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Hunting The Big Horn

By Matthew Kerns

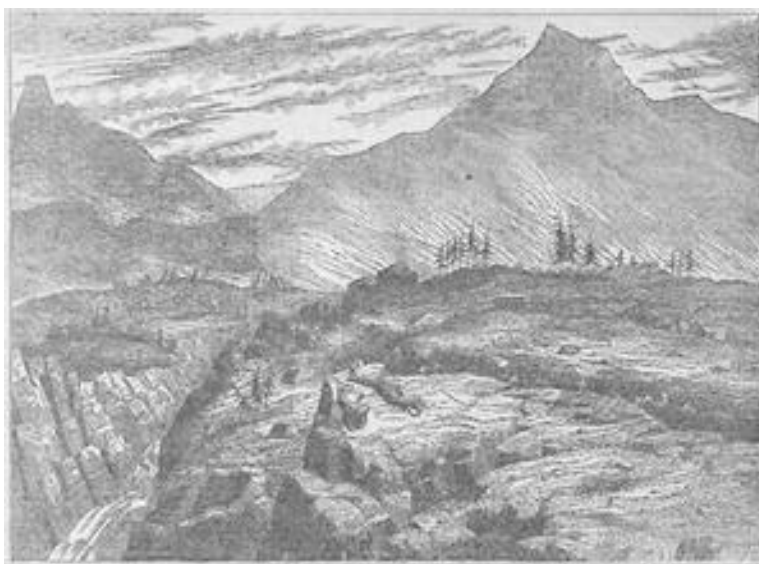
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Previously, I shared a piece by Texas Jack about his favorite hunting rifle, the Remington Rolling Block he called Lazy Kate. This piece, also written by Texas Jack Omohundro himself, is about using that same rifle to hunt bighorn sheep in Montana's Absaroka Range. Old Baldy, the mountain Jack summits here, is now known as Livingston Peak.

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

This illustration accompanied the original article in the November 27, 1879, issue of Forest & Stream.

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from the Editor's Desk...



It is always exhilarating to come upon new information about the life and times of Texas Jack (John B. Omohundro). This issue is no less the case.

Matthew Kerns begins on the front page with “Hunting the Big Horn”, an article written by Texas Jack himself, and which was published in an 1879 issue of *Forest and Stream*. It is a fascinating read, and one can see how Jack spoke, allowing us a peak at who he was. It is like being there with him as he tells us about his adventures.

Robert Omohundro offers us “Can an Italian Muse Hoe Potatoes on a Farm near Boston?” The origins of this piece date to an article in the Boston Post in 1870—two years before Mlle Morlacchi met Texas Jack. The story is very interesting.

Linda Omohundro discovered a story about Texas Jack in the Yellowstone which relates information about Jack’s encounters from grizzlies to geysers. The source was among Matthew Kerns’ blogs. Due to its length, part one is in this issue of the *Scout*. Part two will appear in the November issue.

Finally, we have a report by Larry Tyree about the Texas Jack Zoom Party that was held on Saturday June 19, 2021. All in all, continuing the great tradition of excellence in *The Scout*.

Larry Tyree

Guest Editor

The Texas Jack Scout

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

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

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Continued from Page 1

Some distance further back in the mountains we struck a rough region and came to a high peak called Old Baldy. I had never seen Baldy before, and I never want to see him again. We camped near the foot of the hill, and I proposed to climb on top and see what it looked like. None of the party seemed disposed to tackle him, so I shouldered Kate (a favorite rifle) early next morning and started up alone.

It was a long, hard climb, and when I got on top I found out what it looked like—a dead jump-off of some fifteen hundred feet! That’s just what it was on the other side. As it wouldn’t be healthy to go further in that direction I concluded to lay there and gaze on the valley and scenes below (a long way below, I found out afterwards). It wasn’t such a bad lay-out after all, provided a fellow was fond of looking over a heap of country at one time. Eventually I discovered a small band of sheep grazing by a little lake in the valley. They seemed almost straight down from where I lay, but how to get at them was something else. I meant to try it on anyway, so crawled along the edge of the precipice for a long ways, going down many rough, steep places, until I came to the lowest gap there was, and it looked mighty scaly, some eighteen or twenty feet nearly straight down; but there was snow to light on. I could get down, perhaps, but not up there again that I knew of. It was a go, anyway, so I reached Kate out clear of the rocks and let her drop. She struck, butt foremost, turned over and started down



Texas Jack with his favorite rifle, Lazy Kate

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the snowbank; at first slow, but she soon went out of sight some two hundred yards away, going at the rate of about a mile a minute.

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

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

The further I went along the mountainside the worse it got, and more of it, until I came to a point where I could see neither bottom nor top! I was just sticking up among the stones like something that had growed there! I had but one chance to go ahead, and that was to jump down off the rock, some ten feet. If I did that I should have no chance at all to go back. It is strange how a fellow will press forward when he gets into trouble, though he may know it will take him deeper and deeper into it.

I dropped Kate first, then swung myself down. I had but a few feet to drop, but that rolling business was what worried me the most. I struck all right. There was some earth and a small timber ahead, and I was hurrying along as fast as possible, when all of a sudden the rocks commenced rolling down all around me. Looking up, I caught sight of an old ewe's head and neck stuck out over the rock some two hundred feet above me. Up went Kate and down came the ewe clear over my head and lodged against some fir bushes quite a distance below.

I crawled down and took off a quarter. I was pretty tired, but had rather pack meat than go hungry. I had already made some calculations on doing like a dog on a deer hunt—eat and drink nothing, and lay out that night. After a good deal of hard climbing, nearly straight up, I reached the top of the ridge, or backbone, as we call it. One step would put me on the descent either way. I sat Kate down, straddled the rock, and dropped into meditation for a moment.

