the TEXAS JACK SCOUT

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COLORADO

As always, when I learned the location of the next Roundup, I asked Rand, "Why Golden?" "Well," he replied, "it is probable that Texas Jack was there, and it's the burial place of Buffalo Bill." Golden is not far from Leadville where Texas Jack is buried, and it seemed fitting to me that this long lasting friendship, begun at Cottonwood Springs (later to be renamed as Ft. McPherson) in 1868, ended with the two "good pards" in neighborly resting places.

Part I

Leadville

Silver! The silver era, the most spectacular and lurid in the mining annals of Colorado, really began with a series of almost incredibly rich strikes along California Gulch, which had been virtually deserted since the early days of the gold rush. Thousands of men came swarming into the state, and almost overnight an uninhabited pine flat just below timberline, boxed in by the towering Mosquito Range and the Continental Divide, sprouted a town – cabins, tents, pine bough shelters, banks, grocery stores,

Chestnut Street, Leadville, 1880

Colorado State Historical Society

Continued on page 3

Dear friends,

As always it has been such an incredible journey into our history to research material for my article for this issue. What courage and spirit our ancestors exhibited in coming to this brand new country and carving out a livelihood. As always I am especially touched to read about Texas Jack and his beautiful and caring wife. It doesn't seem to matter which part of his life I look at, the consensus is that he was a very good man, full of courage, multi-talented, generous and kind. What an inspiration.

Some of you may know that Rand (my son-in-law and former TJA president) McKinney's dad, Charles McKinney of New Mexico, suffered a stroke last fall and is currently being cared for in a nursing home close to us. He experienced loss of sight and is still quite weak. I honor Rand for his devotion to his dad, and I see in his response to this difficult time all the qualities that made Texas Jack a hero. It's in the genes. Rand's wife Candice continues to send polenta and other goodies for Charles, which he loves to receive. I'm so glad he's close enough to visit.

I received an email from Steve Friesen at the Buffalo Bill Museum and Gravesite saying he hoped we would be visiting him there. He was most helpful. I enjoyed the new blog and Texas Jack Site, great job, I really enjoyed it. Best wishes to all and happy spring.

KB Chapman

Guest Editor

Charles McKinney

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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

"fancy parlors", smelters, charcoal ovens, wine theaters, gambling saloons, boarding houses, ten-cent lunchrooms, restaurants, bicycle clubs, barber shops, beer gardens, temperance societies, grand opera houses, and unsightly mine dumps – a pulsating mass famed as the city of Leadville.

Prices rose rapidly, and many great fortunes were founded upon ruthless profiteering. Rooming houses turned away hundreds each night, and men were glad to pay $2 for the privilege of sharing a frowzy bed with a stranger in a makeshift room crowded with a dozen cots. A large tent advertised itself as the best "hotel" in town, and the Mammoth Palace, a vast shed lined with a double tier of bunks, was packed day and night to capacity, five hundred guests paying fifty cents each for an eight hour sleeping shift. Men fought for a place to sleep on drafty saloon floors, paying high for warmer spots near the stove. Hundreds died of pneumonia, and scores froze to death during the bitter mountain nights. And still the hordes poured in. All of Colorado followed the pace set by the "Magic City" as Leadville christened itself.

The archetype of the day was Horace Austin Warner Tabor, a Vermont born stonecutter, the best known of the Carbonate Kings of Leadville. He came to Colorado with his family in the gold rush of 1859, but fortune escaped them. He took up store keeping and served as postmaster in several towns, while his wife Augusta took in boarders and sold pastries. He didn't pay much attention to the silver boom, but it pleased him as a source of additional customers and new poker players. He grubstaked two itinerant German shoemakers, who helped themselves to a jug of whiskey without Tabor's knowledge. Just outside the camp they stopped to sample the liquor, and when the jug was almost empty, decided to dig right where they were standing. They struck a rich silver vein, and Tabor's grubstake entitled him to a third share in the Little Pittsburgh mine, from which he realized $500,000 in dividends within a short time. He bought a mine "salted" with silver from the Little Pittsburgh, but to save face he ordered his crew to keep on digging, and within eight feet they uncovered a vein that netted him $3,000,000! Tabor went on to buy an unworked claim for $117,000 and paid another $40,000 in liquidating all claims against it, and a few days later he brought in the $10,000,000 mine famed as the Matchless.

