

## The Story of "Uncle Ike" Alden

As He Told It, May 18, 1927 to

Carolyn Hosmer Rhone



"Three hunters and a hauler ourselves, looked when he was in Deadwood with a horse usually went out on a kill. The hunters would fill one wagon, and while the hauler went into Deadwood and sold the deer and banked the money in the Tom Thumb Bank, the hunters would get another load ready. venison, potatoes, saffron, and arrowroot. I laid off my belt with my knife. That fall was the year of Custer's last fight. We heard the guns in the distance. Lucky for us that it was a distance, too.

"We started out, and Muller was our hauler. When we come to a good deer country, we made a big circle to see if we could find any deer tracks. Now, the Indians used to come down from the British lines to get meat.

"Muller said to me, 'Ike, the Indians ben here lately.' get killed. They aren't. And I knew they had, for I found three little strings cut from a red blanket and tied to choke-cherry bushes.



"You see the Indians on the move sent out scouts and then followed in a band with their squaws and papooses. Indians on the move kept about five steps apart. Indian markers were most always red, for the Indian is a lover of red. The scouts would cut red strips, and then fasten them around the bushes in one twist. Those three red strips meant that the Indians were going to make camp in that locality.

" 'My God,' I said, 'We got to get away from here, and get away devilish quick, too. The Indian runners have marked this for a camp ground, and gone on. Directly the whole band will be coming!'

"Now we had left two men to get out the mess box and make camp. The horses were just unhitched.

" 'Hitch up as quick as God'll let you,' I said to them.

"We got up and started. That's what made us move from that country. (I was just around thirty. Just old enough to be a fool. I'd laugh in them days whenever a fella would get scairt and run.) So we up and traveled. We crossed a stream and went on. The next morning we come back on the stream we had left. We'd gone about twenty five miles, and we come back to within eight mile of the spot we had left. That's the way in the hills.

"Then we rested. The next morning we went out to hunt. I killed five deer myself. We got a good wagon load.

"Now the hauler did the cookin' when we were out huntin; and we, ourselves, cooked when he was in Deadwood with a load of deer.

"That night we found out that we had left our picket rope at the first camp. We needed that picket rope bad. After dinner, which always was biscuits, venison, potatoes, onions, and chowchow, I laid off my belt with my .45 six shooter.

" 'I'm goin' after that picket rope,' I said.

" 'You're not goin' without your six shooter,' said old Pauly, one of the hunters.

" 'Yes', I said.

" 'You're not', he said. 'That's why so many white men get killed. They aren't prepared, and then they get scalped.' So, I put on my six shooter, and took the Winchester, too!



"I'll go with you," said Old Jack Axel.

"So we jogged along to the hogback that separated us from the first camp. As we come to the saddle in the hogback (This part I'm ashamed to tell, but it's a part of the story) I felt cold shivers of danger. Felt creepy from head to foot. I can't describe it, but all my life I've known when I was going to be in real danger; never fails. Not that I was afraid; I was never afraid. But I was always warned in that way of danger. I walked faster. Old Jack kept saying,

" 'Don't go so fast, Ike!' " and I answered, 'I'm goin' to get that picket rope if I have to fight Sittin' Bull and his 7000 warriors.'

"We crossed the hogback through the saddle, just the kind of place to get ambushed by the Indians. (You think it's strange to believe in predestination. Read history and you'll find that I'm not the only one. Napoleon believed in it.

"We went on through the gap and to our camp. Sure enough, there was the picket rope. I picked it up and wound it around my arm, like this, and then went on to see if we had left anything else.

" 'Let's rest awhile,' said old Jack, who was shorter and heavier than I.

" 'We'll not rest,' said I, 'until we get across that hogback!'"

" 'Your imagination makes you want to run a foot race,' said he.

" 'Look yonder, Jack! I whispered.

"Up the creek, a band of Indians was ridin', single file, like birds above the bushes.

" 'Indians, b'gosh,' said he.

" 'Indians, b'gosh, and on horseback,' said I.

" 'They'll circle us,' said he.

"Them Sioux would circle on horseback, hanging on with one leg across a horse's neck, and shoot under the horse's belly. We took to a run, but that didn't do no good. We saw we couldn't make that saddle, so we stopped. We took a knee bumper. The Indians knew that when a white man took a knee bumper, his aim was dead sure. 'Like this'.

Uncle Ike got slowly out of his chair and eased himself down on one knee, putting his elbow on the other knee, and indicating how the gun was held in the supported left hand and the butt of the gun steadied against the shoulder.

of me!

"Where were you born, Uncle Ike?" I asked.

"Well, them Sioux Indians come at us! They'd ride right at us, as if they meant to run us down, and then wheel. For some reason, they didn't circle us. Twice they rode at us, then went back again. They made a third start.

"'Come on, you son of a guns,' said Jack Axel. He looked funny there, takin' a knee bumper. Short he was, and he wore a broad brimmed hat, and his eyes had a red look, from drinkin' too much whiskey.

"There were fully thirty Indians, swoopin' at us. Neither Jack nor I had any idea of ever gettin' away alive.

"'We can kill as many of them as they can of us,' I said. The danger didn't paralyze me at all. My nerves seemed to get tense, and I could hold a gun like a vise.

"'How many of 'em kin you kill, Ike,' old Jack Axel said.

