

How the Outlaws of the Old West Became Romanticized Heroes: Early Americans Create their Own Folk Tale Lore

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Overview

In eleventh grade English curriculum, emphasis is on American Literature. In an effort to understand the influence of the Europeans on the already existing Native American culture, it will be necessary to examine the evolution of the American cowboy, be he (or she) outlaw or hero, and how s/he indelibly left his stamp on the literature of the frontier days and into the present. Who better to look at than Jesse James, Billy the Kid, and Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid to see that we, as Americans, have a love affair with “cowboys-bad-guys.” We have made folk-tales, legends, and even movies about them that put them on a par with the best that our present-day super heroes have to offer.

Rationale

Generations of Europeans had the tales of Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, England had Andrew Lang and his many “Color” Fairy Books, the Scandinavians had Hans Christian Anderson, and the African nations had their Anansi tales, but what did the Americans have after having been on the continent for only 100 years or so? A new people without a common bond of legends, these Americans felt a need to create their own fairy tales, legends, and heroes. In the Westward Movement and expansion, conflicts between different groups arose; stories of cowboys and Indians abounded.

Over the common pursuit of the American Dream, early Americans were all looking for a better life, but few found the riches of oil or gold. Success stories such as those of Butch and Sundance were passed along and elaborated upon. Could these stories have been a basis for the creation of a truly American folk hero? The success of these bandits showed that some people were getting too large a share of the profits. Putting aside the more grisly aspect of these deeds, i.e. senseless murders, enabled the common man to advance an outlaw (such as Jesse James) to the zenith of popularity, albeit through notorious acts and bravado. The focus of this paper will be the exploration of lawbreaking “heroes” and how, through popular and folk culture, they achieved their status.

Robert Redford wrote,

“as technology thrusts us relentlessly into the future, I find myself, perversely, more interested in the past. We seem to have lost something—something vital, something of individuality and passion. That may be why we tend to view the Western outlaw, rightly or not, as a romantic figure.”
(*National Geographic* 1976)

And they are romantic figures, larger than life to most of us. They are gunfighters with a mysterious sort of darkness about them. We know they're not lawmen, but they're not really outlaws either, at least we're not entirely sure about that. The line between outlaw and hero, gunfighter and lawmen is a thin one in the American West, both in myth and in the hindsight of history. Cultural values, religious beliefs, and gender roles were often challenged by survival. The distinction between law and lawlessness in retrospect is often mitigated and unclear. For some, the Westward Expansion represents the triumph of the American spirit against all odds, for others it is a continuation of European colonization which resulted in the outright genocide of indigenous peoples, and not unlike the dual nature of our hero, it is both of these things. (*Lawmen and Outlaws Lit. Hist. of American West 2*, Adams, Ramon, ed.)

As far as literature goes, lawmen and Robin Hood outlaws have continued to inspire the familiar, romanticized tales of legends and movies. What do we mean when we use the term “outlaw-hero?” He is generally someone who is just outside the law, outside the box, with a sense of moral and not necessarily legal justice. He is usually perceived as having some basic character flaw when held to the values of society. His exploits seem to offer more in the way of dramatic possibilities and as Eugene Manlove said, “Outlaws are more interesting than in-laws.” (*Lawmen and Outlaws Lit. Hist. of American West 2*, Adams, Ramon, ed.)

Most of the plots and subplots and character portrayals of outlaw narratives fit into all too familiar patterns. We have a basically decent man who becomes the victim of one or another type of persecution. After unimaginable provocation, he turns on his persecutors and makes revenge his reason for being. His enemies are all either corrupt politicians or officials or lawmen, thus, our outlaw is seen as a hero because he defies corruption in defense of a higher form of social justice.

Despite his crimes, he remains a humane character. He is kind to women and children and does not mistreat animals, especially his horse. He has a sense of humor, is loyal to his friends, and gives to the poor when he takes from the rich. This idealized outlaw or “good badman” is the most prominent type in folklore and literary tradition. The contrasting picture of the outlaw as a vicious,

psychopath and “back-shooter” is much less in evidence. ” (*Lawmen and Outlaws Lit. Hist. of American West* 2, Adams, Ramon, ed.)

