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BLACK HILLS STAGE COACH LEAVING CHUGWATER
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The Hole-in-the-Wall

By

THELMA GATCHELL CONDIT

PART V, SECTION 3: OUTLAWS AND RUSTLERS

Arapahoe Brown

Andrew (Arapahoe) Brown, while a dangerous man and not by any stretch of the imagination, an exemplary character, was not an ordinary outlaw. He used sense with his killings—to him it was not only logical but justifiable to remove, in-so-far as he was able, whatever got in his way; and this he did himself. He had no "partners-in-crime" until the very last; and when he did, it was his complete undoing.

Perhaps Brown's aggressive attitude toward life was partly due to his physical bigness, for he was powerfully built, a regular giant of a man, tall, big-framed, raw-boned, straight-backed, square-faced, long-armed and big-handed. He was quite an imposing figure, to say the least. He had the habit, when he spoke, of looking straight at a person out of dark brown eyes. There was no cruelty in his eyes—they were not the hard, bold, sunfacy type that show evil underneath. Brown's eyes were deep-set under prominent brows and a broad forehead; intelligent, "wide-awake-looking" eyes, the unblinking kind that served to accentuate the over-all forcefulness of the man. His hugeness, coupled with the unwavering intensity of his gaze immediately convinced a person that Brown was not a man to be lightly reckoned with. Everything about him showed strength and deep-rooted determination, and you felt mightily disinclined to interfere with him in any way. You just automatically stepped aside and let him pass. The thumb of his left hand was missing (rumor said it had been chewed off by an adversary in a fight up in the timber—when neither had a gun). However, its absence was in no way a disfigurement—rather it seemed to enhance the commanding physical strength of the man.

Andrew Brown appeared out of nowhere in the wolf-trapping days and was seen frequently in the Hole-in-the-Wall country. He was known as Arapahoe Brown, having acquired the name through his association with the Arapahoe Indians. Some folks say he was raised by them because his parents had been killed by Indians on their way west from Tennessee; others say his living with the Arapahoes wasn't entirely involuntary—that he took up with them by choice. At any rate, one idea is as good as another, because no one knew anything for sure about his past, and, for that matter,

Courtesy Thelma G. Condit

Andrew "Arapahoe" Brown

knew nothing about his present comings and goings either. Like an Indian he'd appear out of nowhere and sit down by a fellow's campfire warming himself and the next moment he was gone. In those days he was very dark, and very tanned and smooth-shaven. He wore his hair long like an Indian and was dressed in buckskin garb and moccasins. He often visited the Barnums. Old Tom said, "Arapahoe never said much, but was always pleasant and friendly. He had a nice voice, spoke soft and low—never acted out-of-the-way. We'd never hear him come or go. Sometimes he'd set up and eat, but most generally he'd just set behind the stove and warm up—squattin' on the floor like an Indain—rubbin' his big hands over his knees, and up and down his long legs,"

Sometimes Arapahoe was seen with Wild Cat Sam and Shorty Wheelwright, but mostly he trapped alone. He and Shorty would make an odd-looking pair, riding along loaded down with traps; a short-legged, wiry-little fellow on a big "rangy" horse, and the big, long-legged fellow on a small, spotted Indian pony, his big moccasined feet practically dragging on the ground.

Arapahoe had a big staghound, brown-brindled and wire-haired that could kill a gray wolf single-handed. He also had a "bawling" hound—a black and tan Missouri coon-hound. This animal was so fast he could get clear out of sight when hot on the trail of a wolf or coyote. Arapahoe wasn't satisfied until he got himself a horse that could keep up with this "bawlin' " hound. He liked his horses and dogs and took mighty good care of them.

Wild Cat Sam had a bitch setter dog. (See picture) She had a litter of pups out of Arapahoe's staghound and these pups were the fastest rabbit-chasing dogs you ever saw. A jack rabbit didn't have a chance in the world out on the flats. Old Sam would say, "We got 'vittals' for supper—roasted jack rabbit's mighty fine eatin' to my way of thinkin'." Sam had to admit that Arapahoe's bawlin' hound was a pretty fair dog, but not like one a friend of his had down in Missouri. "All that fella had to do was show that hound a piece of wood, and by gum, here he'd come with a dad-blamed" coon that'd fit right over that board. All he had to do was skin it out and stretch it to dry. One day his ole woman got careless-like and left the ironin' board settin' outdoors and blamed if that old hound wasn't so all-fired crazy to hunt coons that he high-tailed it out to find a coon to fit that there ironin'-board. Did he find one? Hell, no, he didn't, but he might—he ain't back yet."