"'Five or six,' I answered. 'How many kin you?'

"'Five or six,' he says.

"'If they keep foolin this way, I'll walk right up to that saddle, Indians or no Indians,' said I.

"Just then, I looked up, and there standing right in the gap was two of our boys. That explained everything. The Sioux had caught a glimpse of them; that was why they didn't circle us. They thought there might be more white men beyond the gap. So, we walked up to the gap where our friends were, and all went on to the camp, eight or ten miles from there.

"Anybody that hunted in that part of the country took chances. The Indians always followed the streams. The hauler surely had to keep his eyes skinned. He would view the river all the time, for twenty-five or thirty Indians might be goin' up or down, most any time.

"A wagon would hold a lot of deer. We'd kill 'em, cut off the head and the last load, and then they'd go into town and sell a story about how the hauler got killed by the Indians! cover them with the wagon sheet, and on top we'd put the deer we was eatin off, and also the mess box.

"Indians were always cowardly after night. They'd always attack at daybreak. Man's the time I slept with my boots on and my gun alongside of me!



"Where were you born, Uncle Ike?" I asked.

"In Indiana," he answered, Southeastern part, Dearborn County, twenty miles below Cincinnati, on the Ohio River."

"On a farm?"

"Yes. My father bought, off and on, 1200 acres from the government at \$1.25 an acre. I was the youngest of eight children!"

"And you went from there to Dakota?"

"No. I went first to Missouri. The year Greeley and Grant run for president, that was. Tried farmin' for awhile. Then I said to myself, 'Why not go West!'"

"So I struck out for Dakota. Always did like to hunt. I got there July 25th. Was three miles from Custer's battlefield, and camped only five mile from there. Antelope and deer was plentiful, everywhere."

"We knew the government was goin' to send troops and that Custer was comin' with 'em. Grant and Custer had quarreled in Washington. People liked and trusted Custer. Grant reduced him from a general to a colonel; put Terry in Custer's place. Grant's life wouldn't have been safe out West about that time. It was the president's place to keep track of how many Indians was away from the reservations. He could have done that. But Indians from the reservations would sneak off to fight with Sittin' Bull. Sittin' Bull was the war chief. Red Cloud and Spotted Tail was above him, but Sittin' Bull was the war chief, like a colonel in the army."

"Now, I'll tell you another story if you got time?"

I had time, of course.

"Well," Uncle Ike went on, "it come at huntin' time. We had Muller for a hauler. He liked to haul for us. He trusted us. A Hauler had to be careful what hunters he hauled for. Hunters would sometimes kill a hauler for his team and the last load, and then they'd go into town and tell a story about how the hauler got killed by the Indians!"

"We'd start out and go first to Muller's cabin and start from there. Muller made his winter's grub by haulin. We took our grub along. The chow chow we bought at a store in Deadwood."

"We got to have our cauliflower," the boys would say.



"This time a fellow named Fowler was with us. Six feet tall he was, and he wore a peaked Napoleon hat. That and his long legs made him look funny. We started from Muller's cabin and went about the same place as before. As usual I went out to look for signs of deer. When I got back Muller told me that the Indians had stolen our horses.

" 'Come with me to hunt the horses, Ike,' said old Muller.

" 'Why don't you take Fowler?' I asked, knowing full well that Fowler was too scairt to go, and he was!

"We started. 'God, I'm glad you come, Ike,' said Muller. 'Fowler'd go the other way.'

"There was a high mountain there, and the Belle Forche River had a fifteen foot bank. There was an open place like a flat iron. That's where we had our horses picketed. We went down there where our horses had been clogged, and the clogs was there, but somebody had unloosened them.

" 'Let's go back of the big mountain,' I said. Muller and I went back there, but we didn't find no horses' tracks. We went about thirty steps from the mountain, and then started toward the Belle Forche. The lay of the ground fetched us together there. While we was talkin low, I said,

" 'I see one of the horses!' I pointed it out. 'You stand still, Muller, and I'll go to the horse; when I get to it, you come!'

"He says, 'Now watch. Indians lay in the grass and you don't see them. They'll spring up and knife you; so walk slow, and watch every step!'

"I went out where the horse was and picked up its rope. I could see from the way the rope was wound up, that the horse had not strayed away, but had been stolen. In the meantime, I saw the other horse, and found its rope wound up, too. When we stopped to talk for a minute, we heard, clear as could be, a plunge into the river.

" 'Indians,' said Muller. 'No beavers here!'

"Another plunge, and another, until we had heard seven in all. Seven Indians had swum across the river. We took our horses in and tied them to the wagon, and the next mornin' we started on.

" 'Our safest way,' said Muller, 'is to go back where white men hunt.'

"We killed game and sent in three loads, but the Indians got so darned thick that we thought we'd better start home and camp on the way.



"We would hide our campfire at a bend in the river. Ten or twelve Indians followed us, but they did not attack. We came to a park with a cabin in it and decided to stay there all night, but to wait until after dark to picket our horses. We took our deer into the cabin, also the neck yoke and single trees and everything movable about the wagon.

"We got water that night, so the Indians wouldn't have a chance to ambush us in the morning when we went to get water. We spread our wagon sheet on the floor, then put down the blankets and laid down, the four of us, side by side. Went to bed pretty late -- about nine o'clock.

