



Volume XL no. 3

www.texasjack.org

November 2025



2026 ROUNDUP IN VIRGINIA

President's Message

By Robert Omohundro



From the great central valley of California to the riverbank of the James River in Virginia the call has gone out for the next Roundup in Richmond, Virginia. In just a short seven months, those interested in the life and times of Texas Jack Omohundro will meet at the Omni Hotel to greet friends new and old, and family too. Starting on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 24th we will “meet-n-greet” in the Westham Tavern inside the Omni.

The following morning, Thursday June 25th, we will board the bus, bound for the great Civil War Museum at the site of the Historic Tredegar Iron Works. We will see fascinating examples of historically interesting pieces as we visit this tour about the Great Conflict; including some of the personal effects in their collections that belonged to J.E.B. Stuart under whom Texas Jack served for a time.

After an enjoyable lunch at Daisy's, conveniently next to the museum itself, we will continue with our journey to nearby Hollywood Cemetery to visit some of the Omohundro family that is resting there and then on to Richmond National Battlefield Park to finish out the first day.

About 9am or so on the morning of Friday, June 26th, we will again board our coach, but this time we will journey a further distance to a further time, back to, yes, Colonial Williamsburg. We will get to see the one-time capital of the colonies, and various trades' stations; a vast living museum unlike any that I have seen before. There are horse-drawn trollies to convey visitors to sites there, people dressed in colonial garb, all taking us back in time, restaurants that serve colonial era dishes, and many examples of life at that time. We will have our individual lunches there, returning via our bus to the Omni Hotel in the afternoon.

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The Texas Jack Scout



from the Editor's Desk...



Greetings to all my TJA friends and family!

The holidays are once again upon us, and just as fast as this year has flown by, the 2026 Richmond Roundup will be here before we know it.

This issue of *The Scout* will help you begin making plans for what is shaping up to be a great Roundup. We have a planned visit to Williamsburg, and Larry Tyree has contributed an article providing fascinating insight into this historical area. Matthew Kerns offers an important update on Texas Jack III's grave marker, and John Omohundro shares some history about the gunfighters of the Wild West. I have also written a small piece on how I became a TJA member in the hope of encouraging others to join our organization and help keep the name of Texas Jack alive.

We know there are many Omohundro family members and their kin in the Richmond area. We need all of you Virginia members to reach out and invite them to this upcoming Roundup to help us make this a truly memorable event.

On a more somber note, as many of you are aware, we lost a dedicated TJA member, Karl Pelkan, earlier this year. Karl was a wonderful guy and a good friend to everyone who regularly attended the Roundups. We have included a special "In Memoriam" article about Karl in this issue of *The Scout*.

I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and I pray for good health for all in the coming year.

See you in Richmond!

Rick Omohundro, Guest Editor

The Texas Jack Scout

Vol. XL no.3

An Occasional Publication of
The Texas Jack Association, Inc.
A Non-Profit Corporation
www.texasjack.org

Subscription is included in annual membership dues.

Contact: The Texas Jack Association
Rick Omohundro, Treasurer
PO Box 91
Salt Lick, KY 40371

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

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

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Mr. Herschel C. Logan, Santa Ana, CA
Author of *Buckskin and Satin*
Mrs. Nellie Snyder Yost, North Platte, NE
Historian of the Plains

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Continued from page 1

Saturday, June 27th will allow a restful morning before the Association's Business Meeting at 10am in the Roanoke Room, followed by lunch. We will enjoy lunch from the options provided on the Registration Form. In the afternoon, we have individual free time. Then our Banquet will be at the hotel from our choices made on the Registration Form also.

And speaking of the Banquet, the Roanoke Room will also be the site for our Plated Dinner that evening, where the choices of meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian will be enjoyed by Roundup participants. And, in **special recognition to those from Virginia** and surrounding areas, there is an opportunity to register for the Banquet only.

So be sure to register today! (See the information elsewhere in this issue). The TJA has a great room price extended to us by the hotel, so be quick to make your reservations online or by calling the Omni on South 12th Street, Richmond.

See you there! 

*Omni Richmond Hotel, 100 S 12th Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Contact the Omni directly at **1-800-843-6664 (1-800-THE-OMNI)** Be sure and mention you are with the Texas Jack Association!



Travel Back in Time at Colonial Williamsburg

Explore 18th-century Virginia through living history, immersive demonstrations & historic trades.

By Larry Tyree



The Texas Jack Scout



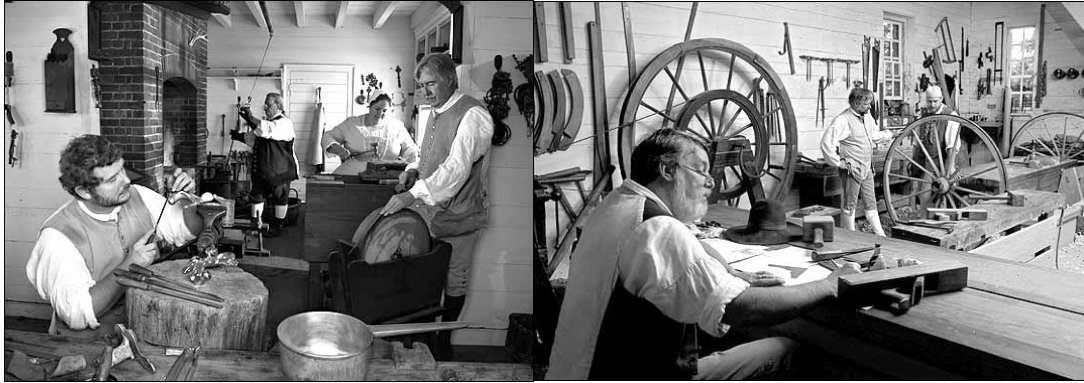
Step into the world of colonial America in the heart of Virginia. At Colonial Williamsburg you'll meet interpreters dressed as 18th-century townspeople, ride in a hand-carried carriage pulled by horses down Duke of Gloucester Street, and witness the sparks fly at the forge of our historic blacksmith.

With more than 300 acres of restored buildings and authentic trades, the experience brings the past to life in surprising ways.

Why Visit?

