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## **Bat Masterson: The Dodge City Years**

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BAT MASTERSON; THE DODGE CITY YEARS

being

A thesis presented to the graduate faculty

Of Fort Hays Kansas State College

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Science

by

George G. Thompson, A.B., 1939

Fort Hays Kansas State College

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Date May 15, 1939



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IN MEMORY  
 OF  
 INSPIRATION  
 FROM  
 DR. MYRTA E. MCGINNIS  
 AND  
 DR. FLOYD B. STREETER

*Dye*

*George S. Thompson*

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## INTRODUCTION

Kansas has an unusual and a brilliant history. The men who lived within its boundaries when this history was being made, and who helped make it, are becoming older each year; historians and biographers have only a short time in which to secure their stories, which will, otherwise, go with them when they die. With this thought in mind, the author has selected the life of William Barclay Masterson, a colorful figure in the history of Dodge City, Kansas, for preservation.

The sources used in this biography were, largely, newspapers, printed between the years 1876-1886, interviews with men who knew Bat Masterson when he resided in Dodge City, and the recorded memoirs of men who lived and fought side by side with him on the Plains. Not all of the available sources agreed on the details of certain stories in which Bat Masterson participated; it has been the task of the author to compare and contrast these various stories, to weigh evidence, and to evaluate sources. In certain places the evidence is not entirely convincing on either side; in these instances the author has given all of the different versions, permitting the reader to choose the story with the most verisimilitude for his particular

taste and entertainment.

"They also served" — the men of the Old West, who brought law and order to the Plains at the risk of their lives, played their part in the development of our civilization. We, who live after them, have a heritage of history; this heritage should be preserved not only for us but for the people who may follow.

Every period has crusaders; men who, perhaps, make grave and unfortunate errors, but who make them courageously. The purpose of a biography, as the author of this thesis interprets it, is to catch a part of a brave and dauntless spirit and to preserve it through a medium which will be read for entertainment. If this biography does not entertain its readers through its subject matter and style; then, the author has failed.

With hope, and humility, the author presents  
Bat Masterson; The Dodge City Years.

## A YOUTH ON THE FRONTIER

On a farm near Fairfield, Illinois, November 24, 1853, a boy was born, the second child of seven to be reared by Thomas Masterson and his wife, Katherine McGurk Masterson.<sup>1</sup> This infant was christened William Barclay Masterson by proud parents who little knew that this wee babe of the innocent blue eyes would one day strike terror to the hearts of murderous gun-men and highway thieves. Neither did they know that the stately title of William Barclay would one day be discarded for the short and unusually-descriptive title, "Bat."

Bat was only one year younger than his brother Edward and two years older than his brother James; these three boys became playmates and hunting companions who scoured the countryside of Iroquois County, Illinois, for birds and small game. Four children were added to the family in a period of seven years after the birth of James; they were in the order of their births: Nellie, Thomas, Jr., George, and Minnie.

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<sup>1</sup>The material concerning Bat Masterson's early life, including his first business adventure as an assistant grader on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, was secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., the brother of Bat Masterson, in Wichita, Kansas, on November 4, 1937.

Thomas Masterson, Sr., was a weighmaster for the Marshville coal company until the year 1867. During these first fourteen years of his life Bat received the bare rudiments of an education that he was to supplement for the remainder of his life by a voracious desire for reading. The rural school from which he received his first knowledge of the three R's was a very ordinary one and Bat was an ordinary pupil who did boyish pranks to mitigate the boredom of formal discipline and study habits supervised by a stern master.

The happiest days of his early life were spent in the wooded and brush country where he loved to hunt, very much as any boy of that period loved to do. Thomas, his father, was not a rich man; and, in addition, he was a man who had learned the rules of economy from the hard and severe school of experience. At the age of twelve Bat needed a gun; every boy needed a gun in those early days, because the ability to shoot straight might mean in later life the difference between food and starvation when one might be forced to forage his livelihood from the streams and woods.

The Civil War had just drawn to a halting finish at this time in Bat's career and the tired soldiers were returning from the ranks, ragged and weary. They were often willing to barter what few possessions still remained in their keeping for a night's lodging between clean sheets and



a "square" meal of corn bread and side meat. In some manner one of the scarred Civil War muskets became the property of the Masterson family. After being coaxed continually from day to day by his persistent son, Thomas, Sr., gave the old musket to Bat with a few words of warning but with neither powder nor lead.

The country was rather closely settled and Bat knew that it would be dangerous to shoot the musket there, as its lead slugs would carry for a long distance; also, it would be impractical to shoot the musket because of the expense of powder and lead and the necessity for accurate marksmanship in shooting a rifled gun.

Charles Kown, a local Scottish blacksmith and a very good friend of Bat, offered to bore the rifling from the barrel of the musket and convert it into a straight-bore gun for shot. This was agreed upon by the two and performed by the kind-hearted Scotsman with skill and precision — and no charges.

Thus began the career of the man who was later to be pronounced a "gunman" and killer of twenty-eight men in the line of professional duty as sheriff, marshal, and deputy-marshal. This dark-haired and blue-eyed boy was later to be given by certain sensational writers "steel-gray eyes that pierced a man through and through and a steel nerve that quailed before neither man nor beast."

In 1867 Thomas Masterson, Sr., moved his family of seven to the vicinity of St. Louis, where he homesteaded a quarter-section of land. He remained here until the land was deeded to him and then in May, 1871, he moved his family to the present site of Wichita, Kansas, where he again settled himself on government land.

The family was becoming older. In that period it was expected that boys would start making their own ways when they had learned either to plow a straight "furrer" or to throw a good rope.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was building toward the present location of Dodge City at that time and the contract for grading the right-of-way had been let to Wiley and Cutter, major contractors in Topeka. Certain portions of the road-bed grading were being sub-let to minor contractors and private individuals with horses and equipment. One of these minor contractors was Raymond Ritter from Lawrence, Kansas. Edward Masterson and Bat, the latter aged seventeen, were employed on a profit-sharing basis by Ritter to assist him in filling his contract to Wiley and Cutter.

After his part of the construction was completed, Ritter returned to Topeka to make a settlement with the major contracting firm. According to his word he was then to return and make a settlement with the Masterson brothers.

Ritter proved to be a fly-by-the-night and the two brothers were left stranded in Dodge.<sup>2</sup>

Edward Masterson returned to Wichita for a short time, but Bat hired out to a group of buffalo-hunters who were planning a big hunt to the southwest; by this time Bat had become an expert marksman. It was in this hunting party that Bat first made the friendship of Billy Dixon,<sup>3</sup> the scout who was to help Bat and some other hunters and traders make history at Adobe Walls in a later year.

In the spring of 1874 a party of buffalo-hunters planned a hunting trip into the Panhandle country of Texas. The buffaloes in the vicinity of Dodge City were becoming scarce and reports had been brought back that the Panhandle country, although infested with savages, was a veritable mecca for hunters of the "humped" animal of the plains.<sup>4</sup>

Among the party venturing into this unprotected territory infested by savages was Bat Masterson, a sturdy, handsome lad of twenty.

