

FROME COUNTY REPORTER

LIBERTY, FROME COUNTY, NEVADA.

THE STORY OF SHERIFF MIRON CARTER

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MIRON CARTER'S EARLY LIFE

Miron Carter was born in Franklyn, in the north of Frome County. He did a lot cattle driving as a youngster and became an experienced trail boss. He has a good friend in Stubville (SE Frome County), who he met when driving cattle to Railhead. During that time he also met Tom Brown, the Sheriff of Halford's Ferry (central Frome County), whose daughter he married. His wedding gift from the Sheriff was 'Cactus', his horse. Whilst dashing and bold in his early life, marriage and children caused him to reflect and made him more cautious than in his early years.

THE COFFEE GANG RAID HENRYVILLE BANK SPRING 1875 [06]

SUMMARY

A savage gunfight starts as the Coffee Gang leave the bank with the money. Two of them are injured and captured (Coffee and Keeper), three killed (Medhurst, Hughes, and Louis), and two escape (Helsigton, on horse, with some of the money; Rudolph on foot). Of the townsfolk, Hartman was killed, along with Cactus, the Sheriff's horse.

The most effective firing was by the Sheriff (four downed), followed by Margaret Ritchard (one downed). Both Coffee and Keeper recover from their wounds whilst in the jailhouse.

The Sheriff forms a six person horseback posse. They chase after Helsigton and Rudolf, wounding and capturing both, and recovering the money.



Henryville

FULL ACCOUNT

Miron Carter, Sheriff of Henryville, ties up his beloved horse Cactus and walks down the main street of Henryville. Something is

wrong...townsfolk are hurrying off the street. Carter glances around and spots some horses he doesn't recognise near to the bank, and three of shifty-looking varmints.

The varmints are Ted Hughes, Will Louis, and John Rudolf of the Coffee Gang. Their leader, Will Coffee, is in the bank pointing his revolver at a very frightened clerk. The rest of the gang (John Medhurst, Juno Keeper, and Henry Helsington) are grabbing bags of money and valuables from the safe as fast as they can. So far, the bank raid is going well...

Sheriff Carter keeps moving, rather than approaching the varmints, and heads for the grocery store a few buildings beyond the bank, on the opposite side of the street. Suddenly a six gun fires. Bullets whistle round his head as he crashes open the door of the grocery store and dives inside. He is helped to his feet by John Hewlett, the village idiot. Hewlett looks confused (as usual), and although armed with a trapdoor rifle, is probably not going to be a lot of help in a firefight. Carter's confidence only raises marginally as Matt Leroy, armed with a rifle, joins them from the back of the store.

Peering out the window, Carter spots movement. Coffee and Medhurst have left the bank and are slinging the heavy sacks over their horses, and grabbing their carbines from the saddle holsters. Carter raises his scattergun, takes aim at Coffee, and fires. Medhurst's face and neck are grazed by several of the balls, but Coffee is unscathed, as the horse in front of him bears the burnt of the blast. Coffee and Medhurst return fire, driving Carter back from the window of the grocery store.

The firing panics the three gang members that had been waiting in the street. Hughes fires his pistol at Mark Welch, the owner of the Land Claims Office, who had been peering out of the window, sending him scurrying for cover. Rudolph, thinking about a possible chase by a posse, draws his gun and fires twice at Cactus, the Sheriff's horse, killing him.

Coffee and Medhurst, eager to get going, mount their horses. Keeper and Helsington exit the bank, loading their horses with more sacks of valuables. Mary Ritchard, who has been hiding in the Land Claims Office, is determined to stop them. She moves to the front windows of the Office and, grabbing a pistol, fires out the window at Keeper. Her first bullet hits Keeper's horse in the head, killing it instantly. Her second bullet hits Keeper in the arm; he spins round and collapses.

The Sheriff and his companions in the grocery store are spurred on by the bravery of Ritchard. Returning to the front of the building, they open fire on the varmints. Leroy's rifle shot hits Helsington's horse in the stomach. It rears up, almost unseating Helsington, and then flees north out of town, in the direction of Prospect. Helsington struggles to keep both himself and the sacks of money on the wildly careering animal.

The Sheriff's scattergun blasts again, seriously wounding Coffee in the guts. Coffee is down and out of the fight. Medhurst fires his six gun at Sheriff Carter, who staggers back, clutching his arm, before firing his scattergun again. He catches Medhurst in the head, killing him and knocking him off his horse, which wounded in the neck, gallops off down the street.