- Authentic 18th-Century Ambience: Walk the cobblestone streets of the former colonial capital of Virginia.
- Living History Around Every Corner: Engage with artisans, musicians, and interpreters who bring daily life in the 1700s to life.
- Signature Experiences:
 - Horse-drawn carriage rides — “See our city differently.”
 - Historic trades—blacksmithing, wheel-wrighting, coopering—bringing craft to life.
 - Dramatic reenactments and immersive storytelling that connect you with the founding era.

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Colonial Williamsburg in the Civil War: The Facts

By Larry Tyree

The Date:

The Battle of Williamsburg took place on May 5, 1862.

The Context:

This battle was part of the Peninsular Campaign, an early Union attempt to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond by moving up the Virginia Peninsula.

The Location:

The fighting occurred in and around Williamsburg, Virginia, including parts of what is now Colonial Williamsburg.

The Commanders:

For the Union: Major General George B. McClellan led the Army of the Potomac.

For the Confederacy: General Joseph E. Johnston, and General James Longstreet commanded the Confederate rear guard.

The Forces Involved:

- Union: ~40,000 troops (about 15,000 engaged)
- Confederates: ~32,000 troops (about 13,750 engaged)

The Outcome:

The battle was inconclusive, but the Confederates withdrew toward Richmond, allowing the Union army to continue its advance.

The Impact:

- After the battle, Union forces occupied Williamsburg for the remainder of the war.
- The town's buildings—including churches and the remains of the colonial Governor's Palace—were repurposed for military use, such as hospitals and barracks. ¶

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Richmond International Airport RIC



jetBlue **allegiant** American Airlines

DELTA Southwest **UNITED**

spirit



<https://flyrichmond.com/airline-information/>

Car Rentals at the Airport



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Budget

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CAR RENTAL

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dollar.

SIXT
RENT A CAR

- Alamo: 844-370-8283
- Avis: 804-222-7416
- Budget: 804-222-2491
- Dollar: 800-800-5252
- Enterprise: 833-268-5452
- Hertz: 800-654-4173
- National: 844-370-8284
- Payless: 804-226-8153

Taxis

Like most large cities, Richmond offers reliable and affordable taxi service. You can find taxis at the airport in the center section of the lower level curbside, adjacent to the North and South parking garages (follow the Ground Transportation signs). Service runs from first flight departure to last flight arrival. Each listed operator offers wheelchair-accessible vehicles. For rate information, please contact any of the following companies:



Airport Taxi: 804-233-4444

Galaxy Cab Co.: 804-560-4408

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Texas Jack Association 2026 Roundup

REGISTRATION FORM

JUNE 24-27 RICHMOND, VA

(*Roundup participants must make their own hotel reservations* **before May 24, 2026**)

* **Omni Richmond Hotel**, 100 S 12th Street, Richmond, VA 23219 **1-800-843-6664** *

ROUNDUP REGISTRATION:

Adult(s) @ \$280/person = _____

Children (5-18 yrs) @ \$250/person..... = _____

Children (4 and younger) free

NOTE: All attendees must be current members of the TJA. See following page.

Please choose:

SATURDAY BOXED LUNCH SELECTION—Served with Pasta Salad

_____ **Roast Beef, Cheddar** _____ **Roasted Turkey** _____ **The Virginian (Ham)**

BANQUET INDIVIDUAL SELECTIONS—Served with Garden Salad, Dessert

_____ **Roasted Chicken** _____ **Grilled Salmon** _____ **Cabernet Braised Short Rib**

(For vegans: Ratatouille, plus a vegan dessert is served with this meal.)

Enclose a check payable to: **Texas Jack Association** for: **TOTAL =** _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Email address: _____

*** Please give names of all who are coming so name tags can be made.**

First and Last Names:

Send completed form and check to: *Rick Omohundro, Treasurer TJA*

P.O. Box 91

Salt Lick, KY 40371

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TEXAS JACK ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Note: Membership in the Texas Jack Association is open to all interested persons. Your information will not be shared. Please fill out and send with your check to:

The Texas Jack Association
Rick Omohundro, Treasurer TJA
PO Box 91
Salt Lick, KY 40371

Please choose from one of the four basic types of membership:

- ___ Individual adult @ \$25/person = _____
- ___ Junior (under 18) @ \$10/person = _____
- ___ Senior (55 or over) @ \$20/person = _____
- ___ Family (all persons residing at same address) @ \$40/family = _____

I have enclosed \$ _____ for the following membership(s) in the Texas Jack Association.

*Required

*NAME: _____

*ADDRESS (street, apt., city, state, zip, country): _____

E-MAIL: _____ @ _____

PHONE: (_____) _____ MOBILE PHONE: (_____) _____

*Please indicate if this is New or Renewal membership.

___ NEW MEMBERSHIP or ___ RENEW MEMBERSHIP or ___ ALREADY A MEMBER

BIRTHDATE: _____ (Optional)

ARE YOU RELATED TO THE OMOHUNDROS? _____

IF SO, PLEASE GIVE KNOWN LINEAGE. FEEL FREE TO ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS:

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How I Became a Texas Jack Association Member

By Rick Omohundro

With the Roundup coming up in June, I started reflecting on my first Roundup, and because my introduction to the Texas Jack Association is somewhat unique, I thought I would share my story with you.

My story begins in the early morning of June 22, 1990. My wife Nancy, our son Brandon (5), and myself left Salt Lick, Kentucky, early on a family vacation to the west. Our goal was to mainly see Colorado and Montana. Because I had been west before in the late 1970's on the back of a motorcycle, I knew that I wanted to get to Colorado as quickly as possible. To me that was where the West started, and I wasn't interested in anything between Kentucky and Colorado. That night when our day of driving was over, we had covered 1060 miles and had crossed the Colorado state line. We spent the next day touring different places in Colorado and made our way to Leadville the following day. One of the things I wanted to do while in Colorado was to locate the grave of Texas Jack. My grandmother, years earlier, had given me Malvern Hill's book, *The Omohundro Genealogical Record*, and that is where I had learned what little I knew of Texas Jack.

We arrived in Leadville on Sunday, and not much was open in the way of help in finding his grave. We did eventually find someone that was able to help. They ask us if we were affiliated with the Texas Jack Association. I said no and that I had never heard of it. I was told that they were going to meet there, in Leadville, on Wednesday and that a dedication was going to take place on Thursday, the 110th anniversary of Jack's death. We did find his grave that day but because this was a family vacation of touring the West, we had to move on.

