

WEIRD TALE OF THE DESERT

Scorched Wife Betrays the Plans of Arizona Desperados.

BIG HOLDUP FRUSTRATED IN TIME

Booty Arrives at Camp, but Robbers Fail to Come—Remarkable Highway of the Alford Gang.

The building of a "thieves' highway" over a trackless desert for eighty miles from Mohawk Summit, in Arizona, across the border into Mexico is the latest exploit of the Alford gang, one of the most desperate bands of crooks that ever infested the southwest. The road was the result of three months' labor by the outlaws. It was built as a means of escape from the scene of a great holdup planned for August 12 of this year. It was visible and impassable for pursuers, yet an open highway over which the thieves might gallop without a change of horses at the rate of eighty miles a day.

The men who built this magic road are Bert Alford, train robber, notorious escaped convict and the partner of the notorious Billy Stiles; Willis Wood, who is wanted for robbery and murder, and Jim Alexander, who is now under arrest charged with counterfeiting, bigamy and robbery. The bait which lured them to the task was \$100,000 in gold bullion which each month is brought down from the King of Arizona, transported, locked up overnight in the safe at the little station of Mohawk Summit, sixty miles east of Yuma.

Plan Holdup and Escape.

In planning to rob this gold bullion long experience taught the trio of desperadoes that there were two possibilities to be considered: First, the robbery must be secured and, secondly, the robbers must be able to escape without being followed and caught. As for the first proposition, the trio simply planned the timeworn ruse on the little station, the hurried opening of the surprised guards, the blowing open of the safe and securing of the bullion and then the wild ride off into the night and across the parched desert that stretches away for hundreds of miles south from Mohawk Summit.

It was a desperate enough scheme, but one in which the Alford gang had always been successful. None of the three crooks has ever been caught during a holdup proper—all have served time through being captured by pursuing posse while attempting to get away from the scenes of the various crimes.

It was therefore to the second proposition that the outlaws gave the most thought. How could they elude the posse of hardriding, quick-shooting, determined men that would be gathered even in the vicinity of little Mohawk Summit and would pursue them until horseflesh or manhood could go no farther? How could safety across that friendly Mexican border, where they might hide in the Sonora fastnesses?

Hard to Get Across Desert.

Across the border was Billy Stiles, Alford's partner, with his band of 100 renegade Yaqui Indians which had terrorized Sonora. For Bert Alford and his gang Mexico meant perfect safety. So with heads together the trio planned for days about ways and means to get across that eighty miles of desert between Mohawk Summit and the line.

To begin with, they knew their Mustangs could not carry at any speed the four hundred and some odd pounds of gold which they hoped to secure through the robbery. The weight would so impede the travel of their horses that capture would be a predestined certainty. It was decided quickly that the gold must be cached early in the flight. In the end a place on the ocean desert marked by three cactuses and situated about five miles south of Mohawk Summit was selected for the cache.

A hole was dug there and covered with mesquite brush so that no desert wanderer might notice it and yet all be in readiness for the burial of the gold. At some date subsequent to the robbery the highway would come back and disinter the bullion.

Plan a "Thieves' Highway."

The finer problem and the one on which the three men racked their brains for days was how to distance their pursuers after the hurried burial of the gold. There would be men in the pursuing posse who would ride as hard as they. There would be why little Mustangs under the gaze of those pursuers that were faster than any that the desperadoes might secure. Even with an hour's start if the race was fairly run the gang of desert hide and seek would go against the outlaws. So the problem was a big one—worthy of the criminal genius that Bert Alford is. His solution was the "thieves' highway."

It was a thorough knowledge of conditions on the desert that allowed Alford to solve the problem. He knew that without water a Mustang can travel only about forty miles across a sandy waste. He knew that even to go this distance the pace must be restrained and the animal "surfed" carefully. The hot, dry air parches the throats of horse and rider so that both give out. Forty miles across desert with-

out water means one of two things—a slow pace or a dead Mustang.

Water the Main Problem.

And also Alford knew that with water the western horse can do phenomenal things. It can jog even across the sort of ground all day and cover surprising distances. Given water, an Arizona Mustang can make an eastern thoroughbred look like a selling-plater in a twelve-hour race. Therefore on water depended the speed of desert horseback travel. And on desert horseback travel depended the hopes of Alford's gang.