It was a strange scene; the sun had long since gone behind the mountain, and that peculiar yellowish green light (such, I believe, can be seen in no other part of the world) shone over the sky; that is, what I could see of it for the high peaks around. Not a sound to be heard, save the faint roar of the torrents far down in the deep dark hollows below! I looked to Kate, my only companion. Thinks I, "old girl, this ain't no good place to be in; if I drop to sleep and tumble off this rock I shan't wake up much before Gabriel toots his horn."

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These thoughts put me in a stir! I hastily gathered up my little outfit and struck down the mountain; I was in for it now. The further down I went, the rougher it got, more the ledges and the greater distance I had to drop from one to the other. I got kind of desperate, and hardly stopped to look for a better place—just peep over, drop Kate, (always butt foremost) then the sheep, and I would follow. Darkness was gathering fast, the weather was turning cold, I was nearing the valley and hope began to brighten a little, when I came to a dead sticker. It was the last ledge! All below was loose stone that slanted away to the cañon below. I looked over—no use talking—over fifty feet in the clear; no pair of legs in America could jump down there and ever come out with a whole bone in them.

I scrambled along the ledge some distance one way, it got worse! Tried it the other, and found but one chance, and that a mighty slim one. It was where the water had cut a narrow crevice through the main ledge. If I could only hold on, it would take me within a reasonable distance of the loose stones below. It beat no chance at all, so over went Kate, meat next, and I commenced my descent bear fashion (tail foremost, of course, the same as I do everything) holding on in any way, or to anything that was fast, as long as there was anything, and then I went about half as far as I expected and hit twice as hard as I ought to. The loose stones began to slide, and away went me, Kate, sheep, stones, and all, some twenty yards down the hill. It was quite dark now, but I managed, by feeling around, to find Kate and the sheep, and rustled off up the hollow, though the darkness and over the rocks, with a few tumbles and skinned shins.

I reached camp, that is, where camp ought to be, but it wasn't there. Although it was very dark, I knew I was within a few steps of the right place, and there I stood, dumfounded for a moment, thinking to myself, if this is not me, who in thunder can it be? I knew *I* was not lost; the camp must be lost. Presently I saw a little spark, and crawling under some logs came on to a heap of smoldering embers, the only sign of human existence.

I gave the coals a kick, and a dim light glared around that made the old white logs loom up like so many ghosts. While gathering some brush forty different imaginations rattled through my brain. Indians? I thought first; somebody shot accidentally, or fell off the rocks and broke a leg; horses stampeded; everything; until I got a big light, when all was explained.

Right over the fire hung a big flask half full of the best!—with a note attached saying, “Come into the river, party started at 3 P.M.” Old Whity, my pony that was tied to a tree near by and had been quiet all this time, now began to snort and tear around as much as to say, “get that saddle and outfit on here, and let's be off,” and you bet I did, and was off in a hurry, and didn't forget the flask either.

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

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Boteler Brothers Ranch, Paradise Valley; photograph by William H Jackson; 1871



NEXT SCOUT ISSUE INFORMATION

The deadline for the November 2021 issue of *The Scout* is November 1, 2021. Please send ideas and materials to our Guest Editor:

Robert Omohundro
robert.o1h8i2j@gmail.com
(408) 832-8064

Thank you, Rob!

The Texas Jack Scout

TJA asks: Can an Italian Dancing Muse Hoe Potatoes on a Farm Near Boston?

By Robert A. Omohundro

With the pandemic over the last year, we have come better acquainted with the value of family and home. Texas Jack found a place to call home when he got married to Mlle Giuseppina Morlacchi in the fall of 1873. She and her sister had purchased a twenty-acre farm before she and Jack met. This became their home and remained hers until she herself passed away. I wanted to find out more about this farm. What I have found is all dependent on the work and graciousness of those who have searched before me...

From a 1994 exhibition at the Mogan Center in Lowell, Massachusetts that Dennis and Julie Greene contributed photos for, Giuseppina, after making her debut in New York in October of 1867:

“Although she traveled travelled to many different cities, Mlle. Morlacchi enjoyed the atmosphere of Boston most of all. While she loved performing in Boston, she never really wanted to live in a big city. In addition to ballet and choreography, another dream was to own her own home in the country and at the same time have access to Boston by railroad.

One community that fit her needs was Billerica. By December, 1869, Josephine and her older sister, Angelina, purchased a farmhouse along with twenty acres of land in East Billerica.”

This excerpt interested me. I had done family history searches before; I had found that reference librarians, with their professional skills and generosity, can unearth gems. At the Billerica Public Library is Kathy Meagher. (I asked her and she said that it’s pronounced “Mahr.” I asked because we folks from California have an accent that, I have been told, is called the California clip.) Anyhow, her job title is Local History Specialist for the library and it fits! She was able to share some great visuals about the farm and its location.

We do not have any illustrations or photos of the farm buildings themselves, but Kathy shared an 1875 pictorial map of Billerica that shows the names and locations of the property owners. Though it is quite large, you will find the name “A. Morlacchy” (sic) is located on the east side of the town, just below Fox Hill, near Salem Road. As far as I know, being in this issue of the *Scout* is the first public printing of this item.

Our very knowledgeable and gracious author and friend of the TJA, Matthew Kerns, gave a big confidence vote to the accuracy of this map by sharing with me a portion of his copy of the estate papers for Morlacchi (wow!) which had the legal description of the farm. The survey description is measured off in rod counts. He labored over this and translated it to determine that the distance off Salem Road, the origin point, puts it right where the map shows.

For more details about the farm, both of them shared the city’s 1870 taxation roll

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listing the farm being assessed as the possession of Angelina, her older sister. There are two taxable cash assets in the form of two horses (\$250) and one cow (\$50), two buildings Dwelling House (\$1500) and a Barn (\$500), and, of course, the forty acres of land itself (\$1000). So how much was the tax? It was \$2.10 on the animals, and \$21 on the estate.