<sup>2</sup>According to Thomas Masterson, Jr., Bat later forced Ritter to pay this debt when he stopped for a short time at the Dodge City railroad station.

<sup>3</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. Preface, page vi. "Mr. W. B. (Bat) Masterson, writing from New York City, a short time before he died, said: 'I first became acquainted with Billy Dixon on the buffalo range in the fall of 1872 and continued to know him well and intimately for several years thereafter. The last time I saw him was at Sweetwater, Texas, in the spring of 1876.'"

<sup>4</sup>It did not seem important to the buffalo-hunters that they were violating a treaty with the Indians in which they had agreed not to hunt for buffalo south of the Arkansas River.

With the party was a stranger from the East named Fairchild. Fairchild was impetuous and more than eager to plunge into the stormy life of the frontier and kill his first redskin. Billy Dixon describes him in the following words:

My first glimpse of Fairchild made me finger my sights, for he certainly looked like game. He was arrayed in a shining broadcloth suit and a cravat that resembled a Rocky Mountain sunset, a plug hat, and a flower-bed vest. That he might behold the sights of Dodge in proper fashion, he had hired a livery horse, equipped with a "muley" saddle, and was riding up and down the streets, as if he owned the whole town. His get-up was so unusual in Dodge that it caused much talk and laughter.<sup>5</sup>

We can imagine the effect of such a sight on a frontier town of this early date; we can also imagine the inevitable end for such a tenderfoot who possessed such bravado and self-importance. Dixon describes the incident of putting the tenderfoot in his proper place as follows:

Ever since we had left Dodge City, Fairchild had been eager to get into an Indian fight, and had bragged about what he would do when the time came. He said that he would not allow an Indian to do or say the least thing to him without his killing the Indian. He was bad medicine from the forks of the creek, a wolf with hydrophobia, a blizzard in July.

In this camp on the South Canadian we paid our respects to Fairchild. All liked him, but he was so bent upon killing an Indian that we felt something must be done, as we were not down in that country to hunt Indians....

In a large grove of cottonwoods just above our camp hundreds upon hundreds of wild turkeys roosted every night. When a turkey hunt was proposed, to

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<sup>5</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon, p. 113.

take place at night, Fairchild grew so eager and excited to go that he could scarcely control himself.

Three men were selected to slip quietly out of camp and at a certain place in the timber have a fire burning when the hunting party got there. One of them came back to act as a guide. Ostensibly he was to lead the hunters to the best and the biggest roost, but actually he was to pilot them to the immediate vicinity of the fire.

Fairchild was so impatient to start that it was difficult to persuade him to wait until darkness had fallen and the turkeys had settled to roost.

I do not believe that it would have been possible to find a man who loved practical joking more than did Bat Masterson. He was in his glory at that sort of thing, and was forever pulling off something of the kind. Bat was one of the three that had gone out to build the fire. He now came back to camp, ready to pilot the hunters where they would "sure find a million turkeys" — and the camp-fire.

It was arranged that Bat should start out, with Fairchild close at his heels and Myers bringing up the rear. Bat cautioned Fairchild to keep both eyes wide open and to move softly, as the turkeys must not be frightened.

Rounding a bend of the creek, where the timber was dark and dense, the hunters suddenly found themselves slap-bang against a camp-fire in full blaze. Bat motioned to Fairchild to move back into the timber. The three then held a consultation to discover, if possible, who had built the fire. Bat was dead sure that it was an Indian camp; he had been dreaming about Indians two or three nights he said, and was now fearful that the worst was at hand. Myers tried to argue that Bat was mistaken and rattled, if not actually showing a streak of yellow; anyway, he was willing to bet that Fairchild could whip all of the Indians in the Panhandle if given a fair show.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Half a dozen shots were fired in the direction of the hunters. The bullets whistled and ripped through the branches close above their heads. Myers took the lead back to camp, yelling bloody murder at every step, to terrify Fairchild. Bat came last, gradually dropping behind and firing his six-shooter until Fairchild was confident that the most desperate fight with Indians imaginable was at hand.

"Run, Fairchild; run for your life!" shouted Masterson.

At a bound Fairchild had passed Myers, and tore

into camp like a tornado coming through a forest. He was half a mile ahead of Bat and Myers. They had led him far enough away to give him a long, hard run.

Fairchild stumbled and fell exhausted on a pile of bedding, gasping for breath, his eyes distended and his teeth chattering. We crowded round, seemingly in great alarm, asking him a thousand questions about the cause of his fright. For several minutes he was unable to speak and acted as if he were suffocating. Finally, he managed to say in a hoarse whisper:

"Injuns."

"Oh, men, he must be shot," exclaimed a mischievous hunter.

Thereupon, another joker seized a butcher knife and ripped Fairchild's shirt down the back from collar to tail. Another, frantically calling for water, and finding none, emptied the contents of the camp coffee pot down Fairchild's bare back, which alarmed Fairchild with the fear that he had been wounded.

Fairchild was recovering by the time Myers and Masterson and the men who had been at the camp-fire bounded in, panting for breath, and began upbraiding Fairchild for abandoning them to the mercy of the Indians. We had asked Fairchild what had become of Bat and Myers and he feebly replied:

"Killed, I guess."

"How many Indians were there, and did you see them?"

He answered that he did not know how many there were, because of the way they shot, but he was sure that the timber was full of them. Once he heard something whiz past his head which he knew was not a bullet, but an arrow.

Masterson now stepped forward and tremblingly declared that the whole turkey roost country was alive with Indians. Instantly there was rushing to and fro in preparation for defense. Serious, perhaps fatal trouble for everybody, was at hand; the devil was to pay and no pitch hot. All kinds of suggestions were offered as to what was best to do. Some of the boys were in favor of starting for Dodge City at once, as the Indians would be unable to follow our trail at night, and we might get far enough away by daylight to escape. Fairchild was firmly committed to the Dodge City plan.

More resolute men were in favor of fighting it out, if every man bit the dust, and proposed that a strong guard be thrown round the camp, and that the men take turns standing guard until morning.

This plan was adopted, and the guards were

stationed at regular intervals everywhere round camp, save on the river side, where a high bank offered protection against sudden surprise.

Fairchild was placed on guard nearest the river, and warned to maintain a vigilant lookout along the edge of the bank, as the Indians might swim up the river and plug him when he wasn't looking, after which they could kill everybody in camp. As a matter of fact, it would have been impossible for the enemy to approach in this manner, because of the swiftness of the water, and the banks were too high and steep to be scaled.

By this time Fairchild was ready to believe anything he heard and was so badly rattled that he failed to see that we had left our camp-fire burning, something that we would never have done had we actually felt that Indians were in the vicinity, as fires would have exposed us to a broad-side from the darkness. Fairchild was in no frame of mind to think of trifles, and obeyed all orders without asking why.

