

THE DAILY BEE

OMAHA PUBLISHING CO., PROPRIETORS. 116 Farnham, bet. 9th and 10th Streets.

RAILWAY TIME TABLE. Table with columns for route, time, and station.

MAIL GLEANINGS.

Jim Bludso, the Engineer of the Prairie Belle, Who Died Like Robert Kelley.

Editor Memphis Avalanche: I read a poem some years ago entitled 'Jim Bludso'...

Well, no—I can't tell where he lives, because he don't live, you see.

Leastways he's got out of the habit of livin' like you and me.

That you haven't heard folks tell How Jimmy Bludso passed in his checks the night of the 'Prairie Belle'!

He warn't no saint—but engineers Is all pretty much alike—

One wife in Natchez—under the hill— And another one up in Pike.

A careless man in his later years, And an awkward man in a row—

But he never pinked, and he never lied, I reckon he never knowed how.

And this was all the religion he had— To treat his engine well;

Never to be on the river; To mind the pilot's belly,

And if ever the 'Prairie Belle' took fire, A thousand times he swore

He'd hold her nose agin the bank 'Till the last coal got ashore.

All boats have their day on the Mississippi, And her came at last—

The 'Prairie Belle'—the latter boat, But the 'Belle,' she wouldn't be passed,

And so came tearing along that night, The oldest craft on the line,

With a big engine, her safety valve, Her furnaces crammed with pine.

The first burst at six she cleared the bar, And burst a hole in the night,

And quick as a flash she turned and made For that willow bank on the right.

There was rumbling and cursing, but Jim Over all the infernal roar,

'Till the last galoon's ashore.

Thro' the hot, black breath of the burnin' boat Jim Bludso's voice was heard,

And they all had faith in his cooseness, And kno'd he'd keep his word.

And sure's your born they all got off, And sure's the smokestacks fell,

And Bludso's ghost went up alone In the smoke of the 'Prairie Belle.'

He warn't no saint—but at judgment 'Longside some pious gentlemen

He'd seen his duty, a dead sure thing, And cri'd for that and then;

On a man that died for men.

'GRIZZLY JIM.'

San Francisco Morning Call.

High up in the mountains of Tuolumne, on the South Fork of the Stanislaus River, amid scenes as wild and rugged and grand as the Highlands of old Scotia, lived, in the early days of California, a hunter named Jim Lyons, who was known far and near as 'Grizzly Jim.'

Lyons was a native of Pennsylvania, a man of medium height and powerful frame, with keen gray eyes, overhanging brows, and bold, resolute, massive features.

The rough, strangely-marked face, so cold in danger and terrible in passion, was ordinarily pleasant and genial in its expression.

It would be hard to find a manlier-looking man, or one of a more determined character. Lyons had a ranch about twenty-five miles above the beautiful little mining town of Columbia, but found hunting much more congenial to his nature than farming.

Day and night, winter and summer, he followed his favorite pursuit. Armed with his trusty rifle and a huge hunting knife, and with one or two other companions, he tracked the grizzly to his lair and fought him to the death.

Not one, big or little, old or young, was ever known to have escaped him when once encountered, although he bore on his person more than one ugly mark of his fierce struggles with the savage beasts.

The man was a singular compound of good and evil. True and again had he risked his life to save others, and in hours of suffering and danger exhibited a generous and heroic spirit.

Yet, notwithstanding this, the name of Jim Lyons grew to be a terror in the mountains. Mysterious murders in the vicinity of his ranch were attributed to him, and he was arrested so often that he used to say: 'It looks as if there can't be a man murthered in the mountains without Jim Lyons bein' created right off.'

As a rule he made light of such accusations, and had no difficulty in getting rid of them. The suspicions, it was remarked, uniformly took the same shape—the deceased had in some manner crossed Lyons' path. At one time it was a Frenchman, a partner of Jim's. They were known to have quarreled, and the Frenchman was found dead with a bullet in his brain.