(I could delve into the 1870 Federal census, but that opens the door on her manager, John M. Burke. That is a separate story altogether.)

After Jack died in Leadville in June 1880, Giuseppina returned to the farm. Her sister passed in 1885, and she passed away from stomach cancer in 1886. The homestead went through various owners until the homestead itself burned down in 1895.

All the preceding really functions to introduce an article and illustration from Boston reprinted in this issue that gives an interesting non-danseuse view of Giuseppina. Our friend Matthew Kerns graciously shares the article and illustration gems with us. Many source articles about her recite how, off-stage, she was very down-to-earth, sensible, and was able to take care of her own affairs and look out for others as well. I do not know whether these have been re-printed since the original date, but as far as I know, it is the first time for the *TJA Scout*. If this wets your appetite for more about Mlle Morlacchi, our president, Larry Tyree shared with me that there are more articles available on the TJA website from earlier editions of the *Scout*. Check out the November, 2008 and July, 2009 editions of the *Scout* for the articles from Rene Tyree and Susan Omohundro. – RAO



(The star near the center denotes the location of the farm)

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Names of Persons Assessed.	No. of Folks.	Tax on Polls.	Description of Taxable Cash Assets.	Value of same.	Aggregate of Personal.	Tax on Personal.	Buildings.	Value.	Description by name of every lot of land owned by each person.	No. of Acres.	Value.	Aggregate Value of Real Estate.	Tax on Real Estate.	Total Taxes.
Morlacchi Angelina	2	10	2 horses,.....	250	300	2 10	Dwelling House	1500	Homestead,.....	40	1000	3000	21 00	23 10
Moody I. D.	1	5	1 cow,	50			Barn,	500						
	1	5	1 horse	75	75	53	Barn.....	75	H. Brown land.....	6	150	250	1 75	2 28

Billerica 1875 Map, section
Billerica 1870 town valuations, section


Morlacchi Farm Potato article, Boston Post, 09AUG1870
Terpsichore in a Potato Patch, Days' Doings, 10SEP1870

Morlacchi in *Boston Post* – August 9, 1870 (from Matthew Kerns)

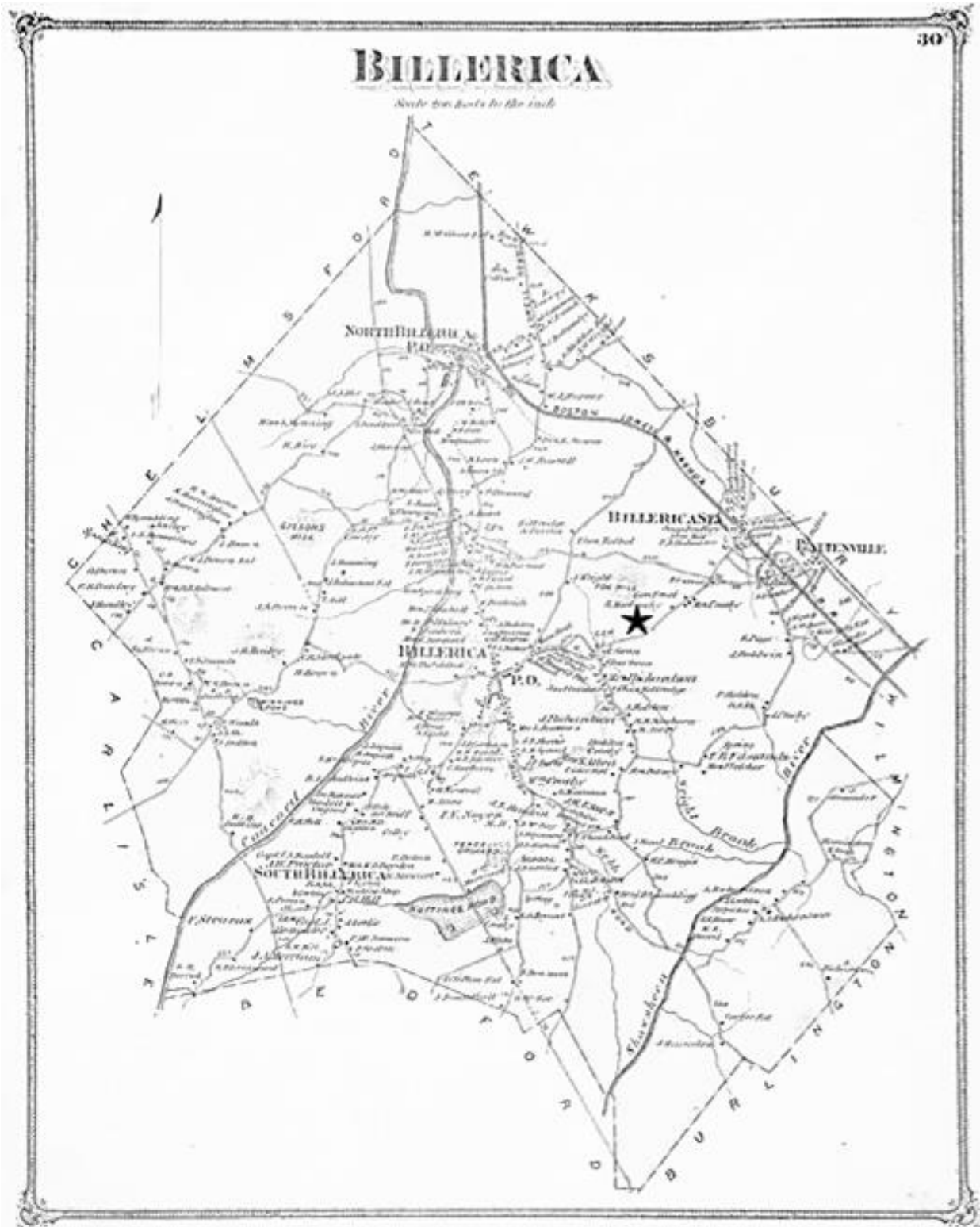
Evidently Mlle. Morlacchi, the noted premiere danseuse, is a practical woman. A well-known manager of one of our theatres, accompanied by a gentleman in the profession, visited Morlacchi at her farm...a day or two since, for the purpose of securing her services for the Adelphi. They rung the bell at the door, but getting no answer, made bold to enter the house. She was not to be found. The servant girl, however, at last appeared and stated that her mistress was somewhere on the farm. The gentlemen at once proceeded to navigate the same, and, in course of time, found Morlacchi in a field, digging potatoes for dinner. She was not exactly arrayed in a ballet dress, but in a much more appropriate one for the place, having the protection of a huge



