



WAR VETERAN 94 YEARS OLD

"Daddy" Cormack, one of the few Civil War Veterans left, and about the only living Indian fighter in western Kansas, had a birthday Tuesday and he was 94 years old, says the Bird City Times. He is positive that he will stretch that quite a number of years over the century mark. Many came to see him that day to congratulate him and wish him many more years of youth. That night the legion boys took him to McDonald where they were holding their regular monthly meeting. They presented him with a birthday cake which had one candle and in red letters thereon were these words, "A Hundred Years or Bust." And we're certain that Dad will go past such a small number as one hundred. 5-17-40

'Daddy' Cormack, Civil War Veteran, Died Thursday

"Daddy" Cormack, pioneer resident of Bird City and last surviving Civil war veteran in Cheyenne county, died at a local hospital Thursday morning. Mr. Cormack fell and broke a rib several weeks ago and had been under treatment here since, and during the past two weeks had been failing rapidly. He was 97 years old.

Cormack to Sparks

Here is something for you to get your teeth in.

Its our old friend, Charles Cormack, who claimed to have been a Scout with Forsyth in Beecher Island fight. All I ever located, he was pretty much of a fraud, altho without doubt was blacksmithing at Ft Wallace. May have went with Kidders father time the military sent Lt Beecher to recover bodies of the Kidder group. Why send a civilian? Evidently he was under correct name Charles Cormack...Claims to have received pension for activity age 16 in Civil war, but claims he kept under assumed name to avoid capture by his parents, who wanted him to return home.

He claims he was with Forsyth under assumed name. Why assumed name 1368?

Alright, I just received a 50 page history of Cormack written by a grandson. Nothing specific except saying he was a pal with Buffalo Bill, with Custer, Custer even requested Cormack to join as a scout at Little Big Horn but Cormack reached that site a day late..but was a survivor of Reno's, with whom he joined. *W. D. Day?*

This yarn says that Charles Cormack was at Beechers Island under name of A.J. ENTLER (name of his grandmother) and as proof claim the name is on the old monument...You know it wasnt, so do I..but there is a A E EUTSTER... claimed to be misspelled ??? The story goes that he very often took old buffalo hunters, officers, and friend to the battlesite, telling them the heroic story. BUT..insofar as I ever learned, it was impossible to get Cormack, to go there at any reunion. Williams, and others have told me it was impossible to take Cormack. Once they took him to some site in southeast Colorado,,as an excuse..but ended at Beecher Island R union which Cormack didnt even know was in session. Cormack, disappeared and Williams said they never did locate him.. But he got home like, the stray cat.

You have all thats known of the several Scouts. Can you run this down?

Everette

*Cormack told Geo Thors of Cormack
Williams he used name
of Pratt - another time
he told Thors the assumed
name was Wilson. Its told Pat Keller it
was Walker.*

McDonald Kansas

December 16 40

Mr E S Sutton
Benkleman Neb

Dear Tir

(Youngblood)

Will say I never have heard of this man you mention he was probably a horse thief or some long fingered gentleman Prior to 1876 the Indians were very hostile and this being located right in the middle of the territory of the Northern Cheyennes and with no protection doubtful whether he would have survived long. Local history gets so badly distorted in a short time that it is soon beyond recognition.

We have the Dewey Berry Shooting I grew up in the midst of these men knew them all personally and every once in a while I hear some native airing his ignorance so pitifully that I am compelled to call him down. As for instance when the natives hung the rat down on the east end of this place several years ago who killed the little girl over by Golby The Denver Post said "The mob wanted to hang him but could not think where they could find a tree and then some one happened to think of a little seragy Sycamore in a dry arroyo that they had hung Chauncey Dewey on thirty years ago and which so angered and incensed Mr Dewey that he immediately brot suit in the Federal Court For the Dist Of Kansas Praying that his Honor Award him judgment in the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars. For mental anguish which he sustained Old Fort Wallacet Kansas located in wallace County had numerous spectacular characters but the old characters are gone and the next generation such as the Madigans Robodoux are still there and they do not seem to have a very clear conception of what happened they have heard it so often they hav forgot about it For example the citizens of wallace petitioned the honorable Legislature of the state Of Kansas For an appropriation to build a stone fence around the old Millitary Cemetery and got the money and after the had got the fence done discovered that all soldiers had been removed to Fort Leavenworth fifty years ago

(over)

of this man
1872 the
last summer Frank Madigan was here and was telling me his version
of the killing of Billie Comstock Madigan said "Comstock and Grover
who were scouts at the Fort had been north on to the beavers on a
scout and he was killed by Grover and some of his henchmen so they
could get Comstocks Very valuable hay ranch located on Rose creek
close to the fort and he was having argument where was buried some
contending one place and some another he asked me to ask Charles C
Carmack Carmack said he was killed ten miles east of the Fort
One and one half miles north of the Smokey River and one half mile
north of the old Butterfield Overland stage line on the east side
of a canyon and this is where Bill Cody says in his memoirs it happened
Carmack said he was loaded into his ambulance and removed to the west
side of the canyon and the grave was never permanently marked
He had lain there so long in the hot sun and was so badly decomposed
that they could not remove him I asked him if he had ever heard

the hay ranch story before and he said No
Frank Madigan Father came to Wallace in 1865 as an army teamster
and lived at Wallace until his Death Recently he was saloon keeper
at the fort during all of these hectic times and saw it all and
was acquainted with all of the star actors in the great drama
enacted on the western plains and in spite of this the next generation
have a very dull conception of what happened and care less

In 1864 the Butterfield overland express was laid out up the
Smokey Hill River The material for the construction of the eating
house was saved in the vicinity of Pueblo Colorado and loaded on wag
wagons and hauled by Ox train under an escort of Cavalry down the
old Butterfield and the station was built about twenty five feet
square and two stories high the men who operated the station lived
on the second floor and the transients were fed on the first floor
in June 1867 it was attacked by Roman Nose with about three hundred
Cheyennes and captured the station and killed all the stock tenders
but did not burn the building after the

abandoned Tom Madigan bot the building and ran a saloon in it for a number of years and when the saloon business blowed up they moved it out to the Ranch ten miles north of wallase on Lake creek where it is now the old building is riddled with fortyfive and a fifty six calibre slugs from the indian fight and from numerous drunken gun brawls that were pulled off about the building in saloon they use it to store junk in and is in bad reare I wish we had the old buildig I have my mind madt up whae I would do with it

now

say

Charley Carmack gave me an old Colt 36 calibre six shooter which was undoubtly dropped by some Cheyanne during the fight it was picked up in 1917 on the field south of the river it was in perfect repair when found and four chambers were loaded but the Rube had to the bullets out ad messed around and damaged it considerable before I got a hold of it On the front of the handle is ingraved "wis vols" on the but of the stock there is tngraved a Miss ~~Yas~~ L M S to D H S near autss on ta history is as good as any ones

at Beachy stand

dig

The middle fork of beaver creek has no historical spots of importance while the so fork has several indian killings and a horse thief or two were shot in early times There used to be an old trail which ran from Old Fort McPherson to the junction of the beaver Creek thence up the stream untill it intersected with the old Custer Trail and thence on to Wallase and of course where there was a trail there was more or less trouble with the Indians

The Mail contract for the delivery from Wallase to Atwood was let to a character by the name of Sam Loyde he carried it once a week afoot about one hundred and ten miles We used to get our mail at Wallase and than after the Burlington came up the Republican Benkleman was our home town Tis interesting to look back

a half Centary and on the activities of the honest yocannary the all start out asthough the might amount to something but by the time they are 65 or 70 the have moved to town and have a little snack worta about 200 Dollars with a 600 dollar Mortgage on it and of late yearsn they dont seem to do that good they rlet old Santa clause feed them

[Handwritten signature]

House 17 - Family 18 - 2 June

Cormack, Charles, 34, farmer, b. Ill., pts.b.blank
, Hannah J., 17, b. Missouri, pts.b.Penn.
1880 Cen. Neb. Furnas Co. Richmond Pre., p.2

House & Family 86 - 8 June

Cormack, Charley, farmer, b. Minn., pts.b.Penn.
, Anna, 22, b. Missouri, fb Tenn., mb NC
, Seth, 3, b. Neb.
Thomas, Louis, 25, boarder, b. Va., pts.b.Penn.
1885 Cen. Neb. Furnas Co. Richmond Pre., p.9

House & Family 165 - 23 June

Cormack, Charles, b. May 1846, Mo., fb Tenn., mb NC, owns farm #82
, Hannah J., b. Mch 1863, Neb., pts.b.Penn., wed 20 yrs.,
5 children, 4 living
, Clarence H., b. Mch 1889, Neb., att sch.
, Curtis H., b. Sept 1892, Neb.
, Mary A., b. Oct 1897, Neb.
1900 Cen. Neb. Furnas Co. Richmond Pre., p.5A

Cormack, Charles

Pvt. Co.I, 14th Missouri Cavalry
7 Apr 1865-17 Nov. 1866, served 3 months, 10 days
PO Address: Beaver City

1890 Cen. Civil War Vet. Neb. Furnas Co. Richmond Pre. p.2

Cormack, Charles H.

Homestead. N $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ & N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21, Township 1 North, Range 22
West, filed 15 Mch 1877 #3924. Cancelled 2 Mch 1879.
U.S. LAND OFFICE RECORDS, Neb. State Hist. Soc. Archives,
Vol.76, p.66

Pre-emption. E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 31, & W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 32, T1N, R22W,
filed 30 Jan. 1882, #1612.
Vol.76, p.70

Homestead SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ S14 T1N R22W, filed 1 Nov 1886, #12149.
Final patent, 1 Apr 1892.
Vol.76, p.64

Thomas, Seth [father-in-law]

Pre-emption S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ & N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 14, T1N R22W, filed 13 May
1876, #563.
Vol.76, p.64

Note: Could not find him in Roster Volumes of Members of the Grand
Army of the Republic.

Charley Carmack

(1)

By Chas Williams
Mc Donald Ks 10-15-1939

Old Charley Carmack is quite a character--he is getting old, being something over 96--and he is given to telling wild tales, some of which are o.k.--and some are imagination--and some are pure fiction.

I just saw an article in which old Charley claimed he was with the scouts at Beecher Island--there was no such name in the list of soldiers.. He made this explanation, claiming he had deserted from the Union forces during the Civil war and came up into Kansas under the assumed name of Charley Peatt...Now I have read the book on the battle of the Arickaree, and seen the pictures there of Peatt and we who have known old Charley Carmack all these years know they are not the same..Charley would never go to the Beecher Island celebration and always fought shy of mixing with men who were connected with the affair.

One time some of the fellows conceived the idea of roping old Charley into going..They stopped for Charley and asked him if he wanted to take a ride as they were going to scout out over the country and wanted to see the place where the Kidder massacre happened as well as other points of historical interest.. Charley fell for the trap and wound up at Beecher Island, but he was conspicuous for his shyness and it was impossible to get him up with any of the oldtimers..

Charley also claimed his assumed name was Wilson. There were two Wilsons at the fight--but no one around here was any more impressed with that story than with the Peatt story.. He was taken over to the Island at one time in the early days before the place was made a memorial.. He had claimed he knew all about the fight because he was there--but he fell flat and couldnt locate the place--that is, his description did not tally with the location.

