
JANUARY
2026

THE HOWLER
At 5 Dogs
Latest News, Updates & More

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2025 - 2026 Town

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The Mayor's Anvil:
Forging Understanding
By Mayor Fordyce Beals

The clipper sailing ship heralded the end of the era of sail. In what has been referred to as the "first world-class gold rush", there was no easy way to travel to California; forty-niners faced hardship and often death on the way. At first most traveled by sea. From the East Coast, a sailing voyage around the tip of South America would take 100 to 150 days and cover approximately 18,000 nautical miles (21,000 mi; 33,000 km). An alternative was to sail to the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Panama, take canoes and mules for a week through the jungle, and then on the Pacific side, wait for a ship sailing for San Francisco. There was also a route across Mexico starting at Veracruz. The companies providing such transportation generated vast amounts of wealth among their owners. Many gold-seekers took the overland route across the continental United States, particularly along the California Trail.

A clipper was a type of mid-19th-century merchant sailing vessel, designed for speed. By the standards of any other type of sailing ship, a clipper was greatly over-canvased. The US clippers were designed for the high winds encountered on their route around Cape Horn. A defining feature of a clipper was a captain who had the courage, skill,

and determination to get the fastest speed possible out of her. During the 'crest of the clipper wave' year of 1852, two hundred clippers rounded Cape Horn. In 1853 forty-eight clippers were added to the California fleet. The American clippers sailing from the East Coast to the California goldfields were working in a booming market. Freight rates were high everywhere in the first years of the 1850s. The age of clippers ended when they were phased out in favor of more modern Iron-hulled sailing ships and steamships. One of the most successful of the clippers was the **DAVID CROCKETT**, built in 1853 by Greenman and Company at Stonington, Connecticut. It was 215 feet long, 40 feet wide and drew 27 feet of water. A three-skysail-yarder of 1,679 tons, she was first owned by Handy and Everitt of New York. Her route was basically New York - San Francisco, grain westward and cargo eastward. For 27 years, she made the trip around Cape Horn. Her forty-eight passages around Cape Horn (over 2 million miles) are believed to have been the record for any sailing ship. Twelve of her runs in thirty years of New York to San Francisco trading averaged 109 days, 14 hours. The best of these passages, in 1872, was completed in 102 days. The Crockett outlived most of her fellow clippers and was still ship-rigged in 1889. After 37 years of commendable service, she was converted into a schooner barge, and her long career ended when she was wrecked in the winter of 1899.



David Crockett under full sail



David Crockett in light winds showing all possible sail area with studding sails set.



Oil painting of the clipper ship **DAVID CROCKETT** in high winds reefed down on a port tack. Faint signature at bottom right "J. E. Buttersworth".

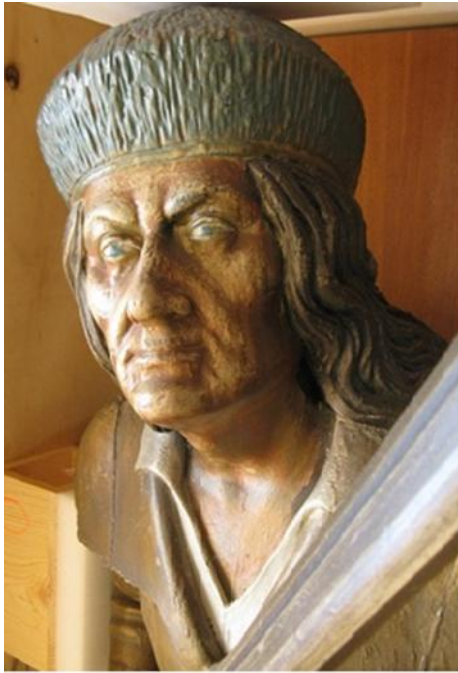


Morning Departure, Clippership DAVID CROCKETT Leaving the East River, New York, New York

John Stobart's painting shows David Crockett towing down New York's East River, outward bound on one of her later voyages



The David Crockett ignoble end in 1890 as a cut down schooner barge



DAVID CROCKETT carried as a figurehead a statue of colorful congressman and hero of the Alamo in honor of whom she was named. Showing him in frontiersman's garb and gripping a long rifle, the figurehead hangs today at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut, almost on the site where the DAVID CROCKETT was built.

116, 114, 114, 110, 107, 114 & 110 Days' Passage,
And just Returned in 95 Days!!!

Sutton & Co.'s Dispatch Line for San Francisco.

SAILING PROMPTLY AS ADVERTISED.

Office, corner of Wall and South Streets.