TERPSICHORE IN A POTATO PATCH; OR MORLACCHI AND THE MURPHYS.

summer hat. The business of the visit was made known, and the terms were soon arranged. Morlacchi then finished digging the required quantity of potatoes, and subsequently proceeded to the house, where hospitalities were served. These included a dinner, of which the potatoes she had dug served a humble part. Morlacchi is happily situated in a home of her own, which is supplied with all the comforts and not a few of the luxuries of life. 

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Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob...©November 2020

By: Driftin' AaronG

*Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob were as wild and as cool as two romantics could ever be
From the Western plains to the northern Rockies their legend grew so all could see*

*Gunsmoke Sally, she came from an old farm in Kansas with a six gun
and eyes of blue
Ridin' a half wild mustang pony, this young girl, she stood only five foot
two*

*Wild and wooly she was with no special place to go
Just headin' west lookin' for the right cowboy who could put on a good
show*



*Not just any cowboy would do for Gunsmoke Sally
But a true-blue cowboy who could chase steers through mountains and any valley*

*It was mid-summer as she rode into Colorado territory all straight, fit and prim
And there on a hill sat a young cowboy on a black stallion tall and slim*

*She sat her pony all quiet and still, watching him quietly with interest from afar
Smiling with a friendly gesture she rode into his sight like a shining new star*

*With a smile on her face she gave this cowboy a simple howdy and a wave of her hand
"I'm Gunsmoke Sally an' I'm headin' west across the Rockies and the desert sand"*



*"They call me Buckshot Bob an' you're a right down pretty
little gal"*

*"I'll be dropping off these steers in a day or so, an' just
maybe you could be my pal.*

*There were only a dozen or so steers to take to a local ranch
up ahead*

*So Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob joined up and drove
those steer to their new homestead*

*Three days later Lil' Sally and Buckshot headed west
Making their way together to see if they could stand the test*

*There were dry water holes along the way and marauding Indians, a threat to every living soul
But Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob continued on knowin' they'd reach their goal*

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*They helped every rancher and traveler in need
And when all was calm they were wed by a preacher, yes they were
indeed*

*They continued to help everyone, everywhere along their trail
Continuing their travels and no one did they ever fail*

*As their direction shifted and they headed north toward Wyoming and
Montana*

They rode with joy into Wyoming where they sang Ol' Susanna

*It was up Montana way when the action really began
Along the Missouri river with local ranchers and the Blackfoot clan*

*Indians attacked a small Montana town along the river early one morn
Outnumbered the town was, and about to fall from evil scorn*

*Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob with a few others moving a herd of steers
They saw the battle raging on and stampeded the herd through the town of happy cheers*

*The Blackfeet warriors rode off and away from all the towns happy tears
Both Sally and Bob and their wranglers rode out to gather the steers*



*The herd was delivered and their fame did grow
And throughout this very day they left a legacy in history
the books would show*

*So Gunsmoke Sally and Buckshot Bob rode off to find new
adventures, just the two all alone
Across the plains and over the northern Rockies, with
growing fame, they would always roam*

* * *

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The TJA ZOOM Party

By Larry Tyree

Well, we've done it again! We had a wonderful time doing something for the first time!! On Saturday June 19, 2021, the Texas Jack Association held its first ever online party! From the first moments as people gathered to our ZOOM room, it was great to renew friendships and to just be together again! This get-together was inspired by the necessities developed during the pandemic.

After gathering for a few minutes, we were randomly put into a bunch of "breakout rooms" where two or three persons had a chance to visit privately and get updated with each other. Then after that first one, we were put into a second breakout room to do it again with someone else.

The Trivia game led by Candice and Randy McKinney was great fun. Rick Omohundro won 1st place, Kitty Pelkan won 2nd, and John and Susan Omohundro got 3rd. Rick and Kitty both won autographed books by Matthew Kerns.

Best Costume went to Peggy Greene, with Marshall Brown a close second. Best Zoom background went to Terry Omohundro, with Dick and Linda Omohundro in second. Best costumed pet went to Carole Brown, with Mark Greene in second.

Carole Brown graciously provided some great material for the Auction that included 4 framed photos that of Texas Jack in various combinations with others, a poster of Texas Jack, and another one of Mlle Morlacchi, and 13 posters of the front covers of Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack dime novels. Over \$150 was raised for the Association.

On page 16 are some of the prizes that were awarded and some of the items auctioned off.

All in all, there were 24 people in attendance. We also had a chance to vote to extend the term of office of our TJA Officers to the Roundup of 2022 in Chicago. The Roundup dates were approved to be June 15 to 19, 2022. Much more information will be in the November 2021 and March 2022 issues of the *Scout*.



*Chicago, Chicago, that toddlin' town
Chicago, Chicago, I will show you
around, where
the premier of "Scouts of the Prairie"
starring Texas Jack and Buffalo Bill
took place!*



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Larry Tyree, Rob Omohundro, Karl and Kitty Pelkan, Wes Cleaver, Steve Omohundro, John and Susan Omohundro, Mark and Peggy Greene.