JESSE JAMES

Probably the most vicious of these types was Jesse James (1847-1881). If he were still around to question, he would say that he was driven to a life of crime by the outcome of the Civil War. Jesse was part of Quantrill’s Raiders, who were disillusioned by the outcome of the war. They were never recognized by the South for what they did, risking their lives behind enemy lines to subvert the enemy as much as possible. Jesse figured he would put all that training to good use. The art of raiding, robbing and killing were second nature to him. Jesse and Frank, his older brother by three years, harbored a deep resentment against the Union and were out to “get” all Union bankers. On Feb. 13, 1866, the James gang committed the first daylight bank robbery in United States history when they robbed the Clay County Savings Bank in Liberty, Missouri of \$57,000. Thus, Jesse became America’s greatest outlaw. He was a good boy gone bad. Theodore Roosevelt called him “America’s Robin Hood.” (*Time Life Books, The Old West*, Barton, Utley, Robert, ed. 369)

This just added to the myth of the romantic outlaw. He was portrayed as a romantic hero who attacked Union institutions like banks and railroads which were victimizing small farmers. Jesse became a folk hero in Missouri and Kansas. The citizens protected him against the law, and that was the reason that he was never captured. Many law-abiding citizens took secret satisfaction that the outlaws were bloodying the noses of the rich. “The robbery of a train payroll, bank, or even a large mine, had little, if any, effect on the small farmer and rancher.” (*Utah Outlaw History*, Barton, John D., ed.) Therefore the rewards offered for these miscreants rarely enticed them to do anything much less turn them in.

But the reality was quite different from this Robin-Hood-type folk hero outlaw. Jess James was not such a next-door neighbor nice guy. The James boys didn’t rob from the rich and give to the poor. They robbed from everybody, kept it for themselves and killed innocent people along the way. Jesse used a direct method: hit anywhere, kill anyone in the way, whoop it up out of town, and lay low until things die down. Jesse James was actually a cold-blooded killer. He and his gang wantonly killed bank clerks and tellers, railroad engineers and stage drivers.

As the law and the Pinkertons began to get too close for comfort, and the price on their heads went up, the gang decided to “take a rest” and retire for a bit. So, they all hid out until 1872, when they started out again with renewed vigor.

On September 26, 1872, they most daringly robbed the Kansas City Fair. In the midst of 10,000 people, a ten-year-old girl was shot in the leg. One editor compared them to Knights of the Round Table.

In 1873, they started robbing trains. They thought there would be \$100,000 in gold on the train but the gold shipment was moved ahead of time. They only got \$2000. In 1874, another train robbery gave them \$22,000. Jess was starting to believe the publicity about himself as “Robin Hood.” He started looking at the hands of passengers. If their hands were “soft”—they were robbed because they were capitalists, and deserved to be robbed. After every robbery he wrote to the editors proclaiming his innocence. He was the only robber who wrote his own press releases and left them for various editors of the local papers. He justified his crimes by saying, “They drove us to it.” (*Utah Outlaw History*, Barton, John D., ed.)

James married in 1874, the cousin who had nursed him back to health. Frank also married a seventeen-year-old girl and moved to Kentucky. For a few years they both settled down and raised kids, but this was only because things were “too hot” for them and they needed to get the law off their tails. At that time, the price on their heads was \$3000—a lot of money at that time. The law was hard-put to find them because of all the public sympathy for the James boys. Farmers hid them and gang members covered for them but the Pinkerton Agency prided itself on getting its men.

