

## FIRST DRAFT

# Life was tough for Fanny Wright, other prostitutes in mining towns

On a recent trip to Arizona, some friends picked up a souvenir for me — the brass token shown on this page.

The token purports to be from a Silverton bordello called “The Blair House,” which was operated by a madam named “Jew Fanny.”

The token is believed to be a hoax, minted in the 1950s or 1960s. There was no “Blair House” in Silverton, and a real brothel token wouldn’t have used words such as this one.

But Jew Fanny did exist. Her real name was Fanny Wright, and she ran a small house of prostitution in Silverton into the 1940s.

She was one of many prostitutes in Colorado who acted as a nurse during the horrible flu epidemic of 1918.

Fanny was born in Pennsylvania, and after arriving in Silverton early in the 19th century, she worked first in a small house in the notorious Blair Street district, according to Allan G. Bird’s book, “Bordellos of Blair Street.”

No photos of Fanny are known to exist, but a woman who served as her hairdresser described her: “Fanny was a short plumpish woman with a very pretty face,” the hairdresser told Bird. “She had a pimp named Hans Pavelich, a gambler ... Fanny kept him in the finest clothes. After she left Silverton (in 1948), she married Hans.”

Fanny died in Salida not long afterward. She was probably in her late 50s or early 60s.

She survived a rough profession that claimed the lives of many younger women who worked the frontier towns of Colorado during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

“Domestic violence broke out often among couples who worked as pimp and prostitute,” wrote Jan MacKell in her book, “Brothels, Bordellos and Bad Girls: Prostitution in Colorado, 1860-1930.”

She added, “The law often turned (its) back on those who beat prostitutes, while the public felt that the ‘whores’ got what they deserved.”

There was also frequent violence among prostitutes and occasional attacks by clients.

The grim lives many women experienced prompted frequent suicide attempts, with women often using carbolic acid. Drug overdoses, usually involving laudanum or opium, were not uncommon.

Pneumonia was a frequent killer, especially in cold climates like Silverton.

Veneral diseases, or sexually transmitted diseases, were a constant threat. Gonorrhea was especially prevalent. One 1913 medical report estimated that 30 percent of all prostitutes nationwide died of gonorrhea.

“It was the biggest killer next to tuberculosis,” said Steve Baker, of Centuries Research in Montrose.

During the 1980s, Baker conducted extensive archeological work on the remains of brothel outhouses in Ouray. He found numerous devices designed for both men and women to clean themselves after sexual intercourse and, it was hoped, prevent the spread of diseases.

Many communities had health rules requiring regular medical exams of prostitutes to prevent the spread of STDs, and Silverton had one of the most robust programs in Colorado.

Prostitutes had to be examined by a doctor once a week and were required to display a copy of their health certificate on their walls.



BOB SILBERNAGEL



SAN JUAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY/Special to the Sentinel

Big Tillie Fattor, far left, stands outside Silverton’s Tremount Saloon, which she owned with her husband, Celeste (in white apron). Prostitutes can be seen in the upstairs windows.

Most communities in Colorado also had laws that ostensibly made prostitution illegal and prohibited other activities such as gambling and lewd behavior. But these laws were often more about raising civic revenue than banning activities.

One long-time Silverton resident explained to Bird that, during Prohibition, “Each bootlegger and girl of the line had to come in once a month and pay a set fine. That’s how all those cement sidewalks in Silverton were built.”

Bird’s book is also replete with articles from early day Silverton newspapers in which prostitutes, madams, pimps and clients were involved in violent altercations, occasionally including gunfire.

Unless someone was killed or seriously injured, however, they usually paid a small fine and continued their business.

There was a class system among working girls, MacKell wrote. Parlor houses were home to the most elite prostitutes and were frequented by the wealthiest customers.

“The average house employed anywhere from five to 20 working girls, plus servants, a musician, and a bouncer,” she said. “The naughty ladies employed there were required to be talented, attractive and classy.”

Next in the hierarchy were common brothels, often in backrooms or second stories of saloons. These were generally less reputable and not as clean as parlor houses.

Then came the cribs, tiny houses with one or two rooms where prostitutes



A brass token that purports to be from Jew Fanny’s brothel. It’s actually a hoax from the 1950s or 1960s.

worked, usually under the thumb of a pimp or madam.

The lowest ranks were streetwalkers and signboard gals, often aging, unattractive or diseased prostitutes who could no longer make the grade in the upper levels of the trade. They were forced to perform sex acts for meager funds in cheap hotels or whatever location they could find, even behind billboards.