All of this development was not without its problems. Gambling and crime were rampant, fights were common, and often the bark of six guns could be heard above the mixed sounds of midnight revelry and debauchery. Lawlessness seemed to grow with the town. Enter Mr. Tabor, always civic minded and politically ambitious, he spearheaded the formation of numerous local guard units, including the Tabor Highland Guards and the Tabor Light Calvary - the duty of which was to patrol the streets, either day or night, to preserve order and to prevent the lawless element from gaining an upper hand. He became Leadville's first mayor in 1878-1879 and Lieutenant Governor of Colorado in 1879.

Wealth poured in for many, and there was a high demand for the best the world afforded in amusement and entertainment. In 1879 Leadville's leading theater, the Grand Central, was advertised as the largest, best appointed theater in the West.

GRAND CENTRAL THEATRE, 1880
It was in this popular theatre in Leadville that Texas Jack and his wife, Mlle. Morlacchi, made their last stage appearances.

Mr. Tabor outdid it all though, by building the Tabor Opera House, a magnificent three storied building which housed two stores on the ground floor, and on the second, offices as well as the opera house. On the third floor a covered bridge connected it to the Clarendon Hotel immediately to the south across St. Louis Avenue, so that actors, actresses, and celebrities could go to their rooms without using the street. Entrance to the opera house proper was through two large front doors into a spacious hall, up a flight of stairs, at the top of which to the right and left, doors entered the back of the main auditorium. Another staircase led to the balcony. It opened in November 1879 and still stands today.

The Tabor Opera House, 1880, Denver Public Library

This is what Malvern Hill Omohundro has to say in the *Genealogy*. "...Nights were gay in Leadville then, with the crowds of newly rich mine owners, seeking entertainment in dance

halls, saloons, and other places. What was more to be expected than that Leadville, the new-world rich and cosmopolitan city, should call Mlle. Morlacchi, the premier danseuse of two continents, to be their darling! And so it was that Jack, her husband, came with her to Leadville.... When they first arrived in Leadville the tenderly nurtured and cultured "Mademoiselle" was very much dissatisfied, for she was not used to such people as she found there, but Jack of the Plains, Jack, the Indian fighter, was in his element, for he was a man among men, and here was crowd to his liking.....

Photo from Buckskin and Satin.

.....On the gay streets of Leadville one might see of an evening a striking man well over six feet tall, strong and muscular, and so handsome that the ordinary passerby would, of course, turn around to inquire who this handsome and striking stranger was. He would be told Texas Jack. With his buckskin frock, fringed and beaded, and leggings of the material tucked into high-topped cavalry boots and armed with spur, the indispensable belt, with weapons of the most approved make, and gray sombrero, Jack presented a picture not easily to be forgotten."

Photo-Program from Buckskin and Satin.

Even after the gala opening of the new opera house, the Grand Central continued to feature top dramatic talent, thus giving Tabor the stiffest kind of competition. Mademoiselle Morlacchi was featured there for many weeks in different plays, the first of which was the "Black Crook, " in which she had the support of her Grand Ballet Troop. Texas Jack and his wife Mlle. Morlacchi became very popular in Leadville and were much entertained. They entered into the life of the community. Jack

joined the Tabor Light Cavalry, and Mlle. Morlacchi opened a dancing school for children, and both made stage appearances.

Towards the end of May, as the season wound down, Jack caught a cold. Being a strong and seasoned outdoorsman, he didn't pay much attention to it. By the middle of June however, the cold was worsening until finally at the urging of his wife, Jack consented to take to his bed, thinking he would be fine in a day or two.