So Alford thought of water—water for his horses and no water for the horses of his pursuers. There was the problem solved if only the arrangement could be made. And the desperate fellow made the arrangement—made it so carefully and cunningly that there is not the slightest doubt that the robbers could have distanced their pursuers in the race for which liberty and \$100,000 were the stakes.

With their plans completed, Alford, Alexander and Wood quietly went to work in May and secured a number of Mustangs best suited, which they cut in halves. With an industry worthy of a better cause and with great secretiveness the three men packed these half-horses on mules back and made trip after trip on the desert.

One of these trips was seventy miles across the broiling desert. Several of the robbers returned from the trip with water had planted the half barrels in the sand at intervals of ten miles apart the entire distance from Mohawk Summit across to the Mexican line. Each half barrel was an improvised but perfect watering trough, covered from view by mesquite bushes thrown over it. The location of each trough was marked by a growth of cactus or some other natural desert sign.

To understand the magnitude of the work accomplished it must be kept in mind that traveling seventy miles across a desert without pack animals is in itself a feat worthy of consideration. In desert countries such as that south of Mohawk Summit it was deemed impossible. There are no oases. A burro cannot pack sufficient water to keep itself alive for ten days on the desert. And it took ten days or more of travel to plant the farthest of the troughs and then return to a watering place.

But Alford solved this problem as he did the others. As the troughs were planted he saw that every other one was filled with water. In this way, as he continued going forward on the desert, he kept open a line of supply behind him.

Troughs at Last Filled.

Willis Wood was given the task of continually hauling water to the troughs. The ones near to Mohawk Summit were kept filled with no great difficulty. Before the farthest ones were filled the gang lost several of its pack animals.

Finally the last of the troughs was put in place and then there was a weary retracing of steps across the desert to fill the alternate barrels, which had not been filled, and to replenish the always diminishing supply in those which had been filled. On August 5 the "thieves' highway" was ready for its purpose. On August 12 the load of bullion was expected at Mohawk Summit.

It was agreed among the robbers that in the flight across the desert they would knock holes in the barrels after every watering, so that by no chance could the pursuers get any value from the highway. It was also agreed to go share and share alike on all the gold secured. Other minor details were likewise settled and the three desperadoes then went to Yuma to lay low for the intervening days. They feared that hanging around Mohawk Summit might arouse suspicion.

Bert Alford's gang had repeatedly outwitted the best detectives. In their present plot they had planned with more than their usual secrecy and cunning. But there was one detective they didn't take account of. That was Detective Cupid.

Alexander the Victim.

The little god of love is a bringer of infinite disguises. When it came to big Jim Alexander he did not recognize it as a sleuth. All that he saw was a midget, pretty, dark-eyed girl, who looked at him with love-lit eyes and made him forget that he had a wife at home. He met this girl in Denver and married her there after two weeks' courtship. Then he wanted money for silks and satins and other gauds for his jewel. So he had the new wife farewell and went to Arizona to plan with Alford and with Wood how they could make a "stake."

It was while Alexander, with Wood and Alford, was toiling on the desert that the Denver wife learned of the other wife whom Alexander had deserted. The black eyes ceased to burn with love. Instead they burned with hate for the man who had deceived her. Wife No. 2 got out a warrant for Alexander. And she gave letters to the police proving Alexander was in the neighborhood of Yuma. And finally she tore his picture from a heart-shaped locket he had given her and turned it also over to the officers.

So all unknown to Alexander the police of Arizona and particularly of the vicinity of Yuma were on the lookout for him. Investigation of the highway charges was followed by charges of robbery and counterfeiting. Alexander had become the particular juicy morsel that the territorial police most wanted.

Alford and Wood, with many charges

against them, kept carefully in hiding. Alexander, a comparative stranger to the police of Arizona, openly walked the streets of Yuma. One day as he sauntered along a man suddenly stepped in front of him and showed a revolver in his face.

"I'm Lieutenant Wheeler of the Arizona rangers," said the man.

"Never met you before," said Alexander. "Come with me," said Wheeler. Alexander had to go.

