

FIRST DRAFT

Disputed demise:

The end of outlaws Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid probably died in a battle in Bolivia in 1908, but it wasn't the guns-blazing last stand made famous in the 1969 movie about the two outlaws.

Instead, two bandits were cornered by just three men — two soldiers and a policeman — in San Vicente, Bolivia, after a mine payroll holdup. One man apparently killed his badly wounded companion, then turned his pistol on himself.

Many people believe that Butch Cassidy survived his South American sojourn and returned to live in the United States under assumed names. A variety of anecdotes support that view.

But it's also clear that two Yankee outlaws were killed in San Vicente in November 1908 under circumstances described by the mayor of the small mining town.

The mayor's story and more are included in "The End of the Road: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in Bolivia," by Daniel Buck and Anne Meadows, an article published late last year by The English Westeners' Society of London.

Buck and Meadows are a husband-and-wife team who have been researching Butch and Sundance for more than 30 years. They've made several trips to South America and have tracked down key information about the outlaws' time in Argentina, Chile and Bolivia.

However, Buck acknowledged to me that the fate of Butch and Sundance remains disputed.

"The way Anne and I normally sum up the case is that the evidence supporting Cassidy and Sundance's deaths in Bolivia is better than the evidence supporting some other scenario," he said.

Their article lists at least eight mine payroll robberies involving Yankees in Bolivia from 1892 to 1938, only one of which has been attributed to Butch and Sundance.

Bolivians understandably grew tired of crimes by northerners. A 1908 newspaper article from Bolivia said, "It is well known that unrestricted immigration has introduced into our society dangerous and criminal elements."

Butch and Sundance — whose real names were Robert LeRoy Parker and Harry Longabaugh — arrived in Argentina in March 1901, accompanied by Sundance's girlfriend, Ethel Place.

By then, the two were widely known as leaders of the Wild Bunch, a loose confederation of Western outlaws. They were linked to bank robberies and train holdups across the West.

Aided by the Pinkerton Detective Agency, lawmen were constantly on their trail, and even remote hideouts like Robbers Roost in Utah and Hole-in-the-Wall in Wyoming weren't safe.

Argentina at the turn of the 20th century welcomed Americans. In June of 1901, Butch and Sundance — using a variety of aliases — along with



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MUSEUMS OF WESTERN COLORADO

In this 1901 photo of the Wild Bunch, the Sundance Kid is seated on the left, and Butch Cassidy is seated on the right. Ben Kilpatrick is seated in the middle. Standing are Bill Carver and Harvey Logan.

Ethel homesteaded in Patagonia, in the foothills of the Andes Mountains. They raised cattle, horses and sheep, and had Welsh, English, American and South American neighbors.

But they were unable to shake the persistent Pinkertons, who by 1903 knew the trio were in Argentina. Additionally, they reportedly were involved in or helped plan several robberies.

By 1905, even their remote corner of Argentina was not safe. They sold their ranch and moved to Chile.

In early 1907, Ethel Place had returned to the United States, while Butch and Sundance had moved to Bolivia. They worked for the Concordia Tin Mine in La Paz.

Sometime in 1908 they moved on to northern Bolivia, where in August they spent several weeks with a mine dredge operator who wrote about his experiences under the pseudonym A.G. Francis. He described two rough men who gave false names. He later concluded one of them was Butch.

During their time with Francis, the pair apparently planned the Armayo Mine payroll robbery.

On Nov. 3, 1908, the mine manager, his son and a servant rounded a bend on a trail to the mine and found two masked bandits pointing pistols at them. The outlaws took only the mine payroll and one mule, then disappeared. No one was injured.

The two bandits then returned to Francis' camp, where they told him about the robbery and forced him to head north with them. They released him the following day, then made their way to San Vicente.

Arriving at sunset, they met Mayor Cleto Bello, who told them there was no hotel in town, but pointed them to a private home where they could stay.



Robert Parker, aka Butch Cassidy, when he was in prison in Wyoming in 1896.