The Popular A 1 First-Class Mystic-built Clipper Ship

DAVID CROCKETT

BURGESS, Master.

Is Receiving her Cargo at Pier No. 19, E. R.

This celebrated Clipper has made the above short passages, and famous for discharging her Cargoes in **PERFECT ORDER.**

Messrs. GEORGE HOWES & CO., }
Consignees in San Francisco. }

SUTTON & CO., cor. Wall & South Sts.

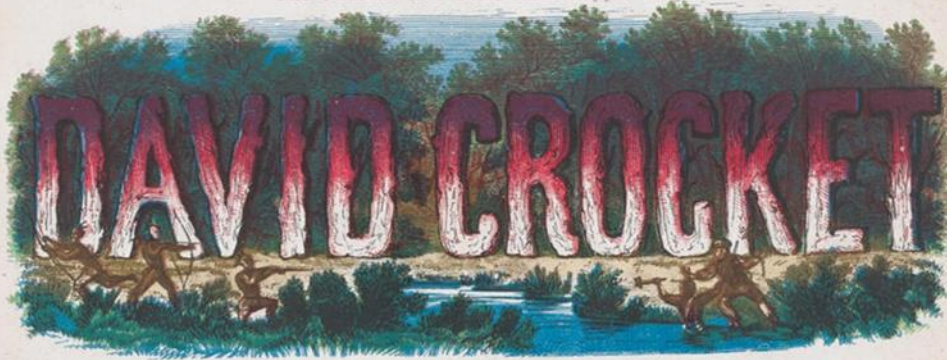
Shippers wishing Sure Dispatch will please observe the promptness of the sailing of the vessels of this Line.

NEBITT & CO., PRINTERS, N. Y.

122, 116, 131, 123, 114, 114, 110 & 107 Days!

These are ALL the Passages by this celebrated Clipper.

The Famous A 1 First-Class Clipper Ship



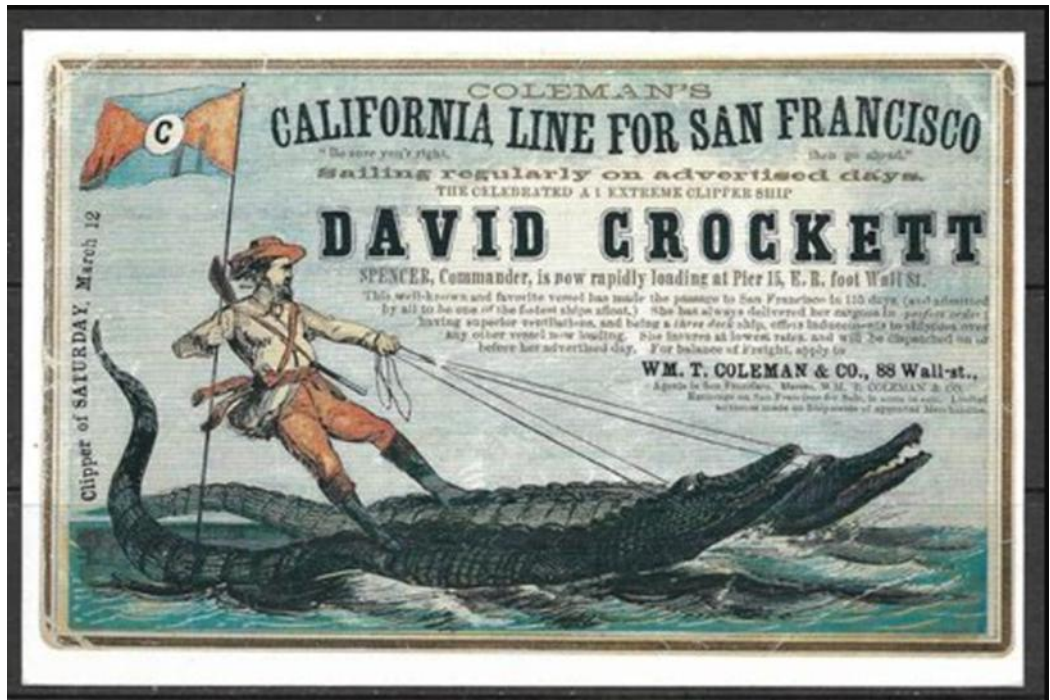
BURGESS, Master, IS RECEIVING HER CARGO AT PIER 26 EAST RIVER.

This favorite clipper has made the above short passages, delivering her cargoes in **PRIME ORDER.** Her last Passage was made in 107 Days. Having her Freight nearly all engaged, she will have **EXTRAORDINARY DISPATCH.**

SUTTON & CO., 58 South Street, cor. Wall.