Charley Carmack

By Chas W Williams as related to E S Sutton

1939 at depot
Benjamin
Copy from letter Aug 4-1939

Old Charley Carmack is quite a character, he is getting old, being something over 94. Charley is given to telling wild tales, some of which are o.k. and some are pure imagination and some are up-and-down fiction...I have known Charley every since we hit the country in '79...

I just read an article in which old Charley claimed he was with the Scouts at Beecher Island. There was no such a name in the list of soldiers.. He made this explanation, claiming he had deserted from the Union Army during the Civil War and came up into Kansas under an assumed name. He used the name Charley Peatt.. Now, I have read the book on the Battle Of Beecher Island and I have seen the pictures of Peatt and we who know Charley Carmack all these years know they are not the same.. Charley would never go to the Beecher Island celebrations and always fought shy of mixing with men who were connected with the battle. Along about 1898 the oldtimers decided to make an annual meeting at the Island.. There was some argument about the location.. A bunch of men took Charley over to the Arickaree and asked him to show them the place "where you fought." Well, Old Charley was so confused it was pitiful.. None of the other men who had really taken part in the fight had the least trouble in going direct to the Island..

One time ^{some} of the fellows conceived the idea of roping Charley into going. They stopped Charley on the street and asked him if he wanted to take a ride as they was going to scout over the country and wanted to see the spot where the Alder massacre happened as well as other points of historical interest. Charley fell for the trap and wound up at Beecher Island, but he was conspicuous for his shyness and it was impossible to get him up with the other oldtimers.

Charley also claimed he assumed the name of Wilson. There were two Wilsons on the roster, one was killed.. But no one around here was any more impressed with that story than with the Peatt yarn.. He was taken over to the Island once in the early days, that was before the place was made a Memorial. He claimed he knew all about the fight because he was there, but he couldnt locate the place and he couldnt tell a decent story of the engagement and he couldnt name ^{any} ~~but~~ a few of the Scouts..

By Chas Williams

(2)

Charley was here in the early days, there is no doubt of that.. And it also seems pretty certain that he was with Custer when Custer camped on the Republican at the Froks on the bottoms near the present location of the Benkelman Fair grounds.

At least part of his story holds water.. Charley claims he was ambulance driver for the company Custer had in command and was with Custer when the bodies of Lt Kidder and his ten men and indian scout were discovered. The skeletons were picked up and placed in the ambulance and taken to Ft Wallace for burial.

However, Charley told a tall tale about this also. He claims that "Mrs CUSTER" and another woman were with the troops--but who ever heard of a commander on an Indian campaign taking his wife along.? Carmack claims they were on the trail between St McPherson on the Platte and Ft Wallace with the women riding in the ambulance, when the bodies were found and that the women rode along after the bodies were picked up..

The fact is that on the 12th day of July Custer took 100 picked men and went to Ft Hays for supplies and Custer went on to Ft Riley to see his wife who was staying there while the troops were in the field. Gen Bankhead came to Wallace, discovered that Custer was at Ft Riley without leave of absense and had Custer arrested for desertion while in a hostile country. Custer was "broken" and relieved of his command.

This is something that happened--and is a ##### disgrace to the Nation--efficient army men created enemies--their superior officers merely waited for a minor technicality to catch them up and break them.. Later affairs gout out of their hands, Custer was reinstated, but sent to a command that was so dangerous that they practically knew he would be killed--an easy way to dispose of an enemy--or one who whowed them up -

Charley Carmack consorted with the rougher element--men who were mixed in the horse and cattle stealing game. While I do not mean to insinuate that Carmack ##### was a horsethief, I mean his disposition was to hobnob with that class rather than with the more substantial element who were trying to make something of the country.

One time Charley told me about his trip with Bill Streeter. Now Bill Streeter was our Honor man--one we could point to with pride as being the kingpin hoss-thief of the valley..

According to Charley's story, Bill came to him one day and asked him to help him meet a cavvey of horses that we was buying.. they went down the creek some distance and there, under rather mysterious circumstances, met a cavvey of 16 or 17 horses, one being saddled but with no rider. The bunch had been parked in a well covered draw.. Bill was mighty anxious to move the horses on out of the country, which they did. He immediately disposed of them--and when that was accomplished, he again became his care-free self--previously he was very much on the alert--and carried his rifle across his saddle--something a man never does unless expecting trouble--and it was past the "Indian days", so no excuse of being afraid of a raiding party..

Done

Aug 1939

Daddy Cornock, Cheyenne County's
oldest Citizen, Civil War Veteran, and Indian
fighter has purchased his first Automobile at
the age of 93 and with a friend to drive it
he plans on making a tour of the Black
Hills Country and visit Yellowstone Park.

Wg of T. J. C. present Tupper - East
Champion

CHARLES H CORMACK

The editor of the Grit-Advocate interviewed Charles H Cormack of Bird City Kansas who was about 90 years old but active and alert.

He told of meeting Genl Custer here (Julesburg) when he was a soldier at Fort Sedgwick. He later joined Forsythes' command and was in the Beecher Island fight.

Custer moved to Sedgwick - He was at Riverside only long enough to telegraph Sedgwick for information

The above item was mailed to E S Sutton by Mrs Guy Dunn, Curator of the Ft Sedgwick Museum March 1969,, with the following reply to her.

As for the Grit-Advocate Aug 1939, re:
Charles Cormack.

This is just another of the windies jiggling loose from Cormacks mind with advancing age...things which he seemed to have forgotten when and while living at Bird City Kansas, our neighbor city 23 miles to the south.

It was only when Cormack made extended trips away from home and far from those knowing him, that he hunted up gullable editors and those 'experiences' came to mind...and in time to our desk for confirmation.

I was well acquainted with Cormack..He was not all wind. For instance, he WAS at Ft Wallace and it is reported he drove the ambulance with Mrs Custer to Ft Riley...even that story is contested. Why a civilian driving a military vehicle? *She was not at Ft Wallace!*

He either drove the ambulance or was with the ambulance escort, knowing the country, that carried Judge Kidder to the massacre site of his son Lt Lyman Kidder and party on the Beaver, when the military removed those bodies to the Ft Wallace cemetery March 1868.

Judge Kidder returned to to St Paul Minn with the body of his son.

Charley Cormack was NOT at Riverside with Genl Custers 7th in any capacity. He was at Ft Wallace as a blacksmith and horse *shoer*

It will be recalled the 7th cavalry LEFT Ft McPherson on the Platte, over the Traders Trail to the Republican Forks (Benkel) from where a wagon train was sent to the fort for supplies while Custer scouted the Republican valley. He was informed Lt Kidder would leave Ft Sedgwick with instructions In an attempt to head off Kidder, Custer left the Froks June 30th for Ft Sedgwick. He hit the Platte 45 miles WEST of the Fort, at Riverside Station. There he was informed THAT Kidder had left for the Republican Forks. Custer immediately returned to the Republican, and on to Ft Wallace, enroute on the Beaver was found the bodies of Lt Kidder. *Why* Custer never saw Carmack until he reached the Fort July 12th, IF THEN.

Cormack was NOT with the Forsyth Scouts at Beecher Island altho that story received wide publicity after an interview kn Houston Texas. When questioned and shown the list of the Scouts, he said he was under an assumed name and AWOL or A DESERTER FROM THE Army

We have the official record of all Scouts and Col Sparks and others have not only verified the names, but has recodded biographically al 1 Scouts.

*Mrs Lann
Jubisburg. Museum.*

Perhaps you have heard of Chauncey Dewey...re the Dewey Berry shoot-out.!

Chaunceyn Dewey L N Lockard ^{Geo Williams,} and others tired of hearing the Carmack tales attempted to take Carmack to the Beecher Island reunion, something that Carmack should have been anxious to accept but he always managed to squeeze out..until one time they pulled a daisy on Carmack... saying they were going to the Smoky Hill country and wanted Carmack to show them the points of interest and Carmack was only to pleased to accept....but they ended at Beecher IIsand. Carmack disappeared immediately and no amount of searching found him. Charley found some way home.. and 'spies' tried to worm the story outof him.

I worked with Carmack several different times locating historical sites along the BeAVER, Sappa,, Smoky Hill and found him generally reliable but he never attempted to give me a windy..and when questkoned he avoided a reply.

I mightge along with his yarn that he went to Beecher Island with the military to recover the bodies of the slain scouts, even then he gave the distorted yarn of ^{Robert} Walker.

He did take me to the first burial site of the Kidder party, showing me a draw where the fight took place, and nearby the burial.

This was a half mile from the accepted site, but in later years when I had the Custer personal map, Lt Jackson said, the fight was a half mile east of the military trail...Charley Carmack was right.

So with this explanation, just cancel out the Riverside and Beecher Island fight.....and go slow on the others.

It is a shame to spoil a good story???

ESSutton

Mar 27 1965

Benkelman Nebr 69021

Feb 23 1975

Dear Col Sparks, Kc

We sure missed the boat in by passing Charley Cormack. You need OUR education brought up to date.. Listen to this, some excerpts from History Of Charles Cormack by Thomas J Cormack.

Charles mother died, 1850, his father remarried and young Charles left home 1861, age 15 and doubtful if ever saw any of the family again, altho did write to his sister Ann. After leaving home, he worked on farms in that general neighborhood. His father did not like Charles leaving home and tried to keep track of him.

IT WAS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT IN A FEW YEARS CHARLES WENT BY ANOTHER NAME.

April 8th 1865 musterin in 14th Rgt Cav until May 1865
"In Plains Dept of Missouri Nov 18 1865 /St Louis, then scouted
Waynesville to Coal Creek camp. Oct 1865 honorable discharge.

Age 18 became buffalo hunter and scout, took herd of 5,000 Texas cattle to Canada, RETURNED HOME by horseback, alone, took three to five months and never saw a white man during that time/

Supplied meat to Fort Hays, hauled in wagons from area of Burd City. Then contracted to furnish meat to the construction gangs on the Union Pacific 1872 1876.

One of his partners was Wm D Street, Co I 19th Kans Cav 1868 had been partners 1875-1876

They also did some TRAPPING on the Driftwood, Red Willow county Neb.

Once, they were fooling for some stolen horses by the Indians and came close to being killed several times before returning with the horses. (see Lockard-Street deal following injun ponies 'on the prairie' at Sappa Hole fight. Also Geo Williams letters)

Cormack knew several different Indian languages. A chief came to Charles asking him to join the Indians on a wagon train attack. Cormack said he was NEUTRAL.. but next morning he watched the battle thru field-glasses. This he called the Trenton massacre SOUTH of BIRD CITY ... (Cormack told Raymond Bengé he watch Indian attack and kill lots women children from Blue Point Hill 1 mile east Benkelman) He told George Williams he watched the battle Achillis (Sappa Hole) ..Same battle three different sites

Charles hunted buffalo with Buffalo Bill Cody 1872 in Ft Wallace ar who asked Charles to join the Wild West Show in London. Charles said he wanted no part in being a showman.

CHARLES WAS A SCOUT FOR GENERAL CUSTER. ON ONE OF THESE TRIPS, THEY CAME TO AN AREA NEAR Fort Wallace where a young lieutenant and party were massacred. Lt Kidder was on his way to join Custer. The scalped and mutilated bodies were put in one grave. Later Judge Kidder came for the body of his son. Charles drove the ambulance and helped locate the grave.

Charles drove the ambulance with Mrs Custer from Ft Wallace to Hays and has a very narrow escape.

