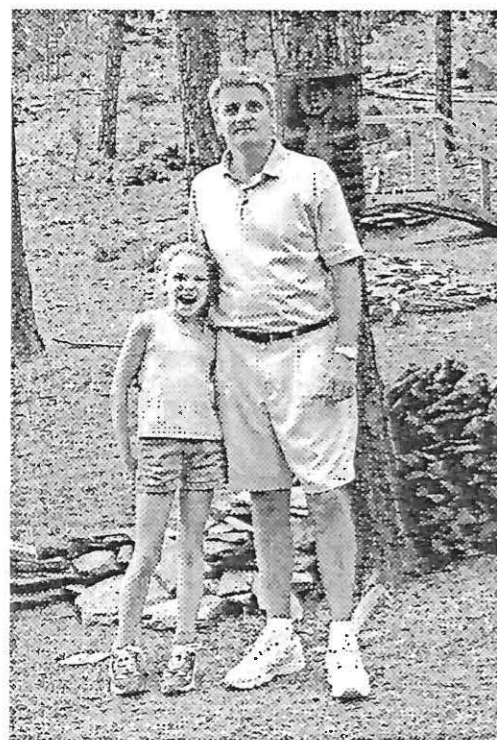
*Laura Niabi-Westcott and Robin Carmody*



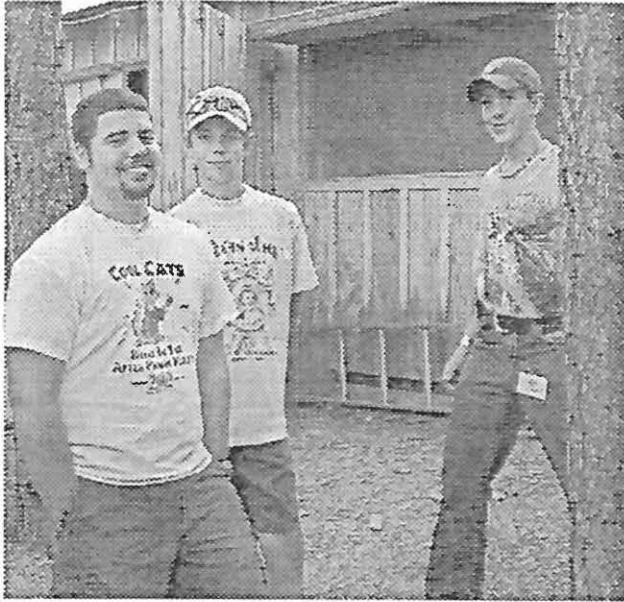
*Armond Spencer, Michael Foster, Judith Phillips*

The excessive heat was sapping our energy but we soldiered on, heading next to the nearby Crazy Horse Memorial, another impressive mountain sculpture. In fact, while watching the progress of Mount Rushmore, Chief Henry Standing Bear of the Brulé Band of Sioux conceived the idea of a memorial for the American Indian. He invited sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski to undertake the project saying, "My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red

man has great heroes, too." Korczak accepted the offer and together they chose the legendary Sioux warrior Crazy Horse to be the subject of the sculpture. Crazy Horse was born in the



*Lindsay Greene befriends  
Rick Omohundro.*



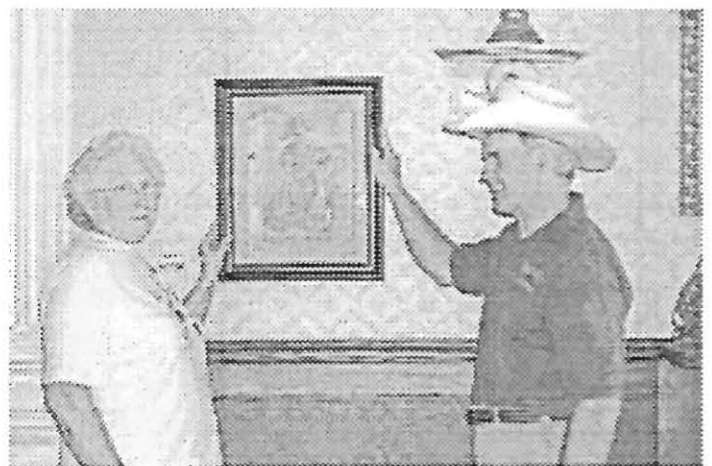
*Brandon Omohundro, Gus de la Housaye,  
Jason Swingle*



*Jason and Tammy Swingle sitting on the porch,  
a popular "activity." Jason's Eagle Scout  
project is to clean the site of the Omohundro  
cemetery in Fluvanna, Virginia. Watch future  
Scouts for details.*



*Brandon and Nancy Omohundro at the  
Old Style Saloon #10.*



*Edna Nees presents a framed picture of Texas Jack  
to Bill Walsh to be hung in the 1903 Dining Room.*



*Isabella Willard plays the nickel slots in the Franklin while husband Harvey anticipates great riches!*



*The days started hot and stayed hot, so it was very necessary to consume lots of ice cream! Charlie Curtis, Thomas Omohundro, Barbara Curtis, Carol and Michael Foster, Elizabeth O., and Tipton O. enjoy a cool treat at The Stockade's Big Dipper Ice Cream Shop.*



*Ben, Kelly and June Wyche dine with Ann and Mal Wyche.*

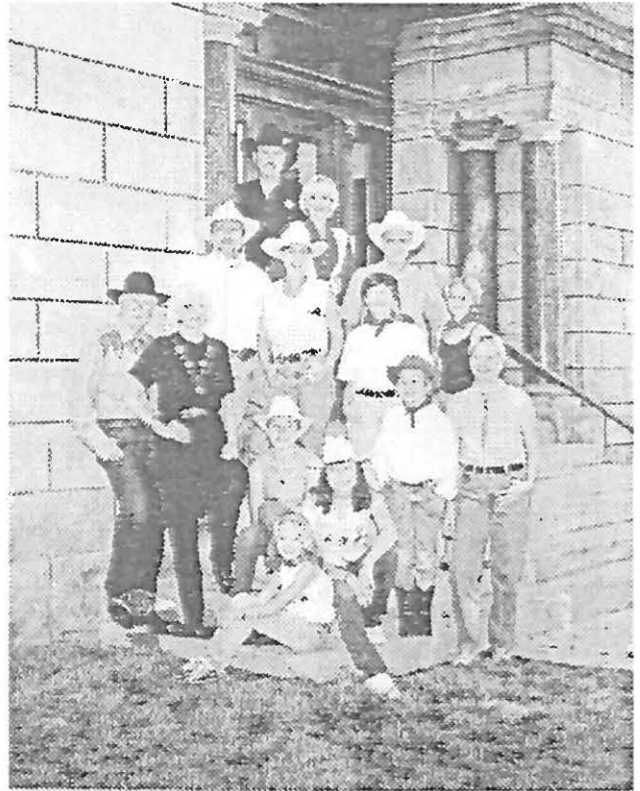
Black Hills and had fought fiercely at the Battle of Little Bighorn. He refused always to sign any treaties, and when asked sarcastically by a white man, "Where are your lands now, Crazy Horse?" he replied, "My lands are where my dead lie buried." It is this proud and defiant attitude that is depicted in Korczak's sculpture: Crazy Horse astride his steed, fiercely pointing to the far distance. The monument has been a work-in-progress since 1948. Korczak's wife Ruth and seven of their ten children have continued the project since his death, guided by his detailed plans and scale models. The non-profit Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation is completely supported by private donations and admission fees and it funds so much more than just the mountain sculpture. Already it has assisted 1,000 American Indian students with college scholarships.

Our last destination of this busy day was the Circle B Ranch. By now wilted and weary, we trooped into the enormous Chuckwagon Barn—large enough to seat 1300—and had our meal. On the way back to Deadwood our bus driver remarked that no one actually lives in the historic part of Deadwood. The residents, instead, all live on the ridges and bluffs that rise up on either side. As we descended Strawberry Hill, he pointed out the Northern Hills General Hospital, the Gulches of Fun amusement park, and a little nest of homes and trailers at the very edge of town. In a few minutes we were back at the Franklin and the energetic ones in the group headed out to the casinos. Others made a beeline for the ice cream shop. Some cooled off on the verandah or sat in the famous red rockers on the front porch. Many just simply went to bed, exhausted from the heat.

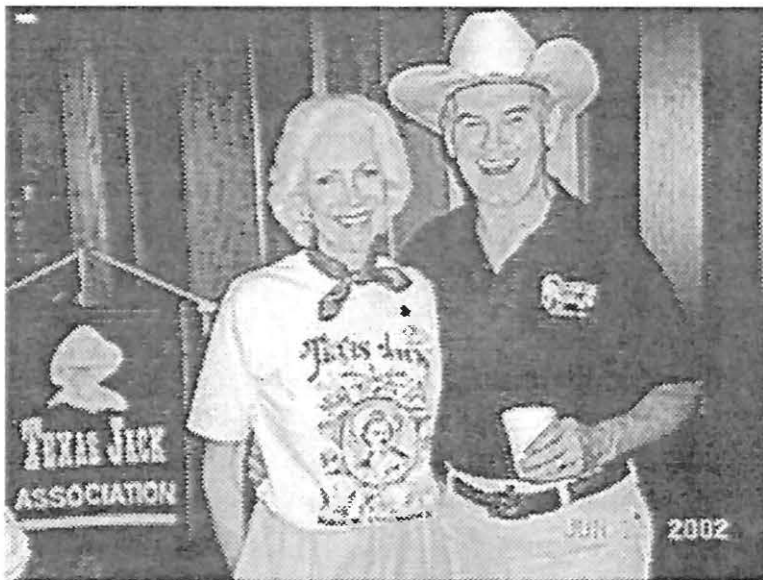


*Julie Omohundro, Judith Phillips, Carol Foster*

Saturday, June 29, dawned hot as blazes again, but the air-conditioned Gold Room was nice and cool for the biennial meeting of the membership. It was a lively and productive session, presided over by president John Omohundro. The minutes are published on page 43.

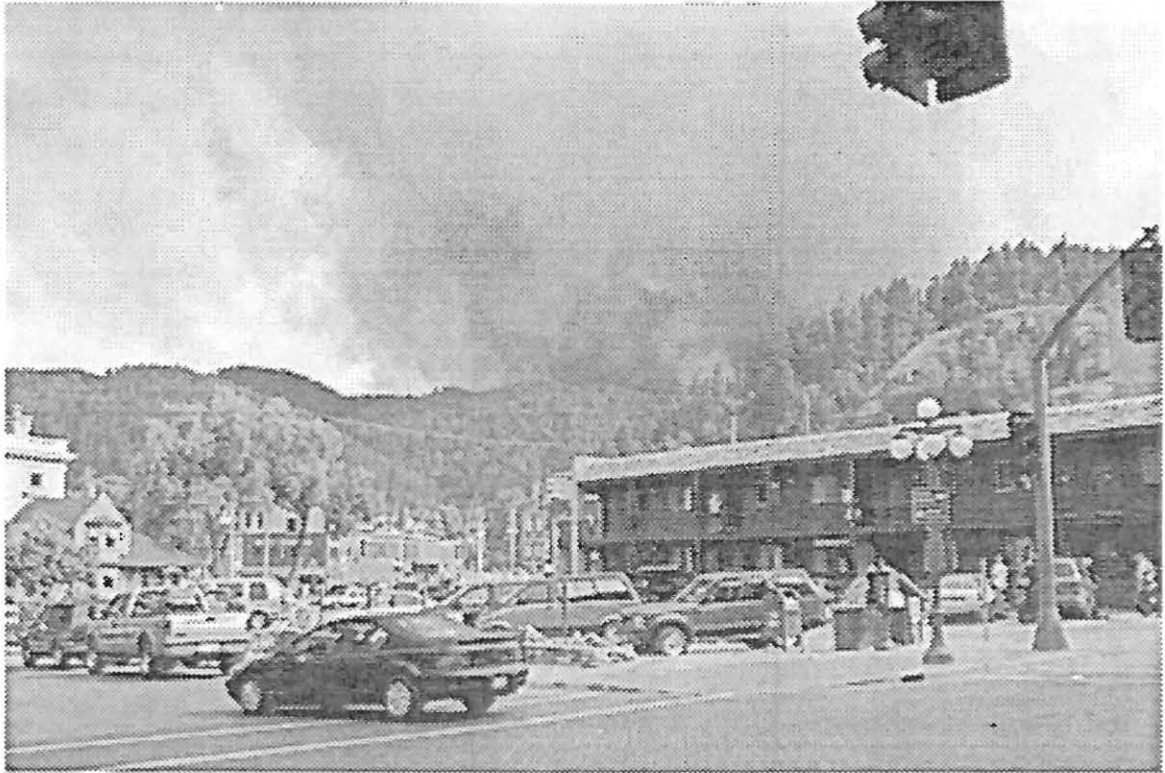


*Dennis and Julie Greene (front row, left) were thrilled to have their entire family with them at this Roundup, including daughter-in-law Peggy's mother!*



*Julie Greene and Bill Walsh, at the business meeting*

The rest of the day was unscheduled until that night's farewell banquet, always a looked-forward-to-event. It was so hot, the men were conspiring not to wear ties. We women were contemplating dispensing with hosiery and heels. In the meantime there was lunch to eat, sights to see, slot machines to be played. Off we all went in various directions - to Gulches of Fun with the kids, to Lead to pan for gold, to the Adams Museum, to the Adams House. Devout Catholics Betty Woods and Barbara Weitekamp went off to church. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to us,



*A view of the fire from street level at the corner of the Franklin Hotel.  
(photo by Terry Omohundro)*

an explosive wildfire was heading toward Deadwood! First sighted at 2 pm in Grizzly Gulch one mile south of Lead, the fire came raging over Strawberry Hill in a matter of hours. An initial crew of 200 firefighters—assisted by 7 heavy air tankers (“slurry bombers”) and 6 bulldozers—were working furiously to push back the flames and dig a dozer line. Local fire trucks were spraying water on homes threatened by the encroaching flames. Sixty-five troopers of the South Dakota Highway Patrol were driving to homes to warn residents they should evacuate.