The guards were stationed and shortly afterward, one by one, they came in, all save Fairchild, who stood at his post. There was much noisy laughter over the trick we had played on him. When Fairchild failed to meet the next guard, he became suspicious, and drew near camp, where he overheard what we were saying. Then he came in, with blood in his eyes. I have often thought that he was the angriest man I ever saw in my life. We were too many for him, or else he would have crippled somebody. He refused to eat breakfast and sulked for several days. This cured him, however, of wanting to kill an Indian, and ever afterwards he was a good hunter and a good fellow.<sup>6</sup>

Dixon also states that Bat Masterson was the youngest member of the party and that he was next in age, being at that time only twenty-four. In referring to Bat's general alertness Dixon says, "He [Masterson] was a chunk of steel, and everything that struck him in those days

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<sup>6</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. Selected portions, pp. 120-129.

always drew fire."<sup>7</sup>

Bat Masterson remained in the vicinity of Dodge City during the next two years, 1873 and 1874, going out on buffalo-hunting parties during the hunting season when such parties were financed by some hide-buyer who wished a good marksman with the rifle. Hunting became so profitable that Bat's brother Jim came to Dodge City to aid Bat in his hunting. Jim rode along with Bat and held his horse when the actual shooting of buffaloes began.<sup>8</sup> Bat became so proficient with the rifle that men who knew him said that even in later years his marksmanship with a rifle far surpassed his skill with a six-gun, and then hastened to say that his dexterity with the old Colt's "Peacemaker" was excellent.

These buffalo-hunting parties often took Bat many miles from Dodge City, sometimes into Oklahoma and sometimes as far south as the Texas Panhandle. It was on one of these extended trips to the south that Bat and his comrades came near to death in a raid by the Indians. His hunting party had taken up temporary quarters at the old Adobe Walls, about one hundred fifty miles from Dodge City. Several Dodge City merchants had reconstructed the adobe

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<sup>7</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. p. 115.

<sup>8</sup>This information was secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., November 4, 1937. Thomas Masterson, Jr., also stated that Billy Dixon's account of the battle of Adobe Walls coincided with the story told to him by his brother, Bat Masterson.



ruins and had stocked them with supplies to sell to the roving buffalo-hunters in that section. On the morning of June 27, 1874, Adobe Walls was attacked by a large party of Indians who felt that the white men were poaching on their territory. Billy Dixon tells the story of the battle at Adobe Walls in a manner that agrees with both later newspaper accounts and with the stories of the other men who participated in the battle. The following is an abridged version of the battle as Billy Dixon told it to his wife, Mrs. Olive K. Dixon:

On that memorable night, June 26, 1874, there were twenty-eight men and one woman at the Walls. The woman was the wife of William Olds. She had come from Dodge City with her husband to open a restaurant in the rear of Rath and Wright's store. Only eight or nine of the men lived at the Walls, the others being buffalo hunters who by chance happened to be there. There was not the slightest feeling of impending danger.

As was the custom in the buffalo country, most of the men made their beds outside on the ground....

Every door was left wide open, such a thing as locking a door being unheard of at the Walls. One by one the lights were turned out, the tired buffalo-hunters fell asleep, and the Walls were soon wrapped in the stillness of night.

About two o'clock in the morning Shepherd and Mike Welch, who were sleeping in Hanrahan's saloon, were awakened by a report that sounded like the crack of a rifle. They sprang up and discovered that the noise was caused by the cracking of the high cottonwood ridge pole.

This ridge pole sustained the weight of the dirt roof, and if the pole should break the roof would collapse and fall in, to the injury or death of those inside. Welch and Shepherd woke up a number of their companions to help them repair the roof. Some climbed on top and began throwing off the dirt, while others went down to the creek to cut a prop

for the ridge pole....Twenty-eight men and one woman would have been slaughtered if the ridge pole in Hanrahan's saloon had not cracked like a pistol shot.

By the time we had put the prop in place, the sky was growing red in the east, and Hanrahan asked me if I did not think we might as well stay up and get an early start. I agreed, and he sent Billy Ogg down on the creek to get the horses. Some of the men, however, crawled back into bed. The horses were grazing southeast of the buildings, along Adobe Walls Creek, a quarter of a mile off.

Turning to my bed, I rolled it up and threw it on the front of my wagon. As I turned to pick up my gun, which lay on the ground, I looked in the direction of our horses. They were in sight. Something else caught my eye. Just beyond the horses, at the edge of some timber, was a large body of moving objects advancing vaguely in the dusky dawn toward our stock and in the direction of Adobe Walls. Though keen of vision, I could not make out what the objects were, even by straining my eyes.

Then I was thunderstruck. The black body of moving objects suddenly spread out like a fan, and from it went up one single, solid yell — a warwhoop that seemed to shake the very air of early morning. Then came the thudding roar of running horses, and the hideous cries of each of the individual warriors who engaged in the onslaught. I could see that hundreds of Indians were coming. Had it not been for the ridge pole, all of us would have been asleep.

There was never a more splendidly barbaric sight. In after years I was glad that I had seen it. Hundreds of warriors, the flower of the fighting men of the southwestern Plains tribes, mounted upon their finest horses, armed with guns and lances, and carrying heavy shields of thick buffalo hide, were coming like the wind. Over all was splashed the rich colors of red, vermilion, and ochre, on the bodies of the men, on the bodies of the running horses. Scalps dangled from bridles, gorgeous war-bonnets fluttered their plumes, bright feathers dangled from the tails and manes of the horses, and the bronzed, half-naked bodies of the riders glittered with ornaments of silver and brass....

We were scarcely inside before the Indians had surrounded all the buildings and shot out every window pane. When our men saw the Indians coming, they broke for the nearest building at hand and in this

way split up into three parties....

Hanrahan's saloon [housed] — James Hanrahan, Bat Masterson, Mike Welch, Shepherd, Hiram Watson, Billy Ogg, James McKinley, Bermuda Carlisle, and William Dixon.

Some of the men were still undressed, but nobody wasted any time hunting his clothes, and many of the men fought for their lives all that summer day bare-foot and in their drawers and undershirts....

The number of Indians in this attack has been variously estimated at from 700 to 1000. I believe that 700 would be a safe guess. The warriors were mostly Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Comanches. The latter were led by their chief Quanah, whose mother was a white woman, Cynthia Ann Parker, captured during a raid by the Comanches in Texas....

For the first half hour the Indians were reckless and daring enough to ride up and strike the doors with the butts of their guns. Finally, the buffalo-hunters got straightened out and were firing with deadly effect. The Indians stood up against this for a while, but gradually began falling back, as we were emptying rawhide saddles entirely too fast for Indian safety. Our guns had longer range than theirs. Furthermore, the hostiles were having little success — they had killed only two of our men, the Shadler brothers who were caught asleep in their wagon. Both were scalped....

