

FIRST DRAFT

Deputy's murder sparks outrage and quick justice 114 years ago

Edward Innes was a well-liked young man and the beloved son of Mesa County's first elected sheriff. He'd been a respected Grand Junction fire chief. By 1906, he was a deputy in the county jail, noted for treating inmates kindly.

So, when he was murdered by one of those inmates on Sept. 26, 1906, the community was outraged and justice was swift.

■ The killer, John "George" McGarvey, was captured on Sept. 30, after a furious man-hunt.

■ McGarvey's trial began on Oct. 3 and concluded the next day with a guilty verdict.

■ He was sentenced to death on Oct. 5.

■ He was hanged on Jan. 12, 1907.

Edward Innes was born in 1878 on the Front Range. But he was raised here and graduated from Grand Junction High School.

His father, William Innes, operated a sawmill near Whitewater when he moved his family here in 1882.

William Innes served two non-consecutive terms as sheriff, the first beginning in 1883, shortly after Mesa County was created. He was elected again in 1892 and served through 1896.

His son became Grand Junction's fire chief, probably in 1901.

When he was reappointed by the Grand Junction City Council in 1903, The Daily Sentinel reported, "His record has been so good that there was no contesting nominee and his election for this important position was made by acclamation."

He ran a professional department and helped to modernize its equipment. He was also in charge of Curley, "the little dog at the fire station" who "is always to be found at the heels of Chief Innes when there is a fire," the Sentinel said.

Despite this record, and even though volunteer firefighters petitioned to have him retained, the City Council declined to reappoint Innes as fire chief in 1905.

So, Innes went to work for then-Sheriff William Struthers, as a deputy in the county jail.

Innes was single and lived with his parents at their home at 755 Ouray Ave.

But he was no shrinking violet, according to the Sentinel: "No young man in Grand Junction was held in higher regard or had more friends than Edward Innes."

The Mesa County Fair was underway the last week of September, so Sheriff Struthers and most of his deputies were not near the jail on the evening Innes was attacked.

Innes was the only officer there about 5 p.m., watching as several inmates played cards in a cell. McGarvey was in the corridor with Innes, as was a 16-year-old youngster named Charles Van Horn, who had allegedly stolen a bicycle.

McGarvey had been in jail since April, accused of raping a 12-year-old girl.

But he appeared sickly, and Innes "was inclined to allow the man some privileges as a trusty," the Sentinel reported the day after the attack.

"For this privilege and kindness the brute has shown his gratitude by attempting to kill the man who befriended him," the paper added. Innes died of head injuries late on Sept. 27.

On the 26th, McGarvey had grabbed a heavy piece of kindling wood, snuck up behind Innes and smashed him in the head, proclaiming "I got you this time, Eddie!"



Two unidentified members of the Grand Junction Fire Department, with Chief Edward Innes standing at the right. The dog is believed to be "Curly," the firehouse dog that the Sentinel said could always be found with Innes at a fire.

MUSEUM OF WESTERN COLORADO

Van Horn, cowering in a corner, was the only eyewitness.

The card-playing inmates only saw McGarvey after he grabbed Innes' revolver and threatened to kill any prisoner who made noise.

When McGarvey disappeared into the falling dusk, the inmates yelled to pedestrians outside. One pedestrian found Sheriff Struthers, and he soon arrived with deputies and doctors.

There were reports of a furtive-looking man heading south toward the Colorado River, and a tracking dog followed a scent to the sugar beet plant near the river.

Telephone calls were made throughout the county, telling people to be on the lookout for a late-20s, clean-shaven man with black hair, about 5-feet, 4-inches tall, weighing around 130 pounds.

However, searchers had no success the first few days, and a reward for McGarvey grew from \$50 to \$500.

Then, late on Sept. 29, a man thought to be McGarvey was spotted near a swamp along the Colorado River, six miles east of Grand Junction.

Carrying torches and weapons, 150 men surrounded the swamp and waited until dawn. But they found no fugitive.

McGarvey had not gone that way. Instead, he headed northeast to Palisade. There, he jumped a train and rode just a few miles before a conductor threw him off near Caneo. From there, he struck out on foot.

Early on Sept. 30, he appeared at William McDowell's ranch, two miles west of De Beque, looking ragged and begging for food.

McDowell suspected this was the wanted man, and he offered him temporary work cutting firewood.

Once McGarvey was busy, McDowell aimed a shotgun at him and demanded his surrender.

He also retrieved the pistol McGarvey had taken from Innes. He took McGarvey into De Beque, where he was held until Sheriff Struthers arrived.

Struthers and his undersheriff took the prisoner east by train.

Although there was no hint of possible mob violence, "the officers, wanting to be on the safe side, thought it best to take McGarvey to Glenwood Springs until the day of the trial," the Sentinel reported.



