

Richard "Bloody Dick" Seymour
~ A Man Who Played Many Parts on the Western Frontier ~
By D. Jean Smith

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits, and their entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts..."*

An educated Englishman, Richard "Bloody Dick" Seymour was well aware of the stark contrast between his early life and his current circumstances when he quoted Shakespeare in an essay describing a recently completed trading mission with the Sioux Indians in southwest Nebraska in 1873.

Having made his entrance on the stage of the American West, Seymour would play many more parts over the course of the next ten or fifteen years. Surely, his most dramatic entrance took place in the rough little mining town of Deadwood, Dakota Territory, in July of 1876; notable because he was in the company of "Wild Bill" Hickok and "Calamity Jane" Canary. Prospector and newspaperman, Richard B. Hughes, described their "spectacular parade" down Deadwood's main street:

Accompanying Hickok were "four other characters – also of considerable notoriety," Charley and Steve Utter, "Bloody Dick" Seymour, and Calamity Jane, "who basked chiefly in the reflected glory of their leader." Their entry was designed to attract attention, Hughes added, as they "rode the entire length of Main Street, mounted on good horses and clad in complete suits of buckskin, every suit of which carried sufficient fringe to make a considerable buckskin rope."¹

This and a few similar references place Richard Seymour in the border towns of the American West in 1876. A short biographical sketch, which includes information from early military post returns, indicates he appeared on the western frontier in 1874.² However, Seymour's own journals describing two trading missions with the Indians in southwest Nebraska, one in January/February of 1873 and another, which took place in March of the same year, place him on the frontier in 1873. Entries in the journals of Georgia native, Ena Raymonde, who first set foot in a trappers' camp on the Medicine Creek in southwest Nebraska in 1872, are evidence that he was back and forth between the Medicine and Fort McPherson as early as June of 1872. Ena's brother, W. H. "Paddy" Miles, who had been on the Medicine since late 1871 noted in his journal on March 18, 1872:

All the boys is in camp – Hank Clifford, Dick Seymour, and John Kirby, our Co. Clerk, his first visit to Frontier County. John King is here the only man on the

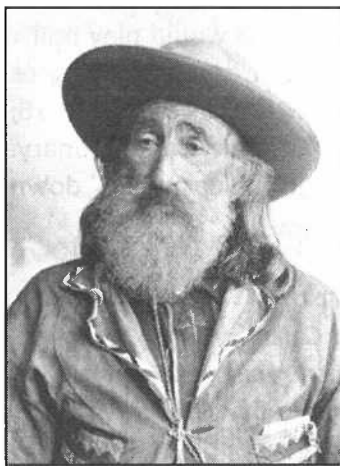
¹ James D. McLaird, *Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), p. 58. Richard Hughes memoirs were later published in a book titled *Pioneer Years in the Black Hills*.

² Nebraska State Historical Society (hereafter referred to as NSHS) Collection RG0900.AM: Richard Seymour Biographical Note.

Republican Valley. I have traided [sic] him two cows for a mule and start this morning to drive the cows to his camp.³

Backtracking a little further, Seymour can be found on the Medicine Creek at least as early as 1871. It is believed that a party of white men with Indian wives and children set up a hunting camp on the Medicine in November of 1870, and "it is certain, at least, that the group were settled on the Medicine in 1871." Southwest Nebraska historian Paul Riley added that other men were in and out of the camp, "particularly after Whistler and his Cut-offs also began to make the area their permanent home."⁴

It was September of 1871 when W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, guiding a hunting party that included General Sheridan and a host of East coast notables, happened onto them. Cody's party of hunters had been having a little sport at target practice in a nearby prairie dog town. Cody later recalled:



John Y. Nelson was an early arrival on the frontier.

Robert Van Pelt Estate

A short distance beyond the dog town we discovered a settlement of five white men, who proved to be the Clifford brothers, Arthur Ruff, Dick Seymour and John Nelson. Each of them had a squaw wife and numerous half-breed children, living in tents of buffalo skins. They owned a herd of horses and mules and a few cattle and had cultivated a small piece of land. Their principal occupation was hunting, and they had a large number of buffalo hides, which they had tanned in the Indian manner.⁵

Richard Seymour, who probably did not have an Indian wife at this time, was one of those who were "in and out of camp." Henry C. "Hank" Clifford and his brother Mortimer H. "Monte" Clifford were experienced frontiersmen by the time they settled on the Medicine, both having worked their way west from Nebraska City as freighters. Arthur Ruff, too, had spent many years on the frontier, and his son later married one of Monte Clifford's daughters. Hank Clifford's wife, Maggie, was believed to be Cheyenne while Monte Clifford's wife, Julia, was Sioux.

In a class by himself, John Y. Nelson had been a fixture in the West since the mid 1840s. After Ena Raymonde first met the old plainsman on the Medicine in 1873, she recorded in her journal that he was "*an original of no mean order...*"⁶ Nelson had several Native American wives in the course of his life on the plains, though probably fewer than he claimed.

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Actually there is an even earlier "Seymour sighting." Solomon Butcher, in gathering material for his 1901 book, *S. D. Butcher's Pioneer History of Custer County and Short Sketches of Early Days in Nebraska*, interviewed a man identified only as the "Old Colonel." Although the story was not specifically about Seymour, a passing reference indicates he may have been in

<sup>3</sup> John S. King was the earliest settler on the Republican in what is now Red Willow County, Nebraska.

<sup>4</sup> Paul D. Riley, "The Valley of the Medicine," unpublished manuscript, NSHS Ballantine Collection MS1730.

<sup>5</sup> William F. Cody, William Lightfoot Visscher, *Life and Adventures of "Buffalo Bill,"* (Chicago: Stanton and Van Vliet Co., 1917), p. 226.

<sup>6</sup> Annie "Ena" Raymonde's Journals, NSHS Ballantine Collection MS1730.

Nebraska by the mid to late 1860s. It seems the "Old Colonel" was camped in the vicinity of the Loup River, hunting buffalo and elk during the 1860s, when he heard rumors of a large band of Sioux warriors having been seen some thirty or so miles to the north. As the Old Colonel told it:

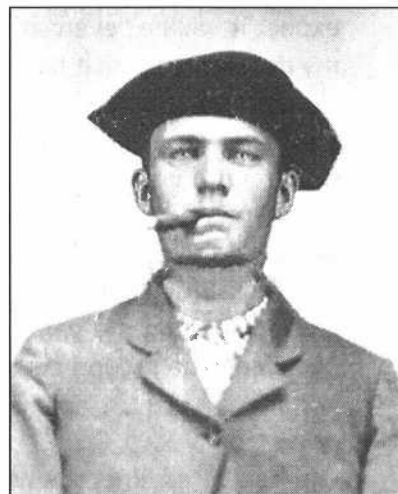
Now if this were true, every precaution must be taken not to be discovered, for the Sioux in peace and the Sioux in war are two entirely different propositions. Since the day before, I had built no fire and was anxiously awaiting the return of [my friend], who had gone north about a week before... Al. Burger, alias Dick Seymour, or Bloody Dick, as he was sometimes called, and his brother, stayed with me all night and confirmed the rumor. These young fellows were buffalo hunters and trappers and were on their way to North Platte with furs...<sup>7</sup>

This is the only allusion to the name Seymour being an alias, or to his having a brother, for that matter. There also is no way of knowing for certain that the storyteller is referring to the same "Bloody Dick" Seymour, but the country was sparsely settled at that time, and a duplication of both the surname and nickname is unlikely. Butcher added in parenthesis that he had recently met "Bloody Dick," and "he tells me that he has married and has been living on the Middle Loup since 1882." Chronologically, this fits fairly well with later developments in Seymour's story as Butcher would have been working on his book in the late 1880s or the 1890s. Certainly it takes no detour from the plausible to place Seymour in Loup River country in the mid to late 1860s and on the Medicine in the early 1870s.

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Although W. H. "Paddy" Miles had been in the West for several years, his parents, Dempsey and Ann Palmer, and sister Ena (Palmer) Raymonde did not arrive until March of 1872. The newcomers attempted at first to establish a campsite on a high bluff but quickly experienced Nebraska's capricious March winds. A log cabin was then built near the timber on the lowland along the Medicine Creek, and the new home site was named Wolf's Rest. Ena Raymonde later recalled Dick Seymour's having helped with the move to the new location, which took place on April 10, 1872: *"How we all trudged over here into the 'brush,' hoping to hide from the sweeping windstorms. A wagon, driven by Dick [Seymour] brought our tents and trunks, etc..."*<sup>8</sup>

A southern belle as well as an accomplished markswoman, Ena Raymonde's arrival in the newly organized Frontier County generated a great deal of excitement among the male population. The young, single men were especially anxious to be in her proximity. In June of 1872, Ena mentioned Seymour, but on this occasion, it was the handsome frontiersman, Texas Jack Omohundro, and the buffalo lassoing adventure that caused her pen to flow across the pages of her journal.



W. H. "Paddy" Miles joined the trapper's camp on the Medicine Creek in 1871.

*Courtesy Ann McIlwain*

<sup>7</sup>Solomon Butcher, *S. D. Butcher's Pioneer History of Custer County: And Short Sketches of Early Days in Nebraska*, (Denver: Merchants Publishing Company, 1901), p. 137.

<sup>8</sup> Transcription of Seymour's journals is in the Ballantine Collection MS1730. NSHS research associate Paul Riley added the information in brackets during the transcribing of Ena Raymonde and Richard Seymour's journals.



J. B. "Texas Jack" Omohundro was a prominent figure on the frontier until his untimely death in 1880.

*Buffalo Bill Historical Center*

From Ena Raymonde's June 7, 1872 journal:

I should have commenced a journal before. I cannot trust to memory the much that is now filling my life's strange book with a chapter all its own! But I have little space and less time for comment. I shall detail nothing. A brief jotting of names, character, adventure, incidents and circumstances must suffice.