But Arapahoe wasn't content to be just a wolfer and wanderer. While strictly an outdoorsman and all, he had an ambitious side to him that struggled for fulfillment—he hankered to make money and be something in his own right. This fact, too, was undoubtedly another factor nurturing his inborn aggressiveness. Maybe personal frustrations nagged at him inwardly causing him to act the bully. Or maybe he was just an idealogical person who needed

no grounds or ideas to justify his acts (the worst type of criminal). At any rate there was nothing about him that suggested in any way that he either desired or sought the approval of his fellowmen. He was sufficient unto himself. Like the average wolfer he wasn't content to live freely, independently and unrestrained—he wanted all that, and more. Maybe his education or something in his past goaded him on—anyway, later on an entirely different side of his dual personality is revealed in his association with the Huson family on Crazy Woman.

Edward W. Huson was born in Boston where he had been educated to be a doctor; but like so many others he wanted to go West. So in the late '70's he went to Wisconsin where he found himself a good wife. Next he went to Council Bluffs, Iowa, where he started practicing medicine. Here unfortunately he contracted typhoid fever and became violently ill. After a long, seemingly endless period of convalescence he decided to get farther west into a high, dry climate. So in 1881 the family arrived in Cheyenne, Wyoming, with wagons and teams carrying their few worldly possessions. It was here the Husons met John R. Smith, who was already firmly established at Trabing, Wyoming, notwithstanding the fact that the Indians weren't exactly peacefully inclined toward the few white settlers.

In 1882 the Husons came on north and took up land on Crazy Woman right below present day "Tipperary" (where they stayed until 1889). It was here they became acquainted with Arapahoe Brown. They grew to be fast friends—Arapahoe Brown proved indeed "A friend in need" as they built a homestead cabin and set up residence in this wild, unpopulated area. Dr. Huson and Arapahoe hunted buffalo and other wild game. It was then that the doctor learned the ways of the great western outdoors and gradually and completely regained his good health. Arapahoe and the doctor spent evening after evening in stimulating, social conversation, discussing events of the times, philosophy, poetry, books, etc. It was very evident that Andrew Brown was a well-educated man. He had by now grown a mustache and a small "goatee".

The Shoshoni and Arapahoe Indians used to camp on Crazy Woman below the Huson homestead, 1,000 at a time, to cut up and dry their Buffalo meat and make the ever-needed pemmican. This would have been indeed frightening had not Arapahoe Brown been there, for as Dr. Huson said, "He was quite an Indian fellow —could get anything out of a bunch of Indians." He used to spend quite a bit of his time with the Indians when they were buffalo hunting.

But Rap, in spite of all this apparent sociality, was still mysterious and abrupt about his comings and goings. After days of enjoyable hunting and visiting he'd suddenly be gone, to appear weeks later just before the evening meal. Perhaps he'd come in all covered with snow, and, unfastening his heavy buffalo-hide

coat remark, "Well, Doc, I think we're going to have a chinook tomorrow". And they did.

It was while Arapahoe was doing a lot of visiting at the Huson's, and soon after a Deadwood Stage robbery, that one dark night two strangers knocked at the door and asked if the doctor would set a man's leg. They were tired-looking and heavily armed. Both were red-eyed and dust-covered to the point where it was hard to tell much what their faces were like normally. They were tall, well-built fellows drooping with fatique. One said, "Doc, this man's needin' a doctor mighty bad. We're figgerin' on bringin' him in". Dr. Huson didn't see how he could rightly refuse such a request (or was it an order?) and while looking them over it flashed through his mind that it was very odd indeed that they had called him "Doc". How had they known anything about him? How did they know he lived there? How had they found him? At the same moment he had a queer prickly feeling up and down his spine sensing that it would be unwise to refuse the request had he had such a notion.

He told them to bring the man in and go stable their horses and have a bite to eat, said he could put them up for the night. The fellow was in a bad way for sure, plumb used-up and suffering plenty, said his "horse had stumbled and fell on his leg." After the doctor and his wife finished working with him, they looked around but no one was there—the other two strangers had vamoosed. Thinking maybe they'd bedded down in the barn, the doctor investigated, but the only thing he found was a big long-legged brown horse tied to the manger, tiredly eating oats. It was plain to be seen that "he'd done some hard-going", for he was sweat-caked and muddy. To one side lay "The swellest silver-mounted saddle and bridle a fella'd ever care to see". "Odd, now wasn't it, if them fella's was in such a hurry to leave, why had they taken time to unsaddle that horse and give him some oats? How'd they know where them oats was, now you come to think about it?"

For a week or more the cowboy took a "heap of watching"—he was a sick man. He stayed there for over a month, "him and his horse," but the Husons enjoyed the stranger's stay. As Harry Huson, then a boy, said, "He was the finest lookin' man I ever saw—the pleasantest fella you could ever talk to—smart, too, and well-raised and educated. He was a good-hearted devil—had a smile a foot long. He was a southerner, and very dark complected, musta been six feet tall and musta weighed 170 pounds. He was sure nice to us kids. We'd break our necks waitin' on him. We'd do anything, just so he'd smile and tell us things in that fascinatin' southern drawl."

One day when he got so he could hobble around fairly well, the cowboy said, "Have the boys get my horse in the corral with the bunch. I aim to be leavin' in the morning."