But military patrols were already searching for the Armayo payroll robbers, and one was in San Vicente. Bello left the two men and went straight to the patrol.

Two soldiers and the policeman approached the house where the outlaws were staying. Bello said one of the bandits opened fire, hitting a soldier, who later died. The patrol members returned shots, and Bello heard screams from inside the house.

At dawn, the patrol cautiously looked inside and found the two dead men. One was shot in the forehead, apparently by his companion. The other had shot himself in the head.

The Armayo payroll and a mule owned by the company were also at the house.

The men were described as two Yankees, but they were never officially identified.

In 1991, an effort to locate their graves in the San Vicente cemetery found only the re-

mains of a German man and several Indians.

Since 1908, Buck and Meadows wrote, there have been more than 60 stories about where Butch and Sundance died, involving many decades and three different continents.

Cassidy's youngest sister, Lulu Parker Betenson, was adamant that Butch survived and returned to the U.S. But she gave different accounts about where he lived and died.

Josie Bassett Morris, who was reported to be romantically linked to young Butch Cassidy, claimed to have seen him

twice in the 1920s and 1930s. However, Butch's brother Daniel Parker, the sibling with whom Butch was closest, believed Butch and Sundance died in Bolivia. So did Butch's one-time outlaw pal, Matt Warner.

Two outlaws were killed in San Vicente in 1908, although not in heroic Hollywood fashion. Whether they were Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid will long remain a point of contention.

Information from "The End of the Road: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in Bolivia," by Daniel Buck and Anne Meadows; "Butch Cassidy, My Uncle," by Bill Betensen; Buck's and Meadows' website is diggingup-butchandsundance.wordpress.com.

Bob Silbernagel's email is bobsilbernagel@gmail.com.

HEADS UP, VOTERS

■ **Fruita** residents can attend a Fruita Area Chamber of Commerce candidate forum from 6 to 8 p.m. March 8 at the Fruita Community Center, 324 N. Coulson St.

■ **Palisade** trustee candidates are invited to an informal discussion with current trustees. The meeting is at 5 p.m. Feb. 20 at Palisade Civic Center, 341 W. Seventh St. The public is welcome. For more information, call Town Hall at 464-5602.

Many candidates running for Fruita, Palisade posts

By AMY HAMILTON
Amy.Hamilton@gsentinel.com

Palisade and Fruita voters can expect to choose from a number of local candidates to serve as town trustees and city councilors in the April 3 municipal elections.

Ten candidates in Palisade have indicated their intent to run for four open seats.

Five candidates in Fruita are running for three open City Council seats and two candidates are running for the mayor's seat.

In Fruita, Lori Buck, who is term-limited as mayor, is running for a City Council seat. Councilor Joel Kincaid is running for mayor against Mike Durden.

Councilor Kyle Harvey is running again for his seat. Oth-

er candidates include Rudy Van Voorhees, Carolyn Gambino and Karen Leonhart.

Fruita councilors serve four-year terms, and the mayor's seat is up for election every two years.

Fruita also will ask voters for six years of relief from the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights. Residents have approved similar TABOR overrides five times since 1993.

In Palisade, Trustee Susan L'Hommedieu is running for her seat.

Other candidates include Jessica Bonds, Dustyn Cipperly, Eric Croy, Alice Dussart, Jesse Loughman, Gary Miller, Greg Mikolai, Jamie Somerville and Andrew West.



THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

DENVER — While some lawmakers are touting the increased revenues the state is receiving, including the extra money it is expected to get because of the federal tax cuts, and pushing for different ways to spend that money, others are working to reduce the state's income tax rate from 4.63 percent to 4.43 percent. Senate President Kevin Grantham, R-Cañon City, and Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg, R-Sterling, have a bill up before committee today to do just that.

■ **Today:** The Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee is to hear SB2, designed to expand money that is diverted to the state's Broadband Deployment Fund, money that is used to help build infrastructure for internet service in hard-to-reach areas of the state.

