

OUTLAWS OF CAPITOL REEF COUNTRY

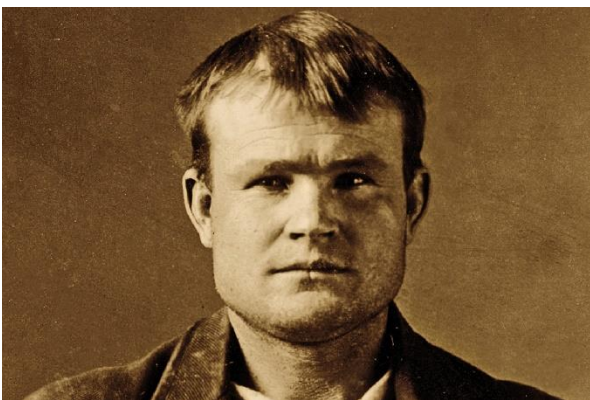


Blazing the Outlaw Trail from Montana to Mexico at the turn of the 19th century, infamous outlaws like Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch gang often hid out in Capitol Reef Country. The temptations of train hold ups, bank robberies and cattle rustling were just too great for these unsavory characters to resist—and Capitol

Reef Country's remote and wild landscape was the ideal location for hiding out after a heist. Robbers Roost was the most common fugitive hideout, thanks to the rugged terrain and the Dirty Devil River winding through the intricate maze of red rock sandstone canyons.

Butch Cassidy

Butch Cassidy, born Robert LeRoy Parker in 1866, may have had a respectable upbringing but his rebellious streak soon had him breaking the law. He was just 14 when he committed his first crime, breaking into a shop and stealing pants and pie. Acquitted of the crime, he drifted between Colorado, Wyoming and Montana before scoring his first bank robbery. That 1889 looting ended up with \$20,000—and his first stint in jail.



The Wild Bunch

As Utah's most renowned outlaw, Butch Cassidy's equally nefarious crew included Wild Bunch gangsters Harry "The Sundance Kid" Longabaugh, William Ellsworth "Elzy" Lay, Matt Warner/Will "The Mormon Kid" Christianson, Ben "The Tall Texan" Kilpatrick, Will Carver and Harvey "Kid

Curry" Logan. Outlaw sisters Anne and Josie Basset, along with Etta Place and Annie Rogers, were

among the few women who were considered part of the gang. They often aided the Wild Bunch by providing horses, food and other essentials to help them evade the law.

The Wild Bunch grew larger after Butch Cassidy's release from jail in 1896. In 1899, Butch and Elzy committed one of their most notorious crimes, robbing a Union Pacific train carrying the Pleasant Valley Coal Company's payroll. Butch made it to Robber's Roost, but Elzy was injured, captured and sent to prison.

Elzy had charisma but Butch was the brains. He planned bank and train heists, then sent the Wild Bunch in to do the dirty work, considering himself a "gentleman's bandit." Gang member Kid Curry, on the other hand, was wanted on warrants for at least 15 murders. Detective William Pinkerton even called Kid Curry "the most rancorous outlaw in America" without a single redeeming trait.



Kid Curry hooked up with The Sundance Kid after serving jail time together. They parlayed that "friendship" into a bank robbery, then joined the Wild Bunch. The boys met Etta Place and Annie Rogers at the infamous Fannie Porter's Brothel. At some point, Annie hooked up with Ben "The Tall Texan" Kilpatrick, the Wild Bunch's most prolific train robber. It was downhill from there for Annie, who eventually spent time in prison for passing stolen bank notes. The Tall Texan served 15 years in

prison for robbery, but immediately returned to a life of crime upon his release in 1911. He was killed during an attempted train robbery less than a year after his release from prison.

Matt Warner, aka "The Mormon Kid" also committed several train and bank robberies alongside Butch Cassidy and Elzy Lay. A gunfight earned him five years in a Utah state prison. Unlike other Wild Bunch members, Warner redeemed himself and joined the right side of the law, living peaceably until his death of natural causes at age 74.

