

## OLD INGALLS: THE STORY OF A TOWN THAT WILL NOT DIE

*By Leslie McRill*

The name "Ingalls" still insists upon recognition. Even though the name was changed to "Signet," the whole town—that part which stands today and the old part—is "Ingalls" in present day talk, and no one ever thinks of its name "Signet." In fact, the writer who has gone to the town time and time again did not know until recently that the name might be Signet. An old plat of the town shows "Ingalls," that part which has practically vanished, and at the northwest corner appears the site of "Signet," First Street of Ingalls becoming Main Street of Signet.<sup>1</sup> Only three or four of the old buildings of Ingalls remain, and these have been made into residences standing on the old site of the town.

Ingalls at the time of the incidents to be recounted in this article, was a progressive community eager to grow and be an important center of business in the newly settled Oklahoma Territory. The town site was laid out about four miles west of this territorial line by a man by the name of Sater, the grandfather of Judge Sater of Stillwater, who was hired by the Government for the work. There were all the usual rumors of growth that accompanied a new town, every one believing, as was so easy to do in those days, that this town was destined to be a metropolis in the near future. The incident is told by one old timer that there was a well in process of being drilled when suddenly the drill struck a vein of coal. Immediately the news spread and visions of a coal mining center immediately took hold of the citizens. There was some coal in the hole since two enterprising girls had dumped a quantity of coal into the hole as a practical joke. The secret of their identity has never been revealed to this day. The town boasted some four or five doctors, stores of different kinds, livery barns, saloons, hotel, blacksmith shop and places of business common to early day towns. Good citizens from many places in the United States had come here to build homes and establish themselves.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ingalls was first established as a post office, January 22, 1890, with Robert F. McCurtry as postmaster (George H. Shirk, "First Post Offices within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXX, No. 1 [Spring, 1952]). This post office was discontinued by order dated October 4, 1907, effective October 31, 1907, and mail sent to Stillwater. A post office was established on the new addition to old Ingalls, and called "Signet" on June 6, 1921, with John W. Porter as postmaster (Gene Aldrich unpublished manuscript in the Editorial Department of *The Chronicles*, titled "Post Offices established in Oklahoma, 1907-1930.")—Ed.

It was a happening, not of the people's choice, that the notorious band of outlaws chose that community as a favorite hangout. There were those in the community, doubtless, who did shelter and sympathize with the law-breakers, just as there were many who did not give aid or sympathy.<sup>2</sup> Opinion was divided as to just how much these men were involved in law-breaking. They were well behaved as they moved in and out of the community, quiet in their manners and friendly. They drank in the saloons, played poker, furnished oysters for country dances and took as much part in community affairs as any of the early day settlers. One who lived in the community and at whose home the "boys" as she called them, often brought oysters and held a dance, remarked: "In that day no one took any sides nor seldom was it asked where a man came from. 'Bitter Creek' is said to have acquired his name by answering when asked where he came from, 'I came from Bitter Creek.' He had worked on a ranch through which Bitter Creek ran."

One of the leading physicians at Ingalls in that early day came to the community in 1893, from Nebraska and began practice. His family consisted of wife and four children. He was Dr. J. H. Pickering and his children were Warnie, Mary (Mollie), Roy and Iva. In his country practice he was usually assisted by daughter, Mollie (later Mrs. William McGinty). Mollie could ride a horse as well as the best of them, always using a sidesaddle, or sometimes going with her father in the old buggy of the day.

Evidently, Dr. Pickering had a view to the future, and that view gave him the idea of keeping a diary. This Diary has been carefully preserved, locked in a small metal box, through the years, and in the possession of his daughter, Mollie. It is from the Diary that this article springs. Among the first items recorded, we find this notation: "Came to Ingalls and bought of Mrs. Thomas our present home, consideration \$380.00. Hired Wm. Yost to drill a well."

Another item gives the proposed cost of the first church building erected in the town. It was a Methodist church built by the "Methodist Episcopal church, North," as the Doctor describes it, and was to cost \$385.00, to be built by a Jonathan West. "It has changed the plans some which adds more to the cost of the building," says the writer. "It is being built

---

<sup>2</sup> Recently the writer walked the streets of Ingalls, Oklahoma, where some sixty years ago the United States marshals fought it out with an outlaw band. Not many of the original buildings still stand, but my companions, Billy McGinty and Gilbert Shaw, of Ripley, who lived at Ingalls at the time, pointed out to me the locations of the saloons, the hotel, the blacksmith shop and other buildings that sheltered, either the law-men or the outlaws as the fight progressed.

by Methodist people, M. E. North."<sup>3</sup> This item is followed by another about the erection of a school building: "Mr. West has just finished a fine two-story school building for the Ingalls district at a cost of over \$1200.00, two rooms below & a hall above. There will be several good buildings put up this spring."