Again it was a rival hunter who had spoken disparagingly of Lyons. No human eye other than that of the slayer had witnessed his tragic death, and yet there was but one opinion in regard to it among the mountaineers. This was the bad side of Lyons' reputation. The better character came in from those who had seen him share his last sack of flour in the dead of winter with a destitute family, and witnessed his manly grief when a distracted mother begged him, for God's sake, to go out in the storm and darkness in search of a lost child, whom he rescued from certain death after an awful night of peril and hardship. In his nature were blended vindictive and revengeful passions, and warm, generous, noble sympathies. How fierce and terrible the battle within his own breast, when his good angel and evil genius struggled for the mastery, who can tell. Under some circumstances and certain conditions of life he would have been a brave, heroic worker in the cause of humanity. Under others, a murderer and an outlaw.

THE NEW DITCH ENTERPRISE. In the spring of 1855 the troubles between the miners and owners of the old water company, which had been going on for several years, owing to the high and exorbitant rates charged by the company, and which gave rise to mass meetings, big processions, and stormy proceedings, culminated in the determination of the people to form

a water company of their own and build a ditch for themselves. Among the most enthusiastic in this gigantic enterprise, for such it really was, all things considered, was the late James W. Coffroth, who personally went into the mountains and worked with pick and shovel like 'an honest miner.'

Much of his subsequent popularity was due to his manly action in this practical strike against the exactions of the monopoly. One of the great difficulties in carrying out this enterprise was to provide food for the hundreds of men engaged in the work at different points high up in the mountains. When hard pressed, and suffering for the necessities of life, 'Grizzly Jim' came to the rescue.

Early and late he was roaming the woods with his dogs, and supplying camp after camp with grizzlies, deer, and wild night every kind of meat to be found in that region. His success in this respect was wonderful, and won for him the gratitude and admiration of all concerned. While thus engaged, on one occasion, Jim came across a couple of miners who had left camp to do a little hunting for themselves, and go into close quarters in consequence. They had stirred up a grizzly of enormous size and unusual ferocity, and after firing at him got demoralized and turned to run.

The grizzly, slightly wounded by the shots, and made furious by the attack, pursued the unlucky hunters at a rapid gait, and was rapidly closing upon one of them, when Lyons came upon the scene, attracted by the outcries of the terrified miner. The latter was making for a tree a short distance off, but although running for his life, was ready to fall at any moment with fright and exhaustion. With a yell to his dogs which made the old woods echo and caused the grizzly to pause for a moment, Jim threw himself in the path of the bear and covered the miner's retreat. The infuriated brute, robbed of its prey, savagely rushed on Lyons, despite the efforts of the dogs, and even the sharp crack of the hunter's unerring rifle failed to bring him to 'he arth. Quick as a flash the man and grizzly grappled in a death struggle. Lyons using his ponderous hunting knife, and the faithful dogs hanging on to the monster like grim death. Both went down at the sudden onset, and for a few seconds rolled together on the ground. Then Lyons, with a herculean effort, shook off his huge antagonist, but fell beside him, more dead than alive, and literally covered with blood from his own wounds and those he had given the grizzly. The miners now, in turn, came to Jim's assistance and put the finishing touches on the common enemy, which was found to have been shot twice and ripped open with seven horrible knife wounds. The vitality of the brute was something wonderful, and even 'Grizzly Jim' had to own up that this was 'a pretty close call.'

With the exception of an ugly gash in the shoulder and a scrape across the loins, which took clothes and hide along with it, the hunter's injuries were of a slight nature, and not deemed by his sufficient to bother a doctor about. But for the timely arrival of Lyons, there could be no question of the miner's fate, as he sank exhausted at the foot of the tree, which was exceedingly difficult for one to climb under any circumstances.