That day and the next in the county jail at Yuma he was as mum as an oyster. On the third day he was shown a letter to the police from his black-eyed wife in Denver denouncing him as a scoundrel and urging the police to catch him.

Then Alexander broke into a string of dreadful oaths. That night he tried to cut his throat with a piece of tin dish on which he got his food. After his failure at suicide he was morose for two days. Then he engaged in a long talk with the officers, after which six of them hurried to a little house on the outskirts of Yuma and surrounded it. They found no one there. Doubtless Alexander's absence had caused Alford and Wood to become suspicious.

Treasure Not Molested.

Lieutenant Wheeler and two other officers lost little time in getting down to Mohawk Summit. Letting as few as possible catch sight of them, they concealed themselves in the station. On August 12, as the robbers had anticipated, the \$100,000 in gold bars from the King of Arizona mine arrived, accompanied by three guards. The guards were let in on the secret but told to act as if nothing had occurred. The night of August 12 passed without a sign of any robbers. In the morning the gold was placed aboard a train and whisked away.

For another week Lieutenant Wheeler and the others remained at Mohawk Summit. Then the officers took to the desert. By means of a small map furnished them by Alexander they located all of the watering troughs for forty miles and destroyed them. The remainder of the job they left to the sun and elements.

And so in utter defeat ended probably the most carefully planned robbery plot framed in the history of the wild southwest. Alexander, truly in love with his Denver wife, is now a thoroughly heart-broken man. He gave freely to the police his own entire criminal history and has identified his intention of pleading guilty to the charges made against him. He asks for no leniency and expects none. If for exposing the plot he would be given freedom there await him in the outside world two of the most desperate criminals that ever lived. The fact that they made no effort to carry out the robbery shows that they suspected Alexander of betraying them. No one knowing the history of Alford and Wood doubts what will be the fate of Alexander if they ever meet him.

As for the "thieves' highway," it has served no purpose but to point a moral and adorn a tale. Merely it shows that the "best laid plans of mice and men oft gang a-ga-gone."—Chicago Chronicle.

See Want Ads are Business Boosters.

