

HELL'S ICE AGE ABATED

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

Lucky Bill Thorington, SASS #765

The Free grazers of the Colter's Hell Justice Committee kept Hell from freezing over this year. It all happened (or didn't happen, depending on your perspective) at Sawmill Park South of Colter's Hell (Cody), Wyoming Territory. No repeat of Hell freezing over this year. As a matter of fact, all shooters had to declare they wished they could shoot like Lucky Bill. Really! Word has it they all said it, but to a man (or woman) they all had their fingers crossed. See pictures and video at:

<http://www.coltershell.net/photos/extravagunza07/extravagunza2007.htm>

As in the past several years, the Colter's Hell Justice Committee and friends took a step back in time to head up Carter Mountain to the old sawmill. Each participant was required to travel to the campsite "old west" fashion. There are many ways to define "old west", but in this case, it is a road on which you could wash your clothes. No, it isn't clean, but it is what people would call a "washboard". This was the closest thing to a buckboard any of us could find. If we had been traveling in a buckboard, all of our supplies (gun carts, ammo, guns, you name it) would have been on the trail behind us. The only thing not authentic to the 1800s were the vehicles used to get to the campsite. And as Flat Nose George often says, "It's a good thing, too".

Speaking of Flat Nose, he along with Drummer, Yakima Red, Scarbelly and I'm sure I've not mentioned someone all made it up the mountain on Friday of Labor Day week-end '07 to set up camp. As usual he did his usual "very commendable" (understatement) job of providing the victuals for the week-end. This year, to his and our advantage, we welcomed a new campadre to our campfire. Camp Cookie and his bride Lizzie Marie have moved to the Colter's Hell country from California.

By the time the weekend was over it was overheard the newcomers say they were going to buy a tent. You see the Colter's Hell Justice Committee believes in segregation. Now before you politically correct types get your undies in a wad, listen. Since this is supposed to be a historical campout the old-timers were separated from the "sophisticates". What that meant was that you could come and shoot with us and camp with us, you just couldn't have your motor home within a football field of the

primitive camp. Lizzie Marie and Cookie got tired of having to walk to the cook tent, where all the fun was. Word has it they plan to get a tent for next year.

Wyoming Drummer, as usual was in charge of targets. But this year he added a whole new dimension to his title. This year, and probably from this point forward Wyoming Drummer will be in charge of *Targets and Toilets*. For you see, this year WD transported a real porta-potty to the campsite. Of course it would not have been appropriate to have the commode in plain sight, so it was duly hidden somewhat to be less noticeable. Word has it we will have a commode camouflage painting party in the near future.

The Colters Hell Justice Committee has gotten a reputation, not one to be ashamed of I should add. That reputation has to do with the fact we do not play the Cowboy Action Shooting game with a “business as usual” attitude. That’s part of the reason for the camp-out, which has come to be known as the *ExtravaGUNza*. Wyoming Drummer is a sick puppy, in a good way. Everyone always wonders what insane idea or stage he will come up with next. This year was no exception.

“INDIAN ATTACK!!!” With those words, the entire camp sprang to life. All “defenders” raced to their tents where their rifles were stored. Rifle in hand they sprinted for the gully where the “hostiles” were ready to ride through the camp. Once at the defense site the 45s, 44-40s and 38-40s roared to life, cutting the aggressors (4-inch posts) in half in short order. The defenders were in teams, and the first team to cut down the enemy was the winner. And the prize? Nothing! ‘Cept a great and grand undertaking brought to its natural conclusion. Then back to the cook tent to finish the desert, peach cobbler, presented to us by Flat Nose and Cookie.

The Colter’s Hell Justice Committee often says, since we are in Wyoming and Wyoming is a big part of the Old West, and us being Free Grazers, we “shoot where it happened”. We did the best we could, only about 150 miles from the original site. Drummer’s latest wild hair was a replica of the “Wagon Box Fight”.

On [August 2, 1867](#), Capt. James Powell with a force of 31 soldiers from the [U.S. Army](#) survived repeated attacks by one to two thousand [Sioux](#) warriors under the leadership of [Red Cloud](#) near [Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming Territory](#). Powell's defenders, acting as guards for civilian crews cutting wood for the construction of the fort, took refuge in a corral formed by laying 14 wagons end-to-end in an oval configuration. The battle lasted five hours with Powell losing five men killed and two wounded. Powell reported killing 60 Indians and wounding 120 (although published accounts have put the number of casualties as high as eleven hundred). The disproportionate casualties, and the soldiers survival, was primarily due to the recent issue of [Springfield Model 1866](#) "Trapdoor" .50-caliber breech-loading rifles, that had been supplied as a direct result of the [Fetterman massacre](#); Indian attack strategy was based on the long reloading time of muzzle-loading weapons. The fight lasted throughout the day until a relief force from [Fort Phil Kearny](#) arrived. –WIKIPEDIA

Dressed in his cavalry outfit Flat Nose cut a fine figure shooting from behind the "wagon box".

Fun comes in many forms at a camp-out such as this. Almost seems as if shooting is secondary. Takes a back seat to the camaraderie of just being with kindred spirits who love immersing themselves in the Wild West. But shoot we did. Saturday was the monthly SASS shoot. Sunday, the Black Powder Invitational. Some shooters braved the rough road to come up and shoot on Saturday only. But the real fun was getting down and dirty, with the "holy black".

Monday the "Buffle Shoot", with real buffle targets that really fall down when hit by the Sharps or Trapdoors. Winner of that was Flat Nose George's 28-year-old son Chris.

Each year at the ExtravaGUNza a special award is presented to one participant or shared by a man and wife as last year. This "prize" is the *Spotted Dick Award*. This award is presented "To the shootist with the most noteworthy performance good, bad, or ugly!" This year's award went to Hatchet Jack. His claim to fame was merely for showing up, coming all the way from Illinois to participate and camp with the crazies of the Colter's Hell Justice Committee. Hatchet Jack has come west to shoot with us on many occasions dating back to the days of "Summer Range". Despite his accent, he has become a true Kindred Spirit

If you wanna see some pics of this year's ExtravaGUNza '07 go to the Colter's Hell website at www.coltershell.net. The site is now under the able talents of Hedley Lamarr. Speaking of Hedley, normally when someone is not able to attend a festivity there is a moment of silence. Since Hedley was not able to attend, the entire camp took note with a moment of uncontrollable babbling.

Oh before I pack it in I must mention one of the reasons Hell did not freeze over this year. It had nothing to do with Lucky Bill's lack of abilities when it comes to hitting a target. It has everything to do with global warming...yeah that's it... that must be it.