
APRIL
2026

THE HOWLER
At 5 Dogs
Latest News, Updates & More

5 Dogs
Creek
PO Box
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CA 93390

2025 - 2026 Town

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

**San Joaquin Valley Agriculturalists put Cowboys in
their place with legislation in 1874.**

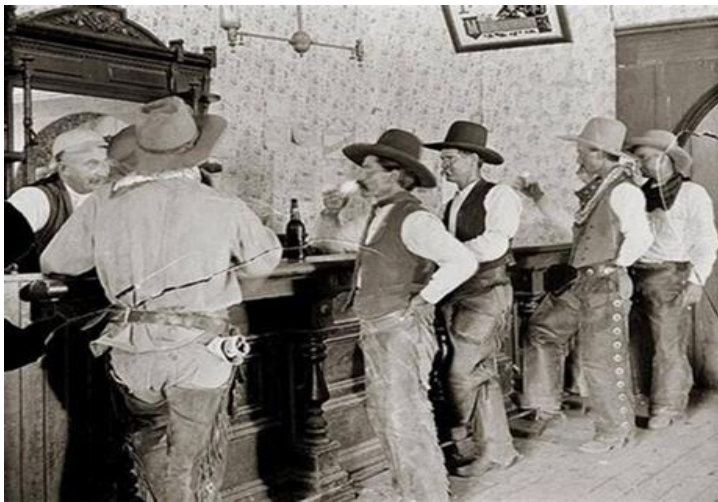
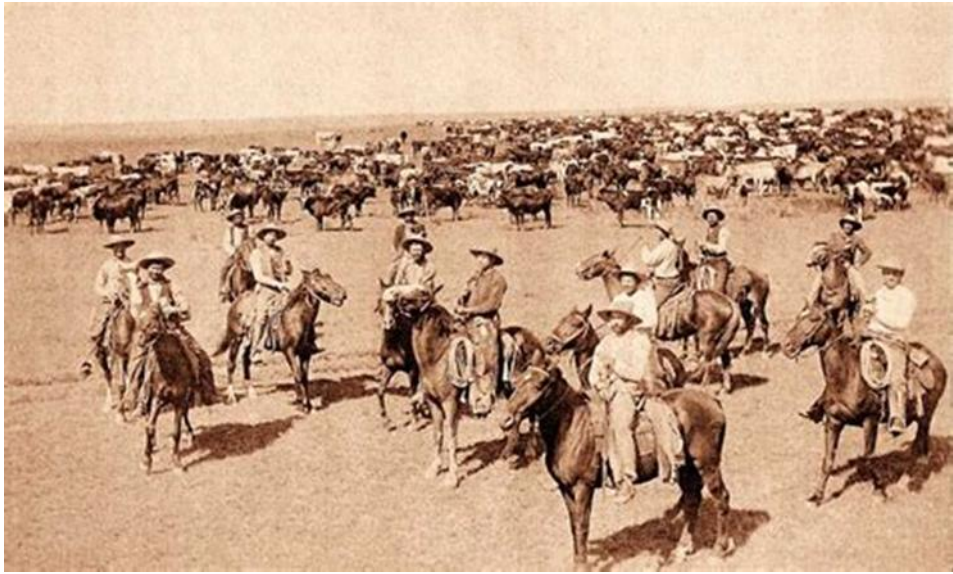
In the 1870s, California was the primary battlefield for a legal and economic war between two titans of the West: the **cattle barons** and the **rising farmers**. The outcome of this conflict, centered on fencing laws, fundamentally transformed the state's landscape from open grazing range to the agricultural powerhouse it is today. Even before the Gold Rush, ranching ruled supremely in California. Ranchers moved large herds of cattle and sheep freely across the state, grazing wherever there was food. And the law favored ranchers over farmers, **The Trespass Act of 1850**. required farmers to build a "lawful fence" around their crops, if they wanted protection from grazing livestock. Back in the days before barbed wire, building a fence was prohibitively expensive. But things soon began to change. Farming became more widespread, and farmers developed more political influence in Sacramento. **In 1874, the Legislature passed the "No Fence" law.** It shifted the liability burden from farmers to ranchers. Farmers no longer had to fence their fields and could recover damages for crops destroyed by grazing livestock.

