

WILD BILL HICKOK

Deadwood City ~

End of Trail

THADD TURNER

Wild Bill Hickok: Deadwood City - End of Trail

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Universal Publishers/uPUBLISH.com
USA • 2001

ISBN: 1-58112-689-1

www.upublish.com/books/turner.htm

*To Tanya Cheyenne and Wyatt Matthew Paul;
and my beautiful wife Cindy....*

*In memory of Les Turner
and Howard Allen....
now ridin' the range with the big ponies.*

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Forward

At about 12 noon, August 2, 1876, James Butler 'Wild Bill' Hickok, possibly dressed in his favorite frock coat, best linen shirt, and fine dress pants, entered Nuttall, Lewis, and Mann's No. 10 Saloon in Deadwood City seeking entertainment and drinks..... among the half dozen people in the gaming hall & saloon were included Carl Mann, the co-owner of the establishment, Captain William Massie, a former Missouri River boat pilot turned local real estate speculator, and Charlie Rich, a young part time gambler and card dealer whom Bill had previously met earlier in the year in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The three men were engaged in a game of draw poker cards and quickly invited Wild Bill to join them at the table..... When Hickok sat down at the card game, he had a clear and unobstructed view of the front door. He could comfortably turn his head to see the rear door, but his back was partially exposed to the open area in front of the pine slab bar..... Jack McCall entered the No. 10 Saloon and walked over to the upper end of the bar, then moved down it's entire length toward the back of the building, as if either to access the gold dust scales sitting at the end of the bar, or leave the building through the rear door..... When less than half a dozen feet from the door, McCall suddenly turned and stepped forward to a position within 2 to 3 feet behind Wild Bill. Removing a single action pistol from under his loose fitting clothing, McCall lifted the gun to a point directly behind Wild Bill's head and pulled the trigger. He fired one round, shouting, "Damn you, take that!" Death was instantaneous.

Many authors and historians in recent years have done an excellent job detailing Wild Bill's most fascinating, but often turbulent and adventurous life. Unfortunately, with the exception of only one previously detailed account, the reading enthusiast of this old west event is usually given only the most basic statistics of the time, place, and location of the shooting of this frontier legend. We know that Hickok came to Deadwood in 1876- and was then shot and killed in the No. 10 Saloon while playing a game of draw poker cards. Most readers are generally left with a limited account about the actual shooting and related events that took place in August of 1876. This historic moment, along with the subsequent flight, capture, and trial of Jack McCall, are timeless events to preserve for the generations to come.

This book is an attempt to present a clearer and more concise picture of a fascinating set of events that occurred in a wild and prosperous boomtown mining camp known as Deadwood City during our nations Centennial year of 1876. The same year that we lost some of our most famous frontier heroes, including George Armstrong Custer, James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok, and Moses E. "California Joe" Milner.

This historic year was also the turning point for some of the toughest frontier pioneers in our western history to help lead us into the new era of the settled and tamed west. Men like William F. Cody, Charlie Utter, Seth Bullock, and the two Jack's- John "Captain Jack" Crawford, and John "Texas Jack" Omohundro- whom all became prominent, popular, and well known (even after their own deaths). They would provide us new heroes into the turn of the next century.

Deadwood City grew rapidly and prospered. Unlike most mining camp booms of the late 1800's that grew fast, peaked, and then busted within a couple of short years, Deadwood's growth was phenomenally fast paced from ground zero up through the turn of the new 20th century.

The narrow Black Hills gulches yielded more precious gold material consistently than any other region in the United States, and for the longest period of time.

Author, Thadd Turner, spent two years in Deadwood, South Dakota, researching the actual site locations where these historic events took place. He has reviewed dozens of original newspaper accounts and advertisements of early Deadwood City, and carefully analyzed most of the historic photographs, survey maps, and eyewitness written accounts available from that time period.

The written narration presented herein of the actual shooting of Wild Bill Hickok, and the subsequent movements, flight, and trial of Jack McCall, are the most accurate and detailed accounts provided to date. The extensively researched information provided includes the best available description of the No. 10 Saloon interior floor layout, and the placement of all the primary participants that were involved with the shooting. A new map of the precise location of the many Main Street merchants in Deadwood City at the time these events occurred in August of 1876 is provided.