Outlaw History

Western outlaws were some of the most notorious historical figures of their time, and also some of the best horsemen. Their skill on horseback and knowledge of Capitol Reef Country's intricate maze of canyons helped them evade the law on more than one account. But by 1902 the Wild Bunch disbanded once and for all. As it turns out, Robber's Roost was never infiltrated by law enforcement officers. In fact, the original Wild Bunch corral can still be seen standing deep in Capitol Reef Country today. The terrain in Robber's Roost is as rugged as ever, and has become a popular, albeit remote, area for backpacking, hiking and camping.

Pony Express in Utah

April 22, 2016



RUTS WORN IN LIMESTONE ON OLD STAGE ROAD BETWEEN CAMP FLOYD AND FAUST STATION

Jay M. Haymond

Utah History Encyclopedia, 1994

The Pony Express mail service between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, was a short-lived business venture operated by the firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. The firm was well known as a freighting outfit using the central route in east-west transportation, which followed the general path of present-day Interstate 80. For freighting, the company worked under the name of Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company.

Under the leadership of William H. Russell, the Pony Express system planned to relay mail carried by horseback riders. Each rider rode from 75 to 125 miles during a day or night run. Way stations, ten to fifteen miles apart, furnished fresh horses and whatever the riders needed. There were 190 stations between Missouri and

California. The system was designed so that each rider changed horses at each station until his shift or segment was covered. The cost to send a letter was five dollars per ounce. The goal of the company was to carry the mail across the country in ten days, half the time established by stagecoach. Business leaders initially expressed enthusiasm when hearing the promise of improved mail service.

The sectional competition between the central route over the southern route also was important. The southern route was favored by the southern states of the Union and by Secretary of War John B. Floyd, a southerner, who was in a position to influence the route selection. People opposed to slavery were anxious to show that some route other than the southern route was best.

The Pony Express was inaugurated 3 April 1860 with high hopes for eventual government subsidy. The venture was a publicity success but a financial failure, lasting only eighteen months. Losses mounted to \$500,000 before the books were closed. The ponies and their riders could not compete with the Overland Telegraph, which was completed on 6 April 1861.

In Utah, under the leadership of Major Howard Egan of the Nauvoo Legion, the Pony Express operations ran rather smoothly. The route east to west started with the Needle Rock station, and then moved west to the following stations: Head of Echo Canyon, Half Way, Weber, East Canyon, Wheaton Springs, Mountain Dale, Salt Lake House (143 South Main), Travelers Rest, Rockwell's (100 yards south of Utah State Prison, Draper), Dugout, Camp Floyd (East Rush Valley), Rush Valley, Point Lookout (Government Creek), Simpson Springs (Riverbed), Dugway, Blackrock, Fish Springs (Boyd's), Willow Springs, and Deep Creek. At the time of operation, 20 of the 190 stations were in Utah. Utah companies also supplied many of the horses for the Pony Express.

The route crossed the Jordan River where the river cuts through the Transverse Mountains at Point of the Mountain. The route then went west to the south of the Oquirrh Mountains, to Faust, continued west, north of Vernon, and on to Fish Springs before crossing into the Nevada Territory.

Western Union completes the first transcontinental telegraph line

On October 24, 1861, workers of the Western Union Telegraph Company link the eastern and western telegraph networks of the nation at Salt Lake City, Utah, completing a transcontinental line that for the first time allows instantaneous communication between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. Stephen J. Field, chief justice of California, sent the first transcontinental telegram to President Abraham Lincoln, predicting that the new communication link would help ensure the loyalty of the western states to the Union during the Civil War.

The push to create a transcontinental telegraph line had begun only a little more than year before when Congress authorized a subsidy of \$40,000 a year to any company building a telegraph line that would join the eastern and western networks. The Western Union Telegraph Company, as its name suggests, took up the challenge, and the company immediately began work on the critical link that would span the territory between the western edge of Missouri and Salt Lake City.