We made our way to Monument Valley by Tuesday and that night with really hot temperatures and camping in a tent, we made the decision to start back home the next day. My wife asked me if I would be interested in going back to Leadville for the Texas Jack dedication. She said "it would be nice if there was an Omohundro there to represent the family." I was very interested but at the time didn't think she would be. Since she was on board, back to Leadville would be our next destination.

We arrived in Leadville on Wednesday, the day the TJA was also arriving. There were about 60 members there for this Roundup, and on a side note, I wasn't the only Omohundro. Because Leadville is at an altitude of 10,200 feet some of the older people that had arrived earlier in the week had become ill from the altitude and had to leave. This opened up some rooms that had not previously been available. Two of the people that took up with us immediately was John and Edna Nees. They talked us into staying for the Roundup and we were glad they did. We had a great time and it was here where we became TJA members and made some lifelong friends.

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Over the years we have met people, gone to destinations, and done things that without going to the Roundups, I never would have done on my own. We have visited western towns such as Cody, WY, Deadwood, SD, San Antonio, TX, and Virginia City, NV to name a few. We have been to eastern towns such as Richmond, VA, Lowell, MA, and Scottsville, VA. I would never have gone to these places as my regular family vacation, but had I not become a Roundup-going TJA member, I would have missed out on some great adventures.

If you are a member or someone who loves western history and have never been to a Roundup, you are missing out. If you are a family with younger children, I urge you to come to a Roundup and set them off on what might become some adventures of a lifetime. ¶

Ed. Note: Thank you, Rick, for this interesting and different way of becoming a TJA member. Readers, we would love to hear from you about how you discovered Texas Jack, the Texas Jack Association, and/or our Roundups. Be it a sentence or two, a couple paragraphs, or a whole page or more, think back to that time, and put it on paper-or laptop. Send it to Linda Omohundro, Layout Editor, at omohndro@sbcglobal.net (notice no “u”). It will go into the next *Scout*.



NEXT SCOUT ISSUE INFORMATION

The deadline for the March 2026 issue of *The Scout* is
March 1, 2026.

Please send ideas and materials to our Guest Editor:

Matthew Kerns

matthewrkerns@gmail.com

Thank you, Matt!



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Honoring the Legacy: A New Memorial for Texas Jack Junior's Son

By Matthew Kerns



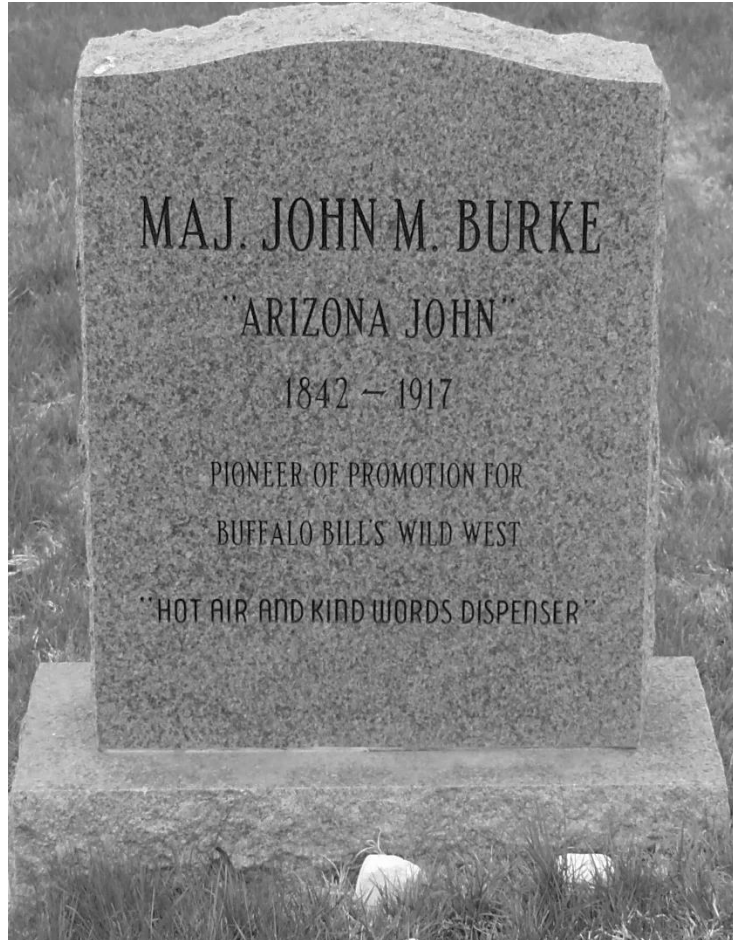
In September of 1908, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody brought his entire Wild West troupe to Evergreen Cemetery in Leadville, Colorado, to pay tribute to his closest friend and longtime partner, John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro. Jack had died in Leadville nearly three decades earlier, far from the Virginia plantation of his youth, the Nebraska prairie where he had scouted alongside Cody, and the Massachusetts grave of his wife, Giuseppina Morlacchi. His grave had been marked for years by a succession of simple wooden slabs. But on that autumn evening in the shadow of Mount Massive, Cody stood among real-life cowboys, Lakota Sioux men and women, costumed "Rough Riders" from around the world, Civil War veterans, and local citizens to deliver a heartfelt eulogy. He promised to replace that

humble board with a permanent granite memorial. True to his word, the gravestone Cody

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commissioned stands to this day—a testament not only to Texas Jack’s life but also to the enduring power of friendship and remembrance.

More than a century later, inspired by that act of personal tribute, historian and author Joe Dobrow embarked on a similar mission. Dobrow had uncovered the unmarked grave of Major John M. Burke—known affectionately as “Arizona John” or “Major Burke”—who served as Buffalo Bill’s publicist and master of logistics during the height of the Wild West show’s success. Burke had first met Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack during their earliest foray into show business, when Burke was serving as Giuseppina Morlacchi’s manager and agent. He later joined the Texas Jack Combination as an actor, and after Jack’s death he rejoined Buffalo Bill during the launch of the Wild West. It was Burke who shaped the public narrative of Cody’s frontier legend, who arranged newspaper coverage and international tours, and who ensured that Cody’s performances reached a global audience.