Matt Hartman, an 80 year old professional gambler has been standing very still near to the Sheriff's Office, hoping the outlaws wouldn't see him. Sensing his moment he shuffles toward the Sheriff's, but instantly draws fire from Rudolf, Louis and Hughes. Hughes hits him in the guts, killing him. This panics Rudolf who decides to run, and rushes off towards Prospect, on foot.

Hughes and Louis realise they have to leave quickly. It is now Louis's turn to be the target. Hewlett, still with a grin on his face, fires from the Grocery Store, hits Louis. Louis, clutching his chest, decides he needs to get out of Henryville and grabs a horse. Ritchard sees this, fires at him, missing, but downing the horse. Welch also fires from the Land Claims Office, but he and Ritchard are driven back by a hail of bullets from a desperate Louis. There is a huge boom from the far end of town as Mabel Nemanich fires her buffalo rifle at the outlaws; she does not damage but distracts them

long enough for the Sheriff to get a good shot at Louis, killing him with a bullet in the head. The last outlaw Hughes mounts a horse but, before he can leave, is hit in the guts by Sheriff Carter, and topples off his horse.

A quiet descends upon Henryville. Four dead people lie in the street; outlaws Medhurst, Louis, and Hughes, and Matt Hartman, the gambler. Outlaws Coffee and Keeper are injured but will survive. The other two outlaws are heading for Prospect; Rudolf on foot and Helsington on horseback with half of the money from the raid. There are also many wounded horses in the street, and several dead, including the sheriff's beloved Cactus.

Sheriff Carter swings himself onto the nearest horse and chases the escaping outlaws. Both are heading north towards Prospect, with Helsington in the lead, on horseback with the money, and Rudolf lagging behind on foot.

Sheriff Carter calls for help as he leaves Henryville and is soon joined by Margaret Ritchard, John Hewlett, Matt Leroy, Mark Welch, and Ed Freeman, all on horseback. They start to gain slowly on Rudolf; he is on foot, but is taking a route through rough gullies and ridges that slows the posse's horses. The posse begins firing at him. They are long range shots, but the Sheriff hits him in the arm, slowing him noticeably. More shots smack into the rocks around Rudolf, showering him with fragments. The posse members begin to fire faster, now they are closer. Hewlett hits Rudolf in the arm with a rifle bullet, spinning him round and knocking him down. Hewlett and Freeman are on to Rudolf before he can get up, pinning him in the dust.

Sheriff Carter is sorely tempted to shoot Rudolf dead, right there and then, to get revenge for the shooting of Cactus, his poor horse. Instead he spurs the posse on after Helsington and the money.

This pause has enabled Helsington to extend his lead. The Sheriff shouts to the posse, encouraging them to fire, but Ritchard and Leroy are out of ammo. It looks as if Helsington will escape. Sheriff Carter raises his carbine, fires again. Helsington is hit in the arm and knocked off his horse. The posse quickly surround him, tie him up, and sling him over his horse (next to the sacks of money). A very satisfied posse heads back to Henryville: two outlaws captured, and all the money recovered.

ATTEMPTED JAILBREAK IN HENRYVILLE SUMMER 1875 [08]

SUMMARY

The Coffee Gang attempt to escape from Henryville jail (where they are being held for attempted bank robbery).

As they leave the jail, the alarm is sounded by women in the street. The Sheriff and some of the townsfolk rush to the scene. The outlaws head for the stables to get horses. Ritchard fires at Outlaw Coffee, hitting him in the head, knocking him out. Outlaw Helsington is killed by Carscodden. Clark shoots Outlaw Keeper, hitting him in the head, knocking him out. The Sheriff fires at Rudolf, injuring him in the arm; he is captured.

FULL ACCOUNT

It is midday, on a hot day in the summer of 1875. All has been quiet in Henryville since the failed bank robbery by the Coffee Gang earlier in the year. Four members of the Coffee Gang, Juno Keeper, Henry Helsington, John Rudolf, and the leader Will Coffee, were arrested and are in the jail, awaiting trial in the winter.

Mabel Nemanich and Margaret Ritchard are in the street outside the jail, talking. They wave at James Carscodden as he heads from the Drug Store to the Saloon for his usual lunchtime drink.