So the following morning, sure enough, he saddled up and leading his horse back to the house, said, "Doc, how much do I owe you? For the extra-special favors for me and my horse?"

"Well, you cowboys have a pretty hard life, have to work hard for your money—guess $25'll do the job; although, rightly, boy, I didn't figure on chargin' you a red cent. We've all enjoyed having you here, even if we do have a tough time wondering where the next grub'll come from. Tain't none of our business and ain't idle curiousity, just friendly interest, and if you're not sayin' won't matter. But now that you're leavin', do you mind tellin' us what outfit you work for generally? Hope it ain't too far away, so we'll be seein' you again soon."

The stranger didn't answer for a moment or two—just stuck his hand in his pocket and pulled out a big roll of money and handed the doctor several hundred dollar bills. Then leading his horse, he limped over and sat down on an empty nail keg nearby and slowly and very painstakingly rolled a cigarette. After carefully scrutinizing the finished job he lit a match and, looking up with that engaging smile of his, said, "Come on over here, you boys, and set down. I want to tell you somethin'. I want you to always remember it. I'll tell you who I am—I'm Bob Dalton—just a plumb no-good train robber and outlaw, and I've been doin' this fer quite a spell; but mind now, I ain't advisin' *you* to do it. Get what you get honest. Do you hear? *Honest,* get it *honest.* Somethin' pretty bad happened to me awhile back, and for the life of me I can't seem to get it out of my head. All the time I been a layin' here healin', it keeps poppin' up and troublin' me. My mother was on a stage I held up—she was comin' out here to find me, her son, 'cause she couldn't stand me never writin' and her never hearin' or knowin' where I was. So after the holdup I rode into Cheyenne and hunted her up. Hadn't seen her for ten years. She had no way a knowin' I was one of them that took her money and scared her till she was fit to be tied. She was terrible upset. Tried to get me to come home and get away from all this wicked country. I gave her money and sent her back home promisin' I'd come soon; I leave her think I was doin' good and earnin' money—I mean earnin' honest money. Boys, I lied to her and ain't atall proud that I had to tell them lies. Boys, don't ever do nothin' that'll keep you from lookin your ma in the eyes and knowin' you've rightly earned that proud way she has a lookin' at you. It ain't good for a fellow to have to lie to his own ma." And stomping his cigarette out with a boot heel he mounted and rode off at a gallop, waving goodby, as he disappeared over the hill. And the Husons never saw him again. Unconsciously the thought comes to our minds—did Arapahoe Brown have anything to do with this episode? It is known that he had "doings" with the James Brothers—why not, maybe, with the Dalton Brothers, too?

It's an intriguing thought. How much went on in the Hole-in-the-Wall that will forever remain a part of its weird obscurity!

Along with everything else, Arapahoe did considerable prospecting for gold. By now, he had himself a dugout up on Rock Creek, which served as a headquarters of sorts. Here he had quite a bunch of horses. He liked this Rock Creek-French Creek country, and spent much of his time there, in between prospecting trips into the Big Horns. By now it was very obvious that Brown was going to get himself a hunk of land. He was on friendly terms with a Mowry family who had located on French Creek. Mowry himself seemed a rather indolent sort, preferring to go hunting and prospecting rather than attend to the improvement of his land. He left all the hard work on their small ranch to his wife. It is said she dug the first irrigation ditch on Rock Creek. That ditch today is still called the Mowry Ditch.

One day Arapahoe and Mowry took off on a hunting trip. Mowry was never seen again. Some say he lies buried beneath a man made pile of rocks on a nearby hill; others say Brown disposed of him high on the Big Horns. Be that as it may, it is known that Brown moved in with Mrs. Mowry without the benefit of clergy. (In those days they sometimes overlooked little formalitites like getting married. After a year or two he apparently tired of this arrangement, so removed Mrs. Mowry. He staked her to a light wagon and a fine matched, roan team and sufficient money to get her back home to Indiana. Not too long after her reluctant departure Mr. Brown drove up to the homestead shack with the wagon and roan team. What had happened to Mrs. Mowry and her son? Who knows. One old-timer said he knew a fellow who happened by the Mowry cabin one time when no one was there. He got off his horse and sort of looked around; he wasn't snooping or anything like that, you understand. He was just resting up a bit and a funny thing happened, a right upsetting thing—his dog got to sniffing around one end of the cabin and finally began digging at a great rate. Next thing the man knew his darned dog was chewing on a kid's skull. He became so frightened he put the bone back under the house, filled up the hole and withdrew from the vicinity immediately. He never mentioned this incident until long after Brown's death. Whether his imagination got out of hand or not is not known. All that is known is that no one ever laid eyes on Mrs. Mowry and her son again.