Their last mistake was a big one. They planned to hit The First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota on September 7, 1876. The cashier refused to open the safe so Jesse put a pistol to his head and blew his brains out. The town fought back and several gang members were killed. Jesse gave the signal to split up. Two of the younger brothers were captured two weeks later and Frank and Jesse escaped through Iowa to Missouri. Several more robberies occurred and finally, after September 7, 1881, their last train robbery at Blue Cut near Glendale, Missouri, Jesse settled down in St. Joseph, Missouri where a Bob and Joseph Ford, new gang members, came to stay with him. These two were really there as “hired guns” working under cover. Jesse suspected them but everything happened too quickly. When he stood up to move a crooked picture, Bob Ford shot him in the back of the head for a \$10,000 reward. He never got the reward.

One of the many theories that abounds is that Jesse hired him to fake his own death so he could finally be rid of the lawmen on his back. But his grave was dug up and the body was found to be the real Jesse James. (Triplett, Frank 280)

Many gunfighters are simply bandits, but the prototype of the outlaw was the one put together by the James brothers. Between 1866 and 1889 they pulled off 26 jobs and “made half a million dollars.” Before these two, no one had ever robbed an American bank before or a train. The only rule Jesse had was never to rob women or preachers. This was all due to Jesse, their handsome, live-wire, baby-faced, blue-eyed leader.

After that his fame developed through the movies. Films such as *Jesse James Under the Black Flag* (1921) and *The Longriders* (1980) portray him either as a vicious outlaw or a Western Robin Hood. The latest film about the “James Legend” is 2001’s *American Outlaw*. That film, the ad says, is where “bad is good again.” (“American Outlaws Review”) In this one, the James Gang is portrayed as a good-natured rock group. (“Freezer Box Mag.”) One reviewer thought a better title for the film, after seeing how much of a superhero Jesse had become, was “James T. West and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles meet the Evil (Railroad) Empire.” (“American Outlaws Review”) This is the outlaw Jesse James with a happy ending! (See **Appendix B** for James—Younger Gang Robberies)

BILLY THE KID

Another outlaw who had quite a romantic reputation was the baddest boy of the Old West, Henry McCarty, alias William H. Bonney, alias, Billy the Kid. He was born in New York City in 1859 but came to live in Silver City, New Mexico in 1873 when his mother and stepfather moved there.

When he was only fifteen, his mother died; his stepfather had long before gone silver mining, and he was left alone. He made the terrible mistake of stealing laundry from a Chinaman, and known as Kid Antrim, at the time, was jailed. Being skinny, 5’7” and a 135 lbs., his wrists were so skinny that he slipped out of the handcuffs and escaped. He found work as a cowboy until a burly blacksmith, Frank Cohill, took to slapping him around and poking fun at him. One night Cohill went too far and jumped him so the Kid pulled his gun and shot him. Cohill died a day later. When Billy learned he was going to be arrested he rode out of town. One can empathize with him for being bullied and doing something about it, so this enhanced his legend even more. We do sympathize with “a kid” left on his own at fifteen—no support for his six-gun. In the incident with Cohill, he was merely correcting a wrong.

When he left town, so as not to be jailed, he fled to Mesilla, New Mexico, where he assumed the alias of William H. Bonney and rode with the Jesse Evans’s gang. From there, he wound up in Lincoln County in the middle of the Lincoln County range war. He became friends with John S. Chisholm, who was

challenging Lawrence G. Murphy's monopoly over government beef contracts in New Mexico. Billy's direct involvement in this war started when he went to work for John Tunstall and Alexander McSween, leaders of the Chisholm crowd. Tunstall was eventually murdered due to bad relations with the rival factions on February 28, 1878. Billy was arrested by Sheriff William M. Brody, a tool of Murphy, and then cast his lot with McSween and Dick Brewer, Tunstall's foremen.

Billy then rode with a vigilante group called The Regulators. During an ensuing ambush, Sheriff Brody was killed along with his deputy. Shortly thereafter Dick Brewer was killed, and later, in a shoot-out at McSween's home between Murphy's gang and The Regulators, only Billy and a few of his cohorts emerged alive. The war continued until 1878-79 with cattle and horse rustling until Lew Wallace, a new territorial governor of New Mexico published a wanted list which included the Kid. A truce was called in 1879. It was not to be and a promised pardon was delayed.