Importantly, Burke was also instrumental in ensuring that a permanent memorial to Texas Jack Omohundro was placed in Leadville after Jack's untimely death. While popular memory credits Buffalo Bill alone for this gesture, the granite stone erected in Evergreen Cemetery clearly states that it was placed by W.F. Cody, John M. Burke, and Johnny Baker. Baker, who had grown up in the world of the Wild West and was like an adopted son to Cody, had known Texas Jack since childhood. In fact, Jack and Buffalo Bill first met while Jack was working as a bartender at the North Platte saloon owned by Lew Baker, Johnny’s father. That early meeting in Nebraska would lead to a deep friendship and a historic partnership that helped define the American West in popular imagination.

Despite his pivotal role in preserving and promoting these stories, Burke died penniless in 1917, just a month after Buffalo Bill’s death, and was buried without a headstone in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Washington, D.C. In 2017, Dobrow raised funds and led a small but powerful

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ceremony to unveil a long-overdue gravestone, echoing Cody's 1908 gesture and highlighting how we continue to rediscover and honor those who played vital roles in the story of the American West.

Today, the Texas Jack Association seeks to continue that tradition with a new and deeply meaningful memorial project. In a quiet corner of Graceland Cemetery in Chicago lies an unmarked grave—a resting place for the infant son of Texas Jack Junior. The child, born in Calcutta, India in 1890 while his Wild West showman father and mother were on tour, died in Chicago two years later. His short life left little behind in the historical record, and no stone marks the place where he was laid to rest. But the legacy he represents is profound, tying together multiple threads of Wild West history and the enduring lineage of the man whose name he bore.

In September of 2023, TJA member and Texas Jack Omohundro cousin Lee Zurligen stopped at Graceland Cemetery in Chicago to confirm burial

details. His search confirmed that Texas Jack Junior's son—also named "Texas Jack"—is indeed buried there in Block 15, Grave 448. This important confirmation grounds our effort in fact and provides a clear starting point for the installation of a long-overdue marker.



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Even more significantly, the Texas Jack Association has received heartfelt support from the descendants of Texas Jack Junior through his daughter Hazel Jack. Among them is Hazel's grandson, Mervyn Dadds, who offered a deeply personal reflection on what this legacy means to his family.

"May I begin by saying that John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro's act of rescuing Texas Jack Junior has enabled me, some 165 years later, to write this. I am Mervyn Dadds, great-grandson of Texas Jack Jr.

My grandfather, George Sutherland Dadds, who was born in Wales, married Hazel. My father, Jack, and Uncle Ellis, were born in the Belgian Congo in 1914 and 1916, respectively. My mother and brother were born in South Africa. I was born in Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, in 1947. I, my wife Joy, and my son Sean, live in England. My daughter, Nicola, and her family live in Northern Ireland.

It was only fairly recently that Matthew Kerns told me about Texas Jack III, of whose existence I was unaware. The Texas Jack Association's spirit of marking graves as a remembrance is wonderful. It an honour, and with deepest gratitude, that I endorse the marking of my great uncle's resting place with a memorial plaque. A million thanks. Mervyn. "

With the blessing and endorsement of Junior's family, this effort becomes something greater than a historical preservation project. It is an act of living remembrance—bridging continents and generations, and honoring a legacy that began with a rescue on the American frontier and continues today in the names, memories, and hopes of his descendants.

Texas Jack Junior, born under mysterious circumstances in the late 1860s, was rescued as a child from a Comanche camp by Texas Jack Omohundro. Without knowledge of his birth name, the boy adopted the name of his rescuer and grew up to become a performer himself, touring internationally as Texas Jack Junior. He followed in the footsteps of his namesake, appearing in Wild West shows across the United States, Australia, India, and South Africa. He married fellow performer Lily Dunbar, and the couple's adventurous lives mirrored the pageantry and peril of the shows they helped bring to life. In a fitting twist of history, it was Texas Jack Junior who hired a young Will Rogers—later known as "The Cherokee Kid"—for his first job in show business, setting Rogers on a path toward stardom that would eventually eclipse them all.

Despite these achievements, Texas Jack Junior's final years were marked by hardship. He died in South Africa in 1905 at the age of 37, far from his adopted home in the United States. His son, born on the road during a tour in India, died as a toddler in Chicago while the family was between engagements. With no surviving marker, the child's grave has faded from memory—until now.

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Chicago holds a unique place in the story of Texas Jack Omohundro. It was in that city in December 1872 that Jack first took the stage alongside Buffalo Bill Cody and Ned Buntline in *The Scouts of the Prairie*. That moment marked the birth of the Wild West on stage—a fusion of fact and fiction that introduced the legends of the frontier to Eastern and international audiences. It’s where Jack was first introduced to “The Peerless” Giuseppina Morlacchi, which Buffalo Bill’s wife noted was the moment Jack “fell in love at first sight.” The city thus serves as a symbolic bookend, both a beginning and, now, a place of quiet remembrance.

Marking graves has long been a part of the Texas Jack story. From Cody’s reverent speech in Leadville to Joe Dobrow’s efforts in Washington, these acts of remembrance illuminate how memory is not just preserved but reasserted through tangible, enduring monuments. They tell the world: this person mattered. Their story matters, and it belongs to the larger narrative of the American experience. As the Texas Jack Association embarks on this new project, we are

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reminded that remembering—even and especially those who have been forgotten—is not only an act of kindness, but an act of historical stewardship.



Through the auspices of the TJA, this memorial project provides more than just a way to honor a lost child. It becomes a demonstration of our commitment to research, remembrance, and the responsible preservation of Western heritage. Because we operate as a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we can accept tax-deductible donations specifically for this cause, ensuring that contributions go entirely toward the memorial without being eroded by fees or taxes.

We will be announcing more soon about how members and the public can support this effort. There is a limitation on memorial sizes in this section of Graceland Cemetery, so we anticipate that the cost will be relatively modest, but the emotional and historical significance is immense. Should we exceed our fundraising goal, any remaining funds will be directed toward similar preservation and educational initiatives in alignment with the Association's mission.

Looking ahead to our 2026 Roundup in Richmond, Virginia, this project gives us an opportunity to not only grow our membership and expand our reach, but also to show how the Texas Jack Association puts action to its principles. The same spirit that led Buffalo Bill to stand among the pines of Leadville and declare that his friend would be remembered is the same spirit that guides

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us now. We remember Texas Jack. We remember the boy who bore his name. And in doing so, we reaffirm that the stories we tell—and the lives we honor—are what bind us together in our shared work.