Fanny Wright apparently operated somewhere in the midlevels of this hierarchy. Early on in her career in Silverton, she worked in a small crib. Later, she operated out of larger buildings and employed a number of other girls to work with her.

She did not approach the status of Matilda “Big Tillie” Fattor, one of the most famous Silverton madams, who owned the Tremount Saloon with her husband. Tillie operated a bordello upstairs and had as many as 14 girls working for her.

Fanny Wright was illiterate, but she was well-liked in Silverton and had others write letters for her. She sent money regularly to relatives in Pennsylvania, asking them to buy a home for her when she retired. They kept the money instead.

Information for this column came from “Bordellos of Blair Street” by Allan G. Bird; “Brothels, Bordellos & Bad Girls,” by Jan MacKell; Steve Baker of Centuries Research and the San Juan County Historical Society.

Contact Bob Silbernagel at bobsilberna-gel@gmail.com.

## BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

### Bank account drained

Parents of a girl who had won a settlement after being bitten by a neighbor’s dog are facing charges of draining the girl’s bank account and attempting to cover up the evidence, according to the Grand Junction Police Department.

Shawna Morrison, 35, and Shawn Morrison, each are facing multiple felony charges including six counts of forgery, attempting to influence a public official and theft of \$5,000 to \$20,000.

The high-school-aged girl told officers she had been expecting to receive \$1,200 by the time she turned 18 in a few months and was excited because she was planning to buy a violin.

When officers told her the amount was more like \$12,000 she said the settlement wasn’t that much, but if it were, she would use the money for college, according to an affidavit for the Morrisons.

Officers determined the parents drained the account of more than \$12,000 in about six months in 2013 and brought in fake

bank statements to Mesa County District Court.

A court clerk alerted officials to the case after becoming suspicious that the statements the Morrisons brought in showed the account earned nearly \$5,000 in interest in three years, the affidavit said.

### According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

■ Daniel Lente, 31, was arrested on suspicion of causing damages of less than \$300 to a property in the 100 block of Country Ridge Road on Thursday. In the same incident, Krisi L. Lente, 29, received a summons on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol after being stopped in the area of Mirand Street and Madison Avenue.

■ Ashleigh Chaney, 22, was arrested in the 700 block of Horizon Avenue on suspicion of having an active warrant and a bond of \$1,500 on Thursday.

■ Heather White, 42, was arrested on suspicion of possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of drugs, and having an outstanding warrant after a traffic stop on Thursday.

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

■ Daniel Alfaro Jr., received a summons on suspicion of driving with a revoked license and other traffic infractions in the 3200 block of D 1/2 Road on March 3.

■ Deputies received a report of a protection order violation in the 600 block of Orion Court on March 3.

■ Deputies responded to a report of a stolen vehicle in the 400 block of Carina Street on Feb. 16.

■ Deputies responded to a resident’s report of a weaving vehicle in the area of 11th Street and Pitkin Avenue on Tuesday. The driver, Timothy Wright, 42, was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs for being on medication. Wright also was arrested on suspicion of prohibited use of a weapon and weaving.

■ Naomi Vaughn, 31, was arrested in the 500 block of 30 Road on suspicion of possession of methamphetamine, possession of drug paraphernalia, criminal impersonation, driving with a restrained license and several other traffic offenses.

## 2016 THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

The Colorado Legislature has reached the midway point of the 2016 session. On Friday, lawmakers will receive another state revenue forecast, the one on which next year’s budget will be based.

That forecast sets the tone for how much revenue the state expects to receive during the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Debate over that budget, however, is a bit unsettled because lawmakers have yet to decide what, if anything, it will do about the state’s hospital provider fee, which helps pay for medical programs for the indigent.

Taking that fee out from under TABOR’s revenue caps would free up more money for state services.

■ **Today:** The House State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee is to hear HB1221, which would take money that government agencies spend on legislative liaisons and memberships in professional or other groups and spend it instead on provider payments for health care programs.

■ **Tuesday:** The House Public Health

& Human Services Committee will hear HB1058, partly sponsored by Rep. Yeulinn Willett, R-Grand Junction, to make it a crime for juveniles to transmit through digital means sexually explicit images of themselves.

■ **Wednesday:** The Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee will debate SB135, introduced by Sen. Kerry Donovan, D-Vail, dealing with broadband Internet.

■ **Thursday:** The Senate Finance Committee will discuss HB1030 that would address issues surrounding off-highway vehicles crossing state or county roads.