Billy got tired of waiting. He then got on a horse and rode away. He tried to collect money owed him from John Chisholm. Chisholm refused to pay and Billy said he'd collect one way or another. In 1880 Billy killed a bounty hunter. By now, his gang was the bane of all cattle men. There was a \$500 price on his head. And Pat Garrett, the new Lincoln County sheriff was after him.

In a darkened bedroom at the Maxwell Ranch where Billy was hiding out Pat Garrett was waiting for him. Billy backed through the open door demanding to know who was in the room and Garrett, recognizing his voice, fired twice into the room and killed him. Billy never knew who the shooter was.

What made Billy so famous was his "devil-may-care" attitude, and boldness, bravado, and wit old men and older gunmen didn't have. He certainly was not dumb. He could read and write and was very knowledgeable about people. He even learned to speak Spanish fluently. He was loyal to his friends and an expert with his guns, animals, equestrian acrobatics, gambling, knife throwing, and he was street-wise.

He lived at a time when strong men made their own law, took care of their own problems and settled many of them with a gun. Samuel Colt was the great equalizer of the time. Billy was only 21 years old and he killed 21 men – one for each year of his life. For this, he has become the most noted outlaw in our civilized world, and come to embody much of the good and the bad of the Old West: recklessness, bravery, lawlessness, and freedom.

Fair Mexican Maidens, play guitars and sing,
A song about Billy, their boy bandit king
How ere his young manhood had reached its sad end
He's notch on his pistol for twenty-one men. (Erdoes 242)

But one day Bill, he met a man
Who was a whole lot badder.
And now he's dead,
And we ain't none the sadder. (Erdoes 244)

These songs were sung by the simple Spanish-speaking people, especially the women, who loved "Billee the Keed." For them, he was a legend. He was better than Robin Hood, Sir Lancelot and Sir Gawain, all rolled into one. He would be missed. (Erdoes 245)

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID

Of all the Western outlaws, none are more fondly remembered in story and folklore than the "Robin Hood of the West" –Butch Cassidy and his sidekick, the Sundance Kid.

Born Robert Leroy Parker, on Friday, April 13, 1886, the eldest of thirteen children in a Mormon family in Utah, he admired and fell under the influence of an old rustler named Mike Cassidy. The theft of a five-dollar horse imprisoned him in Wyoming for a stretch and impelled him towards a life on the run.

The Sundance Kid, born Harry Alonzo Longabaugh in 1867, was the youngest of five in a Baptist family in Pennsylvania. Having read about Jesse James he longed to leave Pennsylvania. When cousins decided to move West he jumped at the chance. After heading West he ranched with relatives in Colorado then knocked around working as a drover (herder) and broncobuster. He got his name by serving 15 months in jail in Sundance, Wyoming for also stealing a horse.

Butch's Mormon background may have contributed to his outlaw life. He saw the church as oppressive and hypocritical. He saw cattle rustling as harmless, when the elders in the church objected. He left Utah after a jail sentence. He felt that if people were going to treat him as an outlaw he may as well act like one, so he moved to the Hole-in-the-Wall area of north central Wyoming. This was where he met most of his Wild Bunch gang, including Sundance. Sundance's companion was Etta Place; schoolteacher/prostitute, though no one knows for sure what she actually was.