The people of Ingalls have always had an interest in community projects, schools, churches, etc. Although the town has gradually lost population and the buildings have been moved away, there lingers that strong community feeling that prompts the citizens, whether living there now or scattered all over the United States, to gather every September in a reunion to commemorate the date of the battle between the U. S. marshals and the Doolin-Dalton gang. At the main street intersection of the "old town" there now stands a monument erected by the "Citizens of Ingalls in 1938," and dedicated to the memory of the three marshals who gave their lives the day of the 1893 battle. The inscription reads:

In Memory of U. S. Marshals

*Dick Speed—Tom Huston—Lafe Shadley*

who fell in the Line of Duty

September 1, 1893

By Dalton and Doolin Gang.

At this reunion, a basket dinner is served in the Ingalls Community building, and the day is spent in reviewing old acquaintances, recounting tales of the "battle" and various community recreations. Some "tall tales" develop year after year when different ones begin to tell about the fight. One of these is the number of holes found shot into the sides of the saloon where the outlaws were at the beginning of the battle. One old timer boasts that over a hundred holes were there. But another who was a boy of thirteen<sup>4</sup> when the fight occurred says that he and his pals (who by the way were engaged in a very common early day past-time when the fight broke out—that of raiding a watermelon patch south of town) counted sixteen holes. Very little would escape the sharp scrutiny of the town boys at a time like this.

Many of the most exaggerated stories have been invented by out-of-town writers or some romantically inclined individuals, seized by the modern cinema fashion of "blood and thun-

---

<sup>3</sup> The writer had the privilege of serving this church twice during the early 1900's. The building still stands but no longer used, has fallen into disrepair.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Shaw, of Ripley.

der" accounts. Poets and writers have seized the opportunity to make interesting reading, regardless of facts. One writer has woven a tale of one Cimarron Rose, giving lurid and daring actions on her part during the fight. How she saw Bitter Creek, wounded and snapping his empty pistol at the marshals—at which pastime he would have lasted five seconds at the most—and how she lowered his ammunition from the upper story of the Pierce Hotel, then lowered herself by means of a sheet, and went to his rescue. This one makes all the old-timers smile, as none of them believe she was in Ingalls that day. Bitter Creek stayed at the Pierce Hotel where another of the old former citizens roomed, and it was known at that time that Bitter Creek was interested in another girl who also stayed at the hotel.

As the Guthrie paper suggested in its write-up of the Ingalls fight, there were romantic tales of what happened or might have happened, and one of these regarding the Cimarron Rose has persisted until it has gained credence and has insinuated itself into both romantic fiction and poetry of the state. Old timers say that the girl was not in Ingalls the day of the fight. She was about fourteen or fifteen years of age at the time of the fight. Her home was in Ingalls, but as she did not always agree with her step-father, she stayed at the Bee Dunn ranch part of the time. That ranch was a mile east and a mile south of the town. About fifteen years after the fight, the tale began to spread that she was Bitter Creek's girl. The outlaws did stay at the Dunn ranch part of the time, so there was some semblance of the connection suggested. The popular story is something as told above.

One of the more romantic and poetic writings is a poem by Grover Leonard,<sup>5</sup> the Cowboy Poet of Oklahoma, with "The Cimarron Rose" as the theme, in which he alludes to her as "Bitter Creek's girl":

Shadows of dead men stand by the wall  
Watching the fun of the pioneer ball.  
The wail of fiddles, the dancers sway—  
Troubles forgotten for a night and a day.

Rose of the Cimarron, Bitter Creek's girl,  
Stood watching the dancers glide and whirl.  
The dance grows wilder, they're young, don't you see?  
"Gosh," says Red Buck, "so were we!"

Of course, when these verses were written the "Rose" was still in the land of the living, and Bitter Creek alone among the shadows. Of such stuff is poetic dreaming inspired but history frowns on the figments of imagination such as have been built out of the Ingalls event.

---

<sup>5</sup> Grover Leonard's poetic writings have recently been placed in the Oklahoma City Public Library; where they may be seen in the "Oklahoma Room."

So many are the tales revived or made more plausible as the years go by. Dr. Pickering's Diary, not written to satisfy literary purposes, but to preserve what happened that day as he saw it, brings to us the account of an eye witness. Many of the citizens, including Dr. Pickering's whole family, were in the caves for safety all during the fight, and while there, they saw little of what was transpiring above ground. But the doctor stayed above ground, as did the other doctors, and all attended the wounded as soon as called.

After recording his coming to Ingalls and a few other items, the doctor begins his account of the fight. We give it in toto and just as he wrote it at that time:

In July Wm. Doolan, George Newcomb (alias Bitter Creek), Slaughter Kid, Tom Jones (alias Arkansas Tom),<sup>6</sup> Danimite,<sup>7</sup> Tulsa Jack and Bill Dalton began to come here frequently & in a short time they all staid here except Dalton. He was out at B. Dunn's. As a rule they were quite (*sic*) & peaceable. They all went hevily armed & constantly on their guard, generly went 2 together. They boarded at the O.K. Hotel, staid at B. Dunn's when not in town.

The last of this month a man by the name of Dock Roberts and Red Lucas came to town looking up a proposed Rail Road rout. Both parties took in the haunts of the outlaws. They were both jovial fellows & soon was drinking & playing cards with them. They left and came back in a week & said they was here to locate a booth, a place for intended settlers to register and get certificates to make a race for land or town lots. They staid here until the last week in August then left.

