

# FIRST DRAFT

## Wild Bunch henchman lived in Palisade until run out of town

In the early summer of 1901, a man calling himself Lee Roy Davis began hanging out with Palisade resident James "Jim" Ferguson.

The two later traveled together to hunt game near Meeker, then on to Hayden, and Dixon, Wyoming, where Ferguson owned a ranch. They visited several times over the next couple years.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

But neither man was what he appeared to be.

Lee Roy Davis was Charlie Siringo, a one-time Texas cowboy turned Pinkerton detective. His stop in Palisade was part of a four-year odyssey to track down members of the Wild Bunch following the Aug. 29, 1900, train robbery near Tipton, Wyoming.

Jim Ferguson was not just a Palisade resident and soon-to-be businessman. He was a peripheral member of the Wild Bunch who had supplied horses and provided a hiding place to the Tipton train robbers. He was not related to any Fergusons now living in Palisade.

But he was a convicted cattle thief who had served prison time in South Dakota. And he had a violent temper.

Siringo claimed Ferguson once got so angry with his 8-year-old daughter that he threw her in an irrigation ditch near his Palisade home.

"It was only a few hundred yards to the treacherous Grand River," Siringo wrote, "and Jim had to run fast to catch the half-drowned girl before she reached the river."

Ferguson nearly killed a man in a bar fight in Dixon before he was run out of town by vigilantes who threatened to hang him. He moved to Palisade then.

Ferguson remained in Palisade for 11 years, operating several businesses, including a meat market, and serving about six months as Palisade town marshal.

A 1902 Pinkerton report on Ferguson described him as 37 years old, 5-feet, 10 inches or 11 inches tall; 165 to 170 pounds; "muscular, healthy olive complexion ... dark brown hair, thin light sandy mustache, scar back of head."

It also gave his occupation as "carpenter," but his criminal occupation as "thief, rustler and associate of train robbers."

The report said that after the Dixon bar fight, "he fled with his wife and family to Palisades, Mesa County, Colorado, and still resides there."

The Pinkertons also reported that Ferguson "helped equip the Tipton, Wyoming, train robbers with horses and feed before the robbery."

After the theft, Ferguson hid the robbers on his ranch for nearly a month, until he fled Dixon.

When that occurred, "the robbers also left and headed for Grand Junction, Colorado, and then went south," according to the Pinkertons.

It's not clear whether Ferguson ever learned Lee Roy Davis' true identity. The two men continued to be friendly during Davis/Siringo's four-year search for the train robbers, despite the fact that other members of the Wild Bunch were suspicious of Siringo.

On one occasion, the cool-headed Siringo stood quietly while Ferguson — who had just received a letter informing him that a Pinkerton agent was after the Wild Bunch — "swore the most wicked oaths against all detectives and swore to cut out the heart of any detective who undertook to win his friendship."

Despite this, Ferguson provided critical information

to Siringo about the Tipton train robbers. He told Siringo that the train gang consisted of Harvey Logan, aka Kid Curry; a man named Bill Cruzan and another named Ben Kilpatrick. Logan and Kilpatrick were well-known members of the Wild Bunch. Cruzan was less frequently involved.

The Tipton train robbery was one of two such thefts in Wyoming believed to have been committed by the Wild Bunch.

In both the Tipton robbery and one near Wilcox, Wyoming, in 1899, the thieves used too much dynamite. At Wilcox, in particular, the train car carrying the safe was blown to bits.

That scene was immortalized in the 1969 film, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."

However, most historians now believe Cassidy, whose real name was Robert Parker, was not at the Wilcox robbery, although he likely led the planning for it.

Harry Longabaugh, known as the Sundance Kid, probably was part of the Wilcox robbery, but not the Tipton one.

Most historians believe he and Butch Cassidy were on their way to Winnemucca, Nevada, when the Tipton job occurred.

There, it is believed they robbed a bank on Sept. 19, 1900, with another man named Will Carver.

However, Cassidy was likely involved in planning the Tipton robbery. Based on information from Ferguson and others, Siringo was convinced Kid Curry was the leader of the Tipton robbery gang.

As Siringo's investigation continued, the trusting Ferguson provided him with a letter of introduction to other members of the Wild Bunch, but with a new name. Now Siringo was Harry Blevins.

With that letter in hand, Siringo became friends with Jack Ryan, a bar owner in Rawlins, Wyoming, with ties to Butch Cassidy and other Wild Bunch members.

He also befriended Bert Charter, another fringe Wild Bunch member who may have assisted in several crimes, but was never arrested.

"His home was in Grand Junction, Colo." Siringo wrote, although he, too, had a ranch near Dixon.

Other information suggests Charter never lived in Grand Junction, but frequently visited his mother here.

Siringo spent the next couple of years visiting and drinking with people associated with the Wild Bunch in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Arizona.

He spent another week with Jim Ferguson in Palisade, probably in the summer of 1903. And he credited Ferguson with providing more critical information.

"Through my work on Jim F. we found out for the first time who (Harry) Longbough (sic) was, and where his relatives live," Siringo wrote. "Jim F. had first known him as the 'Sundance Kid' up in northern Wyoming."