"Pretty soon we could hear the Indians prowling around the house. I raised up on one elbow.

"That you? That you, Ike?" Muller's voice.

"For God's sake don't wake up Fowler, or the house wouldn't hold him. He'd go straight through the roof!

"Now they built cabins this way, in that Indian country. They used upright poles and higher than a man's head, they made port holes. There was a railing around the room on which a man could stand to peer out at the enemy. They put floors in the cabins on account of rattle snakes that love a man's bed. They made one door, only, and in an opposite corner a trap door cut in the floor, so when a cabin was attacked and Indians were breaking in the door, the white man could creep out the trap door and get away.

"Time and again we heard the sneaky, rustly sounds of Indians lurking about the place, but pretty soon everything was quiet, but the sound of a hoot owl. 'Suppose they steal our horses', we thought. Leaving the other two asleep, Muller and I decided to see about the safety of our team.

"I went out first, and I was always afraid of rattle snakes in a place like that. Muller followed through the trap door, pushing his gun ahead of him. 'Crawl around the house,' said I, and we'll meet at the fur corner. 'Go get me a drink of whiskey,' he bewailed at me. 'Don't go past the corner until you know that you are safe!'

"All was quiet. When we came to a spot above where the horses was left, we couldn't see them. 'We'll have to go down there,' said Muller.

"No, I wouldn't go down, not for the price of the horses,' said I. 'It may be a trick on the part of the Indians to lure us.'



" 'I'll lay up here,' I added, 'with my gun ready, and if the Indians attack, Muller, while you get the horses, I'll pour shot so fast they'll think it is a whole regiment!'

"Muller found the horses, all right, and we went back inside and to bed. Early in the morning I built up a fire while Muller went out the trap door to that was corked and full, and struck back hard, like this, and knocked the fellow follow the Indian tracks. 'Don't let anyone open the door while I'm gone,' said Muller. I fastened and braced the door.

"Od Man Pauly and Fowler woke up, and when Fowler heard the story of the night, he was scairt to pieces. Old Man Pauly started to open the door.

" 'Stop!' I said. Just then Muller come to the door. We let him in.

" 'I followed the Indians' tracks to where the road forked,' said he. I fields were in North Park, and how you could starve right out the ground. I 'They took the left road. When we start on, we'll take the right road!' said to myself. 'When I went to Deadwood, I didn't know anything about ore, or After breakfast we started on. 'I don't want to hunt with YOU anymore,' said grumble or quarts. Now, I have something. I'll go to forty bars and strike it Fowler.

Fowler and I marched one on each side of the wagon for a guard, Fowler "I came in over Livermore Canyon. Stayed about a month at Keller, which on the side next the hill, and I, on the other. The ambush we feared did not quite a town. I was there almost at the time it started, too. There was three or four saloons, a couple of stores. Quite a lot of excitement up there. Indians passed down and out of sight. Then we waited an hour lest one of them look back and see us. Then we crossed quick and fast.

"When we got into Spearfish Town on the Spearfish River, we felt safe for there was a stockade there. We could throw off fear. Slept until nine or ten the next morning.

"Deadwood was a wild place in those days. Not a day but there was from three to five killed. I managed to sidestep the gamblers of Deadwood, even though I was a tenderfoot. Therowdy element would do everything they could on they'd fall to pieces and live as hot the fire would set the cabin on fire. to frighten a tenderfoot. I was standing one day on the step of a saloon when a fellow came along riding on the runnin' gear of a wagon. I was on the middle of it; one house and a burying ground. Cameron fast opened, just the porch of Dan Costillo's saloon.

" 'Go get me a drink of whickey,' he bawled at me.

" 'To hell with you,' I said.

"He laughed. 'You ain't a tenderfoot, be ye?' He then ordered another fella the same way, and I kept him from doin' it!

" 'You speckled faced, sangy haired .....! I knowed you was no tenderfoot.' (I sure fooled that fella.)



"The saloons were great places in Deadwood. One fellow, John Mowry, who afterward come with me to Colorado, and run a saloon at Gaskill, run a saloon there in Deadwood. John was behind the bar when this fellow come in.

" 'Mowry, Mowry, are you ready to die?' said he. Mowry was behind the bar brushing off bottles. He looked up kinda startled. Then he ketched a bottle that was corked and full, and struck backwards, like this, and knocked the fellow cold. He drug him out by the hair of the head, and shoved him off the sidewalk which was a goot or more above the mud of the street, and let him lay there until he come to."

"How'd you happen to leave Deadwood, Uncle Ike?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "I'd read in the Cheyenne Leader how rich the gold fields were in North Park, and how you could pick gold right off the ground. I said to myself, 'When I went to Deadwood, I didn't know anything about ore, or granite or quartz. Now, I know something. I'll go to North Park and strike it rich!'"

"I came in over Livemore Canyon. Stayed about a month at Teller, which was quite a town. I was there almost at the time it started, too. There was three or four saloons, a couple of stores. Quite a lot of excitement up there. John A. Logan who ran for vice-president with Blayne came in, and was going to get some capital interested in mining.

"Then I went on up to Lulu to prospect. Struck some leads, but the richest was eighty cent ore, and it takes a big company to make money out of eighty cent ore.