THE DUFFIELD SHOOTING AFFAIR. Among the mountain men who both feared and hated Jim Lyons was M. B. Duffield, late United States marshal of Arizona. The cause of the feud between them was not generally known, but of its existence and intensity there could be no room for doubt. That blood would flow from it was a foregone conclusion. The desperate character of the parties placed this beyond conjecture. In skill, courage and determination the men were very well matched. Lyons was more widely known for his sanguinary exploits, but among those who knew the man Duffield had a reputation for nerve, calmness, and skill with the pistol second to none. His subsequent bloody career in Arizona and tragic death, if proof were wanted, prove this reputation to have been well founded. Finally the long-looked-for affray came off in the streets of Sonora, near the old City hotel. Lyons and a friend of his were in town, drinking freely, when Duffield arrived. In their liquor they grew boisterous, and recklessly made threats to kill Duffield on sight. The latter was not slow to give them the coveted opportunity. His appearance on the scene was the signal for a brief but rapid exchange of shot, in which all three participated. Duffield fell with wonderful rapidity and precision, dangerously wounding both his antagonists, and getting off without a scratch. Lyons recovered, and claimed that Duffield had taken advantage of him when drunk, but public opinion justified the latter, and the general verdict was: 'Served him right!' Fresh trouble was anticipated, as the vindictive character of 'Grizzly Jim' was too generally known to admit of thoughts of reconciliation. But when once, afterwards, there would have been ugly work between the same parties, Lyons always being the aggressor, but for the interference of friends. Duffield found 'eternal vigilance' the price of life, if not of liberty from that time forward. Night and day he was constantly on his guard, and never felt secure until he stood beneath the scaffold and saw Jim Lyons launched into eternity.

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THE BLAKESLEE MURDER. One dark and stormy winter's night, news of a most shocking and horrible murder in the mountains was brought to Sonora. It appeared that the Blakeslee boys, who had a ranch in the direction of the Lyons place, were the subjects of a murderous attack. While seated around the table for supper, at the close of the day, some one from the outside suddenly fired upon them through the window, and at the same instant the door was burst open and man entered with pistol cocked, firing rapidly upon the terrified brothers. The latter sought safety in retreat through the back door, when they found another man stationed with pistol in hand, but whose shots did not take effect. Two of the Blakeslees made their escape to the woods, leaving the other mortally wounded and in a dying condition. Robbery was evidently not the object of the murderous attack, who left the guilty parties were, for they left the place immediately after it, without carrying off anything. The wounded man survived long enough to give an account

of the affair, and created sensation by positively affirming that the man who first entered the door, revolver in hand, was

E. F. HUNTER, a well known and prominent lawyer of Sonora. Nothing could shake him in this belief, and in his dying declaration he charged Hunter, in direct and unequivocal terms, with being one of the murderers. Strange to say, Hunter had been engaged in some law business against the Blakeslees, and on the very night of the affair was in the vicinity of their ranch. As if to give probability to the terrible accusation, it was reported that the horse Hunter rode into the mountains returned riderless to Brodigan's livery stable, where he belonged, at an early hour of the morning succeeding the night of the murder. To make matters worse for the limb of the law, by adding to the likelihood of his doing such an awful deed, Hunter had already killed one man and wounded two or three others in shooting scrapes. For years he had appeared to court the reputation of a fighting man, if not a desperado. Now, to his horror, he found the notoriety so eagerly sought for a curse and a burden to him. In his dismay, for he was really dreadfully alarmed and worried at the appalling accusation made with such distinctness and particularity by the dying man, Hunter would have given worlds for that well-established character for peace and quietness which stands as a shield of safety in the hours of trial and danger. As it was, the Hon. H. F. Barber, the distinguished attorney at Sonora, who was the most zealous prosecuting officer in the state, was convinced of his brother attorney's innocence, despite all appearances to the contrary. He had known Hunter many years, and understood his character thoroughly. They were bitter political enemies, and more than once got into angry personal altercations during hot campaigns, and in the trial of exciting criminal cases. But Barber knew Hunter, and he knew that he was to be utterly incapable of a deed like that with which he stood charged, and with a manly, generous spirit, meriting all praise, proclaimed his convictions and earnestly assisted in bringing to light the guilty parties.

ARREST OF 'GRIZZLY JIM.' In working up the case, and casting about for every possible cause or circumstance which might operate on the mind of anybody, and be likely to lead to such a revengeful act, it was recollected that a brother of Jim Lyons, some time before, had trouble with the Blakeslees about his ranch. They had got the best of the litigation, which was found to have been shot twice and ripped open with seven horrible knife wounds. The vitality of the brute was something wonderful, and even 'Grizzly Jim' had to own up that this was 'a pretty close call.'

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