Introduction

In the early summer of 1999, at the transitional age of 39, (Wild Bill Hickok's very same age that summer he came to Deadwood in 1876), this author determined to relocate to the historic town of Deadwood, South Dakota. I wanted to experience the modern day gambling houses and saloons, the hustle and bustle of the new tourist boom, and the magical lure of the Black Hills. Of course, the irreplaceable original history of this gulch community was the primary drawing card for my move. Deadwood has a true western history that constantly gives the visitor real butterflies in their stomach and huge goose bumps across the entire body. Only Tombstone, Arizona can match the incredible pure historic feeling of actually being in the same place where our heroes of the old west once lived, breathed.... and died.

The old west occupied such a brief period of time in our country's frontier history, and yet it is the most beloved part of our true western heritage. I wanted to experience the

real Deadwood, and started looking for some authentic and original material facts for future writing references, specifically in hopes of gaining a little additional first hand information on the events and activities prevalent in Deadwood City's early days. I located the original survey and topographical maps recorded in the late 1870's, and began a physical comparison of the original street and lot placements possibly now altered by the elements of time. I reviewed early photographs of the first Main Street merchants, carefully studied the physical construction of their buildings, and noted the commercial signage they placed in front of their business locations. I explored the historic newspaper archives in the Deadwood Public Library, and began to read the actual newspaper accounts and advertisements provided by these first business operations. I determined to record my findings, and in the early winter of the new millennium I commenced work on drafting a map of these original site locations. Thus, began the initial accumulation of source material for this book.

In the summer of 1876, the No. 10 Saloon, Bella Union Variety Theatre, and the IXL Hotel & Restaurant where all constructed on the lower end of Deadwood City's Main Street. The General Custer House Hotel, Deadwood Theatre, Senate Saloon, and City Meat Market were all located on the upper end of Main Street near the popular Lee Street intersection. I spent many hours visiting these historic site locations, and specifically focused my attention on the No. 10 Saloon site, where it was well known that Wild Bill Hickok had been shot and killed on August 2, 1876. I wanted to know more specifics about this event. What did the saloon look like? Where was Wild Bill actually sitting? How many people were in the place when Hickok was killed? Why did Jack McCall shoot Wild Bill? Where was the trial of Jack McCall? Many questions, and few explanations. I knew there were answers- somewhere.

While a portion of the material presented herein has been well documented by reputable authors, there is a considerable amount of new source material presented for the first time, including some startling findings never before published. To keep a consistency and continuity in the story, many important and previously published well-known facts are provided here for the convenience and clarity of the reader.

Available personal documents and written accounts of these events as they transpired in 1876, and the activities surrounding them, were diligently reviewed and analyzed for accuracy and material content where possible against the historic newspaper accounts made available from the Deadwood Library archives. A new and comprehensive Deadwood City Main Street map illustration is presented here for the first time showing the physical location of many of the original business operations as they were in place when Wild Bill was shot in 1876.

One of the greatest discoveries, and definitely one of the most ironic coincidences of fact, was the finding of the original Deadwood Theatre site location where the trial of Jack McCall was held on August 3, 1876. This site location was obtained through a careful and meticulous overlapping of original photos and early Main Street survey maps, and published first person accounts of the physical description of the premises. The review of dozens of historic newspaper articles and merchant advertisements from the Black Hills Pioneer- the first and only newspaper publication in Deadwood City in 1876, were also carefully analyzed.

It is this writer's intention that, "Wild Bill Hickok, Deadwood City~ End of Trail", will provide the old west author, historian, and educator with valuable information gained from the new original material presented herewith for the first time. It is also hoped, that the active cowboy action shooter and living history re-enactor will pick up some useful

historical points to apply to their own western character's mannerism and style. And finally, and most importantly, it is expected that the old west reading enthusiast will have a better understanding of one of the most important events in American western history.

Thadd Turner
Deadwood City, Dakota Territory
December 2000



Acknowledgements

This book could not be successful without the assistance of a number of special individuals and organizations. The diligence required to find and locate historically accurate and factual information is the key component to providing the reader with a true narration of events that occurred one hundred twenty-five years ago in Deadwood City, Dakota Territory.

Fortunately, I did not have to reinvestigate Wild Bill Hickok. His life story has been provided in a series of excellent publications written by the world's foremost Hickok historian and authority, Mr. Joseph G. Rosa of Ruislip, England. With the guidance of Mr. Rosa's outstanding researched documentation, I had the factual basis to pursue my own book publication. In the course of researching material for information on early Deadwood City, I had the unique opportunity to form a quality relationship with the man who introduced me to the real world of James Butler Hickok. Joe Rosa's guidance, criticism, and influence to present only the true facts are greatly appreciated.