John "George" McGarvey, the man convicted of killing Deputy Innes, as he appeared in a prison photo shortly before his death. The Daily Sentinel ran this photo on its front page on Jan. 12, 1907, the day McGarvey was hanged. It's not clear why a question mark was superimposed on the photo.

That occurred Oct. 3 and continued the next day. Van Horn testified, as did several other inmates, Struthers, the undersheriff and the county coroner.

McGarvey's court-appointed attorney didn't dispute the testimony. He argued that the killing was not premeditated and that McGarvey only wanted to incapacitate Innes.

It didn't work. At 4 p.m. Oct. 4, the jury returned a guilty verdict on first-degree murder.

Judge Theron Stevens announced the sentence Oct. 5, ordering McGarvey to be hanged at the penitentiary in Cañon City the following January.

The judge also told McGarvey, "You should be wiped from the face of the earth ... Had you one hundred lives, the taking of them all could not atone for the foul crime."

After his trial, McGarvey worked unsuccessfully to get a new trial or to have his sentence commuted. He also pleaded for help from his father in New Jersey, Bernard McGarvey, a well-to-do property owner.

The elder McGarvey was appalled by the rape charge and then the murder of Innes, and wanted nothing to do with his son.

After Bernard's mother — John McGarvey's grandmother — implored him to act, Bernard

McGarvey finally did so. He sent letters to Colorado Gov. Henry Buchtel, pleading for mercy for his son.

He was too late. The letters arrived just days after the sentence was carried out on John McGarvey.

Few people in Mesa County shed any tears for McGarvey. In fact, the Sentinel reported on Jan. 24, 1907, that there was a new display in the Grand Junction Fire Department: In a glass case on the firehouse wall was the noose that hanged McGarvey.

Edward Innes, the first Mesa County law enforcement officer to die in the line of duty, was inducted into the Colorado Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial in 2000.

In 2007, his name was added to the National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial in Washington, D.C.

No other employee of the Mesa County Sheriff's Office died in the line of duty for more than 100 years, until Deputy Derek Geer was shot and killed on Feb. 8, 2016.

Sources: The Daily Sentinel online at newspapers.com. Mesa County Sheriff's Office Wall of Honor.

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Rail mill project solidifies Pueblo's 'Steel City' moniker

By JON POMPLA
The Pueblo Chieftain

PUEBLO — Like the city itself, steel-making in Pueblo has seen its highs and lows, booms and busts, and periods of "steady as she goes."

In history tomes as well as the minds of the thousands with a connection to the "steel mill" and the mines that fed it, memories of strikes, mass layoffs, bankruptcy and name changes share space with thoughts of the glorious era when coal, and in turn American steel, was king.

Now, with the announcement that EVRAZ North America plans to move forward with an estimated \$480 million in improvements at its Pueblo plant, the iconic South Side steel mill is set to become the most modern rail-rolling facility in North America.

A foreshadowing of the next era that will see Pueblo remain at the epicenter of steel-making for the next 50 years.

Steel-making in Pueblo is inextricably linked with the city, which this year is celebrating its 150th anniversary, as well as with Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I), the company that established its main plant at the location now occupied by EVRAZ.

But the genesis of the enduring moniker "Steel City" lies not with industry magnate and CF&I owner John D. Rockefeller, but with a Civil War veteran turned industrialist.

On Jan. 11, 1872, Gen. William J. Palmer, founder of the Central Colorado Improvement Co., declared the purpose of his venture "to purchase lands, minerals springs, coal and iron and other mines and quarries in Colorado Territory, and the establishment and building up of colonies, towns, coal mining, iron making and manufacturing works, and to build canals and wagon roads."

"Just two years earlier, the general organized the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad," notes Victoria Miller, curator at Steelworks Center of the West. "While his competitors were building rail lines east and west, Palmer proposed a narrow gauge from Denver along the Rocky Mountains southward to El Paso, Texas and eventually Mexico."

On a cold morning in February 1880, eight men ventured to a prairie south of what was to become the town of South Pueblo and began excavating for the foundation of a blast furnace.

As the labor force grew, so too did the "neighborhood," as makeshift homes sprung up on the construction area west of the furnace sites. Residents named the settlement Taylorville, in honor of the superintendent of construction, Col. W.W. Taylor.

"Taylorville remained the popular name until 1881, when the company insisted that the proper designation for the area was 'Steelworks,'" Miller said. "At that time, between 300 and 400 men were employed, and the monthly payroll was \$7,000 to \$8,000."

Later that year, the corporation began organizing a town named "Bessemer" and, through the South Pueblo Homestead and Investment Co., arranged for the building of a large number of homes.

Once these permanent homes were up, the temporary dwellings were abandoned.

And when the Colorado Coal and Iron Co. consolidated with J.C. Osgood's Colorado Fuel Co. in October 1892, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co. (CF&I) was born, launching Pueblo's reputation as the "Pittsburgh of the West."

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