Unfortunately the cold turned into pneumonia, and in spite of all efforts by the best physicians of the time headed by Dr. Henry Cook, and the unceasing love and nursing of his devoted wife, Texas Jack died at the age of 33. His body lay in state at the Tabor Opera House, and his funeral services were conducted there by the Reverend Thomas J. Mackay, Episcopal Chaplain of the Tabor Light Cavalry.

Following the service, which was attended by a full house, the funeral procession, led by a fifty piece brass band, followed by Jack's former comrades of the Tabor Light Cavalry under the leadership of the Hon. H.A.W. Tabor, then Lt. Governor of Colorado, made its way to the Evergreen Cemetery. At the graveside, Mr. Tabor made a few complimentary closing remarks about his friend Texas Jack. The services concluded with the firing of a military salute and the sounding of taps.

Mlle. Morlacchi was prostrate with grief. She canceled her contracts and went into immediate retirement. She lived the remaining six years of her life quietly with her sister, who preceded her in death, in Lowell, Mass. In her will, she included .... five hundred dollars to be expended by my executor in procuring a suitable monument for the grave of my husband, John B. Omohundro at Leadville Colorado.... Unfortunately, this last request was never carried out.

TEXAS JACK'S TOMBSTONE.

His grave slab would have suited his ideas to a dot. There is the cartridge belt, the bowie-knife and guns; below, his Winchester. Then a portrait of his pony, Yellow Chief, duly labelled, and finally a few words of the famous man who rests so quietly below:

The simple board marker at Texas Jack's gravesite suited him. There was a cartridge belt, the Bowie knife and guns; below, his Winchester. Then a portrait of his pony, Yellow Chief, duly labeled, and finally a few words of the famous man who rested below: Sacred to the memory of Texas Jack (J.B. Omohundro), died June 28, 1880, 39, Pneumonia. In fact Jack was only 33 years old.

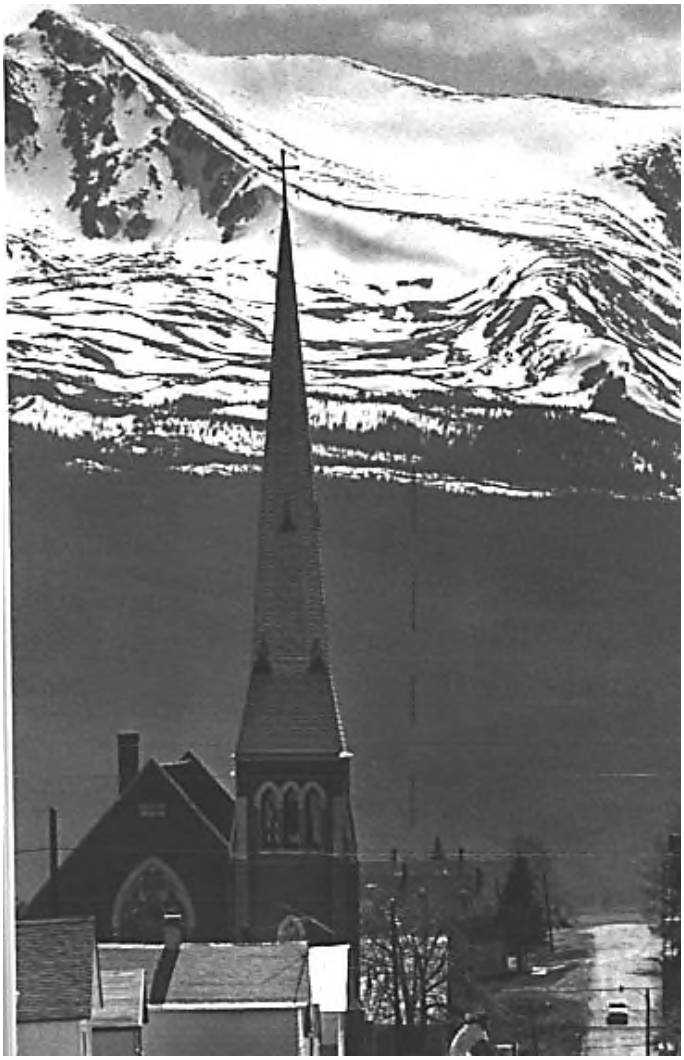
And so he rested quietly until September 1908, when his old and now very famous friend William F. Cody made a visit to Leadville and the gravesite of his old pard. There is a wonderful description of his visit as reported by the *Herald Democrat* in its Sunday September 6, 1908, issue, in Herschel Logan's exceptional book *Buckskin and Satin.*