First of all, I have been introduced to "Texas Jack" – one of our "Western Heroes" – and a fine picture of handsome, dashing, manly manhood he is. Certainly one of my beau-ideals of a hunter or a "Scout". Hope I shall see more of him and that I shall like his character as well as I do his face. He made a very graceful presentation in the way of a handsome toy-bag of China-work – its original purpose I do not know; but he used it for cartridges, and so shall I – i.e. if I keep it; for it is but the souvenir of a challenge to shoot; and after having the bravado to take up the gauntlet thus thrown down, if he does beat me (and I

expect it will be "even so"!), I shall not have the courage to retain such a memento of my defeat, but give it back with my pistol to boot!

But enough of this hero for the present, only that he now heads a party out on about as wild an adventure as even my wild brain could devise – viz. lassoing buffalo – full grown ones – for the purpose of shipping them alive on the train. Some say it is dangerous work; some prophesy not only broken arms and legs and crippled horses, but dead men as well as dead horses!...

Dick S[eymour], my very good friend, is also with the party; ... I saw Charlie Emmett among the party also. He was interpreter for the band of Sioux that came to our camp the second day after our arrival here – a "cut-off" band of which "Whistler" is chief..<sup>9</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, she wrote:

I have made a saddle out of buckskin; fringed it with buckskin; fancied it "muchly." [George] Dillard brought the tree for me from the Post; and quite a time we had of it. At first everyone teased and tried to discourage me, but I hung onto the job with desperate tenacity, until it was finished, and today I went for a ride on it. D[ick] Seymour went with me. Saw three antelope going; and on our return ran across a few buffalo and Mr. Dick killed a huge bull. I was delighted, of course! Though, as I had no gun, it was no hunt to me.

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<sup>9</sup> "Dashing Charlie" Emmett was a scout, guide and interpreter whose name appears occasionally in Western writings. Paul Riley wrote that Emmett was "usually referred to as the son-in-law of Whistler."

Seymour's attentions must have worn thin rather quickly, however, as Ena noted on June 22, 1872:

Dick Seymour has left "Wolf's Rest" – can't say I regret it, as I think it best in more ways than one that he should go. He has gone in to the Post [Fort McPherson].

Several weeks later Ena, herself, was in residence at the fort. She was not well much of the time – possibly suffering the aftereffects of having had malaria – and it was determined that she should stay at McPherson for awhile, the conditions being a little less primitive than the campsite on the Medicine Creek. She mentioned Dick Seymour in several journal entries while at the fort. On July 12, she noted: *"I am too ill and cross to write. Dick Seymour has been here all day – would like to talk to him about that writing business but don't feel able."*

Over the next few weeks Ena was very ill, *"with hot fevers and delirious for two nights..."* In a journal entry on August 24, she again mentioned Seymour: *"Dick S[eymour] was in, during my illness. I think him an unselfish, honest-hearted man; and I trust most sincerely that he will do well. He had gone out on the Medicine."*

Still later, it was Dick Seymour who was *"under the weather."* He and several other fellows had saddled their horses and rode up to McPherson from the Medicine. Ena wrote on September 5: *"It never rains but what it pours," is a trite but sometimes very true adage. The 'Medicimans' are in, en masse! Dick S[eymour] has been quite ill. I have never seen him look as he does now."*

Ena continued to reside at Fort McPherson until early November. During the month of September she occasionally mentioned Seymour's coming and going. On September 12, 1872, an unfortunate incident occurred, as Ena described the following day:

Dick S. was in for a few moments this morning – his luck yesterday seems to have been good as a hunter, but he was so unfortunate as to try to extract a ram-rod with his teeth and strange to say, found that his teeth gave away before he could crush the iron of the rod.

Richard Seymour's name does not appear in Ena Raymonde's journal during the bright blue days of October. She was at this time enjoying the attention of the newly arrived William Frank "Doc" Carver at the fort. Texas Jack Omohundro had also been mentioned frequently in her journal entries during the summer. Neither did Ena mention Seymour after she returned – in the company of Doc Carver – to Wolf's Rest on the Medicine Creek in early November.

On December 23, 1872, Ena wrote of Seymour's having joined Hank Clifford's trading and hunting expedition: *"Dick S[eymour] told me 'good bye' until Spring some days ago. He will winter it among the Indians with the 'Clifford outfit,' hunting and trapping."*



Ena (Palmer) Raymonde was the first single white woman in Southwest Nebraska's Frontier County.

*Nebraska State Historical Society*

Five days later, on December 28, Ena wrote that one of the trappers had brought her a note from Seymour:

They were at Frenchman's Fork when he wrote. Quite a lot of news in a "nut-shell": Pawnee and Sioux fighting; quite a little engagement (for Indians) on Christmas day, and the chief Whistler, reported killed.

As it turned out, the killing of Whistler along with two of his men in December of 1872 came not at the hands of the Pawnee but of white trappers, of which more will be said later. Ena also wrote that Dick Seymour had asked her to send him a pencil and blank book but that she had neither to send. She apparently came up with something he could use for a journal, however, as he began recording the daily happenings of the expedition on January 15, 1873.

Other than a reference to having walked "way out around Dick's claim," Ena made no further entries in her journal concerning Seymour until February 17, 1873:

We have had quite an influx of visitors from the "far hills of the prairie" in the last few days. Hank Clifford called on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> to say Dick Seymour would be here in the afternoon with a letter from Herbert. He came bewhiskered and hearty, and delivered the letter and some tobacco for Mr. Palmer from Bert.<sup>10</sup> The latter article was most tenderly wrapped in a piece of blanket, which Dick placed with an air of proud assurance on my writing table. Of course was glad, having heard nothing direct from our trappers since their departure on New Year's morning.

A few days later Ena wrote that Dick Seymour had stopped by the previous evening to pick up her letters for "The Lone Trapper," another nickname for her brother Paddy Miles. In March Ena mentioned Seymour only twice – both times in reference to books and/or pictures which he had brought or sent her. The last time his name appears in her diary is on April 18, 1873: "*Bert, Dick [Seymour] and McClary are all three trapping up the Medicine. Dick brought me a fine, painted robe from the village.*" (The "village" was the nearby campsite of Cut-off Sioux, sometimes referred to facetiously by the whites as "Sioux City.")

Richard Seymour understood by this time that he was not a contender for the heart of Ena Raymonde, but there remained a connection on an intellectual level. Ena was already a published poet and had penned a manuscript on frontier life, which she hoped to publish. In the introduction to the journal/essay on the March 1873 trading expedition, Seymour emphasized the desire to publish his finished manuscript.

It has been suggested, and rightly so, that the weakness to Seymour's writing was in his attempt to entertain Ena, who would be the immediate reader of his journals. That limitation aside, Seymour's January/February 1873 journal and March 1873 journal/essay do illustrate various facets of his character, background, and the nature of the hunting/trading expeditions, etc.

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<sup>10</sup> "Bert" was a nickname for Ena's brother William Herbert Miles. Because leaving his home state of Georgia involved a fracas with the law, he had changed his surname from Palmer to Miles. The Mr. Palmer to whom Ena refers was her father, Dempsey Palmer.

Richard Seymour began the essay:

True to my promise, I forward you a description of my last journey. I have witnessed a bona fide trade with the Sioux Indians, but first must describe the scenes along the way and the "outfit," this being a new word to many [as] it is entirely a western production... Any party of trappers, hunters, or traders who have got all their teams, riding animals, and their equipment, cooking utensils, sustenance, and other necessities ready for a journey are termed "outfit," and known amongst the residents of their starting point as such and such a one's outfit, generally taking the name of the person leading the party. The "outfit" I now speak of was termed the "Clifford outfit," he being the trader and, of course, leader of his party.

The freighting consists of sugar, coffee, flour, corn meal, rice, dried apples, blue cloth, domestic and calico of different patterns, butcher knives, tin-ware, brass buttons, brass bridles, etc., for the purpose of exchanging these necessities of an Indian's life with him for robes. Three two-horse teams loaded with these goods and two extra horses. The trader drove one team, and a half-breed another, while the third was whipped along by a white man who exists under the appellation of Bloody Dick.

Clifford is a man medium height, of a rather muscular build and is married to a squaw belonging to the same tribe [the Cut-off Oglala], in whose encampment I now am. The half-breed, Andy Barrett, is a fine looking fellow, stands over medium height and built like a man who could stand wear and tear and weather. He is the celebrated California Lassoist and the best thrower of a rope or lasso that I ever saw.



Hank and Monte Clifford played an important part in early Frontier County history.

Back Row, L to R: Orlando Clifford (Monte's son), John Clifford (Monte & Hank each had a son John), George Ruff (Rosa's husband)

Middle Row, L to R: Nellie (Clifford) Rowland, Alice (Ruff) Clifford (Orlando's wife), Julia (Clifford) Bradford, Lizzie (Clifford) Herman and Hank's wife, Maggie (Hard Ground) Clifford. (Nellie, Julia, & Lizzie were Hank and Maggie's daughters).

Front Row, L to R: Monte Clifford holding granddaughter Eleanor Clifford (daughter of Orlando & Alice) and Hank Clifford holding unidentified baby with unidentified little girl standing beside him. Charlie Clifford (Hank's grandson?) in front. *Photo from Ancestry.com*



As Seymour inferred, the half-breed Andy Barrett was commonly known as the California Lassoist or the California Horse-Tamer. As the story is told, he had been captured as a child by Mormon emigrants and taken west, where he became one of the best ropers and horse trainers of the Rocky Mountains. Andy Barrett became part of local legend because his marriage was the first "white style" wedding in the new county. Ena Raymonde noted in her journal that on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June a remarkable event had occurred – the solemnization of the first marriage in Frontier County:

Quite a number of the "creek people" were gathered here at "Wolf's Rest" to see Mr. Andy Barrett and Mrs. Nancy Wheatley joined in the "Holy Bonds of Matrimony!" Both of them are half-breed Indians; and the bridegroom is better known as "Andy, The Half Breed," or the wonderful "California Horse-Tamer"...

