

FIRST DRAFT

Pinkerton man repeatedly visited Mesa County on the bandits' trail

When Pinkerton detective Charlie Siringo began his four-year odyssey to track down the men who robbed a train in Tipton, Wyoming, he started in Grand Junction.

By the time he closed his investigation in 1904, he had "traveled more than 25,000 miles by rail, vehicles, afoot and on horseback."

Siringo made no arrests during the lengthy inquiry, but he still considered it a success.

"During these four years of strenuous life ... I secured much valuable information for the Dickenson agency," he wrote.

That's no misprint. "Dickenson" meant "Pinkerton" in Siringo's book: "A Cowboy Detective, A True Story of Twenty-two Years with a World Famous Detective Agency."

Siringo retired from the Pinkertons in 1907 and began writing about his detective career.

But William Pinkerton wasn't happy with Siringo's book. After a legal battle, Siringo was forced to use fictitious names in many instances.

The Pinkerton agency became the Dickenson agency. Siringo's Denver boss and mentor, James McParland, became "James McCartney." Notorious killer and one-time Pinkerton agent Tom Horn became "Tim Corn."

Siringo used the correct — but often misspelled — names for outlaws such as Butch Cassidy; Harry Longbaugh, known as the Sundance Kid; and Harvey Logan, aka Kid Curry.

Charles Angelo Siringo was born on the Texas Gulf Coast in 1855 and grew up when wild cattle grazed over much of Texas.

While still in his teens, Siringo became a cowboy, first in southern Texas, then in the West Texas badlands. He eventually joined cattle drives from Texas to the new railroad shipping centers in Kansas.

In 1885, he published his first book, "A Texas Cowboy, or Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony." It's considered the first cowboy autobiography, and it appeared just as Americans were becoming enthralled with cowboy life.

His book didn't make him rich, but it provided some money for the budding author. He moved to Chicago with his wife and young daughter in 1886, planning to become a writer.

However, within months of his move, the Haymarket Square Riot occurred in Chicago when a bomb went off during a labor demonstration.

In its aftermath, the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, headquartered in Chicago, actively recruited new agents. Siringo joined and was assigned to Pinkerton's Denver office. His family moved with him.

Working undercover, Siringo helped solve a political dispute in southern Colorado. Next, he partnered with Gunnison County Sheriff Cyrus "Doc" Shores to track down a trio of train robbers.

By the time of the Tipton train robbery on Aug. 29, 1900, Siringo had successfully solved a mine theft in Nevada, helped foil political insurrection in New Mexico and had barely escaped alive while investigating a mine strike in Idaho.

He arrived in Denver in early September 1900 and was immediately sent to Grand Junction.

"Our agency had just received a 'tip' through an ex-convict in Grand Junction," that two of the Tipton bandits were camped on a mesa 20 miles from Junction, Siringo wrote. "Therefore, I was hustled right



FROM SIRINGO'S BOOK, "A COWBOY DETECTIVE"
Charlie Siringo on the trail of the Tipton train bandits in 1900. He wrote that a traveling photographer snapped this photo of him and his horses near Hanksville, Utah, when he was on his way to Circleville.

out to get on the trail of these two men."

Posses had chased the Tipton robbers in Wyoming after the theft. However, The Daily Sentinel reported on Sept. 5, 1900, that the official search had been abandoned because the trail was cold. The thieves "gained so much time on the officers that capture seems out of the question," it said.

But Pinkerton agents weren't so easily deterred. Siringo acquired two horses and supplies, then set out through Unaweep Canyon, after learning that the thieves had visited notorious cattle rustler Lufe Young in Paradox.

He was about two weeks behind Harvey Logan and another man, believed to be Bill Cruzan. The third robber, Ben Kilpatrick, had apparently doubled back northward.

In the Blue Mountains west of Monticello, Utah, Siringo fell in with local outlaws, including a one-time sheriff he identified as Bill G. and another man he referred to as "Peg-leg." The latter had visited the Tipton robbers in their camp and told Siringo they were still heading south.

Peg-leg and Siringo surreptitiously visited Monticello, where they met other outlaws who told them a Pinkerton agent was rumored to be tracking the train bandits. They didn't suspect Siringo.

Initially, Siringo believed Kid Curry was the leader of the Wild Bunch. But, in the midst of his chase for Curry and Cruzan, Siringo's supervisor ordered him to search near Butch Cassidy's hometown of Circleville, Utah. Siringo soon realized Cassidy was the true leader.

Cassidy, he wrote, "turned out to be the shrewdest and most daring outlaw of the present age, though not of the blood-spilling kind like 'Kid' Curry."

From Circleville, Siringo traveled to Alma, New Mexico, a ranching community near the Arizona border, where members of the Wild Bunch were known to hide out. There his frustration grew.

A Pinkerton man from Denver, Frank Murray, had been in Alma the previous year, looking for the men who held up a train in Wilcox, Wyoming, in 1899.

Murray had revealed his true identity to a local bar owner named Jim Lowe, Siringo said. The problem was, Jim Lowe was really Butch Cassidy, who soon warned his gang.

On top of that, Siringo said, some of the outlaws wanted to kill Murray once they learned his identity. But Lowe/Cassidy saved Murray's life, sneaking him out of town at night. Then Cassidy sold his saloon and skipped town as well.