Custer asked Charles to act AS SCOUT on his last campaign. He set up a meeting place but Charles arrived too late. Custer and his Seventh had already gone.

2
One of his hunting partners was Diamond Dick. They spent a winter together, snow four feet deep, peeled bark from trees for horse food. They felled over 2,000 buffalo and fired only a few hundred shots.

Charles knew Chief White Cloud and was with him when he celebrated his 99th birthday. He knew Red Cloud. At the age of three years he was (Red Cloud) kidnapped by Indians. In later years when he had an opportunity to live as a white man, but returned to live his life out with Indians.

Beecher Island

Col Forsyth with a force of picked men, including Charles... ..while camped on Arickaree were attacked by large party of Indians, etc etc.. a fellow Scout ##### was wounded, his finger just hanging. Charles told him to cut the dam thing off. The man couldn't..so Charles did it for him.

ENTLER

When Charles signed up for Forsyth Scouts and at time was at Hays and Ft Wallace, he used the name A J ENTLER. This was his step mother's maiden name. He being under age and ran away from home, his family kept trying to find him, used that name so his father could not locate him.

His fellow scouts wanted him to clear his name with the government and get his name officially on the monument. But he said he knew he was THERE and that was enough.

In 1876 he and two men joined a wagon train from Wichita as scouts, were ambushed by Indians and lost everything but their guns and what they had on..

Charles was part of the great cattle drive to Abilene 1867-68. Once while carrying mail to Fort Hays he was ambushed by Indians and shot thru the breast with an arrow. He broke the arrow and rode some 50 miles to Hays for help.

Charles and a fellow scout were scouting for a young captain out of Hays. They surprised a group of Indians that had killed a group of settlers. The Indians were camped on Beaver river and the scouts saw them take up their position. Charles suggested to the captain they wait for dawn before opening up. Scout Spaulding said "we counted 32 dead Indians.

Another Scout Xarkes was with much of the time was California Joe and was at the bloody battle of the Wichita where Black Kettle was killed.

Another comrad of Charles was George Bardsley, peace officer in Ellis county Kansas. Bardsley recalls knowing Charles when he worked for the Un Pacific and recalls when Charles captured several outlaws singlehanded.

Grit advocate Aug 1930... tells of ##### Charles meeting General Custer in Julesburg when he was a soldier at Fort Sedgwick. Charles later joined Forsyth Scouts and was in Beecher Island fight. (Cormack attended American

Legion convention Julesburg and was interviewed by Grit.

(From Mrs Bunn file)

*Mrs W
Barnes
Day*

Benkelman Nebr 69021 Feb 9 1975

Dear Historian. *Mrs Wash. Bird City Va*

Thanks for the use of the Cormack history. Very Interesting. I was deeply touched with the Lawrence Cormack incident.... I think he was right in assuming an understanding hand and a spirit of christian guidance, could have changed the course of his life. We have seen it happen, both ways. Rebellious boys made criminals for lack of compassion and understanding of Nature..and boys who made fine citizens after a bad start, when someone cared.

I suppose you have a pound of salt to go with Charleys heroism.

As for Beecher Island....Cormack was NOT there. We merely take his word for it, that he took an ambulance for the recovery of the bodies. A military man would never believe a blacksmith civilian would drive a military conveyance under such circumstances. I will not argue that point, nor going with Kidders father, possibly he did. He was at Ft Wallace at the time. He also wrote an article that he drove the ambulance conveying Mrs Custer. His own dates refute it.

Now, he tells of the Trenton massacrs, that the first I heard of it being south of Bird City..He told Raymond Bengé that he observed the massacre from our Blue Point on the Republican, three miles east of hsré. He told Harry DeLaMater he observed the fight at Sappa Hole...Take your choice.

E J Entlers' name is NOT on the Beecher Island Monument. There is a somewhat similiar name, A E Eutster. Col Sparks looked into that. Eutster was on the roll as from Lincoln County Kansas, with others from the same area. He was a German. and he was buried near Salina Kans.

Cormack told George Williams he assumed the name of Peatt. He told Chauncey Dewey that he used the name Wilson. Mrs Dunn, curator of Julesburg, has an article saying he was Rube Waller.....

I have Williams letter..And I have notes taken at the depot when Chauncey Dewey stopped there evening, during sale day.. I visited with Dewey at times. He had asked me to work up a history and was giving me a free hand. A pretty redhead came in from California, intrigued Chauncey to give her the life story towards a book and Movies. Th at didnt last long, tho. I dropped the Dewey affair..but of course)have a mass of material.

As for Simon Matson. We worked the South Fork many times. I found him straightforward and he interviewed many old timers. He read many books, but few history, until late years when I encouraged him to get the Kansas State Quarterly. He did no real research. It was impossible to get Simon to write down a journal. The way I managed was to ask a question and he replied by letter. What he wrote he believed to be the facts, what he got was mostly from the papers, and interviews. You know how reliable, or unreliable such sources may be, altho honestly given, but misinformed. The Old Scouts seldom wrote straight stories in late years..or perhaps, they remembered something that was long, long forgotten ?

ESS

Benkelman Nebr Feb 14 1975

Dear Historian

Sorry I was not home at time you phoned, and I appreciate your information. Was in hopes of seeing you at the St Francis meeting, which we were unable to attend, Mrs Tutton was not able to go and I felt it unsafe to leave her alone as she is yet subject to dizziness or unbalance and near collapse. Then too, it turned too icy to be safe on the highway.

As for the Beecher Island monument with names, as you mentioned. Yes I have that list. Its in their Annual. Then too, I edited Stilgebouers book. Yet have his mms. What I failed to tell you. There were at least three lists submitted and quite a quarrel over the names submitted. I used the list accepted by the military, which was as I wrote you.

Due to Cormacks own statements, giving names of Wilson, Waller, and other names to Madigan in Wallace, ^{later} George Williams, etc, I did not attempt to run his version ~~down~~.

Col Sparks who has made the naming of the Scouts a study is on this version. I would be more than pleased to learn Cormack was at the battle. There is this possibility, he was blacksmithing at Wallace. Perhaps you knew that Donovan arrived at Ft Wallace just after Bankhead left for relief of Beecher Island. An escort was not available to Donovan, so he started alone for the Island, but five citizens went with him. They reached the "dry stream bed" (would it be the So Republican) and met Carpenter, and proceeded on to the Island, and beat Bankhead there.

The five men were not Scouts, but, ^{later on} at least two claimed to be so. Insofar as I know, they were paid and perhaps Cormack was in that group of five. or... Col Sparks may come up with evidence of Cormack being a SCOUT. I know of two who were named but not there, due to being hospitalized. ^{But} ~~then~~ Jack Farr and Mim Curry, who were reported in the hospital, were in the battle. Jack Farr was apal of Barney Day and it was Parr who cut off the damaged finger of Days. I have the gun that blew up in Barney Days hand.

ESS

It could be possible Cormack, as a Civilian Teamster could have joined Bankhead. I would say, every one about the fort would have gone with the relief detachments, whether civilians or military, if possible. Was Nelson Claims to have been in battle? Was not

Benkelman Nebr 69021
Feb 24 1975

Dear Mrs Mast
Bird City Ks

Col Sparks researched the list of Forsyth and Pepon Scouts very carefully in the 1920's and 1930's while several of the Scouts were yet alive. Sparks was raised in Lincoln county Kansas and knew many of them personally, as did a Mr E A Gilbert.

L Ray Hersey lived on the Dry Willow, just below Beecher Island from about 1910. I was closely associated with him. Fact is, he was at one time engaged to my sister. As you perhaps know, he was the mainspring and historian for the Reunions many years. He never recognized the Mj Inman's report of the list of Scouts. His personal contact with many of them rejected Inman.

Here is Co. Sparks letter, just received.

Regarding A J Entler; this mans name was spelled many ways. Mj Inman's list under date Aug 26 1868 at Fort Harker has A.E. Enstster. His report to Q M Genl, then to War department has it A J entler.

In the listing of those from the Saline river country, I have him down as Entslar. A letter written by E A Gilbert to George Martin of Kans Historical Society, has it written A J Entslar-Trescott. Trescott is east of Beverly and was named for T E Scott. This man was part of those recruited by j j peate, who lived in the vicinity and was part of the contingent who went to Fort Harker and joined Forsyth Scouts. They were not organized at Ft Wallace

In the numerous rosters of both the Forsyth Scouts and the Pepon Scouts, I find him several times listed in the Forsyth Scouts, name spelled different in most every time. He was german, little known and Peatte reported his burial in Ottawa county.

You are well aware of the propensity of the old timers to have been everywhere with everyone that had anything to do with history, particularly after those who could dispute their ward was gone.

Cormack could ? havr gone with Lt Beecher to recover the bodies of the Kidder victims as a civilian employee of the Q M D pt, or just because he didnt have anything else to do.

A for meeting Genl Custer at Fort Sedgwick, Genl Custer never was at Julesburg, While seeking Kidder Genl Custer went from Republican Forks to the Platte, Riverside station 45 miles WEST of Sedgwith, to whom he telegraphed July 6th, and immediate made a forcedmarch back to the Republican. In 1939 Cormack was interviewed by a GRIT reported at a vets rrunion at Julesbur, whom he told , I was a solder at Ft Sedgwick+

In Houston interview Cromack claimed to have been Waller

at Beecher Island. He told Chancey Dewey he was Peatte. He told Madigan and George Willi/ans he was Wilson.

I am now after the record of Cormacks fathers second marriage etc.

RSS

Benkelman Nb 69021 Mar 4 1975

Mrs Mast...Bird City

Re; Cormack

Col. Sparks researched the Forsyth and Pepon Scouts carefully in the 1920's, knowing several of them as he was raised in Lincoln County where they were living.

Here's his letter of Feb 27th 1975

Regarding A J Entler, this mans name was spelled many ways. M J Inman listed it under date Aug 28 1868 at Fort Harkner as A E Enstster. His report to the Q M Genl has it differently.

After talking with Scouts who were in the Beecher Island fight, those from the Saline river country, I have him down as A.J Entsler. A letter written by E A Gilbert to George Martin of Kans Hist Soc, has it written A J Entsler Trescott.. Trescott is east of Beverly and was named for T E Scott. This man was part of those recruited by J J Peate who lived in the vicinity and was part of the contingent who went to Fort Harkner and joined Forsyth Scouts. Peate said Trescott was where he understood Entsler was buried.

The numerous rosters of both Forsyth and Pepon scouts, I find him several times listed in the Forsyth Scouts, name spelled differently in most every time. He was German, little known and Peate reported his burial Ottawa County Vans.

You are well aware of the propensity of the old timers to have been everywhere and with everyone that had anything to do with history. In particular after those who could not dispute their word was gone.

Cormack could have gone with Beecher to recover the bodies as a civilian employee of the Q M, or just because he had nothing else to do.

A news correspondent covering the Vet convention in Julesburg reported Cormack saying, "I was a soldier at Fort Sedgwick when Custer came there." "I was under Custer"

Custer, as you know, was NEVER in Sedgwick. He arrived at the Platte River July 6th, telegraphed Ft Sedgwick from Riverside some 47 miles west of the fort, and was informed Kidder had left for the

Republican Forks June 30th. Custer made a forced march back to the Republican Forks. ..Cormack stated he joined Custer as a Scout and found the bodies of Kidder on the Beaver.

Cormack, may have driven the ambulance with Kidders father, just his word for it. BUT he is a dam liar when he says he drove the ambulance with Mrs Custer from Ft Wallace to Hays.

