

# FIRST DRAFT

## Good horses key to bandits' long ride

Tom McCarty understood the value of good horse-flesh.

"Anyone who has had any experience in the kind of business we were carrying on will know that ... a good horse may save their life," the infamous outlaw wrote in his autobiography.

With that in mind, McCarty traveled to the horse country of the Midwest in early 1882, seeking horses with speed, stamina and sound feet. They were needed for his business at the time: cattle rustling.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

In Iowa, he bought three horses named Suzy, Farmer and Iowa. He made the purchase only after he auditioned one of the three on a 5-mile test gallop.

They would prove invaluable later that year when McCarty and two other bandits — one of whom was severely wounded — raced 300 miles to outrun a posse. After abandoning the wounded Josh Swett in Kanab, Utah, McCarty and his brother-in-law, Matt Warner, continued another 300-plus miles to avoid the law.

The ride "was like a prolonged war with us using all our cowboy tricks and knowledge of the country against the skill, cunning and guns of the officers," Warner wrote in his autobiography.

It began in southern Arizona, where the three men had been stealing cattle from ranches on both sides of the Arizona-Mexico border. They sold the cattle and retreated to a camp in the mountains of southern Arizona, only to be tracked down by a posse of local and federal officials.

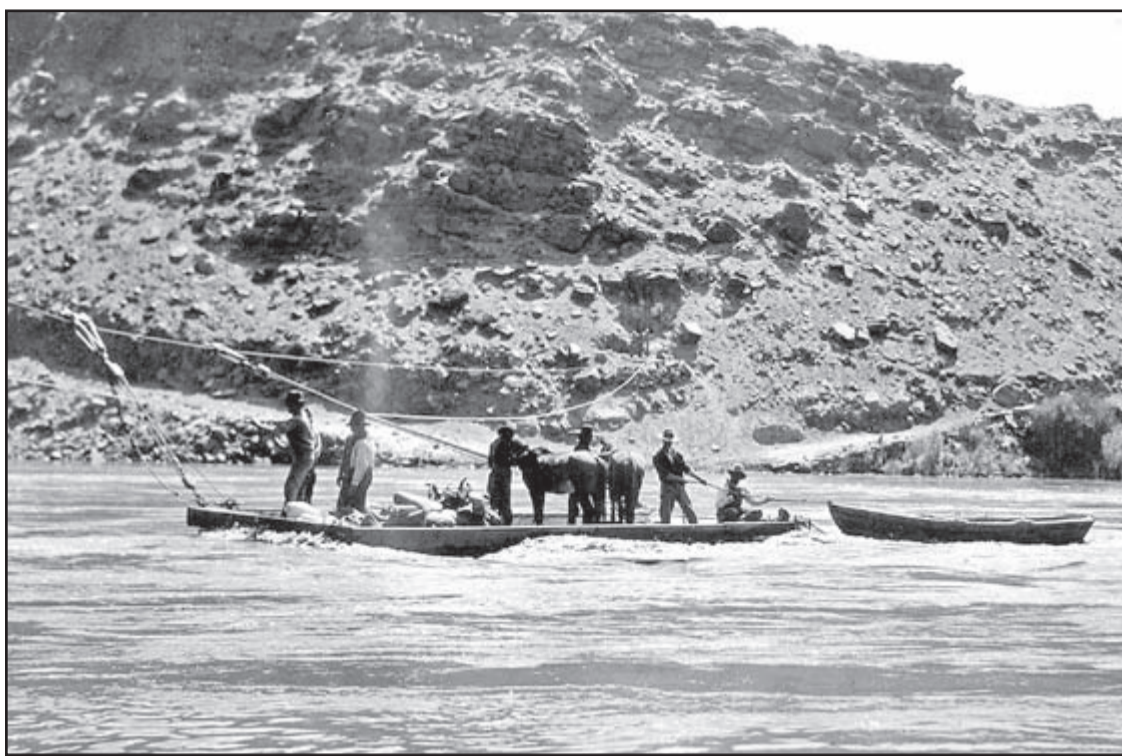
There was a brief gunfight, during which Swett was wounded. The lawmen backed off and the outlaws raced for Utah.