MUSEUM OF WESTERN COLORADO
This famous photo of the Wild Bunch, taken in Fort Worth, Texas, in November of 1900, shows all three men who robbed the train in Tipton, Wyoming, in August 1900, as well as Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. Standing, left to right: Will Carver and Harvey Logan, aka Kid Curry. Seated left to right: Harry Longbaugh, aka the Sundance Kid; Ben Kilpatrick and Butch Cassidy.

If not for Murray's missteps, Siringo believed he could have rounded up much of the wild bunch near Alma, or died trying.

From Alma, Siringo returned to Denver and was again sent to Grand Junction. There he met Jim Ferguson, the Wild Bunch affiliate then living in Palisade, as I discussed in my June 1 column.

Over the next three years, Siringo spent time in Rawlins, Wyoming, traveled back to Palisade, then down to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to deliver a coded letter from Ferguson, on behalf of Cassidy, to Elzy Lay, Cassidy's good friend who was then in prison in New Mexico.

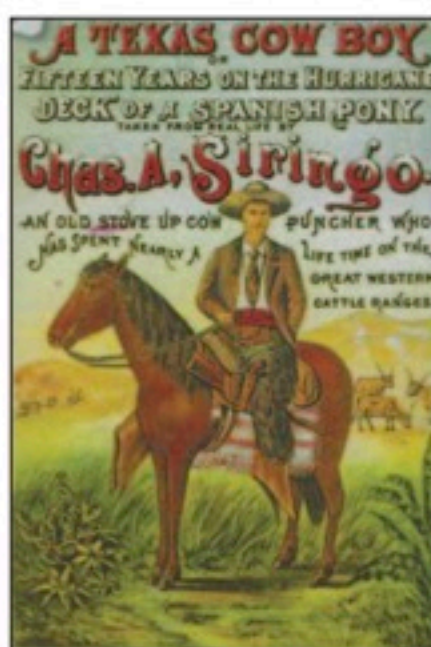
There were several more trips to Palisade, Rawlins, northern Wyoming and Utah.

Siringo visited Gunnison and courted the sister of an outlaw to obtain more information on the Wild Bunch, but abandoned that relationship when she proposed marriage.

Finally, in the fall of 1904, he returned to Denver and ended his Tipton quest.

By then, Siringo wrote, the Wild Bunch had largely ceased to exist. "The only two really 'bad' ones who escaped were 'Butch' Cassidy (sic) and Harry Longbaugh (sic)." They had fled to South America.

By late 1904, Carver was dead and Kilpatrick was in prison. Kid Curry was thought to have been killed in the aftermath of the June 1904 Parachute train robbery, although Siringo and



FROM PROJECT GUTENBURG
The original cover of Charlie Siringo's first book, "A Texas Cowboy or 15 Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony."

others believed he survived and escaped to South America.

After he quit the Pinkertons, Siringo retired to a ranch near Santa Fe, where he wrote several more books.

He moved to Los Angeles in the 1920s, became friends with people like Will Rogers and artist Charlie Russell. He served as an adviser for several Hollywood Westerns. He died in Los Angeles in 1928.

Sources: "A Cowboy Detective," by Charles A. Siringo; "Charlie Siringo's West," by Howard R. Lamar; historic newspapers at newspapers.com.

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Three apprehended in attempted arson of war statue base

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER — Police in Denver have apprehended three suspects in connection with an attempt to set fire to the pedestal of a Civil War statue that was toppled last week, authorities announced Sunday.

About 75 protesters had been demonstrating peacefully around the Capitol late Saturday night when a small group broke off and went to the statue site, a Colorado State Patrol spokesperson said.

Shortly before 11 p.m., a fire was set atop the mostly concrete pedestal using wood and other materials, the spokesperson said. The Denver Fire Department extinguished the blaze within about 20 minutes, and the damage was minimal.

Gov. Jared Polis said three suspects were later apprehended. They included a 22-year-old who was being held on suspicion of second-degree arson, according to the Denver Police Department.

"We hope this also provides a breakthrough into other on-

going investigations regarding destruction of public property," Polis said in a statement. "There is a right way and a wrong way to have an open and honest conversation about our history. Destruction and vandalism are not the answer."

The statue, erected in 1909, had been pulled down Thursday night when a small group of Union cavalry regiment that fought Confederate forces but also acknowledged the soldiers' role in an 1864 massacre of Native Americans.

Its toppling came as protesters across the nation have defaced and torn down statues of historic figures during recent demonstrations against racial injustice.

Most of those pieces have explicit ties to colonialism, slavery and the Confederacy, including imagery of Christopher Columbus and former U.S. presidents who owned slaves.

Polis has said the Denver statue will be repaired.

New Utah virus cases top weekly record

Utah health officials reported the most coronavirus cases in one week since the pandemic began, as a surge in infections continued across the state.

Officials reported 3,638 cases for the week ending Sunday, exceeding the prior record that had been set just a week earlier. That included more than 470 new confirmed cases announced by officials Sunday.

Only one person died over the weekend — an elderly woman in San Juan County, bringing the number of known fatalities from the virus to 167.

— The Associated Press

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The Daily Sentinel will be closed Friday, July 3 to commemorate the holiday.

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