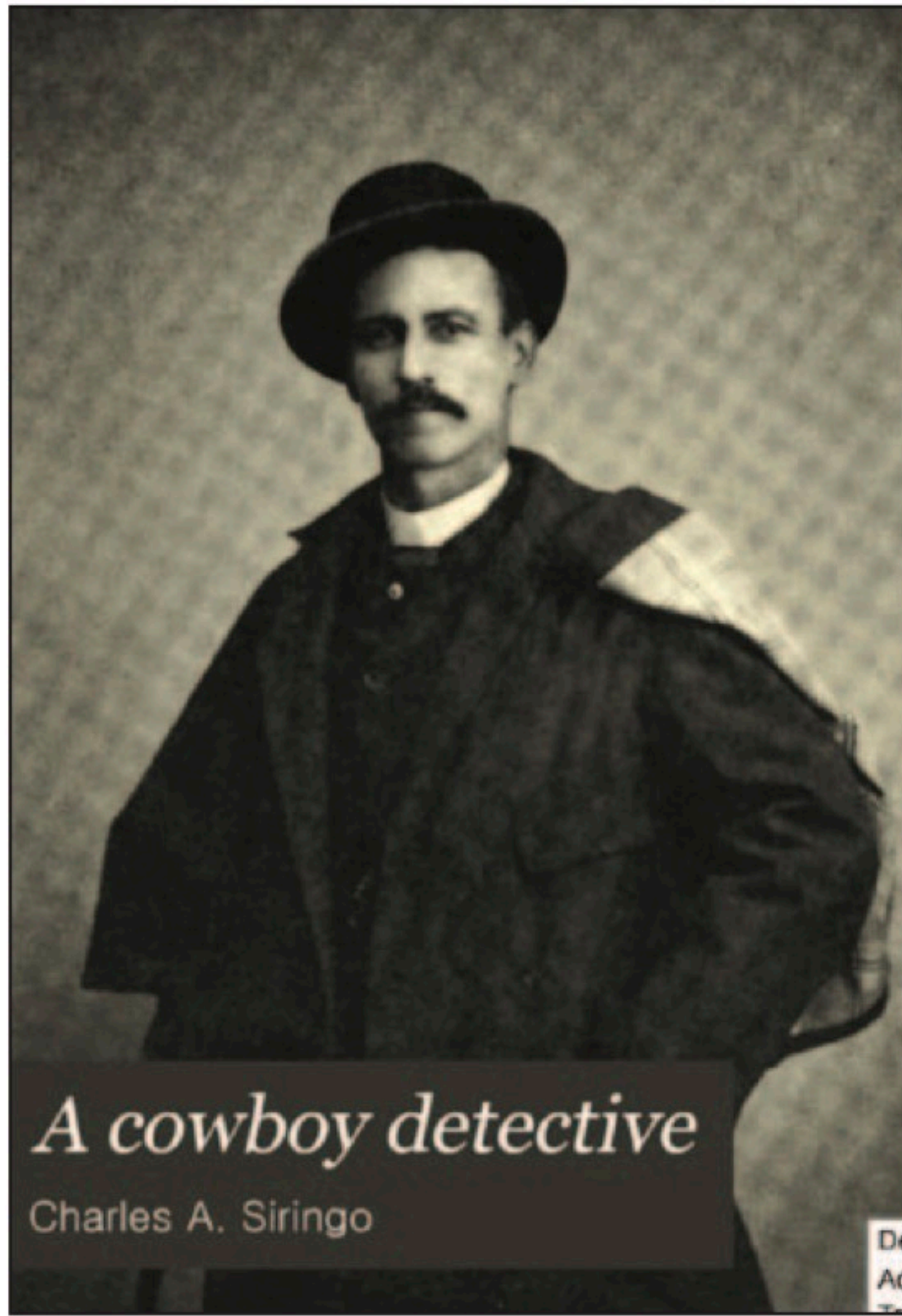
Siringo ended his quest for the Tipton train robbers in 1904, without having arrested anyone.

Ferguson continued to live in Palisade, where he operated several businesses.

In March 1902, he and another man were "charged with keeping a disorderly house at Palisade." They pleaded guilty and were fined \$50 plus costs.

But in 1904, Ferguson was lauded in a local news article when he purchased a meat market and combined it with a restaurant he already owned. He sold the market the following year, then was appointed town marshal in March of 1905.

He won praise for running hoboes out of town. But he



Charlie Siringo as he appeared on the cover of his 1912 book, "A Cowboy Detective."



Annie Rogers and Harvey Logan, aka "Kid Curry." This photo appeared in Siringo's book with the caption, "Kid Curry and his sweetheart."

resigned in September 1905 after being injured in a runaway team-and-wagon accident.

By 1906, he was operating a saloon in Palisade, when he was assaulted by one of his customers.

But his real trouble began in 1910, when he and four other men, including his brother Charley Ferguson, were accused of bootlegging.

Jim Ferguson was convicted in November of 1910, but he and Charley continued to operate a restaurant and pool hall in Palisade until the following year.

In July of 1911, a group that called itself the "Law and Order League" demanded both Fergusons and another man leave town within 10 days.

"The Fergusons took the hint and left," a Palisade man told The Daily Sentinel. "And that's about what was mostly needed."

Sources: "A Cowboy Detective," by Charles A. Siringo; Pinkerton Agency reports and other information provided by Bob Goodwin, Wild Bunch historian of Pleasant Grove, Utah; Colorado Historic Newspapers and Newspapers.com.

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## Use of campgrounds increases in pandemic, sparking bad behavior

By JACKSON WILDE  
Herald Journal

LOGAN, Utah — With outdoor recreation being one of the few activities available during the COVID-19 pandemic, campsites are undergoing a large uptick in positive and negative use. Local forest rangers are encouraging folks to treat campgrounds respectfully, extinguish campfires and plan ahead for trips.

Cache National Forest Logan District Ranger Jennefer Parker said irresponsible gun shooting, garbage and trespassing are all

on the rise this season. However, an increase in unattended fires is prompting the most concern. Parker said multiple citations were recently issued for people who "completely walked away" from their campfires.

"We really do not need to have that happening," Parker said. "To just walk away and leave it is not acceptable."

Parker said each time firefighters are called out increases their risk of exposure to the novel coronavirus.

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