David Howell of Grizzly Gulch went outside to check on his barking dog, saw the smoke, quickly returned to his house, and

found the sheriff at his door telling him to leave. In the time it took him to grab important documents, get the dog, and jump in his truck, the fire was over the ridge and 50 yards from his home.

Tom Blair, owner of the Whistler Gulch Campground said, “I’ve fought some wild-land fires, I never seen it roar like that. You can’t describe how she was coming down that hill.” (*Rapid City Journal*, 7/01/02, Dan Daly, reporter)

Down in Deadwood, many people were unaware of the approaching danger. When the fire knocked out the main power line to the town, many thought it was just a blown circuit in their own particular building. Gradually, word got around that the Hills



*Thadd Turner rides Big Sky as the mountain burns behind him! The leaping orange and red flames and the roiling brown, yellow and black smoke are dramatically evident in the color copy of this photograph, taken by Thadd's daughter Tanya.*

were on fire. People became uneasy, not sure what to do. The air was dry and smoky, parching the throat. It was unsettling to see the ever growing black and orange smoke roaring into the sky. A swirling arid wind gave the awful sense that at any moment the fire was going to be sucked down the steep walls of the gulch and consume Main Street.

Then the fire jumped Highway 385 and Gov. Bill Janklow ordered a mandatory evacuation of Deadwood.

Fr. Paul Dahms, priest at St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Deadwood, was beginning his late-afternoon mass when the city police chief walked in and gave the evacuation order. At the Franklin Hotel, many of us were already packing our bags—just in case—when the official evacuation order came. With no lights, the inner stairway of the hotel was pitch dark and it was difficult to haul our suitcases to the lobby. Over at the Wild West Complex, Dan and Lyndall Foral (our banquet entertainers) were also struggling down a dark stairway, trying to get their sound equipment and instruments out to their vehicle.

All the while, volunteer fire departments from 60 South Dakota towns and cities were rushing to the scene. Record 100-plus-degree temperatures and very low humidity had made already dry conditions even drier. Dead trees from a pine beetle infestation fueled the flames, and strong shifting winds made the fire erratic. Abandoned mine shafts presented hazards for the firefighters and civilian use of cell phones was jamming their communications systems. Because

there are so many private homes in the Black Hills, the Grizzly Gulch Fire soon became the number one priority of the National Forest Service. Within 90 minutes of the request, FEMA funds were authorized to help fight this blaze. Elite Type I crews, trained to fight the most dangerous fires, were on their way from Portland, Oregon.

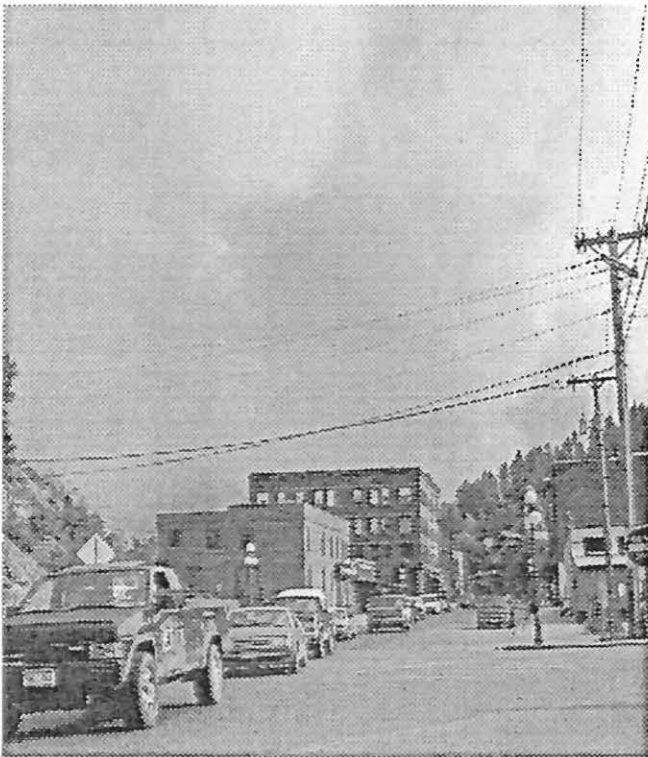
As fire personnel rushed in, some 1380 residents and countless thousands of tourists formed a long slow line of vehicles heading out. As Karl, Judy Phillips and I drove away we kept watch out the back window and saw the slurry bombers drop load after load of fire retardant. Locals from outlying areas were phoning the radio stations to offer their pastures for displaced livestock. The Red Cross and Salvation Army were already organizing food and refuge.

David Howell and his dog were now at a Red Cross shelter in Spearfish. He told a reporter from *The Black Hills Pioneer*, “I don’t know what I’ve lost. I don’t know what I still have.” But he was thankful to have his life.

“On Main Street, Franklin Hotel operator Bill Walsh smoked a cigar as he and an employee remained at the Main Street landmark. ‘The Franklin has never closed its doors,’ he said in explaining why he remained. He said the hotel was used by firefighters during Deadwood’s 1959 fire.” (*Rapid City Journal*, 6/30/02)

Then, a miracle. About 9 pm the winds shifted and began to push the fire away from Deadwood.

But the fire continued to burn intensely to the south and east and crews worked through the night, hampered by steep terrain, thick smoke, and whirling winds. The next day, Sunday, the *Rapid City Journal* gave this weather report: "The outlook for moisture is still dismal with no immediate improvement on the near horizon." Flare-ups were still occurring along Strawberry Hill and Highway 385. Deadwood remained closed and now Lead was evacuated, too. Deadwood Mayor Francis Toscana drove through his deserted and smoke-filled city and remarked, "It's like a science fiction movie." (*The Black Hills Pioneer*, Spearfish, S.D.)



An orderly line of vehicles leaves town as the smoke towers in the sky. Deadwood's gambling establishments are never closed, so some casinos had trouble locating their keys when the decree came to evacuate! (photo by Terry Omohundro)

By now the Type I crews had taken over command of the Grizzly Gulch Fire. Heavy air tankers continued their relentless slurry drops. The Army National Guard had brought in bulldozers, manpower and, later in the week, two Black Hawk helicopters that could carry 2,000-gallon water buckets. Forest Service employees, state fire officials, and crews from the Bureau of Indian Affairs came to assist, as did state prison inmates who were Forest Service trained and certified. At the height of the battle, over 900 personnel were fighting the fire, even though the ranks of firefighters, who will travel great distances to help each other, were stretched thin due to fires in other states. Firemen Lloyd Siemonsma and Chad Rotert—who live near Sioux Falls—had just returned from helping with the wildfire near Durango, Colorado. Despite not having been home in ten days, they immediately began helping with the Grizzly Gulch Fire, though Siemonsma said he probably wouldn't stay to the end. "I've got hay to put up." (*Rapid City Journal*, 7/01/02)

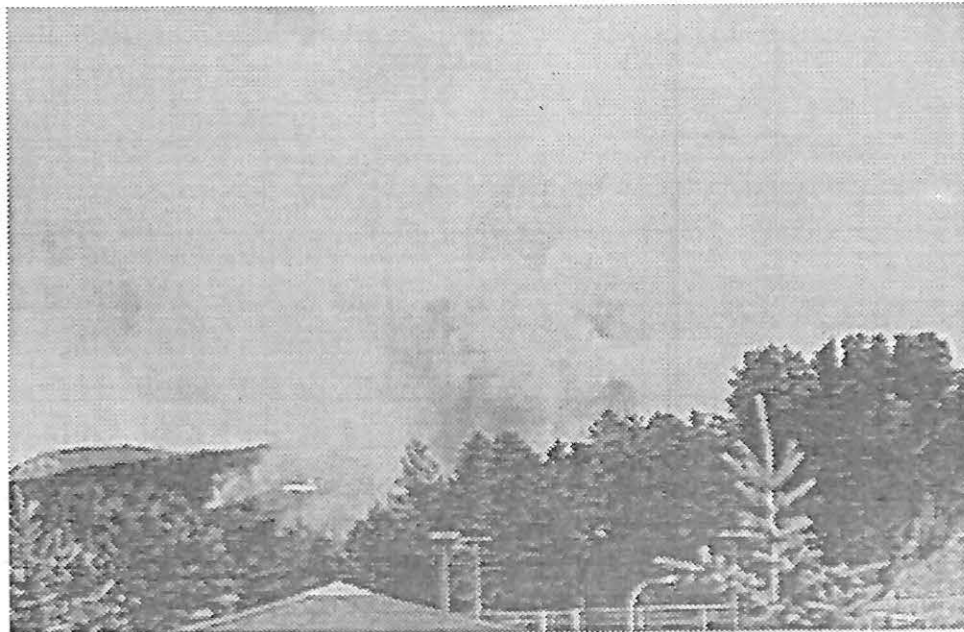
Tim Hill, manager of both the Bullock Hotel and the Wild West Complex, emptied the freezers of his establishments, set up grills on the deserted Main Street and barbecued meals for the firefighters and state troopers almost around the clock. "These people came here to keep our town from burning down and we're gonna take care of them." (*Denver Post*, Ron Franscell, reporter) The TJA banquet food was part of this marathon barbecue.

Deadwood was finally allowed to reopen for business at 8 pm Monday, July 1. The Grizzly Gulch Fire was declared controlled (meaning the fire posed no threat of escaping the perimeter) as of 6 pm Friday, July 12—fourteen days after it had started. All told, 10,744 acres had burned. There were no deaths nor severe injuries, but seven families had lost their homes. It is believed the fire was started by lightning, but officials have called in specialists to help determine the cause. Local papers reported that flames got to within 1/2 mile of Deadwood and crept to within yards of the uppermost homes. Mount Moriah Cemetery was threatened but did not burn. A newspaper photo shows the fire within sight of the Northern Hills General Hospital. Crews were able to save the Mile Hi Mobile Home Manor that

we had driven by just the day before, near the south end of town.

A press release from the Office of the Governor, July 15, from the South Dakota Website: (Pierre)—Gov. Bill Janklow publicly thanked the dozens of volunteer fire departments who responded to the Grizzly Gulch Fire in the northern Black Hills. “Sometimes we don’t say it (thank you) quick enough or often enough, but when there’s trouble, they come. They’re South Dakota’s Minutemen, citizens who are ready at a moment’s notice to drop everything and fight to protect our lives and our property.”

