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“Scouts of the Prairie” As a Frontier Play

By John Thomas Omohundro



“Scouts of the Prairie” premiered on a Chicago stage in December 1872. It was John B. “Texas Jack” Omohundro’s first theatrical performance, and it initiated his successful seven-year show business career, sometimes in partnership with his co-star, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody, and usually with his leading lady from “Prairie,” and soon his wife, Josephine Morlacchi.

What were the other stage shows like at that time? Was “Scouts” just an embarrassing oddity, or innovative and generative? In researching Buffalo Bill’s path to the Wild West Show I came upon just the book to help me answer these questions. Roger A. Hall’s *Performing the American Frontier 1870-1906* explained what frontier (also called “border”) plays were like before and after “Scouts,” and profiled some remarkable shows and actors of that genre. Unfortunately, those shows and stars are almost all forgotten now, even though “Scouts” and its competition ushered in a century of popular demand for western-themed entertainment.

“Dashing Charlie” Emmett was a genuine plains scout who, like Texas Jack, married his leading lady and joined with her in a theatrical career. He also performed with Texas Jack. Photo from wikipedia.com
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from the Editor's Desk...



Greetings to all my fellow *Texas Jack Association* members, friends, family and any others who may share an interest in the history of the American West.

I am ever amazed that another Summer has sneaked up on me. It seems like just yesterday that we were celebrating a New Year. (Some of us still are, actually.)

I would encourage everyone to think ahead to the Summer event of the year – the 2016 *Texas Jack Association Roundup* in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Kansas City / Independence, MO area was one of the major trailheads for Western migration in the 1800's (more specifically, it marked the beginning of the northern branch of the famous Santa Fe Trail). As such, it is an ideal spot for history buffs and Western adventurers.

Also, there will be lots of fun for kids of all ages, good eats (BBQ: Heck, Yeah) and interesting places to visit. Plus, it is a great opportunity to renew old friendships and make some new ones.

So, don't let the Summer of 2016 sneak up on you—plan now on attending the Roundup in KC.

Best Wishes to All,

Tipton T. Omohundro, Guest Editor

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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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This is the first of two articles on the frontier or border plays in the era of “Scouts.” In this part I’ll look at the predecessors and some contemporaries of “Scouts” and provide the fullest description I’ve found so far of its plot. Part Two will look at the imitators and competitors of “Scouts” in the years after its premiere in 1873.

The Pre-War Bursts of Interest

The “border” in border plays moved west with the American population. The first round of popular border plays occurred in the 1830s as Americans flowed through the Cumberland Gap and settled the upper Midwest. Those plays were set in the woods or on pioneer farms, and featured Davy Crockett-type heroes. The tone was uplifting and poetic about the true American nurtured in the great American wilderness. Even the Indians were usually depicted as Noble Savages. The language resembled that of James Fennimore Cooper; in fact, Cooper’s novels were dramatized several times. William Bayle Bernard’s *The Wept of Wish Ton Wish* was one, featuring the character of a Narragansett chief, Canonchet, and a theme of white captives. It was popular after 1835. Another example is George Washington Parke Custis’ *Pocahontas; or, The Settlers of Virginia*, in 1830, featuring the famous love triangle. Enthusiasm for these plays died in the 1840s, however, perhaps because the adventure became the prairie schooners rolling west of the Mississippi.

A second flurry of frontier plays occurred in the 1850s. John Honey Robinson’s “Nick Whiffles”, in 1858, was one of the most successful. Nick was something of a native wit, like Will Rogers, chatty and wise rather than the strong silent type. The melodramatic plot featured a kidnapped maiden (natch) and the Indians were played as comic caricatures by white actors.

One theme of the 1850s plays was Mormon-gentile relations, which were poor during that decade. The Utah War in 1857 and various violent incidents such as the Mountain Meadow Massacre generated interest and plots for several plays in New York City. A typical title was, “The Mormons; or, Life at Salt Lake City.” As the nation turned from conflict with the Mormons to conflict between the states in 1860, these plays disappeared.

Plays After the Civil War

The author of *Performing the American Frontier*, Roger Hall, proposes that the rise in popularity of border or frontier plays beginning in 1870 launched a century of interest, expanding from dime novels and staged melodramas to Wild West shows, films, and television. Interest in such plays resumed after the Civil War because the American military turned its attention to pacifying the western Indians, resulting in two decades of violence. Americans were becoming more urban, isolated from “the wilds.” They were awash in new means of communication—railroad, telegraph, and

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Wood's also premiered Bartley Campbell's "Watch and Wait" in August 1873. The plot is about a young swain who, when framed by the villains, escapes to the prairie and becomes known as "Wild Nat," then travels on to adventures in California. The setting is the West, but the protagonist is an easterner.