"Lulu had some log cabins, just kinda throwed together with mud, the fire-places in the corner, built of sticks and mud, would last for ahile, but later on they'd fall to pieces and like as not the fire would set the cabin on fire.

"Now there is the remains of only one house in Lulu and a tree grows up in the middle of it; one house and a burying ground. Cameron Pass opened, just above Lulu and you could go on through that pass to the outside world.

"There was seven or eight in our gang that come from Dakota. We had grub enough to last us a long time but they was so many folks that had come into the country with one coat on their back and a loaf of bread under their arm that they ate up our grub. We had to feed seven extras our very first night. You can't refuse grub to a man who is hungry. We had to get more grub, and so we started out to go to Georgetown. We camped up here near Grand Lake, just below



the graveyard.

"Along comes Antelope Jack with some tourist and when we told him we were going to Georgetown for grub, he said, 'Go to Grand Lake.'

" 'Where is it?' I asked.

" 'Just down there,' says he.

"We found most of the town camping the other side of the outlet. Dealt with Judge Coulter who sold us 100 lbs. of flour for \$3.00, and bacon and coffee, and sugar, cheap, too. He could have charged us anything. We decided not to go back to Lulu and have somebody eat all our grub up so we hunted down around Stillwater, and prospected some. We worked some on roads and trails, too."

"Did you ever find any pay ore?" I asked.

"Well, not exactly. I located many a lode, but a poor man has no business with the kind of ore I found. Takes a big company to handle it. I never made but \$5.00 out of it. Sam Weed watched me find a lode, one time, and I showed a sample to Sam. That was up the North Fork above Squeaky Bob's.

" 'I'll give you that for it,' said Sam Weed, and he handed me a \$5.00 bill, and I took it."

"But you think there's some rich ore in these mountains. You found some yourself once, didn't you?" I asked.

"Yes," Uncle Ike confessed, "and I'm going again this year. It's probably the last time. I'm goin' as soon as the weather settles."

"In the Never Summer Range?" I asked.

"No. On Gravel Mountain, up Willow Creek and Gold Run!"

"Yes, I'll likely go alone. Lots talk about goin' with me, but they always back out. But one man oughtn't to go alone. Somethin' might happen. I'd rather have Lon Osborne go with me than any man I know. If Lon could make up his mind to it, he'd be rich lots sooner than he ever expects to be.

"I found this lode in '80. But I come down to Grand Lake and had mountain fever somethin' like typhoid. I was going to get grub, pick and shovel, to do assessment work, and I stayed longer than I expected. It was while I was down here that the shootin' of the county commissioners took place.

"I was one of the fellows from North Park sent to watch out for Weber. Rumors was that his life was in danger. And then, too, I had been workin' for Weber.

"I was the first man on the spot after the big shootin'. It took place right in front of Lee's house. There was an old ice house there. I was standin' behind Mrs. Young's house talkin' with Max James when we heard shootin'. Thought at



first it was the Fourth of July celebration goin' on. "It don't sound right," I said to Max James. We knowed that Weber, Dean, and Day had just gone that way, and that threats had been made. "I'll go and see what's up," I said. "They've shot Weber; I seen him fall," said Mose ~~dash~~ apsh.

"One of the assassins lay dead. He had a mask over his head. I wanted to take the mask off the man's face. Somebody objected that the coroner should be the one to do it. Max James stepped up. "We'll show you," says he. He stripped that mask back from the face of J. G. Mills, just skinned it up, and rolled him over with his foot. He had been shot through the temples. The blood gurgled in his throat. Judge Pettingill started.

"Never mind, Jake, he won't hurt you," I says.

"Redmond, the gang leader of the law-breakers, was wounded. He was spirited up into the mountains, and food carried to him every day.

"That Redmond gang was the limit. My gang was building a cabin for Weber.

"Long come the Redmond gang. 'What you doin'?' says he. "Buildin' a house," I says. "We've had enough of that," said Redmond. We stood our grounds. "Shet that down," I said. "We'll build this cabin if we damn please." Bill Stultz was inside the cabin watching it all. There was about twenty of the gang. They went down off the hill and rode off.

"The boys ain't a-runnin'," said Bill, who was watching the proceedings.

"And the Redmond gang had to move their tents.

"The news spread like wildfire that we had bluffed Redmond's gang who had never been bluffed before. And we finished building the house for Weber. The news spread to North Park. Everybody knew it. But there'd have been shootin' done, and Redmond would have been killed that day, if I hadn't stopped it."

"Now, the only place where they ~~careed~~ any gold to speak of was Cal Creek, a small spot of ground I had my heart set on. But it was in an Indian country. "A fellow up there said he'd give me a thousand feet of lumber, and another said he'd lend me his oxen if I had the guts to go out and take up that ranch. So I did. It was the prettiest day I ever saw in my life. I started out. And



the birds sung, and the hills was green. But it rained later on, and I took refuge in a cabin. Upon investigation, I found it was a famous old saloon, that was located about five miles from a fort. The government wouldn't let a saloon be located any closer. Yes, sir. I found the bloody finger marks on the walls and window sills where men had fought to the death with knives, and the rest stood back and kept the crowd back and let 'em do it.

"The rain got me blue, and when I had a chance to sell lumber and oxen for \$100 I took the money and come to North Park.