At our first volleys, a good many of the Indians jumped off their horses and prepared to fight on foot. They soon abandoned this plan; and for good reason. They were the targets of expert rough-and-ready marksmen, and for the Indians to stand in the open meant death. They fell back.

The Indians exhibited one of their characteristic traits. Numbers of them fell, dead or wounded, close to the buildings. In almost every instance a determined effort was made to rescue the bodies, at the imminent risk of the life of every warrior that attempted this feat in front of the booming buffalo guns. An Indian in those days would quickly endanger his own life to carry a dead or helpless comrade beyond reach of the enemy. I have been told that their zeal was due to some religious belief concerning the scalp-lock — that if a warrior should lose his scalp-lock his spirit would fail to reach the happy hunting grounds....

Time and again with the fury of a whirlwind, the

Indians charged upon the building, only to sustain greater losses than they were able to inflict....

Almost at the beginning of the attack, we were surprised at the sound of a bugle. This bugler was with the Indians and could blow the different calls as cleverly as the bugler on the parade ground at Fort Dodge. The story was told that he was a negro deserter from the Tenth Cavalry, which I never believed. It is more probable that he was a captive halfbred Mexican that was known to be living among the Kiowas and Comanches in the 60's. He had been captured in his boyhood when these Indians were raiding in the Rio Grande country and grew up among them as savage and cruel as any of the warriors....

Some had soon discovered that the Indian warriors were charging to the sound of the bugle. In this way they "tipped" their hand, for the calls were understood, and the buffalo-hunters were "loaded for bear" by the time the Indians were within range. Bat Masterson recalling this incident long after the fight, said:

"We had in the building I was in (Hanrahan's saloon), two men who had served in the United States army, and understood all the bugle calls. The first call was a rally, which our men instantly understood. The next was a charge, and that was also understood, and immediately the Indians come [sic] rushing forward to a fresh attack. Every bugle call he blew was understood by the ex-soldiers and was carried out to the letter by the Indians, showing that the bugler had the Indians thoroughly drilled.

"The bugler was killed late in the afternoon of the first day's fighting as he was running away from a wagon owned by the Shadler brothers, both of whom were killed in this same wagon. The bugler had his bugle with him at the time he was shot by Harry Armitage. Also he was carrying a tin can filled with sugar and another filled with ground coffee, one under each arm. Armitage shot him through the back with a 50-caliber Sharp's rifle, as he was making his escape."<sup>9</sup>

Billy Dixon, a simple frontiersman with perhaps a naive but a rigid code of ethics and ideals, evaluates

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<sup>9</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. Selected passages, pp. 155-164.

the courage of his companions at the battle of Adobe Walls as follows:

All my comrades at Adobe Walls that day showed much courage. It is with pride that I can recall its many incidents without the feeling that there was the slightest inclination on the part of any man to show the "white feather"....<sup>10</sup>

He mentions Bat Masterson especially for his valor on that occasion and also attempts to understand how Bat could ever leave the frontier after having lived and fought there.

Bat Masterson should be remembered for the valor that marked his conduct. He was a good shot and not afraid. He has worked his way up in the world, and has long been successful writer for a New York newspaper. He was sheriff of Ford County, Kansas, at Dodge City, in 1876-77.<sup>11</sup> It has always seemed strange to me that finally he should prefer life in a big city, after having lived in the West. I have been told that he said that he had no wish to live over those old days....<sup>12</sup>

On the fifth day the Indians, discouraged by their inability to massacre the brave men at the Walls, disappeared. The traders and buffalo-hunters were free to leave and most of them did so; the majority of them left in a body for Dodge City with the knowledge that it would be too dangerous to attempt to do any further hunting in that territory infested by savage redskins on the war-path.

<sup>10</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. Selected passages, pp. 177-178.

<sup>11</sup>Bat Masterson served as sheriff of Ford County, Kansas, from 1878 to 1880.

<sup>12</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon. p. 178.

Before the hunters and traders struck out for Dodge City an incident occurred which almost precipitated an internal strife among the group of men who only the day before had been fighting shoulder to shoulder for their lives against the Indians. Billy Dixon relates the episode:

A serious row was barely averted that night before we pulled out for Dodge. Guns were scarce, and after the death of Olds [there were four white men killed in all] Bat Masterson had borrowed the Olds gun, a better gun than the one used by Masterson, who had lent his gun to another man. When it was learned that we were going to Dodge, Mrs. Olds sent for her husband's gun. Bat sent back word that he wanted to keep the gun until morning, promising that he would return it at that time. This was not agreeable to Mrs. Olds and she sent a man named Brown to Hanrahan's to get the gun without further talk, as she feared that she might lose it.

Brown made a few mistakes in his language in discussing the matter with Hanrahan, the latter having said several times that he would be personally responsible for the gun and would guarantee that it was returned to Mrs. Olds. Brown crowded matters until Hanrahan grabbed him by the seat of the trousers and shook him as bulldog would a kitten, and then threw Brown out of the saloon, saying, "Get out of my building, you \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_!" Hanrahan drew his gun and had Brown covered, ready to pull the trigger, which I believe he would have done, if several of us had not disarmed him, and then reasoned with him not to go any further, because if shooting began there was no telling what might happen, as both men had friends. Next morning Bat returned the gun to Mrs. Olds.

...The quarrel caused a little coolness among the men, for as we rode away next morning and were passing Myers and Leonards' store, the men there yelled out, "Goodbye, we don't care for any of you leaving, except Billy Dixon!" I waved my hat in acknowledgment of this friendly greeting.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Dixon, Olive K. Life of Billy Dixon, pp. 187-189.

We can well imagine Bat's becoming involved in this type of an altercation, for he was very young at this time and would have resented feeling that he was being forced to do something that he didn't wish to do. We can also imagine Billy Dixon's giving himself a little pat on the back when he dictated this story to his wife by having the men favor his company over that of his companions.

The Adobe Walls battle with the Indians and other similar Indian attacks on white men in the Panhandle district forced the United States government to do something about these depredations. General Nelson A. Miles was commissioned by the governmental authorities to force the Indians to sue for peace with their "white father."

Bat Masterson was forced out of his regular employment by the action of the Indians; it was now impossible to hunt buffaloes on the plains with any degree of safety. A month after the battle at Adobe Walls he was made second in command of a party of eighteen civilian scouts for General Nelson A. Miles.<sup>14</sup> The duties of this group of scouts consisted of acting as guides for the different bodies of troops and of reporting the locations of the different Plains tribes to the commander-in-chief, General Miles.

It was during his experience as a civilian scout

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<sup>14</sup>Wilson, Rufus Rockwell. Out of the West, p. 424.

that Bat Masterson was forced to kill his first man to save his own life. The exchange of shots took place in Sweetwater, Texas.

