

# Fred Hans, the Bandit Hunter

### Man of Nerve Whose Life is spent in Scouring Black Hills — His Business is to Protect Trains Carrying Treasure from Great Mines—Costly for a Gang to Rob a Train.

Western bandits who prey upon the express treasure and passengers carried by the railroads have been so active of late that the managers of properties in Nebraska are making extra efforts to outfit the robbers. The success of Messenger Baxter in killing an Omaha bandit a few weeks ago has put new life into the railroad people. The Union Pacific, the Burlington, the Rock Island and the Northwestern people out of Omaha are arming their messengers anew with Winchester "pump" guns, having new shells with sixteen buckshot each loaded for them, and in other ways preparing to exterminate the first road agent band that attempts to hold up one of their trains. Every large railroad operating out of Omaha employs from one to a dozen men whose exclusive duty it is to protect their trains from the bandit raids, trail the robbers after they hold up the train, and chase them into a fastness of the mountain and kill or capture them. Of all the famous western characters who have made the bandit hunting a business, none is better known than Fred Hans. Hans of Omaha, who is chief of the Northwestern bandit hunters. For years it has been the business of Frederick Hans to protect the treasure trains of that company operating through the Black Hills.

From Deadwood to Omaha the Northwestern carries the treasure of the great Homestake mines. During some months this company ships over \$100,000 in treasure over this road. The lines of the company are operated for many miles through a wild and desolate section after leaving Deadwood. It is a most inviting spot for the work of road agents. The fact that these treasure trains escape the raids of bandits is undoubtedly due to their fear of the man who is the head of the force of bandit hunters the company employs.

Fred Hans is a mild mannered fellow, with blue eyes and of most affable address. As he saunters along the streets of Omaha he is about the last man in the world one would pick out for desperate work with rifle and revolver. Yet this same pleasant appearing fellow, with his careless smile has been in more desperate affairs with road agents, killed more outlaws and sent more to penitentiaries than any man in the west. "Fred," as he is known to nine-tenths of the people of Omaha, is constantly on the move. He has a wife and three babies in Omaha that he gets a chance to see once a month or so, but most of his time is spent "up in the hills," circulating among the element that is most likely to engage in hold-ups.

It is his business to locate all these characters the moment a train is held up in his territory. Thus he can very nearly place the responsibility for a train robbery in the northwest the day after it occurs. Incidentally, it may be said that Fred Hans carries a considerable number of bullet holes on his person, slight testimonials of his many desperate fights.

It was Fred Hans who went into the "Hole in the Wall" after "Shacknasty Jim" and his outlaw band and killed the leader and two of his companions before he returned. Again Fred Hans and five members of the "Robbers' Roost" gang one bright morning on the Running Water in South Dakota. He had but shortly before that been instrumental in piloting a posse of Custer citizens to the lair of the band, where nine of them had been killed and they thought to get even. The five road agents waited until Hans rode close to the sand hill behind which they were hiding, then rode down on him, firing their rifles as they galloped. A fortunate shot passed through the heart of the horse that Hans was riding. Using the animal for a shield, the railroad bandit hunter got out his heavy pistols and began business right there. He only shot four times. The first bullet he fired passed through the heart of the nearest bandit, the next one struck one of the horses of the oncoming gang and killed it, the third passed through the head of another bandit, killing him instantly, and the fourth passed through the body of one of the gang and he died later. The two remaining members of the band surrendered and were taken into Custer by Hans. The men he killed on the spot were known as "Texas Fleet Foot," and "Mountain Pete." The other two, "Long Tom" and "Skinny," were sent to the penitentiary for life.

This is the kind of man who guards the Northwestern treasure trains through the territory west of the Mississippi rivers. He is probably the quickest and deadliest shot with a revolver in the west. He carries two enormous ".45's" of the Colt pattern of 30 years ago. The fact that the guns are the vintage of another generation does not worry Fred Hans. He has been presented by different people with a number of handsome modern pistols, but he says he can't shoot them like he can his old "irons."