■ **Tuesday:** The Senate Transportation Committee is to hear SB28, a measure that would do away with the requirement that the license plate on the front of vehicles be in the center of the bumper, as long as it remains in a prominent location.

■ **Wednesday:** The House Local Government Committee is to discuss HB1054, which calls for imposing a 25-cent fee on consumers who use plastic bags.

■ **Thursday:** The Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources and Energy Committee plans to hear SB42, a measure to create a farming and ranching internship program.

■ **Next week:** The same Senate committee that has heard it in years past once again will consider a measure by Sen. Kerry Donovan, D-Vail, aimed at helping rural communities hard hit by major job losses. Meanwhile, a House panel will eye a bill to double what the state pays counties to house state inmates in county jails.

Scheduled committee hearings are subject to change. All floor action and committees can be watched or heard on the Legislature's website, leg.colorado.gov. Check that website to see which measures are available for remote testimony, and how to register to speak.

— Charles Ashby

The Daily Sentinel (ISSN 1445-8962)
Published every morning at 734 S. Seventh Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501.
Periodical Postage paid at Grand Junction, CO.
Carrier home delivery prices: 13 weeks - \$65.00, 26 weeks - \$130.00, 52 weeks - \$260.00.
Weekend delivery packages: Wednesday thru Sunday - \$244.40, Friday thru Sunday - \$197.60.
Saturday & Sunday - \$163.80, Sunday only - \$163.80.
Weekend Delivery includes the following date in 2018: Nov. 22.
Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday.
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We're wearing jeans for charity at The Daily Sentinel. Ask me how you can help!
we've got heart!

The employees of *The Daily Sentinel* have joined together to adopt a local non-profit organization/charity of the month. We want to help raise awareness and badly needed funds for these organizations that are dedicated to helping people in our community.

JANUARY JEANS FOR CHARITY ORGANIZATION: **Western Slope Center for Children**

The **Western Slope Center for Children (WSCC)** is a Child Advocacy Center, providing services to abused children and their families. In Mesa County, more than 500 children are subjected to sexual or physical abuse each year. WSCC combines law enforcement, health professionals, counselors and long-term help for children and their families. This unique combination protects traumatized victims from an overwhelming system and its regulations. Please join with us and send your tax deductible donation to:

Western Slope Center for Children
259 Grand Avenue, Grand Junction, CO 81501.

BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Man fled twice before arrest

A 32-year-old Mesa County man accused of twice fleeing law enforcement officers in recent weeks was arrested Thursday while in possession of suspected methamphetamine, according to court records.

Adam Lee Hilton allegedly first fled from a Mesa County sheriff's deputy Jan. 13 after being approached at a trailer park at 3349 F Road, according to an arrest affidavit.

The deputy — unaware at the time of Hilton's identity or that he was wanted on a warrant for a drug charge — tried to pull the 32-year-old man over after noticing him acting suspiciously, according to the report.

The deputy wrote that instead of stopping, Hilton attempted to accelerate, then fled on foot after losing control of the car, which slid into an embankment near 33 and F 5/8 roads.

Early Thursday morning, Hilton was on a bicycle near Perkins Drive and Mesa Avenue when a deputy attempted to stop him for a second time for not having a mounted light, another report said.

Hilton allegedly fled before surrendering when more deputies responded to stop him. Inside a duffel bag a deputy believed Hilton had been carrying, deputies found multiple electronics, including six cellphones, a Samsung tablet and a baggie of suspected

methamphetamine.

Hilton was arrested on multiple charges. He was ordered held on two \$5,000 cash-only bonds by Mesa County Judge Craig Henderson.

According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

■ A handgun was stolen from a home in the 600 block of Susan Street on Jan. 20.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

■ Known subjects trespassed at a business near First Street and Grand Avenue on Jan. 20.

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How to reach us: 242-5050. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Circulation phones are open 7 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on weekends.

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