Cassidy is remembered in folklore and story as the “Robin Hood of the West.” He even fancied himself as a modern-day Robin Hood. After one bank robbery he even gave part of his take to a widow who had been foreclosed upon by the bank. Cassidy was seen as a champion of small homesteaders in their struggle against turn-of-the-century cattle barons and railroad magnates. (“Trains, Banks, Stagecoaches . . .” 1) He differed from Jesse James in that he had a great wit, a roguish charm and respect for humanity. He went out of his way to avoid conflicts; according to some he never killed anyone in all his years of robbery except in self-defense. (“Trains, Banks, Stagecoaches . . .” 1) (See **Appendix A** for list of gang members)

Cassidy and the gang put together the longest sequence of successful bank and train robberies in the history of the American West. For one such robber, Butch discovered that dynamite was an efficient way to unlock the safes of the Union Pacific Railroad. The problem was that he used a little too much dynamite and blew \$60,000 in cash sky high. Luckily, the gang managed to scrape up most of it.

Successfully eluding the law became harder and harder as technology became more advanced. Telegraphs could now provide the authorities with a means for tracking the outlaws that was much faster than sending out posses. So, after one last robbery in 1901, they decided to call it quits and split up the gang. Butch, Sundance and Etta traveled to New York City and then, separately, headed for Uruguay. They then went to Buenos Aires and purchased a 1,300 acre ranch.

They lived peacefully, were good neighbors, attended the local festivals and looked after their sheep and other stock. This lasted until they were recognized by an ex- Wyoming sheriff who was supposedly just sight-seeing. Conjecture has it that he was on the payroll for one of the detective agencies and was really looking for them. This incident was the impetus to force them back to their life of banditry and bank robbery. Using Etta as their third “man,” she dressed as one and could ride and shoot as well as any of the old gang members; they started hitting South American banks. The trio was finally stopped by troops in Bolivia.

This is where the myth begins. Legend has it that they were killed in a shootout with Bolivian cavalry members at San Vicente, Bolivia, in 1908. However, this wasn’t reported in the United States until 1930, well after the fact. Historical research has shown that two American males were killed, but whether they were our outlaws is not certain. The oft told story is that Etta had earlier returned to San Francisco and that the men returned out West and lived out their lives under alias names and identities. Cassidy’s sister said that he visited her and died in 1937 in Spokane, Washington.

Whatever their true fate, and, like so many other Western figures, the James boys and Billy the Kid, these men have become larger than life. They left their mark on the American frontier as symbols of a passing age of daring and of adventure. The Wild Bunch was the last great Western outlaw gang that would make its getaways on horseback. Future gangs would use Packards, instead. It was a way of life that ended. Even Butch realizes that when, as he leaves for South America he throws his bike down in disgust and says, “the future’s all yours, you lousy bicycle!” (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* 1969)

Butch and the Kid were truly the last of the great outlaws of legend. In the film of the same name they drop in on Bledsoe, an old outlaw who has gone straight and become sheriff, who tells them, “It’s over! Don’t you get that? Your times is over and you’re gonna die bloody, and all you can do is choose where.” (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* 1969) The old man was right, it was over. But it wasn’t forgotten. Unquestionably, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* has made the most impact as a western and has become both critically and commercially one of the most successful films of all time.

But Western life ain’t wild and woolly now;
There is no daily gunpowder powwow;
There are no bunco game galore
And the tourist dude holds the floor.
But Western life ain’t wild and woolly now!
(*Legends and Tales of the American West* 105)

Western life may have changed but it lives on in legends and folk lore. Just recently, Disney released a new animated movie called *Open Range* about animals who had to save the farm from the big, bad banker man.

We continue to see tales of these Western types in movies, as in a Kevin Costner film, with Robert Duval entitled, also, *Open Range*. This was about cattleman, herders, going up against the ranchers.

These themes of revenge, honor, justice, corruption, or mythic heroes against reality will continue to play out, be it in real movies, Disney animation, songs that we carry around in our head (“Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head”—*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* and “Home on the Range”), or in stories that we tell our children, or in adventure vacations that people seek (herding cattle or riding to places like the Hole-in-the-Wall).

Maybe there is a little bit of the cowboy in all of us—or maybe we all just want to be rescued by a heroic outlaw-turned-hero cowboy type, but that is for minds like Bettelheim to discover, or for another story or another paper.