A colored cigarette card (free with a pack of smokes, like bubble gum cards) of Niblo's Garden, New York City, a popular venue for low-brow theater such as frontier melodramas. wikipedia.com

Even though the nation suffered a depression in 1873, these early plays generated a 30-year boom in border dramas. One strand was the Davy Crockett plays such as "Davy Crockett; or, Be Sure You're Right, Then Go Ahead." In their romantic and nostalgic celebration of the Jeffersonian farmer, the Crockett plays remained popular and made their lead, Frank Mayo, originally a Shakespearean actor, one of the best-known nineteenth century frontier actors. Mayo played Crockett for over 22 years, in

3000 performances. The Plains, the buffalo, and the western Indian wars comprised the second strand, more violent than the Crockett plays that also spread and prospered. This strand follows and fuels Buffalo Bill's and Texas Jack's careers.

In February 1872, "Buffalo Bill, King of the Border Men" premiered at the Bowery Theatre in Manhattan. Fred G. Maeder wrote the play based on Ned Buntline's serialized novel published in the "New York Weekly" in 1869. Buntline's story was based on an 1861 gunfight featuring Wild Bill Hickok and the McCandless brothers in Nebraska, but it became a Buffalo Bill story. A popular actor, John B. Studley, played Buffalo Bill, whose celebrity was widespread in New York thanks to Buntline's story and good press coverage of Bill's western exploits by his admirer, James Bennett, the publisher of the "New York Herald". The play got a further boost when Cody came to New York City and, urged by Buntline, took bows from the audience during intermission. "Buffalo Bill" went on to good reception in Park Theater, also in New York.

Buntline talked Cody into showing up in late fall in Chicago after the western Indian campaigns of 1872 to perform in a play. Cody promised to bring Indians; Buntline promised to write a script. Neither delivered. But Cody brought Texas Jack Omohundro, his buddy from scouting and big game hunts; Buntline dashed off the script by borrowing from his dime novel, *Buffalo Bill's Last Victory; or Dove Eye the Lodge Queen*, and his play at the Bowery in

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Frank Mayo made a career throughout the late nineteenth century portraying Davy Crockett on the frontier melodrama circuit. Studio portrait from wikipedia.com

1872, “Hazel Eye, the Girl Trapper; or, the Gold Hunters.” He hired the dancer Josephine Morlacchi to play the Indian maiden, Dove Eye. The pards played themselves, and Buntline played Cal Durg, a kind of master of ceremonies.

“The Scouts of the Prairie”

A script of this (for us) historic, melodramatic, somewhat profitable but wildly popular event, entitled “Scouts of the Prairie; or, Red Deviltry as It Is,” no longer exists. But news coverage was thorough, so we know quite a bit about what happened on

stage. After premiering in Chicago with Texas Jack in December 1872, “Scouts” opened in New York at Niblo’s Garden in April 1873.

Gerald Bordman, author of *American Theatre: A Chronicle of Comedy and Drama* (1994), describes our man in an interesting way: “One of [Cody’s] co-stars was the then equally celebrated, if now forgotten, gunslinger John “Texas Jack” Omohundro. The production also features twenty ... ‘honest injuns,’ some of whom had to play dishonest Indians.” We learn from Bordman that Hazel Eye, the other Indian maiden opposite Dove Eye, played by Josephine Morlacchi, was played by Eloe Carfano, about whom I’ve learned little— so far.

“Scouts” (in New York at least) was preceded by Buntline’s short farcical curtain raiser with professional actors entitled, “The Broken Bank.” This was so awful that neither audiences nor critics bothered to comment on it.

As Roger Hall reconstructs “Scouts,” in Act One the villainous Mormon Ben sends his Indian cronies led by Wolf Slayer to capture Durg’s ward, Hazel Eye, whom Ben covets. The Indians kidnap Durg and Hazel Eye, then tie Durg to the stake for burning. In the process they “make speeches about the dew, the morning cloud, and the badness of the white man...” (Bordman). Good Indian maiden that she is, Dove Eye releases Hazel Eye, who springs Durg. A big fight results and Cody and Omohundro whomp all the bad guys.

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Act Two, for lack of any better idea, shows the Indians recapturing Hazel Eye and Cale Durg, taking Dove Eye in tow also. Durg, tied to a tree, regales the audience with a temperance lecture. Cody and Omohundro again arrive to save the day, with pistols and lariat (Omohundro was good at rope tricks). Durg dies as the curtain falls. Some critics, annoyed by Buntline's bombastic lectures, considered this the best part of the play.

Act Three finds our pards chasing Indians again, this time for vengeance. Meanwhile, Mormon Ben and his Indian buddies continue to attempt to steal Hazel Eye. Wolf Slayer kills Dove Eye's father, Big Eagle, for refusing to go along. Dove Eye gets revenge in the final scene, by shooting Wolf Slayer during a great prairie fire serving as background to a shootout. Somewhere in there too was a Bowie knife fight. But the curtain falls on a double wedding, as Cody weds Hazel Eye and Texas Jack ties the knot with Dove Eye. The cast of characters included two for comic relief: a "Dutchman," Carl Pretzel, who admires our heroes, and a drunk Irishman.

Bordman quotes one critic, who observed, "... the management might be forgiven for hereafter assuming that the key to success must be in the exhibition of cataracts of gore."

The shows were packed, and after the Chicago opener the troupe went on the road to St. Louis, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Louisville, Cleveland, Rochester, Buffalo, Boston, and ending in New York City. The cavalry wars with the Modoc, Apache, and

the Sioux were in the news—perfect publicity for a play in which the white guys win big, every act.