The Deadwood Public Library is the cornerstone for much of the Main Street material located and provided herewith. The library's historical newspaper archives are irreplaceable. The extensive collection of Deadwood City and Wild Bill Hickok source material is probably one of the most complete of any public entity available for open review. Special thanks to former head librarian, Terri Davis, and her most able assistants, Carol Hauck-Reif, and Nancy Berke-Hutchison. Thanks gals for sending me home on those long

cold winter nights when I became a fixture on the microfiche machine. Good luck to Terri on her new move to Rapid City.

Of course, any non-fiction book publication is not complete without quality historical photos or illustrations of the people and places that helped bring the events written about to life. A sincere thank you to those individuals and historical organizations that provided the very important images used in this book. Your dedication to preserving our country's heritage on film or in art is most appreciated. This important list includes the following: Adams Memorial Museum, Deadwood, SD; Deadwood Public Library, Deadwood, SD; University of South Dakota, W. H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD; South Dakota Historical Society, Pierre, SD; Montana Historical Society, Haynes Foundation Collection, Helena, MT; Denver Public Library, Denver, CO; Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, WY; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; and the National Archives & Records Administration, Kansas City, Missouri, for providing copies of the original trial documents for the Yankton Federal trial of Jack McCall.

Individuals providing photographs or art work from their private collections include: William B. Secrest, author and historian; James Earle, publisher and historian, Creative Publishing Company; Bob Boze Bell, author, artist, and historian, True West Magazine; Dennis and Julie Greene, Texas Jack Association; Don C. Clowser, author and historian; and Jeannine Guern, Ray Phipps, and Anne Shedlock. The excellent cover print of Wild Bill Hickok is from an original painting by artist Joe Netherwood, Scottsdale, Arizona. The rear cover photograph of author Thadd Turner is provided by artist and sculptor Barry Eisenach, Arvada, Colorado. The outstanding Main Street and Deadwood Gulch Maps were adapted from the author's original sketches and drafted by Tonya Vig, Arleth & Associates Land Surveying & Engineering, Deadwood, South

Dakota. The format and design layout for this publication was only possible through the talents of the author's beautiful wife and long time companion, Cindy Turner.

Others requiring credit for their assistance in providing material, documentation, and support for this book include: Edna Nees, author and historian, Texas Jack Association; City of Deadwood Historic Preservation, Deadwood, South Dakota; Days of 76 Museum, Deadwood, South Dakota; Ken Keller and the Heart of Deadwood Corporation, Deadwood, South Dakota; Colleen Kirby and Barbara Chrisman, Black Hills State University, Spearfish, South Dakota; Mark Wolfe, author and former historic preservation officer for the City of Deadwood; Dorothy Newhaus, University of South Dakota, W. H. Over Museum, Vermillion, South Dakota; John and Robert Wondercheck, Black Hills Stagecoach, Moorecroft, Wyoming; and Martha Sullivan, Gordon and Patricia Burgeois, Randy Meeks, John Henris, Nicola Mohr, Troy Love, Tanya Turner, and Wyatt Turner.

And finally, special attention must be provided to the citizens of the City of Deadwood, South Dakota, for their genuine efforts to keep their historic community alive through on-going historic preservation and living history activities.



"Wild Bill Hickok" by Lois Marak. Courtesy of the Adams Memorial Museum, Deadwood, SD.

AN EPITAPH ON WILD BILL

**SLEEP ON, BRAVE HEART, IN
PEACEFUL SLUMBER,
BRAVEST SCOUT IN ALL THE WEST;
LIGHTNING EYES AND VOICE
OF THUNDER,
CLOSED AND HUSHED IN QUIET REST.
PEACE AND REST AT LAST IS GIVEN;
MAY WE MEET AGAIN IN HEAVEN,
REST IN PEACE.**

**CAPTAIN JACK CRAWFORD
"POET SCOUT OF THE BLACK
HILLS"**

Written at Wild Bill's grave site
September 10, 1876
Deadwood City, Dakota Territory.



*James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok, ca. 1874.
Courtesy Denver Public Library.*

Preface

On the day that Wild Bill Hickok was shot and killed, Ulysess S. Grant was at the end of his second term as President of the United States. America had just celebrated it's 100th year of independence less than thirty days earlier, and the U. S. Military was at war with the Sioux Indians and other Northern Plains tribes. Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and his immediate command had been annihilated just six short weeks earlier at Montana's Little Big Horn River. America's centennial year was destined to change the face of the wild frontier forever.....