On the morning of Sept. 1st there was 27 deputy marshals piloted into town in covered wagons. They caused no suspicion as there was hundreds of Boomers moving the same way. 2 wagons stoped at Light's Black Smith Shop & one drove up by my house & they all proceeded to unload in a quite (*sic*) manner and take positions. Doolan, Bitter Creek, Danimite Dick, Tulsa Jack, & Dalton was in Ransom & Murrys Saloon. Arkansas Tom was in bed at the Hotel. Bitter Creek got his horse & was riding up to a small building where Said Conley staid & the marshalls thinking he was known to the move fired on him. Dick Speed marshal from Perkins fired the first shot. The magazine was knocked off of his, Bitter Creek's gun & he was shot in the leg. He made his escape to the southwest. Speed was shot about this time & instantly killed, also young Simonds mortally wounded.<sup>8</sup> The fires of the Marshalls was centered on the Saloon & old man Ransom was shot in the leg. Murry in arm and side. Walker shot through the liver.

By this time the outlaws had got to the stable & saddled their horses. Doolan & Danimite went out at the back door & down a draw southwest. Dalton and Tulsa made a dash from the front door. As they came out Dalton's horse was hit on the jaw & he had a hard time

---

<sup>6</sup> His name as a cow puncher in Western Oklahoma was Roy Daugherty.

<sup>7</sup> Dynamite Dick's real name was Bill Grimes.

<sup>8</sup> Dal Simmons, a young student visiting in Ingalls. Some say he had gone to the drug store passing through the saloon. When he came out the back door he was mistaken for an outlaw.

getting him started, but finly succeeded.<sup>9</sup> He went probely 75 yards when his horse got his leg broke. He then got off of him & walked on the opisite side for a ways, then left him but came back to his sadel pockets & got his wire cutters & cut a fence, then got behind one of the other boys & rode off. A great many say he shot Shadly but I seen Shadly run from my place to Dr. Call's fence & in going through it he was first shot. He then got to Ransom's house & was debating with Mrs. Ransom, she ordering him to leave when he got his last shots.<sup>10</sup> He fell there and crawled to Selph's cave.

A great many believe that Dalton shot him; in fact he thot so for when I and Dr. Selph was working with him in the cave he said Dalton shot him 3 times quicker than he could turn around, but I think I know better, taking the lay of the ground in consideration & I stood where I saw Dalton most of the time & never saw him fire once & Shadly was hit in the right hip and all the balls tended downward. If Dalton had of shot him he would of been shot in front & balls of ranged up. The outlaws crossed the draw south of town & stoped a few minutes shooting up the street my house is on. One of these shots hit Frank Briggs in the shoulder but a slight flesh wound. I took him to my cave and dressed his wound, then went to Walker & gave him Tempory (*sic*) aid, from there to Murry's & laid his wound open and removed the shattered bone. Some of the doctors<sup>11</sup> wanted me to amputate but I fought for his arm; 2 inches raidus (*sic*) was shot away, slight flesh wounds in the side.

About this time I was called aside & told to go to Hotel, that Jones was up there either wounded or killed. I and Alva Peirce & boy by the name of Wendell, boys about 12 years old, went over. I went in & called but got no answer & was about to leave when he<sup>12</sup> came to top of the stairs & says 'Is that you Dock?' and I told him it was. I asked if he was hurt & he said no. He said for me to come up & I told him if he wasn't hurt I would not but he insisted. So I went up. He had his coat and vest off[f] also his boots. Had his Winchester in his hands & revolvers lying on the bed. I said Tom come down and surrender. He says 'I can't do it for I won't get justice'. He says: 'I don't want to hurt anyone but I won't be taken alive.' He says: 'Where is the boys?' (meaning the outlaws). I told him they had gone. He said he did not think they would leave him. It hurt him bad. I never seen a man wilt so in my life. He staid in Hotel till after 2 o'clock & then surrendered to a Mr. Mason, a preacher. They took him off right away.

Of the wounded, Simonds died at 6 p.m. Shadly & Huston was taken to Stillwater, both died in three or four days. Walker shot through the liver died the 16th. All the rest recovered. The outlaws staid close to town as Bitter Creek was not able to travel. Dr. Bland of Cushlon tended him. I loaned him instruments to work on wound with although I did not know just where he was at. A piece of magazine was blown in his leg. It eventually worked out and he got able to again ride. Tom was indicted for the killing of Huston, Speed & Shadly, was tried on the Huston case and convicted of manslaughter in 1st degree with no leniency of the court. Judge dale sentenced him to 50 years at hard labor in the Lansing Penitentiary. Dalton drifted

<sup>9</sup> It is said that the horse kept spinning and became unmanageable.

<sup>10</sup> He wanted to come into the house, but a woman was in there under the bed screaming for fear so Mrs. Ransom directed him to a cave where several people were.

<sup>11</sup> There were four or five doctors in Ingalls at the time of the fight.