The obstacles to building the line over the isolated western plains and mountains were huge. Wire and glass insulators had to be shipped by sea to San Francisco and carried eastward by horse-drawn wagons over the Sierra Nevada. Supplying the thousands of telegraph poles needed was an equally daunting challenge in the largely treeless Plains country, and these too had to be shipped from the western mountains.

In the summer of 1861, a party of Sioux warriors cut part of the line that had been completed and took a long section of wire for making bracelets. Later, however, some of the Sioux wearing the telegraph-wire bracelets became sick, and a Sioux medicine man convinced them that the great spirit of the “talking wire” had avenged its desecration. Thereafter, the Sioux left the line alone, and the Western Union was able to connect the East and West Coasts of the nation much earlier than anyone had expected and a full eight years before the transcontinental railroad would be completed.

THE HOLE IN THE ROCK EXPEDITION

In December of 1879 approximately 80 wagons, consisting of 250 men, women, and children, gathered about 40 miles southeast of Escalante, Utah. They were prepared, with supplies, for a six-week journey to establish a new community in southeastern Utah. Unfortunately, the trek actually took six months to complete.

These families, many already living in southwestern Utah, had been called by LDS Church President John Taylor to settle the southeast corner of Utah. Investigation of a southern route, along what is now the Utah and Arizona border, had been deemed too sandy for wagons. Explorers believed that a new route could be created near the town of Escalante traveling southeast across the Colorado River and then east along the edge of the San Juan River. The sheer faces of the cliffs and the depth of the canyons meant that the Colorado River basin was the least explored region of the continental United States.

Explorers found a narrow slot on the edge of the cliffs of the Colorado River and they surmised that this was a possible passageway for the wagons. Platte D. Lyman, leader of the party indicated that if a road could be built, it would be a steep descent in sections and would have to negotiate several sheer precipices. The company was prepared to do blasting of the cliffs to carve a passageway, and then to build a raft that could carry their teams and wagons across the Colorado River.

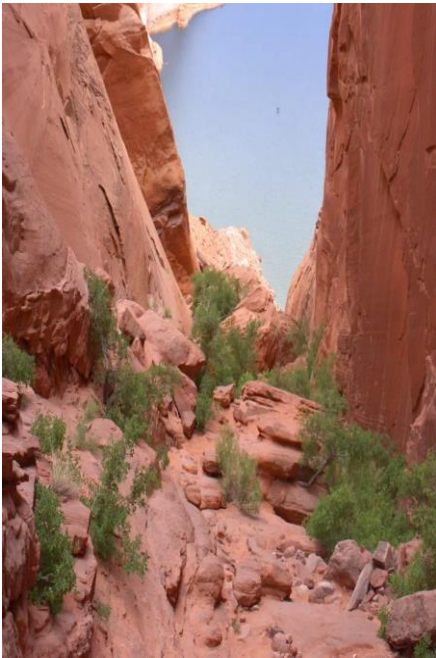
Members of the company, the Perkins brothers, were coal miners from Wales who were experts in using blasting powder. They were given the nickname of the "blasters and blowers from Wales." These two men were among several who were lowered over the cliff and dangle in midair to drill holes in the cliff and fill them with blasting powder. Their daily work continued even during winter blizzards.

The workers soon realized they would also have to create a section of road along the face of a fifty-foot rock wall. To accomplish this, men drilled a line of vertical holes ten inches deep and about a foot and a half apart. They built a retaining wall by pounding long wooden stakes into the holes and then filled in the

Another Hole In The Rock expedition leader, Kumen Jones, recorded his description of the events surrounding the descent of Hole In The Rock. He indicated that approximately twenty men and boys would hold long ropes on the back of each wagon. The wheels were brake-locked with chains, to stop the wagons from rolling forward too fast and into the struggling animals that were in the front of each wagon. On January 26, 1880, Platte D. Lyman recorded in his journal: "Today we worked all the wagons in this camp down the Hole and ferried 26 of them across the river. The boat is worked by one pair of oars and does very well."