"Yes, I knew Judge Westcott. He was a great hand to get mad at a man, and say that he was gain' to kill him. He got mad at Jim Elliott, once. Jim come rowin' across the lake, and somebody told the Judge that Jim was a-landin'. The Judge got out his Winchester to shoot Jim. Jim come up the beach carryin' two bottles of whiskey.

"He saw the Judge armed to kill him!

" 'Have a drink, Judge,' says he.

" 'Don't care if I do,' said Judge Westcott, and put up his gun.

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Uncle Ike is about five feet six, now, bent, and rheumatic. His hair, which is gray, is cut quite short. He has whiskers, not long, but a yellowish gray. His eyes are blue. His face is lined deeply. Six or eight deep furrows, dirt filled, cross his forehead. His nose is wide at the nostrils. His neck is short. His clothes are ill-assorted, a dark suit, now dusty gray. His hands are not large, but show exposure.

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Uncle Ike Alden's story, as continued on May 20, at the home of Mrs. Adams, on the west shore of the lake.

"The Cheyenne Leader was full of stories about the rich gold strike in North Park. When I went to Dakota, I didn't even know how to pan gold, but, thinks I, 'I'll go into North Park, now, and strike it rich!'

"Now, the only place where they panned any gold to speak of was Owl Creek, a small creek from which they took \$2000. I panned the whole country to Lulu, but found no gold to speak of. Suppose one found flakes of gold occasionally, then it was a good bet to go on up the stream, for the heavier gold wouldn't float."

(Uncle Ike's mind wandered to the trip from Missouri to Dakota, then, and he began to tell about the wagon trains.)



"Did you ever hear of little Mrs. Meeks' fight with the Indians?" asked Uncle Ike. I hadn't, so he told me. "It was bigger than a dollar. The Indians would grab the hair. I knew her in Deadwood," said he; "her son had consumption, in Nebraska. After he died she went in a wagon train of only eight or ten wagons.

"A band of Indians attacked them. Twelve or fourteen whites were killed. The rest wanted to surrender. But it was all back, this cold fever. You had to pass

Oh! "Mrs. Meeks picked up a gun. 'You cowards!' said she. 'Surrender to the Indians, and you know how they torture their captives!'" Around the Rabbit Ear

Mount. "She led the fight. Now on the Devils' Hearthstone, possibly a mile or more away as the crow flies, I could watch the whole proceedings. I also could see at a distance a bull train (freight train) and I knew if the whites held off the Indians long enough, this wagon train would save the. A freight train was made up of maybe 100 wagons and 200 or 300 men. Out of scrub and we came on down here and

escape. "Sure enough, Mrs. Meeks led the fight until the Indians, seeing their danger, fled. Mrs. Meeks was not injured. Tourists. By tourists I mean you that were in-

tere. "In the wagon train in which I traveled going to Deadwood, there were 700 or 800 people, and yet we were circled by a band of probably 3000 Indians. In those days, the wagon trains had regular stations. One was called the Eagle's Nest; one was at old Fort Laramie; one at Hat Creek. No wagon train could go on from the Hat Creek station without 100 wagons and 5 or 6 men to a wagon. We had 112 or 115 wagons and over 700 men when we left Hat Creek. Side was open and that was

there. "I remember filling a water keg when we were being circled by the Indians. The keg had a spout in it through which the water ran. If you held the keg clear under it wouldn't fill; you had to give it vent, then it would go 'glurg-glurg.' The captain of the wagon train had told a 200-pound man to fill that keg, and he just stood there and shook all over with fear.

" 'I'll fill it,' said I to the captain. I was not afraid, but it seemed like an hour that the keg was filling. And the Indians circling around going 'Yip! Yip! Yip!' And the horses' hoofs scrunching through the grass. The creek was deep. It was foggy so that the Indians could not see us very well, but they circled us, yipping. I straddled the keg like this, and the water went 'glurg-glurg' and I knew the keg was filling. wealthy in her own name. Weber bought the

Holzer's Mine, sold stock to it. .... Superintendent of the mine. The

Red. "I forgot to finish about Mrs. Meeks. 'You cowards!' said she, 'you'll die a-fighting!' The Indians set fire to the grass, and burned the wagons before the bull train got there, but Mrs. Meeks wasn't hurt. It, not because they wanted to be

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"Them Sioux would not scalp a red-headed man. They didn't scalp Custer, you remember. The scalp wasn't much bigger than a dollar. The Indians would grab the locate mine and sell them, for instance. They didn't have real sand, though. hair, give a slash this way, and a slash that way, and off came the scalp. Maybe they'd rise up behind a man when he was on horseback, especially if the man

was drunk, and attack and rob him.

"Well, as I was saying, I was anxious to make my stake in North Park and get out. That was my idea. But it was all bosh, this gold fever. You had to pass Owl Creek when you come into North Park by Livermore Canyon. I might have made my strike there if I'd gone over there. I prospected all around the Rabbit Ear Mountains. The lode I found near Lulu was the best anybody had found, and it only tested .80 aton. I called it Green Lake lode, because there was a lake nearby surrounded by green grass and trees so that the water looked green.

"They was just startin' the Wolverine mine when I got into the country. We stopped at Lulu, but hungry men ate us out of grub and we come on down here and camped on Columbine Creek.