Custer was courtmartialled for leaving Ft Wallace without permission of Bankhead,, taking an escort and light wagons to Hays, on pretext of needing supply, which they did, but to see his wife who was at Hays during Custers Republican River Expedition.

Now get this.

When Cormack made trip to Houston, he reported he was at Beecher Island fight, under name of Rube Walle.r, due to having beeb AWOL from civil wa r. That on file at Julesburg

I have letter from Chauncy Dewey where Cormack claimed he used name of Peate... He told Frank Madigan the name was Wilson

and I have George Williams letter, saying he used name Wilson.

Now, I am checking record on his step mother. Doesnt it sound silly to use her maiden name when he was hiding his true name..and he surely was using Cormack to hold his pension.

I do think he was an unusual character, hunter, etc,etc and he acquired a lot of western lore, which I wish I could have collected.

I have a very intersting, old Military map of your section of Laveta Pass country. Will drop it off when go

your way

WCC

E. A. Dutton

Old gun
paraphrase

Gov Williams letter Dec 16 1940

Charley Carmack gave me an old Colt 36 Cal
Rev. shooter which was accidentally dropped by some
Chuyenne during the fight at Beecher Island
and picked up in 1917 on the field South of the
river. It was in perfect repair when found and four
chambers were loaded but the Rubs had to dig out
the bullets and messed around and damaged it
considerable before I got a hold of it.

on the front of the handle is engraved "W 15 Yots"
on the butt of the stock "B 19155 LMS to BH3"
your guess on the history is as good as any one's

Kam Day Bird City.

I visited with Mrs Williams - months after I visited the action
part of one of the gun - she repeated the story as
told by her husband - both saying Carmack told them
that the fore part of the gun was tossed into the water
for the good sleep of his house - 'Why in the hell would
he throw it away? Surely it was near perfect, as was the action
and cylinders.

Both of Carmacks shacks were sold at Sheriff Sale and
Bird City manager. Mr Mast was instructed to Wreck +
clear the premises - I had told Mr Mast about the gun
& parts supposedly in the cement steps. The cement was
poor and easily broken up very fine - I helped - there was
no scrap iron of any sort in that of his abode - the
other shacks on highway into town - proved a few pieces
of scrap metal. The lots were loaded with usual pieces
of blacksmith junk - that was all - Williams figured
Carmack, a liar!

E. A. Daulton 1974

May 28th 1980

Dear Mr Cormack

Yes, I knew your grandfather, but not in a personal way that would help you. I would suggest the Melvin Mast at Bird City, of whom I am sure you have contacted them. My association with Mr Cormack was on some trips of local scene and his directions to them, such as the Kidder site and Beecher Island. He had been invited to go with us to Beecher Island, George Williams, Wm Beougher Frank Madigan, which he had excuses NOT to go. The last time Williams said we were going to Sand Creek, where Cormack never had been, so he said. But, we ended at Beecher Island, and we never saw him after arrival there. I never knew how he returned home. I have gone very, deeply and regardless of the assumed name he claimed to have used in service there, and in one Beecher Annual, is, NOT this name, that man is buried in Lincoln county Kansas, so recorded by Col Ray G Sparks. However, we do feel that Cormack as a civilian driver, went to Beecher Island with the escort for the bodies of the scouts in November. I am inclined, in such a capacity the he went with the ambulance or was a driver, with Kidders father and escort in March, after the battle, for the bodies. He, absolutely was NOT with the ### Juster troop that found Kidder, as published at the time he went to Huston Texas.

May 23, 1980

Dear Mr. Sutton :

My name is Tom Cormack , my great-grand dad was Charles H. Cprmack , a few days ago I was visiting my friends the Museum in Oberlin and they gave me your name .

I understand you knew Charles Cormack and are also a history Buff like I am . I have written several items about Charles Cormack and have spent many a year gathering facts about him.

Since you knew him I am in hope s you can tell me what you know about him. I would be very thankful.

Please drop me a line ,

Thank You,

Tom

Thomas J. Cormack
1112 West 29th St. Terr.
Lawrence, Kansas
66044

May 29 1980

Thomas J Cormack
1112 West 29th St. Terr
Lawrence Kans 66044

Mr Cormack

Yes, I knew Mr Cormack, your grandfather, but not in a personal way that would help you. My association was on some trips of the local scene, such as Kidder site, Beecher Island, etc. Largely due to his interviews, we will say, that of Houston Texas, A COPY GOING TO the Julesburg Museum, which Mrs Dunn was going to use as source material, but upon investigation had to be discounted.

Then there was his interview when at Julesburg, saying he had led Custer on Custers forced march to overtake the Kidder party, whereas it is possible that he may have drove the ambulance taking Judge Kidder to the site of the burial party trying to recover the bodies in March, he as a civilian.

Such appears to be the case at Beecher Island. He may have drove the ambulance as a civilian to Beecher Island that late fall when a militia party went after the bodies of the Scouts. He never mentioned that trip to me when Mr Beougher, Mr Blackwell, Mr Madigan and I tried to get him to go with us to their Annual meeting..

The name he assumed as being a Scout at the Beecher Island fight, although that name did appear in one of the reports of the Scouts, but not in other Annual reports. Col. Ray Sparks, knew most of the Scouts, and worked with those who knew the Scouts name, and that Scout, ^{whose name is Cormack} is buried in Lincoln county Kansas. ^{by} Sparks has that record.

There is no question but what Mr Cormack was in the area during those exciting times and associated with many of the well known actors and that he took an important part in the construction of the new West. He was a blacksmith at Ft Wallace as far as I can learn.

I may be in error. In this historical research as I am involved. I make it a point, NEVER to settle absolutely on any subject until

Record.

Would like to help you but his trail is
impossible to fully follow. So, with regards
sit at Trail Side, accepting, any thing offered
in good faith.

J. D. Sutton

all the chips are in and always accept connections

Friday, June 2, 1939

WAS WITH BEECHER ISLAND EXPEDITION

Ed Phenice
G. H. Carmack, Civil war veteran and one of the last of the old scouts, was with the Beecher Island expedition, according to an article printed in the Topeka, Kansas, Daily Capital a few days ago. Mr. Carmack, 93 year old resident of Bird City, Kansas, was a special guest at the American Legion district convention held at Belleville, Kansas, April 30 and May 1. When asked about being at Beecher Island, Mr. Carmack remarked: "Yes sir, that is the only place that I thought I would never get out alive."

Carmack was employed at hunting buffalo from 1872 to 1876. Speaking of this experience Mr. Carmack said: "I had an outfit of 42 men, many horses and a few wagons. I left Hays in September and returned in February. On the flats between the Smoky and Arkansas rivers there were plenty of buffalo. At the end of the trip I had 5,700 hides. Yep, there was plenty of jack in game hunting for the man who was a good shot and a good hunter."

Ed Phenice of Almena, Kansas, is another of the few remaining men of

The Grand Army of the Republic Phenice was on guard at Ford's theater in Washington, D. C. at the time President Lincoln was killed and he was an eye witness to the assassination.

Terrible!

It is now doubted

That he drove ambulance to Beecher Island

But it is possible
Barely possible

Carmack drove ambulance to Kidder site.

It does not seem reasonable
The military would have a
Civilian Driver.

However, we do agree he may have went with the military - at least he stood firm on the burial spot, which has proved out. Whereas many other historians claimed Carmack was in error.

Civilians were hired as teamsters -
Could have been with Bankhead Relief.

CHARLES CORMACK

By Thomas J Cormack

1973

Pa 1

Charles Henry Cormack was born in the St Louis area in the 1846. His father, Joel, was a stonemason by trade and had for some reason, moved his family from Virginia where his sister, Frances, and his brother Jasper, were born. Altho Joel and his wife Susan, were born in Tennessee, this Cormack, as most Cormacks, had a hard time staying in one area very long. In 1848 Joel moved his family to Quincy, Illinois. There, two more children were born to the family, James and Ann.

Very little is known about Charles' early days in Quincy. He talked about the family having a negro cook and commented many times about the catfish she cooked and how good they were. It is also known that his mother died in the 1850= and his father remarried before the time Charles left home in 1861. As Charles put it in later years, "I just up and skedaddles." What happened to Charles' family after 1850 is not certain. The 1860 census shows they were not in Quincy or the state.

After Charles left home, there is little known if he ever saw any of his family again. He did write many times to his sister, Ann E Carmack, but he never talked about his family in later years.

After leaving home, Charles worked by 'hiring out' on farms and seemed to stay in the general area of his home. It is ALSO KNOWN THAT Joel didnt like Charles leaving home and tried to keep track of him. It is because of this that in a few years, he went by another name.

On April 8 1865, just one week before the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, he enlisted in the Union army. He was mustered in at LaGrange MISSOURI and became a member of the 14th Rgmt, Cavalry, vols Co. I. His commanding officer was Captain Cross. The 14th Regiment cavalry was organized St Louis and Springfield Nov 30th 1864. Until May 13 1865 they were in the district of the Plains, Dept of Missouri. In November 1865 they were on duty in St Louis, then scouted from Waynesville to Coal Camp creek. In May, they moved to Nebraska and frontier duty on the plains. In October 1865 Charles was mustered out and received his honorable discharge at Fort Leavenworth Kansas.

At this time Charles was still 18 years old and he started his life wandering the plains and soon became a buffalo hunter and Indian fighter.

Charles and two other men took a herd of Texas cattle from Texas to Canada. When reaching Canada with the 5,000 head, his two partners stayed to work for the man who bought the cattle. Charles came back alone by horseback, which took three to five months, and never saw another white man during this time.

During his days as buffalo hunter, he supplied meat for the army at Hays and it was in the Bird City area where he hunted them and hauled them to the Fort in wagons also had a contract to supply meat for the contractors and gang which constructed the Union Pacific through Kansas. During the years 1872 through 1876 he roamed the wesyrn plains hunting buffalo.

Buffalo/hunters in those early days dressed much as did the Indians, using animal skins and living much as the Indians did. Many of the buffalo hides were sold at Fort Wallace Kansas. They brought as much as \$3.25 when they were getting top price, or as low as 60¢.

William D Street, who was a member of Company I 19th Kansas cavalry, in 1868, was Charles partner in many of his buffalo hunting trips in 1875-76. William later settled in Oberlin Kans and took up ranching.

Fort Wallace, when Charles was a scout, was one of the most important forts on the Western frontier in the wars with the plains Indians. It was the "fightinest" Fort on the plains as U S army records clearly show that more soldiers who were fighting Indians were buried there.

Fort Wallace was closer to the actual scene of fighting than any other fort in Kansas. The Plains Indians, made their biggest stand defending their buffalo hunting grounds against the slaughter of the buffalo.

Cutting through the heart of this favorite hunting ground was a new route to the West, particularly to the gold fields. Also, the Butterfield Overland Stage trail ran through this route. It wasnt until the buffalo hunters came to the area that the Indians started their raids. The Plains Indians depended upon the buffalo for their food, clothing and shelter. After awhile the settlers had to stop using this route and soon the stage line as well had to stop.

The troops at Fort Wallace were the ones who had to act when the Indians held their raids.

Charles once told of one of his trips hunting buffalo and stated he had an outfit of forty-two men, many horses and a few wagons. He left Fort Hays in September and returned in February. He hunted on the flats between the Arkansas and Smoky Hill rivers, where there were plenty of buffalo. At the end of the trip he had 5,700 buffalo hides. As Charles put it "Yep, there was plenty of jack in game hunting for a man who was a good shot and good hunter."