Rap now began to visualize himself as dictator over the Rock Creek area. One time an old cowhand by the name of J. W. Mooney, working for a big outfit south of Buffalo, was stacking hay on Lower Rock Creek, where choice bluestem grass grew abundantly on the rich bottomland draws along the creek. It was open country, nobody owned the land; whoever felt most ambitious at the right time used the grass for hay and hauled it in for saddle-horse and milkcow feed. Just as J. Will was finishing the stacking

Arapahoe rode up, as usual on a horse that seemed much too slight to bear his weight, and said that that hay and grass was his. "This land's mine and what's on it is mine." J. Will got his rifle and climbed onto the stack, at first thinking he'd battle the bully. Arapahoe said with that soft voice of his, "I'll give you just five minutes to get off that stack and get out of here." After looking into Brown's unblinking, intense-gazing eyes, J. Will slowly climbed down off the stack, got his team in gear and left the premises. Those eyes made him feel that a stack of wild hay and the work of stacking it was hardly worth the price of his life; for Arapahoe's boast was, "I'll fight any man, fists or guns". Like everybody else, J. Will, who was in no sense of the word a coward, figured that Brown was a man it didn't pay to argue with. It was just common sense to get out of his way and that as quickly as reasonably possible under the circumstances.

Then along comes this story that gives yet another side of Mr. Brown. An eighteen year old girl had arrived on the scene to visit her married sister who lived in Johnson County. She was a gay, young thing, pretty, vivacious and a talented pianist. She was immediately vitally in love with this western way of life. She thought it great fun to try to drive a team and ride a horse. Arapahoe became quite interested in the girl and used to spend many evenings with the family, listening to her piano playing which seemed to appeal to him especially. He became the most thoughtful of neighbors. Just to mention "we have no potatoes" sent him hurrying home to bring them over a sack. One day the girl expressed a desire for a saddle horse of her very own, one she could safely ride; for then, it seemed, a horse was considered broke if he was ridden once across the corral. She was afraid of her brother-in-law's horses and hated to admit it. So the next morning here came Arapahoe leading a beautiful horse, a deep shiny brown horse with a white star in his forehead. It was for her, he said, and one she could safely ride. "Would she like to take a little ride and try him out?" She said she would, so he "eared" the horse down while she got on and they rode off down the valley as nicely as you please, in spite of the girl's fear that this horse might not be safe either. But as time passed, she became thrilled with his easy gait and lively beauty. She lost her fear and began to thoroughly enjoy herself and the lovely day and the "just being outdoors". She even felt slightly intrigued having this big man riding by her side, so immense and yet so kind and gentle and considerate (she thought).

They rode down a pretty little lane where the yellow chaparral-berry bushes grew. They got off and Arapahoe picked some of the bitter little berries for her to taste. They sat in the shade and talked of many things. After awhile he took a sack from the back of his saddle and carefully laid out on the grass little tin cans of

food. These he opened and gave her a small penknife with which to eat the food right from the cans. He said gently, "See how long you can keep this knife, my dear. I've had it for 26 years, and take pleasure in giving it to you at this moment." (So she kept the small knife and has it to this day, cherished all these years as a part of a most unusual experience in her young girlhood).

On the way home the beautiful brown horse ran away with her, suddenly and with no real reason; not maliciously, but gaily, as if he could no longer resist the temptation of fast going. She was not afraid really. She said, "I felt like I was in a rocking chair sailing through the air, so easy and methodical were his movements, but the swiftness was a little frightening, for I did *not* know how to *really ride*". Mr. Brown was all apologies for the horse having run away; he was very, very sorry. When they arrived home that afternoon, he picketed the horse to a long rope and taught her how to go up the rope hand-over-hand, slowly, each day and offer the horse sugarlumps. That way he would come to know her, he said, and would truly be her very own horse. But try as she would, she could never tame the big brown animal. Nor could anyone else do it, for that matter; he'd thrown sky-high every cowboy who got on his back. She said she began to think Mr. Brown had cast some sort of spell over the animal the day she rode him and that he didn't dare to buck her off. He had cast some slight spell over her, too, for in spite of herself she was quite impressed with his courtly manners, poetic speech, and flattering attention.

Soon Brown called again. He had a camping trip in mind and said if her sister would act as chaperone and get a group of young folks of her choosing together, he'd take them all to the mountains and he'd be so happy to furnish everything they'd need, tents, horses, food and all. He said he had a special camping site on Powder River on top of the Big Horns above Barnum and Mayoworth which would be a rare treat for them all. For some unknown reason, perhaps the good Lord was looking down, the camping trip failed to materialize.

Several weeks later the girl received the following letter with the envelope postmarked Mayoworth, Wyoming, written in truly beautiful handwriting and stating clearly, as you shall see, his disappointment that the plans for the camping trip had fizzled out.

High in the Mountains
July 14th, 1899

Dear Friend,

While you did not answer me in the affirmative when I asked you in reference to the anticipated and partly arranged trip to the mountains I am prompted to write you in reference thereto. If you will be so kind as to drop me a line at Mayoworth—I shall return home via Mayoworth and will probably remain there for several days.