Once the wagons were across the river, they began the arduous task of climbing out the other side of the canyon and finding their way onto the place that would become Bluff, Utah. Members of the party described their trek as some of the most desolate and rough country imaginable. This part of the journey also proved difficult as the group encountered other deep canyons and high rock formations that stood in their direct path. One canyon, now called Grand Gulch had to be circumnavigated and a route had to be found up, over, and down a large formation called Comb Ridge. The anticipated six-week journey found the group hungry and worn out throughout the actual six months of the trek. The Hole In The Rock expedition would not have been successfully accomplished without the additional supplies and support obtained from Mormon leaders and the pioneer settlers of Escalante.

The path that was taken by these pioneers can be partially retraced in the Garfield County Utah area (west side of the Colorado River) by driving your vehicle down the "Hole In The Rock" road which begins just north of Escalante, Utah.



The Mighty Mercantile: Shopping in the Old West

February 19, 2021 by Linda Shenton Matchett



What do you think of when you hear the term “Old West?” Probably cowboys or ranches. Maybe saloons. But one mainstay of life in the towns that sprang up across the country during the 1800s is the general store, also known as a mercantile. Unlike the cities of the time that featured specialized boutiques, these small hamlets were remote, serving a population that had little time for shopping and often limited funds.

The goal of the general store was to provide whatever the locals needed. Patrons could find tobacco, cigars, hardware, jewelry, buggy whips, horse

tack, lanterns, pails, foodstuffs, fabric and sewing notions, household items, tools, small farm implements, soap, crockery, dishes, guns and bullets, clothing, candy, coffee, toiletries, school supplies such as slates and chalk, and patent medicines (most of which were untested and alcohol based!).



Merchandise could be purchased with cash or barter items, such as milk, eggs, or surplus produce. Shopkeepers also extended credit as necessary. In 1853, customers could expect to pay eight to ten cents per pound for rice, eleven cents per pound for pork versus nine cents per pound of salt beef. Fresh beef could be had for five cents per pound, whereas lard would run them up to twelve cents per pound.

Many general store owners began as roving peddlers. After accumulating enough capital and inventory, they would establish a permanent location in a growing settlement. Others specifically sought one of the boomtowns such as a mining camp or railroad town. Sometimes, the mercantile would be the first business in a new settlement.



In addition to providing for the physical needs of the community, the general store was often the social center. A collection of chairs encircled the massive woodstove that was often located in the middle of the store. Some merchants offered inexpensive snacks such as soda crackers to allow folks to “sit a spell.” In his book, *Pill, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store*, Thomas Clark indicated “Fox races, tobacco, cotton, horses, women, politics, religion—no subject is barred from the most serious and light-hearted conversation.”

As the communications center of the town, the general store was typically the location of the post office with the owner acting as postmaster, sometimes even town clerk, Justice of the Peace, and/or undertaker. In later days, the mercantile was the first or only place in the town with a telephone. Less formal communication included a wall filled with lost and found notices, event flyers, election information, auctions, and “wanted posters” for outlaws.



Keeping the shop clean would have been a challenge. With unpaved roads, customers tracked in dirt and other detritus, and the wood stove produced soot that settled on the goods. One report I found indicated it was not unusual to discover rodents foraging inside the store.

The late 1800s saw the advent of the mail order catalog business with *Tiffany's Blue Book* considered the first in the U.S. In 1872, Aaron Montgomery Ward sent out his first “catalog,” a single sheet of paper showing merchandise for sale and including ordering instructions. Twenty years later, he was sending out a 540-page illustrated book selling 20,000 items, including prefabricated kit houses. Sears followed in 1888, and the decline of the general store began. The coming of the automobile in 1910 gave farmers and ranchers greater mobility, and as towns grew in size, the population was able to support specialized shops. There are remnants of general stores scattered around the U.S., and you may be pleasantly surprised to find one near you.

History of Chief Washakie, Utah

The history of the American West recognizes Washakie as one of its most remarkable leaders. Revered for statesmanship and respected in battle, he united his people into a significant political and military force. A skilled orator and charismatic figure who spoke French, English and a number of Indian languages, he successfully negotiated land and education settlements for the Shoshone.