The *Denver Post* reported that the 3-day evacuation of Deadwood cost the town’s casinos more than \$2 million a day. The region lost untold millions in structures, forest resources, and Fourth of July tourism



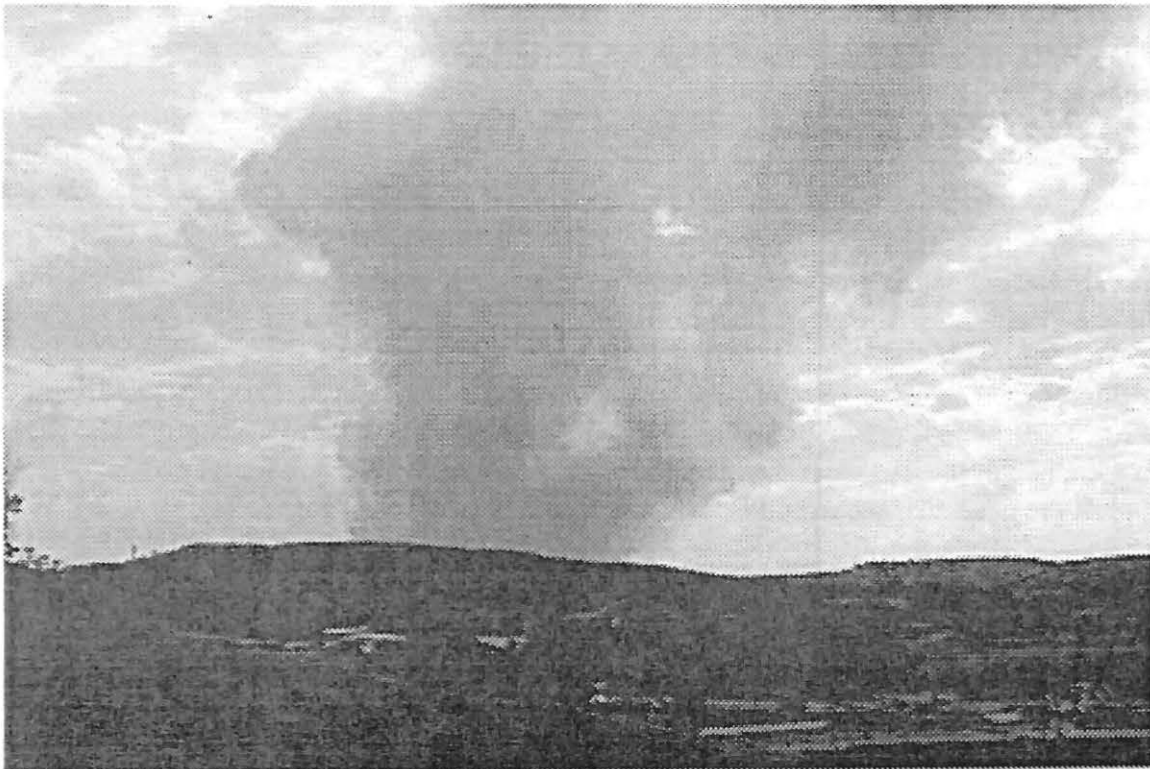
*A heavy tanker is dropping fire retardant (“slurry”) in this picture by Michael Foster from a vantage point in Lead. Fire co-coordinator Joe Lowe said it was because the slurry bombers and 200 firefighters were so quickly at the scene that Deadwood was saved from the fast-moving blaze.*

dollars. We Roundup attendees were lucky. We only lost our banquet.

We've learned that Mercy Hogue of the Wild West Complex had decorated the room beautifully and set the tables elegantly. Dan and Lyndall Foral had written a song for the occasion, "Virginia's Texas Jack." We were going to have a fine meal, take lots of group photos, and say proper thank yous and farewells. It was going to be a grand evening indeed, but... nature had a different plan.

Altogether, it was truly an unforgettable roundup!

*[Information for the Roundup summary came from tourist brochures, tour guide narrations, radio reports, newspapers, and the internet. Thank you to Michael Foster, Julie Greene, Edna Nees, John Omohundro, Terry Omohundro, Karl Pelkan, Judith Phillips, Martha Sullivan, Thadd Turner, Harvey Willard, Betty Woods, and June Wyche for contributing photographs and/or newspaper clippings.]*



*It was reported that smoke from the Grizzly Gulch Fire could be seen 100 miles away.  
(photo by Terry Omohundro)*

## What Happened – Stories from the Grizzly Gulch Fire Compiled by John Omohundro

Saturday, June 29, 2 to 4 pm: *When We Realized Something Was Wrong*

Jack Omohundro recalls, “Jane, Edna de la H., and Gus left about 2 pm to do some sightseeing. Jane went to the Adams House museum and I decided to take a nap. The air conditioner was going full blast so it was comfortably cool. About 3:30 the air conditioner cut off. Also at this time I heard an airplane roar over the town. I got up and tried to call the desk to report no air conditioning, and discovered—no telephone. Then I walked into the bathroom and discovered—no lights. About this time Jane burst into the room with the news of the fire and the orders to evacuate. A hotel employee knocked on the door with the same message. I foolishly asked him if we were to take our belongings with us. He answered, “It’s up to you.”

Michael and Carol Foster and Julie Omohundro were sightseeing by car south of town. “We were routed out of Deadwood in the direction of Lead, so Julie was left to get to the hotel and her car as best she could. Carol and I stopped at Lead and waited to see if we ran into any other TJA members, but didn’t. I took some photos of the fire and then we began trying to sort out where we would stay for the night.” Robin Carmody and her friend Laura Niabi-Westcott (also from Massachusetts) were paying respects at Mount Moriah Cemetery. “I kept hearing emergency vehicles in the area. First I thought it must have been a terrible accident downtown, but then there were more continuous sirens. We left Mount Moriah and headed back to the hotel, passing emergency fire fighting vehicles as we went. Smoke at that time was pluming above from across the street behind the RV Park.”

Julie Omohundro, meanwhile, leapt from Michael’s car and dashed across the hot town to the Franklin, where she was already packed, having made reservations earlier to spend the night near the airport. In a flash, she was into the rental car and off to Rapid City, where a cool hotel room awaited her.

Harvey Willard recalls, “The power went off in the town about 2 pm on Saturday while we were at the Silverado Casino. While we were waiting [for the power to return] one of the attendants pointed out the smoke in the distant hills. The power came on about a half-hour later and we went back to the hotel to get ready for the 6 pm banquet.”

Edna Nees was taking care of Association business in the Fainting Room at the Franklin that afternoon, when Jason Swingle came in and announced that they might have to evacuate, because he and the children were just evacuated from the playground in the park. “I told him to start packing and moving our things out of the hotel that we wouldn’t need that night, because we were leaving for Cody, WY the next morning.”

Thadd Turner, Texas Jack reenactor, was sharing a beer with Rick and Terry Omohundro at the Mint, a local watering hole on Main Street. When the power went out the second time they realized that the Texas Jack banquet would be cancelled that evening. “Tough luck in a town rebuilt on gambling revenue. We stare at the chaos on Main Street. We calmly finish our beers and decide it might be best to get the families out of town. One last look at the interior of the Mint and John Wayne’s old Ford pickup truck. One never knows what will burn up tonight....”

Thadd then in Wild West fashion jumped on a moving city trolley and rode it through the heavy traffic to the Deadwood rodeo grounds. The Days of ’76 RV Park and Campground is the town’s only horse facility with corrals and pens, so he and his family were camping there in their RVs with horses, dogs, and cats.

Julie Greene recalls, “The kids and some parents were at one end of town at the Gulches of Fun amusement park, and others of us were in various stores on Main Street when the electricity went off in town. The small amount of smoke on the horizon beyond the hills surrounding the city became, within minutes, huge, and very close. Dennis, Mark and I hurried back to the Franklin.”

At about 4:00, Kitty and Karl Pelkan were on a tour upstairs in the Adams House when the electricity went out and caused the alarm to the house to go off. “We all assumed the air conditioning had caused a fuse to blow out. We heard sirens in the distance and thought they were responding to the alarm at the Adams House.”

The tour concluded, and Kitty and Karl walked out to the street and saw that the occupants of all the houses across the street were in their yards, looking in the direction of the Adams House. “We spoke to an older couple and learned that the electricity on the whole street was out and furthermore, their daughter, who lived in the trailer court up the gulch, had just phoned to report she was being evacuated because of a fire. Karl and I turned around and saw heavy black and orange smoke billowing ominously in the very near distance. Although we could not see the flames directly, we could see their reflection bouncing off the smoky background. We both felt immediately nervous and ill as it was quite a frightening sight. We wished the couple good luck and hurried on our way.”

As Kitty and Karl rapidly walked back to the hotel, “We passed by the little park where the TJA had had such a nice lunch. A family—obviously local citizens—was running across the street barefoot, in an absolute panic, their belongings and children all higgledy-piggledy, trying to get to their car. I had no doubt they lived in the fire area. I began to feel even sicker to my stomach. Once we came around the bend from the park and walked closer to town we observed that many people on the street were still unaware of the fire.”

Susan and John Omohundro were at the mining museum in Lead with Ann and Armond Spencer when the electricity went off about 3:30. “We heard sirens. No one seemed particularly concerned at first so we continued to try our hands at panning for gold at the museum, in semi-darkness. The proprietor was making light of the fact that his house was on the hill behind town; we were all speculating about whether it was a house fire or forest fire.”

“Eventually,” Susan continued, “and unhurriedly, we got into our car and left Lead to return to Deadwood—for a nice shower, a glass of wine, and a fine banquet with live entertainment! We soon realized we were in a serious situation. Lots of smoke on the skyline. When we got closer to the intersection where the highway branches off toward Hill City, I could see the flames. Most alarmingly, I could see them crowning (leaping considerable distances between trees). This is when I got scared. I’ve seen forest fires before, in Alaska and Newfoundland, but those were slow-traveling compared to this. Since traffic was barely moving, I began to wonder if the fire would catch up with us.”

Susan observed a surprisingly large number of emergency vehicles and personnel zipping up and down the road their car was crawling along. “How did so many responders get to Deadwood so quickly? I saw a last few dazed customers being hustled out of Pizza Hut, and ambulances lined up at the hospital. We passed the Gulches of Fun amusement park with the go-carts where the Greene’s grandchildren had been playing recently, but now it was empty.”

Saturday, June 29, 4 pm – 5 pm: *Getting out of Town*

Jack Omohundro observes, “When Jane packs to go on a trip, she very neatly places tissue paper between each layer of her clothes, which makes a very nice arrangement. Believe me, this time we packed

things very hurriedly, without regard to how it looked. We did get everything except my robe and pajamas, which were hanging on the bedstead. We were in a room at the end of a hall that connected to another hall where the elevator and stairs were. Of course, the elevator was useless and the halls were pitch black. The elevator operator held one tiny flashlight over the stairwell to light the four flights of stairs below.”

Jack went on, “People were very excited, but I will say, there was no panic or hysteria. Everyone was helping everyone. My grandson Gus became a man that day. He helped us get our entire luggage down four flights of stairs and then helped several others. Each of the young people there performed magnificently. Daughter Edna brought our rental car around to the side door exit and we departed the Historic Franklin Hotel and joined a convoy of evacuees. Jane had told me that she saw the fire’s smoke clouds while at the Adams House, but as yet I had not seen any indication of fire. When we got out of the hotel and into the traffic, I looked backward, to the west, and could then see the clouds of smoke billowing over the hills. The officials were directing people to head north to Spearfish but we decided that since we were leaving the area completely, we would return to Rapid City. We inched along Deadwood’s exit road until we reached the Interstate, then cruised uneventfully into Rapid City. We could see the smoke clouds of the fire from the Interstate for several miles towards Rapid City.”

Robin Carmody and Laura Niabi-Westcott were staying at a hotel south of Deadwood. Power there was lost just minutes after Robin and Laura returned from the cemetery. “We stepped outside to see what was happening, and massive amounts of smoke were now growing. The power came back on, only to be lost again—and along with it the phone lines. There was no calling anyone, anywhere.”

“Then,” Robin said, “there came the knock on the door by the front desk personnel to evacuate the hotel and the town! A sudden rush of being trapped flowed through me, as I put anything I could grab into my suitcases. I also realized with a split second of wisdom, that what I was trying to retrieve was inconsequential compared to the fire and getting out. Laura and I would get out just fine (a hotel employee named Martin saw to that). The problem was that this wonderful, beautiful place, which I have come to love, was burning down literally around me. It was truly overwhelming for a time, to watch the fire on our right side as we were trying to exit out of town.”

The power went off for good very soon after Harvey and Isabella Willard had ascended to the Franklin’s fourth floor in the elevator. “A few minutes later a fireman came around banging on everyone’s door telling us to evacuate the hotel. We thought at first this was because of the power outage. However, Tammy Swingle and Karl Pelkan came up to tell us we had to evacuate the town because of a wildfire that was approaching the town at the rate of one mile per hour! They helped us pack our suitcases and carry down some other items in plastic bags. Then Kitty came to help, too. Edna Nees carried our suitcases down the four flights of stairs for us! She then waited until I got our rental car from out of the parking lot up the hill behind the hotel. Edna, Karl and Tammy helped us pack it. Edna said she wouldn’t leave until we did. We are sure grateful for Edna’s, Tammy’s, Kitty’s, and Karl’s concern for us.”

