

FIRST DRAFT

Card game led to Indian battle century ago in southeastern Utah

A dispute over a campfire card game, the murder of one of the participants and the search for the accused murderer near Bluff, Utah, sparked one of the last armed Indian conflicts in the United States 100 years ago this month.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

The card game and shooting of sheepherder Juan Chacon occurred in March 1914. But the accused, a 27-year-old Ute man named Tse-ne-gat, refused to give himself up.

So, in February 1915, U.S. Marshal Aquila Nebeker of Salt Lake City formed a posse of nearly 75 men from southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado.

They tried to surround Tse-ne-gat and his father, Polk, along with Polk's band of about 30 Utes, on Feb. 21 near Bluff. A small group of Paiutes led by Posey was nearby and also became involved. A gunfight ensued. One member of the posse, a man from Dolores, and at least two Indians were killed.

Nebeker unsuccessfully pursued the Indians for several weeks. But when Tse-ne-gat and others finally surrendered, it was to an aging Army general who met the fugitives, backed only by an aide and some Navajo interpreters.

The fight near Bluff wasn't the last armed battle between whites and Indians. But it was close. And issues related to it — the refusal of some Utes and Paiutes to live on reservations and continued friction with ranchers over livestock grazing — would linger for years.

In 1923, they led to what has been called the Last Indian Uprising.

Utes have lived in southeastern Utah for centuries, but after a law passed in 1880, they were expected to move to a new reservation in Colorado.

Posey's band of Paiutes also had deep roots in southeastern Utah. They and the local Utes rejected living on the Colorado reservation because of limited water and grass for their livestock, and they believed the Colorado Utes were hostile to them.

So animosity between whites and Indians in Utah continued, even though some ranchers



A newspaper from February 1915 recounts a battle between Indians and a posse of 75 men led by a U.S. marshal from Salt Lake City. A Ute man who was accused of murdering a sheepherder refused to give himself up.

supported the Indians.

In 1903, Posey was accused of stealing a horse, but the charges against him were dropped.

In 1907, Polk and Tse-ne-gat angrily confronted white ranchers attempting to force their cattle onto traditional Ute grazing lands in Montezuma Canyon, east of Monticello, Utah.

Even so, in 1908 a report prepared by the superintendent of the Fort Lewis Indian School near Durango said the Utes in Montezuma Canyon were peaceful and prosperous and were not a threat to whites.

But other reports and local officials argued the Indians killed livestock, were a threat to whites and should be forcibly removed to Colorado.

So when Tse-ne-gat — who already had a reputation as a trouble-maker — was accused of murder, whites in the region were eager to see him arrested and his band removed from Utah.

Marshal Nebeker's failure

to arrest the young Ute was frustrating. So there was great interest when Gen. Hugh Scott appeared.

On March 8, 1915, The Daily Sentinel announced Scott's arrival in Grand Junction by train. He continued by rail to Thompson, Utah, then headed by wagon to Bluff in hopes of negotiating with the Indians. It was a risky mission, the paper declared.

On March 20 at a trading post in Mexican Hat, Scott accepted the surrender of Tse-ne-gat and several others, including Polk and Posey. The general accompanied seven of them to Salt Lake City, where all but Tse-ne-gat were eventually released after they promised to move to the reservation in Colorado. They did so, but soon returned to Utah.

By the time Tse-ne-gat's trial began on July 9 in Denver, he was a popular figure in the city, reportedly receiving red neckties, pink stockings and love notes from local women.

The trial featured claims of

witness intimidation and an Indian agent who angered the prosecution by supporting Tse-ne-gat.

After nine days, Tse-ne-gat was acquitted. He left Denver, waving from the last train car as crowds cheered him. He returned to Utah, where he died from tuberculosis in 1922.

Friction between the whites and Indians continued into 1923.

Then the trial of two Utes accused of stealing from a sheepherder, and their escape before sentencing, prompted another posse to chase the latest offenders, who soon allied with Posey's band. There was another brief gun battle. Most of the Indians soon surrendered, but Posey refused.

However, he was wounded in the initial battle and died several weeks later, probably of complications from his wound.

The Last Indian Uprising had ended. The small group of Utes and Paiutes were allowed to remain in Utah on individual land allotments. Most eventually settled on White Mesa, south of Blanding, and became known as the White Mesa Utes.

Information for this article came primarily from Robert S. McPherson's 2011 book, "As if the Land Owned Us, an Ethnohistory of the White Mesa Utes," and from the 2003 book, "A History of Utah's American Indians," edited by Forrest S. Cuch.