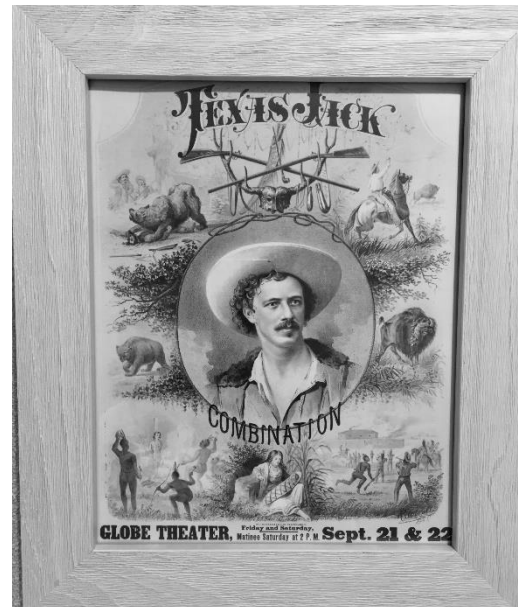
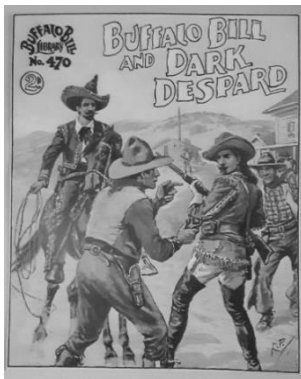
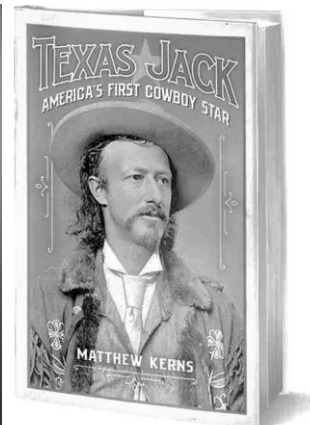
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Candice and Rand McKinney, Nancy and Rick Omohundro, Matt Kerns, Katie Crow, Carole Brown, Terry Omohundro, Marshall Brown, Linda and Dick Omohundro.

Not pictured—Lindsay Greene and Tony Wang.

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The President's Message

By Larry Tyree



The Texas Jack ZOOM Party had one feature in which we were encouraged to dress up in cowboy attire. Many years ago, I had been a member of the Boone's Sons, a historical re-creation group that featured black powder muzzle-loading and keeping the lore alive on various things such as tanning hides, making knives, powder horns, researching and creating 19th century clothing, tents of the period, etc. The group was named after Daniel Boone, who had settled in mid-Missouri at the end of his life. I was living in Columbia, MO at the time-- just 32 miles away from Boonesboro where the Boone family ran a salt production company.

In the Boone's Sons, I had made a throwing knife, put on the finishing touches to a tomahawk, bought an 1860s vintage replica Harper's Ferry .58 caliber black powder rifle, made a coonskin hat, tanned and made a leather shirt, period canvas pants, and period shirt. I used all those items when the Boone's Sons would get together with other clubs at periodic "Rendez-Vous" where we would camp out for a weekend and have all kinds of contests including marksmanship with our black powder rifles, throwing 'hawks and knives, and exchange goods that we had made during the year. All I could find of my things was the knife, muzzle-loader and powder horn, and a "possibles bag" where I kept various implements needed to service the rifle.

Needless to say, I was frustrated. I had hoped to be able to put on my gear. Oh well, as the French say: "C'est la vie". (That's life). Yet I actually got a thrill handling the items that I had used much more frequently thirty years earlier. I also had a renewed appreciation for what I had learned about western life in the 19th century.

Being a member of the Texas Jack Association is much the same. When I think back at the years that I have spent researching Texas Jack, as well as learning from other members' research in the form of articles in *The Scout*, or in simple conversation at our Roundups, I too get a thrill from all that I have learned. It never fails to inspire. Matthew Kerns' book: *Texas Jack, America's First Cowboy Star* is another of those methods of acquiring new knowledge about the life and times of John B. Omohundro (Texas Jack). It is packed with new information and photos.

In 12 months, we will have yet another opportunity to walk in the footsteps of Texas Jack, Buffalo Bill, and others, and we will gain new information that will inspire us about what our predecessors had to do in daily life...how they viewed the world, and responded to it.

Philosopher George Santayana once said: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." May we continue to learn...and remember.

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Texas Jack in Yellowstone Part I

By Matthew Kerns

<https://www.dimelibrary.com/post/texas-jack-in-yellowstone>

*The following article was originally printed in **The Boys of the World**, a serial printed by Street & Smith, the same publisher that produced Ned Buntline's Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack stories. This is Jack's account of his 1874 trip into the Yellowstone with Lord Dunraven, George Kingsley, and Captain Wynne.*



TEXAS JACK'S EXPERIENCE OF **Three Months in the National Park, in The Yellowstone Region.**

His description of that marvelous country after a hunting expedition there with The Earl of Dunraven and others.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

I left New York August 1st, 1874, to go as guide and hunter to an English party, among whom were the Earl of Dunraven, Doctor Kingsley, and others.

I joined the party in Denver City, Colorado, and, after a few days of recreation there, started alone to Salt Lake City, where I met the superintendent of the Overland Stage Line, and succeeded in chartering a coach to carry us from Corinne to Virginia City.

My party came up the next day to Salt Lake, and, after seeing Brigham Young and other curiosities, we hurried on to Corinne.

The next morning the coach was at the hotel door at seven "sharp" as the earl would say, and guns, pistols, dogs, servants, scouts, English lords and other bundles were tumbled in

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promiscuously, and before we could get half a view of the beautiful country our driver shouted "all aboard," and away we went at breakneck speed.