Bat was a good friend of one of the saloon keepers in Sweetwater and had secured the key to his friend's business establishment, so that his friend, Molly Brennan, and he might partake of liquid refreshments after closing hours. Sergeant King heard of Bat's action and became furiously jealous, as he considered Molly his personal girl friend; he felt that Bat was trespassing on his property and meant to make him pay for it.

Shortly after Molly and Bat had let themselves into the combination saloon and dance hall and had lighted a small kerosene lamp, someone knocked on the door.

Bat, thinking that it was merely some friend passing by who wished a drink, unlatched the night lock and swung the door back. As Bat stepped back to let the caller in, King filled the door with an oath and his gun in his hand.

Molly Brennan, who was at Bat's shoulder, jumped in front of Bat and begged, "Don't shoot; you're drunk!"

King, who was more than a little intoxicated, pointed his gun at the couple and fired point-blank into Molly Brennan. The air was suddenly filled with the wild scream of the woman and the acrid stench of gunpowder and



burned flesh. The bullet had passed through the body of Molly, tearing a large hole in her abdomen, and had entered the body of Bat, lodging in his pelvis bone.

As Molly sank to the floor at his feet Bat whipped his six-gun from its holster and shot King through the heart. The shots aroused the saloon keeper, who lived nearby, and he rushed to the scene along with several other citizens who were abroad at that hour.

Bat was taken to a local medical practitioner, who said that he hadn't a possible chance for life. His friends, refusing to accept this judgment, routed out the army physician, who removed the slug of lead and continued to care for Bat until he regained his normal physical vigor. He recovered from the episode with no ill effects other than a slight limp which he carried with him the rest of his life.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>The story of the gun battle between Sergeant King and Bat Masterson was secured from Thomas Masterson, Jr., in an interview November 4, 1937.

Stuart Lake in his biography of Wyatt Earp, p. 133, gives the following account of the gun battle:

"...Sergeant King shot it out with Bat Masterson at old Sweetwater — later, Mobeetie — near Fort Eliot, Texas. Bat, at that time, was a civilian scout with the army. King, entering the combination dance hall, gambling house, and saloon which the soldiers patronized, found Bat dancing with a girl whom the soldier regarded as his special property. King whipped out a six-gun, shot and killed the girl, and shot Bat in the leg. As he hit the floor, Bat jerked out a Colt's and shot King through the heart. When King's fellow troopers would have taken up the sergeant's battle with Bat, as the latter lay on the floor, it was none other than Ben Thompson who leaped to the top of the

Bat remained in Sweetwater until his wound healed; by that time the Indian trouble had been settled and there was no longer employment for him in the Panhandle country, so he struck out for Dodge City in the spring of 1876. The next we hear of him he was in Dodge City acting as assistant-marshal to Wyatt Earp. Earp had been employed to stop all of the killings that were taking place in Dodge. In his biography Earp makes the following statement:

Bat Masterson's brother Jim was in Dodge, a good, game man who could handle himself in a fracas, and I picked him as one deputy, took Joe Mason back, and was looking for the third when Bat himself came in from Sweetwater, Texas, still limping from the leg-wound he got when he killed Sergeant King. Bat's gun hand was in working order, so I made him a deputy. He patrolled Front Street with a walking-stick for several weeks and used his cane to crack the heads of several wild men hunting trouble; even as a cripple he was a first class peace officer.<sup>16</sup>

Bat Masterson's coming to Dodge City and entering the employ of that cattle-shipping center called by a Chicago newspaper "the beautiful, bibulous Babylon of the plains" marked an epoch in his life; no longer was he to roam to the plains and sleep under the stars at night. At this period in his life Bat put away his rifle and strapped a Golt's to each side of his waist, for there was

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faro layout with a gun in either hand and stood off the soldiers until Bat could be moved to safe quarters."

Personally, we believe that Earp's account is much more colorful and exciting than the story of Thomas Masterson, Jr.; but we cannot vouch for the part Ben Thompson played in the episode, as there is no further evidence than that Earp says it is true.

<sup>16</sup>Lake, Stuart N. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, p. 142.

work to be done in Dodge and he had been employed for seventy-five dollars a month to do it. Life lay ahead of him.

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## "SPORTING MAN" AND PEACE OFFICER

In July, 1876, Bat Masterson gave up his job as assistant-marshal of Dodge under Wyatt Earp and struck out for Deadwood, South Dakota, to join the seekers for gold in the Black Hills.<sup>17</sup>

In September of this same year Wyatt and Morgan Earp left Dodge City en route for the Black Hills to seek their fortunes there; they went by wagon, as there was no established railroad or stage line between Kansas and South Dakota at that time.

At Sydney, Nebraska, the Earp brothers met Bat returning to Dodge. He told them that he had not gone on to Deadwood as his gambling luck in Cheyenne had been especially good, and he had figured that all of the best claims would have been staked by the time he was ready to continue his journey from Cheyenne.

Bat tried to discourage Wyatt and Morgan from continuing on what he considered a profitless trek, but Wyatt insisted that his brother and he might stumble onto something that the other prospectors had overlooked. Before they parted Wyatt suggested to Bat that he run for

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<sup>17</sup>Information secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937.

sheriff in Ford County when Charlie Bassett's term expired as Charlie did not intend to seek another term as sheriff.

"I'm not quite twenty-two," Bat objected.<sup>18</sup>

"You're as much of a man as you'll ever be," Wyatt replied.<sup>19</sup>

Bat returned to Dodge in the fall of 1876 and wintered there, making one trip back to Wichita to visit his parents.<sup>20</sup> We may well imagine that he was what the West entitled a "sporting man" during this winter and early spring — that is, a gambler and faro dealer, an honorable profession on the frontier at this time. It was probably during this period of his life that he took part in the several practical jokes that have been accredited to him by men writing of that period of early Dodge life.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Bat probably said, "I'm not quite twenty-three." — his actual age.

<sup>19</sup>Lake, Stuart N. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, p. 155.

<sup>20</sup>Information secured from Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937.

<sup>21</sup>The following tale related by Robert Wright in Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital, p. 208-209, reminds us of what Billy Dixon said concerning Bat's love for practical jokes:

"...a doctor from the east, a specialist in venereal and private diseases, wrote persistently to our postmaster and others to know if it [Dodge] was not a good field for his practice. Some of the gang got hold of the letters and wrote him that the town was overrun with disease, that even our ministers were not free, and that more than half the people were suffering.... They signed one letter, 'Sim Dip, Ed Slump'; and another, 'Blue Pete.'

"...On his arrival he hunted up Sim Dip and Blue Pete....They came to me for the key and the loan of the Lady Gay Theater, a large old building....They printed and put out notices and in the afternoon started

On June 9, 1877, Dodge was doing a lively and thriving business with some two hundred cattlemen in town spending their money for anything that promised amusement. Everything was running smoothly in the shipping center, including the several glasses that were slid along the bars in Dodge's many palaces of alcoholic refreshment. The gambling tables were full and the harvest was being well taken care of.