"Antelope Jack come by with tourists. By tourists I mean men that were interested in putting money into mining. Antelope Jack was a sort of guide. He would get a tourist to put money into a lode and he'd get good pay to run the mine and be foreman. That was the only way a man made much money out of mining. They'd work the company, not the lode.

"In those days, the site of Grand Lake Village was covered with small trees so close together you couldn't get through. The west side was open and that was where the town was and where people camped.

"As I told you before, we bought flour and other grub from Judge Coulter who was anxious to sell out his provisions and get back to Georgetown. After that, we went first to Stillwater to hunt ant prospect, then back to North Park after our tent, which we had left there.

"This man Weber was superintendent of the Wolverine Mine. He was a good man. He intended to build up the country. And he was a rich man. Why, when he died he left an estate of \$100,000.

"He wanted a cabin built about on the site of M. J. O'Fallon's home back here on the shoulder of Echo Mountain. He was going to fetch his wife from Chicago.

Her name had been Hawley, and she was wealthy in her own name. Weber bought the

Wolverine Mine, sold stock in it, and was the superintendent of the mine. The

Redmond gang couldn't rob him, so they killed him.

"There was forty or more men in the Redmond gang. Some cowards in the gang was in it because they didn't dare not to be in it, not because they wanted to be



in it. They had all kinds of ways of getting money out of tourists. They would locate mines and sell them, for instance. They didn't have real sand, though. Maybe they'd ride up behind a man when he was on horseback, especially if the man was drunk, and attack and rob him.

"Instead of digging a tunnel 6 ft. 6 in. high, five foot at bottom, and four at top, Redmond's gang would probably dig it four at the bottom, three at the top, and a bare six foot high. The owner might refuse to pay, then, for the work, and with a six shooter Redmond's gang would get their pay.

"Well, I got to working straight for Weber. When he brought his wife in, she first boarded at the McQueary House at Hot Sulphur Springs. Her room was right over the dining room. And members of the Redmond gang would congregate there and talk especially for her to hear, saying that Weber was a crook and ran after Josephine McQueary. Well, they got the woman about crazy. Just set her wild. Finally, she got a horse and rode out to hunt up the truth.

"Weber bought a ranch t'other side of Granby, and that was where she stayed.

"I was Weber's confidential man. When he wanted a message sent up to Lulu, I was the man he sent.

"One day I was down at the ranch. Mrs. Weber was all wrought up. She told me what she had heard, and how she had ridden out to see if she could find out the truth. She asked me if I blamed her. I told her that her husband was a proud man and a man to be proud of. A supreme court lawyer, Weber was.

"Now, I don't know what I ever done such a thing for; usually I'd have sided with a woman just to humor her. Her brother was in the kitchen, washing. He opened the door to throw out the basin of water, and there stood Weber, and he had heard every word I had said; from that time on, Weber thought a sight of me. And I only said just what I felt.

"Another time, Weber was having trouble with young Hawley, her brother. Mrs. Weber come to me.

"'Ike, ' she says, 'you have more influence with him than anyone else has. As soon as he gets back he is going to fire my brother. You see if you can stop him.'

" 'I'll do what I can,' I told her.

"So I said to him that his wife was out here in the wilds in order to be with him, and that it was a pretty hard life for a woman, and that it was natural for her to want to have her brother with her, and that he should look over some of the front he got from him.



he. "Anyway, he didn't fire her brother. Something will be doing soon."

"As I said, Weber wanted this house built. Three times he got men to build it, and every time the Redmond gang drove 'em away. dog has licked his enemy."

"Weber come around. 'You boys lookin' for somethin' to do?' he asked. Id and most " 'Yes,' we said. ally wa'nt so close to this property here by the outlet."

"I want a cabin built here," he said. turn to Mowry and Baker, and Baker had said " 'All right,' we said, not knowing we were being led into a fight."

" 'I'll give you \$600,' he said. (We'd 'a' done it for \$300.) d 'en down to the " 'You build a cabin 20 x 30,' he said, 'with one partition, and cut the window holes and door hole, and I'll send out myself for window lights and doors."

"Now, what he was really doing was getting a cabin built in order to defy the gang. they did it, and we went to work and we finished the cabin."

"Well, we got started. Got the logs on the ground. Didn't have to go fur. Got about two rounds up, and along came the gang. 000 to put it up again if you

led "They had camped on the lake shore just below us, and made it hard for us to get down there for water, especially after night, on account of the guy ropes on the tents. after, I said."

"Well, in come this gang on horseback. They had pack animals, too. And when they put up their tents, they even had flies for the front of their tents. They was cooler that way. at 'Yes, I'm a member of Redmond's gang!"

"A log was floating out on the lake. They took to shootin' it, and Ed Harmon, who was building his cabin t'other side of the lake had to stop work 'count of the bullets that struck over that way. They was showin' off their marksmanship, you see, to scare us, but we went on workin' on the cabin as if nothing had ever happened. The next morning they come up the hill, and old Judge Westcott was with 'em. though " 'What you sons of bitches doin' up here?' they says. That remark would have cost a man his life in Deadwood. These fellows in our crowd from Deadwood were no cowards. They'd have fought a buzz saw. They'd have fought a grizzly with their fists. Bill Staats was for killing Redmond. that was rich. The tree on that rock " 'Don't you do it,' I says to Bill. We're strangers here, and if we get that gang against us, we're done for.' So I kept him from doin' it."