<sup>12</sup> Arkansas Tom.

away from the crowd & was killed near Ardmore. The rest staid around Dunn's.

Danamite ordered a big gun sent to Tulsa. The Marshalls got onto it & watched for him thinking he would come in at night to get it but he rode in at 2 p.m. & got his gun & was getting out of town before they knew it. They started after him & had a running fight from there to Turkey Track ranch. They killed 2 horses from under him. They thought they had him surrounded in the timber there & sent for more help but when they got it & searched thorough he was gone. He then left the territory for good. Bitter Creek, and Tulsa, still staid here. Doolan disappeared and no one knew where; also Edith Elsworth, they probely went off together. Bitter Creek, Tulsa, Peirce & others went to Dover & held up train. Was pushed closely & Tulsa in trying to cover the retreat of the others was shot and killed. Bitter Creek and Peirce come back to their old haunts and in a short time was killed on Dall Dunn's farm. It is the universal belief that they were betrayed by the Dunn boys if not killed by them.

It might be well here to add some information pertinent to this account up to this time. Billy McGinty, of Ripley, at the time of the battle, was staying at the Pierce Hotel, but was not in Ingalls that day as he was collecting some stock west of town which he had sold. He says that after one train robbery, Doolin, who was wounded in the right foot, came back to the Pierce Hotel where he was treated for the injury by Mrs. Pierce. Billy was there and saw Doolin and talked with him. They did not know then when or how he had been wounded.

When Billy saw Doolin, Mrs. Pierce had brought out a pan of water and carbolic acid to bathe the foot, so Billy went over and washed Bill's foot. Doolin could not bend over to reach his foot since it had been neglected several days and was badly swollen. This was shortly before the Ingalls fight. U. S. Marshal Heck Thomas was looking for Doolin and passed close by. Doolin warned Billy to get away from there as he fully expected the marshal to draw on him. But the marshal passed on seemingly oblivious of Doolin's presence. Billy says that if the marshal had started anything it would have meant the latter's death as Doolin was armed and ready. Billy had known Doolin when the latter was employed on the Bar-X-Bar Ranch and a good cowpuncher.

Billy had also known "Arkansas Tom," but not by that name. He was Roy Daugherty when Billy knew him on the round-ups in Texas and western Oklahoma. When Tom came to Ingalls and joined in with the outlaws, Billy called him out of the saloon and warned him he was in bad compnay. Arkansas Tom just laughed and went back into the saloon and to the gang. Later, after his capture and conviction, Arkansas Tom's brother, who was a minister, came to Billy to get him to sign an application for a pardon for Tom. Billy told him he wouldn't sign since he had once warned Tom. "You ask

him if I didn't when you see him again," Billy said. Later on the brother saw Billy and told him that Tom said he was warned, and he did not blame Billy for not signing. Tom must not have held any grudge against Billy for when he was released from prison he came to Ripley to see Billy. At that time Billy's wife, Mollie, was in the hospital with a fever. Billy and the three boys were having a rough time with the cooking, so Tom, who was a good cook, took over and kept the three boys in school for several weeks until Mollie was able to go home. Tom later ran a restaurant in Drumright, and was offered a marshal's job at Holdenville, but declined the offer. Tom was finally killed in Missouri.

It was difficult for some to believe that the soft-spoken, quiet fellows they saw in and around town were outlaws. They sometimes gave the preacher money, and conducted themselves in a gentlemanly manner as any ordinary citizen might.

There is a break of some time in the Diary, and then we read:

In March 1896 Bill Doolan was captured in Eureka Springs by Bill Tilghman of Perry. He was brought back and lodged in Guthrie jail. I went and seen him there. In June, Danimite was caught in Texas for bootlegging, tried & sent to county jail for 60 days and they suspected him of being one of the Doolan gang & sent Magee, the U. S. Marshall, word and he sent a man there to identify him and they brought him to Guthrie. They got several murder cases against him, but on Sunday night July the 5th, Doolan and a negro overpowered the guards, locked them in cells & 14 of the worst men made their escape, and I think for good. Rumor is they were helped to get out. Time will tell as there is to be an investigation.

Toward the last of August, Doolan and small band was located on Mud Creek 12 or 15 miles east of Ingalls. He was seen to go to Lawson, P.O., several times and the marshalls laid a trap for him and between 9 and 10 o'clock Monday night, Aug. 24, he walked into it and was shot and killed dead. No particulars yet in regard to it. I will note them when I get a full account. They say Danimite & 3 others are hiding close by.

Later; Doolan was at Lawson making arrangements to leave the country with his supposed wife. He had just left the woman, and was walking down the road when he was shot from ambush. He was killed dead. He was put in a wagon and taken to Guthrie that night. The parties that killed him was Heck Thomas, Dall, Bee, George and John Dunn with one or two others. They had Dr. Call's No. 8 shot gunn. This did the work for he had 16 buckshot in him also 2 Winchester balls. His wife went to Guthrie to get his body but failed to get it. On the morning of the 25th the marshalls sighted the remaining outlaws a few miles from where they killed Doolan, but they were on the move heading for Turkey track ranch and it is doubtful if they ever get them now. There was 4 in the bunch.