I've written about the critical reception of the boys' plays before (*The Scout*, Vol. 10, no. 1, Spring 1995). Suffice it to say that the play in script and performance was awful but writers expressed grudging admiration for the big handsome stars, who were genuine plainsmen, fresh from the prairie themselves, and for Morlacchi, who was beautiful and graceful on stage.

The innovation in "Scouts" was to bring authentic westerners (whites and, by the end of the season, Indians) to eastern audiences, displaying their distinctive outfits and ways of speaking, and to showcase their skill with guns, knives, and lariat. In ten years Cody would convert this display of authenticity, which he and Omohundro (okay- and Buntline) deserve credit for starting, into the *Wild West Show*, which attempted to mix the entertainment with instruction about the West.

After "Scouts of the Prairie"

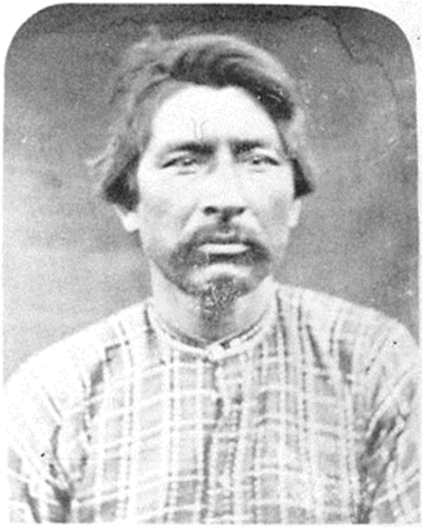
Our boys parted from Buntline after the first season and launched their second season, adding another buddy, "Wild Bill" Hickok. Their new play, "The Scouts of the Plains," was written by Fred G. Maeder, author of the first Buffalo Bill play, who essentially plagiarized that play. The plot I will spare you, except to note that it includes kidnappings, back stabbings, revenge shootings, lots of Indians biting the dust, and a climactic prairie fire (sound familiar?).

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The play included some comic characters: Kitty, the Irish maid; Firewater Tom, an alcoholic Indian; and two of Cody's buddies, Old Vet and Snakeroot Sam. These are teeth-grindingly bad ethnic stereotypes but they added to the audience's enjoyment.

After their second season, Hickok left in disgust, manners and sobriety being a challenge for him. Omohundro and Cody split up as well, each hoping to make his own fortune. Omohundro returned west to be a big game guide. Cody toured stage plays for nine more seasons, with ever better acting and more sophisticated scripts (see more on Cody's stage plays in *Scout*, Vol. 30, no.1, March 2015). Conflicts with Indians and shootouts gave way over time to



Donald McKay, a western scout with Indian parentage, brought Oregon Indians to the eastern stage in quasi-historical reconstructions of the Medoc Wars. Photo from wikipedia.com

romance and sentiment. The plays became profitable. Omohundro rejoined Cody in the 1875-76 season, then launched his own career, with "Dashing Charlie," based on an 1872 Buntline story "Dashing Charlie, the Texas Whirlwind." He starred in "Texas Jack (in the Black Hills)" in April 1877, at the Bowery Theatre. Omohundro re-staged "Scouts of the Prairie" in 1877-78. In 1879 Omohundro's choice was "Trapper's Daughter," basically a re-write of Maeder's "Buffalo Bill." Jack's co-stars included former scouts Donald McKay and Dashing Charlie Emmett, with Arizona John Burke, who had also become Cody's manager. While starring in his "Texas Jack's Combination" at the Tabor Theater in Leadville, Colorado in 1880, Jack died of pneumonia. In 1883, with the sharpshooter William "Doc" Carver, Cody co-produced his first Wild West Show, in Omaha. He never turned back to the conventional stage.

Meanwhile, in Manhattan...

Show business professionals were quick to recognize a profitable genre following the success of "Scouts." Actor Julian Kent borrowed Cody's play "Life on the Border," written for Cody in 1875 by J. V. Arlington, re-naming it "Wild Bill, King of the Border Men," and began playing the lead in 1875. Kent added his trained bear, Julia, which he wrestled. Cody and Omohundro sued Kent for infringement on their "Wild Bill; or, Life on the Border," but they lost. As you've noticed by now, "borrowing" was rampant in those years; intellectual property rights were still a long

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way off. Kent performed his “Wild Bill” profitably until 1882.

Competing with “Scouts” were plays following up on the success of “Across the Continent.” August 1872, just months before “Scouts,” saw the premiere of “Hazel Eye, the Girl Trapper,” at the Bowery Theater. Fred G. Maeder wrote this play also, after Buntline’s recent story of the same title in the “New York Weekly.” The play is unusual in two regards. First, the theme was harmony with nature and its denizens, the Indians. Second, the lead was a female, Hazel Eye, a pioneer woman. Fanny Herring adopted the role and the crowds loved her,



MISS ALICE PLACIDE.

Professional actress Alice Placide married and co-starred with “Dashing Charlie” in their play of the same name. Photo from Wikipedia.com

even if critics didn’t. Herring went on to write some of her own plays, such as “Arizona Sue; or, the Tigress of the West”,

in 1878, and enjoyed a popular career until 1892.