Reproduced from an unknown newspaper, this photo shows Buffalo Bill at the grave of his old pard, Texas Jack. The board headstone was replaced with a granite marker placed in grateful memory by his old friends, Col. Wm. F. Cody, Maj. John M Burke, and a devoted admirer Johnny Baker, foster son of Buffalo Bill. -*Buckskin and Satin.*

There in the quiet solitude of Evergreen Cemetery the great scout sleeps his last sleep. The wind plays and everlasting requiem as it blows softly through the stately pines. Nearby in all its majesty stands the eternal snow capped Mt. Massive. – *Buckskin and Satin.* Photo from *Buckskin and Satin*.

Leadville Today

At an elevation of 10,430 feet, Leadville is the highest incorporated city in the USA. Self-described as quaint, and absolutely original, Leadville has been designated as a National Historic Landmark District including seventy square blocks of Victorian architecture and the adjoining twenty square mile Leadville mining district - a fascinating graveyard of frontier mining. The main avenue includes over 50 significant 1870s buildings including the only two Tabor structures remaining in Colorado, the **Tabor Opera House** and the recently renovated, award-winning **Tabor Grand Hotel.**



In photos of Leadville, the spire of the Annunciation (Catholic) Church is frequently a prominent feature. The church, on the corner of Poplar and East 7th, was built in 1879. The steeple holds a huge bell, "St. Mary", weighing over 3,000 pounds. The famous "Unsinkable Molly Brown" was married in the church on September 1, 1886, and the funeral services for Baby Doe Tabor were held here in 1935.
The exterior church walls bear signs reading "Danger – Avalanche". They do not refer to avalanches on the slopes above town; the danger they warn of is an avalanche of snow sliding off the roof of the church. Leadville averages over 300 inches of snow per season; people have been killed by snow falling off the roofs of regular houses. A substantial "slump" of snow off the large, high roof of Annunciation Church would indeed be a serious danger.
http://webpages.charter.net/dnance/colorado/leadville-abt.htm

Some features of high country living give reason for a little precaution. As you travel from sea level and elevation increases, the air gets thinner and there's less oxygen. Humidity levels decrease, the air gets colder, and the sun's ultraviolet rays are more penetrating. Visitors are often out of breath, and their breathing is faster and deeper. Some people develop more uncomfortable flu-like symptoms of headache, upset stomach, poor appetite, problems sleeping, and feeling tired.

To make your adjustment to the altitude easier, stay at 5,000 feet for a day to two before traveling higher; get a little extra rest and less physical activity in the first few days; drink more water and do not consume alcoholic beverages, caffeine, and salty foods. Salt causes your body to retain fluid, which will increase the effects of altitude sickness. Eat low fat meals and enjoy higher carbohydrate foods. Most of all, listen to your body! take it easy, enjoy, and don't push yourself.

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http://www.texasjack.org

http://www.leadville.com

http://denverlibrary.org

http://www.buffalobill.org

Leadville today. http://www.leadville.com

The President's Message

These days we hear a lot on the topic of value. There is value that is either gained or lost in the stock market. Value is ascribed in many jobs at this time of year as performance is reviewed. There is also a sense of gained value when we get a new job, and a loss when positions disappear in the work place. Home values rise and fall, and we are hoping that the nation's economy is able to stabilize itself as soon as possible.