Join us in this act of remembrance. Help us mark the grave, and in doing so, mark our commitment to preserving the legacy of the American West. **†**



The Texas Jack Scout



The Grave of Texas Jack ©...June 2021

By: Driftin' AaronG

*To think of anyone's grave one must think of death and someone gone from this Earth
We all die from one thing or another and it is written from the time of our birth*

*So it was with Texas Jack Omohundro and his life of adventures and great deeds
And through all of his days and great accomplishments he sewed many seeds*

*Having served proudly and with distinction in that long divided civil war
He went on to early cattle drives, being a frontier scout, fame and fortune where his life did soar*

*John B. Omohundro was his given name
And Texas Jack his well-earned fame*

*Riding across the prairie with such gallant delight
Friends with most tribes, and would fight, only when he was in the right*

*All the tales I'd heard of Texas Jack in all my growing up time
Always encouraged me to know all the distant cousins that would someday make me shine*

*I had the honor of meeting them some years back
At a Texas Jack Roundup, and what a warm welcome I had from the family of Jack*

*And so now, so many many years later, I proudly stand at his grave
Remembering again all the tales of how he was so adventuresome and brave*

*I came to visit not only Jack's grave, but to say a little prayer for the man he became
And for all the family that knew of his bravery and honorable deeds, there was no shame*

*I wanted to say to Jack how I would have loved to ride at his side back in the old west
And to have known this man who offered so much to so many, and to have earned his peaceful
rest*

*As I look upon this quiet peaceful graveside with a proud tear in my eye
I can almost envision a smiling Texas Jack riding his great steed across the eternal heavenly sky*

*I stopped before leaving the grave for just a moment to give a faithful salute and warm smile
To this brave frontiersman, who gave to so many so much, as he rides away mile after mile*

*As I rode away on my own steed, my Harley, Ol'-Giddy-Up-Git, I thought about this man and the
family name
And I thought about a future heavenly time, with Texas Jack, this man of great fame*



In Memoriam

Karl F. Pelkan, III

July 27, 1959 — January 21, 2025



With his wife, Kitty, at his side, Karl Francis Pelkan, age 65, died on January 21, 2025, after battling an aggressive cancer that just could not be conquered.

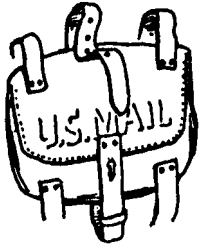
Karl was born in Southern California and raised in the Napa Valley. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1983 with a B.S. degree in Construction Engineering Management. He spent most of his career in the Seattle area as a project engineer for construction of public buildings and heavy civil projects.

In 1987, Karl and Kitty met at a folk dance event in Virginia Beach, VA. It was pretty much love at first dance! They settled in Seattle, married, and continued to dance, dance, dance. Folk dancing, and especially Hungarian dancing and music continued to be a big part of their life together. In addition to dancing, he and Kitty enjoyed traveling to locales near and far and solving New York Times crossword puzzles together. Karl's other pursuits included genealogy, computer technology, number puzzles, maps, and learning the history of people, places, and things. He greatly enjoyed accompanying Kitty (a charter member of the Texas Jack Association and a great-granddaughter of Malvern Hill and Daisy Van Lew Omohundro) to the TJA Roundups and was proud to be an Omohundro-in-law. He found the people to be interesting and entertaining, and he loved learning the history of Texas Jack and his era. Karl is and always will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

Karl is survived by his wife Kitty Van Lew Pelkan; his mother Betsy Pridmore Pelkan; sisters Dr. Kathleen Pelkan and Alexandra P. Olenczuk; sister-in-law Pamela P. Pelkan; and brother-in-law Malvern H. Wyche, Jr. He was preceded in death by his father Dr. Karl F. Pelkan, Jr.; younger brother Stephen E. Pelkan; and father- and mother-in-law Malvern H. and Angela G. Wyche.



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From: Alex Hendrie
Subject: A Texas Jack Screenplay Exists!
Date: August 27, 2025
To: Rick Omohundro

Hi Rick! It's a pleasure to meet YOU, even if via e-mail, and someone who is actually an Omohundro related to the Texas Jack, as I did some 36 years ago with Julie Greene at Herschel Logan's residence to discuss turning Buckskin and Satin into a movie about Texas Jack, and his beloved Josephine, and his best pard Buffalo Bill, and their exploits touring with Scouts of the Prairie.

I just wanted you to add this e-mail in the next Texas Jack Scout, that I am that same Producer in the picture with Julie and Herschel in the July 2025 issue of the Scout who went on to write a very good screenplay about Texas Jack, that has almost been made MANY times with big stars attached (one with Patrick Swayze playing Jack), and that did in fact win a Fade In Screenwriting Competition for Best Historical Drama, BUT ALSO, to this day, that I still have high hopes of producing into a feature film because Texas Jack is absolutely a story that MUST be told.

Bottom Line. I don't want ANY Omohundro's to lose hope about seeing Texas Jack come alive on the silver screen, or at least streaming on Netflix, SO please let everybody know in the Texas Jack universe, I AM still working it...

Alex Hendrie



Gunfighters

By John T. Omohundro

John B. Omohundro got his Western training and his name during his work in Texas. Soon after the Civil War he meandered from Virginia to Texas, where he punched longhorn cattle and drove herds from Texas to the railroad hubs in Kansas. Most of his fellow immigrants were also Southerners and Civil War veterans. They brought with them an ethos emphasizing personal and family honor, which they were prepared to uphold through murderous duels and feuds. A number of those new arrivals to Texas were no doubt also suffering from post-traumatic stress from their wartime experiences.



As all these footloose, proud, and perhaps disturbed young men poured into the southern plains, where law enforcement was still some years in the future, and where rustling cattle and gambling were as lucrative a livelihood as ranching, it's not surprising that disagreements often escalated to gunfire. Shootings became common. Big data crunchers in recent years have established that Wild West homicide rates were enormous. While today a homicide rate of 15 per 100,000 is considered very high, the average in the Wild West was 60. Parts of mining-town California and rail-town Kansas had rates of 155.