Charles and his friend William Street also did some trapping and scouting for the army and had many adventures together on the Driftwood in Red Willow country in 1875. One of these times he and William were looking for some stolen horses that the Indians had made off with, and both men remarked in later years that they came close to being killed several times before returning with the horses.

From time to time Charles would travel, awhile with the wagon trains passing through the plains. When he did this, he would act as scout and also as blacksmith, a trade he took up in his later years.

During his days as buffalo hunter, he supplied meat for the army at Hays and it was in the Bird City area where he hunted them and hauled them to the Fort in a wagon also had a contract to supply meat for the contractors and gang which constructed the Union Pacific through Kansas. During the years 1872 through 1876 he roamed the weseyern plains hunting buffalo.

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From time to time Charles would travel, awhile with the wagon trains passing through the plains. When he did this, he would act as scout and also as blacksmith, a trade he took up in his later years.

Charles knew many of the Indians of the area and visited with them often. He knew several different Indian languages and could speak freely with them. North of Bird City was the site of the Trenton massacre where a wagon train was hit by the hostile Indians. The night before the battle, the chiefs came and told Charles they were going to hit the wagon train next morning at dawn and they wanted him to go with them. Charles told them that they were people of my own race and I am not going to have anything to do with it. The chief asked if he was going to warn them, and he told them, "No, you are my friends, too, and I am going to stay out of it." At this time Charles was on his own hunting buffalo and was better off staying neutral. The next morning he went up on the bluffs and watched the battle through a pair of field glasses.

Charles spent a lot of time with Buffalo Bill Cody and hunted buffalo with him several times in 1872 in the Wallace County area. When Buffalo Bill was forming his Wild West Show and making plans for a trip to London, he asked Charles to go with him and be in the show. Charles told him, "No, I don't want any part of London." In these days as well as in later years, Charles stayed clear of crowds and wanted no part of being a showman.

Charles was a scout for General Custer and was with him on several of his campaigns against the Indians. On one of these trips, they came to an area not far from Fort Wallace, where a young Lieutenant and his party had been massacred. As buzzards circled above, there was a horrible stench in the air. Lt Kidder was on his way to join Custer and he and his men were following Custer's trail. The Sioux and Cheyenne had left, them scalped and mutilated. The bodies were put in one grave near where they had fallen.

Not long after the Kidder massacre, Lt. Kidders father, who was a judge of the area, arrived at Ft Wallace. The judge was provided with an escort with Lt Beecher. Judge Kidder wanted to take the body of his son home, so he was taken to the site of the battle. To help make the trip easier for the judge, an ambulance was provided for him to ride in, and Charles drove the ambulance and went with them to help locate the grave.

Charles once told of a 'greenhorn' who joined him on a hunt: he was a very sickly looking person who the doctors had told would soon die. During the hunt, he became strong, and by the time they returned, he was healthy and stayed in the area and lived many years.

There ARE many stories of Charles and his contact with General Custer and his ill fated trip to the Little Big Horn.

It was told by Charles that General Custer had asked him to go with him as a scout when he left for the Little Big Horn. He had agreed and set up a meeting place, but Charles arrived too late and Custer and his Seventh had already gone.

One of his hunting partners was "Deadwood Dick" and once told of a winter spent together hunting buffalo. The snow was four feet deep and they peeled the bark off the trees to get food for their horses. The hunting party felled over 2,000 of the starving buffalo and fired only a hundred shots.

Charles knew many of the Indian Chiefs, among them Chief James White Cloud, and was with him when he celebrated his 99th birthday in 1939. He was an Indian Chief in Kansas as well as an Union officer in the Civil War. Another Chief that Charles knew was Red Cloud, who was one of the most savage and most widely known Sioux Chiefs. At the age of three Red Cloud was kidnaped by the Indians and even though in later years had the opportunity to live as a white man, returned to the Indians to live his life as one of them

Fort Hayes supplied troops to check the last raid of the Cheyennes and one of the BRAVEST DEEDS OF THE Frontier. The fight of Col George Forsyth against the Cheyennes was an incident of this campaign.

Old Roman Nose, the famous Cheyenne Chief was displeased by the advance of the Kansas Pacific railroad and with a band of followers went on the warpath. Col. Forsyth, with a force of picked men from Fort Wallace and Fort Hayes, including Charkes, started out to rid the country of this band. They followed the Republican river for two days without seeing an Indian.

Near the end of the track on the Kansas Pacific Railroad, a wagon-train was attacked and two men was killed. Forsyths= scouts followed the trail left by the Indians and while encamped on the Arickaree river, in Colorado, they were attacked by a large party of Cheyennes, Arapaho and Sioux. The scouts scooped out shelters in the sand and used their horses, which were soon killed, to help form a barrier. The Indians would not have been so brave if they had known the Scouts were armed with Spencer repeating rifles.

For three hours the Indians rested and then resumed the attack led by Roman Nose.

That night, two scouts slipped through the surrounding Indians to seek help at Ft. Wallace, 70 miles away. They got thru and returned the 5th day with help. Forsyth was severely wounded. 13 Scouts were wounded and five killed, including Lt. Beecher. Among the dead Indians was Roman Nose and Medicine Man.

In later years, Charles, with a reminiscent shake of his head and thoughtful gleam in his eyes, said, "Yes, Sir, that is the only place where I thought I would never get out alive."

During the battle of Arickaree, a fellow scout was wounded and his finger was just hanging. Charles told him to "cut the dam thing off"..The man couldnt do it, so Charkes did it for him.

When Charles signed up for Forsyth Scouts and the time he was at Ft. Wallace and Fort Hayes, he used the name A.J. ENTLER. This was his step-mother's maiden name, he being under age and fact that he had run away and his family were trying to find him, used this name so his father couldn't locate him. During the later years, his fellow scouts wanted him to clear this with the government and get his name officially on the monument that is now located at the site of the battle, but he never did. He said he knew that he was there and that was enough. In later years, he would take his friends there, to the site of the battle, and show them where everything happened.

The year 1876 seemed to be the year that Charles and many of his old buffalo hunters' friends parted and went their own ways. It was this time that the buffalo were getting scarce and it wasn't much profit hunting for hides. He and two other men joined a wagon train from Wichita, and were signed on as scouts. They were ambushed by Indians and lost everything but their guns and what they had on.

Soon after the Civil War, Charles hired out to drive a herd of Texas cattle from Texas to Abilene, Kansas. At that time, railroads were being built across the plains, and the Kansas Pacific Railroad agreed to build stockyards at Abilene. Some 35,000 arrived in 1867, double that number in 1868. CHARLES HERD was part of this great cattle drive.

Charles had many scars, from arrow wounds, that he had received through the years. Once while carrying the mail to Fort Hayes, he was ambushed by Indians and shot through the chest with an arrow. He broke the arrow and rode on some 50 miles to Ft Hayes for help.

Charles enjoyed through the years, keeping track of his fellow scouts and Indian fighters. One such person was CHARLES A Windolph, who was the only known survivor of the old 7th cavalry. During the battle of the Little Big Horn, he was one of the men who took part in the defense of Reno Hill.

Another old friend was Francis S Ishman, who lived in Beaver City and homesteaded the same time Charles did. His family came to that area in a covered wagon before 1800.

His old friend and fellow buffalo hunter, John T Spaulding, tried many times to get Charles to come to Deadwood, South Dakota for the parades held on Frontier Days. Spaulding wrote in one of his letters to Charles, "We will have a great time and since you know Deadwood Dick and he knows them all." Charles was never much for crowds and admitted he wasn't a showman, and for the most part, stayed away from these events. In his letters, he told of many of his friends and people he had met thru his years as a Frontiersman, but he wrote often to his old comrad John T Spaulding. And in the 1930's he went to see him and after 54 years since they had seen each other, you can be sure they had much to tell each other.

In 1930, Charles visited an old friend in Beaver City, Will Sevier and he recalled this story: In 1868 a band of Cheyennes and Arapaho Indians stopped in the area and held a council. One of the young braves mistreated an Indian maiden and the penalty was death. The unfortunate brave was executed and his body buried in a creek on the farm owner by Sevier. No trace of the brave could be found, but Sevier found an Indian stone hammer head in the creek and there was no doubt that was the weapon used in the execution.

Charles' fellow scout recalled the time Charles was scouting with the Army out of Ft Hayes and the young Captain who was in charge of the scouting party surprised a group of Cheyennes that had killed a group of settlers. The Indians were camped on Beaver river and he saw them take their positions and waited for dawn before opening up on them. "I was in the area next day" Spaulding said, "and counted 32 dead Indians."

Charles rode with the bloodiest of the Indian fighters. Among them was Major General Samuel Curtis of Ft Leavenworth. He felt there should be no peace with the Indians until they had suffered more. Curtis was once commander of the Department of Kansas.

Buffalo Bill Cody was Chief Scout for the 5th Cavalry from 1868 to 1872, the same time Charles was scouting with Genl Custer. It was Buffalo Bilk who rode in after the battle of the Little Big Horn and took a scalp. He said he did it for Custer.

Another Scout Charles rode with was California Joe who was also a Scout with Genl Custer, and was at the bloody battle of the Wichita, where Black Kettle was killed.

Others were General Sully, an experience Indian fighter in many States. General Oakes served in the Mexican War, on frontier duty and in Indian fighting. He was severally wounded twice.

In 1874, a band of Cheyenne Indians were harassing the settlers along the Beaver and Sappa creeks, by stealing cattle and running off horses. The band had masacred a white family and the U S cavalry was scouring the plains for the marauders. A group of buffalo hunters joined in the campaign against the Indians. Thw group of Buffalo hunters found the band of Indians and waited for the right moment to move in. The hunters spaced properly apart and opened fire, sending many to the Happy Hunting Grounds. The Indians who were confused, imagined the whole army under Genl. Sheridan had moved in. Only one Indian was left alive, a young lad who, was later known as Yellow Hand. It is not known for sure whether Charles was among this group. but, any of his hunting partners were, including "Old Coon"

Charles, in his later years loved to travel and at the age of 91 bpught his first car from a dealer in Bird City, Kansas. It was a Chevrolet and he and his driver, John Timmons, would set out for visiting family and friends.

In 1939, he was the guest of the 6th district American Legion of Bellville, Kansas. In that year he also visited Topeka, where he hadn't been for 65 years. In Topeka he visited his grandson, Walter V. Cormack, and enjoyed telling him and his wife, Leena, his stories of the old days. Walter remembers him showing him his many arrow wounds received in Indian battles.

In 1938 he was one of the 358 Civil War veterans invited by President Roosevelt to attend the Blue and Gray Reunion at Gettysburg. At that time, 358 Civil War veterans lived in Kansas and over 5,000 attended from all over the country. Charles accepted and enjoyed being a guest of the United States Government. He also visited the site of his old friend's last battle, Little Big Horn, and enjoyed having his picture taken near Custer's grave. He always regarded Custer as being the ideal soldier and said many times that was why he wore his hair long. In his early years, he wore it long and was known by the Indians as Long Hair and in his later years he returned to wearing it long.

Charles seemed to have a great sense of humor and many stories of his jokes were told by the people of Bird City, Kansas. Charles was very short, only five feet, seven inches tall, and had very short legs. So he sawed off the legs of his chairs. He used to get a kick out of inviting people who didn't know this to sit down and then would laugh at them.