“There was a long and slow line of traffic out of town” Harvey adds, “because of the merging of the town and tourist lanes of traffic. In fact the police were letting only the townsfolk lane through until Tammy Swingle got out of Edna’s van behind us and ran a couple of blocks up to the police at the intersection and strongly suggested the lanes should alternate! After about an hour we were out of town onto the highway to Rapid City about 50 miles away. We could see the high flames and smoke all the way out of Deadwood and even high smoke plumes when we got to Rapid City.”

Tom Omohundro had his SUV largely packed while Elizabeth attended the business meeting. So with son Tip’s and Armond Spencer’s help they finished loading the SUV and pulled up beside the cottage

behind the hotel to collect Tip's bags and say goodbye to son John and Susan. Then they joined the evacuation traffic to take Tip to Rapid City for his flight the next morning.

Just as Edna Nees had finished packing, Tammy came to the hotel room and said they had to evacuate. They started taking their bags out when they met hotel security in the hall alerting people to get out. "We had made several trips back to the room when Tammy reported security was saying that we couldn't go back into the hotel. Nevertheless, I went back again to get the Texas Jack things out. Then I went back once more to check on Harvey and Isabella Willard. I took their bags down for them and helped them load their car. Jason stayed outside and packed our van and helped others get their luggage into their vehicles. Tammy also went back in to help others. She helped Betty Woods with her luggage but Hughes Diller was able to get his things out by himself."

The electricity was still on in the hotel and elsewhere on the main street when Kitty and Karl Pelkan returned from the Adams House. They went to the verandah but the view of the smoke wasn't as good as it had been at the Adams House and so didn't seem as serious. "I asked Bill Walsh, the hotel's owner, what he thought of the situation. Bill said that during the fire of 1959, Deadwood had not been evacuated and that his hotel had been used as headquarters for the firefighters. And he said the hotel had a good sprinkler system. I politely thanked him but quickly concluded it was his duty, as 'captain of the ship,' to remain calm and confident in this situation. Not for a minute did I think a sprinkler system was going to save me from a forest fire!"

Karl and Kitty decided to start packing the things they didn't need in Deadwood anymore. "Looking back, I realize I was in denial just like the people on the *Titanic*: I wasn't packing my banquet clothes! We kept looking out our fourth floor window, though, and soon we upgraded to packing everything. Then the electricity went out and we upgraded again, to taking just the non-essentials to the car, but even that was quickly upgraded to taking *everything* to the car. As we were carrying our luggage out, the officials arrived to announce the evacuation order."

Kitty and Karl began to check on their hall neighbors. Rand McKinney and Candice Denton had already left for Spearfish. Because the Pelkans had cleared their belongings completely from their room by the time of the evacuation order, they started helping others carry suitcases down the stairs, and even helped some people to pack. "We made many trips up and down those dark stairs in the stifling heat, feeling and smelling that dry, smoky wind outside. It was all very unnerving, but I thought everyone remained amazingly calm. My cousin Kelly Wyche, who was traveling in a rental car with her parents Ben and June and my dad Mal and Ann, alerted me to the fact that our cousin Judith Phillips didn't have a car, so Karl and I took Judith with us."

When it seemed that the hotel was mostly empty Karl, Kitty and Judith joined the endless line of cars making their slow exodus out of Deadwood. They headed in the direction of Spearfish, ". . . listening to the car radio and hearing reports of emergency shelters being set up and of local people volunteering their pastures for evacuated livestock."

After anxiously crawling back through traffic from Lead with Ann and Armond Spencer, Susan and John Omohundro at last returned to the cottage behind the Franklin. Local residents were in the side street discussing that people were supposed to get out of Deadwood. Ann and Armond quickly cleared out their room at the hotel. John and Susan began to pack clothes and group gear at the cottage. John ran to the front of the hotel and met a steady stream of Texas Jack people pouring out of the dark building. Kitty came out looking harried and said in passing, "well, this will be a roundup we won't forget."

Susan added, "I briefly hoped I'd have enough time to take a shower, but no such luck. Ann Spencer soon reappeared, and, sounding slightly panicky, said "we gotta get *out of here*." At this point, I quit packing

methodically and dumped the rest of the second-floor items into suitcases and bags, while the others collected Association files, camping gear, food, etc. from the first floor. The smoke from the fire billowed overhead, and it seemed like the fire was about to reach the edge of town.”

“We had already seen Julie O. off toward Rapid City and John’s parents and Tip had dropped by, so we knew they were safely headed out. I saw Mona, the hotel’s manager, drive away a couple of minutes later, so I figured all the guests were out of the hotel by then (about 5:15).”

“Either the staff came to the cottage before we got back from Lead, or, more likely, they forgot to check on us, which is fortunate, because otherwise we surely would not have been allowed to take the time to collect our numerous belongings.”

Susan concluded, “I decided there wasn’t anything we could do to help anyone else, especially since I had no idea where they were or what their status was. So, we joined the line of cars heading north to Spearfish.” John recalls, “We passed one pickup with two cages in the back, one of which contained two lovebirds, snuggling and looking quite nervous. A minute later an open jeep went by, whose driver, bare-chested and in cut-off jeans, held a Corgi dog crosswise on his lap.”

Julie Greene recalls, “When we got back to the hotel, in spite of staff assurances (after all, the electricity had come back on), we decided to go upstairs and pack a few things. As Dennis’ knee was still in bad shape, he took the elevator and Mark and I took the stairs to our rooms on the fourth floor.”

“When Dennis didn’t come, I went looking for him. He and Bill the bell man were stuck between the second and third floors with a little open space for them to crawl out, with the help of Karl Pelkan and Rick Cech. Now the electricity had gone out for good. We had just started to pack when a security man came down the hall pounding on the doors telling everyone to evacuate *now!*”

“We had many ‘frills and extras’ with us because we had traveled by car,” Julie concluded, “With only a fraction of that, we left the room. By that time, the whole family was assembled and we agreed to meet in Spearfish.”

Thadd Turner returned to the rodeo grounds at the RV park at 4:45 to find Dianne Gleason, Calamity Jane reenactor, already loaded up and reporting the evacuation. But “Where the hell’s my own truck and family? Cindy went to Spearfish earlier in the day with our children, Tanya and Wyatt, to do some shopping. They’re not back yet. I retrieve my cell phone from my horse trailer (one of those nice rigs with living quarters). There are half a dozen messages, all from Cindy. I should have charged the damn thing last night so I could take it with me to town.”

Thadd calls Cindy but she can’t get back into Deadwood. The South Dakota highway patrol has closed all the main roads into town—no one is allowed in for whatever purpose. “That isn’t going to work. I need to pull my horses out of the gulch. Dianne (Calamity) has a horse in the gulch as well. The cell phone line goes dead just as I tell Cindy to try coming into town through Maitland Road, a popular old-time wagon road that runs from Spearfish to Central City just above Deadwood. I can’t get her back on the line, all circuits are busy. Everyone’s trying to get room reservations somewhere else out of town.”

Thadd decided to saddle Big Sky, his powerful Montana horse. “I’ll pull the other ponies out of the gulch on horseback if I have to. Dianne can take my guns and saddles in her truck. She tells me she probably has room for my laptop computer as well, though she doesn’t know why it’s so important. I tell her “hard drive, baby, hard drive.” She just stares at me.”

By 5:20 the smoke above the ridge line is producing one of the most incredible sights Thadd had ever witnessed. “Calamity and I can only stare at the whirlwind of yellow, brown, and orange smoke. They say that fires create their own weather patterns and we are watching a living, breathing animal do exactly that. Snarling, howling, and swirling above us, we watch the mass of thick smoke move past us at an incred-

ible speed. Terrifying, yet awesome. For almost twenty minutes we debate whether to start leaving now, or wait until we see flames. Maybe the damn thing will blow right past us. I really would like to pull my trailer out of the gulch.”

A few minutes later Dianne gets through to Cindy on her cell phone. Cindy drove to Sturgis and tried to come up through Boulder Canyon. That road is closed as well. Her frantic tears and pleas didn't even faze the highway patrolman blocking the road. They only frightened our four-year-old son, Wyatt. He has seen a lot of the real world in his young lifetime, but a terrified mother can become overwhelming for even a tough little boy. I scream into the mouth piece, “Maitland, Maitland Road! It'll be open!” Cindy has only been there once. She may end up lost in the Black Hills for a week on unmarked forest service roads if she takes a wrong turn. The cell phone goes dead. I want to cry.”

Thadd continues, “In addition to my horse trailer with living quarters, we have a thirty-five-foot motor home that travels with us—the family's home-away-from-home. Cindy locked the motor home up tight and took the keys with her. I can't explain why there isn't an extra set of keys. I never drive the thing. My thoughtful wife left the overhead air conditioner on and threw the dog and cats inside. She closed and locked the windows for good measure. But the power has been out now for over two hours.”

“I'm angry and tired of waiting for the unexpected. The incredible volume of smoke on the ridge line has disappeared. Suddenly, a little after 6 pm, it's just gone. It seems that the fire may have passed us by. Maybe we got lucky on this one!”

The temperature reached 98 degrees that afternoon—one of the warmest days on record. Thadd decided to break into the motor home. He pried open the smallest window (the least expensive to replace), but he couldn't fit through the tiny opening. So he jimmied a larger window. “I really don't care at this point about the cats and dogs. I'm just doing the humanitarian thing so I can look my kids in the face without remorse. It must be 110 degrees inside the motor home. The cats are sleeping on the floor. They lazily look up at me as if I have interrupted something. I really hate them. The dog is happy to see me, so I guess I'm a hero after all.”

At 6:30 the smoke cloud on the ridge line above the RV park has not increased in size. Thadd and Dianne wonder whether the fire has blown past them. The highway out of town has become eerily silent. A local police officer pulls up. Thadd and Dianne are the only ones left at the RV park. “We assure him that we are working on leaving town. He is interrupted by an urgent call and speeds off. A calmness begins to settle over the grounds. It's almost *too* quiet.”

At 6:45 “Cindy arrives with my truck and the kids! A huge sigh of relief. She only made one wrong turn and ended up near Cheyenne Crossing at the south end of Spearfish Canyon. Kevin Costner filmed the abandoned winter Indian village scenes near there in the final minutes of *Dances with Wolves*.”

They hook up the horse trailer and are ready to load the horses. There is hardly any smoke on the ridge line. Thadd thinks, “The fire must have passed us. Maybe we don't have to leave. I decide to ride up to the ridge line and scout it out. I promise I'll be careful. I tell Cindy I'll be back in 15 minutes. I must find out what's happening on top of the ridge.”

“I cautiously ride up the ridge line, hesitating and listening every few minutes to gauge my whereabouts. I don't want to get stuck in the middle of a problem. We peak the ridge line: forest in front of us is completely intact! I'm confused. How could all that smoke and clouds earlier have left the entire mountain above us untouched? The air up here is incredibly warm. I can see the sun over my left shoulder. Big Sky is uneasy, he senses there is danger. It's too calm. I know we're pushing our luck. I go back down the hill.”

“Something is *not right* on the mountain. I decide we should move the rigs across the big open parking lot to the main entrance of the RV park. We pull the horses out of their pens, and I lead my Grey mare on horseback.”

“Suddenly the mountain blows up! The fire comes out of nowhere and races up White Rock Peak above Mount Moriah Cemetery. The remains of Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Seth Bullock, and dozens of early Deadwood pioneers lie below. The tall pine trees on top of White Rocks explode, creating a volcano-like eruption. The fire races down the east side of the mountain toward the RV park and the homes near the Days of '76 rodeo grounds. My daughter Tanya films the entire event with her digital camera.”

It's now 8 pm. “We stand in awe and shock staring at the spectacle. There are dozens of firemen and emergency crews at the rodeo grounds. All they can do is watch the fast-moving fire and hope for the best. We know it is time to leave Deadwood. I worry about the irreplaceable artifacts in the Days of '76 Museum. Everything is housed in a wood building with no sprinkler system or fire protection. A half a million dollar disaster is waiting to happen.”

Thadd concludes, “It is a solemn moment as we pull out of the RV park and start up the hill to Spearfish. We look down at the burning mountain. I am stunned. The entire area where Big Sky and I had just rode less than thirty minutes earlier is completely engulfed in flames. The mountain will never be the same again. Not in my lifetime anyway.”