"Now, John Mowry was livin' in a little cabin down below and Jack Baker was with him, and Mowry was scared of the gang. He got his guns all out and laid 'em on the bed, and loaded them. Everybody carried a six shooter buckled to him all the time in those days. the I was there somebody stole the sample out of my saddle

"John kept lookin' out of his window. 'Boys ain't scared of the gang,' said



he. 'They're gettin' out their six shooters. Something will be doing soon. B'gosh, the boys are drivin' the curs down off the hill. Let me out!' And out rushed Mowry, like a little cur barkin' after a big dog has licked his enemy. He was for hittin' old man Westcott. I says, 'Let the Judge alone! He's old and most blind!' There really wa'nt no title to this property here by the outlet. Westcott had sold it to a man who sold it in turn to Mowry and Baker, and Baker had sold it to Weber. Well, we got the gang down to the top of the hill, and backed 'em down to the lake.

"'You move your tents, you sons of bitches,' we said, 'so we can have a free road to the lake for water.'

"And they did it, and we went to work and we finished the cabin.

"After that we scattered, and the gang tore down Weber's cabin that we had built. Weber said to me, 'I'd give you another \$600 to put it up again if you had your crowd here together.' 'Wish I was back in Deadwood among Indians, road agents and rattle snakes, I'd feel safer,' I said.

"You never knowed who your enemies was.

"'Are you one of the boys' meant 'Are you a member of the gang?'-'Yes, I'm one of the boys' meant 'Yes, I'm a member of Redmond's gang!'

"'Like, pour the water there.....'

"In the spring of '83, it was, that I found gold on Gravel Mountain. It was an accident, really. I was all alone. I had come down with mountain fever, bad, and I was startin' to town. I set down to rest. I was a-cuttin' tobacco to light my pipe, and a-restin' against a huge rock, when I looked down as I set there. I thought, 'That's nice quartz rock, that is.' Quick as I light my pipe I'll see about it.' I saw it was full of mineral, and I see it was a lode. I looked five or six steps, and there was a raise. Thinks I, 'I'll go and see.' There was a volcanic throat, and if I ever see rich ore, that was rich. The tree on that rock had made the raise, and the roots hadn't gone in very deep. The tree had blown out. 'Well, I went all around. I broke it here; I broke it here' (indicating with a tapping motion on each of his four fingers, how he had sampled the rock) 'I took my samples with me and put them in the panniers of my saddle. I went up to Gaskill at Bowen Gulch. And while I was there somebody stole the samples out of my saddle bags. The place where he had been was discovered afterwards. Redmond left the



"I remember, I was going to stay over Wednesday, the Fourth of July. Then here I got this mountain fever and was sick. The county commissioners, Weber, Cap'n Dean, and Day, had met on the 2nd and 3rd of July, and were going to have a short meeting on the 4th. I was one of the men who had been appointed in North Park to act as a guard for Weber, for the Redmond gang constantly made threats against his life. Max James was another one. On the morning of July 4, about eight o'clock, I was talking to Max James near Mrs. Young's Fairview House (the old house still standing on Craig's point on the property bought by Roe Emery) when we heard shooting down in the road.

" 'Don't sound right to me,' I said. 'Weber, Dean and Day have just gone, that way!' And out, I'll never rest until I kill you both!"

"Then Mose LaRosh came a-runnin'. 'Like,' he says, 'Weber's shot!' Entry. But to a "I run backwards like this. 'The hell he is,' I said, led by the Weber party, 2-1. "I was there fifteen minutes before the crowd got there. Weber had run back up the hill. I went to him. He had been shot from behind. You can tell. Small clean wound behind and a big torn wound in front. He wasn't dead. Weber called me Dan. 'Don't you know me, Weber?' I said. times that Fourth of July, I was at the " 'Yes,' being shot. Two men stood behind the rocks to kill me when I went to "I wa'nt sure. (He thought I was Dan Schaffer.) I got water and stooped down to water his wound. "It was Clarence Johnson that told me. He worked at the " 'Like, pour the water there,' he says. "You'll never know until you die. " 'I won't leave you, Weber,' I said. 'I'll protect you,' not knowing what minute the gang would rush up, shoot him again, and shoot me. demand once in camp at the "Weber didn't die until about midnight that night. About the last words he said were, "I hope there won't be no more killing!"

The assassins were masked with flour sacks. One of them lay dead. Max James started to pull the mask off his face, but some of the bystanders objected that they should wait for the coroner. Max James skinned up his mask, and sure enough, it was J. G. Mills, one of the outgoing commissioners. He kicked him over, and the blood made a gurgling sound. He was shot through the temples. Mills was smooth and good looking. Weber knew something about his past history--some crime he had committed before he came to the country. where the old trail was. I'll take out 100 Redmond, the gang leader, was shot three times. His friends hid him away on Echo mountain. A doctor from Teller, who had been seeing Clarence Johnson's wife at Gaskill, came down, and he went to dress Redmond's wounds. His brother took care of him. The place where he had been was discovered afterwards. Redmond left the



country; went up into the Jackson Hole country in Wyoming. Stole some saddles there, and got out into Montana. I don't know what happened to him at last.