One year ago, I saw the Horse-Tamer for the first time. He was with...the party that passed here on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June for the purpose of lassoing buffalo. I did not expect to see him the principle actor at a wedding out here, in a year's time!

Andy Barrett's legend also has it that he was killed by an Indian who shot him dead after having dreamed that if he did not kill the first person he met following the dream, that he would never get to the happy hunting grounds. Perhaps this is what happened, for although Seymour mentioned Andy Barrett's joining Clifford's outfit as a packer on the trading mission, his name seemingly disappears from the pages of history shortly thereafter.

Continuing with a description of the members of the Clifford Outfit, Seymour offers a description of himself:

Bloody Dick! I cannot do him justice in description, but can only say that he is under the medium height, slightish build, and can boast of "some muscle." He appears to have had a fair English education, and is known by many Sioux as *Shuga-man-i-ton*, *Ka Tad* and *Kee-Kel taaw* (The man who killed many wolves, when he was starving to death.) Mohawk Indians, or rather the half-breed portion of the tribe who have emigrated from Pennsylvania to Nebraska, dub him the "dead man."

From the above description, it can be determined that Richard Seymour was English, did not have a robust physique, and had suffered deprivation on the frontier as, indeed, most early-comers did. In another reference to his height, Seymour declared that "Dame Nature" cheated him of two inches. He continues with a description of the "outfit's" progress as it departs the Medicine Creek country:

We started from Clifford's Rancho...situated on Medicine Creek, a small stream running into the Republican... our course lay nearly due west. The Medicine is a well timbered fine looking stream, plenty of water, and broad bottoms for farming purposes, and the hills are covered with buffalo grass, which cannot be beat for stock raising purposes... We wend our way slowly along this stream, and after a travel of about twenty miles we encamped on Brush Creek, a small tributary of the Medicine. The weather was cold, but by the side of a huge fire we soon felt warm enough, and here a scene of cooking commenced that beggars description.



The old adage "too many cooks spoil the broth," does not apply on the prairie. We were all cooks for that meal and right royally we supped. First something for the "inner man," broiled deer ribs, fried pork chops, hot biscuits, coffee, sugar and condensed milk. With appetites sharpened through long fasting and keen winds, we did justice to our own cooking. Each one praising the dish he cooked himself.

Following are excerpts from the January/February journals, which capture further aspects of the trading mission itself, the essence of Seymour's aristocratic background, and his desire to compile a glossary of the Sioux language. These entries also support Paul Riley's argument that Seymour's attitude toward the Indians was patronizing and that he displayed little interest in understanding their way of life or beliefs:

Jan. 16, 1873:

Finds us alive. I tackle the "Culinary outfit" again, and dish up fried sugar, slap John, and coffee for three. Hank mounts a mule, two robes and one blanket this time, same old rope for stirrups, and goes trotting [off]. Asa travels down the creek afoot [and I] am left in camp; the old grey pulled out a sack from the wagon last night, and sprinkled the ground with about 20 lbs. of tea.<sup>11</sup> The cold is intense and the sun is seen struggling to show its face thro misty looking clouds.

I am waiting for Hank and [Asa] to return. We expect Andy with a pack horse to overtake us at this camp. Hank and Asa have returned with the horses, & we hitch them up, & start for Chief Creek. Get there before sundown, find a little wood. Same old camp routine. Cold again, etc. No troops.

Jan. 17:

Cross Chief Creek & strike wagon road. Travelled till early noon, and expect Indian village to be about 35 miles from where we are. A little beyond we halted for dinner. Hank shot a [chic]ken, and shortly after could be seen two little specs rise on a hill about four miles to the west... It was but a [short time until] the objects were gone... We knew [they had] seen us, and before our d[inner was] cooked, lo! two reds came [riding] towards us. We fed them, then [came] a third. We fed him...

Jan. 19:

Slept late this morning, was up nearly all last night. Looked out about sun up, and here they come – Squaws, a hundred of them – some with one robe, some with two, three, and four, and still they come pouring on to the trade lodge.

Inside stand two soldiers or policemen, one armed with an old infantry sword, the other with a club. They keep order. Hank dishes up flour, corn meal, etc. as an equivalent for their robes. I take the robes and squeeze them thro this crowd of squaws, take them to the next lodge, which is used as a store room and Asa packs them away...

No Andy here or I should have taken charge of the Sugar and Coffee Dept. Oh! What a time dragging myself and three or four robes through this crowd of squaws, all clamorous and afraid they would get no sugar... The soldiers shout and club these squaws, and lay it on somewhat lustily I think.

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<sup>11</sup> Asa McManus was present at the founding of Frontier County in Hank Clifford's tepee in January of 1872.

I guess I passed through this crowd about 200 times... Fell over 19 squaws at 19 different times, sometimes going out of the lodge, just as a squaw was coming in; at others going into the lodge just as one was coming out, and then we would both straighten up, always to the detriment of the squaws nose...

Soldiers got angry and shot off their pistols. Hank stopped the trade, and [they] smoked until the clamorous old hags were taught a little patience. An Indian can... [be taught] patience under the soothing influence of a pipe.

Trade commenced again. The squaws forgot their lesson of patience and the push and pull goes on again. Once I started out with three robes for the store lodge. Got into the crowd myself, but the robes were dragged from my hands, the crush was so bad. I was blinded by perspiration, smoke and dust when I felt the robes go...

In the melee and the crush the front of the lodge was torn out and the pole with the shot holes in it broke and fell on the heads of some in the crowd. Didn't some of the old hags pull, haul, and jabber away at each other? They crowded and crammed and pushed like a mob at a London Punch and Judy Play.

The crush is over, and trade is very sharp. Proceeds are counted, and we find 250 robes for about 800 \$'s worth of goods. Robes are good ones.

They are having a dance tonight, but I am too tired to go and see it. I hear the children singing. No music, but an old drum with its monotonous tap, tap, and some really sweet strains from a kind of flute they make themselves.

The "vocal accompaniment" sounds finely, but strangely, no words to be distinguished. Their voices turn and quaver in perfect accord and the time is good. I almost imagined it to be like that old chanting of an anthem that I have heard so many times at the old Cathedral in England... It sounded like the first bar of "God Save the Queen," and then again like a weird wild wail that seems to swell in a yell of exultation...

Jan. 20:

Today opened with plenty of sun, and everything seems peaceful and quiet. I have seen this same band of Indians in a different shape, not at rest as they appear today, but dressed in all their panoply of war with blackened faces and bows strung. Once I had a little race with some of them; the stake was life. I won. Shall I be any better off for the "fortune"? ...

No beautiful eyes to sparkle and dance with merriment, caused by the thoughts, "I'll let you run my boy, to the length of the string; the faster you go now, the more sudden the stop, when you have run what I think to be your proper distance." I have trolled for Pike in English waters.

Seymour's words tumbled out in this journal entry made on January 20, reflecting a sequence of apparently unrelated thoughts. Considering their tenuous relationship, the preceding brief paragraph may indicate that Seymour felt Ena Raymonde was stringing him along. With no further explanation he abruptly moved on to his immediate surroundings:

More dances, squaw feasts, and everything runs riot in the camp: whooping, shouting, and firing off pistols. I have made one friend in the camp and he is the head soldier.

My [trade] jewelry is a failure, the ear rings don't jingle. We wait up till nearly one o'clock and hear and see things that enlighten me somewhat and amuse me vastly. The Indian will yet prove himself smarter than one white man with whom I am acquainted...

No Andy here, and I doubt if he will come. I would willingly give \$50 to see Andy here. I should [then] have the finest opportunity to do my work, as I would be left here for a month at least. I get along [with my Sioux language study] slowly, very slowly, and am powerless to mend the pace...

Jan. 21:

[Leon F.] Pallardy came here last night and is trading today. I do have a time snatching and grabbing each separate Indian word. It is like tearing the tooth or tongue from an Indian to get a word...from him. I started off today in "pursuit of knowledge" or rather lingo – tackled two old squaws and asked them where Poor Elk's lodge was. They would not understand me...



Leon F. Pallardy, well known scout, interpreter, and trader on the early frontier is seated second from right in this photo of an 1877 Indian delegation found on the Internet.

Jan. 22:

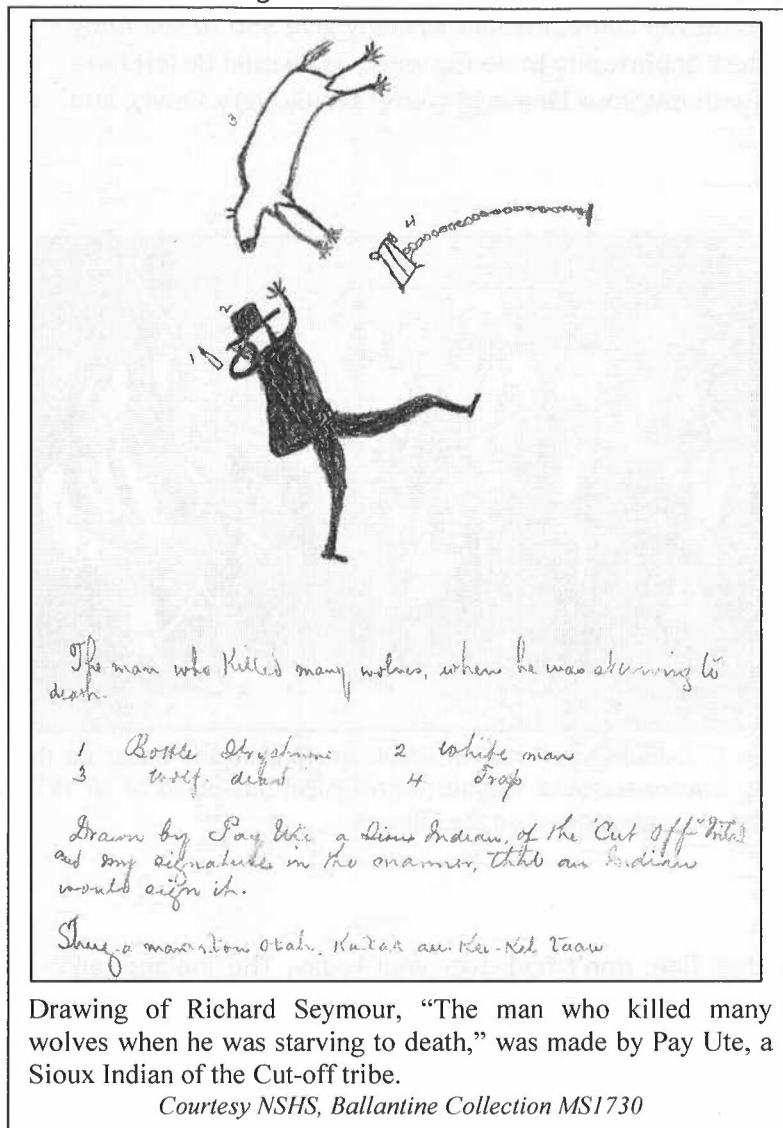
Still staying in camp. Weather fine; don't feel over well today. The Indians talk about splitting up. Forty lodges to move to Whiteman's Fork, 40 lodges to go further up Chief Creek, and the balance to [Fort] Laramie. I was offered two fine robes, painted ones, for a needle carbine, but I have no carbine...