The women hear a crash in the Sheriff's jailhouse. Curious, they move a little closer. They hear more crashes and some arguing. This doesn't sound good. It cannot be the Sheriff; he is in the Land Claims Office - they saw him enter ten minutes before. The front door of the Sheriff's Office swings open and Will Coffee steps out, armed with a scattergun. Glancing at the women he begins walking away from the street, heading towards the stables, so he can steal horses for the outlaw's getaway. As Nemanich shouts out for the Sheriff, Ritchard pulls her pistol out of her handbag, carefully takes aim at Coffee's back, and fires. The first bullet whistles past his waist. The second hits him in the head and he crumples to the ground.

The sound of gunfire wakes up the inhabitants of Henryville. Some hide, some rush out to see what is going on. Sheriff Carter is running up the street, loading his scattergun. Juno Keeper and John Rudolf (the killer of Cactus, the Sheriff's horse) run out of the Sheriff's Office. They are also armed. Keeper fires wildly at Ritchard, missing. She returns the fire, but then has to reload, fumbling in her handbag for more ammunition. Fortunately for Ritchard, James Carscodden has reached the Drug Store, next to the Sheriff's. He opens fire at Rudolf with his trapdoor rifle, missing him, but scaring him so much he panics and sprints towards the stables.

The final outlaw, Henry Helsington, now runs out of the Sheriff's. Carscodden bowls him over, killing him with a bullet in the chest.

Keeper is now rushing after Rudolf, heading for the stables. Both Ritchard and Carscodden are reloading. It looks as if the two remaining outlaws may make it to the stables, the horses, and escape.

John Clark was in the blacksmith's when he heard the gunfire start. He grabbed his pistol and ran towards the Sheriff's Office. Rounding the corner of the stables he sees the two outlaws heading towards him. He fires, hitting Keeper in the head. Keeper collapses. Rudolf is now in a complete panic - he has townfolk in front and behind him. He stops. The Sheriff takes his opportunity and fires his scattergun, badly wounding Rudolf in the arm. Clark rushes over and disarms Rudolf. The jailbreak is over.

REELECTION OF SHERIFF CARTER FALL 1875 [12]

Townfolk of Henryville today voted to retain Miron Carter as their sheriff, after his success at thwarting the bank raid and jailbreak, and agreed to fund a deputy. Sheriff Carter has chosen 30 year old William Murphy.

SHOOTOUT AT REDWATER FARM FALL 1875 [11]

INTRODUCTION

Miron Carter has been thinking. When the the Coffee Gang raided Henryville, outlaws Helsington and Rudolph fled to the north, towards Prospect, a tiny town in the North Mountains. Why there? Outlaws wouldn't be welcome in Prospect, and what else was there out that way? Just a few soddies and Redwater Farm, a small place about halfway between Henryville and Prospect. Redwater Farm was unremarkable...it had Chas Shields and Cinthia, his young bride, and their four children, and not much else. Nobody ever went there as it was well off the beaten track.

Perhaps there was some link with the Coffee Gang. Perhaps they had been hiding stolen money and goods there. Hmmm, thought Carter, that would swell the coffers of Henryville. And anything he could do to make up for that varmint Rudolph, who

had killed his beloved horse Cactus. However there might be even more of the Coffee Gang out there.

Carter decides to investigate. He, and his new deputy, Will Murphy round up a posse of suitable Henryville townfolk to mosey on over. Carscodden was good with a gun, he had killed Helsington when the Coffee Gang tried to escape from Henryville Jail. Clark, despite being a bit weedy, had shown pluck overpowering Rudolph. Welch, although fond of the bottle, had shown his worth in the pursuit of the outlaws. Crow...well, he volunteered.

The posse saddle up and head north for Redwater Farm.



Mr and Mrs Shields outside Redwater Farm

SHOOTOUT AT REDWATER FARM

John Hall, cowboy turned outlaw, slowly raises his head and looks over the rock. From his vantage point on the craggy hill he can see, down below, the two buildings of Redwater Farm. Beyond it lies the Redwater River and, over the river, the land of the Apache. He guesses that Chas Shields, the owner of the farm, is inside with his family, having lunch.

Hall scans the horizon. A trail leads from the farm off to his left, heading towards the town of Prospect in the North Hills. To his right the same trail heads off southeast towards Henryville. All seems quiet.

Hall has become disillusioned with the life of the cowboy: hard work, saddle sores, and not much pay. He had been having a well-earned drink over in Wide Gulch, off to the west, when he had overheard the story of the Coffee Gang.

Will Coffee and his gang had raided the Henryville bank in Spring 1875, very unsuccessfully, with all the gang being killed or captured. Two had been caught by the posse whilst trying to escape to the north, with the money. There was much discussion about where the two had been heading. Perhaps they had a stash of stolen goods and money somewhere out there.

