

THE ORIGINAL SKIDOO NEWS

by Ruby Ann Walker
Yucaipa, California

After reading the last MAC (Issue Number 18 Spring 1993), I found the article by Bob Schroth entitled "Skidoo: A Death Valley Ghost Town" to be extremely fascinating. Mr. Schroth mentioned in his article that there was a headline in Skidoo's newspaper that read "Murder In Camp. Murderer Lynched With General Approval." The first thing that came to mind was how great it would be to own, or just see, that original newspaper. I remembered seeing a collection of old newspapers from various mining towns in Ted Bobrink's collection and thinking how broad the field of mining artifact collecting can be.

I decided that the first place for me to start looking for a Skidoo newspaper would be at the local library. I asked the lady in charge if she could assist me in finding any information about a certain incident that happened in Skidoo, California, on April 25, 1908. With her help, we found several books on Skidoo. One of them had a picture of the original "The Skidoo News" newspaper with the exact article I was looking for. The book gave reference to the Eastern California Museum in Independence, California.

Shown below is a copy of the original newspaper sent to me by the Eastern California Museum in Independence.



VOL. II, NO 18 SKIDOO, INYO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 1908 TEN CENTS

MURDER IN CAMP

Murderer Lynched

WITH GENERAL APPROVAL

Joe Simpson Shoots Jim Arno'd Dead and Is Hanged By Citizens

The disturbance which has shaken this community to the roots, in the past few days, opened on Sunday morning last, at about eleven o'clock, when Joe Simpson, familiarly known as Joe 'Hootch' (that being his favorite beverage) held up the Southern Calif. Bank here, for the nimble sum of twenty dollars, that being the sum of his immediate need. He was overpowered before he could collect, and his gun taken from him. He returned to the bank (which is located in the store) again and became very abusive. Jim Arnold, managing partner in the store, finally put him out. Three hours later, he returned again with his gun and deliberately shot Arnold, who was unarmed. He turned, and covered the banker, Ralph E. Dobbs and would probably have killed him had not his attention been attracted. He was overpowered and handcuffed. Arnold died the same evening. An inquest on Arnold's body was held on Monday, the jury returning a verdict, "killed by gun-shot wound, inflicted by Joe Simpson." Sentences on the

raise his gun and shot Arnold just below the heart. Turning quickly, he threw his gun on Mr. Dobbs behind the bank counter and commanded him to come out and die, but before he could fulfill his threat, he realized his own danger, and backed out into the street. Simpson's entrance to the store and the crack of the shot, caused a scene, that, for a moment, was more dramatically tense than ever pictured in play or song. Constable Sellers, who was reading a newspaper in the Club saloon, snatched up a hot gun and loaded as he ran, the shells whizzed!!! flinging it down, he leaped over and grabbed a six shooter from beneath the bar. The rapidity of his actions, was judged from the fact that he was up with the murderer, before he had crossed the street. Others were equally quick. At the

Sellers don't be highly commended for the great bravery he displayed throughout the action. He virtually carried his life in his hand, from the time he appeared upon the street, until the jailer took him to the jail. He showed great patience with Mr. Simpson. Many officers would have shot him down without argument.

Simpson's hands led, but just as he was cowardly came and at the hot fight he had put up, was taken to the Club saloon, until a guard house could be decided upon.

DEATH OF ARNO'D

When Simpson's first bullet tore its way through Arno'd's vitals, he sank to the floor crying, "For God's sake don't shoot again Joe, You've got me now" and in the excitement of the dramatic events of Simpson's capture, he was, for a moment, half forgotten. Like a dog with a animal that has been hurt, Arno'd crawled on hands and knees into the cellar below, his life ebbing away from internal hemorrhage. He was found and carried down to Dr. Macbeald's surgery. A cursory ex-

amination about his interference, that not only resulted in other deaths. After a deliberation, the jury, consisting of W. R. Falls, John M. Goodland, A. H. Swainston, J. H. Wilson, F. J. Shackell, A. T. Hall, J. J. Shook, F. Hinger and W. McPey, brought in a verdict "that the deceased, James Arnold had died from the effects of a gun-shot wound, inflicted by Joseph L. Simpson."

Early on Monday, the District Attorney was telegraphed for to take charge of the case. The funeral was arranged for the following day and it was then the subsequent feeling of regret and deep respect in which the deceased was held, manifested itself.

A DESERT FUNERAL.

At noon on Tuesday the victim was buried, not in a cemetery and perhaps unknown in later communities. The casket, fastened with living hands in the presence of a number of the Skidoo's notable citizens, and drawn out to the cemetery. In the presence of a large number of the Skidoo's citizens, which was opened by the singing of "Back of

follows. "In the early part of the week, I feared violence, but as the days went on I felt that the ill-feeling had cooled off. On Wednesday evening, shortly before midnight, the door was broken in and Deputy Heath and myself were overpowered. A stolen gun was produced against us and we were told that if we made a sound, we would have to take the consequence. The guard house was a one roomed building of thin corrugated iron, in poor repair. The walls could be kicked in anywhere. Resistance was useless. The night was so dark I was unable to recognize one another. There was a single number present, about fifty I judge. Only two of this party spoke. I could not recognize either voice. The prisoner was awakened taken upstairs. Guards remained at the door and window to prevent us from coming out. We saw nothing of the lynch party."

The body was discovered early next day, hanging, and in the presence of the body to be cut down. An inquest was held later in the day, but no information could be obtained as to the names of the persons who shot. While the

I wrote a letter to that museum explaining my interest, and one week later I received a package in the mail with a photo-copy of the original newspaper dated April 25, 1908. Also enclosed were photo-copies of other reports and photographs on the murder and hanging that had been written about in various books.

It was surprising to me that it was so easy to find out so much information in such a short time and that everyone I contacted would be so enthusiastic and helpful. I'm sure that just about every collector out there has his or her favorite mining town and by simply going to your local city or county library, you will be able to find out a vast amount of information that will be of great interest to you.

Many thanks to all of the helpful workers at the Yuciapa City Library and the great folks at the Eastern California Museum.

Shown to the right is a copy of the photograph of Joe "Hootch" Simpson in his unique post-mortem encore. The body was disinterred and hanged a second time so that a reporter from the Los Angeles Herald could take this photograph. (Photo courtesy of Eastern California Museum, Independence, California)



ANOTHER HERCULES MATCH SAFE FOUND

by **Larry Kuester**
Yorba Linda, California

I recently acquired another different Hercules match safe. This new style has the Hercules man on the front like all of the others, but with a different back. The back side shows a miner dressed in slickers with boots, a hat with an oil wick lamp, and holding two boxes of dynamite. The match safe, like the others, is made of metal and wrapped with celluloid plastic. The Hercules man and the miner are printed in black on an off-white background while the text, including the "H" on the Hercules box, is in red.