What we think of as the classic gunfight or “marquee gunfight,” where two cowpokes face off in the street and do a quick-draw, was rare. Wild Bill Hickok had such a fight, when he killed Davis Tutt in Springfield, Missouri, in 1861. The point may have been to retrieve Hickok’s gold watch, or it may have been about a woman, or several issues may have combined. In any case, Hickok was not a Southerner, the fight wasn’t in Texas, and marquee gunfights were not common. Most shootings happened in saloons, over gambling tables, and on the open plains in feuds among cowboys, rustlers, Latinos, and shepherds. The Colt pistol was often drawn at the gambling tables, but the Remington rifle and the shotgun were also popular.

< Wild Bill Hickok is well-known as a gunfighter, but journalists, probably with his encouragement, exaggerated his conquests. Photo from Wikipedia.

This interesting—and probably controversial—thesis about Texas’ central role in producing fighters comes from Bryan Burrough’s *The Gunfighters: How Texas Made the West Wild* (2025, Penguin). Perhaps a summary of Burrough’s research will help us understand the Texas where

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John Baker Omohundro honed his skills in the saddle and with a lariat. Burrough's research carries through to the start of the twentieth century, but I'll focus on developments during Jack's lifetime.

Gunfighting before the Civil War

Sam Colt invented the revolver pistol in 1836 that became well-known and widely used in the War with Mexico in 1846. When gold was discovered in California in 1849, the revolver contributed its share of mayhem in the lawless, hypermasculine mining camps. And Southerners, who comprised about 40% of the miners, committed most of the mayhem. Press coverage of these camps was poor, but a few fighters' names have survived, like Cherokee Bob and Longhair Sam. Fans of the South will not appreciate Burrough's thesis, surely, but his argument is well made: that as a cultural region, the South most strongly stressed that a man's honor was paramount and to be defended to the death, if need be. Mix this honor with alcohol and gambling, or disagreements over mining claims, and a lot of Colts got fired.



Samuel Colt developed one of the first revolving pistols in 1836. Photo from Wikipedia

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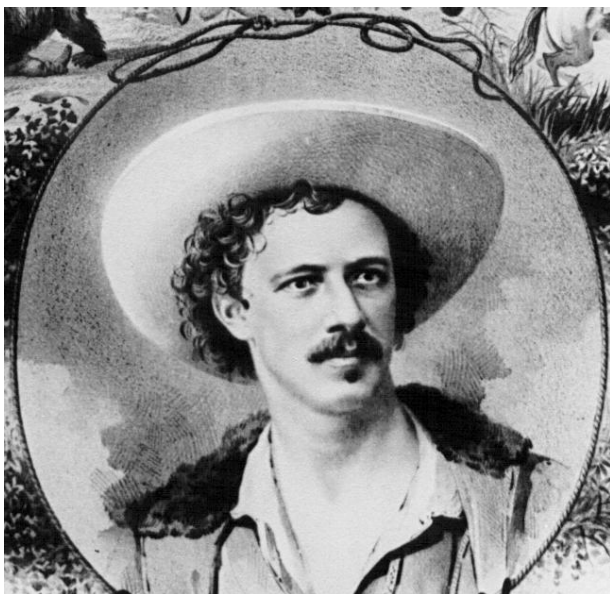
As California began pacifying the mining camps in the early '60s, the hotbed of prospecting and shooting shifted to Virginia City and Carson City, Nevada, the boom silver towns. Sam Clemens, aka Mark Twain, spent time in these towns then and reported on his adventures in *Roughing It*, which will get its own report in the next *Scout* issue. One of the most active outlaws Clemens publicized was Jack Slade, who led a gang that robbed stagecoaches and jumped claims. Clemens was a storyteller, not a historian, so his reporting of Western characters, like much writing that followed by journalists and Wild West authors, needs to be read with skepticism.

Texas in the '60s

After the Civil War, returning Confederate veterans left their bankrupt and depressed homesteads looking for a new chance in Texas. Reconstruction in the South was violent, but even more so in Confederate Texas, which was not contained by a Union occupation. Arrivals formed ad hoc gangs and went after Blacks, Unionists, and carpetbaggers at first. John Wesley Hardin [sic] was a scourge of Unionists. By the end of the '60s he was only seventeen, but had already killed that many men.

But by the end of the '60s, violence shifted from settling Civil War scores to building a cattle industry. Cattlemen from the South arrived to increase and manage the herds of longhorns, and as that enterprise grew, so did rustling. Feuds between gangs across the un-fenced range cost hundreds of lives.

The new industry needed a market, so driving the herds to the railroad towns of Kansas brought many Texas cowboys north, so much so that the term "Texas cowboy" was redundant. No wonder that John B., in the midst of this business, picked up his moniker this way. One consequence of this traffic was to turn the Kansas rail towns into gunslinger centers, as Texas Southern culture followed the herds.



< John B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro knew how to work the press, but his life was so interesting he didn't need to make up much.

A second force pushing Texas gunslinger culture to Kansas was the development in 1874 of the Texas Rangers. Their efforts were three-fold: to tour the southern border and quash rustlers' raids into or out of Mexico; to keep an eye on the Comanche resistance to the cattlemen; and to arrest the Texas war lords and stop the cattle feuds. They even tracked down John Wesley Hardin in Alabama and returned him to prison in Texas. Responding to every slight with a Colt would no longer get a free pass in Texas.

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Gunslinging in Kansas in the 1870s

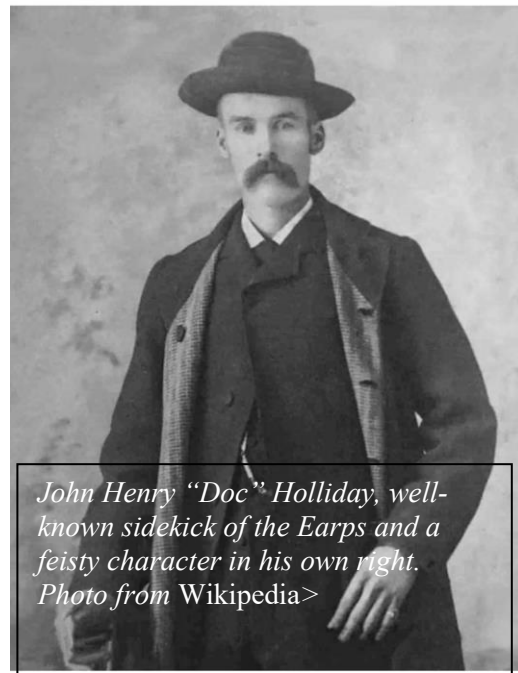
It is surprising to learn that many towns like Abilene had laws against open carry, but they were often ignored. Wild Bill Hickok was made marshal of Abilene in 1871 to keep a lid on. He didn't shoot many men, and he wasn't a Texan, but his myth was sealed by being adopted by journalists George Ward Nichols and Henry M Stanley (of "Dr. Livingston, I presume" fame). He also became a hero in the dime novels of the time.