Robert Gilmore (more popularly known in Dodge as Bobby Gill) had taken on a little more whiskey than he could handle with grace and was making a mild sort of an ass of

two boys with bells to ring up the town....The house was jammed and crammed from the door to the stage. Bat Masterson was on one side of the doctor and Wyatt Erb [sic] on the other, with Jack Bridges and other gun men around on the stage in chairs.

"The doctor had only got a little way in his lecture when some one in the audience called him a liar.... Bat got up, and pulled his gun in front, and said: 'I will kill the first man that interrupts this gentleman again.' The lecturer had not gone much farther when some one called him a vile name. Bat and Wyatt [sic] both got up and said: 'This gentleman is a friend of ours, you want to understand that, and the next time he is interrupted, we will begin shooting and we will shoot to kill.' He had not gone much farther when some one in the audience said, 'You lie, you s of a b !'

"Bat, Wyatt [sic], and Bridges all arose and began shooting at the same time. First they shot out the lights and my! what a stampede began. The people not only fell over each other, and rolled over, and trampled each other under foot. Some reached the doors, others took the windows, sash and all, and it was only a short time till darkness and quiet reigned in the Lady Gay...."

himself when Marshal Deger spotted him. Deger didn't care for some of the things that Bobby was saying concerning the law and order enforcement in Dodge, so he grabbed him by the shoulder and started toward the "dog house" with him.

Bobby walked very leisurely, in the manner of a kingly and privileged citizen, which he was not; so Deger thought it in the line of his duty to help Bobby along with a few paternal kicks in the rear. It was then that the trouble began!

Bat Masterson twined an arm around the neck of the mighty defender of the law, for whom he had few fraternal feelings, and let the prisoner escape. Deger and Bat scuffled on the board walk; it seemed as if Bat were going to man-handle Deger and throw him into one of the rain barrels that decorated Front Street for the purpose of extinguishing fires. Deger called for some one to disarm Bat. Joe Mason, an assistant-marshal, appeared on the scene and slipped Bat's gun from its holster as Deger and Bat grappled.

Bat was a gambler, and a good one, and had beaten a number of the Texans who surveyed the battle at their own games; so they came to the help of the Marshal and gave him a chance to draw his gun and beat Bat over the head with it until the blood flew in every direction. With the aid of the Texans and Joe Mason the Marshal was able to force Bat

into the city's dungeon.

Ed Masterson, Bat's older brother, who had just been appointed assistant-marshal, did his first official duty that day when he arrested Bobby Gilmore for aiding in the disturbance of the city's peace.

On the next day both Gilmore and Bat were brought before Judge Frost for trial. Bat was fined twenty-five dollars and costs; Gilmore was fined five dollars and costs.

Gilmore was a good-for-nothing, drunken loafer who generally made a nuisance of himself on every occasion. Bat was an impulsive youth who found it impossible to see Gilmore mistreated when he was more than half-intoxicated. There was no love lost between Marshal Deger and Bat anyway, as they had both announced their candidacies for the office of sheriff in the coming election.

When Gilmore was brought before Police-Judge Frost, he tearfully requested mercy and stated what he considered an important precedent in his case -- namely, that Jesus Christ had died for just such sinners as he.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The story of Bat's fight with Deger over the latter's treatment of Robert Gilmore was adapted from a newspaper account in the Dodge City Times, June 9, 1877. The story in this case reminds us of another court scene in which Bobby Gill [Gilmore] was being tried at a time when he was completely down-and-out:

...The sentence was twenty dollars and costs. The marshall said, "Well, so far as I am concerned, I am willing to throw off my costs;" the clerk said, "I will do the same;" and the judge said, "So will I. Mr. Gill what have you got to say for yourself?" He promptly



In the latter part of June Bat bought a part interest in the Lone Star Dancehall.<sup>23</sup> He was definitely in the "swim" for the office of sheriff in Ford County and wished to appear an interested citizen of Dodge and its surrounding territory. Charlie Siringo wrote the following concerning Bat's business establishment: "'...That celebration came near costing my life in a free-for-all fight in the Lone Star Dancehall, in charge of the now noted Bat Masterson. The Hall was jammed full of free-and-easy girls, long-haired buffalo-hunters, and wild and wooly [sic] cowboys.'"<sup>24</sup> Bat's place of entertainment was very similar to the many other places of recreation that were flourishing in Dodge at this period.

At this same time Bat was also serving as deputy-sheriff under Charlie Bassett,<sup>25</sup> which position he held until he was appointed a special policeman of Dodge in the

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jumped up and, quick as a flash, and [sic] said, "Your Honor, I never was yet out-done in generosity, and I will not be in this case; I will throw off the fine."

It is needless to say that he never paid any fine.\*

\*Wright, Robert M. Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital, p. 225.

<sup>23</sup>Information secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937; and a statement in Wyatt Earp's biography, p. 168.

<sup>24</sup>A direct quotation from Charlie Siringo's memoirs found in Wyatt Earp's biography, p. 165.

<sup>25</sup>Statement based on a news item found in the Dodge City Times, Sept. 8, 1877: "Under-Sheriff Masterson arrested a man this evening from Granada who had stole a horse...."; and on a statement in Wyatt Earp's biography, p. 168: "Morgan Earp and Bat Masterson were now [July 5, 1877] deputy sheriffs under Charlie Bassett...."

early part of September.<sup>26</sup>

Bat was living in Dodge when it was merely a blustering baby in the painful and uncertain stage of growing up. Some of the rather asinine notices appearing in the Dodge City Times in the late summer and autumn of 1877 are worthy of a chuckle inasmuch as they show some of the elementary stages of progress in a new town's growth. Some of the more humorous newspaper notices and items are as follows:

An ordinance was passed some time ago prohibiting the stacking of hay inside the city limits. Hay stackers will take notice and act accordingly.<sup>27</sup>

Judge Frost decided that a physician in order to collect a bill by suit must prove himself a graduate of some medical college or to have practised medicine for a period of ten years.<sup>28</sup>

Miss Frankie Bell who wears the belt for superiority in point of muscular ability, heaped epithets upon the unoffending head of Mr. Wyatt Earp to such an extent as to provoke a slap from the ex-officer, besides creating a disturbance of the quiet and dignity of the city, for which she received a night's lodging in the dog house and reception at the police court next morning, the expense of which was about \$20. Wyatt Earp was assessed the lowest limit of the law, \$1.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Based on an official notice printed in the Dodge City Times, Sept. 22, 1877: "Policemen: J. W. Mason, W. B. Masterson."

<sup>27</sup>Dodge City Times. August 18, 1877.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., August 18, 1877.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., July 21, 1877.