Discussing bandit hunting and the method of road agents in holding up trains a few days ago, Fred Hans said: "It requires a man of very desperate courage to undertake to handle a railroad train crowded with passengers. Of course you find men every day who are willing to take the chances involved in spite of the fact that few of them escape the consequences long enough to enjoy whatever they have secured in the hold up. In truth it is not the act of robbing the train that requires the greatest exhibition of skill and daring, but rather the escape after the crime has been committed. You see, in robbing a train the band stands little chance of opposition. Passengers are, as a rule, unarmed, and the express messengers are not in the po-

sition to make much of a fight. The use of dynamite by road agents is a terrifying element for express messengers. The minute the bandits start to make their escape they come in contact with fighting men who are as well armed and well mounted as they and know how to use their guns. This is the element of danger that deters many bandits from attacking a railroad train.

"When a gang of men contemplate a hold-up now, the first thing they do is to arrange for their escape. A route of retreat is selected, and the bandits go over the trail, so that they can follow it night or day. They frequently secrete food for themselves and horses along the route and lay in plenty of ammunition. The Black Hills of the country in Southern Wyoming are favorite resorts for train robbers these days. Here most of the desperate road agents live. These men are, however, not of the class that will undertake single handed to rob a train. They operate like the James gang did, but of course are not so dangerous, because they have not the sympathy of the community in which they operate. They are not so expert with firearms as the James gang, neither are they banded together by associations, such as made the James gang successful. These bandits merely trust each other as long as they are together, and they know it is a matter of self preservation.

"The same energy, hardship and daring these men expend in robbing trains. If turned into honest channels would reap for them a great deal more substantial profits than the dangerous business they engage in, but they are attracted by stories of enormous hauls by train robbers and dazzled by reports in the newspapers that this or that gang secured a hundred thousand dollars in a raid. Of course these raids sometimes net the robbers a big sum, but in most cases they do not get enough to pay the expenses of the undertaking. It costs a pile of money for a gang of six or seven western desperadoes to prepare for a train hold up. They must have the best horses money will buy, they must get a city crook, as a rule, to handle the dynamite; they must have white powder for their guns in the event of a collision with a posse, which is quite certain, and a thousand little details. The minute the news of a hold-up is flashed over the wire we start possessing from a dozen different points. These close in on the robbers. The road agents are afraid to split up in the face of a possible fight. They know they will be killed one at a time if they do not stick together. That is their only chance, and, of course, it makes the trail easier for us to follow.

"The Hole in the Wall country is the place these western bandits now make for. That is a wild section and most difficult of access. If the gang gets in there it is hard to get at them. Usually we merely wait for them to come out and then we get 'em."

"Most of the bandits we come in contact with are of the most desperate character. Of course they know that sooner or later they will die with their boots on. Most of them are wanted for some crime that would keep them in the penitentiary for life, if it would not carry them to the scaffold, and so, of course, they will not surrender. I usually hunt these characters singly and with my pistols. It is my experience that in the wild country a desperado character seeing a lone man who does not carry a rifle, will permit him to approach, where otherwise he would hide if the same man was armed with a rifle or accompanied by others. With my pistols I can get close to a bandit on the plains and then I jump from my horse, use the animal as a breastwork and begin to shoot before the robber expects the attack. He surrenders or is killed, just as he prefers. My experience is that a quick shot with a pistol is worth a dozen long range shots with a rifle.

"I have had some measure of success hunting road agents, and have been forced to kill some of these desperate characters, but all my work has been done with a heavy revolver. I do not recall a fight I have been in, except possibly when I was scouting in the Indian service, where I used anything but my revolvers. I can kill a man three hundred yards every shot with my pistol. I carry on my watch chain today a bullet I cut from the heart of my horse. It is a souvenir of the fight I had with the "Robbers' Roost" on the Running Water. The man who fired the shot used a Winchester and was firing at me from a distance of five hundred yards. Before he reached the range of my pistols he had probably shot at me six times, one of his bullets plowing a furrow through the top of my scalp but the moment he came within range of my heavy revolver I placed a bullet squarely between his eyes. This was "Fleet Foot," probably one of the worst murderers and road agents the west has ever produced.