Where I write this is high on the mountains—just beside a big snowdrift and the mosquitoes!

Oh! thou cussed little fellow
Blood-sucking beast of prey
With your fawning wings of music
Stop! I'll take your life away.
The snow is in abundance, clinging to
the crest of every peak.
Proud soars the fearless eagle around
the frozen crest.
Low mid the blooming daisies, the turtle
dove builds her nest.

I have met an old acquaintance and friend—will camp with him tonight. He, too, is prospecting for gold and silver. I probably will lend a feeble hand for a short time.

It is a beautiful time now for one to visit the mountains.

There are flowers round about me
As I sit beneath the lime
Sweet lovely things are
Breathing the breath of olden time.
They look so kindly upward
I greet them as my friends
And my mind to each small blossom
Such holy beauty lends,
That—as if to living creatures
Wherever my glance may fall
On the bluebells or the daisies
I say, "God bless you all."

I have arranged to take a short trip to the "Springs". Shall probably go down day after tomorrow. There are a great many people going to the Springs[1] now, some for pleasure, some for health, some to scatter round their wealth.

I have built a great many castles in the air about our anticipated trip and this is the finest locality for building castles you ever saw.

In the regions of cloud
Where the whirlwinds arise
My Castle of Fancy was built
The turrets reflect the blue of
the skies
The windows with sunbeams were gilt.
The rainbow sometimes in its
beautiful state
Enamels the mansions around.
My vision of fancy that the clouds
can create
Supplies me with plenty of ground.
I have canyons and gorges and pine-
tree groves.
I have all that enchantment has told.
Sweet shady walks for the Gods and
their loves,
Mountains of silver and gold.

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1. Probably means Thermopolis.

But the storm that I felt not, has arisen
And called, while wrapt in slumber I lay.
And when I looked out in the morning
Behold! my castle was carried away.
It passed over canyons, over gorges
and groves,
The world—it was all in my view.
I thought of my friends, of their fates
and their loves
And, full often of you, my dear.

Excuse this hasty botch.

Yours in kindness and friendship,
Andrew Brown.

Soon afterwards the girl was sent unwillingly back east to her home. Thus ended what might have been a serious romance, or is it more to the point to say that a possible tragedy was thus averted?

As Arapahoe's herd of horses grew and the land became more settled in the Rock Creek area, he enlarged his holdings and took up a homestead on lower Powder River, about 12 miles this side of Arvada, Wyoming, where there were few people and lots of room. He now built himself a substantial cabin and had quite a comfortable place.

He also began living with a Mrs. Sonny (pronounced Son-ni), "Old Lady Sonny" she was called. She lived in the northwest end of Buffalo in a house located on site where Emil Hecht now lives. Her husband had been a teamster for Fort McKinney while it was in operation, and what became of him after that, nobody knows. Brown apparently paid her bills, although there was no marriage ceremony. Maybe he just wanted a place to stay when in town and have someone to make his shirts—he took a 19-inch neck size which was hard to find "store-made". Old Lady Sonny made his shirts. She was a heavyset, elderly looking, rather slovenly appearing person, but she had a pleasant, friendly way about her. She loved the children of the neighborhood and always had stick candy, cookies or doughnuts for them when they happened by, which was often.

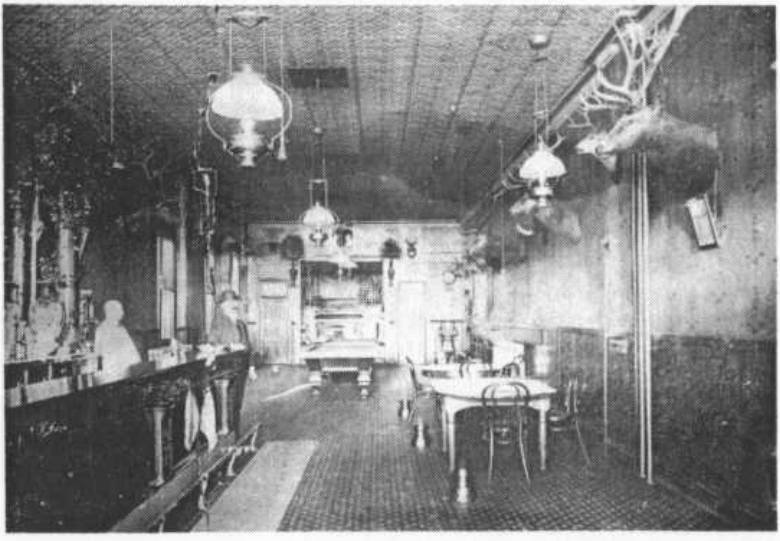
As he grew older Rap (as he was now called) grew bald on top. He'd let his beard grow, too, until it was most luxuriant. It was really a thing of beauty (if one was an admirer of beards.)

Rap still moved around a lot—he'd be on French Creek, then Powder River, then Buffalo and probably lots of other places no one knew about. Glimpses into his personality are shown by incidents related by various old-timers who knew him by sight.