The comedienne Alice Placide met Charles E. Emmett, “Dashing Charlie” of the dime novels, a real plains scout, in early 1873, when he went on stage in the play of the same name. They wed and began to perform together—a parallel with Josephine and Texas Jack. Their first production was in fall of 1873, in “Little Rifle; or, The White Spirit of the Pawnees,” and was successful. She was the actor; all Charlie had to do was show up, because he was the genuine scout. Alice and Charlie performed together in these two plays into the 1880s.

One of the innovations our boys introduced in “Scouts” was displaying their skills with pistol, knife, or lariat; Frank Ivers Frayne did them one better: he brought real shooting skills to the stage, as Annie Oakley and “Doc” Carver would do later in arenas for Wild West shows. Frayne’s “Scouts of the Sierra Nevada” in 1874 at the Bowery drew throngs. Frayne’s credentials were better than most city actors’. He had spent time in western mining camps and was a genuine sharpshooter, shooting out candles or shooting behind him using a mirror. His melodramas included not only his fine shooting but tricks with horses and dogs. Hall observes that Frayne’s animal tricks were emulated later in the movies by Roy Rogers’ sidekicks Trigger and Bullet. Tragically, Frayne’s gun exploded at a performance in 1882, killing his fiancé. He returned to the stage with somewhat more trustworthy tricks and performed into the ‘90s.

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Part Two will look at the frontier plays in the late 1870s and 1880s, when Cody and Omohundro were touring their popular “combinations,” or variety shows. 🦖



Frank Frayne had western credentials to play the heroes in his frontier melodramas. He was among the first to add real gun and animal tricks to his stage shows. Photo from wikipedia.com

Frank Ivers Frayne in costume as Si Slocum, one of his characters.



Next Scout Information

The deadline for the November 2015 issue of the Scout is October 15, 2015. Please send ideas and materials to our Guest Editors:

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Thank you, Mike and Jean!

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TALE OF THE COWBOY TRAIL...May 2013

By: Driftin' AaronG

*This is a tale of a tale of the Cowboy Trail
When cowboys roamed the west, where some would win an' some would fail*

*This is about the driftin' cowboys who had no particular place to go
They roamed this land to seek their adventures and fortunes always putting
on a good show*

*Some of these good ol' boys came outa' the east while some were born in the west
But they were almost always the same, always giving their very best*

*Most were hard-working and rode for the brand
Some were shiftless an' lazy while some were special and grand*

*The cowboy trail was one that was not easy on any man
Roping steers and branding, they gave as good as any man can*

*Scouting for Indians or headin' up a wagon train across the western plains
Driving a herd of cattle up the Chisholm Trail didn't take a lot of brains*

*But all these trails took common sense and a lot of heart
And these cowboys they did it all, right from the very start*

*Chasin' cows an' ropin' broncs was a hard way to live
But each cowboy from their souls they'd give*

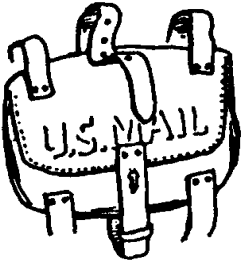
*Just to ride down the old cowboy trail was a treat to each man that rode
To give of his very best was their very own special code*

*So if you happen to visit an auction where some old saddles and tack are for sale
Just take a moment to think about the old cowboys who once rode the
Cowboy Trail*



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From the Mailbag:

Janice Fox, System Administrator of Lake County Public Library, Leadville, CO, on 6/3/15 wrote on Facebook:

I put our Texas Jack display back up for the summer at the library. I was thinking about you guys. Praying for Dick. Hoping he feels better, soon. (Dick Omohundro was in the hospital all during May.)

I'll stop by [the cemetery] this weekend and see how his memorial looks.

Mar 20, 2015 at 7:28 AM, Rick <rickwo@gmail.com> wrote:

Below is an email the TJA received. Does anyone have any information about this incident?

Rick

From: robert butler <rbutler116@hotmail.com>
Date: March 19, 2015 at 11:10:29 PM EDT
To: "info@texasjack.org"
Subject: Texas Jack, July 29, 1878

Do you have any information about what happened to Texas Jack immediately following the incident in Rawlins where he shot out the hotel window to impress Thomas Edison?
<http://www.wyomingtalesandtrails.com/rawlins2.html>

Thanks.

From: Larry Tyree

Rick,

I just researched it and evidently there is some inaccuracy to the account. Jack arrived after Edison had been there for three days already at least, and there is some discrepancy as to where he really stayed. There is a good probability that Edison was actually staying in the home of R. M. Galbraith. While the fact of TJ shooting out at a vane in the town may be accurate, it may not have been as dramatic as Edison portrayed it to be. He was known to tell stories "...for their effect, not their accuracy. He had little interest in dates, a bad memory for figures, a great capacity for generalization, a history of inconsistency and a penchant for exaggeration." -- Robert Conot, *A streak of Luck: The Life and Legend of Thomas Alva Edison, 1979*.