It is interesting to see what the Guthrie paper had to say about the capture of Doolin. In the Guthrie *Daily Oklahoma State Capital* of August 26th, 1896, we read:



**DOOLIN KILLING****True Story of How It Was Done Told by Eye Witness**

The *State Capital* reporter got the true story of the killing of Bill Doolin today from an eye witness. He was killed a few hundred feet across east of the Lawson postoffice in Payne county . . . . . The hour was between 12 and 1 o'clock Tuesday morning. A wagon was loaded and was ready to take Bill and his wife and baby out of the country. Bill and Mrs. Doolin were across a ravine, away from the house, in the timber, in conversation. Mrs. Doolin went to the house and Bill promised to meet her and the wagon around a certain corner. Heck Thomas, Tom Noble, John Mathews, Charley Noble, Dall Dunn and Bee Dunn were in hiding on each side of the path where Bill Doolin proposed to go. He came with the rein of his fine riding horse on one arm, and the other holding a Winchester. When he was within reach the posse of marshals on one side cried out to him to throw up his hands. Instead of doing so he wheeled about, and lifted his Winchester. At the same moment the marshals on the other side cried "Stop! Throw up your hands." He turned in the direction of the last voices and fired his Winchester once, and dropping it, followed up with three shots from his revolver. A volley of Winchesters from the marshals on both sides and the emptying of a double barreled shot-gun razed him to the ground before he could shoot more. Mrs. Doolin, hearing the shooting, ran to the spot and found her husband dead. She desired the body but the marshals said they would first have to take it to Guthrie which they did immediately . . . . .

The Doctor's Diary goes on then to relate some later developments in the Ingalls neighborhood, the outcome of the outlaw betrayal by former associates:

Friday Nov. 6 at 4 p.m. George Dunn rode into Ingalls very fast & said his brother Bee had been shot by Deputy U. S. Marshal Canton in Pawnee. They left for there immediately. Saturday afternoon Mr. Cots of Stillwater & family, also Mrs. Bee Dunn arrived with dead body of Bee. They took him to his stepfather's house & kept the body until Sunday noon & then buried it. There was a long Funeral procession. They found no bill against Canton for the killing and let him loose at once. The feeling in Pawnee is all in favor of Canton. Past reputation is what hurts Dunn. All kinds of reports are afloat in regard to his past life. At Ingalls people are divided on the case. All was looking for Dunn to be killed, but expected it to come from some of the remaining outlaws. There is bound to be more killing over this. I think it only a matter of time until more of the Dunn boys are killed or they get Canton.

After Bee's death, John, Dall and George go on the scout.<sup>13</sup> There is a number of bills against them in Pawnee for cattle stealing. T. Boggs and Bill Long left for Kansas to avoid same charge. They got into trouble there and was sent to jail. As soon as their time was out, Havelin wrote for his step-son, Bill Long, to come home. He thought there was not anything against him but just as soon as he got here they took him in. He laid in jail at Pawnee a month or so and gave bond for two thousand to appear at Sept. 1897 court. Bob Boggs went to Texas to get away & stole down there 47 head of cattle. They caught him & sent him over the road for 4 years. Pawnee

<sup>13</sup> Expression which evidently means "to keep under cover" or "leave the country."

county will get him when his time is out. Bill Chappel, Tom Boggs, A. E. Peirce and several others left the country for good. McIlhiney (Narrow Gauge Kid) skipped his bond & is gone for good. Some think he went to Cuba. J. McLain, Dr. Steel & W. Wilson are his bondsmen. A May term the Grand Jury found bills against John & All McLain at our place & several others in Stillwater for perjury. They gave bonds. It was on scheduling their property for taxes.

Here the Diary ends. This is an account of an eye witness, written as he saw it, and jotting down current happenings and the aftermath of the outlaw matters.

Now it might be well to observe some of the effects the outlaws had on the rest of the Territory, as well as in Payne County. Rumors were rife at all times as to the activities of the outlaws. A dispatch from Topeka, Kansas, dated June 17, told of a Santa Fe train robbery at Cimarron Crossing, and named Newcomb, Wyatt and Davis as the robbers. They were captured at Hennessey, Oklahoma Territory, on the Rock Island according to the report.

On September 5th news was given of a train hold-up at Mound Valley, Kansas, and it was reported that the Ingalls' bandits were responsible. A dispatch from Wichita reads:

The railway and express companies' officials are of the opinion that the Frisco train robbery at Mound Valley yesterday morning was committed by Bill Dalton, "Dynamite Dick" and another one of the outlaws who escaped after the battle with the United States marshals at Ingalls, I. T., on Friday.<sup>14</sup> These three desperadoes were seen by an Indian policeman early Saturday morning in the Osage country, about forty miles due south of the scene of the robbery going toward the Kansas line, and it would be just like them to hold up a train before going into hiding.