One of the most popular themes in classic cowboy movies is the conflict between the free ranging cowboy and the “sodbusters” who were changing the landscape of the West with their farms. The cattlemen tried to keep the West open to grazing rights and wanted open land. The farmers wanted security for their row crops, fruit trees and vineyards. The early California cattlemen depended upon open range and available water for their cattle and sheep. They had been using the San Joaquin Valley for grazing since five Spanish ranchos were developed in Kern County in 1842. The Spanish, and then American ranchers, moved cattle from the foothills and mountains in the summer to the valley in the winter to take advantage of free grass and water through the 1870s. There are early chronicles in the mid-1800s that describe huge trail drives that moved cattle over the mountains to Los Angeles and to the mining towns of Northern California.

The turning point in the conflict came about in California’s Central Valley by sheer force of numbers. There were more farmers than ranchers and therefore greater influence in the state legislature. Also, the farms, with the taming of the great central valley rivers and watershed (see last month’s anvil), were turning into revenue machines for the development of towns. Cattle and sheep, with the need for free grazing and open land, were no match economically with the farmers developing new crops for the open market. With the development of the railroad and transportation corridors, the Central Valley began to connect farmers with eastern markets. The result was the reinvention of the central California landscape. The San Joaquin Valley became the nation’s fruit and vegetable basket. Crops like cotton and potatoes soon dominated the national market. The development of the almond and orchard industry, along with wine and table grape vineyards, pushed the cattleman out of the central valley.

While there is still a viable cattle and sheep industry in California, there will never again be the large cattle drives over the Tehachapi Mountains. There will never again be heard the crack of the vaquero’s quirt or the free ranging herds of cattle moving up to the mountains for summer. Lucky for us, the cowboy spirit lives on at 5 Dogs Creek







THE SHERIFF'S LOG

Howdy All,

The time has moved forward an hour and the weather is changing. But the bullets are still flying down range at 5 Dogs Creek. The March match was written by Fordyce Beals and had a little of everything for all styles of shooting. A big thank you to Fordyce and looking forward to the match in May as he is writing the stages for that match.

The match in April will be limited to Saturday April 4th as Easter is on Sunday. **Camping is allowed but campers need to leave on Saturday afternoon.** There will be 'bonus' match on Saturday April 11th. Summer hours are back for Saturdays, which means the office opens at 8:00, shooter meeting at 8:45 and the match begins after the meeting. Sunday hours are the same.

If you liked the Saturday winter hours let a Town Council member know. The more positive, or negative, feedback we get determines if it returns in the winter. The Town Council asked Sam Ootie into looking at getting some decomposed granite for the range. Sam Ootie is working with David Olds, the range owner, to get a price. When the TC approves the purchase, helping hands will be needed to distribute it to the spots needing it. This will help in those wet months to keep the ground less muddy and safer to walk on.

The grass has gotten quite a bit taller at the range and Panhandle Red plans on bringing his lawnmower out to tackle the grass. He's waiting for it to warm up and the grass to stop growing. There will be a work party in May, but everyone is encouraged to come out to the range at any time and do some clean-up. Or even after the match for an hour or so.

Town Council elections are coming up in July. Please consider becoming a Town Council member. The sheriff has loved the job, but it is time to mosey on down the road, the job is not that demanding and there are always many helping hands. See you on the range,

Lap Dog

APRIL

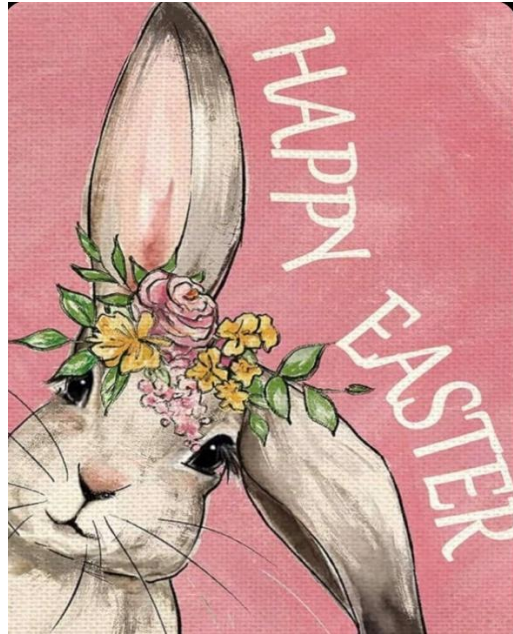
Shooting Schedule:

4/4, SATURDAY

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

4/5, SUNDAY

FIVE DOGS RANGE
CLOSED FOR
EASTER



2026 MATCH CALENDAR

APRIL: 4

(Range closed for
Easter, 4/5)

"Bonus Match"

4/11

(& 12 if enough
interest)

MAY: 2-3

JUNE: 6-7

COME JOIN US IN MAY FOR SOME CAMPING FUN!