"I usually carry three heavy revolvers when hunting road agents, and carry about five hundred extra shells. I would rather have plenty of cartridges than plenty of food when I am looking for real bad people. My experience however is that train robbing has been made so dangerous that it is losing its popularity and will probably disappear in a few years."—Omaha Correspondent of New York Times.

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OPPOSITION TO THE BIG DAM IS CRYSTALLIZING AGAIN IN COLORADO AND NEW MEXICO, AS SHOWN IN NEWSPAPERS

The Territory is Doing Everything It Can to Defeat the International Dam, But the Newspapers and Public Men as a Rule Evince Either Ignorance or Wilful Desire to Misrepresent the Facts.

The bill introduced in congress for the building of the international dam near this city by the general government has not only awakened opposition throughout New Mexico but also in Colorado.

The Rocky Mountain News in a recent issue sets forth that the bill is a menace to the irrigated section of Colorado which depends on the waters of the upper Rio Grande and calls upon Colorado's representatives to watch the progress of the bill closely and defeat it as it now stands, if possible.

It ridicules the claims of the inhabitants of northern Mexico for compensation for the loss of water which had been theirs time out of mind, and guaranteed to them under the terms of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and asserts that the Mexicans were encouraged to present their claims by American boosters of the international dam project.

The way New Mexico looks at the matter is shown in the following from the Albuquerque Citizen:

The people of New Mexico do not properly appreciate the danger that is hanging over the territory in the project to build an international dam at El Paso. Delegate-elect Rodey, Governor Otero, Dr. Nathan E. Boyd, and a few others, do appreciate it, and are working like beavers to prevent the passage of the Culberson bill, which embodies the ideas of those who favor the measure. Gov. Otero is now making a flying trip to Washington in behalf of the territory on this question, in the few days that remain to him before the legislature convenes at Santa Fe.

Dr. Boyd, who is the American agent of the bondholders of the Elephant Butte dam project, is working hard in Washington against the scheme, and while primarily fighting for the rights of his company, is necessarily fighting the battle of the people of New Mexico. He should not be put on the great expense this involves. He has spoken on the subject to nearly every senator and congressman, and to all officials who have anything to do with the matter, and has filed a written argument comprising more than fifty typewritten pages, before the secretary of state protesting against it, and showing to that official how partial certain reports made to the United States senate were, owing to either negligence or partisanship of the government officials who compiled them. Delegate-elect Rodey has filed written briefs and arguments before the secretary of state, the attorney general, and the committee on foreign relations of the United States senate, besides furnishing copies to several senators not on the committee, and the Colorado delegation in congress. Besides this he has spoken to many officials at Washington against the measure, and has devoted a large part of his time for about a month past working against the bill. The people of New Mexico from Las Cruces to Embudo should hold meetings and protest against this iniquity, and send the resolutions adopted to congress for its consideration.

Interested parties at El Paso, Texas, chief among whom is Colonel Amador Mills, a United States official who has become intensely partisan against New Mexico and Colorado about the matter and who now resides in Washington and is occupied solely in fostering this bill, are aiding the Mexican government in every way possible in its demands for large sums of money, for alleged injuries to the agricultural interests of citizens of Mexico on the south bank of the river below El Paso. These parties are trying to induce our government to build a large dam just above El Paso, at its own cost, and give half the water collected there to Mexico, and prevent everybody living above the dam from ever hereafter appropriating any water not already appropriated. The passage of a law to this effect will of course forever paralyze New Mexico. If the Elephant Butte dam is built 120 miles above El Paso, it will supply the whole Mesilla valley, including El Paso, and land for quite a distance below it on the American side with plenty of water without reference to the people of Mexico to whom we owe nothing.

The Mexican government claims, that because the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo provides that from the south line of New Mexico to the gulf, where the center line of the Rio Grande is the international boundary, that the navigation of the river shall be free and common to the vessels and citizens of both countries, and that neither shall without the other's consent construct any work that may impede or interrupt in whole or in part the exercise of this right, that is the right of navigation; that this government must not permit the construction of any impediment in the river anywhere above the southern line of New Mexico.