We reached the first twelve miles station before I had got comfortably seated, for there was such a confusion of baggage in the coach one would have thought the Grand Duke and the



Prince of Wales were along, and here our first trouble began, for, to "cap the lay out," one of the dogs had taken sick, for Salt Lake hash did not seem to agree with that canine's English stomach; but then we had only four hundred and forty-eight miles to go, and, as a little thing like that wouldn't amount to much, I chucked the dog on

top the coach, and had just time to jump astride of a ten-gallon keg of whiskey when the driver shouted "hoop la!" and away we went again.

I had given the driver a drink, and that settled it, for in vain did I cry out to him to make the horses pace that we might go easy over the stones. He took my wailing for cries to make better time, for all that is said to these Western drivers they understand to mean go faster and make time.

At this rate, we soon pulled up at the next station, where we got in a balky horse. He would not budge, and the driver called out for some of us to get out, and throw a stone at his head.

I only got a chance to throw one at old balky when back went his ears, and out came his two hind feet at my head, and off like a shot went coach and horses.

I had just time to grab on to one of the straps behind when I was towed for half a mile, and then rescued by the earl, who dragged me in.

The remainder of the trip to Virginia City was made under similar circumstances, we arriving there in four days and a half after leaving Corrine; for a wonder everybody alive, and nobody robbed.

The Texas Jack Scout

The next day I hired a team, and the earl and myself drove to Sterling, distant twenty-nine miles, and on the way we passed Alf Slade's old ranch.*

Sterling is a place that started up upon "quartz" prospects, but, like the butcher's calf, it "kinder gin out."

Here we expected to meet George Ray, one of the noted hunters and trappers of the Yellowstone, for he was to join us at Sterling. Buying some ponies, we rode on to Boseman City, distant ninety miles, and on the way

passed through Gallatin Valley, which was by far the prettiest country we had seen thus far.

Boseman is a nice little town, situated upon a tributary of the Gallatin, and three miles from Fort Ellis, and here it was I bought my outfit of saddle ponies, pack-mules and other necessities, the earl going, in the meantime, in company of some officers of the fort, to visit the Crow village and see a war-dance by some



"Indians, by Jove!"



"Elk or Indians?"

Indians of that friendly tribe.

After leaving Boseman I shot a small bear on Trail Creek—first blood of the trip. The next day we entered the great and wonderful Yellowstone Valley, striking the river at a point about a hundred miles below Yellowstone Lake.

The Texas Jack Scout

The valley here is wide, the rolling hills extending back some distance to the main range, and the country grandly beautiful. Here we met some friendly Indians of the Bannock tribe, who were hurrying back toward the Gallatin, as they said there were Sioux across the river. These tribes have long been deadly enemies. They admired my Winchester and Remington rifles greatly, and when I told them that Dr. Evans, of Lewiston, Maine, was making me a gun that shot thirty-five times without reloading, they were immensely tickled, and also curious, one of them saying:

“Me habee dat gun me stay here and kill em heap Sioux every time.”

A few hours ride brought us to Bottler’s ranch, the last regular settlement up the river. It was late when we got here, but the tents were soon pitched in a nice little grove, and things began to look to me like old frontier times.

Mr. Bottler came to see me soon, a stout, healthy-looking, American born Dutchman who had spent half his life in the mountains, and from him we heard nine

good bear stories, while he showed us signs where one had gone off with a good piece of his left leg. Also he told us that there were plenty more bears around his ranch, and as I knew this to be a good part of the valley for that kind of sport, we concluded to stay here a short while hunting, and trout fishing in the streams.

The next day some of the party went into the hills on a deer hunt, and I took to the river for some fish, and had landed, perhaps, a couple of dozen of trout and white fish, when I discovered a band of ponies coming at full speed down the opposite side of the stream.

Satisfied that there were Indians, running off stock, I didn’t hesitate an instant, but dropped the fishing tackle, seized my rifle, mounted, and swam across the river, which at that point was a hundred yards wide.

Reaching the other banks, I headed off the ponies, and they turned into the hills, and in



The Texas Jack Scout

pursuit of them were several Indians, to whom I gave chase, but soon drew off, as after ten minutes I discovered they were too well mounted for me to overhaul them.



A Yellowstone Highway.

As I turned to ride back I saw a lone Indian coming up in my rear; but he was out of range, yet I fired a shot at him just for luck, and after returning the fire he dusted, and was soon out of sight.

Returning to the river I recrossed, and was soon back in camp.

The next morning

we moved up the river, and turned into the rough mountains, where we ran upon a band of elk, killing four or five before they got out of range, and had plenty of fresh meat. Camped that night on the bank of a small brook, and had just started to pitch tents when we heard the whistle** of an elk close by.

Every one sprang for his rifle, and the earl took the first shot, and brought him down nicely, and we soon had his hide and horns in camp, the antlers being an exceedingly fine pair.

Before we finished supper we could hear bear growling at the remains of the elk, and several of the party who had not seen grizzlies, prepared to surround the place and take a shot at them; but I gave it as my opinion that grizzlies were nice little pets, and should not be disturbed at a quiet lunch at so late an hour, and Mr. Bottler, who was with us, hoped they would make out a meal on the elk as he had no more legs to spare.

Thus we decided to await until the morning; but no bears were in sight at that time, so we divided into two parties, and started out on a hunt for one.

Owing to the rough country it was impossible to keep together, and soon each man had to look out for himself.

One of the party soon found a large grizzly, but, being alone at the time in a dark valley, he concluded to climb a tree before he opened fire—a very wise conclusion, by the way.

The Texas Jack Scout

After seating himself comfortably upon a convenient limb, about seventy-five feet from the ground, he got his rifle ready, and found that the bear had moved camp; but, being unused to bear tricks, he concluded to hold his position and await the return of Bruin, and there he might have been yet, perhaps, if I had not happened to pass the place, and assured him that there was no bear at the root of the tree.