1

Black Hills Gold

Dakota Territory was formed on March 1, 1861, and originally included the area encompassing the future states of South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Prior to the Civil War these areas were part of the larger Nebraska Territory.¹ By 1876, Montana and Wyoming were well-established independent territories looking for statehood. John L. Pennington was the appointed Governor of Dakota Territory, which now encompassed only the two Dakota's. Yankton, the Territorial Capitol was located on the Missouri River at the extreme southern end of this large territory.

The Black Hills of Dakota Territory were a part of the great Sioux Indian Reservation, which had been designated for the Sioux people in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868. The treaty specifically recognized that members of the United States government and military would be the only non-Indian presence allowed in the Black Hills. No other persons would be granted access into the region, in any capacity, for whatever purpose. Everyone else entering the Black Hills would be considered illegally trespassing on United States Federal lands.

The 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty read in part:

ARTICLE 2: "And the United States now solemnly agrees that no persons except those herein designated and authorized to do so, and except such officers, agents and employees of the government as may be authorized to do so, and except such officers, agents and employees of the

*government as may be authorized to enter upon Indian reservations in discharge of duties enjoined by law, shall ever be permitted to pass over, settle upon, or reside in the territory described in this article or in such territory as may be added to this reservation for the use of said Indians."*²

The document was signed by the well known and popular Oglala Sioux chief, Red Cloud, along with most of the other Lower Brule reservation chiefs. United States Army Generals William T. Sherman and William S. Harney also signed the treaty, which was ratified by the U. S. Senate and subsequently signed into law by President Andrew Johnson in February of 1869. It took the United States government less than seven years to break the treaty promise.

Lt. Colonel George Armstrong Custer had led a military expedition into the Black Hills region in 1874, for which purpose among other things was to explore and map the geography of this area for a military post site. That site would become Fort Meade, and would eventually be the new headquarters of the mighty Seventh Cavalry just a few years after Custer's death at the Little Big Horn River in Montana on June 25, 1876. Fort Meade would be located near the present town of Sturgis.

Traces of valuable mineral deposits, including the precious metal gold, were soon discovered on French Creek located in the southern part of the Black Hills. In late 1874, as word began to leak out of Custer's gold discovery, civilian mining parties began to illegally filter into those parts of the Black Hills. The U.S. Military initially removed these early parties from the region, as they were in direct violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.³

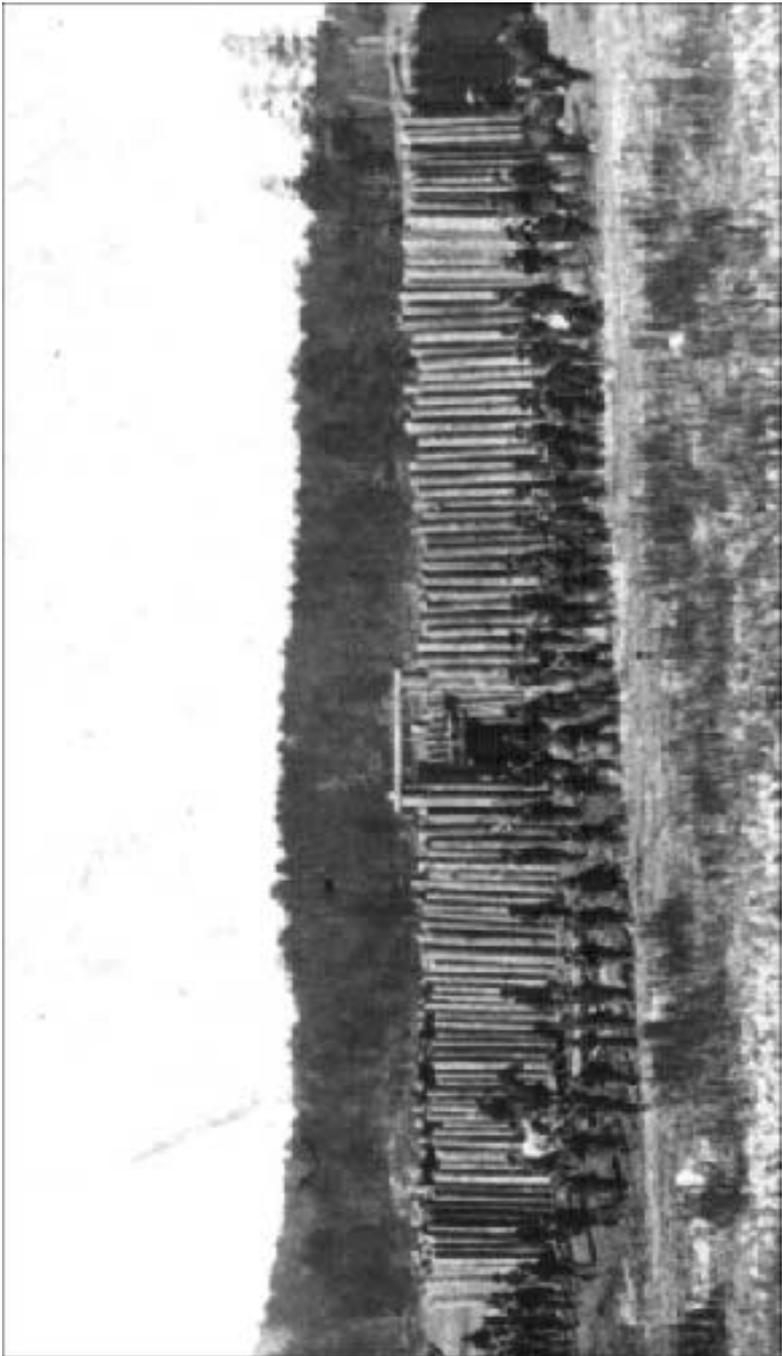
One of these very first mining parties did however manage to avoid the military, and gained access into the Black Hills in the last days of 1874. Arriving just two days