Merely in passing we note that Stuart Lake did not have Wyatt Earp relate this incident, humorous though it is, when he recorded the latter's biography as it was dictated to him — of course, it is apparent that such an unseemly act on the part of a lady must have been painful to

We regretted very much that the fighting editor was unavoidably absent this week when Miss Frankie Bell called to administer a horse whipping.<sup>30</sup>

Dodge had been organized and chartered as a city of the second class Kansas at this time, but it was still struggling valiantly to overcome its awkward stage on the road to maturity. Bat, as a peace officer, was doing his part to help Dodge City establish law and order, a step in the growing up.

Wherever there is a frontier and easy money, there are confidence and gold-brick men, trying to live on the fat of the land without manual labor. Three such men tried to "gold-brick" Rath and Co.'s General Store for over a hundred dollars worth of supplies in late September of 1877.

These three men stated that they did not have sufficient money to pay for all of the supplies, but agreed to leave a valuable gold watch for that part for which they could not pay. They left the store a few hours later with the supplies but without leaving either the watch or the money.

One of the clerks employed by Rath and Co. was sent after the party; but the thieves, as soon as they found the clerk was unarmed, refused to pay him; however,

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the "big, brave man of the Old West" — especially when he slapped her.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., July 28, 1877.

they did give him the watch.

Bat Masterson, who had just been appointed a special policeman during the same week, was sent after the party. Bat "bulldozed" them into giving him twenty-five dollars, which seemed to be all they had. He then released them, as the watch and the money would just about pay for the supplies which they had purchased.

It turned out later that the watch belonged to Sheriff McCause of Edwards County, from whom these three men had stolen it.

When Sheriff McCause and his two deputies were on the trail of these thieves, they passed Mr. J. E. Van Voorhis' ranch near Spearville. Van Voorhis immediately saddled his horse and struck out for Dodge to notify the authorities, as he thought the Sheriff and his two deputies were horse thieves who had been stealing his horses. Van Voorhis described the men to Bassett and the city policemen — he had arrived in Dodge before Sheriff McCause and his party, by taking a short-cut.

Bat and Joe Mason located Sheriff McCause and his two deputies; and, identifying them as the supposed thieves from Van Voorhis' description, attempted to disarm them and take them into custody. Bat succeeded in disarming one of the deputies, and Joe Mason had another covered with his six-gun. Sheriff McCause, however, refused

to relinquish his gun and prepared to fight it out when Bat recognized him as the sheriff of Edwards County.

Everything was straightened out all right after Bat recognized McCause; the watch was returned to the latter, and the three thieves were caught the same night by McCause and his deputies.<sup>31</sup>

The entire incident proved to be a very humorous one, but might have resulted in several casualties had not Bat recognized the Sheriff of Edwards County when he did.

It was a popular pastime with the Texas cowboys who drove cattle up the long trail from the Lone Star state to "shoot up the town" when there was nothing more exciting to do. They had been warned against this practice by the Dodge City officers, but some of the more reckless ones continued to try their marksmanship on the rain barrels and swinging signs of Dodge. As a result of his bravado one of the Texan cowboys paid rather a dear price.

A. C. Jackson, who liked to shoot his gun to see people run, had been warned by the law officers, but refused to pay any heed to their warnings. His usual custom was to empty his six-guns and then ride out of town over the south bridge at a furious gallop.

One evening in late September, 1877, Jackson

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<sup>31</sup>The stories of the three thieves and of Sheriff McCause and his two deputies was adapted from a much longer account printed in the Dodge City Times, Sept. 22, 1877.

fired his revolver five times in front of Beatty and Kelley's and then turned to ride out of town. Bat, who happened to be standing nearby, ordered Jackson to halt; but he refused to obey Bat's order, waving his hat in defiance of the voice of law and order.

At this time Ed Masterson, who was assistant-marshal of Dodge, came out where Bat was standing and they both shot at the horse with apparently no effect.

Bat mounted a horse to follow, but found when he neared the other rider that his gun was empty, so he was forced to turn around and come back. However, Jackson's horse had been wounded by Ed's and Bat's shots; when Jackson was two miles south of the bridge, his horse stumbled, fell, and died. Jackson was forced to walk into camp minus his mount.<sup>32</sup>

The next month was spent in a comparative state of peace in Dodge City. Bat was devoting all of his time to campaigning for the coming election in November. He had two honorable and well-respected opponents: George F. Hinkle and L. E. Deger.

In the middle of October the Dodge City Times made the following unsolicited statement concerning Bat's qualifications for the sheriffalty of Ford County:

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<sup>32</sup>The story of A. C. Jackson and his shooting spree was adapted from a longer story printed in the Dodge City Times, Sept. 29, 1877.

Mr. W. B. Masterson is on the track for Sheriff, and announces himself in this paper. "Bat" is well known as a young man of nerve and coolness in cases of danger. He has served on the police force of this city and also as under-sheriff, and knows just how to gather in the sinners. He is qualified to fill the office and if elected will never shrink from danger.<sup>33</sup>

Bat's announcement was modest and devoid of the promises that filled the announcements of many office-seekers of that time — and of today. The announcement was as follows:

At the request of many citizens of Ford County, I have consented to run for the office of sheriff, at the coming election in this county. While earnestly soliciting the sufferages [sic] of the people, I have no pledges to make, as pledges are usually considered, before election, to be mere clap-trap. I desire to say to the voting public that I am no politician and shall make no combinations that would be likely to, in anywise, hamper me in the discharge of the duties of the office, and, should I be elected, will put forth my best efforts to so discharge the duties of the office that those voting for me shall have no occasion to regret having done so.

Respectfully,  
W. B. Masterson<sup>34</sup>

As Dodge was growing up, so was Bat Masterson growing to manhood. His serious declaration was a "far cry" from his participation in the incident concerning Robert Gilmore and L. E. Deger. Bat was entering another stage in his development.

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<sup>33</sup>Dodge City Times. October 13, 1877.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., October 13, 1877.

## A GUARDIAN OF THE LAW

On November 6, 1877,<sup>35</sup> Bat Masterson was elected sheriff of Ford County, Kansas, by receiving three more votes than L. E. Deger, his nearest opponent.<sup>36</sup> The Hays Sentinel in commenting on the election said, "Larry Deger only lacked three votes of being elected Sheriff of Ford County. His successful opponent Bat Masterson is said to be cool, decisive and a 'bad man' with a pistol."<sup>37</sup> Two weeks after the election there was a notice in the Dodge City Times that L. E. Deger had filed a notice to contest the election,<sup>38</sup> but either he did not carry out his intentions or failed in his attempt to contest the election, for nothing ever resulted from his action.

<sup>35</sup>Robert M. Wright in his book, Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital, p. 300, states that Bat was elected to the office of sheriff in Ford County in the year of 1876; he then continues to quote verbatim from the Dodge City Times Bat's statement of candidacy. If Wright were recalling the incident from memory, the error of one year would be understandable; but as he must have had the source directly before him, the error becomes an almost unforgivable breach of accuracy in a supposedly historical book.

