



# THE VIGILANTE



Volume 20 Issue 8

Editor: Nasty Newt SASS# 7365

April 2018

## The Monthly Chronicle of the Robbers Roost Vigilantes

### From the President

#### I Love April

April is about my favorite month. Not one, not two, but three of my kids were born in April, two on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and my little sister was also born on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Plus, if you like movies, and I do, there is a movie you have to be kind of old to remember, 1957's "April Love." It starred Pat Boone, who had a great voice and scored big covering Little Richard songs. His co-star, some twenty years prior to her heyday as the matriarch of "The Partridge Family," was Shirley Jones, also a singer and...well, gorgeous.

And, as it turns out, this April was a great month to be a Vigilante. We were out there three times in April, and had a great time while we were at it. I had hurt my hand and couldn't shoot on the 7th, but seven stalwarts did, led to the finish line by Bad Bascomb, Zig Mar, Venomous Doc, M.C. Ryder, and Goode Bascomb.

I was away for the black powder trail walk on the 14<sup>th</sup>, which featured not just rifles but also pistols and shotguns. The guys gave him a run for his money this time, but once again Ed Hinkley won the Cadillac, followed by M. C. Ryder, Cowboy Earl, Silver Badger, and Jerry Twohig. DON'T FORGET, we have loaner guns available, so if you want to try a trail walk, come on out. It's a ton of fun.

I was still gone on the 21<sup>st</sup> we had one of our bigger cowboy matches in a while, with 15 shooters. I guess I should go away more often. Oil Will and Hiccup Kid stopped by and shot with us for the first time. Old friend Mattel Sackett shot the match, as did Tom Hood and junior shooter Katie Hood, who signed on as the newest members of the RRV. Welcome to all, and don't be strangers! Bad Bascomb blazed through M.C. Ryder's stages and won the match, but Mattel Sackett was right on his heels. Cowboy Earl, Venomous Doc, and M.C. Ryder filled out the top five.

All of the scores from all three matches are posted.

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### No Goodee Cow Men and Indians

by

Nasty Newt, SASS # 7365

When we think of "Indian Wars" out west, most of us probably first think of Apaches in the southwest, Comanches in Texas, and Sioux and Cheyenne on the northern plains. But one such drama played itself out just up the road from us, in the Owens Valley, in the 1860's.

Probably the first white man to see Owens Valley was the mountain man Joseph Walker. In 1833, while in the employ of trapping interests in Salt Lake City, he was sent west to look for safe routes from Utah to the Sierras and back. He found routes, not to mention the mountain pass that bears his name, as well as a green valley north of the pass on the eastern side of the mountains occupied by Paiute Indians. There weren't any beaver, though, so his employers lost interest. In 1845 Walker led a mapping expedition to the area for Captain John C. Fremont. Later, when Fremont and Walker were going over the maps, Fremont named the valley, the river, and the large brackish lake after one of his hunters, Richard Owens, who would never set eyes on any of it.

In 1861, cattlemen from the San Joaquin Valley and Tehachapi Mountains established ranches in Owens Valley with an eye toward providing beef to the booming mining towns in the region. Cattle grazing meant less food for indigenous game animals, and the destruction of plants that were a staple of the Paiute diet. They

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*From the President Continued from page 1*

In May we're shooting a four-bagger. There will be cowboy matches on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup>, a trail walk on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and a BAMB on the 26<sup>th</sup>. So, load up your rifle ammo and watch your email and look at the web site.

We're switching to **Summer Hours**, so we will start signups around 7:00 and try to have the meeting by 7:45.

## **Robbers Roost Vigilantes**

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**No Goodee Cowmen** *continued from page 1*

were forced to become beef eaters, or starve.

It wasn't long before a cowboy shot a Paiute for stealing a steer, and then the Indians retaliated by killing and scalping a cowboy. The Indians stole cattle through the bitter winter of '61 – '62, a fifty-man militia force was formed, and war broke out in earnest. They would shortly engage a force of some 500 Indians under Joaquin Jim from the cover of a Paiute irrigation ditch. This would come to be known as "The Battle of the Ditch." Outnumbered ten to one but not outgunned, the militia held off the Indians and eventually retreated to Big Pine Creek.

At about this point, the army became involved. A detachment from Ft. Churchill, Nevada, under Lt. Herman Noble and accompanied by Indian Agent Warren Wasson, came to the valley to attempt to make peace. From Camp Latham, near Los Angeles, Lt. Col. George Evans marched into the Owens Valley with orders to "chastise" the Indians and put a stop to their depredations. Neither column was aware of the other until they met in Owens Valley. Evans assumed command of both forces and shortly engaged the Indians in battle. After only a few days in the valley and running short of supplies, the soldiers left.