Saturday, June 29, evening: *Where We Ended up That Night*

When Jack and Jane Omohundro with Edna and Gus reached Rapid City they discovered that it was hosting a convention of some sort. “This, coupled with the evacuation, created another ‘no-room-at-the-inn’ situation. Edna finally found a very friendly and helpful desk clerk at one of the motels who started calling every motel in the area for us. She found the last available room at the Lantern Inn in Hill City (our tour was in that town on Friday), so we reserved it. We drove to the airport to rearrange our tickets, from Tuesday to as soon as possible. After much explaining and pleading, Edna found Delta very accommodating: we got tickets for Sunday at no penalty. At 8:30 pm, we drove the 30 miles to Hill City, slept real fast, and returned to make our 6:30 am flight on time.”

Richard Bond Omohundro called Jack later to report that he and Joyce couldn't find rooms in the Rapid City area either, so they tried sleeping in their car. When that proved unsatisfactory, they elected to drive on. They did not stop until they reached St. Joseph, Missouri.

Michael and Carol Foster, stranded on the south side of town near Lead, were redirected to Spearfish via the Spearfish Canyon Road, “one of the prettiest drives we've ever been on.” They stayed in Spearfish that night.

Rick and Nancy Omohundro, son Brandon, and Rick's brother Terry drove toward Rapid City. On the road they began calling hotels on the cell phone but couldn't find a room anywhere. “We actually stopped at one place between Deadwood and Rapid City (just off the interstate) to see if anything was available.” Rick reports. “Terry went in to inquire about the room and on the way out met a young couple going in. Terry told them there were no rooms available; the couple told him that they had just lost their home in the fire. At that time it was one of two homes that had burned.”

Rick's party proceeded to Rapid City and decided to stop at the Dollar Rental Car where they had rented the car. “We told the people there that we were going to eat and then bring the car in and would need a ride to the airport, where we planned to spend the night. The Dollar people proceeded to call several hotels on our behalf, but no luck. Then another employee started calling bed and breakfast establishments and finally found one about 10 miles outside of Rapid City. We spent the night there—it was a nice place and we had a great breakfast the next morning.”

Tip Omohundro rode with his parents Tom and Elizabeth to Rapid City with the expectation that they would drop him off at a motel near the airport, then continue driving home to Arizona. Unfortunately, there was not a room to be had in Rapid City anywhere at any price. "So we felt lucky to get a reservation at the Historic Old Cabin Lodge in Hot Springs, 45 miles south. It was old and perhaps historic, built in 1929. All the rooms were free-standing log cabins. We arrived at about 10:00 pm. Since all the decent restaurants were closed, we dined on potted meat, cheese/crackers and scotch. Plenty of scotch."

In Rapid City Harvey and Isabella Willard stopped at a motel where they were informed that every room in town was booked so they would have to drive another 50 miles east to the town of Wall. "We decided to check one more motel whose clerk called around to look for a room for us. The man in line ahead of Isabella told the clerk that he would drive on, and if the clerk were to locate a room, he was to give it to Isabella. We guess the gray hair did the trick! The clerk found the last available room in Rapid City! So we stayed at a run-down motel that was something out of the 1950's! It was better than sleeping in the car, which we found out the next day at the airport that many people had to do. The airport was closed for security reasons around 10:30 pm Saturday night so no one was able to spend the night there."

Edna Nees and Tammy and Jason Swingle drove west, as they had originally planned to do anyway, arriving that evening in Buffalo, Wyoming, where they found a cabin with two nice rooms.

Thadd Turner writes that a little before 9 pm his convoy of RV and horse trailer pulled into the Seven Downs Arena near Spearfish. "There are dozens of horses that have been dropped off by their owners fleeing the fire. Everyone is welcome here. I am still uncertain what all this means. We are all a bit confused. We can only wait and see where the flames blow next."

Kitty recalls, "Naively, we tried to get a room at the first hotel we saw off the first exit to Spearfish. It was full, so we quickly decided that probably all the hotels at this exit would be full, so we got back on I-90 and headed for the second exit. The third hotel we tried referred us to a Days Inn a little further away from the exit. There was a long line there, but rooms were still available. Karl figured that we were just on the margin of being able to get a room. After a long wait it was announced that all the rooms were full, and most people left. We and the family in front of us stayed in line, hoping something would pop up, and sure enough, the two ladies behind the desk decided to release the last two vacant rooms in the hotel which had been held for guaranteed-for-4:00-arrivals. Since by now it was nearly 6:00 p.m. and since this was an emergency situation, they released a room to us and one to the family ahead of us in line. We were jubilant at the thought of an imminent hot shower."

Kitty continued, "Judith and Karl and I took our luggage to the room (we were in luck—two beds), but before settling in I wanted to go look for family at the Red Cross shelter. I hated not knowing where anyone was. We left Judith to the luxury of a shower and drove to the shelter but no one from the Roundup was there. We decided just to drive around and see what we might see and had driven only a short distance when lo and behold—I recognized the large Greene family plus tall Stephen Omohundro in his bright red shirt across the street! They had all gotten out of Deadwood safely but had left a great deal of their luggage behind."

"Because the fire had forced them to leave Deadwood a day early they had not had a chance to pick up another rental car, which they would need the next day when the family groups separated, some going to the airport, some continuing west. By cell phone, Mark was able to secure a rental car for that evening but needed a way to get to the airport to pick it up, so Karl and I drove Mark and Peggy east to Rapid City."

On the way out of Spearfish the Pelkans' car passed the exit for Deadwood. "By now, the sun was setting, and I must say that the effect of the sun behind the black smoke was quite beautiful and dramatic. We stopped to take photos. Later we passed a National Guard convoy and could see bulldozers and Guards-

men on the trucks. On the way back from Rapid City, the orange glow from the fire was quite evident from the interstate. We were distressed to see that it was still looking dangerous.”

Kitty and Karl got back to their Spearfish motel about 10:30, after making one more stop at the Red Cross shelter to look for family and friends. “We had lots to tell Judith as we all watched TV reports of the fire. This was how Karl and I spent our wedding anniversary!”

John and Susan Omohundro were sharing driving an SUV with Ann and Armond Spencer. “After we left the city limits of Deadwood, traffic picked up speed. Hot, adrenaline flowing, smoke in the sky behind us, we decided to put some miles between us and Deadwood, so we drove north on 85 along the western edge of South Dakota, buffeted by a hot dry wind. Tumble weeds and antelope along the fence line.”

Armond and John stopped in Belle Fourche at about 6:30 to ask about a campground nearby. It was 110 degrees according to the bank marquee, probably hotter in the parking lot. Ann and Susan came in from the car. “We mutiny. *No way* are we gonna camp in this heat. Keep driving!” They continued north into greener, cooler Bowman, ND. The first motel they stopped at was full, but the kind desk person there helped them find two rooms at a Super 8 nearby. “We tried to find some fire news on TV while we cleaned up, then we found a late but tasty meal with a bottle of wine at the steakhouse downtown, to substitute as best we could for the final banquet.”

Julie and Dennis Greene’s extended family all met up in Spearfish (along with Stephen Omohundro) and tried to figure out where to stay that night. Everything within a 50-mile radius was booked, but they were eventually able to get hotel rooms in Gillette, WY, 100 miles west.

“The original plan,” Julie continues, “had been for daughters Linda and Carole and their families to return the rented car and fly out of Rapid City on Sunday. Mark was to pick up another car in Rapid City and with him and his family, Dennis and I were going on a little vacation together for the next ten days. Here is where we owe a lot to Kitty and Karl Pelkan. They drove Mark and Peggy all the way back to Rapid City to pick up a rental car, while the rest of us drove west to Gillette. Mark and Peggy didn’t arrive in Gillette in their rented car until after midnight.”

Mal Wyche later told his daughter Kitty that their group had no luck finding rooms in Rapid City, so they continued 50 miles east to Wall. On the way they passed a ramshackle-looking lodge that they pointed to and said, “Boy, we’re glad we don’t have to stay *there!*” When no rooms were to be found in Wall, they drove the 15 miles back to the ramshackle lodge and were very grateful to get the last two rooms!

#### Sunday, June 30 and after: *Getting on and Getting Home*

Jack Omohundro says, “From the time we got on our plane Sunday morning things worked like clockwork. We arrived home in Louisiana two days earlier than planned, and lo and behold: our bags were still with us. As an ex-airline employee, I was so proud of the way everyone had done their jobs.”

Elizabeth Omohundro reports, “We drove home [to Mesa, Arizona] through the country roads of Nebraska and Colorado and enjoyed the ride. We were home safely before noon on July 2.”

On Sunday Michael and Carol Foster drove up to Mount Terry, about 7,000 feet, for a better view of Deadwood and the fire. They had hoped to get back into Deadwood, but when it became apparent that the town would be closed for several days they headed into the Black Hills via some back roads, a drive they had originally intended to make anyway. “The drive was beautiful and well worth the time. Then we drove through the Badlands. We got into St. Louis late Monday night [to rest a few days before returning to Tampa].”

Rick Omohundro ran into Tipton Omohundro and Harvey and Isabella Willard at the airport on Sunday. "We had learned Saturday night that the airport does not allow anyone to spend the night there. So had we dropped off our rental car at the airport on Saturday, we would have been stranded and had to spend the night on the curb outside the airport. As it was, we got home to Kentucky about 9:30 Sunday night." Tip Omohundro also talked to Martha Sullivan at the airport. He learned that Martha had slept Saturday night on the floor in one of the hotel lobbies in Rapid City. Betty Woods was with her. Hughes Diller and Barbara Weitekamp had spent the night in their rental car at the airport. "Julie Omohundro was at the airport that morning, too. She had made arrangements earlier to stay in a Rapid City motel on Saturday night so had no trouble with her room. I returned to Las Vegas via thankfully uneventful flights."

Edna Nees and Jason and Tammy Swingle awoke Sunday morning in Buffalo, Wyoming. "We drove to Cody, WY, where Monday we went whitewater rafting, shopping, ate at the Irma Hotel and saw the shootout and, of course, the rodeo. Tuesday we drove to Yellowstone. Jason enjoyed seeing the animals and Old Faithful. We took him into Montana and to Idaho. He liked the country so much he wanted to move there to live. We got back to Cody on the Fourth just in time to see Thadd Turner, "Texas Jack," riding his horse in the parade."

Edna went on, "We left Cody early on July 5 for the airport. All appeared to be well. We had our bags checked to Dulles in Washington, DC. When we were about to fly out of Dallas, Tammy was paged to come and claim her bags. Security wanted to inspect her bags, and then wanted to go through my bags. We had gotten some boy scout knives and some new quarters for gifts. Tammy gave the personnel such a hard time that they threatened to arrest her if she didn't calm down. The airline people wanted to walk her to the plane and just have the bags checked, but security wouldn't let them. Jason and I were on the plane waiting but they came aboard and took us off. We had to wait four hours to catch another plane. It took us about 20 hours to get home. But we brought back all our knives and quarters."

On Sunday Kitty and Karl Pelkan bade their cousin Judy Phillips goodbye in Spearfish. "We were just about to get on the interstate when Karl spotted Tom Caterson walking along the street. We hailed him and found out that he and Beryl and Beryl's mother Dorothea Whalon had spent the night in a nearby hotel and were now waiting for the airport shuttle to fetch them. Fortunately for them, a friend was visiting them when the evacuation started and the friend drove them out of Deadwood. Otherwise, they say they don't know what they would have done."

"And then we saw Julie and Mark Greene!" Kitty continued: "They had driven back from Wyoming hoping to get back into Deadwood to collect all their left-behind things. Part of their crowd from Saturday—Stephen Omohundro, the Browns, and the Cechs—had driven to Rapid City, as they had flights to catch that day. Still in Wyoming were Dennis, Peggy and her three girls, Peggy's mother Violet Underwood, lots of luggage, and only one car. Everyone needed to get 100 miles up the road to Sheridan, Wyoming, where they had a reservation for that night. Since Karl and I were going that way anyway, we offered to shuttle some of the group."

"But first we tried to get back into Deadwood. We tried two ways but the roads were blocked; no one was being allowed back in. That night, Peggy treated us to dinner in Sheridan. Then we found a great campsite high up in Big Horn National Forest. The next day from Bald Mountain (about 9000' elevation) we could see all the way to the Rockies! After visiting Little Big Horn Battlefield and camping out again, we were tired of the heat and pushed for home. For the next few days Seattle was wonderfully cool and cloudy! "

Julie Greene remembers, "Sunday morning, Mark and I drove back to Deadwood in the hopes of getting the rest of our belongings. We waited around all day, but by 5 pm we were told that there was no

hope of getting back into the city. So we went back to Sheridan, Wyoming. Rick and Linda Cech delayed their flight until Tuesday so that they could get back into Deadwood, which they did. They packed up everyone's belongings and sent them home to us. In the meantime, Dennis and I discovered that we had packed very erratically, as we found ourselves with only one change of clothes for the next ten days. So we went shopping in a Walmart to get a few things to tide us over."