before Christmas on December 23, 1874, this party found the same area where Custer and his troops had located their gold deposits earlier that summer. This group was organized by two individuals named T. H. Russell and Charles Collins, and were led into the Black Hills by John Gordon, who had been named Captain and chief scout of the expedition.⁴ Gordon had come into the hills earlier in the year, and was the only party member familiar with the terrain and trail routes the group would need to travel on.

The Russell-Collins party quickly built a defensive stockade of thick pine logs, which were stood on end and lashed together in a four-walled rectangular pattern. The length of the log walls was almost as tall as a two-story home. This became known as the Gordon Stockade, which is still visible today, and is recognized as the first permanent structure built in the Black Hills prior to the 1876 gold rush.⁵ Individual, single room log cabins were built throughout the interior of the little fortification to serve as living quarters for protection from the anticipated harsh winter elements.

The small party of twenty-eight gold seekers, which included the first recorded white woman to come into the Black Hills, Annie D. Tallent, spent a difficult and tough winter along what is now the western boundary of South Dakota's spectacular Custer State Park. Custer City would be founded the following year just two and a half miles west of this first settlement.

The valiant, but uninvited and unwelcome little group found a small amount of gold deposits along French Creek, but before they could fully develop their claims, these first adventurers were discovered by the Military in the early spring of 1875. The entire outfit was immediately put under federal arrest for illegally trespassing on a designated Indian



Reservation, and forcibly removed from the Black Hills to Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory. Annie Tallent would in later years write an account of her experiences in her historic book *"The Black Hills- or The Last Hunting Grounds of The Dakotahs"*.

Charles Collins, the principle organizer of this first mining party, would eventually find his way to Deadwood City. By 1877 he would start the city's third daily newspaper, the *Black Hills Champion*.⁶ In 1878 Collins would also publish an excellent, and most valuable, business and residential information directory about the Black Hills region and it's mining and ranching communities: *"Collins' History and Directory of the Black Hills"*.

Word of the Russell-Collins-Gordon parties small gold finds on French Creek would spread like wild fire throughout the nation, and only provide additional credibility to the excitement already prevalent from Custer's own gold discovery of the previous year. There definitely was gold in the Black Hills.

In May of 1875, the U.S. government launched the Jenny Geological and Topographical Survey Expedition from Fort Laramie. This scientific survey group would attempt to further explore the Black Hills region and evaluate Custer's finds of the previous year. By the following year, the United States would be actively pushing the Sioux Indian tribes into renegotiating the Fort Laramie Treaty in an attempt to acquire the Black Hills region from them.

(opposite) Gordon Stockade, ca. 1876. The first permanent structure built in the Black Hills after the Russell-Collins party arrival on December 23, 1874. Stanley Morrow photo, University of South Dakota, W. H. Over Museum