Mabel, Charles' daughter-in-law, wife of Curtis, remembered a joke he played on her by showing her a gun that was loaded and firing it while she had hold of it. "He knew that it was loaded and it really scared me"

CHARLES ALSO told a tale of his buffalo hunting days when they had a greenhorn with them on the hunt. This greenhorn rolled up in a green buffalo hide one cold night and it froze during the night. He would laugh and tell of the time they had getting him out of it. When Charles got a toothache, he would get one of his tongs and just pull the one that was giving him the trouble. He pulled all his own teeth but two. Charles carried a cane with him most of the time in his later years, but seldom used it. He would leave it somewhere and spend lots of time hunting for it.

G N Munhal/ was another fellow scout and served with General Custer the time Charles did. He, too, settled in Nebraska after 1876, not far from Beaver City, He, in a letter to Charles, recalled the time they were paid in chewing tobacco and whiskey.

Charles could predict the weather just by looking up into the sky and was seldom wrong. He said he had to learn to do this in the early days or he couldn't have lasted out on the range.

In the days Charles was scout the pay was very good though, the risks were great. His daily wage was usually \$3.00 but sometimes as high as \$5.00.

There are many mysteries in the life of Charles E Cormack, which the answers have been lost through time. One of these is an official paper dated March 17, 1915 stating he was giving up property in Sterling, Colorado. Where this land came from and why he was giving up is not known.

Another comrad of Charles was George Bardsley, who was a Peace Officer in Ellis County during Charles' buffalo hunting days. B Bardsley also knew Charles when he worked for the railroad and helped the Union Pacific keep law and order. Charles kept track of him until his death. Charles recalls the time George arrested singlehanded a notorious gang of thieves, he joined the gang disguised as a cowboy and recovered the \$50,000 in gold they had stolen.

Near the end of 1875, the buffalo were gone and the Indians were settled and Charles parted company with many of his old comrades, each going their own way.

Charles headed north to Nebraska and settled in Furnas County near Beaver City. There he went into the cattle business and because of the drought was forced to sell.

April 21, 1880, he was united in marriage to Hannah Jane Thomas in Beaver City. Hannah was the daughter of Seth Thomas and she was born in Minnesota Mar 31 1863. She came to Furnas County Nebraska with her family and married Charles when she was only 17 years old. Charles was 34 and had already lived more than half his life away from home, and a rough life it had been. There in Beaver City he set up a blacksmith shop and they were active in the community. Charles was a commander of the G A R Post.

In this union of Charles and Hannah were born five children. The firstborn was a boy named after his two grandfathers, Seth Joel Cormack, born Sept 11, 1881. He, like his father, left home when he was about sixteen. He didn't like his father because of the rough way he treated him. He went to Kansas, and not long after, married Jessie Emma Shipley of Rossville, Kansas. Oct 2 1909 their first son was born, Walter Vernon.

Seth Joel Cormack was the adventurer like his father, and in 1909 he attempted to fill a balloon with gas but without success owing to the wind. It was just about sundown that another effort was made and shortly after, the big bag sailed away into the clouds with him hanging to the parachute. It reached the height of nearly 2,000 feet before he cut the rope and dropped with the parachute and landed gently in a cornfield. He had several other adventures with balloons in the Rossville area.

On July 9 1913 a second son was born to Jesse and Seth, Clifford in Rossville.

In June 1915 a third son was born, Willard. Soon afterward the infant and his mother died. Jesse's family blamed

Seth for his wife's death and "alter and Clifford went to live with an aunt who lived in Rossville. Seth, being only 34 and still a young man went to Florida and later held a prominent position as Supervisor of Public Works. There he remarried, he and his wife Clara had three children, Ealine, Patsy, and Seth Joel Jr.

On March of 1938 he went on top of the City Hall building to inspect and supervise some work that was being finished. He accidentally stepped backwards into some wet roofing material and slipped and fell 32 ft to the ground below.

After the fall he got up and walked about 25 ft to the door of the City Hall and was found there and rushed to the hospital by the Mayor and escort. He died enroute to the hospital.

On June 28 1885, the second son was born to Hanna and Charles, Lewis Milton. He died two months later, cause of his death unknown. March 18th 1888 the third son was born, Clarence Harrison.

Clarence went with his father to Bird City in 1909 and worked with him in the blacksmith shop. On Nov 10 1915 he married Margaret Elizabeth Guatt in St Francis Kansas.

In 1917 a son was born, Charles William. A few months later, Elizabeth died of pneumonia, Charles William was adopted by Mr & Mrs Fay Ward of Bird City.

Sept 17 1890, a fourth son was born to Hannah and Charles, Curtis Harvey. Curtis also went with his father to Bird City in 1909 and took up an active part in the blacksmith shop and later had a machine shop adjoining his father's shop. Charles, who was known in the community as "Butch" was well liked and was the local expert in athletics. On May 1915 he married Mabel Frances Hayes at Bird City.

To this union ~~TEN~~ sons and three daughters were born. He served in World War I Company A 127th Machine gun Battalion. His health began to fail in 1939 and he spent most of his later years in Veteran's Hospitals. On Feb 27 1947 he died in the hospital, in Norton Kansas

On October 26 1896 a daughter was born to Charles and Hannah, Mary Alice. Mary stayed with her mother in 1909 and was a comfort to her in those difficult years. She married John Beers of Hastings, Nebraska. Mary and John moved to California after John retired and Mary was the only living child of Hanna and Charles, She still lives in California

About 1890, Charles and Hannah were having problems with their marriage and Charles moved out and lived about a year in his blacksmith shop located in Beaver City. Hannah could not stand the rough life that Charles lived and had lived.

In 1865 Charles had filed on a homestead near Beaver City and this is where they spent their near to thirty years of married life. Hannah, Aunt Jane as she was known by the people of Beaver City, was well liked by the community. After Charles left her, he refused to give any money for her and the children's support. Many people went to Court in her behalf. One such statement sent to the Court by a neighbor said that he had seen her gathering cowchips for fuel and then had to carry them on her back a mile to her home. The same neighbor offered to sell Charles a wagonload of wood to take to the house, and he refused.

Other reports about Charles was sent to the Courts, such as Charles bought at least two gallons of whiskey each week while he lived in the area, and that his money was needed for food and clothing for the family.

Charles wanted a divorce but Hannah would not agree to it, so Charles took steps to leave the area. He sold the farm, without saying a word to Hannah, loaded up his wagon with his blacksmith tools and he and his sons Clarence and Curtis left for Bird City.

After a while, Hannah was ASKED TO leave the farm and she had nowhere to go. The neighbors took up a collection and almost everyone in town gave money. They moved her house from the farm to the town and gave her a sum of money to set up a household. With a little help from the Courts, Charles gave Hannah one third of the money received from the sale of the farm and she received one half of his pension from the Army. Charles made no effort from this time to contact her.

Hannah lived many years alone, supported herself, and was active in church work. Those who knew Hannah remembered her as being one of the sweetest and most lovable characters ever known to them. And she spent her last years not feeling sorry for herself, but helping others. She was a member of the Methodist church in Beaver City.

Mrs Harley Lambert of Beaver City said she could remember her Aunt Hannah Jane making sweet cookies and hominy to sell and stated they were really good.

When Hannah was 73, ill health forced her to move to the Old Soldiers Home in Grand Island Nebraska. She died there at the age of 75.

When Charles left Beaver City and went to Bird City, he returned to an area he had known from his buffalo hunting days and had friends who had settled there. Charles and his sons opened blacksmith shop and lived in a little house back of the shop. In 1921, when he was 75, he closed his shop with the advent of power farm tools and machinery and the automobile. Curtis continued with the shop for several years, doing work on machinery and automobiles. Although Charles was not working, he would spend many hours at the shop watching his son work and visiting with old friends.

Many of the old-timers in Bird City still remember how on the 4th of July, he would put powder on the anvil, and hit it with a hammer. The sound could be heard all over town.

When Charles Ward, his grandson, was five, he became very ill and for awhile they thought he would die. Hannah came to take care of him and stayed in Bird City several days

The Wards, even though they had no use for Charles, felt they should ask him to come to the house. The Wards asked him to stay and he replied. "I will not stay in the same house with that woman."

It is known that Hannah wrote many letters to Charles wanting him to forgive her and stated the problems they had were her fault. It is not known if Charles ever wrote her, but he did save some of those letters from Hannah.

After Charles son Clarence died, his son Charles was adopted by Mr & Mrs Ward. Charles went to court to fight this and tried to gain custody of the boy who was only 22 months old. This court battle he lost and it started a feud that lasted many years between Charles and the Wards.

Charles Ward did not know Charles H Cormack was his grandfather until he was 14 years old. Earl Wards, Charles adopted brother and a few years later, knew the truth and took Charles to the blacksmith shop one day and asked him, "Don't you want to talk to your grandfather?" Charles was surprised because all this time the Wards had told him to stay away from that old man. Charles H was very much pleased at this reunion and smiled at him: this started a very warm feeling between Charles and his grandfather that lasted until CHARLES Cormacks death. They received much enjoyment from each other and the older Charles used to sit and tell him of his early days. Many of which are written in this volume.

It is not known what reaction the Wards had to this and it is believed that they did not know of this meeting until years later.

The following is the story of Lawrence Cormack, son of Curtis. He tells it in his own words while awaiting his death in the electric chair for having committed double murder.

Every morning when I awake I hurry to the barred window of my cell in the Santa Ross /County jail to get a lungful of clean, fresh air. Because its free, its the only luxury I can afford now. I'm only 23, and my days are numbered. You cant shoot down two people in cold blood like I did AND EXPECT TO GO on living. Thats why I try to get all the fresh air I can. Its a commodity I wont enjoy very long. Dont get me wrong, I'm not writing this for sympathy. I'm writing this because I think my life is an interesting story. Also, because I figure that if some punk reads it, he might think twice before deciding to become a big shot the easy way.

I was born in Bird City Kansas. My dad was a blacksmith and he had a tough time trying to feed and clothe his family of 7 boys and 2 girls. Dad had T.B. which was another thing that didnt help any/ Mom had to work like a horse just to give us the bare necessities of life.

Bird City is a small town and everybody knows everyone else. I think what started me on the wrong foot was seeing the other kids going to movies and eating candy, and not having the wherewithal to join them. I decided early that envying the other guy didnt get you. nowhere, so I was only 10 when I busted into my first store and swiped a handful of pennies. For a week I had everything I wanted, movies, icecream cones and candy. The works.

The other kids began looking up to me then. They wondered where I was getting the dough, but I never told them. I figured if they didnt have brains enough to gdt in out of the rain, let them get wet!

I busted four or five stores before they grabbed me. Like I said, Bird City is a one horse town and it didnt take long for the law to put 2 and 2 together. hey came around one day and took me to the sheriffs office. I admitted breaking into the stores and told them why, but they werent in my excuses. All they cared about was breaking up "the crime wave" as they called it. They sent me to the State Industrial School at Topeka. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I got what was coming to me, but I'll always believe that a little kindness, a little understanding around that time would have changd my whole life. They kept me there for two years and it was rough, believe me. What you didnt know before you went in you picked up quickly. I was no different, although I tried to keep my nose clean all the time I was there. They let me out in September 1940, Parolled as they call it. I was placed in the care of a farmer who lived about 2 miles from my folks place. He was a nice old guy and he used to make me read the Bible every night before we went to bed, but if youve never worked on a farm from sunup until sundown, you have no idea how monotonous it can get.?