The ships of this line insure at the **LOWEST RATES** and sail **REGULARLY AS ADVERTISED.**

NEBITT & CO., PRINTERS, N. Y.



Advertising was well developed in the 1800's but why would you want to ride two alligators from New York to San Francisco?



THE SHERIFF'S LOG

Howdy All,

Looks like the New Year is just over the next mountain range. No telling what the New Year will bring, but if it is as good as this one was for the range, then bring it on!

Utah Blaine and Lucky Lu wrote some friendly stages, if it hadn't been so darn cold for the December match. Shooters almost couldn't stop shivering long enough to enough to shoot the targets! All kidding aside, it was a lot of fun and we even got to 'ring the bell.

Bull McFearson was talked into writing the stages for the New Year so we shall see what he comes up with. You can be sure they will be gunfighter friendly!

Weather permitting, we will bring out some .22 targets for some friendly competition on Friday to help ring in the New Year. Hot dogs and fixings will be provided by the range for the Friday night dinner, bring an appetizer to share. There might even be a movie on Friday night. The fabulous 5 Dogs Creek Saturday night potluck will be held so bring a dish to share.

When making your New Years resolutions consider writing some stages, being a bay proprietor, or becoming a Town Council member for the range.

Happy New Year and see you at the range,
Lap Dog

PS - As a reminder, the club voted to have winter hours on Saturdays from December to April. The office will open at 9:30, shooter meeting at 10:00 and start shooting at 10:15.

JANUARY

Shooting Schedule:

1/3, SATURDAY

Office opens 9:30
Shooter's Mtg. 10:00
Match Starts: 10:15

1/4, SUNDAY

Office opens 8:00
Shooter's mtg. 8:30
Match Starts: 9:00



2026 MATCH CALENDAR

JAN 3-4

FEB: JAN 31-

FEB 1

MAR: FEB 28-

MAR 1

APRIL 4-5

COME JOIN US FOR SOME CAMPING FUN!



Friday Evening (5:00-ish)

Appetizers (Hot or cold)

Saturday Evening, (6:00-ish)

Bring your favorite potluck grub to share.

Plates & utensils provided

SATURDAY CLEAN

(NO, NOT ONE!)

SUNDAY CLEAN



WTF Bottles, Badman Bob, Bull McFearson, Coyote Carson, Dirty Hands,
Johnny Ringworm, Lap Dog, Panhandle Red, Sam Ootie, Shotgun Lynn
(Presley: The Mascot)

Territorial Governor's News:

(Watch for the Professor's wise words of wisdom here again soon.)



Professor Cubby Bear
cubbybear29521@aol.com

Range Wranglers' Notes:

(Brandin Iron's News here soon.)



Mayor Fordyce's Range Notes:

Watch here for more of The SASS Shooter's Handbook Review

Link to Shooters Handbook

<https://sassnet.com/uploads/downloads/Shooters%20Handbooks%20-%20CAS/CAS%202025%20SHB%20-%20%20Vers%2027.9%20-%20May%202025%20%20-%20FINAL.pdf>



WANDERIN' AROUND with Utah Blaine

The Story of Mary Fields

Mary Fields was born into slavery in Hickman County, Tennessee, circa 1832. In 1865 she was emancipated and began work as a chambermaid on board the *Robert E. Lee*, a Mississippi River Steamboat. There she met Judge Edmund Dunne and eventually worked in his household as a servant. After Dunne's wife died he sent her and his five children to live with his sister, Mother Mary Amadeus, in Toledo, Ohio where she was a Mother Superior at an Ursuline convent (Wikipedia p. 2).

In 1884 Mother Amadeus was sent to the Montana Territory to establish a school for Native American girls at Saint Peter's Mission, west of Cascade. Learning that Mother Amadeus had come down with pneumonia, Fields rushed to Montana to nurse her back to health. Mother Amadeus did recover. Fields stayed at St. Peter's and took on many roles some thought to be "men's work" at the time: such as maintenance, repairs, fetching supplies, laundry, gardening, hauling freight, growing vegetables, tending chickens, and repairing buildings, and eventually became the forewoman (Wikipedia p. 2).

Native Americans called Fields "White Crow", because "she acts like a white person but has black skin". Fields' rather different temperament and her habitual profanity made the religious community uncomfortable (Wikipedia p. 2). Even though she faithfully served the nuns this harsh and sparsely populated community, her subversive behavior reached the bishop. The Bishop raised serious concerns about Fields' drinking, smoking, shooting guns and wearing men's clothing. When Mary Fields and the convent's male janitor pointed guns at one another during an argument, Mary was kicked out of the convent (Carlton p. 2).