Saturday Evening Potluck (6:00-ish)
Bring your favorite potluck grub to share.
Plates & utensils provided

SATURDAY, 2/28
NO CLEAN SHOOTERS



SUNDAY, 3/1 CLEAN SHOOTERS



BULL MCFEARSON, BOOTS STIMBOLI, SHATTERHAND, SAM OOTIE, (& FRIENDS)

SATURDAY, 2/7,
BONUS MATCH
NO CLEAN SHOOTERS

NOPE....NOT ONE!

Territorial Governor's News:

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



Professor Cubby Bear
[\(\[cubbybear29521@aol.com\]\(mailto:cubbybear29521@aol.com\)\)](mailto:cubbybear29521@aol.com)

Range Wranglers' Notes:

(Brandin Iron's News here soon.)





Mayor Fordyce's Range Notes:

Sass Pocket Range Officers Card

Print and cut out for range use

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

SASS® Range Operations Basic Safety Course	Pocket RO Card — Current as of January 2024 "MSV" Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty "SDQ" = Stage Disqualification; "MDQ" = Match Disqualification		M S V	S D Q	M D Q
Empty or live round in magazine, action, or on the carrier of the long gun in which it was loaded, or an empty in the chamber of a long gun- after the next firearm is fired, or if last firearm, put down on the unloading table.			X		
Empty long guns that slip and fall but don't break 170 or sweep anyone			X		
Cocking a revolver before it reaches 45 degrees downrange			X		
Leaving the stage anytime between when the first and last shots have been fired on the stage				X	
Leaving the firing line after stage has begun before all firearms have been verified as clear				X	
Loading at other than designated location				X	
Holstering or staging revolver with hammer cocked (not fully down) or down (on a live round)				X	
Any dropped unloaded firearm on the firing line				X	
Discharge impacting 5-10 feet from shooter, while on the firing line				X	
Cocked revolver leaving shooter's hand				X	
Changing location or leaving the designated loading area with a live round chambered in a long gun with the action closed				X	
Unsafe gun handling (fanning, etc.)				X	
Use of illegal or illegally-modified firearm				X	
Dry firing at the loading or unloading table(s)				X	
Violation of 170 rule (without sweeping anyone)				X	
Sweeping anyone with unloaded firearm				X	
Arriving at the designated loading area with uncleared firearms after completing a stage within the same day (assessed on the previously completed stage)				X	
De-cocking to avoid a penalty if cocked at the wrong time, position or location				X	
Not adhering to loading or unloading procedures				X	

SASS® Range Operations Basic Safety Course	Pocket RO Card — Current as of January 2024 "MSV" Minor Safety Violation = 10 Second penalty "SDQ" = Stage Disqualification; "MDQ" = Match Disqualification		M	S	M
			S	D	D
			V	Q	Q
Shooting on the move (shooting multiple shots during continuous movement)				X	
Leaving the designated loading area with a RIFLE having a live round under a cocked hammer/hammer down on a live round				X	
Staging or discarding a long gun containing a live round in the chamber (once it leaves the shooter's hands)				X	
Use or presence of outlawed/illegal items				X	
Dropped gun (loaded)					X
Discharge impacting within 5 feet from shooter, while on the firing line or any discharge away from the firing line. Any discharge in the loading or unloading areas.					X
Sweeping anyone with loaded firearm					X
Willful failure to comply with a "cease fire" or "Stop" command given by, and while under the positive control of, the CRO/TO					X
Any two (2) stage DQ penalties or 2 F.T.E./S.O.G.'s during the course of a match					X
Belligerent attitude/unsportsmanlike conduct					X
Shooting under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or impairing medications					X
Leaving the firing line with a malfunctioning firearm unless under direct supervision of a match official					X
Shooting out of category. e.g., Not wearing the correct items in Classic Cowboy or not making enough smoke in B/P Categories 1st violation is a procedure, 2nd violation is SDQ, 3rd violation is MDQ			P	2	3
<p>Procedural: Unintentional errors caused by confusion or mistakes. 10 seconds; no more than one procedural penalty may be assessed per stage.</p> <p>Failure to Engage/Spirit of the Game: Willfully shooting a stage other than the way it was intended in order to gain a competitive advantage, not meeting the Ammunition Power Factor or willfully disregarding a non-shooting procedure. 30 seconds.</p> <p>Reshoots are granted for failure of props/match equipment; Range Officer impeding shooter progress; or timer failure.</p> <p>Reshoots for failure of shooter equipment or firearms may be granted at the discretion of the Match Director (except at annual or state/regional champion-ships and above). Only safety penalties carry over. Restarts shall be allowed for a competitor to achieve a "clean" start, up to the point at which the first round goes down range. Multiple restarts by the same shooter, that in the judgment of the R.O. are seen to be taking advantage, will not be entertained as they are not in the spirit of the game.</p>					

Mayor Fordyce's Range Notes (cont.)