I'd been there about 2 months when a couple of kids I knew came along and offered to stake me to the movies. I was alone in the north pasture and I decided to skip for a few hours. I figured the old man wouldnt miss me. I figured wrong. The old boy turned me in. He told the authorities I was incorrigible and "living in sin" All because I went to the movies.

They sent me back to the Industrial school. Yhis time I didnt take it lying down. I was there about a month or so when I went over the wall with a couple of other kids. We parted company somewhere along the line and I went it alone. Two night later I hit wichita broke and hungry. I was walking around, wondering what to do when I spied a neon sign over a bowling alley. I went in and asked the guy who ran the place for JOB setting up pins. His name was Max and he looked me over real careful like. I was a husky kid and looked older that I really was.

" You hot?" "Yeah, I climed out of the Industrial school a couple of days ago." He thought it over for a minute. "H ngrly?" "You Bet" He grinned, gave me a buck and told me to get something to eat. I found a diner nearby and had six hamburgers, adish of ice cream nd 3 cups of coffee. It was the best meal I'd had in weeks. I went back to the bowling alley and Max put me to work. When the joint closed a 4 a.m. he fixed me a cot in the back room. "You can bunk here, kid. It wont cost you nothing. Just keep an eye on the place."

Max paid me 40 cents an hour AND I got tips from the customers besides. It wasnt much, but I loved it. For the first time in my life I was on my own, and I fugged it was a chance to make good. But it was too good to last. When the cops learned that Max had a 14 year old kid sleeping in the back room, they came running. They gave me 24 hours to get out of town, or else. Max tried to smooth things over so I could stay, but it was no soap. After the cops left, he called up a guy who was in the bowling business too, and arranged to have me work for him until the heat was off.

That didnt last either. The cops got wise and I had to skip out of Wichita one night on a truck. I wound up in San Francisco and got a job in a filingstation right off. Bad luck continued to haunt me, for I was there only about two weeks when he let me go because I was underage.. I was in a fleabag over on Cabrillo, near the Golden Gate Park, and was wondering where my next meal was coming from when I met Sheila. She was a medium sized redhead.

Funny thing how we met. I was unlocking my door when I heard someone back of me. She was st nding.in her doorway looking at me. She was wearing a tight fitting black silk dress and patent leather pumps and silts instead of heels, I couldnt help staring. :One of my burgau drawers stuck, thin you can open it for me?+ I can try. he stepped aside and I went into her room. Clothes, shoes, and lingerie were strewn all over the place. She pointed to the dresser and closed the door."The bottom one" she said. When I worked it open she said, "have a drink?" "Fine" I said dropping into a chaif, During the next few hours we got real chummy..S e told me she was from some jerk town down in Pennsylvania and had come to California to get a job in the movies. She had the looks alright, but she was sure outnumbered.

I hadnt much expeerience with James and I guess that why she could twist me around her little finger. She told me she was a booster which is con language for shoplifter..Whats more, she was pretty good at it, too. Leastwise she alsways had a roll in that handbag she lugged around.

I dont know how it started, but before I knew it, I was breaking into stores and filling stations and handing dough over to her. If it was merchandise, Sheila unloaded with some fence. After awhile she was ordering me around like I was a stable boy or something, but I was as blind as a bat where she was concerned.

We worked fine as a team. Sheila took care of the finances and I never had much dough, I figured she was stashing it away for a rainy day. Like I said, she was the boss and while I wasnt afraid of her exactly, she had a rip-snorting temper. Things went along o.kay for anout six months. Then early in October 1944, I spotted her coming out of a swanky night spot on Filbert with a swanky dressed guy. They got into a snappy convertible and drove off.

I was waiting for her when she drifted in about 3 a.m.. She was wearing a green dress and green pumps andlong black kid gloves. With that red hair of hers, she really looked terrific. "Beat it kid" I'm tired, she snapped/.."Who"s the guy?" she stopt fumbling with her gloves and asked "What Guy?"

The guy in the yellow convertible, I said, dont try to deny it. I saw you last night on Filbert. "So now you are spying on me" she snapped.. That still doesn answer my question. Sheila put her hands on her hips and glared at me. She looked beautiful when she was mad, and brother, she was boiling.

"Look kid, lets get something straight, she said, I am running this show. What I do is my business. You just do what you're told and shut up" I was nuts about her but I was fed jp. So the next day I enlisted in the Merchant Marine. I never saw Seila again.

Funny thing. The way I had it figured, Sheila was a cinch to wind up killing somebody some day with that temper of hers. Instead iuts little wiseguy me who pulls the trigger and takes the glory toad. Anyway, things went from bad to worse after I left Sheila.

My first trip after training school was to New Caledonia, in the Herbrides. Two weeks later I got caught selling overnment property. I was tried by a military court in Baik, New Guines. and sentenced to five years in the old Billbid Prison in Luzan,,the Phillipine Idlands.

IzterI was transfered to the prison at Camp McQuade, in Maryvills California..When I finally got out in 1948 I learned that my Dad had passed away while I was in stir. Iwent to San Francisco for a couple of weeks, but saw no sign of Shiela. I often wondered if she married the.well-dressed guy that brok-caused our bust-up.

I drifted south to San Diego where I broke into,a house and was caught again. I had the place cased for a week. so when I saw the couple who lived there leave, I figured it was a cinch. Five minutes after I had forced my way inside, the cops came. It seems there was an incalid in the house and he called the police

They gave me five years to life in the Youth Authority Camp at Pine Grove in Amador County. I was there 15 months when they let me go for good behavior. I returned to San Francisco where I worked in a mattress factory. During the next five months I kept my nose clean, but it was too good to last. I got the urge one night and stole a car, a snazzy convertible, eith the car and a hundred bucks in my pocket, I figured I would cut quite a caper in Bird City, so I headed for home. What a laugh. I got as far as Winnemucca , Nevada,,where a hick sheriff nabbed me. Because I had taken stolen property across a State Line, the Feds took, me in chargr. I pleaded guilty and drew two years at the Federal prison in El Reno, Oklahoma. I sefved twentymmonths and went to Tulsa and got a job as a baker. I had learned the trade in El Reno.

After a few months I went back home, but I had itchy feet bad, and didnt stay long. I drifted to Wichita where I learned my friend Max was dead. He was a ight guy and if the cops hadnt interfered, he would have made me a right guy, like himself.

Wichita had too many memories, so I was hoping to bump into Sheika again. I hitched a ride to Frisco. Maybe, you dont want it, but just let somebody take it awayand youwant it back again, real bad. Thats the way Sheila affected me, I guess.

I bumped around Frisco,for a couple of months and was getting nowhere fast. Some guys are satisfied with a steady job, a nice quiet home and a movie with his best girl. Not with mr. I dont know why. but I just had to keep on moving, and the faster the better. It was as if something evil was pushing me further and.further into the quicksand..Mzybe thats why I have spent half my life behind bars.

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In December 1950, I figured I would go back home and surprise the folks for Christmas. I was broke, but it didnt bother me. I took another walk one night and stole another car. Y, is time the hick sheriffs from California to Kansas werent looking and I made it. I spent the holidays with the folks and had a gr nd time. I was out of dough a couple of times, but, I broke into a couple of stores to replenish my supply of lettuce.

In March I decided /to head for Florida. I still had the car I had stolen in California, so I didnt have any transportation worries. I didnt know it but time was running out on me fast! I robbed a few joints on the way South, but even so when I hit Milton, a busy little town in Santa Rosa County Florida, I was flat broke. I parked the car under a dogwood tree and slept until midnight..When I awoke, I,drove slowly around the Courthouse square, studying the stores and trying to decide which one to take. Two blocks from the square I spied one of these chain grocery stores. It looked easy, so I circked around the block a couple of times to make sure the joint wasnt being watched. When I was satis ied, I parked the car a block away and walked to the rear of the store. It was easy breaking in.

After my eyes became accustomed to the layout inside, I had no trouble finding the cash register. The drawer was open and the only thing it contained was a bag of nickles. I found out later there was exactly \$14.15 in it. It was better than nothing, so I stuck it in my pocket and hurried back to the car. I gunned the car and headed east on highway 90. About a mile out of Milton, I saw a car trailing me out of the rearview mirror, as mile after mile slipped by, I began getting nervous. The car stayed right behind me. It was still there when I went thru the town of Crestview. I decided to ditch the car the first chance I got.

J st before I hit Defunian Spri gs, I swung into a side road and doused the lights. When I left the car and hightailed it through the woods as fast as my legs would carry me. I must have run a mile before I felt safe. There was a little culvert nearby, so I decided to get a coiple of hours shuteye.

I dont know how long I had slept before I felt domething prodding me in the side. I opened my eyes to see a grim-faced farmer pointing a double barfelled shotgun at me. "WhatchA DOIN HERE, MISTER" he snapped I rubbedmy eyes " Just grabb ng a few hours of sleep. Any harm in th t?" "Maybe, maybe not, where ya from?" Kansaa, I am hitchhiking my waymto miami. The farmer looked skeptical. " You ont look like, a danged hitch hiker to me. Your clothes are too good. Whatcha you running away from, mister?"

"Nothing" I snapped angrily, "Anyway, whats its your business?" You ,aint the law....Maybe not, but I am going to take you to 'em just the same. Git moving."

I was just getting maddr bynthe minute and I started towards him. I halted, however, when I saw his finger tighten on the trigger. " Thats better, sonny, now git moving before I git riled" He marched me thru the woods until we came to Defuniak Springs. There he turned me over to the Sheriffs office. A quick search of my pockets revealed the bag of nickles. I knew I was sunk when the Sheriff told one of his deputies to get Sheriff Marchall Hayes on the phone.

They returned me to Milton where Sheriff Hayes questioned me about the robbery. He was a real nice guy, a lot different from the usual kind of small town officials you run into. I admitted breaking into the store and signed a confession. There was nothing else I could do, they had me cold. After they questioned me for a couple of hours, I was locked up in the Danta Rose County jail which is located on the top floor of the courthouse. Because of my previous record the judge gave me 10 years in the Florida State Penitentiary at Raiford. They returned me upstairs to await transportation to Raiford. I was there three days when I got an idea. I was going to break out!

The cell block was a large enclosure inside the top floor, something like a building inside of a building. It was called a bull-wing and there was approximately 15 ft between it and the surrounding wall. Every morning they would let us out for exercise. Then, about ten minutes before lunch, they would send in a Trusty to return us to our cells. Once that he gave the work that we were locked up, a jailer would wheel in and distribute the grub. I noticed one flaw in this arrangement. The jailer didn't bother to close the outside door.!

The way I figured, All I had to do was to slip to the top of the cell block a few minutes before meal time and hide. The, while the Keeper and Trusty were busy dishing out the food I'd slip from my perch and sneak out of the door. The roof of the cell block, was cement, so unless they missed me, there was not a chance in the world of them spotting me.

I decided to try out my plan that night, June 28th. I told the other guys about my plan, but none of them wanted any part of it. Most of them were short farmers and I couldn't blame them much. They agreed to keep the trusty and jailer busy so that my absence wouldn't be noticed.