Wyatt Earp, a Californian, also made a name for himself in Kansas in the 1870s, the same years Texas Jack and Mlle Morlacchi traveled the country with their Combination, or variety show. Texas cattle drivers were terrorizing Newton, Ellsworth, and other Kansas towns, but local police were corrupt and ineffective. Earp had made money pimping and gambling in Wichita, but in Dodge he was an honest and sober cop, engaging in few marquee gunfights but slugging or pistol-whipping a lot of cowboys into abiding by the law. His friend Bat Masterson helped him keep the peace there and later in Tombstone, Arizona. In Dodge, Masterson had his own history of gunfights, over women or cards. Surviving those, he moved to New York and became a writer, contributing much to Earp's legend—which Earp himself fanned by living long and writing his memoirs.

Besides Texas cowboys shooting up towns and rustlers, their widespread gambling accounts for many gun deaths. Gambling was not only a pastime with drinking, but it was profitable for some players. The professional gambler developed in the South, went on to prosper in New Orleans and on Mississippi River steamboats, and was among the first to ride the railroads as they expanded west. Gambling generated the most marquee gunfights, usually over claims of cheating, which was widespread.

Ben Thompson is one of Texas' last classic gunfighters. He dressed well, spoke well, and worked the press proficiently so stories of his adventures have been better preserved than most. He presented himself as a Southern gentleman, even though he was born in England. He gambled for a living and shot his way out of numerous scrambles, although Earp kept him in line when he visited Dodge. Thompson was still getting into fights in Austin, Texas, in the late 1870s. Elected its city marshal, he got rich by extorting the gambling halls. He died there in a theater shootout in 1884.

Doc Holliday also joined Earp in Dodge, and later in Tombstone, and in both towns backed up the Earps when they faced armed gangs, such as at OK Corral. Consumptive, alcoholic, and a heavy gambler, this Southerner survived a number of gunfights, most arising from gambling arguments, to die in bed of consumption.

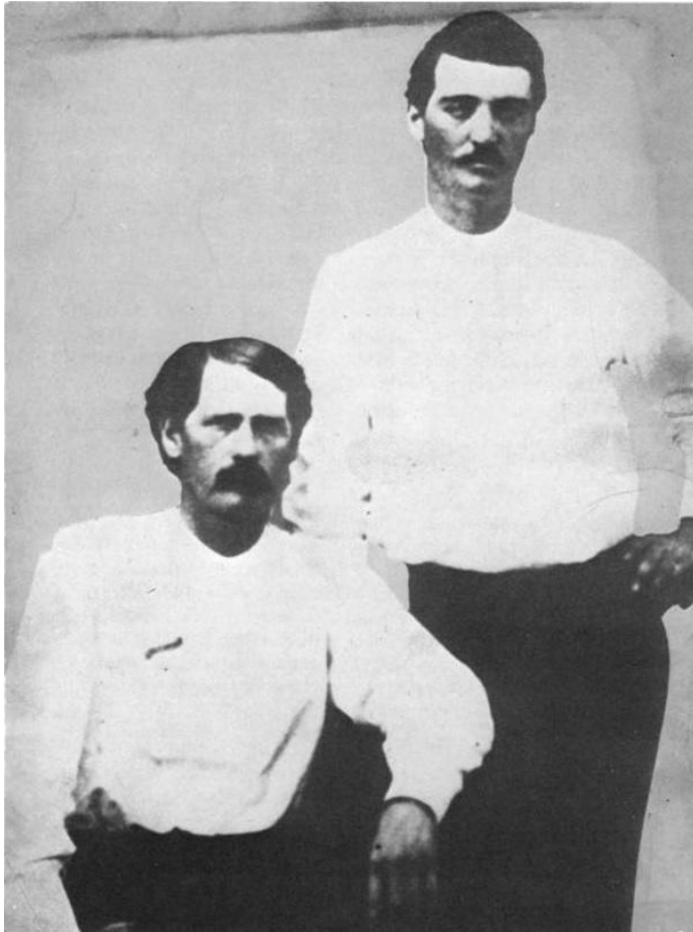


John Henry "Doc" Holliday, well-known sidekick of the Earps and a feisty character in his own right. Photo from Wikipedia >

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Bat Masterson's "Battle of the Plaza" was Dodge's last famous gunfight. Masterson returned from New Mexico to Dodge in 1881 to defend his brother Jim, who ran the Lady Gay Saloon. As soon as he stepped off the train and accosted Jim's enemies, a gun battle arose with bullets flying everywhere, for him and against him. When the main parties ran out of ammunition, the mayor appeared and halted proceedings. Masterson was fined \$8.00 for shooting a man and the battle was over.



Wyatt Earp and his brothers (not pictured) were sometimes gamblers and businessmen, sometimes lawmen, and often in the midst of a fracas. Bartholmew William Barclay "Bat" Masterson, a chum of the Earps, was a gunslinger who concluded his career as a journalist for Eastern papers extolling the stories of the Earps and other gunslingers. Photo from Wikipedia.

A well-reported (and rare) iconic quick-draw duel in the street occurred in 1887 in the dusty streets of Fort Worth, Texas, between Bat Masterson's chum Luke Short, a tiny gambler from Texas with numerous notches on his gun, and Sheriff Jim Courtright, who profited from shaking down the gambling houses and saloons. Courtright drew first but his Colt mis-fired, then Short put five bullets in him.

A Sea-change in Attitude

One striking feature of these gun battles is there were rarely any legal repercussions, even when there were injuries or deaths. The perpetrators might be fined, or escape from jail, or be found not guilty in jury trials. Men were being hung or lynched all the time—for treachery, horse theft, or rustling—but gunfighters, if they survived the bullet, lived on to their next battle.