During the last year the Internal Revenue Service granted our association tax-exempt status. Because of that we have petitioned for and received $768 in refunds from previous tax payments in 2007, 2006, and 2005. We are still petitioning for one more in the 2004 tax year. Members can also claim tax deductions from their gifts to the association because of our new status. That's a good value!

Membership in the Texas Jack Association gives us a chance to stand together as a body of individuals who seek to maintain that legacy. We receive annually three issues of *The Scout* and have the opportunity to share knowledge with others. Ask your local library if they want to receive copies of *The Texas Jack Scout.* If you have time, look also for any copies of correspondence or other items in the holdings of local museums. By pooling our efforts, we find new links to Jack's history.

The Texas Jack Association views value in the quality of its members. In that we are wealthy. Texas Jack himself is someone that we value highly. His legacy is what we uphold and continue to seek more detail about. We continue to be blessed by what we learn about his life and times. Because Jack was a western hero, his mythical quality was widely admired and celebrated. Knowledge of history enriches our civilization and allows us to progress because of it. Texas Jack had an important role in the history of the Wild West, and he added ultimately to each one of us. Now that's value!

Larry Tyree
President, TJA

Photo from the Denver Public Library of the Interior of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville, CO.

We will see this on a tour during the 2010 Roundup in Golden, CO!

Recent TJA Publicity
By Larry Tyree

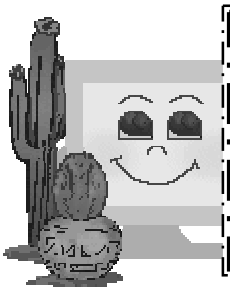
A couple weeks ago I received another mailing list of persons who have indicated interest in knowing more about The Texas Jack Association through an ad that was placed in the *True West Magazine*. I was sent a list of 48 names and addresses of persons interested in more information about the Association. I will be sending them some information.

In May 2008 we received a first list of 44 names. We will have shared the life and times of Texas Jack with almost one hundred totally new people through follow-up from the advertisements. In addition, 800+ subscribers in the Wild West History Association's publication will have read an article co-written by Rand McKinney and modified by myself which was recently published in their February 2009 issue. All in all, we have reached over 900 new people.

The actual readership of *True West Magazine* is about 200,000, and so the ads are at least available to those who purchase the magazine, or view it in its online version. I would like to encourage other venues to get the word out about the life and times of John B. Omohundro, Texas Jack.

These ads have been made possible by contributions from members, and their generous donations have helped us to further the word about Texas Jack.

TJA ad in True West Magazine



PLEASE VISIT THE NEW AND IMPROVED TEXAS JACK ASSOCIATION WEBSITE!
http://www.texasjack.org

NEWT…

From 'Lonesome Dove'

By: Driftin' AaronG
August 2006

Newt Dobbs was his given name
He rode from Montana to Texas an' earned a lawman's name

Like his proud father Old Capt'n Call
He became a Texas Ranger an' to no man he'd ever crawl

But Old Capt'n Call was shot in the back
An' Newt come a runnin' the outlaws he had to track

Across the Missouri Breaks alone he rode
A chasin' them outlaws by his own deadly code

The outlaws they were runnin' wild an' free
To catch 'em all Newt 'd have to pay the fee

He traveled the land beyond and followed their outlaw trail
To catch and kill 'em all he knew one day he'd prevail

The years they came an' went until that fateful day
To honor Old Capt'n Call the old timers often say

Newt met them in the street with guns a blazin' wild
He killed 'em all 'cause Capt'n Call raised him from a child

Back to the ranch in Montana he rode with pride

To live his life on the old ranch with the ghosts of Gus 'n' Capt. Call at his side.