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 Cattle Kate

Born July 2, 1860 - Died July 20, 1819
(Age 29))

Ellen Liddy Watson [eventually known as **Cattle Kate**] was born about July 1860.¹¹ It is likely that she was the daughter of Thomas Lewis Watson and Francis Close, who married the next year on May 15, 1861, in Grey County, Ontario. Ellen Liddy was the eldest of ten surviving children, helped at home and attended school, where she learned to read and write in a typical small one-room building. Eventually the family moved to Lebanon, Kansas in 1877 (Wikipedia, p. 3).



Shortly after the move, Watson went to Smith Center, Kansas to work as a cook and housekeeper for H.R. Stone. It was there, she met a farm laborer, William A. Pickell and they married on November 24, 1879. Their wedding portrait \ depicting a "tall, square-faced woman." Watson was probably 5 foot 8 inches tall and weighed about 165 pounds. She had brown hair and blue eyes. She also had a Scottish accent she had inherited from her parents (Wikipedia p.3)



Unfortunately, Pickell was both verbally and physically abusive and drank heavily, so in January 1883, Watson fled back to her parents' home. Pickell, of course, came after her, but her father clearly intimidated him and fled, having no contact with her afterwards. Watson moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska where she worked at the Royal Hotel for a year, establishing residence and filing for divorce from Pickell (Wikipedia p. 3).

That same year she moved to Denver, Colorado where one of her brothers lived. Watson moved on to Cheyenne, Wyoming where she found work as a seamstress and a cook. However, she did not like Cheyenne, so in late 1885 or early 1886 she moved to Rawlins, Wyoming. There she worked as a cook and a waitress in the "premier" boarding house in town (Wikipedia, p. 3).

Then in February of 1886 Watson met James (Jim) Avery, who happened to be in Rawlins to file a Homestead Claim on land about one mile from the Oregon, Morman, and California Trails. It was there that Averell opened a restaurant and a general store, which catered to cowboys and folks traveling west. He right away hired Watson to cook at the restaurant. And in May she and Avery applied for a marriage license 100 miles away, which listed her as “Ellen Liddy Andrews.” They likely were married but it was kept a secret (Wikipedia p. 3).

This strategy allowed Watson to apply for land through the Homestead Act of 1862. This Act permitted single women, but prohibited married women, to buy 160 acres of land, provided they improved it within five years. In August 1886 Watson filed squatter's rights to land adjacent to Averell's, and then in May 1888, she filed a homestead claim to the same piece of land. In order to adhere to the Homestead Act, she had a small cabin and corral constructed. To earn some extra money, she mended clothing for cowboys who frequently visited her cabin (Wikipedia, pp. 3-4).

With her savings, Watson bought cattle from emigrants on the trails, so she fenced about 60 acres of her land with barbed wire, even though this did not be enough grazing area for her small herd. A law at the time stated that unbranded calves became the property of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA). All ranchers, both small and large, must have a registered brand; however, the cost was exorbitant. Also, a brand had to be approved by the cattlemen's associations, which had substantial power to either reject or accept brands, thereby locking out smaller ranchers. Over a three-year period, Watson and Averell filed applications for five different brands and were denied each time. In 1889, she bought a previously registered brand, "L-U" (Wikipedia p. 4).



With her own brand, Watson was able to mark her own cattle. In July 1889, just as the spring roundup was ending, Watson branded her cattle, 41 which was a fairly high number considering the year before she had purchased only 28, all which had been described as being in poor health. It is possible that some cattle had broken through her fence and were accidentally mixed in with her own, quite possibly “mavericks, which were considered the property of the WSGA (Wikipedia p. 4).