About 5 minutes before dinner call that night, I shinnied up the bars and crouched on the cell block roof. My heart was beating like a triphammer as they wheeled the food wagon in. Inching my way forward, I looked down. Sure enough, the outside door was open. With a prayer on my lips, I swung over the side and eased down the steel bars like a cat. There was a short flight of stairs on my right, so I made for it. I was still wearing my clothes, so I knew if I didn't run into one of the deputies, I wouldn't be recognized.

ON THE second floor I spotted a door which led to the courtroom. There was nobody there, so I hid under one of the benches. I decided against leaving the building while I was still able to be seen in the daylight. With my luck running the way it was, I would be certain to bump into Sheriff Hayes himself.

I don't know how long I lay there before I decided to make my move. It was dark outside and there were hardly any traffic sounds, so I figured it must be late. I walked down the darkened stairway to the street without meeting anyone. The park benches, usually filled with old guys chewing the fat, were empty.

I headed across the street towards a lone car parked at the curb. As I approached it, I glanced quickly around. There was no one in sight. Holding my breath, I turned the door handle. It was unlocked. For the next five minutes I tried feverishly to get the car started by jumping the ignition wires, but it was no soap. I cursed myself for not taking a mechanics course while I was in stir. Finally I had to give it up. I inspected the glove compartment and found a fully loaded .32 calibre Smith Wesson. I stuck the gun in my back pocket and headed out of town. I had the wild idea if I could reach some coastal town like Pensacola, I might slip out on a fishing boat and land in Mexico some place. If I'd known what was really going to happen during the next 36 hours I'd have turned around and given myself up; I kept walking at a brisk pace and pretty soon I was in a heavily wooded section. There wasn't a house in sight. A bright moon was shining so I didn't have trouble finding my way. The mosquitoes and other night bugs were bad, though.

Just before sunup I started looking for a place to sleep. Most of the land was dry and sandy and the tall scraggly oaks were no shelter for the blistering sun, so I managed to find a thicket that was fairly shady, so I curled up and tried to sleep. It was impossible. The heat was terrific and all kinds of insects were crawling over me in a matter of minutes. Sometimes I heard people nearby and I hugged the ground for dear life. The alarm was undoubtedly out for me by now, and I knew I was a marked man.

I hung around the thicket all day and it was torture. My arms and legs were covered with mosquito bites. To add to my trouble I was hungry. It was now more than 24 hours since I had eaten anything. When darkness fell, I started off again, keeping to the west, and the Florida coast. As near as I could figure, it was around midnight when I saw a sprawling, vine-covered house in the woods. I circled around it carefully, my whole body ached with the hunger, looking for signs of life. By this time I removed my shoes and crept silently onto the wooden porch.

I tried one of the doors and it was open. So far, my luck was running okay. I slipped inside and stood back against the door until my eyes got accustomed to the darkness. I saw I was in a large living room. To my right, a tiny bulb burned in the bathroom. Beyond that I could make out the glossy outline of a frigidaire.

My body shook with anticipation and I stumbled over a chair. I straightened out and tiptoed softly towards the kitchen. I hardly got there when "Get the ...ell out of here, you," It was a man's voice and it was gruff and stern and it scared the daylights out of me. Petrified with fear, I turned towards the voice and the gun in my hand became a flashing tongue of flame. Once, twice, six times I pulled the trigger!

I heard somebody groan and it was only then I realized that I had known all the time. It was something I can't explain, it all happened so fast. One moment I was happily anticipating what I would find in the frigidaire, and the next I was blazing away with a gun like some trigger happy punk!

I stumbled from the house and ran into the woods. I don't know how long I kept going or even what direction I was headed. All I wanted to do was get away as far as possible from the nightmare I'd just been through. It was only after several hours of running

ABD walking that I realized I had left my shoes behind. Somewhere on my mad flight, I remembered throwing the gun into a stream. Alternating walking and running, I almost keeled over when I noticed a landmark which told me I was only a short distance from Milton. In my bewilderment, I had retraced my steps.

I was too footsore and weary to care any more. All I wanted to do was to lie down somewhere and go to sleep. It lacked about an hour before dawn when I spied the gray dome of the Santa Rosa County courthouse. I was back, where I started, with one exception, I was a murderer.

I crossed the silent street and up the stairs to the second floor. The door to the judges chambers were open and I went inside. There was a leather couch and I fell on it, exhausted.

I dont know how long I slept, but it was pitch black outside when I awoke. My whole body felt numb and I could hardly move. I lay there praying over and over that all six shots had gone wild. But I knew I was only kidding myself. The groan I heard had mean death. I was sure of it.

When I woke up, Sheriff Hayes was standing over me. He had a gun in his hand and he wasnt smiling any more. Deputy Wade Cobb and Harvell Engineer stood alongside him, and I could see they were having a tough time trying to mask the hatred that shone in their eyes.

"Get up, son" said Hayes. I got up and followed him from the room. My hands were handcuffed. We reached the Sheriffs office on the ground floor, he waved me to a chair.

"Why did you kill them, Larry?" he asked

"THEN"

The sheriff nodded "Yes, there were two of them, two harmless old people, Julian Edwards and his wife May. He was 75 years old and his wife was 72. Why in Gods name did you do it?"

A lump filled my throat and I couldnt talk. I had shot down two old people in cold blood. My body began shaking as if with ague and I blabbered like a kid. Sheriff Hayes and the others never said a word, they just let me cry it out.

When I was able to talk, I told them the whole story. God knows I didnt mean to kill that old couple. The gun seemed to go off by itself as if someone else had pulled the trigger and was pulling it. Maybe it was the Devil himself, snuffing out those two lives.

Thats my story. I hope some kid with lofty ideas about taking the Easy Way and the Easy Buck road reads it. If it saves one kid from doing wrong, then maybe my life wasnt be wasted.

I know it sounds cirny, but the onky things in life worth having are what you have worked hard for. Thats one thing I didnt learn until it was too late.

Later that morning, they took me to the creek where I got rid of the gun. It was so shallow, they didnt have any trouble finding it. On the way back, they told me the gun belonged to Deputy Clyde Murphy. I'll be coming up for trial soon and I figure they will throw the book at me. I spent most of my time thinking. Thinking that if the cops back in Wichita had only let Max take care of me, things might have been a lot different. Or, if Sheila had been a square shooter, maybe I would have become one.

I guess I was born unlucky.

Mr Lowell Sawyer who knew Charles for many years in Bird City, described Charles in this way. He was rather short, probably five ft 8 inches and wore a full white beard and long hair. He did in fact, resemble, Buffalo Bill Cody.

Charles was once asked if he also wore his hair long and he remarked " my hair was long enough to twist in a knot, roll and tuck into the belt of my trousers to keep it from blowing in my face .

Charles last years lived in the past, and his mind was quite keen on the happening of his early days. In reading through some of Charles old letters, you will find names of his old comrades. Buskskin Bill, Old Com silver Tip, and Deadwood Dick.

Hannah was a very religious person and Charles told about the time she finally talked Jim into going to church with her, the one and only time, he said, then they started rolling in the aisles, he got up and left the church, stating, if that's what it's all about, I don't want any part of it.

Charles could have gotten more money from his pension if he had only requested it, and wouldn't do it because that would mean Hannah would get more. A few days after she died, he requested it and received it.

Fred Boll, an old timer of the area, recalled talking with Charles . One time in St Francis for a ceremony and unveiling of a plaque listing the names of the Countys World War veterans Charles was the guest of honor and did the unveiling. The plaque has since been moved into the courthouse in St Francis. The name Curtis Cormack is among the veterans listed.

On March 8 1944, Charles became ill and was taken to the Morehouse hospital at Benkelman Nebr. Up until this time he had enjoyed good health. At the hospital they discovered he had a broken rib.

The American Legion made all arrangements to have him taken to the U S Veterans hospital in Lincoln. But Charles wanted to stay where he was. Everyday someone from Bird City would come to see him and that was great encouragement.

One of the nurses who took care of him said he really gave them a time, they couldn't keep him down and he was always getting up and walking around.

A few days later the doctor announced "These ribs are not healing right.. Charles said.. Well Hell, at the age of 97 years 10 months 23 days. I have lived long enough.

Charles was buried Bird City April 2 1944. Vet American Legion conducted the Legion ceremony, with the help of Jim Eagan, a Spanish War vet.

From John Spaulding

Our old friends and scouts are dropping off one by one and soon we will all be ranging on the happy hunting grounds, and gee, what a herd of buffalo you will have, if all you have sent there have increased. We have reason to be proud of the part we played in opening the West. The present generation is interested in far different things but many of them appreciate the risk and hardships we passed through without pay, or much pay, except the good will of the people, which is in most cases, better than a salary.

Obituary Reveals That Daddy Cormack Had a Colorful Life

4-14-1944

Charles H. Cormack was born May 7, 1846, at St. Louis, Missouri, and passed away March 30, 1944, at the Morehouse hospital at Benkelman, Nebraska, at the age of 97 years, 10 months and 23 days. At the age of two years, he with his parents and sister, moved to Quincy, Illinois. With our country in Civil War, Mr. Cormack enlisted at La Grange, Missouri, April 8, 1865, and served the last seven months in the Fourteenth Missouri Cavalry, Company I. He received his honorable discharge November 17, 1865. Going on to the years after the Civil War, we find Mr. Cormack serving under General Custer as an ambulance driver in headquarters company in 1868, and as a scout attached to General Custer's troops at Fort Hays in 1869, a member of the Sixth Cavalry, Mr. Cormack remained as a scout at Fort Hays through 1870, under Generals Curtis and Oakes, who successfully took command. From the fall of 1872 to the spring of 1875 he roamed the middle western plains hunting buffalo, then settled in Furnas county, Nebraska, and engaged in the cattle business there over 25 years. During that time and shortly before Custer's ill fated last expedition to the Little Big Horn, he received a message from the famous "Buffalo Bill" Cody asking him to join him as a scout, but refused on account of his cattle. A few days before Custer started on his fatal expedition, he likewise sent a message asking Mr. Cormack to join him as a scout, but this offer he likewise refused on account of his cattle business and subsequent history proved this a lucky decision for him. While still active as a scout, Mr. Cormack was in the famous Becher's Island battle.

On April 21, 1880, he was united in marriage to Hanna Jane Thomas at Beaver City, Nebraska. To this union were born one daughter, Mary Alice, and four sons, Seth Joel, Lewis Milton, Clarence Harrison and Curtis Harvey. In the fall of 1909 Mr. Cormack with his two sons, Clarence and Curtis, moved to Bird City where he and his sons operated a blacksmith shop. Mr. Cormack discontinued his work in the shop in 1921.

He was a member of the Home Department of the Bird City Methodist Church.

In recent years Dad Cormack made a trip to Gettysburg, Pa., to attend the reunion of the Blue and Grey of the Civil War, to Florida and two trips to Montana.

The deceased was familiarly known to the townspeople here as "Dad" Cormack. He was preceded in death by his wife, parents, three sons and a sister. He is survived by his daughter, Mrs. J. B. Beers of Hastings, Nebraska and Curtis H. of Bird City, eighteen grandchildren, ten great grandchildren and other relatives.

Funeral services were held Sunday afternoon at the Bird City Methodist church with Rev. T. H. Parrott officiating. The members of the Evertt J. Nelson Post of the American Legion assisted by the Legion Posts of St. Francis and Goodland, and by Mr. Jim Egan, Spanish-American War Veteran, conducted the Legion ceremony at the cemetery. Burial was made in the Bird City cemetery under the direction of the Trickett Funeral Home.