Making the best of it.

Climbing down he started straight for camp, saying he "hadn't lost any bear, anyway." Guess he had already found one too many.

Taking a tramp through the hills, I was approaching camp late in the evening, and it had come on to be rainy and disagreeable, and put me in a bad humor.

Suddenly I came on a tremendous grizzly, picking the bones of the elk the earl had killed the day before.

It was the first big game I had seen during the day, and I was determined to tackle him alone, and at once endeavored to get as near as possible before I fired to make a sure thing of it.

Stripping myself of hat, coat, and boots, I crawled within thirty yards, for it was getting dark, and I could not see well at a longer range.

At the crack of my rifle the old fellow raised up on his hind legs and bit his side angrily. I knew I had hit him hard; but my hair raised a little as he started directly toward me, and quickly I reloaded and again gave him another shot squarely in the breast, and again he assumed the position of a soldier, and with open mouth and terrible growl, rushed upon me.

A climb for it was not my only chance, and with no time to lose, I started up the nearest tree; and in none too big a hurry, you bet, for with one blow of his large claw, he stripped the bark off within on yard of my feet.

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It was sixty feet to the nearest limb, and that was too small to bear my weight, so, knowing I could not hold on a great while, I clung well with my legs and left arm, and opened on Mr. Bruin with my six-shooter, and although he was bleeding from two bad wounds, I still had him bleeding from six more, and yet he haunted the foot of that tree as though he had business there.

Wondering what chance I would have in a tussle with a grizzly with my knife, and feeling that it had come down to that, I was thinking of coming down, when the old fellow staggered off to a little pond of water nearby and commenced rolling in the mud.

Just then several of the party, attracted by my firing, came up, and we soon had him out of the pond and found he was a twelve hundred pounder.

Being too late to take his hide, we returned to camp, the earl greatly lamenting that we could not enjoy another encounter with a bear; but I told him that it would likely snow during the night, as it threatened it, and then he should have all the bear-hunting he wanted.



Stalking the Ram.

As I anticipated, there was snow, and the ground was covered white in the morning, so we all set off on another hunt, and soon struck a fresh trail.

We soon discovered that the bear was not far ahead, for he was circling the spot where he intended to lay down, a habit of caution which the grizzlies have.

Sending the party on the trail, the earl and myself cut across and come up the other side of

the hill, and in five minutes we heard a snarling in the brush, and instantly we jumped behind a big boulder, just as the largest sort of grizzly came out in full view, not more than fifty yards distant.

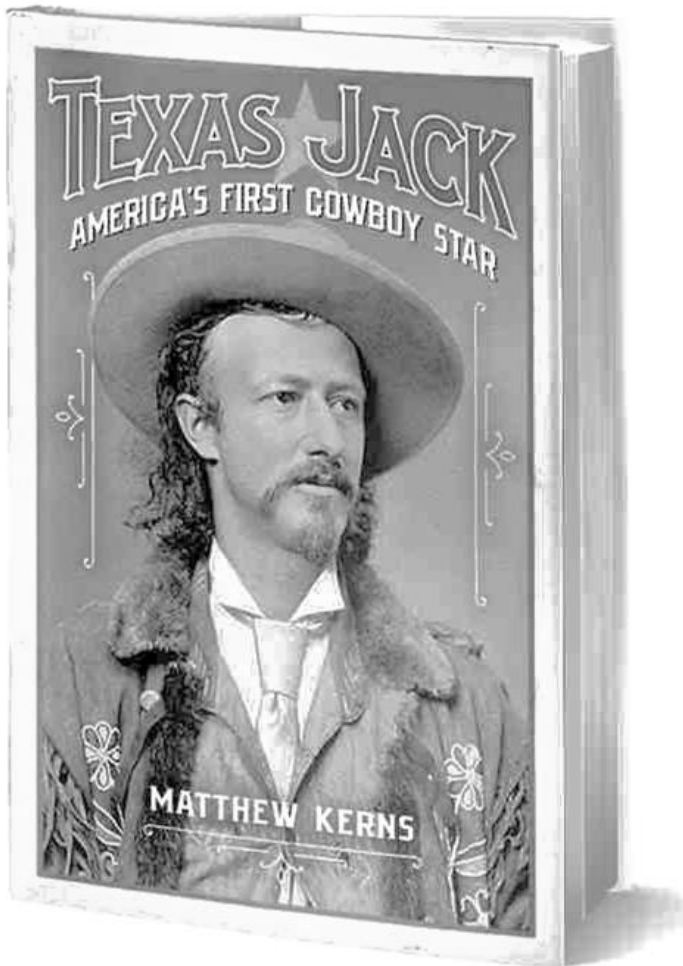
**Alf Slade was one of the most noted characters on the plains, and Mark Twain has given him a conspicuous place in his book "Roughing It."*

***This is a queer noise the elk makes in running season.*

● What does the grizzly do next? Will the hunting party be saved? What does Texas Jack think of Yellowstone Park? See the November issue of *The Texas Jack Scout* for the answers. 🔫

The Texas Jack Scout

Great Reviews on Amazon of Matthew Kerns' New Book



Consumer reviews:

5.0 out of 5 stars The way-back source for the Wild West cowboy icon

Reviewed in the United States on June 14, 2021 Verified Purchase
Texas Jack Omohundro is the real, true cowboy who started it all, and this book tells his fascinating story, from Confederate veteran and Texas cowboy to stage star with Buffalo Bill Cody, Ned Buntline, and Wild Bill Hickok. Deeply researched and well written, Matt Kerns's book is a must-have for devotees of the real roots of the fictional Wild West. Highly recommended!

5.0 out of 5 stars Learn about one of the West's forgotten characters

Reviewed in the United States on July 9, 2021 Verified Purchase
I am a cousin of Texas Jack and already knew about him, however, this book contained stories and photos that were new to me. The

book was well written and gives an unbiased look at one of the west's forgotten characters. Because of the thorough research by the author, this book separates facts from myth which is sometimes a hard thing to do with "Wild West" characters.