One said, "When I was just a kid, Old Rap stopped at our ranch for a meal one day. He was the biggest man I ever saw—he looked simply tremendous to me. Gosh! but he was a whopper! With that big old bald head and great big hands. It was fly time and the flies kept lightin' on Rap's bald spot and crawlin' around.

Courtesy Thelma G. Condit

Zindel Saloon. Zindle is standing at the end of bar with hat on. Red Angus, bartender, stands behind the bar. (Early 1900's)



Courtesy Thelma G. Condit

View of Zindel Saloon, one of the most famous saloons in Wyoming in the early days. (Early 1890's)

He'd haul off and whop himself on the head, a blow hard enough to kill a mule, tryin' to kill them flies. When he got ready to leave before gettin' on his horse he tucked his long beard (it came below his waist) into his vest—he always wore a vest. I remember he went over Basin way a lot, used to take the trail through Clear Creek Pass (that's all caved in now). He'd ride it in a day, too. The only food he took along them times was a pocket full of peppermint stick candy. What was he doing in the Basin? Gosh! I don't know. Nobody knew nothin' for sure about Rap except he was a surly old devil and everybody was half-scared of him."

Another time Rap stopped at a homestead shack where the woman of the house had just given birth to her first son. He laid the wee babe along his forearm and held him quite awhile looking intently at the little red-faced squirming thing, then said, "This is the smallest baby I ever saw. I wonder if he'll be worth his keep."

Another old-timer said, "Old Arapahoe Brown sure had a reputation. I remember when I was just a small boy my father and I went past Rap's place. We was goin' for a load of apples. We stopped at Rap's for dinner. I was scared plumb silly. I figured he'd shoot you on sight. Old Nigger Steve was cookin' for Rap. He was terrible lookin' to me, too, cause I'd never seen a nigger before. They both was nice and friendly, but I was too scared to eat. Nigger Steve had made a nice pie and coaxed me to eat a piece but I wouldn't take a bit. I figgered he was sure tryin' to poison me. I knew we was never goin' to get out of there alive."

Rap was always getting arrested. He was suspected of being a horse thief among other things, but he was hard to pin down, mainly because when the Sheriff came to serve the papers on him he'd not only tear up the warrant but proceed to beat up the sheriff.

When Newt Lane was sheriff he was continually having trouble with Rap. Newt was a "little bit of a sawed-off fellow" with a crippled hip, which caused him to limp badly. He was just an old "stove-up" cowboy who owned a little cow ranch on the north side of Rock Creek. Once when he was attempting to arrest Brown, Rap yelled at him, "I'll tell you when I want to be arrested" and he slapped Newt on the side of the head. Newt hit the ground with blood spurting out of his nose. Being a tough little guy he promptly got up, wiped his bleeding nose and took Rap to the courthouse where Rap tore up the warrant and walked out. And that was the end of that.

When Red Angus was tending bar in the Zindel saloon, Rap came in one day and apparently became quarrelsome over drinks or something. Anyway, Angus refused to cooperate in the matter, so Rap just pulled out a little old .32 pistol and shot Red through the side of the throat. After a lot of coughing and spitting and

bending and twisting, Angus spit out the bullet. (It was a sharp little bullet and had not exploded in the gun-chamber.) Holding the thing in his hand he faced Brown across the bar and said, "That was a very ungentlemanly act, a very ungentlemanly act, Mr. Brown".

When anyone sued Rap, he immediately, upon being informed of the fact, found and beat up the man bringing suit and then rode into Buffalo and whaled his lawyer, too.

This story is told about a certain lawyer who was representing one of his clients who was bringing suit against Brown. He was a frail, rather nervous little man. A friend of his walked into his office one afternoon and saw a wicked looking gun laying on the lawyer's desk pointing straight at the door. He jokingly asked the reason for the display of firearms and the lawyer replied, "My God! man, I aim to use that gun on Arapahoe Brown the minute he sticks his head in that door. I'm taking no chances, I tell you. I'll kill him, I'm telling you, I'll kill him outright and *first*."

But Rap didn't show up that day at all. Next morning when the lawyer's wife opened the front door there was a long cylindrical object leaning against the side of the house. When she started out to pick it up her husband yelled, "Woman, don't touch that thing—it's a bomb Arapahoe Browns put there to blow us to eternity." He had the object removed to the outskirts of town where it was cautiously unwrapped. It was only a rug his wife had ordered from Metcalf's store.

After the Johnson County Invasion, a couple of fellows, Eric Bunton and Halabaugh (don't know his first name) drifted into the Hole-in-the-Wall. Eric was just a skinny, tow-headed kid about 17 or 18 years old, innocent enough looking so no one would ever suspect that he was one of the worst, most hardened young criminals ever to hit these parts.

Halabaugh was about six feet tall, slim and slightly grey at the temples, although not thought to be really very old. He herded horses for Harmon Fraker. George Fraker said, "Halabaugh had a lot of crooked ideas, although he was a nice enough fellow to meet and know, just an average cowpuncher, nothin' extra as a hand".