Mal and Ann Wyche said the ramshackle lodge turned out to be quite clean, though a bit lacking in amenities. The next day they enjoyed driving through the Badlands with Ben and June and Kelly. They were able to get rooms in Rapid City that night and flew back to Virginia on Monday.

Days later: *Reflections*

Jack Omohundro writes, "I've already told you how proud I am of Gus [helping everyone out of the hotel] but I must add this about daughter Edna: she just took over [throughout the crisis] and did it all. She really made Jane and me proud of her. I have asked her if she wants to travel with us as our private "keeper."

Michael Foster frets, "My failure to get Julie Omohundro back through town to her hotel somehow was not much of an example of Omohundro intrepidity, for which I apologize to Julie and to the memory of Texas Jack: he would have done better."

To which Julie replies, "In Michael's defense, I must point out that, had Texas Jack been there, he would no doubt have pulled me up behind him on his trusty pony and galloped down Deadwood's alleyways to deposit me promptly at the Franklin Hotel. However, had he, like Michael, been constrained to the limited routes open to the horse-less carriage, I'm sure he would have been hard-pressed to do any better! Personally, I think we were all pretty intrepid, given the circumstances."

Michael continues, "[We enjoyed our first Roundup] but I must say the finale was completely unexpected. We had anticipated a nice concluding banquet, but such mundane conventions are apparently not part of the Texas Jack Omohundro persona. Something more dramatic would have been in character, and had I read more about Texas Jack and his cronies before we arrived in Deadwood I would have known to expect the unexpected."

Harvey Willard says, "It was a frightening experience, one we hope never to be involved in again! We are thankful that relatives were around who cared what would happen to us, and grateful to the stranger in Rapid City who gave up his room for us. It's a great country."

Kitty Pelkan wrote, "Karl called the Franklin later in the week and spoke to Mona, who said the fire was heading toward Sturgis. Her daughter's home had been 'slimed' by a slurry drop, but, as Mona said, 'It's still standing!' She said the hotel was already starting to fill up with guests again, some of whom were unaware of the fire, and some of whom, when told of it, didn't seem to care. Belongings left behind had been taken to the Emerald Room, and the Franklin had already started shipping some things back to their owners."

Robin Carmody wrote, "It's ironic that only two days before this Grizzly Gulch Fire, the *Black Hills Pioneer* printed a story saying 'the land around the Lead-Deadwood areas poses such a great risk for fire, that the area is considered in the top five for treatment by the Bureau of Land Management [to reduce the dense fuel load].' Guess its status has now changed, huh! From what I have read, Deadwood has been through many trials and tribulations, fires, and floods, but it always manages to rebuild. I'm positive it will again—it's too tough not to!"

Susan Omohundro reports, "We woke one morning recently in northern New York to be enveloped in a thick yellow-brownish haze like smog. This hardly seemed possible, in our isolated northern setting. It also

seemed to me that I could smell smoke, which I dismissed likewise as the product of my hypersensitive brain or else legitimate household burn-barrels or campfires. But it turns out that this was really smoke, coming on a north wind from dozens of forest fires in Quebec. Most unusual. This does seem to be the year for forest fires.” John adds, “I am grateful we got through a lot of important Association business before we were scattered.”

Judy Phillips wrote to Kitty, “A good friend of mine just happened to be in Deadwood last weekend and said things seemed back to normal—though she was shocked to see how close the burned areas were to the town.”

Julie Greene said, “When we got home (yesterday), there were four huge boxes waiting for us—our stuff from Deadwood. So what did we learn? Even when you’re traveling by car, *pack light!*”

Jack Omohundro concluded his report, “All in all, I do believe this will go down as the most memorable Roundup ever. Really, everyone needs a little excitement in their lives—don’t you think?”



*Gravesite of John Baker “Texas Jack” Omohundro  
Evergreen Cemetery in Leadville, Colorado*

On her way to the roundup in Deadwood, Edna Nees visited TJ’s gravesite to place flowers and Confederate and U.S. flags at the headstone. This photo, taken by Edna, also shows the black iron fence paid for by donations to the Association.

While in Leadville Edna noticed that two of the three TJ highway markers (dedicated in a ceremony in 1996) had yet to be installed. At the Roundup she mentioned this to former TJA president Harvey Willard. He has written to the city and has gotten a promise of action. This will be reported on more fully in a future *Scout*.

## **Frank Sullivan: The Man Who Saved Texas Jack from Obscurity**

**Prepared for Presentation at the Roundup Banquet,  
Deadwood, SD, June 29, 2002**

**by Julie Greene**

Frank Sullivan always looked forward to the Sons of the American Revolution conventions that took place every four years in various cities throughout the United States. The one in 1976 would be particularly enjoyable, he was sure, as it was being held in Boston, a city steeped in history – the very cradle of this great country.

His ancestors had immigrated to America from Ireland, but that was many years ago. So many, in fact, that Frank was qualified to be a proud member of the Sons of the American Revolution (or SAR) and had, in fact, served as the president of his local Springfield, Illinois chapter.

Frank was an attorney by profession, but he was deeply interested in history – particularly American and Irish history. He was active, not only in the SAR, but he also was involved in the Westerners, and other historical organizations in Springfield.

But Frank's insatiable appetite for history was not limited by the borders of the United States. His Irish roots encouraged him to delve into the historical events of the Emerald Isle, and his personal genealogy that originated from there. He became particularly interested in a 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish nobleman – the Earl of Dunraven.

Lord Dunraven was a true *bon vivant*! He was a wealthy adventurer, a great yachtsman who was instrumental in the creation of the "America's Cup" yacht races. He was also an avid game hunter who filled his home, Adare Castle, with trophies of his many hunting expeditions.

Dunraven started coming to America to hunt when he learned about the great American West, and Geysersland (now known as Yellowstone Park) in particular. The vast forests and plains teeming with game were very compelling to the Earl. Contacting the Army Commander at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, he arranged for their best guide to accompany him on his first hunting sojourn. And that was how he and U.S. Government scout, Texas Jack Omohundro met.

Subsequently, Lord Dunraven came to America several times to hunt, and insisted that Texas Jack be his guide each time. The Earl was enamoured with Texas Jack's incredible skills and engaging personality, and his portrayals of Jack in the two books he later wrote are the most vivid personal descriptions we have of Jack.

Frank Sullivan, of course, had read all about Texas Jack in Dunraven's books, and had become fascinated with this illusive historical character, but was never able to learn much more about him. And so it was on that June day in 1976 that Frank Sullivan and his wife, Mary Margaret, found themselves, along with hundreds of other SAR conventioners in Boston, attending meetings and visiting with old friends.

At one function, while Frank was deep in conversation, Mary Margaret decided to do some mingling of her own. She began looking at the name tags that everyone wore, and spotted one that made her do a double take: "M. H. Omohundro," it read. Well, that was certainly familiar! She immediately approached the tall stately man.

"Are you, by any chance, related to a western scout by the name of Texas Jack Omohundro?" she asked him. Rarely had anyone recognized his unusual name, let alone been able to pronounce it correctly. M.H.

was much more used to people remarking on what a strange name it was, and asking where it came from. So although he was a little taken aback he was very pleased, and he quickly replied, "He was my father's older brother."

Mary Margaret was excited. "I'd like for you to meet my husband," she told him. "Wait right here!" She rushed over to Frank. "Come with me," she said. "I have a big surprise for you."

And that's how Frank Sullivan met M.H. Omohundro. The two men fell to talking and when Frank learned that M.H. was Texas Jack's nephew, he was full of questions about Jack's family and roots. M.H. was equally interested to learn more about the Lord Dunraven connection. They soon became fast friends. Through M.H., Frank learned about Malvern Hill Omohundro who wrote the *Omohundro Genealogical Record*, a book that included a lot of information about his older brother, Texas Jack. Frank obtained a copy of the *Record*, and at the same time he obtained Herschel Logan's biography of Texas Jack, *Buckskin and Satin*. The more he learned, it seemed, the more fascinated he became with the intrepid cowboy/scout/actor.

In October of 1977, Frank arranged a meeting with descendants of Lord Dunraven and Texas Jack Omohundro. Those attending were the present Lord Dunraven, Lady Dunraven, and Lord Meath. Frank's family members included his wife Mary Margaret and his two daughters, Deborah and Martha. And representing the descendants of Texas Jack were M.H. Omohundro and his wife Libby. The gathering took place at Adare Manor in Ireland. It was a significant and unforgettable occasion indeed.

Upon his return to the U.S., a nucleus of an idea began to form in Frank's mind. Wouldn't it be great to gather together people who have an interest in western history, along with some of the relatives of Texas Jack Omohundro, to commemorate his all but forgotten life? They could meet in Leadville, Colorado, the place of Texas Jack's tragic death, and the location of his gravesite.

So Frank contacted the historical society of Leadville with his idea, and the people there were very enthusiastic about it. He then talked to M.H. to get the names of family members who might like to be informed of such an event. Frank's many friends in Springfield, along with his own family, were equally enthused.

He would need to form an organization under which these people would gather, Frank thought, so he formed the "Texas Jack Association," and as he was an attorney, he incorporated it. And so it came to be. In the summer of 1980, the town of Leadville, Colorado hosted "Texas Jack Days." About 20 visitors from various parts of the country, along with most of the good citizens of Leadville had a wonderful time at the first Texas Jack Association Roundup!

Four years later, in 1984, Frank arranged for another get-together in Cody, Wyoming. With the help of Paul Fees, curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum, a small but enthusiastic group engaged in many enjoyable and educational activities.

And the first business meeting of the Texas Jack Association was held in a small conference room of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. At that meeting, Frank announced to the group that due to health reasons, he would be unable to continue with the Texas Jack Association, but he would be pleased if any one of the 15 people present would want to take it on.

Julie and Dennis Greene volunteered and the Texas Jack Association was on its way! Members met again two years later at North Platte, Nebraska, and thereafter every two years at a site of historical significance.

And now look at us! Wouldn't Frank be proud?

*[Ed. note: Now the reader must visualize the standing ovation the membership would have given Martha Sullivan to honor her father and to thank her for this roundup.]*



These are three Illinois friends who are members of the Texas Jack Association due to Frank Sullivan's influence: Betty Tabor Woods (seated), Barbara Weitekamp and William Hughes Diller, Jr. (standing).

Betty's late husband, Edward English Woods, was a charter member of the TJA. Betty recalls that Edward and Frank would spend hours discussing history. Often Hughes Diller (also a charter member) would join these roundtable discussions. Both Betty and Hughes accompanied the Sullivans to "Texas Jack Days" in Leadville in 1980. Deadwood makes the sixth roundup Hughes has attended. (photograph by Woody's Wild West Old Time Photos, "Deadwood, S.D.

*[Ed. note: Charter memberships, \$100 each, were available until September 1, 1986. Each charter member received a certificate and an enamel lapel pin with "charter member" engraved on the back. There were 19 charter members at the Deadwood Roundup.]*

## Old Glory: An Indian View

by Robert Mottley (produced by Megan Battle)

As Native Americans in the West saw their tribal lands absorbed by the incessant encroachment of white men, a strange phenomenon occurred. The flag that flew above U.S. Cavalry patrols became an icon of some tribal cultures, a red, white, and blue design motif that appeared in clothing, artifacts, and art.

Why did this happen? Flags captured in battle were believed to contain the power of the enemy. Native Americans also felt that flags had the power to protect those who displayed them, despite evidence to the contrary. In one notable incident, the sudden raising of an American flag by a band of Cheyenne did not stop the subsequent carnage by mounted troopers in the 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado.

As fighting in the Indian Wars waned, flags became talismans of appeasement for Native Americans shunted onto reservations. The Lakota tribe in particular, heavily recruited for Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show, was exposed to barrages of American flags.

The Lakota people, particularly the Brulé and Oglala Sioux subgroups living on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations in South Dakota, produced artifacts with flag designs for their personal use. Historian Richard Pohrt, author of *The American Indian, The American Flag*, writes that "the vogue for decorating articles with the flag and other patriotic emblems really started among the Plains Indians during the early reservation period.... Confined within boundaries established by the government, the old ways and values disintegrated under the pressures of reservation life, disease, and poverty. However, the enforced idleness of reservation life allowed Sioux artists plenty of time to produce the beaded, quilled, painted, and carved objects they so admired. Few other tribes had developed a beadwork tradition as strong and widespread as theirs, for Sioux women were wonderfully skilled and ambitious beadworkers. Family pride was a dominant factor. It was important to make a proper appearance at social functions, and the lavish decoration of clothing for prestige was a powerful artistic motive."