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The Making of Martha Jane Canary as Calamity Jane - Heroine of the West

By Tipton T. Omohundro

Possibly no other Western woman of her time has acquired the impressive and lasting legacy of Martha Jane Canary (a.k.a. Calamity Jane) 1856 – 1903. Hundreds of newspaper stories, biographies, and novels about her were published during her lifetime. During the



late 19th century the public's fascination for stories of Western-themed adventure was seemingly without limit. Clever newspaper editors and writers saw a chance for great profits by printing outrageous frontier-era stories of straight-shooting heroes, dastardly villains, rampaging natives, and damselfs in distress.

“Calamity Jane” was a prominent headliner in many of these tales as were her real-life contemporaries: “Wild Bill” Hickok, “Texas Jack” Omohundro, and “Buffalo Bill” Cody. There were many other fictional characters (like “Deadwood Dick”) that were created specifically for these stories. But whether

Calamity Jane 1880 <https://yesteryeargazette.wordpress.com/tag/calamity-jane/>

real persons or otherwise, the popularity of the Wild West theme in the press was undiminished. It did not seem to matter that most of these stories were, at best, “tall tales” of unlikely actual events (or even entirely fabricated non-events). No matter, whatever, to the readers of these publications mainly located east of the Mississippi River, they were stories of “Real American heroes and heroines”. And they couldn't get enough of it. Business was good.

Newspaper and publishing empires were then, as now, in tough competition to out-

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scoop each other. The popular Western stories soon evolved into features and interviews with various Western personalities. These subsequently grew to become serialized publications in the form of popular dime novels and other pulp fiction. The market for selling western-lore (albeit not entirely factual) was very good indeed, and Calamity Jane was one of the most popular characters to appear in these dime novel publications – either male or female.

The market for Western-themed promotions continued well into the 20th century. With the advent of motion pictures, a new generation of Calamity Jane stories was released to Western enthusiasts. Numerous full-length movies were made featuring Jane; (“The Plainsman” – 1937) with Jean Arthur and Gary Cooper as Wild Bill Hickok, followed by (“The Paleface” – 1948) with Jane Russell as Calamity Jane.



Royal Theater Poster

<http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/calamity-jane/theatre-royal-brighton/>



Royal Theater Poster

<http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/calamity-jane/theatre-royal-brighton/>



Royal Theater Calamity Jane 2014 Starring Jodie Prenger

<http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/calamity-jane/theatre-royal-brighton/>

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Then came (“Calamity Jane” – 1953) a musical comedy, with Doris Day in the lead role and another (“Calamity Jane” – 1984) starring Jane Alexander. Still another film was made (“Wild Bill” – 1995) which starred Jeff Bridges and Ellen Barkin as Calamity Jane. Television gave us yet more of Calamity Jane; in one version the heroine was played by Anjelica Huston (“Buffalo Girls” – 1995, a made for TV movie) and later, the popular HBO Series (“Deadwood” – 2004-05) featured the well-reviewed Robin Weigart as Calamity Jane. There has even been a Royal Theatre (Great Britain) musical production (“Calamity Jane” – 2014) starring the popular British singer-actress Jodie Prenger. As entertaining as these performances may have been, none of these actresses were remotely similar (in looks or in manner) to Martha Jane Canary – the one and true Calamity Jane.

According to 1860 census records, Martha was born in 1856 near Princeton, Missouri (approximately 80 miles NE of Kansas City), the first child to a poor farming family. Her mother, Charlotte M. Burge, was about 16 at the time of Martha’s birth. Her father, Robert W., was 31 years of age. By 1863/4 they decided to move the growing family westward. A gold strike located in Alder Gulch, Montana, in 1863, has been suggested as the motive for this move. Others have suggested that financial difficulties and/or family squabbles with Robert’s relatives were the primary motive for their departure.

In any event, Martha and her five younger siblings grew up rural, poor, unsupervised,

nearly wild, and totally uneducated. She remained functionally illiterate the rest of her life. (Her brief, and largely fictitious, *Autobiography* (1896), was merely dictated to the publisher, but she claimed it as Her Story.)

The westward trip to Montana via the Overland Trail was difficult and dangerous, taking upwards of four or five months. Martha learned to ride and drive a team of oxen at an early age and reportedly loved the open country and the adventure of the Overland Trail. But the journey produced little wealth for the family, and the records indicate Charlotte and her young girls made ends meet by cooking and taking in laundry, etc. in the mining camps. In the spring of 1866 Martha’s mother died near Blackfoot City, a mining settlement north of Alder Gulch. Martha was about 10 years old at the time.

Her misfortunes continued after her father relocated the family to Salt Lake City the following year. Martha and siblings (two boys, three girls) were orphaned there in 1867/8. The younger children were apparently adopted by members of the Mormon Church, but Martha had other plans and probably lied about her age by four years (as she did in her autobiography) claiming to be 16 years old. This was seemingly reasonable to the juvenile authorities, as Martha was a large and strong girl for her age, and so she was left to be on her own. She wasted no time in heading for the Wyoming Territory and settled in the area of Piedmont.

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There is no record of any reunion with her siblings during her lifetime. Little is known about their lives, except one brother, Elijah Canary, was known to have been arrested in Wyoming (1896). He was tried for being involved in a scheme to drive livestock onto the railroad tracks in order to exact bogus monetary damages from the Union Pacific. He subsequently served four years in the Wyoming Territorial Prison in Laramie.