Email Bob Silbernagel at bobsilbernagel@gmail.com.



SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Army Gen. Hugh Scott, shown in 1918, accepted the surrender of accused murderer Tse-ne-gat on March 20, 1915, at a trading post in Mexican Hat, Utah.

Aspen has one of its driest Januaries ever

By SCOTT CONDON The Aspen Times

ASPEN — Aspen's January snowfall was the second lowest amount for the month since 1935, according to the record keepers at the Aspen Water Treatment Plant.

Only 5.26 inches of snow were recorded for the month, according to a report by Laura Taylor.

"Average snowfall for this month is 25.74 inches," Taylor wrote. "This minimal snowfall is the second lowest recorded here since January 1935. Back in 1961, the lowest snowfall for January was recorded at 5.0 inches.

The water treatment plant is on Doolittle Drive, near Castle Creek, at an elevation of 8,148 feet. Snowfall amounts at differ-

ent locations around the Aspen metro area usually vary, but the water-treatment plant is the official National Weather Service station.

The station's records show Aspen has received less than 10 inches of snow in January only five times since 1935 prior to this year. There were 5 inches in 1961, 6.5 inches in 1974, 9.9 inches in 1981, 9.25 inches in 1985-86 and 7.75 inches in 2002-03.

In contrast to the dry years, the record high snowfall for January was 71.5 inches in 1957.

Snowmass Village saw 13 inches of snowfall in January.

This winter, to date, isn't close to the driest on record. Snowfall was well above average to start the winter. There were 32.3 inches in November compared with an average of 22.14 inches. The

tap turned on late in December and produced 42.63 inches of snow for the month compared with an average of 25.01 inches.

So far this winter, 82.49 inches of snow have fallen. In the infamous drought winter of 1976-77, only 85.70 inches of snow fell from October through May. That spurred the Colorado ski industry to invest in snowmaking equipment.

The record low snowfall for a winter was 1953-54, when only 59.10 inches fell.

However, data for March was missing that winter. The winter of 1976-77 is the lowest snowfall for any winter with complete information.

Joe Ramey, a forecaster and meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Grand Junction, said precipitation was a

mixed bag for western Colorado in January.

Durango enjoyed one-half inch above average in total precipitation for the month, and Grand Junction also was above average, he said. Below-average precipitation was more common, he said.

"There's been a big ridge just out to our west all of January," Ramey said. "That ridge is really the culprit."

That ridge of high pressure deflected storms to the north and to the south of the Aspen area. In the short term, Aspen could pick up a few inches of snow from a series of weak disturbances, Ramey said.

A wet spring is forecast in the desert southwest and into the Colorado Rockies during March and into April.

BLOTTER COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF

Man steals smartphone

The Grand Junction Police Department is seeking information about a man suspected of stealing an LG L39C smartphone valued at more than \$300 from Walmart at 2545 Rimrock Ave.

The alleged theft happened shortly before 1 p.m. Jan. 8.

The suspect appears to be a white man between the ages of 25 and 30, of medium build, between 5 feet 8 inches and 6 feet tall,

with black hair. He was wearing a black jacket, blue jeans and black sneakers the day of the theft and was seen driving away from the store in a black passenger car with a Colorado license plate that read 788-QVT.

A surveillance photo of the suspect is available at www.241stop.com. Anyone with information about this crime can contact Crime Stoppers anonymously at 241-7867. Information that leads to an arrest can earn a caller up to \$1,000 cash.

According to the Grand Junction Po-

lice Department:

Jeffery McCrum, 44, was arrested and booked into the Mesa County Jail on suspicion of brandishing a weapon in front of a victim Wednesday at 2984 1/2 Brookwood Drive.

Troy Green Jr., 24, was contacted Friday night in the alley behind Quincy Bar at 609 Main St. on suspicion of urinating in public. Green also had a warrant for his arrest and was arrested on suspicion of drug possession. He was booked into the Mesa County Jail.

Cash 5 Sunday: 11-13-29-31-32

Pick 3 Sunday: 9-6-5

For information, go to www.coloradolottery.com.