"Texas Jack" Must-haves

Sweatshirt $20

Mug $15

Polo shirt $20, T shirt $15

Poster $15

We have a wide assortment of sizes available. The polo shirts come in two colors: a white polo (embroidered image), and a beige polo (a screened image).

Please make check payable to the **Texas Jack Association** and mail to:

The Texas Jack Association
% Rene Tyree, Treasurer
244 NW Whitlock Dr.
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

NOW'S THE TIME TO GET YOUR ORDER IN!

NEXT *SCOUT* ISSUE INFORMATION

The deadline for the July 2009 issue of *The Scout* is July 15, 2009. Please send ideas and materials to our Guest Editor:

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Book Review by KB Chapman

The Quilt That Walked To Golden, Women and Quilts in the Mountain West from the Overland Trail to Contemporary Colorado. By Sandra Dallas with Nanette Simonds.

From the Prologue..... "In 1864, Mary Jane Paulson Burgess, about twenty- six, packed up her household belongings for the long trip across the prairie from Columbus, Ohio, to Golden City, Colorado Territory. Mary Jane's husband, Thomas W. Burgess, thirty - four, had recently returned from a trip west where he had prospected for gold. The precious metal was discovered in Colorado just six years earlier, and he had hoped to make his fortune there. But Thomas fell ill, and when he recovered, he concluded that he was not cut out for the manual labor of a prospector, working outdoors in the cold and rain. He looked for something more to his liking and discovered Golden.

Located at the edge of the mountains, Golden was a supply point for the mining towns farther west and was so important that from 1862 to 1867 it was Colorado's territorial capital. The Civil War had deprived the town of money for growth, however, and Burgess saw a prosperous outlook for a man who could provide Golden with necessities. His future, as the saying went, was not in mining, but in mining the miners."