Jan 23:

Pay-Ute, an Indian that I can just tolerate visited me tonight. He has been East and being a close observer noticed many things amongst the whites. Lots of the bad he condemned and had a good discernment of what was good as well as the useful. While he was talking, his actions, many of them, were grotesque and laughable; at the same time unmistakable as to their meaning... He says white men of the East love not horses, they love not their guns, or their wives, but their whole souls are centered on the Almighty \$...

Our old landlady, the Silver Woman, dissipated last night. I missed her from her side of the lodge this morning. When she came in carrying her drum with her, I asked her what she meant by running off all night and what she was doing. She had been to a feast and pounded that old drum all night.

She was presented with a horse and two robes... She tells me she is Chief among the Squaws. She loves her son-in-law, Hank Clifford, and knowing three words in broken English, she gives vent to her feelings with them. Her own language is insufficient to give an idea of the love she bears him. Speaking of this son-in-law of



hers, she breathes gently the whole of her English vocabulary, and the White listener hears, "Gaud dam um..."

Jan 25:

The sun came up this morning and today is fine. We all leave this camping place today – Indians and white man. There is just a spice of romance in the scene and lots of reality. The latter extinguishing the former without much trouble.

Our wagons with Pallardy's, six altogether, move out slowly along the prairie; before us, behind, and at each side, the road is dotted with gaily dressed Indians and their outfits. Here come six Indians [in] red, white, blue, green, black and all other colors, in one conglomerated mass. They ride slowly along all

abreast. Four of them carry spears or lances and they do look a little romantic. Near them travel 30 or 40 squaws and they form the reality – the contrast is great.

While in camp, Richard Seymour was sharing an Indian lodge with Asa McManus and a few Indians as well – and growing increasingly tired of that arrangement. Hank Clifford had his family with him and they seem to have had their own lodge. By the time the outfit broke camp on January 26, rations were running low and the traders were at least a two-week journey back to their homes on the Medicine Creek. That evening they found themselves caught in a snow storm and, lacking a lodge, fashioned a tent of sorts from a canvas wagon sheet. They spent the next day and night hunkered down, with only the wagon sheet for shelter. Their sustenance came from a meager supply of coffee, fried flour, and dried meat.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> Seymour confided to his journal, "*I sigh for the Medicine, and feel a little prepared for something not very palatable...*" He did not elaborate as to what troubled him.

The weather continued to be stormy and the travel was slow, made more arduous by the difficulty in crossing the partially frozen streams, the horses and wagons usually falling through the ice. When they reached the Stinking Water on February 4, they decided to build a makeshift bridge to get the outfit safely across the creek. On the 5<sup>th</sup> Seymour noted:

Build bridge. I built a little lodge and ran myself thro a laundry. Got wagons and everything ready for tomorrow's start. No meat in camp, no flour for us. We start with coffee, tea and sugar. We expect Providence to feed us, and I expect to come out slim from her bounteous hands. Horses are all sick and tired. No feed for them and we must travel slow. What is time? What is hunger?...

Ho! For the Medicine. I hear the Dr. [Carver] has returned. It takes a long time to fill teeth. We do grope in the dark. Laugh gentle reader. "Ich dien" [I serve]. We must wear the iron collar; but oh! How it galls the neck.

The meaning of Seymour's sarcastically nuanced reference to Doc Carver's return to the Medicine Creek is not entirely clear; its insinuation, however, would not have been lost on Ena Raymonde. Although Carver had staked his own claim and built a rudimentary sod house on the Medicine, he was, for the most part, headquartered in the log cabin at Wolf's Rest where Ena Raymonde, her parents, and her brother Paddy Miles also lived. Even so, Carver was away from Wolf's Rest most of the time, attending to his dentistry profession as well as other concerns.

As it turned out, "Providence" did provide for the hungry traders. From Seymour's journal of February 6:

We start for the Medicine and pull all around the high bluffs on north side of Cologne Creek; we discover a trail of trappers and follow it down.<sup>12</sup> Find five or six trappers in camp and providence furnishes us with about twenty pounds of corn meal at the expense of these trappers. It seems that two of these fellows were camped about three miles farther up the stream, but seeing our "outfit" of ponies – broke and left their camp. Thought we were Indians and well they might.

Apparently the cornmeal was left behind when the disconcerted trappers hurriedly broke camp. Seymour wrote that "corn dodgers" were on the still slim menu for the following day. On the 8<sup>th</sup> he killed three prairie chickens and was able to secure some flour when they came upon



As the intended reader of his journals, Seymour could be sure Ena Raymonde would understand the implication in his remarks about Doc Carver.

*Tintype photo from Ancestry.com*

<sup>12</sup> Cologne Creek was a euphemism for the Stinking Water Creek, which runs through present-day Chase and Hayes counties before joining the Frenchman River in southwest Nebraska.

Paddy Miles's hunting camp on the Red Willow Creek. On the 9<sup>th</sup> Seymour made another journal entry detailing their progress:

Leave Red Willow and travel about twelve miles. Dry camp on main divide between Willow and Medicine. Twenty-seven miles from the Medicine. Twenty-seven miles from my home. Ha! Ha! Bert [Paddy Miles] gave me a note for Einna and three pcg. of tobacco for Mr. P[almer]. On the 12<sup>th</sup> we shall be at Clifford's ranch, and I have lots to do when I get there.

This entry brings together the circumstances of Seymour's life with those of Ena Raymonde's, for she wrote in her diary on February 17, 1873, that she had received both the note intended for her and the tobacco for Mr. Palmer.

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Indian-white relations in southwest Nebraska were considered peaceful at the time, and the residents of Wolf's Rest on the Medicine Creek had little reason to fear their Cut-off Sioux neighbors. Regardless, the previously mentioned death of the old Cut-off chief, Whistler, and two of his men at the hands of white trappers did pose potentially serious ramifications for white settlers in the area. The resulting investigation by the military into Whistler's murder was not conclusive, and no one was ever punished. It will be further mentioned here only so far as it involves the subjects of this narrative – in this case, Richard Seymour.

The following segment from Seymour's essay describing the March 1873 trading mission refers to events following Whistler's murder:

Turning to the opposite side of the creek, I espied the two companies of cavalry we had left at Red Willow Creek, following our trail, distant about two miles from where I stood and four from the Indians. They [the Indians] had seen the soldiers moving sometime before, but not being aware of their approach, they had mistaken them for a herd of buffaloes and had started to chase them. Coming closer, they recognized the moving objects to be soldiers. They at once brought their ponies to a walk and came riding slowly to our camp. When within one hundred yards of our wagons, they halted, dismounted, and sat upon the ground in a semi-circle on the brow of a hill, and awaited patiently for the soldiers' interpreter to come and talk. He came and after a smoke he delivered his message.

Early in the month of December last, Whistler, the chief [of the Cut-off Oglala], Fat Badger and [Hand Smeller], another warrior belonging to the tribe, started from their village to go to the railroad for the purpose of visiting the whites and getting a trader to come to them, as they had many robes they wished to exchange for the necessities of life. These three Indians were to be gone for twenty days. They have not yet returned, and the supposition was that they had been killed by Pawnee, many of these Indians being within twenty miles of the Sioux, and they are deadly enemies to each other.

Subsequent events have proven that the Pawnee did not kill these three Indians, but that they met their death at the hands of two white men, who were trapping on Cottonwood Creek, a tributary of the Republican, and whose hospitality they had accepted for the night. Where this tragedy will end remains to be seen. The Indians,

especially this tribe, hold vigorously to the rule of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and in this case, I think they will not be satisfied if they get a whole set.

The soldiers are now looking for the Indians' bodies and the perpetrators of this dastardly act, which will, no doubt, place many of the lives of the new settlers in jeopardy, as well as the safety of their horses, for Indians will steal even if they do not kill, and the killing of these members of their tribe will be their excuse for any outrages they may commit upon the Whites for some time to come. Not only for this band alone, but the cry will soon be taken up by the whole of the Sioux nation.

Seymour further wrote that on the afternoon of the day in which the above visit from the soldiers and the Indians occurred, a large band of Indians moved their lodges near where the traders were camped:

Nearly all of this band came to us today. There are about twenty-five lodges to come yet. They are at the head of the Republican River killing buffalo and making robes. We have about seventy lodges erected now, and the camp is rather romantically situated; a stream of water, "Eau de Cologne Creek," running through it. To the East and West, the tall bluffs run up to the divides. To the north a valley which the stream runs through, but very few trees. The land on the east side gives forth a plentiful growth of willows and brush. To the south can be seen the wending of the picturesque little stream, heavy patches of timber on each side. The white spots are the tepees glistening in the sun. Ever and anon, a gleam of sunlight from a piece of silver will flash from lodge to lodge, denoting the ingress or egress of a warrior from one to another.