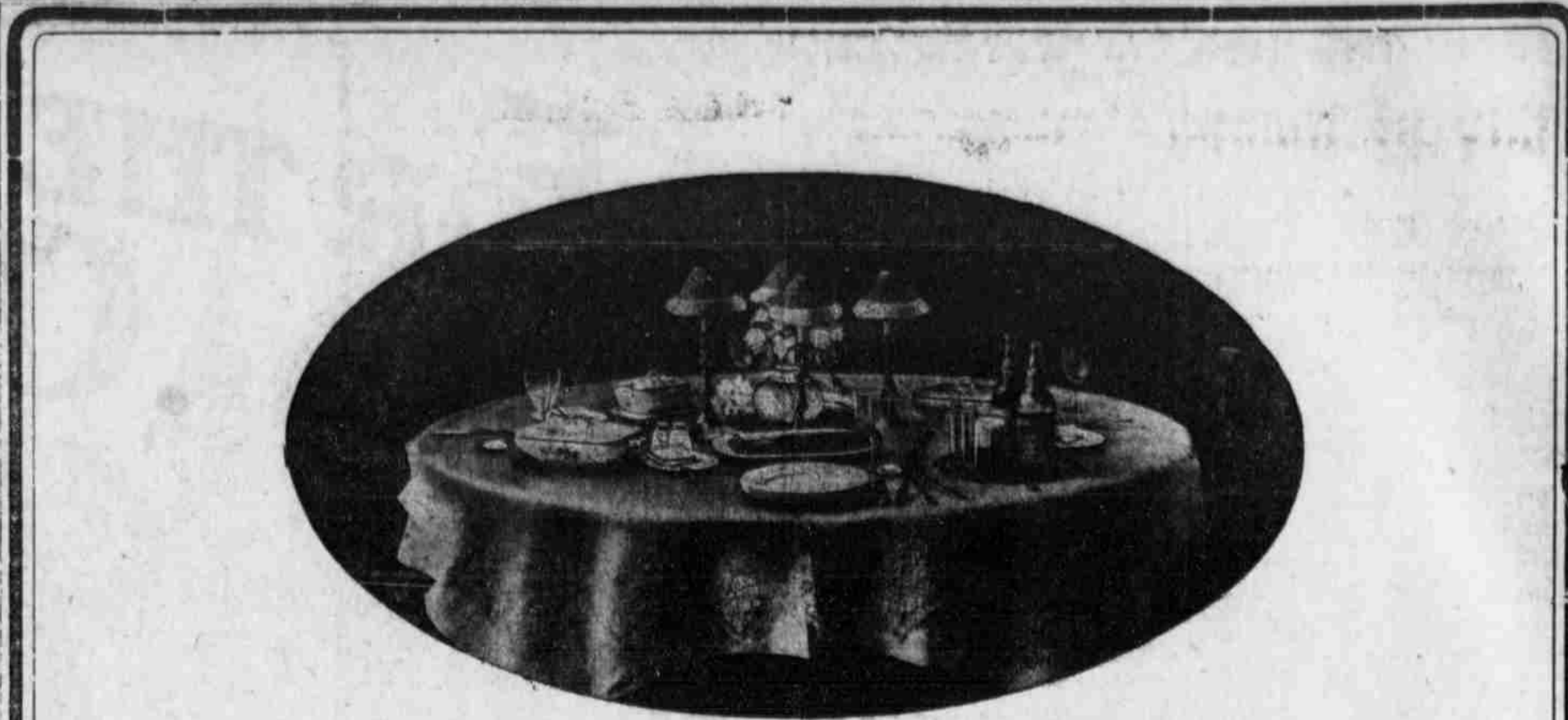
NOTES ON NATURAL HISTORY

Australia's Emus Vanish Before the Barb Wire Fence of Civilization.

Australia's emus are being destroyed wholesale by the wire fences which have been erected to prevent the ravages of that country's rabbit pest. Every year the emu makes a migration from east to west, the return journey being made at the beginning of the dry season. The march of death begins in the westward journey, when the birds, eating the fences, find further progress barred and die hundreds from thirst. A boundary rider in a journey of six miles found no fewer than fifty dead birds; while in a stretch of about sixty miles it was estimated that no fewer than 300 had perished. But in other districts matters appear to be even worse. Boundary riders reporting that when riding along these fences they are hardly ever free from the stench of putrid bodies. A complete track is found on the east side of these fences, worn by the maddened birds in attempting to find a passage to the coveted water. Only a very few appear to have the courage to charge the barrier and then, once over, make off westward at top speed.

Says the Madison (Mo.) Times: "R. J. Pendleton has a cat that is an expert fisherman. Near Mr. Pendleton's home is a large pond stocked with fish and on a number of occasions this summer the cat has come from the pond to the house carrying a catfish in her mouth. The fish had evidently just been taken from the water, as they were perfectly fresh, and Mr. Pendleton is convinced that the cat had caught them while they were swimming near the edge of the pond. The fish in each instance were between three and four inches long."

Sea snakes are very plentiful in the south Pacific. They are widely distributed, stray individuals having been secured on the coast of New Zealand. When swimming close to the surface they exactly resemble an ordinary snake, except that the head is always below water. At night they come ashore and lie among the rocks. They feed on fish and although their small double fangs appear harmless they are reported to be very venomous.



THE FOOD VALUE OF Storz High Grade Bottled Beer

STUDY this table; also the one above. Can't you see the place STORZ BEER holds as a food?

Table comparing the food value of Storz Beer to various food items. Columns include Storz Beer, Milk, Eggs, Lean Meat, Potatoes, Cabbage, Turnips, and Bread. Rows list Nitrogenous Matter, Carbohydrates, Fats, Mineral Matter, Water, and Alcohol. A 'Standard for daily dietary in grams' column is also present.

\*Trace. xincluded elsewhere.

Man requires in the constituents of his food about 1/4 muscle building ingredients and 3/4 heat and power furnishing material. So say scientists and those learned in the medical profession. From the above table it will be readily seen that though STORZ BEER contains less nitrogenous (muscle-making) food than milk, which food standard it closely resembles, it is richer in carbohydrates—fuel furnishing material.

The same as in milk, the carbohydrates in STORZ BEER exist in predigested form, which makes them readily assimilable and superior to those in potatoes, cabbage, bread and other articles containing starch in a raw or farinaceous state.

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