"Our only chance to get out of Arizona was to beat the deputies to Lee's Ferry in a three-hundred-mile horse race," Warner wrote.

Water holes were few and usually had people living nearby. The bandits stopped once at an isolated ranch, where they paid a ranch wife for watering their horses, then hastily rode on. Otherwise they stayed away from well-traveled trails and found water far removed from people.

In addition to Suzy, Iowa and Farmer, the outlaws had multiple pack horses and remounts. This combination of good animals and their knowledge of the country helped them win their 300-mile race. But it was close.

The posse was hot on their heels when the trio arrived at Lee's Ferry, south of the Utah-Arizona border.



Lee's Ferry, as operated by Charles Spencer, circa 1910.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/Special to the Sentinel



A well-dressed Tom McCarty. Date unknown.

DELTA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY/Special to the Sentinel

miles to the mining town of Frisco, Utah. During another scrape with the law in Milford, Utah, when they attempted to trade cattle legally but were accused of rustling, they were held briefly in the local jail before escaping. Next they headed to Ely, Nevada, 150 miles west from Milford.

Warner said posse members were galloping toward them even as the outlaws cajoled the ferry operator to get his boat from the north side of the river to the south so they could cross. They made it safely across and prevented the ferry operator from returning to get the posse members.

The outlaws continued northwest to Kanab, some 75 miles away, where Swett could obtain medical help. There, Swett urged his partners to continue without him. He was treated by a local doctor and recovered from his wounds. The Arizona posse caught up and arrested him.

But local authorities made sure he was charged with horse theft in Utah rather than allow him to be taken to Arizona on more serious charges. He spent a year in the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, then renounced the criminal life.

McCarty and Warner continued northwest another 150

After another grueling ride in rain and snow, they reached Ely, where McCarty was hospitalized with pneumonia. There he and Warner separated. They eventually returned to Utah and Colorado. The desperadoes had crossed some 600 miles of the most desolate terrain on the Colorado Plateau, with one wounded rider for more than half of the trip and a posse close behind. It's not clear how long the trip lasted, but the first portion to Kanab was believed to take less than a week.

Neither McCarty nor Warner ended their criminal careers then. They engaged in cattle rustling and horse theft before graduating to more serious crimes. Both were involved in the 1889 bank robbery in Telluride, with young Butch Cassidy as a partner.

In 1896, Warner killed two men while working as a guard for a mine in Utah. Although he claimed he acted in self-defense, he was arrested for

manslaughter. Despite legal efforts by Cassidy and others, Warner went to prison, but he went straight upon his release. He eventually served as a marshal and justice of the peace in Price, Utah. He died in 1938.

McCarty remained an outlaw until he and others attempted to rob the Farmers and Merchants Bank in Delta in 1893. His brother, Bill McCarty, and nephew, Fred McCarty, were shot and killed. Tom narrowly escaped, racing out of town with bullets whizzing past him. He rode northwest over the Uncompahgre Plateau to a hideout on the Colorado-Utah border. After that, McCarty's life is a mystery. It was rumored he was killed in a gunfight in the Klondike during the gold rush there. But he probably moved to Oregon by 1901, where he worked for a county road department. He is believed to have died in the Northwest around 1917.

During the long ride of 1882, most of the bandits' horses were abandoned because they were either too weary or footsore to continue.

But all three of the Iowa horses made it as far as Kanab. McCarty's writing suggests that at least Suzy, and perhaps one of the other Iowa horses, carried McCarty and Warner as far as Ely, Nevada. They proved that McCarty knew his business, at least when it came to horses.

Information from: "History of Tom McCarty," by Tom McCarty; "The Last of the Bandit Riders," by Matt Warner; "In Pursuit of the McCartys," by Jon Skovlin and Donna McDaniel; "Banks Bullets & Bodies," by James Wetzel; the Delta County Historical Society.

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## REGION SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

### Snowboarder hits tree, dies

SALIDA — Authorities say a snowboarder was killed when he hit a tree at Colorado's Monarch Ski Area.