"Well, after the shootin', we did our best to make the assassins fight. We used terrible language, but they didn't fight, though we knew that part of the spectators were in the plot. Indian Jones, for instance, was one of them. There was only two men arrested: Gil Martin and Lon Coffin. Their trial was in Golden. Tom Patterson was their lawyer. Fred Dean, whose father had been killed, was there to get vengeance. They tried to bulldoze him. The criminals up at the Burgess House and we at the Cabardine House.

"The murderers were acquitted. Fred Dean said, 'If you fellows were in it, and I ever find out, I'll never rest until I kill you both!'

"After that, the friends of the murdered men began leaving the country. But to show how the community felt, the next election was carried by the Weber party, 2-1.

"I wanted to go out myself. I had a job offered me at Golden, but I felt it was my duty to stay in and help settle the country up.

"Someone told me afterwards, that three times that Fourth of July, I was at the point of being shot. Two men stood behind the rocks to kill me when I went to my camp that night, but I stayed all night at the hotel that night. Over at the Walden House, that was. It was Clarence Johnson that told me. He worked at the Ruby Mine. He knew the details of the plot. 'You'll never know until you die, Ike, how close you come that night.'

"The Redmond gang was strong. Why, I even slept with Redmond once in camp at the mouth of Baker Gulch. 'I'm the king of Middle Park,' he said to me; and I told him that I acknowledged no king.

"That gang would turn tourists' horses loose. And when they couldn't find them hire out for \$10 to find the horses, and bring 'em back.

"The county seat stayed at Grand Lake until 1888."

"But about this gold of yours on Gravel Mountain?" I asked Ike.

"I'm going back there this year," he said.

"Fires and new trails have always thrown me off but I think I have my bearings now. I went last fall, and I found out where the old trail was. I'll take out \$100,000 afore I sell it. And I won't have no partner in the lode. It ought to run \$80,000 to a tun. I think as soon as I find it that I can get Charlie Hanington to lease it on half shares."

"What would you do with all that money?"



"Give it away," he said. "But my brothers and sisters are all dead, and I have only nephews. The trouble is, they're all well fixed now, themselves, but I reckon I'd go back there.

"Nothing but trouble's followed me ever since I've been in this country.

"None of my own? Well, no. I had a cabin down at Stillwater, once. And I built a cabin up near the mouth of Baker, once. That's on the land that you and your husband have now. You'll find the old cabin up there.

"Seen lots of men killed? Well, yes.

"Especially up in Deadwood. J. G. Mills and Barney Day, here at the lake, and Weber and Dean that died later. And I saw a hauler killed up in Dakota. I'd gone to an adjoining camp to get my mail. Was reading my letter, squatted down in the light of the fire--a long log fire, it was--and the hauler and a hunter was quarrelin'. The hauler had his gun out. The hunter shot him and he fell face forward in the fire.

"Did I tell you that me and Max James followed Redmond that night by the blood on the ground. Thought he might have crawled over yonder hogback.

"Hoyt says, 'What you doin' here, Ike?'

" 'Followin' this track,' I says.

" 'Where's Max?' he says.

" 'On the other side of the hogback,' I says.

" 'That's a dangerous trail to follow,' says Hoyt. 'The evidence is back yonder,' and he pointed to where the shootin' had occurred. Coffin was there with Hoyt.

" 'They dasn't kill another,' said I. Hoyt and Coffin looked at each other and kinda grinned. James come over the ridge with his six shooter in his hand.

" 'If you surprise Max, I'll surprise you, by God,' thinks I, with my gun ready. As the two of them consulted low, Max and I consulted too, and Max says, 'Let's go back and organize,' says he.

" 'No,' says I. 'They're here to kill us; let's kill them,' says I."

"Who do you think fired the shot that killed Weber?" I asked.

"Hoyt," said Uncle Ike.

"One time I was sittin' in a barroom readin'--that was long after--and I heard John Smart and Lon Coffin talkin'.

"Lon says, 'Hoyt is as white as Uncle Ike.' No fool trick shootin' a man in cold blood like he shot Weber!

" \_\_\_\_\_ Redmond, Bill's brother, ran off with Hoyt's wife; and Dave Coffin



run off with Shaffer' s wife."

Uncle Ike confessed that the remnants of the Redmond gang tried to get him out of the country, and have always slandered him. In spite of that, he has always gone his way.

Aaron Gove said one time, "Uncle Ike ought to be pensioned by Grand County. He has been in every fight since 1880, and not a blotch on him!"

The three Hanington families; M. J. O'Fallon; Dean Hart; the Hicks families have all been his friends. He has cared for their cottages and received all the way from \$10 to \$100 a season for the winter care of a cottage.

The Gebhart girls are his friends, and Mrs. Craig.

Uncle Ike got pretty tired. He asked me not to mention the fact that his gold is on Gold Run, where Willow Creek cuts into Gravel Mountain; and perhaps not to mention the names of the gang--the ones still living.

His eyes were watery and a little bleary. Still, his appetite was good when Mrs. Adams, herself 87, fixed dinner for us.

"I have no teeth for to eat my corn pone," he quoted.

"Haven't you ever wanted to get married, Uncle Ike?" I asked.

"Seen plenty of women that were tolerable good to look at; but I've never wanted to actually settle down."