Halabaugh and the kid pulled off a lot of shady deals. They'd run sheep, and cattle too, from the big outfits on top of the Big Horns, down canyons, and pick brands off the wool and rebrand steers to sell on the side.

Then, next thing, they were working for Arapahoe Brown in a big horse stealing deal. Old Rap would take a chance on anything if he figured he could make some money, but this partnership business proved to be his "Waterloo". All the time Bunton and Halabaugh were slipping little bunches of Rap's horses away from the rest and selling them over in South Dakota. The three men

were back and forth from Powder River to French Creek and no one thought too much about what was going on. But horse stealing was getting pretty tame for restless men and bank robbing was about passé, so the two outsiders persuaded Rap to go into a counterfeiting racket with them. He was in for anything profitable, so they began laying the groundwork for the proposed setup down at the Powder River place, since it was isolated and most suited for the project.

The two fellows dug a tunnel from the cabin to a good sized cave in a bank about 100 yards from the buildings. Also they made a cellar under the house which connected with the tunnel, thus making an underground passage from the cabin to the cave. Also they made several other "dugout cabins" of varying sizes in several places round about. Eric and Halabaugh did the manual labor and Rap was to supply the necessary machinery (whatever it took).

After all the digging was done, Rap still hadn't fulfilled his part of the deal. Weeks passed by and still no "printing machine". Maybe he "smelled a rat" and was stalling a bit to sort of think it over some more.

Finally his partners, like all petty criminals, got impatient with this prolonged stalling around and gave Rap a deadline of just two weeks to get the stuff there. They were also become somewhat mistrustful—suppose Old Rap was planning to doublecross them? He knew enough about them to send them both "over the road" for keeps. If the truth were known, they were secretly afraid of the man. They felt that here was a fellow who was just a little too much for them to handle. They just couldn't quite figure him out.

So, conforming perfectly with the type of lawless thinking characteristic of such renegades, they decided the best thing to be done under the circumstances was to get rid of Rap, for *good*. After all, he did own some good land and had a sizable bunch of horses which they could easily appropriate. Maybe they'd get the land, too, if they worked it smart.

They planned it all very carefully and foolproof, they thought. For days they grubbed sagebrush and started little fires here and there so the air round about would have the "sagebrush burning" smell. Then they stacked some of it close to the big woodpile not far from the cabin. They also replenished the woodpile itself with everything in the way of wood and brush they could lay their hands on.

A day or two afterwards Rap showed up about suppertime, presumably in a right jovial mood. They got supper ready and Rap ate heartily, too heartily it seemed to his companions, who had little appetite. He appeared to purposely prolong the meal. When the dishes were done Rap got out a Montgomery Ward catalog and sat down at the table and began thumbing through

the pages. The three talked of everything except the thing that was uppermost in their minds. Bunton seemed restless; he kept going to the open doorway, leaning against one side and putting one foot up on the other side. Finally Halabaugh went over to the bunk along the side of the wall, pulled off his boots and stretched out flat on his back with his arms folded under his head. Old Rap was still sitting at the table picking his teeth and thumbing through the catalog. Finally Bunton rolling a cigarette and looking outside, said, "Guess I'll see what them horses 'er doing. Seems like that one you rode in ain't happy about somethin'. Reckon anything's botherin' around."

"No, there ain't nothin' around", said Halabaugh, "or them dogs would be notifyin' us." Rap said nothing at all, just went on looking at the catalog.

Suddenly a rifle shot rang out, and shattered window glass fell in pieces on the floor. Old Rap grabbed his chest mumbling, unbelievingly, "My God, boys, I'm shot". He tried to get up and get his gun which stood by the door, but couldn't make it—just fell full length face down on the floor and bled to death. Bunton had fixed him, for good.

Next the criminals tied his feet together with a rope and dragged him to the door where they wrapped the other end of the rope to the saddlehorn and "snaked" him over to the woodpile. Before placing him on top, they maliciously beat out his brains with a grubbing hoe. This last, probably, in wrathful hate, because he had forced them to get rid of him. Stubborn, shrewd old fool, he should have cooperated and they wouldn't have had to do this.

They covered his body with wood and sagebrush and started a rip-roaring fire, which they kept going for days. They replenished it as needed with anything handy that was burnable and "smelly".

In a day or two Halabaugh rode into Buffalo and bought a window glass and considerable rifle ammunition. When he returned they worked franticly fixing everything up on the Powder River place to make it look normal and as if nothing out-of-the-way had happened. They rounded up his horses, ready to take off for South Dakota. They also went to the French Creek place and appropriated whatever they desired of Rap's personal possessions. They told anyone who happened to inquire about Rap that he'd gone over Basin way for a week or so, and no suspicions whatever were raised.