On the hills feeding around are innumerable number of their ponies and mules, many of them gaily decked with feathers or pieces of bright silver. Scattered around and among these herds, a few warriors on the watch may be seen, making a picture that few of your readers have had the pleasure to see.

About thirty of the men have started to North Platte City and will visit the Forts, for the purpose of ascertaining more of the facts concerning the death of their chief or headman, Whistler, and his companions. They more than half suspect the true facts of the case; dark looks and angry glances are cast at white men now. There is a bombshell and it remains to be seen whether it will fizzle or explode. We shall know in a few days.

As it turned out, the "bombshell" Seymour referred to fizzled, and there was no serious retribution against the white settlers. Some of the old timers on the Medicine Creek attributed this to the steady influence Hank Clifford had with the Indians.

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It is not known how long Richard Seymour hung around Wolf's Rest and the Medicine Creek vicinity after he returned from the March expedition. Paul Riley noted that the list of words in the Dakota language that appears in an appendix to his Seymour's journals is in Ena Raymonde's handwriting so they would have spent some time together while she did the transcribing.

On the last day of March 1873 Ena wrote in her diary:

The Doctor said "goodbye" this morning. This is the ninth day since his arrival. Quite a party of us went out to Plum Creek on a camp-hunt on Thursday. Took wagon, tent, etc. Mr. Palmer, Dr. Carver, Fritcher, Bert and I made or contributed the party...

I saw Dick Seymour when he "came in" and when he "went out". He brought me a very handsome copy of *Belden, The White Chief*. Am very glad to get it; and am pleased to say I am in no way disappointed in my anticipation of its contents! "A feast of good things" arranged by a deft hand! ...

Ena Raymonde's reference to Seymour having brought her a copy of *Belden, The White Chief* attests to his recognition of what would please her, whether or not he was in the running for her heart. The more telling aspect of Ena's journal entry on March 31 is her reference to Doc Carver. Though he was only in residence at Wolf's Rest sporadically, W. F. "Doc" Carver was a major component of the romantic dynamic in Ena's life in 1873. There was turbulence in Ena Raymonde's life, however, and the fact that Dick Seymour's name appeared on the pages of her journal for the last time on April 18, 1873, does not mean he had left the area quite yet.

For that matter, Ena made only one entry in her journal in May of 1873, none in June, a few in July and then, for reasons never made clear, she vowed in October of 1873 to write no more because she was "weary of the weakness" of her own words to express what was in her heart. It was February 24, 1875 – sixteen months later – before she broke her "seal of silence." There was an increase in permanent settlers and a departure of the various "plainsmen" from the vicinity of Wolf's Rest on the Medicine Creek during the middle to late 1870s. Consequently, Ena's silence during the latter part of 1873 and all of 1874 leaves unanswered questions on several fronts. Sometime during this "silence" Ena Raymonde also left the Medicine, albeit temporarily. It is known she was briefly a resident of Carver's hometown of Winslow, Illinois. Beyond that, one can only speculate as to the reason.¹³

There inevitably came a day, however, either in late 1873 or early 1874, when Richard Seymour saddled up and rode out of the Medicine Creek Valley for the last time. He might have been looking for adventure, or he may simply have needed employment, as the idea of writing for publication had apparently struck a dead-end. Although Ena made a reference to "Dick's claim" as well as to his dugout, if Seymour made an actual homestead claim, he never hung around long enough to prove up on it. That be as it may, he was on the Medicine long enough to be mentioned by several sources as one of the area's early settlers. One of those was John Bratt, the Platte Valley cattleman and driving force behind the organization of Frontier County, who mentioned Dick Seymour – "self-named 'Bloody Dick'" – as one of the area's early settlers in his autobiography, *Trails of Yesterday*.

Richard Seymour traveled light, apparently leaving his journals and a little of his heart with Ena Raymonde. Within the same time frame Doc Carver also set his sights on new horizons and left his claim on the Medicine Creek. Carver's relationship with Ena Raymonde was infinitely more complicated; suffice it to say, he also left a little of his heart with *Pa-he-minny-minnsh*, or "Little Curly Hair," as the Indians called her. While Carver and Seymour had their sights set on different objectives, they both left the Medicine headed in a northwesterly direction.

¹³Doc Carver brought his mother and younger brother to the Medicine in July of 1873. The situation may not have been satisfactory, and Ena may have accompanied Mrs. Carver back to Illinois and briefly took up residence there.

In her book on Seymour's eventual business partner, "Colorado Charley" Utter, Agnes Wright Spring noted: "Dakota writers have stated that Seymour was 'Bloody Dick' Seymour, an Englishman who was a friend of 'Doc' Carver and the Reynolds family..."¹⁴ She gave no further details on the Reynolds family, making the reference in a manner indicating she presumed the reader knew to whom she was referring.

Carver's movements after leaving the Medicine are hard to track but on October 19, 1874, he was married to a Miss Lizzie Morris in North Platte, Nebraska, following which he practiced dentistry at the Sidney Station (later Fort Sidney) for a few weeks. In November of 1874 he set up a dental practice in Cheyenne where he remained until the following year, migrating on to California where he continued the dentistry profession while launching his career as a sharpshooter.¹⁵

Meanwhile, events were developing that would set the stage for the next scene in Richard Seymour's life. Soon after Buffalo Bill Cody and Texas Jack Omohundro concluded their tour with *The Scouts of the Plains* in Boston in May of 1874, Cody headed back to Nebraska. Before leaving the East he had been engaged by a wealthy gentleman by the name of Thomas Medley to serve as a guide on a hunting expedition.¹⁶

When the hunting party broke up late in July, Cody went to Fort McPherson, where he was hired to guide an army expedition commanded by Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Anson Mills to the Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming Territory. Cody served in this capacity from August 7 to October 2, 1874. The Indians had committed a number of murders and robberies in southern Wyoming Territory, "and while it was not to be expected that they would await the assembling of an expedition to pursue and punish them, it was at least hoped that the presence of troops in their area would discourage further raids."¹⁷

Serving as a packer for the United States Army alongside scout Buffalo Bill Cody was Richard Seymour, who was one of twenty packers in charge of the pack mules.¹⁸ A system for the efficient use of pack mules in addition to the cumbersome supply wagons on these long marches had only recently been devised by the great Indian fighter, General George R. Crook. Collectively, four or six mules could carry more in a wagon than they could carry individually on their backs; however, individually they could keep up with the cavalry, while wagons could not.



After he left the Medicine Creek area, W. F. "Doc" Carver went on to become a world- renowned rifle marksman.

Frontier County Historical Society

¹⁴ Agnes Wright Spring, *Colorado Charley, Wild Bill's Pard* by Agnes Wright Spring, (Boulder: Pruett Press, 1968), p. 92.

¹⁵ William B. Secrest, Editor, *I Buried Hickok: The Memoirs of White Eye Anderson*, (College Station, Texas: Creative Publishing Company, 1980), p. 74; Don Russell, *A History of the Wild West Shows*, (Fort Worth: Anon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1970), p. 10.

¹⁶ Don Russell, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 208.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 1960, p. 209.

¹⁸ NSHS, Seymour Biographical Note.

A historian for the U.S. Army Transportation Corps writes that qualifications for a packer or "mule skinner" were high for that era: "He must know how to read and write; be sound in body, of athletic build, and not addicted to the excessive use of intoxicants or display of bad or ugly temper, and thoroughly imbued with an 'esprit de corps' for the pack service." He should also "be gentle in his treatment of animals; never throw rocks, blinds, or in any way abuse them."¹⁹

Because there were no confrontations with the Indians on this particular expedition, little has been written about it, but one of Cody's biographers describes the hardships encountered:

Colonel Mills knew that the Indians had had every opportunity to learn of his expedition by the time it was ready to move from Rawlins [Station in Wyoming Territory], but hoped they would expect him by the usual trail, by way of Fort Reno. Instead, he ascended the Big Horn Mountains, keeping within their cover until north of the supposed location of the Indian villages, so that he would be able to strike them from the rear. Little was known about the country of the Big Horns, by Cody or anyone else, for the sensible travelers had been accustomed to take an easier route. The expedition had had bad luck at the start; on the first day of September a severe snowstorm started. It lasted for thirty-six hours and brought snow two feet deep. One horse died as he stood that night, and Colonel Mills attributed the loss of twenty-three horses to this one storm."

After the snow stopped falling, says Colonel Mills, "the mountains looked quite formidable to our front, so I sent...Cody to the southwest, who soon returned and reported a pass to a stream of water seven miles distant."... The expedition marched through this pass on September 5, and on the following day crossed the highest peaks on the range... After crossing several streams... They then found themselves descending into a canyon which the scouts reported impassable. [Another scout] was sent to find a way out. He discovered a pass, but it led into a truly remarkable blockade... Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka of the Third Cavalry...this time found the way out by a steep climb.²⁰



W. F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody served as a scout for the U. S. Army during the Indian wars. Richard Seymour was a mule packer on at least one of these expeditions.

Robert Van Pelt Estate

After another day's march, the guides and scouts were sent ahead to where it was believed the "offending Indians" were camped. Finding that the Indians had apparently vacated the area several weeks earlier, the expedition worked its way back to Rawlins Station. Colonel Mills had

¹⁹Richard E. Killblane, "Pack Mules", www.transportation.army.mil/historian/documents/pack%20mules.pdf

²⁰Russell, 1960, pp. 210-211.

intended to do additional scouting in the direction of the Tongue River, but on September 25, the department commander "ordered the expedition dissolved, its object having been accomplished – to be sure that the Indians had left the area."²¹

How Richard Seymour and his fellow packers fared with their mules is a matter for speculation. Mules are hardier than horses, better able to withstand the cold and lack of forage or water. Nevertheless, when they have had enough, they will literally stop in their tracks, calling into action the persuasive skills – and maybe harsher language – of the packers.