In Piedmont, a wild and bustling railroad town (the main industry was producing ties for the Union Pacific railroad), 12 year old Martha had to grow up fast. She first earned her keep any way possible; as a waitress, as a domestic helper, in the dance halls, etc. But she preferred the outdoors and the company of men. Soon she was working as a teamster driving a six-mule team for the railroad and the contractors. She traveled extensively the next several years, and in short order she could drive a team with the best of them. The teamsters adopted her as one of their own, and Martha adopted their ways and habits. She did a man's job, wore men's clothing, and packed pistols which she could use proficiently. She smoked cigars, swore like a teamster, and developed, among other dubious habits, a life-long affinity for drinking alcohol...lots of alcohol. As one writer would later put it, "She was ahead of her time".

By 1874 Martha's wanderlust brought her to Fort Russell, Wyoming, where she found work as a scout for the Army. That year also brought "Gold Fever" to the territory with the discovery of gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota. She accompanied the

Newton-Jenny party into the Black Hills. The following year (1875) she was with General Crook's expedition (along with another scout by the name of William Hickok) when Crook's command was dispatched to protect the flood of miners in the Black Hills from hostile Sioux natives. The Sioux, it should be mentioned, had a legitimate claim to the Black Hills from the terms of a prior treaty with the U.S. government. But that treaty did not keep the hordes of fortune hunters from settling in the area. The settlers around Deadwood only experienced a few minor skirmishes with Indians. However, General G. A. Custer's division of the 7th Cavalry was utterly destroyed May 1876, some 200 miles to the West in a portion of the Montana Territory called the Little Big Horn (River). These were dangerous times in the territories and war with the Lakota (Sioux), Cheyenne, and other tribes would sporadically continue for years to come.

It was in the spring 1876, when the Charlie Utter wagon train arrived in Deadwood with Wild Bill Hickok and also Martha Jane as one of the drivers. The boomtown settlement was just beginning, but there were already thousands of people living there with the same hope of finding a fortune in gold. Knee-deep mud, rats, and streets strewn with garbage, and a smallpox epidemic the following year were mere inconveniences to the vast majority of gold hunters. Bill Hickok came to Deadwood to play poker, while Martha came mostly for the adventure of being there. It was not a fortunate trip for Hickok, however, as he was murdered in the Number 10 Saloon on August 2, 1876, by

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Jack McCall, who later was hanged for the crime. Martha sincerely mourned the loss of her friend and idol. She was not present at the time of the crime, but she attended his funeral along with hundreds of others.



Deadwood, 1876

<https://www.pinterest.com/ninakel/deadwood-sd/>

It was here in Deadwood 1877, at age 21 that Martha's legacy as Calamity Jane was ultimately forged. Her frequent over-the-top behavior had already captured the attention of the local newspapermen. For example, when drinking, she had the habit of "borrowing" a horse to ride up and down Main Street firing pistols and occasionally would ride into one of the saloons for more

of the same. Her celebrity was reaching the attention of people on the East coast. Stories were being published. In the fall of 1877, Edward L. Wheeler released the first in a series of 33 "Deadwood Dick" dime novels. Calamity Jane appeared prominently in about half of the series and was billed as "The Heroine of Whoop Up". The series was immensely popular and had a huge circulation. Typical in style and fashion with many other dime novels, the stories were full action with shoot-outs, harrowing escapes, wild chases, evil-doers and even romance. Little, or none of it, was founded on anything remotely related to actual events; but this author (who by all accounts never set foot west of the Mississippi River and who never met Martha Canary), made Calamity Jane a household name throughout the Eastern seaboard of the United States.

For the rest of her life Calamity Jane would be known and recognized for these stories wherever she would travel. She assumed the role with relish. Not long thereafter making personal appearances became a viable career for her which she continued well into her later years. She reached the apex of this path in 1895-96 with several tours in the East for the Kohl & Middleton Dime Museum. One advertisement sketch for these appearances pictured her wearing fringed leather pants, a large sombrero and a dagger in her teeth. The tours took her to Minneapolis, Chicago, and other cities where she was promoted as; "The Fearless and Intrepid Scout, Trapper and Indian Slayer", "The Pioneering New Woman - Calamity Jane", "The most-famous American Woman". Curiously, in one such museum appearance also appearing

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with Calamity Jane was; “Unele - The Aboriginal Albino Beauty”, “Ralston - The Rattlesnake King”, and a person using the name “Texas Jack”, who appeared as a one-armed whittler. (No relation to John B. Omohundro who also became known as “Texas Jack”.)

Later she appeared at the Pan-American Exposition in 1901 in New York and also in “Buffalo Bill” Cody’s Wild West Show 1901-1902. However, failing health caused

her to relocate back to the Deadwood area where she died August 1, 1903, at age 47. She was buried in Mount Moriah cemetery in Deadwood near William Hickok.