The Chaffee County Sheriff's Office says 23-year-old Collin J. Zak, a native of Ohio who was serving in the military, was found unresponsive Saturday morning on the ex-

pert-rated Mirage run. Ski patrollers performed CPR, but Zak was pronounced dead at the scene. He was wearing a helmet.

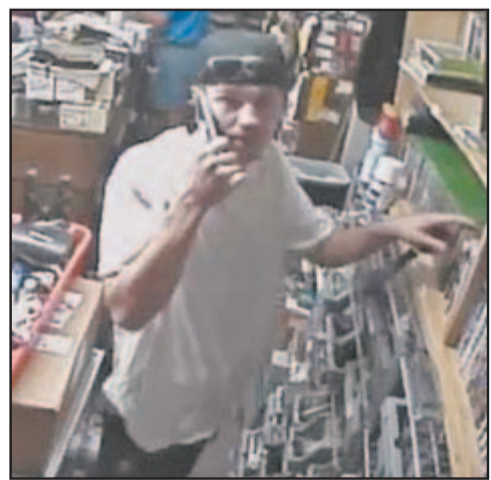
### Cops kill man carrying gun

COLORADO SPRINGS — Colorado Springs police shot and killed a man who officers say pulled a handgun as they were trying to take him into custody.

Police were trying to arrest the man on an outstanding misdemeanor warrant Saturday evening when he began resisting and fighting the officers. He was shot when he brandished the weapon.

The man, whose name has not been released, died at a hospital. Officers involved suffered minor injuries and were treated at a hospital. They have been placed on routine paid administrative leave.

## BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF



### Pawn shop theft probed

Law enforcement is asking for help with identifying a suspect involved in a theft case dating back to Sept. 14.

Authorities said a male suspect took a white X-Box One video game console and several video games from A Pawn Shop, located at 353 Pitkin Ave., that afternoon.

The suspect is described as a white male, 27 to 35 years old, about 6 foot 2 inches tall. He was last seen wearing a white T-shirt, black shorts and a black baseball cap.

Anyone with information can report it by calling Crime Stoppers at 241-7867.

Information leading to an arrest can earn up to \$1,000 cash reward and the informant

can remain anonymous. For information, visit [www.241stop.com](http://www.241stop.com).

### According to the Mesa County Sheriff's Office:

- Matekah Owens, 28, was arrested on suspicion of domestic violence on Nov. 24.
- Joseph Ambrose, 33, was arrested Friday on suspicion of violating a protection order.
- Glen Knotts, 28, was arrested Friday on an outstanding warrant in the 3200 block of D ¼ Road.

The Grand Junction Police Department did not release blotter information over the weekend.

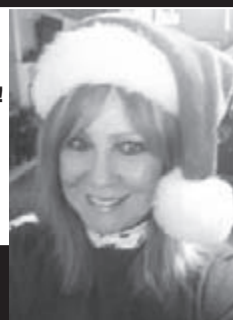
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## ATTENTION ADVERTISERS

The Daily Sentinel's advertising deadlines will be moving up to accommodate the Christmas & New Year's holidays! This early deadline schedule is designed to help you plan your advertising around the holidays.

DISPLAY ADVERTISING	
Publication Date	Deadline
12/26, Tuesday	12/21 Thursday, 5pm
12/27, Wednesday	12/21, Thursday 5pm
12/28, Thursday	12/22, Friday 2pm
12/29, Out & About	12/22, Friday, 2pm
1/2, Tuesday	12/28, Thursday 5pm
1/3, Wednesday	12/28, Thursday 5pm
1/4, Thursday	12/29, Friday 2pm
1/5, Out & About	12/29 Friday 2pm

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12/25, Monday	12/22, Friday 2pm
12/26, Tuesday	12/22, Friday 2pm
1/1, Monday	12/29 Friday 2pm
1/2, Tuesday	12/29 Friday 2pm

LEGALS	
12/25, Monday	12/19 Tuesday 4pm
12/26, Tuesday	12/19 Tuesday 4pm
1/1, Monday	12/26, Tuesday 4pm
1/2, Tuesday	12/26, Tuesday 4pm

The Daily Sentinel offices will closed on Monday, December 25 and Monday, January 1.

THE DAILY SENTINEL  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO  
734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501  
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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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