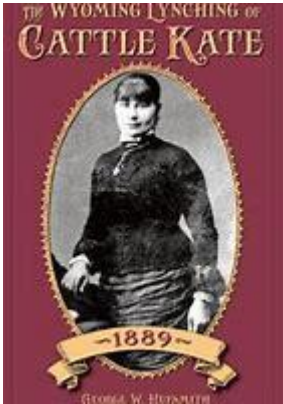
And here is where the story of Watson, Cattle Kate, changes dramatically! On July 20, 1889, a range detective, George Henderson, was cited in a meeting with other ranchers as having seen that Watson had rustled cattle. Six of the WSGA members wanted to lynch both Watson and Avery (Wikipedia p. 4). And so, they were lynched accused of cattle rustling. Newspapers reported that cowgirl Ella Watson was a no-good thief who deserved the vigilante killing that befell her (McGraw, p. 1).

The story echoed across America like a shot and, of course, only grew more dramatic in the retelling. An account published in the *Salt Lake Herald* portrayed Kate as a local legend, "of masculine physique, she was a daredevil in the saddle; quick on the shoot; an adept with the lariat and branding iron." Another story in the *National Police Gazette*, alleges a man asked Kate a question she didn't like, so she quickly knocked him down with a left-handed punch and then she lashed him with her riding whip until he begged her for mercy (McGraw, p. 2).

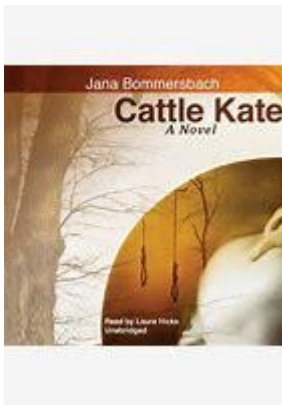
But the truth of the matter was likely much different. Most likely Cattle Kate was just a woman trying to create a life for herself on the frontier. Although some local papers put out accurate accounts soon after her lynching, the mythical version—wild woman meets her just end—is what stuck. Experts today seem to agree that Watson's, Cattle Kate's real crime was likely her willingness to cross boundaries. In sum, she was likely hung for being different (McGraw, p. 2).

The men who hung Watson and Averell never did go to trial. No one could find any witnesses and besides the grand jury was made of 16 people, seven of whom were cattlemen. Even in Wyoming, famous for being the first state to give women the right to vote, women owning land and demanding rights still irked a good many men.

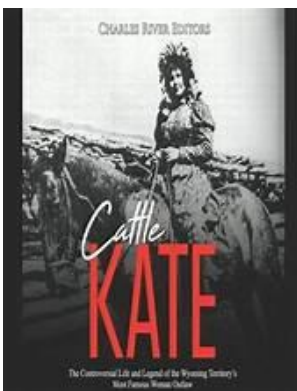
Books



The Wyoming Lynching of Cattle Kate, 1890 - By Hufsmith, George W.



Cattle Kate by Brommersbach, Jana



Cattle Kate: The Controversial Life and Legend of the Wyoming Territory's Most Famous Woman Outlaw by Charles River Editors

References: McGraw, Eliza. “The Tragedy of Cattle Kate.”

A Smithsonian magazine special report. March 12, 2018.

From Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia. No date.

CONGRATULATIONS Wanderin' Rose!



Marilyn Mehling

19h · 2



The SASS Long Range awards were tonight and I was excited to bring these home.



We salute you!!!



... and raise a "Texas Ranger Cookie" in your honor!

DON'T MISS THIS!!!

FORT MILLER **91ST ANNUAL** **WEST COAST CHAMPIONSHIP**



- ★ **Thursday**, compete in a full day of **Side Matches**, including 3 lightning-speed events, Cowboy Trap, 3 warm-up matches, true Long Range, and back by popular demand, the Three Gun Blast and Cowboy Sharpshooter. You can even take a practice run in our famous Ore Cart!
- ★ **Friday and Saturday** feature an 11-stage **Main Match** with some of the most unique and challenging targets around - and welcoming back the return of our Plinkerton (.22 L/LR Caliber) shooter category!
- ★ Enjoy a lip-smackin' **Ice Cream Social** on Friday afternoon as soon as shootin' is done. (Who doesn't like chocolate sauce and sprinkles?)
- ★ **Saturday night Awards** include buckles for Top Man and Top Woman shooters, followed by a fantastic, fully catered **Dinner** complete with side dishes and dessert.
- ★ Check out our **Raffle Tent** chock full of fantastic prizes. You could really win big!



Process your registration on-line at:
www.kingsriverregulators.com/annual
Or click on button to download a mail-in registration form
Limited to 120 shooters
Free dry camping available on site



Match Director: Big Bad Blaine
cshirkey5563@msn.com
(559) 352-9829

APRIL 16-18, 2026

Fresno Rifle & Pistol Club

15687 Auberry Road, Clovis CA

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