Despite the limitations of her youth, a lack of education, and personal failings related to drink, Martha Jane Canary became the one and only Calamity Jane and remains world-famous today for her independent ways, adventurous spirit, unflinching courage, and as a pioneer in the early days of the West. 🦮

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The Texas Jack Scout



Hi Texas Jack Family and Friends!!

I hope you enjoyed celebrating our Independence Day!!! July is steamy here in Virginia and we are experiencing more rainfall than usual! Needless to say, it is really MUGGY!!!!

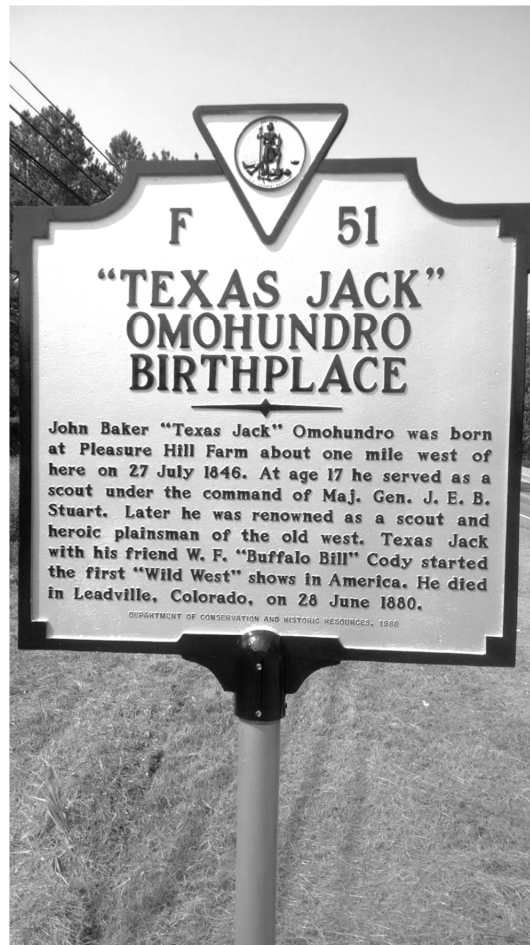
I am happy to report that the TJA highway marker in Palmyra, VA, has been reinstalled after a contractor working for the highway department damaged it. The marker was not repairable so a new one was cast.

A couple of minor corrections were made to the marker since we had the opportunity to do so. Texas Jack's middle name was added and his birthdate was also corrected. The marker is beautiful and if you have not seen it in person I hope you will someday have that opportunity!!!

It's time to start preparing for "Kansas City Roundup" summer of 2016!!!

Hope you are having a GREAT summer!!!!

Mary Golladay
President



The Texas Jack Scout



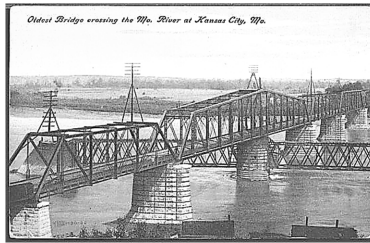
TEXAS JACK ROUNDUP: Kansas City Missouri Area June 22-26, 2016

By Larry Tyree

The newest venue for the Texas Jack Roundup will be in the country's midsection, an area with rich history filled with Indians, fierce border wars, the American Civil War, religious revival and persecution, and the indelible marks left by tens of thousands of pioneers who came from the east as emigrants, stopping one last time to outfit before embarking on the unparalleled adventure of trekking 2,000 miles along the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon trails.

Texas Jack, Buffalo Bill, and Wild Bill Hickok all passed through the area as they went back and forth from the East Coast to their destinations in the West—whether to St. Louis or Chicago from Fort McPherson, Nebraska, or on the way to the Yellowstone hunts with the Grand Duke of Russia. They would have come through on horseback and by train especially since the railroad was being built in the 1860s.

Kansas City and St. Louis were connected by railroad for the first time in 1865.ⁱ By 1869 the first bridge across the Missouri River allowed Kansas City to be the connection between Chicago and Texas.ⁱⁱ This helped to establish Kansas City as a major cattle town and staging area for bringing Texas herds to the East coast.ⁱⁱⁱ This was likely one of the reasons Jack stopped working the cattle drives because trains now carried the cattle. He may have ended up in Fort McPherson because the Union Pacific line ran through there and because scouts would have been needed by the Army.



Independence, MO, especially saw thousands of settlers depart on the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon Trails. Daniel Morgan Boone, son of Col. Daniel Boone, was likely the first white trapper in the area.^{iv} His brother Nathan later helped in the establishment of Fort Osage in the year 1808.^v Fort Osage was built and was the principal outpost established by the Army for trading with the local Indian tribes and protection of settlers. This allowed expansion to the neighboring area of present-day Independence, MO. Long before Independence had a name however, it had been a well-known area called "Big Spring" by the local Native Americans because it was a fresh water source. It became a favorite for pioneers who stopped for water as they moved through the area as well.^{vi}



Pioneers began to pass through the Independence area in earnest in 1819 after 107,000 acres in western Missouri were opened for settling on public lands.^{vii} Then another influx occurred in

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1825 when 24 miles of border land along the Missouri-Kansas border became available.^{viii} Independence was named in late 1821 as a Camp Independence, and later became a city as families put down roots and established businesses. Fort Osage was decommissioned in 1822.