One such function was the Lakota Sun Dance, a four-day ceremony that occurred during the midsummer Cherry Ripening Moon and involved, among other practices, ritualistic self-torture. When the U.S. government banned this ceremony from 1881 to 1934, the Lakota began to celebrate the Fourth of July with rites strongly evocative of the Sun Dance. That ritual's sacred forked Wakan tree became a flagpole for the Stars and Stripes, which conveniently made use of two sacred Lakota colors: red, for the heart and the earth, and blue, the color of the sky when the sun is shining. To the Lakota, the sun will hide its face with clouds if some offense has been committed. A "blue day" boded well for the Sun Dance.

The Navajo of the Southwest, far removed from the central plains, have used American flag designs in their weaving since the early 1870s. It was rare for Navajo artisans to render the flag literally. Historian Mark Nohl has noted that flag rugs were not common among Navajo sources, since Americans were reluctant to walk on a national emblem. As for the patterns used, "seldom does Old Glory come from the Navajo loom in the traditional format. It may be shortened into a square, elongated into a stripe, or have eagles or messages woven into it. It may have stars that look like anchors or flowers, and it may not be red, white, or blue. But it is always recognizable."

The Plateau Indians of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho—specifically the Yakima, Nez Perce, Warm Springs, Klickitat, and Umatilla—used flag designs most often in flat-beaded bags and woven containers for corn husks. Many Plateau Indians enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War I. Those Native American Yanks displayed many flag designs that incorporated tribal motifs, intended to reflect patriotism more than irony.

Patterns were painted with colored pigments and embroidered with dyed porcupine quills or glass beads. Edges were decorated with pine cones, calico, and various fringes. The glass beads used by almost all Native Americans actually came from Venice. Since Columbus' first voyage, they have been traded for such native products as furs and hides. Called "seed beads," they were applied primarily to hides with threads made of fibrous strands of dried muscle tissue.

The Plateau Indians managed to obtain cotton and linen threads by means of trading. Indian women also used porcupine quills for embellishment. Colored with natural dyes, the quills were softened, flattened, and then wrapped, plaited, or sewn into hides. Exposure to ultraviolet light has caused the brilliant fugitive dyes on some of the quills to fade. Hides came from buffalo, elk, reindeer, and common cattle. They were first scraped clean of flesh and gristle and then softened in a mixture of brains and other internal organs. —Excerpted from *Colonial Homes*, Dec. 1993, Vol. 19, No. 6, pgs., 42-45 (*CH* is no longer in publication; used without permission.)

*The photographs below are two of the five that accompanied the Colonial Homes article (photography by Steve Tague, courtesy NYSHA). The two items are from the collection of more than 500 American Indian artifacts donated to the New York State Historical Society by Eugene and Clare Thaw. In 1993, plans were in the works for the collection to be installed in a new wing being constructed at NYSHA's Fenimore House in Cooperstown, located on Lake Road, PO Box 800, Cooperstown, NY 13326; (607) 547-2533.*



*These two examples of American Indian flag art come from Lakota artisans in North America. Both pieces are circa 1890. A beaded pouch displayed in the Adams Museum in Deadwood, South Dakota was decorated with an eagle (but no flags in talons) and the date 1925 in red, white and blue beads. On the eagle's chest was a red, white and blue shield very much in design like the one on the eagle pictured above.*

## TJA Minutes, 6-29-02, Gold Room, Franklin Hotel

The meeting was called to order by TJA President John T. Omohundro at 10:10 am.

He read a summary of the 2000 meeting minutes and there were no additions or corrections from the members.

Officers' reports:

JTO reported on his presidency's efforts to establish links to other organizations, such as wild west groups, museums, etc. by sending them *The Scout* with a cover letter. The effectiveness of this effort is uncertain, since no replies have been received.

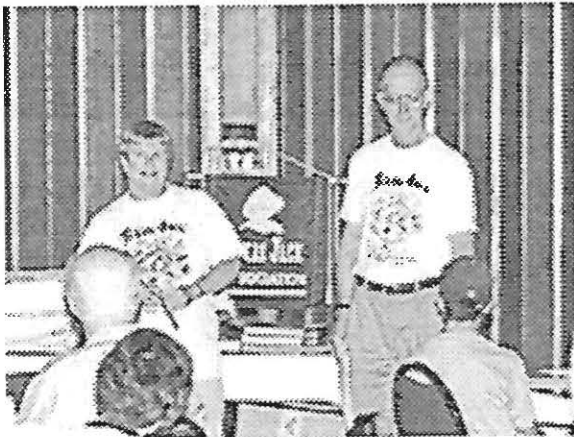
He has also been assembling the Association's official papers regarding 501(c)3 status and incorporation; these should remain with an archivist rather than traveling from president to president.

Vice-President Julie Omohundro reported on her project to compile an index of *Scout* issues from 1980 to 2001, with assistance from Julie Greene, Kitty Pelkan, and Edna Nees, for which she was thanked.

Secretary Edna Nees continues to update the membership data base, with help from Rick Omohundro. We have about 250 members on the books, but only about 85 have paid dues so far this year.

Edna gave the treasurer's report in lieu of R. C. Omohundro. At the end of May we had a little over \$8,000 in funds. This includes partial Roundup receipts. The Roundup income will be a little over \$9,000, and the expenses will also be a little over \$9,000, so we should break even, as planned. Our treasury exclusive of Roundup funds contains about \$5,000, so our financial status is healthy. The Association expressed its gratitude to R.C., the treasurer.

Sixty-seven members attended the entire Roundup; several other members and guests attended some events. This was a record turnout.



*Incoming president Julie Omohundro is introduced by presiding president John Omohundro at the well-attended business meeting Saturday morning.*



*Auctioning a poster of Texas Jack, donated by John and Susan Omohundro. Also auctioned were a ceramic pistol, ceramic tiles, and a 2-volume set of bound Scouts donated by Edna Nees.*

Old Business:

1. Roundup organizer Martha Sullivan was heartily thanked for her excellent and conscientious efforts.
2. *Scout* layout: John and Susan Omohundro are passing the task to Lorrie Tenos and providing her assistance as she learns the process. They were thanked for their six years as layout editors.
3. Bill Omohundro of Buffalo, WY has not moved forward with the effort to get a peak in Yellowstone Park named for Texas Jack. John and Susan O. will retrieve the related documents from Bill. This project is in abeyance for the present. [Bill has returned the files but expressed a willingness to work on this when he retires.]
4. Edna reported on installation of the cemetery fence at Pleasure Hill and showed photos. The chain link fence is up, with assistance from Tammy & Jason Swingle, among others. The cost of the fence materials was \$400 and labor was donated. Members agreed that the Association should place a metal plaque on a permanent (probably concrete) base inside the fence. the plaque will provide information about the persons buried there, including their relationship to Texas Jack. The executive committee will approve the text. Members approved \$400 for this project.
5. The long-running effort to get Texas Jack on a U.S. postage stamp continues, headed by Dennis Greene. All Association members are urged to participate in the letter-writing campaign. The next *Scout* will contain a sample letter and reminder to act. [The reminder is in this issue; the sample letter will be in the next one.]
6. Edna will go to the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody next week and attempt to establish whether the museum would be willing to exhibit a painting of Texas Jack if the Association gave them one. If they are willing, then the artist, composition, and cost remain to be determined. [As it eventuated, Edna was unable to visit the museum.]
7. It was pointed out by the Curtises among others that it is not easy to find Texas Jack's gravesite in Evergreen Cemetery in Leadville. After some discussion, it was decided to look into placing a directional arrow or signage at the cemetery's front gate and to put a metal plaque on the cast iron fence surrounding Texas Jack's grave. \$400 was allotted for the plaque. Text will be determined by the officers. Also, a suggestion was made to publish directions to the gravesite in *The Scout*.
8. Several people have informed us that the Texas Jack website is not functioning. The association wishes to own the URL and to maintain the website. John O. will contact Richard O. of CT who created the website. The Association will pay to maintain the site. It was thought the cost would be about \$7/mo. Incoming President Rand McKinney volunteered to be webmaster, after inconclusive discussion about hiring a professional.

New Business:

1. Three possible sites were offered for consideration for the 2004 Roundup: Leadville, Colorado; Fort Worth, Texas; and Charlottesville, Virginia. Each has its attractions and relevance to Texas Jack. Each has disadvantages. Lively discussion by membership. The conclusion was a consensus to go to Charlottesville in 2004. Possibly we will go to Fort Worth in 2006 under Rand's leadership, but that will be decided in 2004. The Charlottesville Roundup preparation will be a group effort, involving Edna Nees as coordinator, John O., the Willards, Julie O., and others.
2. Future guest editors for *The Scout*: Sept. '02, Kitty Pelkan; Jan. '03, Kelly Wyche; May '03, Rand McKinney & Candice Denton; Sept. '03, Harvey Willard; Jan. '04, John and Susan Omohundro; May '04, Peggy Greene; Sept. '04, Julie Greene. There was considerable discussion about the format of the colophon and it was decided to return to the traditional format, which will appear in every issue on page two.

3. A suggestion was made to place framed Texas Jack posters in various restaurants and other establishments with a wild west theme. This suggestion was not acted on. However, members approved publication of a brochure similar to the old one designed by the Greenes. This will provide publicity for Texas Jack and the Association. Edna will look into printing costs.
4. Members approved spending up to \$50 to print a business-card sized information card with basic information about Texas Jack and the Association, which members could hand out to anyone who inquires or expresses interest. This card will have TJA Secretary Edna's phone number and e-mail address. John O. will look into this.

#### Election of Officers:

Rand McKinney was nominated to be vice president, meaning that he will be president from summer 2004 to 2006. Julie Omohundro moves up from vice president to president for 2002-2004. John O. becomes Director. Edna Nees continues as secretary, and R.C. Omohundro continues as treasurer (with assistance from Edna). This slate was unanimously approved by voice vote.

The official meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Subsequent to this, Edna auctioned several items to members to raise funds for the Association. The auction plus the sale of TJA items such as T-shirts netted over \$1100. John O. distributed souvenir coffee mugs showing the photo of the Three Scouts and labeled "2002 Roundup, Deadwood, South Dakota."

### **Roundup Financial Report**

Not all bills and checks have been received, so this is an estimate of income and expenses for the Roundup and a comment about refunds.

Total registration income was \$9130. Planned expenses were \$9200. As a result of the evacuation, anticipated actual expenses are \$8400. Though we didn't hold the banquet, we had expenses associated with it, and a couple of unanticipated expenses resulting from the evacuation.

To be precise, we wrote a check for tips for all of us to the Bell Man and the Bell Boy. We sent appreciation gifts to Mona and Thadd. We made a donation to the fire department. We gave a small honorarium to the Forals, our Saturday night musicians, who had already decorated the stage and composed a song to Texas Jack.

These expenses, if we refunded all the banquet fees, would put us in the red. So after much consideration the Executive Committee decided not to make an automatic refund from the registration fee for the missed banquet.

Nevertheless, if one wishes a refund of \$15 per person for the banquet, one may request that from Edna Nees at [andeseen@aol.com](mailto:andeseen@aol.com)

Roundup income beyond expenses will be spent on the several projects we approved at the business meeting. The Association's annual financial report will appear in the January *Scout*.

We understand also that the Franklin Hotel has been charging for Saturday night lodging but will offer a refund if you request it.

John Omohundro  
Director

## from the Editor's Desk...



Julie Greene designed, wrote, and produced the very first *Scout* in 1985—all on the typewriter! Now in 2002 you're reading the 49<sup>th</sup> issue—all done on the computer, even the photographs! I must thank my husband Karl for his numerous hours of technical assistance with this project. I also thank John Omohundro for his technical support and for taking on the mammoth task of compiling and collating the exodus stories. On behalf of the TJA I welcome Lorrie Tenos as the new layout editor. Lorrie is descended from Silas Omohundro, the brother of Texas Jack's father. She takes over this task from John and Susan Omohundro, layout editors for the last six years. I've lost track of how many years Edna Nees has been getting *The Scout* printed and mailed! Many thanks to *all* the volunteers who keep the TJA going strong.