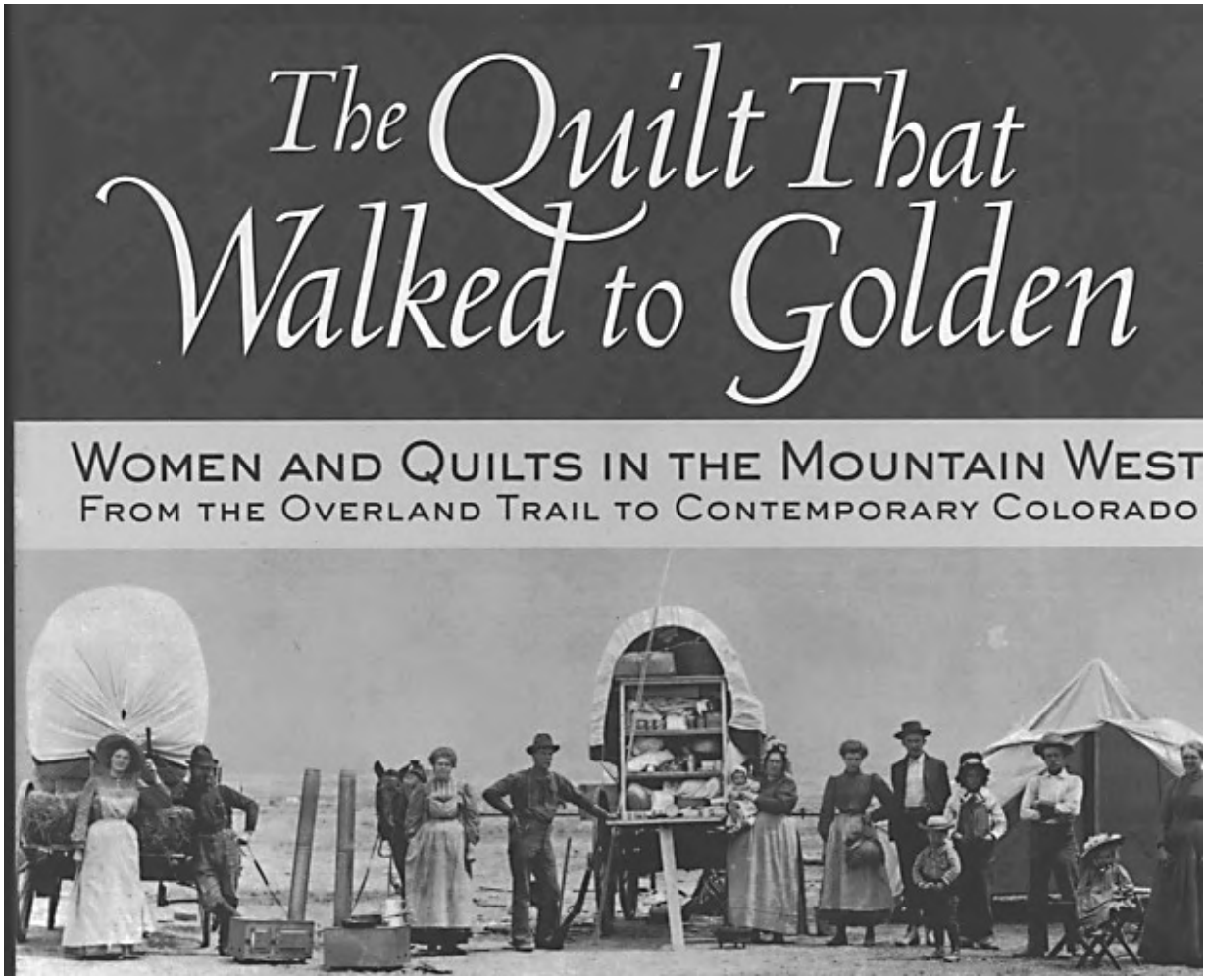
The trip west was made with his wife and daughter Alice, 2 years old, his brother and his wife, in covered wagons – full of enough building materials to construct a business block. This left little room for much of anything else. "...as a space saving measure, Mary Jane packed her china plates and cups in barrels of flour.....even then there was no room in the wagon for trunks of clothes, and Thomas told the women they could take only the apparel that they could wear. Unwilling to leave behind their clothes the women layered their dresses and skirts, blouses and petticoats. Bundled up in their entire wardrobes, they made the journey from Ohio to Golden, much of it on foot.... their layers of skirts dragging in the dust, rather than ride on the hard wagon seats. They probably made about 20 miles a day."

The prologue goes on to describe the duties of the women, to look after the children, their husbands, and anyone who got sick. They picked wild greens to eat as they walked and buffalo chips for fueling the campfires. " They cooked on heavy iron pots suspended on tripods above the flames, while the wind drove smoke and powdered buffalo chips into their faces and clothes." They seldom had the opportunity to bathe, and when water was available, they would wash themselves and the clothes.

The Burgess' made it, and Thomas built his hotel and opened the Burgess Block in 1866. It held a saloon, store and public hall where early day balls and

political gatherings were held. “Mary Jane kept busy in her new home, and if she had spare time she sewed. As the red and blue calico dresses she had worn on the overland trek wore out, she ripped them up and put the pieces aside for quilts. Later, she used the cotton fabric from her pioneer wardrobe to piece a Lone Star quilt top. Perhaps she used the pattern because it reminded her of starry nights on the Great Plains.....”

The rest of the book is a treasure trove of American History as recorded in the quilts made by women from the past right up to the present. The photos are wonderful, both of the quilts and the quilters. There are patterns and instructions for making some of these wonderful quilts, and the notes and bibliography offer a wealth of historical references. A wonderful book for anyone interested in the American West or vintage and contemporary American quilts.



IN THIS ISSUE…

Colorado, Part 1……..…….……..1
From the Editor's Desk…….…….…….……2
President's Message.…….……10
Recent TJA Publicity…….11
"Newt" by Driftin' AaronG……..…….12
Next Issue Information……..…….……13
Texas Jack Must-Haves……..……..……..13
Book Review-*The Quilt That Walked To Golden*……..…….……...14

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