But as time went on and neither Rap nor his partners showed up, Kennedy, the sheriff, thought maybe he'd ride out to French Creek and sort of check up. Finding nothing there showing signs of recent occupation, he decided to go to Powder River and have a look around. He took a couple of fellows with him just for company. This place, too, showed nothing out-of-the-way. It didn't look like anybody'd been around much lately, though, which was rather queer. They were about to ride off when one man

decided to see why there was such a big pile of ashes in that one particular place. It looked rather odd. Upon closer scrutiny they could plainly see the outline of a man's body. There was a row of buttons in the ashes and the distinct imprint of a long body. Poking around with a stick they found a human jawbone with the teeth still in it and several other human bones. Grabbing a tarp off the bunk in the cabin, they quickly gathered up the buttons and bones and hastened to Buffalo to report their gruesome find.

Old Rap's bones caused a lot of excitement in town. J. A. Jones was undertaker at the time. (These events took place in 1901.) Flatrock Jones he was called, because he was tight with his money. He was a short, rather heavy-set man with a big mustache. He ran a saloon (its location where Seney's Drug store now is), not a fancy saloon like Zindel's up the street; just a common, run-of-the-mill place where the drunkest drunks held sway. Flatrock had his "funeral parlor" in the rear of the saloon. This served more than one purpose, for whenever a man got too inebriated, all Flatrock had to do was lead him into the back room and leave him a minute or two. Upon finding himself surrounded with coffins, and once in awhile one with a corpse in it, he immediately remembered he had rushing business to be attended to elsewhere, anywhere in fact, but here, and he usually departed "dead sober", too. This was an ideal setup for Jones for he could handle his two businesses himself this way. He had sort of a grudge against his predecessor in the undertaking business anyway, for when he'd bought it he was made to clearly understand it was a thriving thing. Flatrock, himself, felt like the price was much too high. However, he was assured that there were three men about to die and he'd more than double his money right away. "These fellows were good, payin' customers, one a man could depend on to pay right up." But just as Jones had suspected all along, he had been swindled, against his better judgment, too, for one man got well, the second went to Sheridan to die and the third just up and left the country.

Flatrock had Rap's bones lying in state in the funeral parlor back of the saloon. Everybody for miles around had to come in to look at them. Flatrock had a really thriving saloon business, for nearly every man had to fortify himself with a little snort in order to sort of calm himself down and talk about this murder sensibly. It was kind of a spooky subject, the more one thought about it.

One old-timer told me, "In those days, by gum, a kid just didn't get in a saloon, but Old Flatrock let me and some other boys in to see Rap's bones. Had 'em in a baby casket. We was plumb flabbergasted to think them bones was all that was left of big old Rap Brown. I'll never forget the coffins stacked on the sides of that room. Didn't take us kids long to see what we wanted to see."

In a month or so Halabaugh came back to the French Creek place. He had a beard now and either thought he wouldn't be recognized or that he had committed "the perfect crime." One day he walked into the Zindel saloon and wanted to sell the bartender a watch, or at least put it up for some whiskey. While the bartender was examining the watch preparatory to making up his mind, a fellow standing at the end of the bar, presumably scanning through the weekly newspaper, happened to get a good look at the watch. He knew at once it belonged to Arapahoe Brown, a fine gold watch with A. B. engraved in large letters on the side. He also recognized the man as Halabaugh. Very nonchalantly he laid down the newspaper and sauntered out, sheriff-bound.

Both outlaws were later apprehended on the French Creek place and put in jail, and both eventually confessed. The trial was a lengthy one and popular opinion ran high. A lot of folks felt sorry for the kid, Eric, being so young and guileless-looking. They just knew he'd been led astray by Halabaugh (who actually wasn't as old as he looked). A Dr. Allen, a dentist in Billings, identified the teeth in the jawbone as Andrew Brown's after careful comparison with his office records. Both murderers were sentenced to a stretch in the pen, but they were soon pardoned upon promise of leaving the state.

Eric's mother came to Buffalo and tried hard to get her son out of the mess he was in. She wept and pleaded (and she was a pretty, dainty, little blue-eyed woman) but neither her tears nor her imploratory outbursts softened the hearts of the court officials. The judge said bluntly, "Madam, when a jury finds a man guilty, I let it alone." One of the lawyers said later, "They should have turned those fellows loose and given them a silver medal a piece for killing that old devil." Another lawyer said that "Halabaugh seemed like a saint compared to that kid, who sat through the whole trial mighty cool and cold-blooded. The only thing that kept them both from hanging was the fact that the man they'd killed needed killing. For if ever there was a cold-blooded murder, this was it."

There is a saying that people have a way of forgiving a man when he's dead, but this didn't hold true in the case of Andrew Brown. "He'd led a violent life and died a violent death" and by a peculiar twist of fate had, in the minds of most people, made just retribution for his evilness. Powerful though he was, he had not been able to foresee the handwriting on the wall nor anticipate this date with destiny.

"The storm that he felt not, had truly
arisen and carried his castle away."