5.0 out of 5 stars Wonderful writing

Reviewed in the United States on June 21, 2021 Verified Purchase
Would highly recommend this great read.

5.0 out of 5 stars A must read

Reviewed in the United States on July 9, 2021 Verified Purchase
Fantastic book!!! Highly recommend.

The Texas Jack Scout

Editorial Reviews

NetGallet Review: 5 stars Updated 20 Feb 2021

"This groundbreaking work by Matthew Kerns brings to light a lesser-known but vitally important figure in any history of American pop culture. It's probably enough to learn that John B. 'Texas Jack' Omohundro was the only full partner of William 'Buffalo Bill' Cody in terms of sharing the stage and revenue from that venture. "But Omohundro was so much more than Cody's pecuniary partner. They were good friends and had each other's back in frontier Nebraska for three years before stepping onto a Chicago stage together for Ned Buntline's Scouts of the Prairie and launching what would become the most popular entertainment sensation for decades in the form of Buffalo Bill. And for years after that fateful night in 1872, 'Texas Jack' and Cody helped make stars out of Annie Oakley, Doc Carver, 'Wild Bill' Hickok and others--begging the question, how did those luminaries thrive in the collective consciousness of America for the next 150 years, while Omohundro remained a stalwart, if lesser-known figure?

"The easy answer is that he died of pneumonia, in 1880--a few years before Cody exploded onto the national and then international scene with his famed Wild West show. There is more to this, though, and as Kerns illustrates, it's worthy of examination. He summarizes: 'While his friends Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill were rendered iconic as the preeminent scout and lawman of the American West, Omohundro's legacy as the first cowboy on the American stage is fundamental to the mythologized Western hero later introduced to the world by Buffalo Bill and personified in the stories of Ned Buntline and Prentiss Ingraham . . . If the idealized American man is the frontier cowboy, then the genesis of the American cowboy in popular culture is Texas Jack Omohundro, a man who, despite his moniker, was not from Texas.' (This reviewer won't spoil the story of how he was given his nickname.)

"In fact, Omohundro was born in Virginia. He served in the Confederacy, and later as a civilian scout for the U.S. army during the Indian Wars. In 1869, at Fort Hays, Kansas, 'California Joe.' Milner introduced Omohundro to Wild Bill Hickok, then the acting sheriff of Ellis County. Later this year, Jack met Cody for the first time, while the latter was scouting for the 5th U.S. Cavalry at Fort McPherson, Nebraska. Cody was instrumental in getting Jack hired on as a 'trail agent and scout' for the 5th. Jack soon became known as one of the best trail agents, hunting guides, and Indian fighters on the frontier.

"The year 1872 was a pivotal one for both Cody and Jack, the details of which Kerns writes in gorgeous detail, as he also does with Jack's work as a cowboy, and his time alongside Pawnee and other native peoples: 'The clouds of dust gradually rise as if a curtain was lifted, horses stop as buffaloes drop, until there is a clear panoramic view of a busy scene all quiet, everything still (save a few fleet ones in the distance); horses riderless, browsing proudly conscious of success; the prairie dotted here, there, everywhere with dead bison; and happy, hungry hunters skinning, cutting, slashing the late proud monarch of the plains.'

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"As well, Kerns reconstructs the relationships between Jack and other figures such as markswoman Ena Palmer, Louisa Cody, various indigenous peoples such as Pitaresaru of the Pawnee, Ned Buntline, Hickok, and of course, the love of his life, actress Giuseppina Morlacchi, whom he met when she joined Scouts of the Prairie.

"Kerns meticulously reconstructs the fascinating--if sadly shortened--life of Omohundro using Omohundro's own letters, newspaper accounts, accounts of various Indian agents and agencies, dime novels, various historical societies, and much more. What emerges is the story of the man who actually was the driving force behind Cody's decision to go into show business, and perhaps was too authentic to shine as brightly as Cody through the ages. Until now." -- Julia Bricklin, Consumer Reviewer

(Included in the Editorial Reviews) About the Author

Matthew Kerns is a historian and digital archivist who lives in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He manages the popular western podcast *Dime Library* (dimelibrary.com) and the Texas Jack Facebook page (facebook.com/jbomohundro). He has had multiple articles about Texas Jack published in *The Texas Jack Scout*, the triannual publication of the Texas Jack Association.

Texas Jack: America's First Cowboy Star by Matthew Kerns, is available at:

Amazon - <https://amzn.to/33ep4KI>

Barnes & Noble - <https://bit.ly/3h1s9ps>

Bookshop - <https://bit.ly/3gZg701>

Signed and inscribed first edition copies are available at no additional charge at:

<https://www.dimelibrary.com/shop> 



The Texas Jack Scout – An Urgent Need

The *Scout* is totally comprised of member donated articles. Our membership has been wonderful in writing and sourcing articles about Texas Jack, his friends and peers, and about the Wild West of the 19th century. The Guest Editor of each issue is in charge of writing and/or finding one or more articles for the issue they volunteered for. The problem is sometimes the Guest Editor is not able to do that when their time comes, but it leaves a problem for the other editors.

There is so much information out there about Texas Jack's era. Many of you have been very helpful in supplying us with wonderful, informative, and entertaining articles. Many of you we haven't heard from in a while. Please think about what you could contribute. Many of our members have said in their articles how much they enjoyed finding material and writing about it. Wouldn't you all like to have that same pleasure—and give other members the pleasure of reading and learning more about Texas Jack and his times?

TJA Members, let's refill our "bank" with great articles to share. Send them to [<omohndro@sbcglobal.net>](mailto:omohndro@sbcglobal.net). Thank you!

The Texas Jack Scout



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