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**O**ther events were taking place that would inextricably change the course of history for the white settlers, plainsmen, and military forces in the region as well as for the Lakota Sioux, whose ownership of the Black Hills had been recognized in the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. In July of 1874 General George A. Custer and the Seventh Cavalry were dispatched on a mission through the relatively unexplored Black Hills to, among other objectives, investigate the possibility of gold mining. Gold was found, and in spite of the fact that Custer's official report downplayed the findings, prospectors began to filter into the Hills.<sup>22</sup> As was to be expected, the Indians started making attacks on these small parties of prospectors.

The military was in a quandary. Custer's foray into the Hills had been, in itself, a violation of the 1868 treaty. General Philip H. Sheridan sent instructions in September of 1874 to General Alfred H. Terry, commander of the Department of Dakota, directing him to use the necessary force to prevent prospectors from trespassing on the Sioux Reservation. On the other hand, Sheridan also indicated he would give support to settlement of the Black Hills, should Congress decide to ignore the treaty rights of the Indians and open the country for settlement.

Stated succinctly, "by the middle of 1875, whites were beginning to converge on the Hills like a colony of ants. Soon it became impossible for the army to stop the rush, and it then had to offer protection."<sup>23</sup> By late 1875 the government had, for all practical purposes, abandoned its treaty obligations and the invasion of prospectors increased even more rapidly; consequently, so had conflicts with the Indians. As a result, the government attempted to buy the Black Hills from the Sioux. This plan was fraught with all the difficulties that could be expected, and its failure was the impetus behind the Big Horn Expedition of 1876.



In January of 1872, two years before his exploration of the Black Hills, George A. Custer was in southwest Nebraska as part of the Royal Hunt with Russia's Grand Duke Alexis.

*Courtesy Denver Public Library*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Jim Donovan, *Custer and the Little Bighorn: The Man, the Mystery, the Myth*, (New York: Crestline Books, 2011), p. 124.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph G. Rosa, *They Called Him Wild Bill: The Life and Adventures of James Butler Hickok*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), p. 279.

Richard Seymour was once again a packer when General George Crook's forces marched north from Fort Fetterman on March 1, 1876. This military operation against the Sioux and Cheyenne took place in Wyoming and Montana Territory, with Crook planning to strike the Indians while they were in their winter camps. The events of this grueling military operation have been thoroughly detailed by other writers and will not be covered here.

During the battle at the Powder River Richard Seymour was an assistant in charge of public train. This encounter took place on the bitterly cold day of March 17, 1876. General Crook had divided his command and sent a force southeast toward the Powder River where they found a Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux village. Although a large amount of Indian property was destroyed and over 700 Indian ponies were captured, the enraged warriors regrouped and recaptured most of their horses. Frustrated with the failure to prevent the Indians from recapturing their horses, General Crook called a halt to the campaign and returned to Fort Fetterman.<sup>24</sup>

The ensuing concern that the failure of Crook's winter campaign might instigate defiance among the young warriors at the agency was justified. Restlessness grew among the agency Indians, and the stage was set for the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877.

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Richard Seymour's next appearance is as a partner in a business venture with C. H. "Colorado Charley" Utter, who had established himself as a trapper, guide, and prospector in Colorado in the 1860s. Since the mid-1860s Charley Utter had also run pack trains in the mountains of Colorado.

The influx of white prospectors to the Black Hills presented a variety of opportunities for entrepreneurs. Although Charley Utter had plenty of endeavors going on in the mining communities of Colorado, by late 1875 he was making plans to parlay his experience in the transportation business into new enterprises in the developing gold fields of the Black Hills. Utter had a two-fold plan, one being a pony express to expedite mail delivery between Fort Laramie and the booming prospector's settlement of Deadwood in Dakota Territory; the other being a freight line into the hills. Colorado Charley Utter was, coincidentally, also a friend of Wild Bill Hickok's, who was, himself, planning a business venture involving the Black Hills gold rush.

From Joseph Rosa's biography of Wild Bill Hickok:

Colorado Charley Utter arrived in Cheyenne in March... During the next month he superintended the organization of his proposed Black Hills transportation line. Presumably he and Wild Bill met and discussed each other's plans, but Wild Bill left for St. Louis and Charley returned to Georgetown, Colorado, where he was reported to be completing arrangements for his wagon train.

He was also organizing a pony express to be operated between Deadwood and Fort Laramie. In this venture he was to go into partnership with a man named Ingalls...and an Englishman named Richard Seymour, better known from his own self-styled name "Bloody Dick" Seymour.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas R. Buecker, *Fort Robinson and the American West 1874-1899*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003) pp. 79-80.

<sup>25</sup> Rosa, pp. 284-285.

Hickok had married Agnes Lake Thatcher in Cheyenne on March 5<sup>th</sup>, following which they traveled to Cincinnati to visit her relatives. In less than three weeks Wild Bill was back in Cheyenne, no doubt working on his proposed expedition of Black Hills bound prospectors, which was to start from St. Louis.

As for Seymour, April 6, 1876, found him registered at the Inter-Ocean Hotel in Cheyenne.<sup>26</sup> The Big Horn Expedition had terminated on March 26 with the return of the command to Fort Fetterman. Discharged from his duties as a packer for the government, Richard Seymour most likely made his way to Fort Laramie and then down to Cheyenne. His address at the time, as noted in the Cheyenne *Leader*, was simply "Black Hills."

Although it isn't known when Seymour and Charley Utter first became acquainted or when they developed plans for the proposed pony express, it is safe to assume their paths crossed in Cheyenne. Besides his service as a packer with General Crook's previously mentioned 1876 spring expedition, Seymour had also served as an "assistant in charge of public train" at Camp Robinson. This assignment had most likely involved hauling freight from Fort Laramie to the newly established Camp Robinson near the Red Cloud Agency in northwest Nebraska.

Seymour was probably weary of haranguing mules, and Charley Utter's pony express idea appealed to him. (Colorado Charley Utter was never short of business ideas or the courage and know-how to execute them.) Although not a drinker himself, Charley Utter may have met Bloody Dick Seymour at a local watering hole in Cheyenne; Seymour was contemplating his next move, and a plan was conceived.

The May 3, 1876 Cheyenne *Leader* published a long article about Hickok's planned expedition, which was to leave St. Louis on May 16. According to circulars the *Leader* had received from St. Louis, Wild Bill proposed to "lead the expedition to points where plenty of gold" could be found.<sup>27</sup> The June 8<sup>th</sup> *Leader* noted that "Wild Bill is among us again," but there was no further reference to his expedition, leading to the conclusion that it had either been abandoned or joined up with another one.

Sometime in June, Charley Utter and his brother Steve arrived in Cheyenne, and in company with Wild Bill prepared to set out for the Black Hills. According to J. F. "White Eye" Anderson, he and his brother Charlie were also on this trip as well as a friend of Wild Bill's identified only as "Pie." About June 27 they left Cheyenne and after several days on the road, they reached Fort Laramie where the soldiers told them they would have to wait until there were over a hundred people in their group. Joining other wagon trains and obtaining plenty of ammunition before entering the Hills was essential as security against Indian attacks.

Within a few days 130 or more people and about thirty wagons had gathered in Fort Laramie, ensuring a large enough group for relatively safe travel. Besides the usual prospectors, gamblers, and saloon men who joined the group in the Fort Laramie vicinity, there were as many as fourteen "ladies of easy virtue." This is also where they were reportedly joined by one of the West's most unconventional women, the well-known "camp follower" and soon-to-be dime novel heroine, Martha "Calamity Jane" Canary. White Eye Anderson recalled:

While we were at Fort Laramie, the officer-of-the-day asked us if we would take a young woman with us. It was just after payday and she had been on a big drunk with the soldiers and had been having a hell of a time of it. When they put her in the post

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<sup>26</sup> Spring, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> Spring, p. 89.



guard house she was very drunk and near naked... I believe Steve Utter knew her, for he said he would take care of her. The officer furnished a suit of soldier's underclothes and the rest of us furnished her with sufficient clothes to wear.<sup>28</sup>

Anderson said they came up with a buckskin outfit and a broad-brimmed hat for Calamity to wear and added that, when she was cleaned up and sober, she looked quite attractive. Although the names of Wild Bill Hickok and Calamity Jane have become inextricably linked in Old West history, Anderson insisted this was the first time that Wild Bill had met her and "he surely did not have any use for her." He noted further that Wild Bill scarcely spoke to Calamity Jane at all, except to allow her access to his five-gallon keg of whiskey.<sup>29</sup>

The party now consisted of four of the five characters who would make the grand entrance into Deadwood on or about July 12, 1876, referred to at the beginning of this narrative: Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Colorado Charley Utter and his brother Steve. "Bloody Dick" Seymour is missing, though he, too, may have joined the wagon train at Fort Laramie. It is also possible that Seymour was with another party which left Cheyenne either ahead of or behind Utter and Hickok, and made connections at Fort Laramie while the group laid over waiting for more wagons.

In an article titled "The Story of a Forgotten Romance" about Wild Bill's marriage published in the August 23, 1929 *Record-Journal of Douglas County, Colorado*, Elmo Scott Watson wrote:

As Wild Bill had already made his plans to seek his fortune in the Black Hills he left his wife in Cincinnati after a honeymoon of but two weeks. Going to Cheyenne he remained there until sometime in June when he set out with two of his friends, "Col. Charlie" Utter and "Bloody Dick" Seymour. At Custer Calamity Jane attached herself to the party and the four of them made their spectacular entrance into Deadwood a short time later...

This version is missing Steve Utter and Calamity Jane doesn't "attach herself" to the party until they reach Custer. While Watson's article was published half a century following the event, he writes with the assumption that the reader is familiar with the story of the "spectacular entrance into Deadwood." Watson was undoubtedly working with contemporary sources and didn't have a "horse in the race," so to speak, as did Anderson.