After Mary Fields left the convent. She lived a life that was shocking by 19th-century standards. She took in laundry and did odd jobs, started businesses and became known for liking hard liquor and guns (Carlton p. 2).

In 1895, at the age of sixty years old (Wikipedia p. 3) she got a contract with the postal service to be a star route carrier. A star route carrier is an independent contractor. She carried mail using a stagecoach donated by Mother Amadeus. Her job was to protect the mail on her route from thieves and bandits and to deliver mail. She was only the second woman in the United States, and she was the first African American woman to serve in that role (Carlton p. 2).

Mary carried several firearms, most notably a .38 Smith & Wesson under her apron and a to protect herself and the mail from not only wolves, but also thieves and bandits Wikipedia (p. 3) and she carried a rifle (Carlton p. 2) Mary drove the route with horses and a mule. She never missed a day, and her reliability

earned her the nickname "Stagecoach Mary" (Wikipedia p. 3) or "Black Mary" (Carlton p. 2). If the snow was too deep for her horses, Mary Fields delivered the mail on snowshoes the sacks of mail on her shoulders.

On one occasion she was up all night fighting off a pack of wolves who had knocked over her vehicle. On another occasion she was forced to walk back and forth all night and until morning to avoid dying of frostbite, as she had gotten stuck in a blizzard. Mary Fields was certainly dedicated to her work (Wikipedia p. 3).

"Stagecoach Mary" (Wikipedia p. 4) or "Black Mary" (Carlton p. 2) as she was nicknamed, while she certainly intimidated those who may be thieves, she was beloved by locals, who praised her generosity and her kindness to children.

Mary Fields delivered the mail for eight years but age finally caught up to her, and she retired (Carlton p. 3) in 1903, at age 71 (Wikipedia p. 5). Interestingly the community rallied to support her. Despite occasional disagreements with neighbors, local restaurateurs gave her free meals. Saloon regulars carried on conversations with her until bars became forbidden to woman due to a town ordinance (Carlton p. 3). but the mayor of Cascade granted Mary an exemption, so she could continue to drink in the bar (Wikipedia p. 5) When Mary's home caught fire in 1912, community members came together to rebuild her home. Mary also babysat many Cascade children, and she owned and operated a laundry service from her home (Wikipedia p. 5).

With scant records there is the temptation to create legends out of ordinary people. Many facts about Mary Field's life are still not clear. But what is clear is that the real-life person of Mary Fields was extraordinary enough to draw plenty of attention on its own. Mary certainly did not need to be a myth to stand out from the crowd. But neither did she mind her reputation (Carlton p. 3).

Fields died in 1914 at Columbus Hospital in Great Falls. She was buried outside of Cascade (Wikipedia p. 5). Her funeral was one of the largest the town had ever seen (Carolton, p. 3). And as an aside Mary Fields was Catholic (Wikipedia p. 5).



Addendum (Wikipedia pp. 5-6)

Legacy and representations of Mary Fields in popular culture

Films

- In the documentary ***South by Northwest, "Homesteaders"*** (1976), Fields is played by [Esther Rolle](#).
- In the TV movie [The Cherokee Kid](#) (1996), Fields is played by [Dawnn Lewis](#).
- In the TV movie [Hannah's Law](#) (2012), she is played by [Kimberly Elise](#).
- In the short Western film, [They Die By Dawn](#) (2013), Fields is played by [Erykah Badu](#).
- In the film [The Harder They Fall](#) (2021), she is played by [Zazie Beetz](#).
- In the film [Outlaw Posse](#) (2024), she is played by [Whoopi Goldberg](#).
- In the TV series [Hell On Wheels](#) (2011), she was played by **Amber Chardee Robinson**.

Print

- In 1959, actor and Montana native [Gary Cooper](#) wrote an article for [EBONY](#) in which he wrote, "Born a slave somewhere in Tennessee, Mary lived to become one of the freest souls ever to draw a breath, or a .38."
- **"Stagecoach" Mary Fields**, a screenplay by **Georgianne Landy-Kordis**
- A biography for children, ***Fearless Mary: The True Adventures of Mary Fields, American Stagecoach Driver*** by **Tami Charles**
- ***Stagecoach Mary***, a collection of supernatural tales in pulp-fiction style by [Jess Nevins](#)
- **"The Life and Legend of Mary Fields"**, Source: [Sunny Nash](#), *Mother Amadeus and Stagecoach Mary* True West Magazine, 1996, True West Publications, Cave Creek AZ.
- A biographical book, ***Mary Fields: The Story of Black Mary*** by **James A. Franks**. [ISBN 0-9657173-4-8](#)

Music

Fields is the subject of [Michael Hearst](#)'s song **"Stagecoach Mary"**, as part of his 2015 *Extraordinary People* project.