Tradition holds that Washakie was gifted with an ability to foresee what the future held and work out the destiny of his people to the best possible advantage. He rose to a position of leadership in 1840, bringing together disparate groups of Shoshone warriors. With immigrants pressing along the eastern slope of the Rockies through traditional Shoshone hunting grounds, Washakie sensed that the tide of the White Man could not be stemmed. He believed if the Shoshone were to retain their lands, they would need to make peace with the immigrants, and he convinced his own people and the U.S. government of the need for a protected Shoshone territory.

On July 3, 1868, Washakie signed the Fort Bridger Treaty that established a three million acre reservation in Wyoming's stunningly beautiful Wind River country. Thanks to his foresight and leadership, this Warm Valley remains the home of the Shoshone today.

The Fort Bridger treaty included pledges for building schools; Washakie was as committed to his people's education as he was to protecting their lands. To this end, he and his good friend the Welsh clergyman John Roberts established a boarding school for Shoshone girls. Built on sacred ceremonial grounds along the banks of Trout Creek, the school encouraged tradition and native speech.

Washakie remained an active and respected leader until his death at 102. His wisdom, gained from a century of experience and leadership, was sought by non-Native Americans as well as his own people.

When Washakie died on February 20, 1900, he was accorded a full military funeral, the only one known to be given an Indian Chief. The mourning Shoshones, Arapahos and soldiers formed the longest funeral procession in the history of Wyoming.

Chief Washakie is buried in the old military cemetery at Fort Washakie. The cemetery road leads to the heart of Wind River country, the land he loved and fought to protect and preserve for his people.

The Washakie Archives

THE COTTON MISSION

By Georgene Cahoon Evans

When the Mormons entered the Salt Lake Valley, Brigham Young recognized the need of the pioneers for clothing as well as food. He resolved that the Latter-day Saints should be economically independent, and experiments in growing cotton in the Salt Lake Valley were implemented.

Early exploration in the 1850s confirmed that the Santa Clara and Virgin river basins, located 300 miles south of Salt Lake City at a lower altitude, had the potential to grow cotton, grapes, figs, flax, hemp, rice, sugar cane, tobacco, and other much-needed semitropical products. Following the Utah War of 1857-58 Brigham Young's drive for self-sufficiency was strengthened.

By this time Parowan, New Harmony, Pine Valley, Toquerville, and Santa Clara had been established. The mission of those sent to Santa Clara was to befriend the Indians. This had to be done before cotton could be planted. However, at Santa Clara three quarts of old cotton seed were procured, planted, harvested, and ginned. The cotton was then carded, spun, and woven into thirty yards of cloth. A sample was sent to Brigham Young.

Church members were called to go to Washington County to colonize, with the specific assignment to "grow cotton." They were told that the Cotton Mission should be considered as important to them as if they were called to preach the gospel among the nations. Settlements involved in the Cotton Mission, some now erased from memories and maps, were Washington, St. George, Heberville (Tonaquint), Parowan, Grafton, Hurricane, Santa Clara, Harrisburg, Duncan's Retreat, West Point, Rockville, Millersburg, Shunesburg, Northrop, Springdale, Gunlock, Harmony, Kanarra, Hebron, Middleton, Pine Valley, Pinto, Leeds, Bellevue (Pintura), Panada, Eagleville, Cedar City, and Toquerville. There were also those on Muddy Creek--St. Joseph, St. Thomas, and Overton. Some of these settlements involved just a few families.

Men were chosen for their skills and capital equipment. The first calls included: ten families under the leadership of Samuel Adair left Payson 3 March 1857; twenty-eight families were called at April 1857 conference and came under the direction of Robert Covington; fifty families arrived at Washington from San Bernardino. They had been told to return to Utah because of the Utah War in 1857. Most stayed for the winter and left in the spring for other locations in Dixie and elsewhere. Three hundred families were called in October 1861 conference. That year the Civil War cut off cotton supplies. Thirty families of Swiss converts were included in the call; and they were directed to settle in Santa Clara and provide supplies for the cotton farmers. In 1862 220 families were called. Fifty or sixty families were called in October 1864 to settle south of St. George on the Muddy River. At least 300 additional families (upwards of 1,000 persons) were called in the late 1860s and 1870s.