Back to White Eye Anderson's recollections: It was another sixteen miles from Fort Laramie to the Government Farm, which was where they were to organize their wagon



"Calamity Jane" Canary after a successful "dime museum" tour in 1896

*Photo from Wikipedia*

<sup>28</sup> Secrest, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> Rosa, p. 287. There is disagreement among the experts about Calamity Jane's presence on the June/July 1876 trip into the Black Hills; however, James McLaird, Calamity Jane's foremost biographer, accepts Anderson's story.



train. They elected a captain "and a wagon boss so that the wagons could be properly corralled in case of Indian trouble." White Eye continued:

We had some two-horse outfits, but mostly four-horse and six-mule teams so there was a lot of stock to herd at night. There was not much of a wagon road in those days. Teams were always getting stuck in the mud and having to cross streams of water. At times, Calamity Jane, with a black snake whip and lots of cussing, would have to help the teams over the rough, bad places...



"Colorado Charley" Utter was an authentic frontiersman in spite of his reputation as a frontier dandy.

*Alamy Limited use license*

We saw only one band of Indians, about forty in number [about sixty miles north of Fort Laramie]. They were in the bluffs on the south side of Hat Creek. Our advance guard tackled them, but as soon as they saw how large our party was, they struck a trail going in the direction of Old Woman's Fork. We could see the dust they made "agetting" for miles. Going down through the Cedar Bluffs the road was very steep and we all had to help each wagon to the bottom of the hill...

The trip from Cheyenne to Deadwood was roughly 290 miles, took about two weeks, and was difficult anyway you looked at it. Anderson recalled that from "Custer to Deadwood, the road was very bad and made slow traveling." As they approached Deadwood the cast was assembled and ready to make their presence known. Calamity Jane was in buckskins provided by the generosity of her fellow travelers; Colorado Charley always made a point of looking dapper; and buckskins were commonly worn by the others. In recalling the remarkable entry into Deadwood, Richard Hughes added further description to the four characters – "also of considerable notoriety" – in addition to Wild Bill:

"Calamity" Jane; Charley and Steve Utter, brothers; and Dick Seymour, the last named being known as "Bloody Dick." Where or how he had earned or acquired the sanguinary title no one seemed to know. Charley Utter was a frontier dandy; he wore his hair in long curls down his shoulders; and his reputation was due chiefly to a story written by E. Z. C. Judson (Ned Buntline) for the *New York Weekly*, in which he was dubbed "Colorado Charlie" – a name he ever after affected – and was depicted as a dashing frontiersman and scout... Steve Utter's chief hold upon fame was as Charley's brother...<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Richard B. Hughes, edited by Agnes Wright Spring, *Pioneer Years in the Black Hills*, (Rapid City: Dakota Alpha Inc., 2002), pp. 122-123.

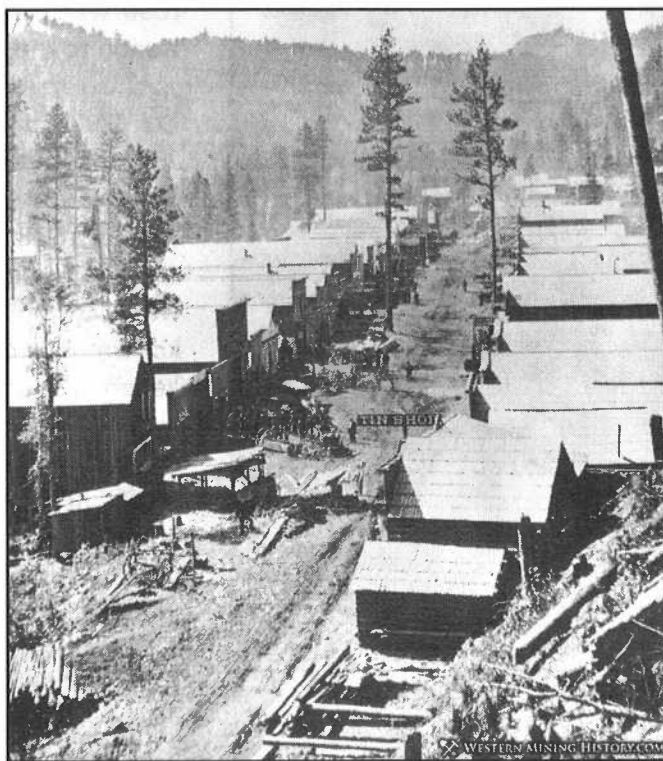
Joseph Rosa describes the rowdy mining town of Deadwood:

Laid out on April 28, 1876, it consisted of one main street which weaved like a moving rattlesnake in and out among the tree stumps and potholes left by early arrivals... During the daytime the street was packed with jostling men, horses, mules, oxen, and every conceivable manner of conveyance. For every store there were three saloons, and above the click of dice and poker chips rang the voices of the dealers and players...<sup>31</sup>

It was against this backdrop that the above ensemble made their entry into Deadwood. Had it been Sunday, it is hard to imagine how anyone would have been noticed as they rode into Deadwood. Richard Hughes remembered Sunday as being the busiest day of the week when most of the prospectors and anyone they might have working for them in the surrounding gulches all came into Deadwood. The streets were packed and there might be as many as 1,500 to 2,500 lined up to get their mail if a wagon train had, by chance, made it through with a delivery.<sup>32</sup>

At first glance, it is difficult to discern how the entrance of "Wild Bill & Company" would have been construed as dramatic even in the middle of the week – July 12, 1876, was a Wednesday – given the constant hustle and bustle on the main street of Deadwood. But, then, this was the notorious Wild Bill Hickok, who dressed with flair and carried himself with an air of deadly assurance; Calamity Jane Canary, who by all accounts grasped for attention wherever she could get it; and Colorado Charley Utter, whose sense of style and mode of dress certainly stood out from the pack. If, as Hughes suggested, they were "basking in the reflected glory of their leader," perhaps "Bloody Dick" Seymour and Steve Utter simply squared their shoulders, assumed a cavalier attitude, and sat a little straighter in their saddles.

Hughes also noted they were riding good horses, and while riding a good horse was generally the goal of every plainsman that may not have necessarily been the case in Deadwood. Mules and oxen for use as packing and freighting were more essential to the mining



Deadwood, Dakota Territory ~ 1876  
*Western Mining History.com*

<sup>31</sup> Rosa, p. 280.

<sup>32</sup> Hughes, p. 80.

industry than horses, and securing adequate forage for livestock in the Black Hills was often difficult. Consequently keeping a good horse in Deadwood often came at a premium. On the other hand, Calamity's life was usually in such a state of disarray that she seldom even owned a horse of her own.

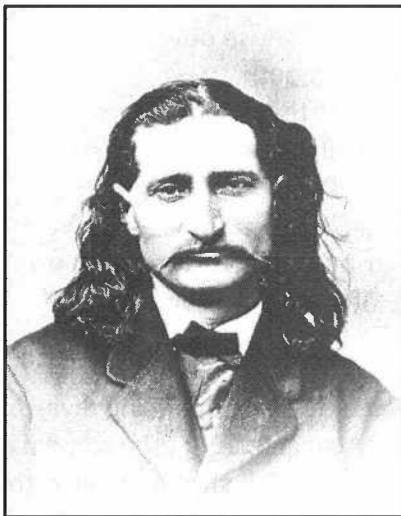
At any rate, these five characters attired in buckskin outfits and riding good horses did make an entrance that apparently impressed at least some of those who happened to be hanging around on the rutted dirt road and rough board sidewalks of Deadwood's main street. It is notable that Hughes's memoirs, which were not written until the late 1920s and did not appear in print until 1957, used the term "spectacular entry," while Elmo Scott Watson's article, which appeared in a Colorado publication in 1929, used the term "spectacular entrance."

The *Black Hills Pioneer* of July 15, 1876, noted only that, "*Calamity Jane has arrived.*" The brevity of the item is attributed to the fact that only Calamity had been in and out of Deadwood often enough to be considered an integral part of the community.

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Regardless of the impact of their arrival in Deadwood, Charley Utter and Richard Seymour presumably set about organizing their pony express. An announcement of the prospective business venture appeared in the *Black Hills Pioneer* as early July 8. The following ran in the *Cheyenne Leader* on July 22, 1876:

PONY EXPRESS -- Messrs. Seymour & Utter have established a pony express between Deadwood and Fort Laramie and will make round trips hereafter. All mail matter arriving at Cheyenne for the Hills, for which they may have orders, will be telegraphed for from (Fort) Laramie. The pony express must prove a great convenience and we hope it may be adequately patronized...³³



J. B. "Wild Bill" Hickok
Photo from Wikipedia

Followers of the history of the Wild West have always been particularly interested in what Wild Bill Hickok was doing between his arrival in Deadwood and the day of his murder three weeks later. Colorado Charley Utter, White Eye Anderson, Bloody Dick Seymour – even Calamity Jane – are only supporting actors in the last three weeks of Wild Bill's life. By the same token, it is because of Wild Bill's death that stories including these less imposing characters have survived.

Leander P. Richardson was an east coast journalist who arrived in Deadwood near the end of July 1876. Like White Eye Anderson and others, his proximity to Wild Bill Hickok became an integral part of his life story. Richardson related this version to the editor of a Colorado newspaper and it was later reprinted in the *Georgetown, Colorado Courier*:

The last days of Wild Bill's life in Deadwood are interesting, I know all about them because I was there. I was the guest of Wild Bill and his partner and lived with them.

³³ Thadd Turner, *Wild Bill Hickok: Deadwood City ~ End of Trail*, (Universal Publishers, 2001), p. 66.