Hall knew that area well, having grown up in Iron Mine. All there was round there were the two small towns of Prospect and Iron Mine, a few soddies, and Redwater Farm. If he wanted somewhere good to hide stuff, he'd choose Redwater Farm; it was secluded and Chas Shields didn't have that good a reputation for honesty. Hall had banged his empty beer glass down and decided to get together a small gang of ruffians (easy to do in Iron Mine!) and pay a visit to Redwater Farm.

Hall checks on the positions of his gang. Juno Glaset is off to his right, also peering down at the farm. Hall can just make out Fred Savage and Henry Bourn in amongst the scrub and rocks of the southern edge of the hilltop; they are watching the trail to Henryville. Hall has left Hans Roberts, the least experienced

member of the gang, back behind the rest of the gang, holding the horses.

Hall raises his hand to indicate to Juno Glaset that they should move down the hill to check out the farm, but hears a loud shout from Fred Savage, followed by gunfire.

Sheriff Miron Carter, of Henryville, has also been thinking that Redwater Farm was a good place for the Coffee Gang to hide their ill-gotten gains. He has formed a posse to check on the farm with him (who knows, there might be other members of the Coffee Gang there). He is riding along the trail towards the farm. Alongside him are James Carscodden and John Clark, both good Henryville townfolk. Carter's Deputy, Bill Murphy, is a distance off to Carter's left, riding along with Larry Crow and Mark Welch; the latter is, as usual, somewhat drunk.

Carter's plan is for his group to approach the farm along the trail, next to the river, with Murphy's band skirting round the large rocky hill and heading to the farm from the opposite side to the river.

Carter scans the hilltop. All seems to be quiet.

Savage, from his vantage point, has seen Carter's group approaching. He panics, shouts, and begins firing his carbine at the Sheriff and his men. Bourn also begins firing. Carter's men manage to control their horses. Carter decides to head for cover and leads his men towards the dense scrub at the base of the hill. The outlaws' bullets fly round them. A bullet from Savage hits Clark in the gun arm, knocking him off his horse. Carter is nicked in the leg by a bullet from Bourne. He fires back from his rapidly moving horse and, with a combination of luck and skill, hits Savage in the head, killing him.

Carter and Carscodden reach the scrub, dismount and take cover, slowly crawling through undergrowth to get into a position where they can continue firing at the outlaws.

Bill Murphy has heard the firing. He leads his team to the west side of the hill. Leaving Welch to hold the horses, Murphy and Crow begin climbing up. Suddenly, as they surmount a crag, they see Roberts and the horses of the outlaws. Murphy and Crow both fire, sending Roberts scurrying for cover. Panicked horses scatter over the hill.

This commotion alerts Hall and Bourn, who fire back, much to the discomfort of Roberts, who is in the line of fire. He isn't hit, but one of the horses is.

Welch, hearing the firing, ties up the horses at the base of the hill and moves up to join Murphy and Crow. A prolonged firefight begins, with posse members and outlaws crawling from rock to rock, using all the cover they can.

Hall knows they are in trouble. It is only a matter of time before the Sheriff and his team join in the fight. He must finish this fast. He gives a loud yell and charges forward. Bourn, Glaset, and Roberts, after a moments hesitation, charge with him. This display of bravery is too much for poor Larry Crow, who drops his rifle and flees, bounding down the hill. Murphy is made of sterner stuff; he fires at Bourn with his rifle, hitting him in the head, bowling him over.

The outlaws have now closed in and a brutal hand-to-hand fight starts. Glaset hits Murphy in gut with the butt of his carbine, knocking him out. Welch's buffalo gun roars and Hall collapses, holding his stomach.

Welch keeps firing at the outlaws, but runs out of ammunition. He sees Glaset charging in at him. Welch is now facing the outlaws alone, drops his rifle and flees.

Glaset and Roberts know that the Sheriff will be upon them soon. They take the three horses of Murphy's men, flinging Hall and Bourn—who are wounded but alive—across one horse, and head off north towards the mountains as fast as they can. Hall, moaning and groaning as he is bounced on the back of the horse, realises that an outlaw's life may not be better than that of a cowboy.

EPILOGUE

Carter and Carscodden were able to catch the outlaws' horses and use them to get Clark and Murphy back to Henryville.

Carter recovered fully from the flesh wound to his leg.