—Kitty VanLew Wyche Pelkan

Deadline for materials for the next issue of *The Scout* is December 1, 2002

Send to:

Kelly Wyche

637 N. Abingdon Street, Arlington, VA 22203

kelly@comstockhomes.com

### SOUTH DAKOTA TIMELINE

- 1803—land acquired through Louisiana Purchase
- 1861—Congress created the Dakota Territory
- 1874—gold discovered in the Black Hills
- 1889—statehood
- 1980—For land seized in 1877, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the federal government to pay \$105 million to 8 Sioux tribes.
- 2002—Texas Jack Association visits Deadwood and gets chased out of town by the Grizzly Gulch Fire!



Korczak's 1/34<sup>th</sup> scale model of Crazy Horse (foreground) stands one mile away from the memorial-in-progress. The nearly completed head of Crazy Horse is 87 1/2 feet high.

## Miscellanea re Texas Jack and Wild Bill

by Kitty Pelkan

A large, but clear and complete, version of the photograph below is on exhibit in the Adams Museum in Deadwood, S.D. (credited courtesy the Buffalo Bill Historical Center). The museum's caption is as follows: "*Scouts of the Plains* from l-r, these men are Elisha Green, Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill Cody, Texas Jack Omohundro, and Eugene Overton. This photograph comes from Wild Bill's brief career as an entertainer. Wild Bill took a decidedly humorous pose with his rifle barrel-first into the floor of the studio. His pranks on stage led to disputes with his co-stars and he quit in March of 1874."

A photograph very similar to this is displayed in the visitor's center at Pactola Reservoir near Deadwood and has this caption: "*A Handful of Legends* c.1872 Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill Cody, Texas Jack, Gene Overton and two other unidentified wild westerners. The reality of the hard, rather brutish life of the frontier was overshadowed by a glamorous image."



This photograph also appears on page 33 in *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: An American Legend*, by R.L. Wilson with Greg Martin. Both authors are firearms collectors and historians, thus every gun, pistol and knife in the photograph is identified. Texas Jack's rifle is a deluxe Remington Rolling Block, a gift from the Remington Arms Company. The revolver in his belt is "a rare ivory-gripped squareback triggerguard 1851 Navy." The picture is said to be circa 1874.

The fuzzy cropped copy that is reproduced above is from Herschel Logan's *Buckskin and Satin*, p. 91 (credited to the Denver Public Library). This is Logan's caption: "*Five Frontier Scouts* From an old tintype made at Denver, Colorado in the early seventies. From left to right: Elisha Green (son-in-law of Eliphalet Remington the gun manufacturer), Wild Bill Hickok, Buffalo Bill Cody, Texas Jack Omohundro and Eugene Overton (a New York restaurant man)."

However, on page 54 in *Buffalo Bill and His Wild West: A Pictorial Biography* by Joseph G. Rosa and Robin May, the caption states (after identifying the men), "It is thought that the original plate was a tintype rather than a wetplate, but the original photographer has not been identified. This print is credited to Robert H. Furman of Rochester, New York, who first appeared in the city directories of 1877. Evidently he copied an existing print."

What is a tintype? Also called melainotype or ferrotype, tintype photography was developed in 1855 and was popular into the early 1900's. The technique involved spreading a thin layer of emulsion on tin sheets or "plates." The picture had to be processed immediately after exposure while the emulsion was still wet.

Tintypes were favored over daguerreotypes because one did not have to pose motionless for as long. Also, the quality of the picture was better and the cost was cheaper. If, when you carefully touch a magnet to an edge of an old photo, there is a magnetic pull...it's a tintype.



This picture featuring Texas Jack, Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill was given the title "Three Scouts of the Old West" by Herschel Logan. The copy here, photographed in 1873, is reproduced from page 86 of *Buckskin and Satin*. In Deadwood, SD this picture is exhibited in the Wild Bill Hickok Interpretive Center, is framed and displayed in the Old Style Saloon #10, and is for sale in the gift shop next to the Franklin Hotel. Appropriately, it is the photo on the 2002 Roundup souvenir mugs.

Herschel Logan wrote, "According to John M. Burke [their press agent] this photograph of the three scouts, and parads, was taken at Syracuse, N.Y. sometime during their theatrical tour together." As is well-known by TJA members, Wild Bill Hickok did not remain long with *The Scouts of the Plains* troupe. Following is an excerpt from an interview given by Wild Bill to the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (March 13, 1874) just before he left the show: "Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack, and the other scouts did not like to have him leave, but when he said he must go, the noble-hearted fellows presented him with \$500 apiece, and each gave him a splendid revolver,

bidding him to make good use of it among the 'Reds.' He had nothing but kind words to speak of the boys, as he familiarly termed the other scouts. He wished them all manner of good fortune and was sure they would receive it."

*[Wild Bill's interview appears in full on pages 94-95 in Buckskin and Satin. Information about the tintype was gathered from "Early Snapshots," Reminisce, Sept./Oct. 2000, p. 12.]*

OUR CONDOLENCES to the family of Louise Lipscome Melton, 95, of Bremono Bluff, Virginia, who died April 30, 2002. She is survived by a son, Bill Melton, and a daughter, Barbara Leigh Melton, both of Bremono Bluff. Louise Melton's husband was a descendant of Richard Omohundro, the fourth generation of Virginia Omohundros and the founder of the Fluvanna County branch of the family, thus Texas Jack Omohundro's great-grandfather. Richard O. established his farm at Bremono Bluff in the late 1770's. Richard Omohundro's son, Thomas Washington O., married Mary Cowell. Their daughter married Thomas W. Melton. Thomas and Mary Melton's son, Robert J., was the father of Wm. Melton Sr. Consequently, much of Richard Omohundro's acreage has remained in the hands of his descendants, and belongs now to Billy Melton, Jr. SUNY Potsdam College conducted an archaeological field school at the 'Old Omohundro Place' in 1991 and 1992. The house no longer stands but the brick-walled family cemetery remains.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO:

.....Proud parents Jessica and Robert Fulford on the birth of Cody Wayne Fulford, July 3, 2002. Grandparents: Mary and Randolph Golladay; Great grandmother: Edna Nees

.....Brandon Omohundro for being one of nine valedictorians in his high school graduating class of 112. He maintained a 4.0 grade point average for four years! Brandon has received a Presidential Scholarship from Morehead State University in Kentucky where he will start classes this fall. He plans to major in computer science. Parents: Rick and Nancy Omohundro

.....Rand McKinney and Candice Denton on their marriage August 24, 2002.



*Rand McKinney and Candice Denton  
at the Roundup picnic.*



*Tanya Turner watches her dad Thadd, dressed as Wild Bill Hickok, autograph copies of his book at the 2002 Roundup in Deadwood, SD.*

Back issues of *Deadwood Magazine* are \$3 each. (The May/June 2002 issue is the one with the Texas Jack article by Thadd that is mentioned in the Roundup summary.) Send check to: *Deadwood Magazine*, 4851 Cliff Drive, Rapid City, SD 57702.

To preview and order *Wild Bill Hickok: Deadwood City~End of Trail*, a hardcover book by Thadd Turner, go online: [www.oldwestalive.net](http://www.oldwestalive.net)

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**TJ POSTAL STAMP LETTER-WRITING CAMPAIGN**

Now that you've read this issue of *The Scout*, take a few minutes to compose a letter to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee detailing why the U.S. postal service should produce a stamp with Texas Jack's image and name. Use some of the information about Jack that is contained in these pages. Each time you receive a *Scout*, write another letter urging that a stamp be produced, and include a different set of facts about why Jack deserves this honor. Send your letters to:

Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee  
475 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.  
Room 4474E  
Washington, D.C. 20260-2437  
Attention: James C. Tolbert, Jr.

---

MANY OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ROUNDUP, SUCH AS THESE TWO, WERE TAKEN BY TERRY OMOHUNDRO. FOR A COPY OF TERRY'S CD OF ROUNDUP PHOTOS, SEND \$5 TO:

Terry Omohundro  
2660 Two Mile Pike  
Winchester, KY 40391



*The Mount Rushmore profile of George Washington from the highway.*



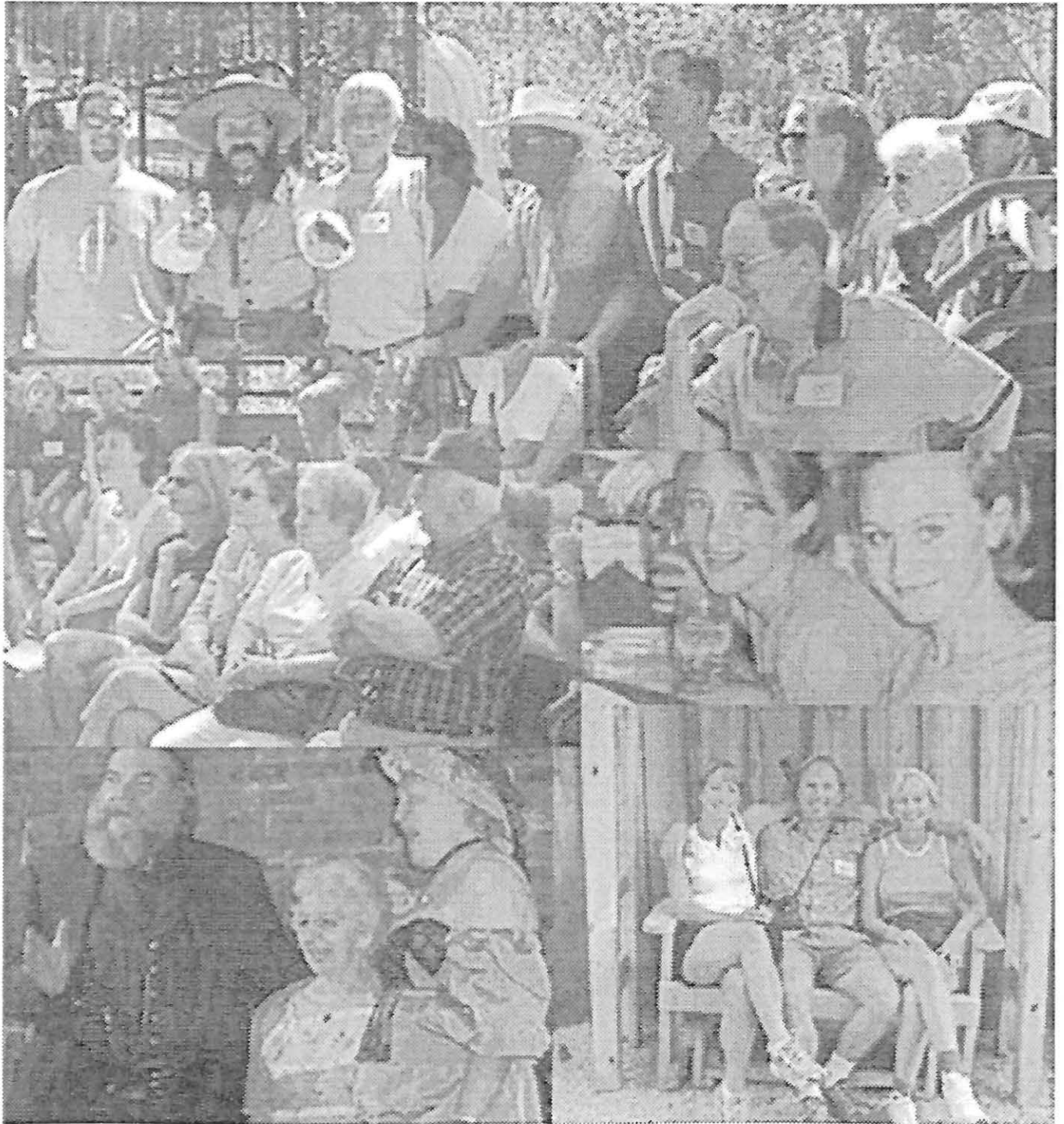
*Richard Bond Omohundro flirting with a feathered "floozie" clad in bright red satin!*

*The Texas Jack Scout*

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**THE NEXT TEXAS JACK ROUNDUP  
WILL BE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA  
JULY 12-18, 2004**

**Plan to join us for another educational, fun-filled event!**

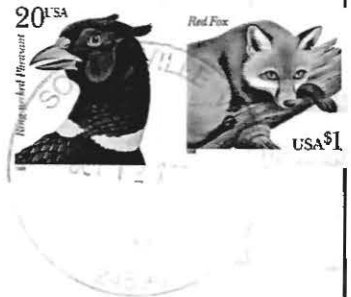


*Scenes from the 2002 Roundup in Deadwood, SD*

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*The Texas Jack Scout*  
Edna Nees  
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Scottsville, VA 24590



**TO:**  
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256 S E Sumpter Dr.  
Lee's Summit MO 64063      2002

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