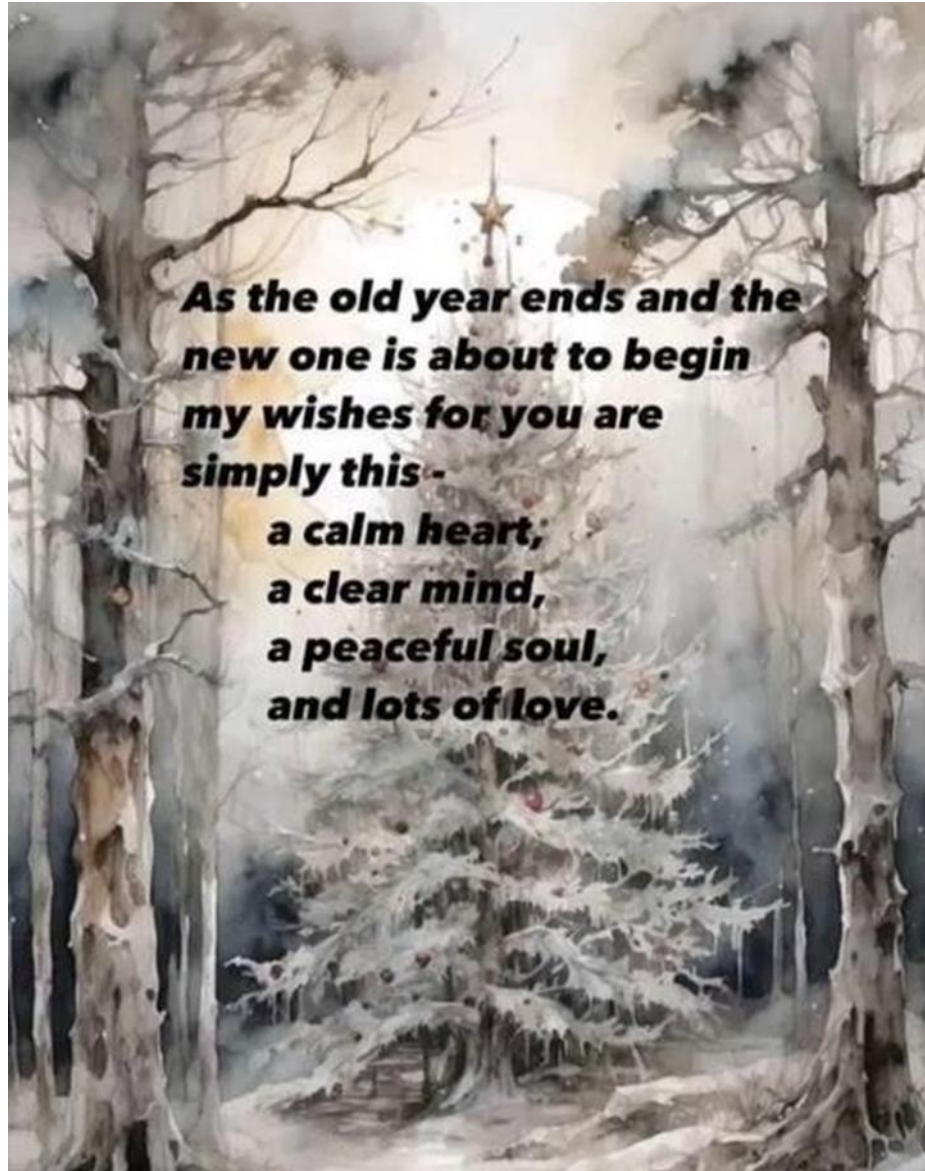
Television

In the [TV AMC](#) series, **"Hell On Wheels"** (2011–2016), Fields is played by [Amber Chardae Robinson](#), featured in five episodes during 2015–2016, season five.



Mary Fields Horse & Heritage Museum (Hartford, CT)

The Mary Fields Horse & Heritage Museum opened to the public in October 2025. The museum, which is located in [Hartford, Connecticut](#) on the campus of the [Ebony Horsewomen, Inc. Equestrian and Therapeutic Center](#), honors the legacy of Black Cowboys and Indigenous horsemen and women.



***As the old year ends and the
new one is about to begin
my wishes for you are
simply this -
a calm heart,
a clear mind,
a peaceful soul,
and lots of love.***