■ **Next week:** With the revenue forecast in, the Legislature’s Joint Budget Committee will be in the throes of completing next year’s spending plan.

Scheduled committee hearings are subject to change. All floor action and committees can be watched or heard on the Legislature’s website at [www.leg.state.co.us](http://www.leg.state.co.us). Check that website to see which measures are available for remote testimony, and how to register to speak.

— Charles Ashby

## REGION SENTINEL WIRE SERVICES

### Flights nonstop from London to Utah

SALT LAKE CITY — Delta Air Lines will offer nonstop flights from London to Salt Lake City during the next ski season.

The only North American ski destinations previously served by direct flights from the United Kingdom were British Columbia and Denver. To get to Salt Lake City, British visitors would have to connect through a hub like Chicago or Dallas.

Delta held its first nonstop flight from London’s Heathrow Airport and Salt Lake International Airport in August. The summer trial went so well that Delta says it will offer the route three times a week in the winter.

### 1 dead in Pueblo apartment fire

PUEBLO — One person died and at least three people were hospitalized after a fire broke out on the ninth floor of an apartment building.

The Pueblo Fire Department said about a dozen apartments were damaged after the fire broke out Saturday night at the Azteca Apartments, near Interstate 25. The Pueblo County coroner says Linda Sue Collins died in the fire.

Fire investigators say smoking and the use of a home oxygen tank may be to blame for the fire.

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 2016: Nov 24.  
Single Copy: \$1.00 daily and \$2.00 Sunday.  
Mail (USPS): \$5.00 per week, \$260.00 per year. \*POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Daily Sentinel, P.O. Box 668, Grand Junction, CO 81502.\*

**Brown's Shoe Fit Co.**  
“Better Shoes Since 1911”  
**YES, We Have...**  
**HOKA ONE ONE**  
Free Gait Analysis  
Mon. - Fri. 9:00 - 6:00  
Sat. 9:00 - 5:30  
Sun. 11:00 - 3:00  
Your locally owned store and remember parking in the back.  
**425 Main St. • 242-7690**

**MARCH 31<sup>ST</sup>**  
**Is the LAST day to join Dare to Care Auto Club**  
\$55 per hour on ALL labor • Discounts on parts • Local tows only \$40 - All tires and wheels only 10% above cost • Free Road Hazard on all tires • BIG Discounts on ALL maintenance • Discounts on Extended Warranties • Help buying and selling cars  
On April 1st we ARE shutting down to the public and becoming the first EVER Members Only Auto Repair Club!  
Dare to Care Auto Club • 2914 North Avenue  
245-8442 • Daretocaregi.com

**ATTENTION ADVERTISERS!**  
*Spring*  
**HOME & GARDEN**

Find new customers in your own backyard with help from The Daily Sentinel’s **Spring Home & Garden 2016** section. This exciting magazine is filled with interesting and innovative home decorating and remodeling ideas, plus up-to-the-minute local gardening tips from a CSU Extension Master Gardener. Reach potential customers before they begin planning their landscaping and remodeling projects for the year. Your Daily Sentinel representative will be calling on you soon or call 256-4289 to reserve your space.

**Get growing, there’s no time to lose.**

**Advertising Deadline: Wednesday, March 23**  
Part of your Sunday, April 3 Daily Sentinel

Publishes on **GJSentinel.com** Magazine Gallery (including your ad).  
**THE DAILY SENTINEL**  
GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO  
734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501 • Advertising 256-4289  
Classified 242-1313 • For Home Delivery Call 242-1919

All contents copyright © 2016 The Daily Sentinel. All republication rights are reserved. Material in this publication may not be published, broadcast, rewritten for broadcast or publication or redistributed directly or indirectly in any medium.

**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.

**CIRCULATION**  
Subscription and delivery questions:  
..... 242-1919 or (800) 332-5833

**ADVERTISING**  
Retail advertising..... 256-4289  
Classified advertising..... 242-1313

**Pick 3 Sunday: 5-5-9**  
**Cash 5 Sunday: 5-6-19-30-32**  
For information, go to [www.coloradolottery.com](http://www.coloradolottery.com).

**NEWSROOM**  
Managing editor..... 256-4252  
City desk..... 256-4213

Features and entertainment..... 256-4224  
Sports..... 256-4203  
Commentary..... 256-4236

coloradopress ASSOCIATION  
AWARD  
GENERAL EXCELLENCE WINNER  
2011 • 2012 • 2013  
2014