A later report, however, noted the capture of three other men for this deed. But this will show how every happening would be laid at the door of the Ingalls gang. That there was serious fear of reprisals from the outlaws at Ingalls, Cushing, and even Guthrie is shown by news items current in those days. One headline reads "Getting Serious," and cautions that preparations should be made at once to guard the city of Guthrie, saying that the bandits may even now "be here." The item goes on to say: "A man pretty well posted informed a representative of the *State Capital* that if the bandits were coming to the city at all they were here now. He said the game would be to come in separately and concentrate about the jail. He stated that their arms would be brought in in a wagon. That they would arm in some isolated spot and that their objective point would be the jail for their only purpose in coming to town would be the liberation of 'Arkansas Tom' and his asso-

---

<sup>14</sup> Letters were post marked "Ingalls, Indian Territory" for several years after 1890, the Post Office Department having delayed changes of names in its records.—Ed.

ciates. He advised the arrest of all suspicious persons in the city who could give no satisfactory account of themselves." This item was dated Sept. 16th, 1893.

An item from Vinita on Sept. 29th put Bill Dalton's Gang at Wybark, I. T. where the officials of the railroad were warned to watch for them. "It is believed, if not known, that Bill Dalton has been in the vicinity of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas road for two weeks," the report said.

A report from Cushing appearing in the *Daily Oklahoma State Capital* of October 10, 1893, was headed, "They Want Revenge," and the item proceeds:

Mr. J. K. Berry of Cushing was in the city yesterday. He states that the Dalton gang of outlaws has again congregated about Ingalls and is pursuing its old line of depredations. Many of them have been at Cushing, also, and the neighboring country has been in fear of them ever since threatening letters have been received by a few good citizens of Ingalls, telling them that they took sides with the United States deputy marshals and that they would better pull their freight or they would pull it for them. A few days ago they got an Indian drunk at Ingalls and then stole several head of horses from him.

Mr. Berry came to Guthrie to see Marshal Nix to see if a posse of deputy marshals could not be gotten into that country to clear the outlaws. They are a continual menace to the neighborhood and are becoming a great burden.

Dr. Pickering's Diary simply states the fate of "Bitter Creek" and Pierce, but the Guthrie paper gave a lurid account of how the two were killed and brought into Guthrie in a wagon. This is the newspaper account on Thursday, May 2nd, 1895:

#### OUTLAW BLOOD

**Bitter Creek and Dynamite Kid killed by Deputies. Battle in Osage Country. One Man Shot 35 times.**

The city was suddenly turned upside down at 2 o'clock this afternoon by a wagon driving into the city with two dead men in it. The wagon came down First Street and stopping at the side door of Spengel's Furniture House, the bodies were taken into the undertaking rooms. In an instant the city was in an uproar of excitement and everybody on the streets ran to see the bodies.

The dead men, stretched out on two boards, were Geo. Newcomb, alias "Bitter Creek," alias "Slaughter Kid," and Charley Pierce, alias "Dynamite Dick." They were in full clothes with boots and spurs on, and armed to the teeth. Besides a Winchester each, they had on a revolver apiece and belts of cartridges for both instruments of death.

As the clothes were cut off them, it was seen that Dynamite Dick had at least thirty buckshot in him, while two Winchester balls let the life out of Bitter Creek. Dynamite Dick was shot all over, but mostly in the right shoulder and side, though he had fully six shot in his stomach and as many in one foot. One eye was still open as though he had cocked it alongside of a Winchester. One Win-

chester bullet struck Bitter Creek in the forehead and tore out a lot of brains at the back of the head and the other hit his hand as he was pulling the trigger.

Marshal Nix does not want to say too much about the killing, as the marshals who did the work are still after the other men. The outlaws were killed at the southeast corner of Pawnee county at the house of the Dunn brothers, who were protecting them, by Deputy Marshal Sam Schaffer at the head of six other marshals. The outlaws rode to Dunn's house about 8 o'clock last evening. It being moonlight they were easily seen, and Dynamite Dick was killed outright, being filled full of buckshot. Bitter Creek made a fight, and two Winchester balls felled him off his horse before he could pull the trigger of his Winchester.

The outlaws who are killed are a part of the gang that held up the Rock Island train at Dover some time ago. They have been chased ever since. Chas. Pierce, alias Dynamite Dick, is a half brother to Tulsa Jack who was killed in the Cheyenne country by Deputy Marshal Dudley Banks. Banks saw the body and recognized him. Oscar Halsell recognized Bitter Creek. The outlaw used to herd cattle for him. O. F. Hicks, a cowboy, looked at him and said he "punched cattle" with him several years.

The horses of the outlaws were killed and their saddles and all the guns were brought to the city. The catch is a great big feather in Marshal Nix's cap as he had spent lots of private money and has been incessant in running the outlaws down, and he feels justly proud in their capture. None of the marshals was hurt.