Objectives

Students will be able to understand the role of the cowboy and the outlaw in shaping the Old West. Students will be able to gain an understanding of the historical significance of these characters and how they influenced future generations.

Lesson Plans

In this lesson students will be made aware of the life style of real cowboys versus make believe cowboy heroes.

Instructional Objective:

1. The student will study expository material pertaining to the lives of real cowboys.
2. The students will compare and contrast their findings to the selected movie about cowboys.

Procedure:

1. We will first discuss the history of the American West and what led us to its expansion.
2. We will then read the book *Cowboy*.
3. Students will then do their own research on a famous “outlaw” or “bad” guy or romanticized figure from the 1800’s to the 1900’s. (Acceptable list will be handed out)
4. We will then watch the Movie *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid*.
5. A paper will be written describing the differences between the movie cowboys, and the types of cowboys previously studied, and your research person.

Strategies

Students will be introduced to the history of the expansion of the Old West in America. Through listening, reading, writing, and viewing, students will construct meaning relevant to their own lives, relating what they learn to their lives to today and to their own futures.

Materials and Media

1. VCR
2. *Butch Cassidy And the Sundance Kid* movie
3. Book: Murdock, David H. *Cowboy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1993.

Supplemental Materials

1. Cowboy catalogs
2. The internet
3. Students' research books
4. If there is time, we could also watch the 2001 film, *American Outlaw*. This is the story of the super-hero, Jesse James.

Bibliography

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Bowman, Dr. James Cloyd, *Pecos Bill The Greatest Cowboy of All Time*, Albert Whitman & Co., Chicago, Ill., 1956. This is a collection of the tales of the "Greatest Cowboy who ever lived" and his very large adventures, including riding a cyclone and a mountain lion and having a horse called "widow maker."

Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, MJF Books, New York, 1949. In this book, the author uses myth as a revelation of human personality development, which each of us must discover as we journey through life it is the mythical journey of the hero that we seek.

Davis, Wm. C., *The American Frontier Pioneer, Settlers, 1800-1899*, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1992. This book begins with the opening of the Western frontier and chronicles the history of the land, paying particular attention to exploration, expansion, conflict and settlement. The pictures are utterly awesome!

Erdoes, Richard, *Legends and Tales of the American West*, Pantheon Fairy Tale and Folklore Library, Pantheon Books, NY, 1991 This wonderful book of American folk mythology includes more than 130 colorful stories ranging from Davy Crockett to Billy the Kid and including pioneers, gamblers, lawmen, and outlaws: anyone and everyone who had a hand in settling the West.

Flanagan. Mike, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to The Old West*, Alpha Books, Indianapolis, In., 1999. This is a detailed history of the Old West, including little-known tales of legendary outlaws and gunmen and thrilling events like the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, and the Gold Rush.

Hough, Emerson, *The Story of the Outlaw*, OP, 1907. Emerson chronicles the famous and not-so-famous- bad guys of the Western territories up until the law overcame all of them.

Sabin, Edwin L., *Wild Men of the Wild West*, New York, 1929. This is similar to the Hough book, but he includes people who were also performers, like Calamity Jane, Wild Bill Hickok, etc., and people like Lewis and Clark and the explorers.

Time Life Books, *The Old West*, Editors of Time-Life Books, Foreword by Robert Utley, Prentice Hall Press, New York, 1990. Through gripping accounts and hundreds of illustrations, this book follows the first settlers across our continent, be it on horseback, covered wagon, or, later, via the train. It shows the struggle of the cowboy and the homesteader and the society that was shaped as frontier towns grew even going into the shaping of Alaska.

Triplett, Frank, *The Life, Times, and Treacherous Death of Jesse James*, Barnes and Noble Books, NY, 1970. This was a controversial book about Jesse James' death because it was very favorable towards the outlaw and really made you like and even admire him.

Woodhull Frost, *Southwestern Lore*, Publication IX, Texas Folklore Society, 1931. This publication was mainly about Texas and any outlaw, famous person, who ever set foot across the border of Texas is mentioned here.