It took a whole season for John Clark's wound in his arm to heal, but he eventually made a full recovery.

Bill Murphy suffered no lasting damage from blow to his stomach.

Larry Crow was never seen again after he ran away.

Mark Welch returned to Henryville after a couple of days, and always denied that he had ran away.

John Hall and Henry Bourn both recovered from their wounds, despite the very uncomfortable ride back to Iron Town.

The body of Fred Savage was buried by Chas Shields, close to where he found it on the hill.

THE TRIAL OF THE COFFEE GANG WINTER 1875

SUMMARY

Judge John Kennedy, from Liberty, arrives in Henryville for the trial of Will Coffee, Juno Keeper, and John Rudolf. Most of the townfolk are present for the hearing. There is outcry when Kennedy releases Coffee and Rudolf, only fining them. Keeper is sentenced to just one season in prison.

Sheriff Carter objects, pointing out that Matt Hartman, the ageing gambler, had been killed, horses too, and the outlaws had tried to break out of jail. The meeting erupts in noise as the townfolk shout their agreement.

Kennedy, staying calm, quietens them down. He explains that Hartmann had been killed by the outlaw Ted Hughes, not any of the defendants. And Hughes couldn't be sentenced - he was dead. The horses had been accidentally killed in the crossfire, so it was hard to blame the outlaws. Yes, the outlaws had raided the bank, but the money had been recovered. He had given his verdict: Coffee and Rudolf were to be released immediately, and Keeper early next year.

Carter is watching the outlaws and the judge carefully. Do they know each other? Is the judge corrupt? He is certain of one thing - Rudolf killed his horse, and isn't going to get away with it that easily.

THE HUNT FOR JOHN HALL WINTER 1875 [13]

PROLOGUE

Miron Carter stretched out his legs towards the warm stove and took another sip of whisky. He gave a big grin to Deputy Murphy and Chas Shields, their host. Carter and Murphy visited Redwater Farm after the shootout with the Hall Gang, and questioned Shields and his wife about the incident. It soon became clear that Shields had no involvement with either the Hall Gang or the Coffee Gang, and there was no sign of any loot belonging to the Hall Gang at Redwater Farm. Indeed, the Shields were glad to help, offering to host the lawmen overnight, feeding them and giving them somewhere to sleep. It was after dinner that Chas Shields had told them he had seen horse tracks and some blood spatter leading from the hill that was scene of the gunfight away to the west. He had trailed it; looked like it was leading to the soddie that old Crazy Barnard used to live in. Shields had gotten close enough to see that three horses were outside of it. Carter had decided that he and Murphy would take a look; this might be a chance to get payback

on the Hall Gang. Carter put the whiskey down and began to clean his revolver...

DAWN RAID

Sheriff Carter looks down at the grubby looking soddie. It appears grey and washed out in the light of just-risen sun. Carter and Deputy Murphy have ridden through the dark to get to it, in the hope of catching the outlaws napping. Carter can see one horse outside, and smoke raising from the chimney. Obviously someone is at home. Carter and Murphy watch the soddie a little longer.



Soaring eagle's view of Crazy Barnard's soddie. Carter and Murphy are in the hill in the top left.

Suddenly the door of the soddie opens. A man's figure can be seen in the doorway. He is holding a carbine in one hand and scratching his ass with another. He stretches and walks out towards the toilet. He scratches his ass again and looks up towards the hill. Carter can see it is John Hall. He rests his rifle on a rock and takes careful aim. The bullet hits Hall in the head, bowling him over. Murphy gives a subdued cheer and grins at Carter. They look for further activity. They can hear moaning from Hall, but nothing else.

Carter waves Murphy forward and they run down the hill, darting from cover to cover. Carter reaches the soddie first and puts a couple of rifle bullets into the toilet, just in case it is occupied. It isn't. Hall is alive but in no fit state to resist arrest. Carter checks the soddie; it's empty.

Carter and Murphy rope up Hall and sling him over his horse. They head off towards Redwater Farm so they can get some coffee and patch up Hall's head wound.

EPILOGUE

Hall recovered fully from his head wound whilst waiting in the jail of Henryville Sheriff's Office for his trial.

NOTES

Winter 1875

The Hunt for John Hall.

Hall recovers from his head wound. He will try to jailbreak in 3 seasons.

22. Spring 76. Hector Helsington [156], older brother of [53], killed in 08, comes to avenge the death. But is he after Sheriff Carter [26] or Carscodden [41]?