In consideration of getting the half of the waters impounded at El Paso, the Mexican government magnanimously (?) agrees to forego forever its claim of \$35,000,000 of damages against our government. After the Elephant Butte dam people had, with the sanction of our government, spent large amounts of money in the construction of its dam, the Mexican government and the El Paso people, induced our state department to procure through the department of justice the bringing of injunction proceedings against it, and although our government was by its own courts, that is

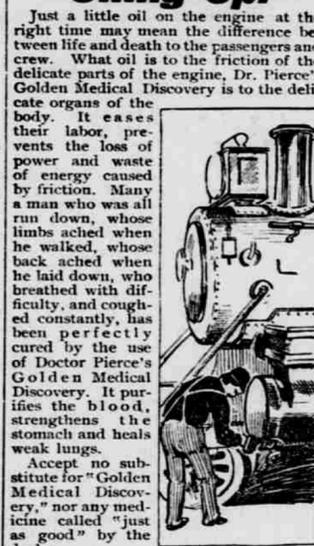
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Mr. Chas. Hunwick, of Lenox, Macomb Co., Mich., writes: "I have never felt better in my life than I do now. I have taken Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery right along. I can now walk quite well with a cane, and hope to grow even taller before long, as I have had to use crutches for nearly two years. I think I am doing fine. I do not cough now and I can sleep like a school boy. You must know that I have been treated in two hospitals and by three doctors besides, and received no benefit; so I think your medicine is the only medicine for me."

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the district and supreme courts of the territory and the supreme court of the United States, defeated five successive times, still these parties are now endeavoring when defeat is staring them in the face to get this Culberson bill passed before the last appeal from the supreme court of the United States is decided in favor of the territory of New Mexico, as it surely will be, and before the record in that last appeal, which was taken only at the last moment, is printed in the supreme court of the United States, so that the committee of congress would have a chance to see it.

Delegate-elect Rodey since his return from Washington has worked to get the record in this last appeal sent up, which is now done, our court officials having attended to it promptly, and all friends of New Mexico are pressing the department of state, the department of justice, congress and the supreme court of the United States to have it printed for the information of congress, because it is believed by the friends of New Mexico that even before the decision in the supreme court of the United States on this last appeal that if congress shall have an opportunity to see the bill will never become a law. The courts of New Mexico hold that the navigability of the Rio Grande below the south line of New Mexico, never was, never will be, and never can be, affected by the construction of any dam or impeding structure in New Mexico, and the navigability of the river, is the only question in which the republic of Mexico, under the treaties has anything to say.

It is hoped that these few remarks on this subject will awaken the people of New Mexico to a proper sense of their danger, in time to prevent the passage of the iniquitous Culberson-Stephens bill.

INTERESTING COMPLICATION IN THE KRUG CASE

From the San Antonio Express.

The Krug extradition case was continued Friday morning in the federal building before United States Commissioner Seelgson, and took up the time of the court throughout the day. No witnesses were put on the stand, the entire day being taken up in argument by counsel. The question at issue was as to whether the charge in Mexico for robbery without violence and the complaint here charging robbery and embezzlement, and the evidence showing embezzlement under our laws and probable robbery without violence under the Mexican laws, would allow defendant to be extradited. The contention of Krug's attorneys was that the charge in Mexico being for robbery without violence and the evidence showing embezzlement under our law, he could not be extradited, because there was no charge of embezzlement in Mexico. The contention of the prosecution was that the evidence while it showed embezzlement under our law, also showed robbery without violence under the Mexican law and the treaty.

"CHEATING THE POOR."

The following is contributed to The Herald by a little El Paso girl:

I have often noticed How the people that are well to do. Let three children go out to sell papers on the streets. I have often asked their parents why they let three children sell papers. "Oh it will turn them to work," they will say. But do you know there are lots of those same people. That have lots of chores for three children to do at home. Those they never think of turning them to work. By putting them at it. They would sooner let them go out and sell papers and cheat the poor boys. Who haven't got no other way to make a living. If the rich would not let three children sell papers. The poor children would have a better showen.

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