The Indians were emboldened by what they saw as an enemy retreat. During the next three months the Indians stepped up their attacks on the whites, and the settlers demanded protection from the army. In June Evans returned with 200 troopers, and on the fourth of July founded Camp Independence, having convinced his superiors that a temporary post was necessary in order to defeat the warring Paiutes. In October a truce was signed, but the Commissioner of Indian Affairs would not agree to the establishment of a Paiute reservation

*continued below*

**No Goodee Cowmen** *Continued from above*


in Owens Valley, insisting that they be relocated to a place where they wouldn't require so much space to live.

In March of 1863, the Indians renewed the war, and included miners in their attacks along with the ranchers. The garrison at Camp Independence was reinforced, and one contingent of troops brought a mountain howitzer, as well as fifty rifle-muskets and ammunition for distribution to civilians. Additional men of Company D, Second Cavalry, California Volunteers, accompanied Capt. Moses McLaughlin, who in April left Ft. Babbitt to assume command of Camp Independence. His orders included a stopover in the Kern River Valley to investigate and deal with citizen complaints of Indian depredations. The city fathers of Keyesville, and a local Indian farmer, Jose Chico, informed McLaughlin that the troublemakers were renegades from the Owens Valley. The soldiers surprised the Indian camp at dawn on April 19, and the soldiers quickly sorted out 35 men for whom neither the city fathers nor Jose Chico could vouch. The men were summarily shot or sabered on the spot.

Upon arriving at Camp Independence, McLaughlin immediately set about pursuing and fighting the Indians. Company L was in the field for the entire month of May, and discovered and destroyed a large cache of pine nuts and seeds near Bishop Creek. With over 100 men killed, and running out of food, Indians began coming in to Camp Independence to surrender, and by July there were nearly 1,000 in camp.

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## Business Card



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## How to Join the Robbers Roost Vigilantes...

Come out to a RRV match, held the third (and sometimes first) Saturday of every month, or call Nasty Newt at 760-375-7618, or MC Ryder at 760-384-2321, or mail it in. Our membership application is here [RRV Membership Application](#) Annual membership dues for the RRV are: single membership \$25, member and spouse \$30, family membership (including children under 18 living at home) \$35. First time shooters will be able to take their FIRST (1) NEW SHOOTERS CLASS for \$10, any subsequent new shooters class or RRV match shoot will be \$10 members, \$15 nonmembers. Donations for shooting regular monthly RRV matches will be \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Memberships run from September 1 - August 31. New memberships purchased after September will be prorated depending on the number of months remaining and the type of membership. **RRV members are encouraged to become Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) members.** Please call SASS at 877-411-SASS. SASS membership information can be found here:

<http://www.sassnet.com/Membership-Main-001A.php>

SASS membership is not required for membership in RRV, or participation in RRV regular monthly matches. **RRV encourages all shooters to join and support the NRA and the NRA Foundation, and Ridgecrest Gun Range Association.** For further information visit our website at [www.robbersroostvigilantes.com](http://www.robbersroostvigilantes.com).

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## Schedule of Monthly Matches

### RRV Match Dates:

May 5, 2018 Cowboy

May 12, 2018 Trail Walk

May 19, 2018 Cowboy

May 26, 2018 BAMM

**Summer Hours: Sign up starting ~ 7:00, Safety Meeting ~ 7:45.**

**No Goodee Cowmen** *continued from page 2*

On July 11, 1863, Capt. McLaughlin, seventy cavalrymen and twenty-two infantrymen left Camp Independence with 900 Indians bound for the San Sebastian Reservation at Ft. Tejon. Camp Independence was abandoned, and Indian attacks attributed to Joaquin Jim continued through the summer. On December 31, 1864, Indians killed a woman named Mary McGuire and her six-year-old son at Hawean Meadows, which is now under Haiwee Reservoir. At that point the civilian militia went after the Indians with a vengeance. Fifty Indians, including some women and children, were killed in the space of a few days in January of 1865. The Second California Volunteer Cavalry re-occupied Camp Independence on April 1. During the summer, the Indians burned the Willow Springs, Lotta, and Union mills and wounded a miner. This was the last gasp of real Paiute resistance, although soldiers and Indians did battle at least two more times through March of 1867.

The Paiutes were good fighters, specializing in ambushes and hit-and-run raids, but of course never really stood a chance of holding off their little piece of America's westward expansion. They weren't organized, and though they had some firearms, they were always out-gunned. Poorly-maintained weapons and improper ammunition plagued them as well, as there are reports from whites of Paiutes using rocks to pound the ramrods down the barrels of their rifles.

The adobe structures of Camp Independence would be destroyed in the great earthquake of 1872. It was rebuilt as a permanent fort, using wood frame construction, and was occupied until the summer of 1877, when the men of the Second Cavalry, California Volunteers, saddled their horses and rode out of the Owens Valley for the last time.