The Covington company arrived in May 1857. Isaac C. Haight, who was presiding over the Parowan Stake, organized the new settlement as a branch of the Harmony Ward. It was at this time that the name Washington was chosen for the new town. Civic and religious leaders were sustained. The pioneers prepared the ground for corn and went to work making dams and ditches. They lived in tents, wagons, or dugouts.

Many problems were encountered as they struggled with nature. Most of the early colonists were converts from the South and were familiar with cotton but were not familiar with irrigation. They had to cope with the alkali in the sandy soil. They had an unending battle with the Virgin River. Their dams, built on quicksand bottoms, were washed out yearly, sometimes several times. One year there was a

drought, and grasshoppers and worms consumed their crops. They had night watches to protect their crops from hungry animals.

As cotton growers they were successful, but they quickly found that to survive they had to grow their own food and "make do." Many were beset with chills and fever and were unaware that they had contracted malaria from the mosquitoes that bred in the seeping springs and along the streams' edges. This robbed them of much productive energy.

Many quit the mission. By June 1861 only twenty families remained in Washington. Late that year, the community received quite a number of new settlers, most of them from Sanpete County. Their spirits rose. One historian said, "Just to have a few fresh arrivals to share their miseries must have made the burden lighter." In 1862 the arriving cotton missionaries settled in what is now St. George.

Most of the early ginning was on a home basis, but there was a problem processing and selling the "lint." One-tenth was sent to Salt Lake as tithing, and as much as possible was shipped east by freight. One year some was freighted to California. Brigham Young objected and arranged for the purchase of much of it.

Brigham Young then had machinery imported. Factories for processing cotton and wool were set up in Salt Lake City, Springville, and Parowan. When it was determined that the Cotton Mission had a deteriorating economy and needed support, Young had the equipment operating in Salt Lake City dismantled and shipped south in 1866. The cotton factory was built in Washington because of its adequate water supply and its central location for the cotton growers. The colonists were asked to contribute their labor and materials to help build the factory. More missionaries were called.

Indian troubles forced the colonists to neglect their crops; some homes and farms in the smaller settlements were abandoned. The end of the Civil War then caused the price of cotton to drop. The less hardy pulled up their stakes and left. The ruts in that trail were deepened as many fled to other settlements.

There was always an acute cash shortage. Most of the exchange was in goods or in paper money printed for temple and factory work, which was not acceptable for the purchase of materials and machinery outside the territory. Added to the factory was a section used for a store, a branch of ZCMI where miscellaneous items for everyday living could be purchased.

One thing that encouraged the poverty-plagued Dixie colonists to remain was the granting of subsidies out of tithing resources to construct a tabernacle and a temple in St. George. These were "public work" projects. Mines in Nevada and in Leeds, Utah, provided markets for the pioneer produce, which included grapes for wine. The emphasis was shifted from cotton. Young men fled to the mines to work for easier money.

The cotton factory began operating in 1869, the year the railroads were united, linking the East with the West. The settlers' problems multiplied. Supplies for the northern communities were now brought in by rail. New machinery was required at the factory for quality production; two additional stories were added. Skilled help was difficult to obtain. Dyes and supplies had to be obtained from the East. The growers organized a cooperative to better their marketing possibilities and increase their purchasing power in California. Their first purchasing agent was killed by Mojave Indians.

The colonies on the Muddy had furnished most of the cotton during the period from 1866 to 1870. An official survey revealed that their farms were located in Nevada, instead of Utah. Nevada then demanded back taxes in cash, which taxes had already been paid to Utah. Because of the tax

situation, malaria, and poverty, Brigham Young advised the colonists to abandon their settlements in 1871.

The cotton industry was revived briefly from 1873 to 1876 and again from 1893 to 1896. The factory made a profit for only a brief period in the 1890s, under the direction of Thomas Judd; it ceased operation as a cotton mill in 1910.