According to the above account, it was believed in Guthrie that they had killed Dynamite Dick, and gave that alias as belonging to Charley Pierce. However, the old-timers, with whom the writer has talked, agree that Dynamite Dick was not the same as Pierce. They say that Pierce was tall and slender, while Dynamite Dick was burly and heavier set. One old-timer says that his father and Dynamite Dick's father were acquainted in Ohio, and that the man's real name was George Grimes. He had committed crime, it is said, in Ohio, and had fled to Oklahoma. Sometimes a man with the alias of "Red Buck" is identified with the Ingalls outlaws, but one old-timer says the "boys" had no use for him and called him "a chain-harness horse thief." Once when he was on the trail with them, a man was following them, going in the same direction, and Red Buck wanted to go back and shoot the man, but Doolin made him give up the idea. It is said that Red Buck's price for killing a man was \$50. All that was necessary was to point out the "victim" and hand over \$50. Red Buck was killed later on Oak Creek in G county (later Custer County, Oklahoma Territory), as an item from the *Cheyenne Sunbeam* of March 13, 1896, tells: ". . . . The firing was kept up on both sides until Red Buck was killed. . . . George Miller was his companion."

That Dynamite Dick was not the man killed near Ingalls is borne out by this item which appeared in the *Hennessey*

*Clipper* of Dec. 10, 1896. "The band of outlaws headed by Dynamite Dick were surprised by Deputy Sheriff Cox and a posse of seven men 16 miles west of Newkirk, Ok., and Dynamite Dick was killed and Ben Cravens, one of the gang, was captured."

*The El Reno News* of the same date had this to say:

Dynamite Dick, who reigned as the king of desperadoes after the killing of Bill Doolin, is no more. He was killed near Blackwell last week by Deputy Marshal Lund during a hot fight between bandits and officers. The marshals had been on Dynamite Dick's trail for several weeks. At sunrise on the eventful day Deputy Sheriff Dossie of Kay county, and a band of deputies possemen surrounded the outlaws in a hollow between Blackwell and Newkirk. The fight lasted an hour and over a hundred rounds were fired. Dynamite Dick was killed outright and his pal, Ben Cravens, fatally injured. None of the attacking party was hurt.

Dynamite Dick derived his name from the deadly manner in which he loaded his Winchester cartridges. In the bullet of each cartridge he drilled a hole, which he filled with dynamite; the hole was then plugged up with lead and it became a double death-dealing instrument. Whenever the ball perforated the object at which it was fired, it exploded tearing the object to pieces. At the fight at Ingalls in which the outlaws killed so many citizens, Bill Raidler<sup>15</sup> fired these dynamite cartridges from his Winchester rifle, doing most deadly work, and for which he was afterwards known as "Dynamite Dick." After he was killed a number of these cartridges were taken from his cartridge belt . . . . .

While on the subject of Dynamite Dick, it is well to note the fact that he was still "going strong," and had not yet been killed though confused with several others who were killed or captured.

There was a heated dispute after this fight near Blackwell, according to the *Arkansas City Traveler*.<sup>16</sup>

Members of the posse and their friends insist that it was the noted outlaw Dynamite Dick, that Cox killed near Blackwell last week . . . . The posse claims that the deputy marshals are jealous because they did not make the capture as the reason they dispute that it was Dynamite Dick, and the marshals laugh at the charge. The United States jailer at Guthrie, who had charge of Dynamite Dick for several months, says the corpse he saw is not that of the noted outlaw . . . . The question is getting too deep for the common people, therefore we would suggest that in order to settle the dispute, if Dynamite Dick is still alive, that he so inform the public. Let him come forth from his hiding place and make himself known in some manner.

On Dec. 21, 1896, the *Guthrie State Capital* carried this final word:

<sup>15</sup> Bill Raidler was not at the Ingalls fight as he was then in the penitentiary. And Dr. Pickering's Diary referred to "Dynamite Dick" even before the Ingalls fight.

<sup>16</sup> *The Daily Oklahoma State Capital*, Friday, Dec. 11, 1896.

**Last of the Gang:** After accounting for several outlaws the article says: "Mr. Madsen who has put in twenty-five years in Oklahoma and the Indian Territory . . . . laughs at the recent killing of Dynamite Dick . . . . As told above Bill Raidler is serving a term at the military prison at Leavenworth and is not now and never was Dynamite Dick. Dynamite Dick's real name is Clifford . . . .<sup>17</sup> Madsen declared that Dynamite Dick is still alive and is on foot in the territory with the deputies after him, and that no man from Oklahoma who knows the real facts ever believed that dead man was Dick."

The writer has searched the files of several Oklahoma papers, and has not found any account of Dynamite Dick's death, although one man who knew him fairly well says he was finally killed by officers about six miles east of Cheyenne at his mother's half dugout home. Officers surprised him in the early morning as he was leaving the home.