HOW TO REACH US - 242-5050

CIRCULATION Subscription and delivery questions: 242-1919 or (800) 332-5833

ADVERTISING Retail advertising: 256-4289 Classified advertising: 242-1313

NEWSROOM Managing editor: 256-4252 City desk: 256-4213

Features and entertainment: 256-4224 Sports: 256-4203 Commentary: 256-4236

2015 THIS WEEK IN THE LEGISLATURE

DENVER — Lawmakers in the Democratic-controlled House and the Republican-controlled Senate have spent much time killing bills by minority party members in recent weeks, and this week is likely to be no exception.

A House committee is expected to do that again with GOP bills that would require photo IDs to vote, something Republicans like but Democrats don't.

Today: The Legislature is closed in observance of Presidents Day.

Tuesday: The House Business Affairs & Labor Committee will debate HB1177, introduced in part by Rep. Yulin Willett, R-Grand Junction, and Sen. Kerry Donovan, D-Vail, that would offer grants to the most economically distressed rural areas of the state for programs that help attract jobs and diversify economies.

Wednesday: The House State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee will hear two bills, HB1140 and HB1169, that deal with requiring a photo identification card to vote.

Thursday: The Senate Agriculture,

Natural Resources & Energy Committee will hear SB127 that would allow a marketing or advertising company to get a state tax deduction if it donates its services to a local community for the purposes of promoting agritourism.

Next week: The Senate Judiciary Committee will hear a bill that would repeal the state's controversial law limiting how much ammunition can be in gun magazines. The measure, SB175, has sponsorship from all 18 Republicans in the Senate and three Democrats, including Sen. Kerry Donovan, the Vail Democrat whose district includes Delta County.

The measure, however, only has 12 House members signed on so far, including one Democrat, Rep. Ed Vigil, D-Fort Garland, who voted against the law when it was enacted in 2013.

All floor action and committees can be watched or heard on the Legislature's website at www.leg.state.co.us. Check that website to see which measures are available for remote testimony, and how to register to speak.

— Charles Ashby

Denver cops upset after their memorial vandalized

By SADIE GURMAN Associated Press

DENVER — Denver Police Chief Robert White on Sunday defended his policy ordering police not to interfere with protesters, saying he found it "disgusting" that they vandalized a memorial for fallen police officers while officers had to stand by and watch, but he said their restraint was necessary to protect the community.

Protesters threw red paint on the memorial outside the department's headquarters Saturday during a march against police brutality.

Officers and the city's police union were upset after they were told not to interfere.

In an email sent throughout the department Sunday, White said there are only rare occasions when police would have to take "immediate enforcement action" during a demonstration.

"We have learned that providing route security at a distance and intentionally avoiding direct confrontation prevents injury to officers, limits liability, and minimizes the criminal actions of many protesters," the chief wrote in the email obtained by The Associ-

ated Press. The email came after officers said they should have been allowed to act sooner upon witnessing a crime.

Denver Director of Public Safety Stephanie O'Malley said the policy of restraint is "a model for other cities as they respond to a growing wave of protests across America."

Denver police issued the policy after widespread protests over several people killed by police, including the police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed, black 18-year-old in Ferguson, Missouri, and the police chokehold death of Eric Garner in New York City.

Officers involved in both deaths were later cleared of any charges by local grand juries.

In Denver, some protesters held signs in support of Jessica Hernandez, a teenager who was shot and killed by Denver officers last month after she drove a stolen car toward an officer.

Matthew Goldberg, 23, and Robert Guerrero, 25, were charged with criminal mischief-vandalism for throwing red paint on the memorial during the rally.

Subscription information for The Daily Sentinel, including rates for home delivery, weekend packages, and single copies.

Advertisement for Brown's Shoe Fit Co. featuring a Winter Sales Event, Free Gait Analysis, and contact information for 425 Main St.

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS! GRAND VALLEY REAL ESTATE GUIDE

..is the local resource to buying and selling in the Grand Valley, providing valuable information for buyers and sellers at all stages - first time, moving up, downsizing and relocation.

Distributed in the full run circulation of The Daily Sentinel plus at key consumer pick up points throughout the valley, this publication features information every buyer and seller needs for their real estate search, including:

- Area profiles with map
Professional Real Estate Resource Directory - including Realtors, real estate companies, builders, mortgage companies
New construction and subdivision update
Financial facts on your home transaction
2014 Statistics
Professionals' Forecast for 2015

Publishes: Sunday, March 15 Advertising Deadline: Thursday, February 26

Judy Shay 256-4284 or Carol Clark 256-4290 FAX: 241-6860 EMAIL: gjsentinel.com THE DAILY SENTINEL 734 South 7th Street, Grand Junction, CO 81501