The other trend in the 1880s was publicity: gun battles shifted from oral myths made up of bystanders' memories to being documented more precisely in newsprint. The results were that the gunfighters won wider recognition and the movement to stop this slaughter grew stronger.

Just as coverage by California papers led to restraints of mining camp violence in the 1850s and 1860s, so too did publicity of shootouts in Kansas turn from fascination to disgust, leading to

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better policing there. Whatever romantic image the Texas cowboy had enjoyed previously (“yay, Texas Jack!”) faded by the 1880s into one of a dangerous thug. The Reconstruction justification of violence was gone, the Southern duelist phase was gone; now most violence arose from the cattle business.

The Wild Frontier of New Mexico and Arizona



During the 1870s gunslinger/sheriff types with important side-lines in gambling like the Earps, Masterson, and Holliday moved west to New Mexico territory seeking opportunity. The territory was being colonized by Texas ranchers, who engaged in constant battle with rustlers among the Indians, Mexicans, and Texas gangs like the Dodge City Gang. Billy the Kid, neither a Texan nor Southerner, was in those gangs. Most of his gunslinging was during gang warfare.

My favorite gunslinger of New Mexico is 19-year-old Elfego Baca. In the process of helping his father, the Sheriff of Belen, Elfego showed great bravery in dealing with desperados. His most famous gunfight was the all-night shootout against forty to sixty Texas cowboys, who surrounded a hut he hid in and sprayed it with bullets. In the morning, he cooked himself breakfast, and in the afternoon, he was rescued unharmed. He'd killed four Texans. The door to his hut had four hundred bullet holes in it.

< Elfego Baca, New Mexican lawman like his father, survived some amazing scrapes with Texas

cowboys. Photo from Wikipedia.

Arizona became the next destination in the late 1870s as the Apache resistance was largely under control by then. The territory's attraction was rangeland, so Texas cattlemen brought in their big herds to graze free, followed by the rustling gangs, also mostly Texan. Rustlers from south of the border also preyed on the cattle. Probably the most lucrative, if dangerous, business was operating a ranch that was essentially a fence for stolen cattle. In 1879 the Earp brothers and Doc Holliday arrived in Tombstone, where they were hired as posse to pursue rustling gangs and chase stagecoach robbers.

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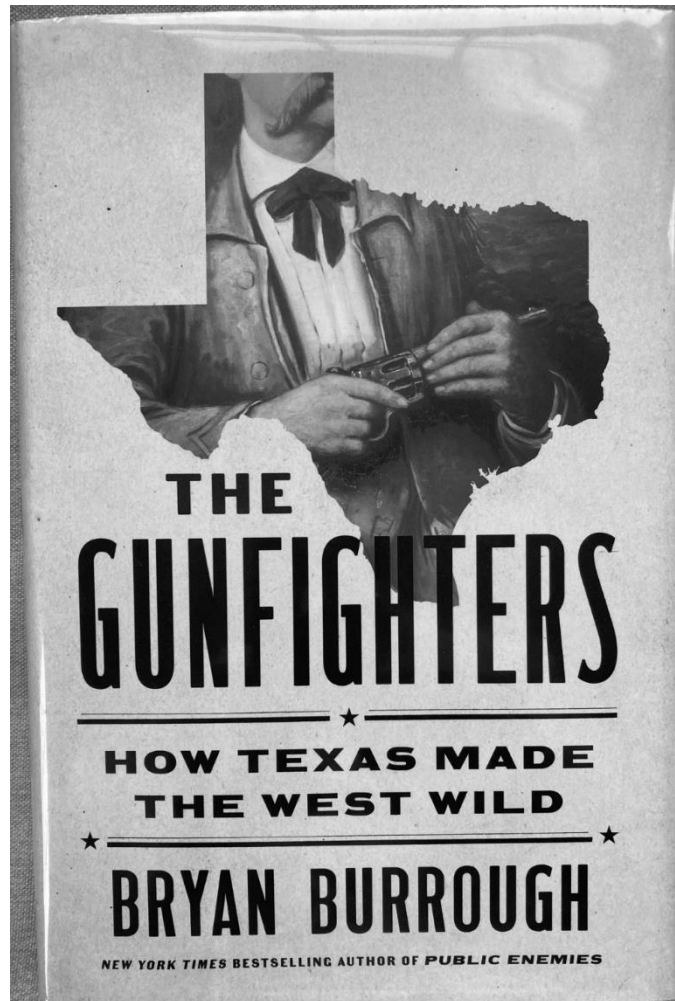
Our man Texas Jack had succumbed to pneumonia and other ailments in Leadville by the time the Earps and Holliday participated in probably the most well-known gunfight, at OK Corral in 1881. Three men died and two were injured in that shoot-out with members of one of the outfits handling stolen animals.

Within a couple of years, even Arizona, the farthest frontier, was becoming civilized. Gunfights among gamblers, drunks, and rustlers became rarer. The cattlemen's next push to violence came from three directions: the railroad, settlers, and sheep, and especially sheep. Apparently, the South had honored the cattle tradition and despised sheep since Jeffersonian times. So the Southern/Texan/cattlemen entered into vicious war for the rangeland with the shepherds, many of whom were Latino, which gave the war an ethnic dimension. The violence was extreme, but it was a long way from the marquee gunfights over honor characteristic of the bygone era.

History, not Myth

Gunslingers argues that the romance of the gunslinger is a 20th century phenomenon. In the 19th century, the country's heroes were working men: guides, scouts, soldiers, cowboys, sheriffs, and explorers. Texas Jack qualified as a hero to his dime-novel fans and stage audiences because he was a guide, scout, and cowboy. The gunslinger's reputation awaited promotion later through novels, films, and television. As the Wild West receded into myth, the trigger-happy were presented as self-reliant individualists, brave and honor-bound. Stories of their conquests were greatly exaggerated, as Burrough repeatedly demonstrates. He is critical of the long list of writers who bought the myths for the sake of a juicy story.

The West was indeed a very violent place, Burrough writes, but the gunslingers' impact on Western history is small. Settlement and pacification came, inexorably, at its own pace. The gunslinger may be permanently in the American myth, but he's not the way the West was won. People will always mythologize their past to energize their present, but knowing what really happened may contribute to a wiser way forward. ¶



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