There were two accounts of the Ingalls fight in the *Daily Oklahoma State Capital*, and it is interesting to compare them with Dr. Pickering's Diary account. Of course Guthrie was many miles from the scene and naturally there was more or less guesswork in the accounts. The first appeared on September 2, 1893. The facts of how the marshals entered Ingalls and took their positions about town are essentially as the Diary has it. The conversations held by the outlaws at seeing the marshals is probably imaginative. It is unlikely that their words were heard or taken down by any one. The outlaws are reported by the *State Capital* as having given a warning:

All but Arkansas Tom heard the warning, and went out. He finding himself alone upstairs when the firing began, punched a hole in the two sides of the roof with his Winchester, and this with the two windows, one at each end, gave him command of the whole town, the building in which he was being the only two-story structure.<sup>18</sup>

Some wonderful shooting and daring deeds were done on both sides but this man out of sight in the building did most of the shooting that killed and wounded. He picked his man whenever he wanted to, and for one hour from 10 to 11 o'clock, poured shot down on the besieging party, and on citizens who appeared. Bill Dalton had his horse shot from in under him twice, the last time by Marshal Shadley. Shadley, thinking he had killed him, turned his attention to the fire from the hotel, when Dalton walked to within easy shot and poured four shots into Shadley, killing him. He then took the saddle from his horse and placed it on another and rode off. Bill Doolin, after getting away some distance, turned his horse and poured shot after shot back into the marshals. He saw Dynamite Dick fall off his horse (perhaps wounded) and riding back toward the fight, picked him up on his horse. Four men rode off on three horses.

The names of the outlaws as learned are: Bill Dalton, Bill Doolin, Bitter Creek or George Newcomb, Arkansas Tom and Nibs or Tulsa

<sup>17</sup> He had as many names as occasions called for evidently. "Dan Wiley," "Bill Raidler", but the Ingalls folk who knew him say he was George Grimes.

<sup>18</sup> Citizens still point out that holes punched in the roof would have given him only sights at the stars.

**Jack.** The names of the marshals' posse as learned are: John Hixon, Shadley, Houston, Dick Speed, George Cox, Jim Masterson, Jensen, Henry Keller, Hi Thompson and Doc Roberts.

Arkansas Tom kept the marshals at bay until 4 o'clock in the afternoon when he made a proposition that if he was promised protection from mob violence and not to be put in chains he would give up.

He said that he knew he could be taken finally, but in the meantime he would kill at least seven men, whom he had range on then. He had over eighty balls yet left. His proposition was accepted and he came down and gave himself up.

A posse of eleven men came down from Stillwater and went in pursuit of the outlaws. The marshals also followed them further.

George Ransom, the owner of the hotel in which the outlaws boarded, was arrested and this morning brought to Guthrie on a charge of harboring the robbers. There will be more arrests of citizens, it is said, on the same charge.

But two days following, the same paper had a further account, after the marshals returned to Guthrie. In this account they brought Arkansas Tom and a group of Ingalls' citizens charged with aiding the outlaws. The charges were evidently not sustained as all returned home later. One of the citizens of Ingalls who was taken as far as Stillwater, was released there when Marshal Nix saw him in the group. It was Lon Case who is now in his ninety-first year. The writer talked with Lon and asked him what they did to him. He replied that when Marshal Nix saw him at Stillwater he asked him what he was doing there. "You tell me, Marshal," replied Case. Thereupon Marshal Nix, who was well acquainted with him, said: "Go on home. We don't want you." Although in his 91st year Lon is feeding a bunch of cattle this year on his farm west of Ingalls and has lived a long and useful life in that community as one of its best citizens, respected and admired by all.

Among those taken to Guthrie according to the newspaper account were:

John Nix, Sherman Saunders, George Perrin, one Murray, Mr. and Mrs. George Ransom, two boys named Case belonging to one family, and two of the same name belonging to another . . . . They are sure that Bill Doolin and Bill Dalton were shot and another man was undoubtedly killed . . . . A doctor from Stillwater was called out the night following and tended the wounded bandits. He was sworn to secrecy and will not reveal their whereabouts, but he says that Bill Dalton will never again hold up a train. Along the road of the robbers' retreat they stopped several times at farm houses to get buckets of water to bathe their wounds . . . . The story of the fight and the preparations of the capture, if told at length, would be very romantic. It is no easy thing to capture five men, outlawed and having a lot of citizens protecting them . . . . The marshals and posse made a bold attempt to capture the most dangerous band of robbers in the territory, and when in a few days the death of one or two more is ascertained, the citizens will appreciate their efforts.

This event probably marked the beginning of the end of bandit gangs in Oklahoma, and as such is an important historical marker date in the events of early Oklahoma.<sup>19</sup> And at Ingalls the citizens still remember and each year they meet to commemorate the event, gathering around the monument "erected to the wrong crowd," as one old man remarked when shown the monument which stands at the head of a street in old Ingalls at the highway. It is but the natural resentment held by some toward a group of marshals who descended upon a quiet town, and loosed a barrage of death in which citizens suffered more than the outlaws, who escaped, for the most part, unharmed.

---

<sup>19</sup> An official Oklahoma Historical Marker erected under the direction of the Oklahoma Historical Society and the State Highway Commission, with the caption "Outlaw Battle," is located at the intersection of State Highways 51 and 101, one and half miles west and two miles north of Ingalls, stating that the notorious battle with the outlaws there, in 1893, "was a climax in bringing law and order to Oklahoma and Indian territories."—Ed.