<http://www.greenriver-utah.com/outlawsshtmloutlawhistory>

Google 5/28/2004. This site provides valuable information about the history of American outlaws.

<http://www.tcu.edu/depts/pre/anwest/html/wlo119.html#lawmen> and outlaws

Google 5/28/2004. This site is similar to the one above and was very useful.

Appendix A

The following men were the core of the Wild Bunch:

- Harry Longbaugh (a.k.a. Sundance Kid), nicknamed possibly from Sundance, Wyoming, where he was caught as a horsethief
 - Ben "The Tall Texan" Kirkpatrick, known as the lady killer of the group
 - Bill Tod Carver, the quickdraw
 - Camila "Deaf Charlie" Hanks, partly deaf in one ear
 - Elza Lay (a.k.a. William McGinnis), one time geology student
 - Tom "Peep" O'Day, court jester; Joe Chancellor, skilled safecracker and poker player
 - Jim Lowe, bartender
 - Jesse Linsley, the dapper dresser
 - William "Bill" Cruzan, best horse thief
 - Dave Atkins, already on the lam when he joined the group
 - Walter "Wat the Watcher" Puntney, jack of all trades
 - Willard E. Christiansen (a.k.a. Matt Warner), part of McCarty's gang
 - Bob Meeks, cowboy
 - Laura Bullion, rode for a while
 - Etta Place, a prostitute
 - Annie Rogers, a favorite of Kid Curry
 - Lillie Davis, a prostitute
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Appendix B

Trains, Banks, Stagecoaches . . .

The Daring Exploits of this Band of Lawless Men

Appendix B

A List of the robberies attributed to James - Younger Gang Members

JAMES- YOUNGER GANG ROBBERIES

The members of the James Younger Gang have been credited with many robberies in their time and today. As it was not in their individual best interest to admit at that time to being involved in any activity that might result in their legal detainment. It is difficult to pin point the exact amount liberated at each event. The gang members and families later exaggerated and the banks, trains, and stages tended to under report the amount. The authorities later admitted, they were concerned that accurate reporting which could lead to other advantageous activities and enterprising young men.

There were several other robberies from time to time credited to the James-Younger Gang. Many "John Does" would rob, say they were Jesse and Gang, then disappear. From the passengers' point of view, you may not have returned with your possessions, but at least you had a story to tell that you were robbed by the best - the infamous James - Younger Gang.

Date	Location	Event	Amount
February 13, 1866	Liberty, Mo.	<u>Clay County Savings Association</u>	\$62,000.00
October 30, 1866	Lexington, Mo	<u>Alexander Mitchell and Co. Bank</u>	\$2,000.00
March 2, 1867	Savannah, Mo.	<u>Judge John McClain Banking House</u>	No record *
May 22, 1867	Richmond, Mo.	<u>Hughes and Wasson Bank</u>	\$4,000.00 *
March 20, 1868	Russellville, Ky.	<u>Nimrod Long Banking Co.</u>	\$14,000.00
December 7, 1869	Gallatin, Mo.	<u>Daviess County Savings Bank</u>	\$700.00
June 3, 1871	Corydon, Iowa	<u>Ocobock Brothers' Bank</u>	\$6,000.00
April 29, 1872	Columbia, Ky.	<u>Bank of Columbia</u>	\$600.00
September 26, 1872	Kansas City	<u>Kansas City Exposition Ticket Office</u>	\$10,000.00
May 27, 1873	St. Genevieve, Mo.	<u>Ste. Genevieve Savings Bank</u>	\$4,100.00
July 21, 1873	Adair, Iowa	<u>Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad</u>	\$6,000.00
January 15, 1874	Hot Springs, Ark.	<u>Stagecoach</u>	\$3,000.00
January 31, 1874	Gad's Hill, Mo.	<u>Iron Mountain Railroad</u>	\$12,000.00
April 1874	Austin, Tx.	<u>Stagecoach</u>	\$3,000.00
August 30, 1874	Waverly-Lexington, Mo.	<u>Stagecoach</u>	*
December 7, 1874	Cornith, Mississippi	<u>Tishomingo Savings Bank</u>	\$10,000.00 *
December 8, 1874	Muncie, Ks.	<u>Kansas Pacific Railroad</u>	\$55,000.00
September 5, 1875	Huntington, WVa	<u>Bank</u>	\$10,000.00
July 7, 1876	Rockey Cut, Mo.	<u>Missouri Pacific Railroad</u>	\$15,000.00