The partner was a natty, handsome, courageous little man named Charley Utter. He was called Colorado Charley and was the dandy of that country. He wore beaded moccasins, fringed leggings and coat, handsome trousers, fine linen, revolvers mounted in gold, silver and pearl, and a belt with a big silver buckle. He was blond with long hair and a mustache and imperial, and "Calamity Jane," who bossed a dance house, had it as her sole ambition aside from the consumption of all the red liquor in the gulch to win him. Utter had one habit that was rather startling in that section. He took a bath every morning, and people used to come out and view the process with interest...

Charley Utter and Wild Bill...used to live across the creek from the main part of the settlement, which at that time consisted of two lines of shanties along the sides of an irregular mass of stumps and mud which formed the solitary thoroughfare. Utter slept in a tent between fine California blankets, and he had a real mirror and real combs, brushes, razors and whisk brooms. Wild Bill slept in a big canvas covered wagon, rolled up in an army blanket...

Utter's greatest hobby was neatness, a thing which most plainsmen knew nothing of. He positively would not permit Wild Bill, or California Joe or Bloody Dick, or any of the rest of them to enter his tent. That, he declared, was a shooting point with him...³⁴

The Cheyenne *Leader* ran the following news item on Wednesday, August 2, 1876:

A Pony Express Race

If you should happen to be in Fort Laramie this evening on the arrival of the coach from this city, you would see a couple of keen looking men, mounted on fleet horses, and with a small pouch hanging on either side of their saddles.

Immediately upon the distribution of the mail and the filling of those pouches, you would see these men ride away like balls shot from the cannon's mouth.

If you inquired concerning the men you would be told that they were riders for opposition pony express lines – Clippinger's and Seymour & Utter's, and that their race would be for two hundred miles and that they will reach Deadwood City Friday afternoon if men and horses fail not.

One hundred copies of this morning's *Leader* which go by coach to Ft. Laramie today will be carried by these rapid riders – each taking fifty copies – and will be delivered in Deadwood when they are three days old.³⁵

The outcome of this race is unknown, the attention of the area newspapers being diverted instead to the murder of J. B. "Wild Bill" Hickok in Deadwood. On August 2, 1876, the same day that the Cheyenne *Leader* ran the above story, fellow gambler Jack McCall shot and killed the well-known gunman at a saloon in Deadwood. Though of a different temperament, Colorado Charley Utter had formed a close friendship with Wild Bill, and he immediately took charge of funeral arrangements for the slain gunman. With both a freighting and pony express business to run, however, Utter did not join the posse to catch Wild Bill's murderer.

³⁴ Spring, pp. 98-100.

³⁵ Spring, p. 98.

From the August 6, 1876 Cheyenne *Leader*:

Attention is directed to the advertisement of Seymour & Utter & Ingalls "Pioneer Pony Express" line which will be found in another column. These gentlemen have been carrying letters through to Deadwood for some weeks, and are now stocking the line with mules for carrying express matter. Envelopes are being printed for use on this line and will soon be placed on sale here, in the Hills, and in the East.

The advertisement read:

Pioneer Pony Pioneer Express Co.
Through Mail and Express Line To
Deadwood
and the
Mining Camps
The only line that is fully prepared to deliver
Mail and Express matter to all the Mining Camps in
the Black Hills
Direct all mail matter care
Express Co.
Express leaves Fort Laramie every Wednesday
Seymour, Utter & Ingalls³⁶

Although successful, the pony express service to the Black Hills was short-lived. The riders generally made trips between Fort Laramie and Deadwood in forty-eight hours and carried as many as three thousand to forty-five hundred letters at a charge of twenty-five-cents each. Though the charge was high for the era, the residents of the hills were willing to pay it, for as one writer aptly put it, "Gold was the most valuable commodity shipped out of the Hills, but the most welcome, and weight for weight, the most expensive item shipped in was mail."³⁷

John S. McClintock, a Black Hills prospector who eventually made Deadwood his home, recalls the evolution of the pony express service:

This service was continued for several months. The skilful [*sic*] riders, with relays of swift ponies, traveling mostly by night, gave excellent service. I was very well acquainted with Charley Utter, whose abode adjoined mine in Deadwood Gulch, and I never heard of his losing a horse or man in the business. Later this pony express business passed into other hands who gave less satisfactory service, and the transportation of mail was turned over to the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Company, which had then become well established. This service was continued until the Hills were opened for settlement and regular government mail service established in the spring of 1877.³⁸

³⁶ Spring, p. 103. John James Ingalls was a prominent author, attorney and congressman from Kansas. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives at the time he went into partnership with Utter and Seymour. He may have provided a financial investment

³⁷ Watson Parker, *Gold in the Black Hills*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 121.

³⁸ John S. McClintock, *Pioneer Days in the Black Hills*, (Deadwood, S.D.: By the author, 1939), pp. 87-88.

The first regular stagecoach of the Cheyenne and Black Hills Stage Coach Company arrived at Deadwood late in September of 1876. The Deadwood *Pioneer* of September 30 reported that the returning stage "took out over one thousand letters free, for the boys to the dear ones in far-off homes..." That act of generosity may well have been the death-knell for the Seymour & Utter pony express. Charley Utter's biographer noted that while the advertisement printed above ran regularly from August 6 until September 13, 1876, on September 29, 30, and October 6 it carried only the names of Utter and Ingalls.³⁹ Seymour had apparently read the cue cards and foresaw the end of the pony express; besides, winter in the Hills comes early.

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By the winter of 1876-1877, Richard Seymour was working between Fort Sill in Oklahoma's Indian Territory and Fort Clark, Texas. April of 1877 finds him again with the army, this time as an assistant wagon master. "In September and October 1877, he was employed as a pack animal herder at Fort Sill. He was discharged from the army in December 1877."⁴⁰

It is also said that Seymour had taken an Indian wife and fathered at least two children during his career with the army. This was surely a radical move considering the statement he made in his January 22, 1873 journal: "If a white man wishes to find a hell before he leaves the planet, I advise him to take a squaw for a wife." He would not have been the first or last white man to change his attitude on marrying a Native American given the short supply of eligible white women on the frontier in the 1870s.

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If all the world is, in essence, a stage then Richard Seymour's last known appearance revolves around the charges brought against him for conspiracy to defraud the government of land in Nebraska. The following article from the February 27, 1886 *Omaha Dailey Bee* tells the story:

Marshal Carr, of Wyoming, arrived in Omaha yesterday with Dick Seymour, a notorious land fraud crook, arrested a day or so since in Cheyenne. He is familiarly known as "Bloody Dick," which name he assures his friends, he got while "Me and Bill Cody were fighting Indians daown thar on the 'Publican."

In speaking of the case the *Cheyenne Leader* says:

About a year and a half ago [Richard Seymour] was approached by some very bad men indeed, and while temporarily residing in Colorado he was interviewed by some Omaha land sharps who said they wanted "Bloody's" blarsted bloody services in a land speculation down in Nebraska. "Bloody" didn't want to be disrespectful "to the boys, you know," and so he jaunted off with them down to the claim regions of the grasshopper state, where he plotted and conspired, cheated and swindled, stole and re-stole, falsified and stultified, and committed perjury with the boys as long as they had any use for him, after which they gave him a \$5 bill and fired him out.

"Bloody" didn't like that very well, and came out west to grow up with the country, or a part of it at least, and after sojourning in the foothills for a considerable time, he ventured into Cheyenne night before last and was at once arrested by Marshall Carr...

³⁹ Spring, pp. 103, 107.

⁴⁰ NSHS, Seymour Biographical Note

On March 2, 1886, the *Omaha Dailey Bee* further reported: "*Richard Seymour, self-styled 'Bloody Dick,' was taken to Lincoln yesterday by Marshal Carr, for arraignment before Judge Dundy.*" The case is again referred to under "Federal Building Items" in the March 16, 1886 *Bee*: "*Richard Seymour, alias 'Bloody Dick,' supposed to be implicated in Nebraska land frauds...*" Court documents pertaining to the case indicate there were sixteen others who were involved. We are told, however, that Seymour was "*released after supplying testimony against others involved in the alleged conspiracy to defraud.*"⁴¹

Richard Seymour was, in the estimation of regional historian Paul Riley, a typical frontiersman – typical in that he was a man of mystery. Joseph Rosa, a prolific author of meticulously researched western histories, made a similar assessment: "Seymour is something of a mystery man. Many believed him to be the son of an English lord or at least from a family of some prominence..."⁴² That he was an Englishman with the self-styled nickname of "Bloody Dick" seems to be the one consistent thread running through his story.

It is not certain how Richard Seymour acquired the "considerable notoriety" attributed to him by Richard B. Hughes and others. Nor are there clues to a weakness of moral fiber that would predict his later involvement in the land fraud case. Ena Raymonde – by this time, Ena (Palmer) Raymonde Ballantine McClary – had lost her life in a horse and buggy accident in 1884 and was spared learning of her friend's decline into an outright lawbreaker. She may not have heard from him after he left the vicinity of Medicine Creek, as she wrote to her cousin Mamie Timmons "back home" in Georgia on September 3, 1882: "*I don't know anything of Dick Seymour; have not heard of him for years...*"

In his years on the plains, Richard "Bloody Dick" Seymour was, at one time or another on life's stage with "Buffalo Bill" Cody, "Texas Jack" Omohundro, W. F. "Doc" Carver, "Wild Bill" Hickok, "Colorado Charley" Utter, "Calamity Jane" Canary, "White Eye" Anderson, "Dashing Charlie" Emmett, Leon F. Pallardy, and others who left an imprint on the pages of frontier history. For the most part, however, Richard Seymour was only a peripheral figure – a bit player.

"Bloody Dick" Seymour's name is included in the lead-in to an article written by Raymond W. Thorp and published in a 1940's era western magazine about Erastus Beadle, the creator of the dime novel, but no further indication is made of Seymour's name actually appearing in one of these pulp fiction publications.

Furthermore, no mention of Richard Seymour has been found after 1886, and no photograph of him has surfaced. It is not known when he took his final curtain call; he remains a man of mystery, a man without a legend.

⁴¹ NSHS, Seymour Biographical Note

⁴² Rosa, p. 291.