ROUNDUP SITE VISITS

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

We will shelter in the City of Independence, Missouri. Founded in 1827 near the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas rivers, Independence was the farthest point westward on the Missouri River where steamboats or other cargo vessels could travel. Independence grew from a trading post to the Queen City of the Trails. By the 1840's, it was one of the most important "jumping off" points for the tens of thousands of settlers who flocked to the city to stock for the fur trade, or to push westward with supplies as they headed out on the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon Trails.



We'll visit several sites at the historic **Independence Square**:

National Frontier Trails Museum

318 W. Pacific, Independence, Missouri, 64050

<http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/NFTM/AboutUs>

The Historic Trails Museum will bring much of the history and lore of the area to light, particularly the connection to America's principle western trails.

<http://www.ci.independence.mo.us/NFTM/AboutUs#sthash.RNbloCoZ.dpuf>

Field Code Changed

1859 Old Jail and Marshal's Home [National Register of Historic Spaces]

217 N Main St, Independence, MO 64050

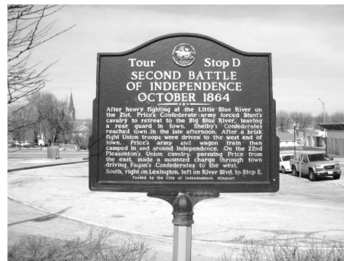
Constructed in 1859, the cells housed famed guerilla raider, William Quantrill, women and children who were detained by Order Number 11, and Frank James. The Marshal Home is on site, also a museum, and one room schoolhouse.

Wild Bill Hickok Parking Lot

We'll make a stop at this landmark and find out how it got its name.

Battle Ground

History about the 2nd battle of Independence will be explored from several locations. Right is one of the tour markers. (thecivilwarmuse.com)



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ALEXANDER MAJORS HISTORIC HOUSE AND MUSEUM [*National Register of Historic Places*] 8201 State Line Rd., Kansas City, MO.

The Roundup will visit the 3,400 square foot antebellum homestead of Alexander Majors (1814 – 1900), one of the founders of the Pony Express. William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) was hired by Majors as one of the first riders in this new rapid mail delivery service that started in 1860 north of Kansas City in St. Joseph, MO.



Located on State Line between Missouri and Kansas and built in 1856, the home and barn served as headquarters of Majors' vast transportation and freight empire, instrumental in supplying America's western expansion.

ARABIA STEAMBOAT MUSEUM

400 Grand Ave., Kansas City, Missouri

Because of its importance to transportation of people and goods, the Missouri River was the first "highway" of the West. In September of 1856, the Steamboat *Arabia* sank after hitting a snag in the river. It was lost with over 200 tons of cargo destined for 20 cities. For 132 years it was lost until discovered and painstakingly brought up for restoration and display as a major time capsule of life in the 1850s and '60s.



ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI



St. Joseph was the launching point of the Pony Express. We'll visit both the **Pony Express Stables**, 914 Penn St, and the **Patee House**, 1202 Penn St, St Joseph, MO, which served as the Headquarters of the famous mail delivery service. Next door, the **Jesse James Home and Museum** will be visited. A special treat for lunch will be in store as well.

THE PLAINS INDIANS ART EXHIBIT, NELSON-ADKINS MUSEUM OF ART –

Optional

4525 Oak St, Kansas City, MO

You may optionally visit, on Saturday afternoon, the **Plains Indians Art Exhibit in the Nelson-Adkins Museum of Art**. The Nelson also has exceptional offerings in many other types of art and is a fascinating tour.

THE BANQUET

313 W Pacific Ave, Independence, MO

The banquet will be catered on the grounds of the **Bingham-Waggoner Mansion**. During the Civil War, it was the home of famous artist George Caleb Bingham and features prominently in the history of the Independence community.

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BBQ! Kansas City is well known for its barbecue, and world-renown U.S. Grand Pit Master, Andy Groneman and family will cater the meal for the Association. Check out his competition BBQ team, at smokonwheels.com.



Special period music of the 1870s will be performed by the local musicians, and a local historian will regale us with pioneer tales and lore from the area.

These are the preliminary plans for the Roundup and of course there may be modifications. But as one can see, there is plenty to do and see in the greater Kansas City area that is of historical interest and significance to the Texas Jack Association. Early indications are that we will be housed in Independence at the **Hilton Garden Inn**. There are many restaurants nearby, nine of which are in walking distance from the hotel. All the info you need will be coming in the November, 2015, and March, 2016 issues of *The Texas Jack Scout!* 🦮



Look out Kansas City! Here we come!!



ⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri_Pacific_Railroad

ⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hannibal_and_St._Joseph_Railroad

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri%E2%80%93Kansas%E2%80%93Texas_Railroad

^{iv} Jackson County Pioneers, Pearl Wilcox, 1975, Jackson County Historical Society, pp. 118-119.

^v *Ibid*, p. 21.

^{vi} *Ibid*, p. 122.

^{vii} Missouri Historical Review, Vol. 3: 179.

^{viii} W. L. Webb, Independence Examiner, Centennial Edition, 1927, Topic 5.

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