September 7, 1876	Northfield, Mn.	<u>First National Bank</u>	\$0.00
October 8, 1879	Glendale, Mo.	<u>Chicago and Alton Railroad</u>	\$40,000.00
September 3 1880	Mammoth Cave, Ky.	<u>Stagecoach</u>	\$1,800.00
March 11, 1881	Muscle Shoals, Alabama	<u>Government Paymaster</u>	
July 15, 1881	Winston, Mo.	<u>Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad</u>	\$2,000.00
September 7, 1881	Glendale, Mo.	<u>Chicago and Alton Railroad</u>	\$15,000.00

* It is not known for certain that James-Younger Gang members took part in these robberies.

The Desparados.

The Victims.

The Women.

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Thank you for visiting the James - Younger Gang. For information regarding membership and activities in our organization, please contact Marcia Smith at nottabadvue@earthlink.net. For historical and geneological information, please contact Donna Rose and Wilma Hillman.

Appendix C

Richard Erdoes includes the following account in his collection, *Legends and Tales of the American West*:

COYOTE MAKES A TEXAS COWBOY

Coyote, the creator, the Earth-Maker, the Trickster, had already made the world and all the animals living in it. He was very self-satisfied: "I have done a good job," he said.

"Friend Coyote," the buffalo reminded him, "you were supposed to make a creature called 'Man.' You didn't do it."

"Now you tell me," complained Coyote. "I'm supposed to have everything finished before sundown. I have a deadline. Well, amigos, gather around me and help me to figure out how this creature should look."

So all animals gathered around Coyote according to rank—first the buffalo, then the whale, the eagle, the bear, the mountain lion, and so on.

"It's easy," said the buffalo. "Give him horns and a big hump. Then he'll be beautiful—like me."

"Nonsense," said the whale. "Humps are ugly. No horns! Let him have skin. Hair only gets in the way of swimming. And flippers, of course. Then he'll be at home in the water."

"Water, swimming—bah, humbug," exclaimed the eagle. "Give him wings to soar up to the sky, the sun, the stars. Cover him with feathers."

"Claws, fangs, my word," said the elk, "how gross! Antlers, my friends, majestic anglers and fast legs."

Then all the animals started shouting together: "give him horns, no, wings, a big tail, please, shoveling paws are a must, hooves, no, claws, give him scales and flippers, no, no, no, give him a thick pelt!" And so on and on. Coyote lost patience: "Be quiet, all of you. We haven't got much time. I'll start with the basics, just four legs, a body, and a head. Then we can try out different things, see what looks best—lots of hair or no hair, horns or antlers, flippers or wings." So Coyote formed up a body with a little mud and attached a head and four legs, holding the whole thing upright, contemplating his work. "I think I'll cover him with reddish fur," said Coyote. "That will look nice." Just at that moment the sun went down.

"You messed up, friend," the buffalo chided Coyote. "Everything had to be finished by nightfall. Now you have to leave him like he is. Now you can't add anything more."

"You've put too much brain in his head," complained the bear. "He'll be too smart. He'll rule over us. Make the brain smaller."

"Too late, friend," said Coyote. "The sun is down. We must leave things as they are."

"Look what you've done, Coyote," said the mountain lion. "You've got the critter propped up standing up upright when the sun went down. So now he has to walk on his hindlegs only. He'll be very slow."

"Can't be helped, can't be helped now," answered Coyote.

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