<sup>36</sup>Dodge City Times. Nov. 10, 1877. The actual vote was 166 votes for Bat and 163 votes for Deger. Wyatt Earp in his biography, p. 191, said, "...I stuck in Dodge for the fall elections, at which Bat Masterson was elected by a two-to-one majority...." Earp was undoubtedly permitting his desires to influence his reason when he recalled this incident.

<sup>37</sup>Dodge City Times. Nov. 24, 1877. Printed from an exchange copy of the Hays Sentinel.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Nov. 24, 1877.



On Monday, the day before Bat was elected sheriff of Ford County, Ed Masterson, Bat's older brother, was involved in a shooting scrape that nearly cost him his life. The incident occurred in the Lone Star Dance Hall in the late afternoon.

Bob Shaw had circulated the story that Texas Dick, alias Moore, had robbed him of forty dollars. Texas Dick had heard of Shaw's accusations through some of his friends; when he saw Shaw in the Lone Star Dance Hall that afternoon he confronted him and demanded an open apology.

One of the bystanders, sensing that trouble was brewing which might result in death for one of the disputants or for some innocent customer, started in search of Assistant-Marshal Ed Masterson; when he found him, he hurriedly brought him to the scene of conflict.

When Ed Masterson entered the room, he saw that Shaw had got the "drop" on Texas Dick and was threatening to kill him. Ed Masterson ordered Shaw to give up his gun; the latter refused and warned Ed to keep away from him.

...Officer Masterson [Ed] then gently tapped the beligerent Shaw upon the back of the head with his shooting iron, merely to convince him of the vanities of this frail world and to teach him that all isn't lovely even when the goose does hang antitudilum. The aforesaid reminder upon the back of the head, however, failed to have the desired effect, and instead of dropping, as any man of fine sensibilities would have done, Shaw turned his battery upon the officer and let him have it in the right breast, the ball striking a rib and passing around, came out under

the right shoulder blade, paralyzing his right arm so it was useless, so far as handling a pistol was concerned. Masterson fell, but grasping his pistol with his left hand he returned the fire, giving it to Shaw in the left arm and the left leg, rendering him "hors de combat."<sup>39</sup>

During the shooting Texas Dick was wounded in the right groin; and Frank Buskirk, who from curiosity looked in at the door to see what was going on, received a wound in the left arm.

The Dodge City Times, in commenting on the skirmish, stated the following:

The nerve and the pluck displayed by Officer Masterson [Ed] reflects credit upon both himself and the city, which has reason to congratulate itself upon the fact that it has a guardian who shrinks no responsibility and who hesitates not to place himself in danger when duty requires.<sup>40</sup>

The city might well congratulate itself as suggested by the Times, for the city was not shot in the right breast and did not have to spend two weeks in Wichita with its parents, convalescing, as did Officer Ed Masterson.

Bob Shaw, who had started the trouble, was not detained in Dodge for trial. He had never been known to start a shooting fracas before; so he was permitted to re-

<sup>39</sup>The entire story concerning the wounding of Ed Masterson and three other men was adapted from the Dodge City Times, Nov. 10, 1877. We have included a part of the story as it actually appeared in print because of its being so representative of the journalistic style of the day.

<sup>40</sup>Dodge City Times. Nov. 10, 1877.

turn to his home in Georgia, quitting the West for good.<sup>41</sup>

In early December, 1877, Larry Deger, Bat's three-hundred-pound political opponent for the sheriffalty of Ford County, was removed from his position as marshal of Dodge and Ed Masterson took his place as head of the city's peace force.<sup>42</sup> Charlie Bassett immediately gave up his position as sheriff and became assistant-marshal under Ed Masterson; Bat was then appointed temporary sheriff until he took his oath of office in the spring.<sup>43</sup>

On January fourteenth, 1878, Bat Masterson was sworn in as sheriff of Ford County for a term of two years, replacing Charlie Bassett, who had held the office for nearly four years. Immediately following his installation, Bat appointed Charlie Bassett under-sheriff and Simeon Woodruff deputy-sheriff. With approval the Dodge City Times commented: "...These appointments will meet with the approbation of our people, and indicates [sic] that Bat intends to do his duty...."<sup>44</sup>

In the latter part of January an incident occurred which gave Bat a chance to show his mettle in carrying out the duties of his new position.

Four men attempted to hold-up an express and mail

<sup>41</sup>Dodge City Times. Nov. 17, 1877.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., Dec. 8, 1877.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Dec. 15, 1877.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Jan. 19, 1878.

train in Kinsley, Kansas. They had disarmed the station attendant, Bradley, but did not guard him carefully enough. When the train neared the station in preparation for stopping, Bradley dodged across the tracks and attracted the attention of the train crew by waving his arms frantically. The crew became so excited by his strange behavior that they forgot to stop the train. This saved the day for the crew and their cargo.

The four would-be robbers, excited by the failure of their carefully prepared plans, emptied their guns, contrary to their agreement that only two shots should be fired. Everything was in an uproar.

The robbers attempted to board the moving train; however, since the train was beyond the station platform, they were unable to climb aboard. The mail clerk, attracted by all the gunfire, seized his rifle and fired point-blank at the unfamiliar figure trying to board the mail car. Fortunately for the robber, the clerk was too excited to take careful aim and did not score a hit.

By this time things were in a general turmoil; the amateur train-robbers took to their horses and struck out of Kinsley to the south. After they had gone approximately ten miles, they stopped to black their faces to disguise themselves; then the party broke up into two groups. Dave Rudebaugh and Edgar West headed toward the

southwest; Thomas Gout and Dugan continued southward.

Bat Masterson, newly-installed as sheriff and eager to reflect credit on his political supporters, decided to make an attempt to capture the bandits, although the attempted robbery had taken place outside his ascribed territory. No one knew the territory in the vicinity of Dodge and Kinsley better than Bat, for he had hunted buffalo all over that country during his early years in the West.

Bat organized a posse consisting of J. J. Webb, David Morrow, and Riley.<sup>45</sup> They struck a scent some fifty miles south of Dodge and eventually prepared an ambush in Mr. Lovell's cattle camp some sixty-five miles south and east of Dodge.

Seated in the rude lean-to erected by Lovell's men for shelter from wintry storms, Bat discussed plans for capturing the bandits with Webb.

Bat leaned from his improvised seat on a beer keg toward Webb with these words, "J. J., these men aren't desperate; if we get the drop on them, they'll quit — it ain't as if they'd killed somebody."

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<sup>45</sup>Robert M. Wright in Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital, p. 301, states that Charlie Bassett was a member of this posse. Granting that Charlie would have made an admirable enforcement officer does not alter the fact that he was not present at this time.

"Yeah, but how the hell are you going to get the drop? They're not going to drop in on this camp without first getting ready for some fireworks — you can bet on that," was the laconic rejoinder.

Bat, as eager and impetuous as a political aspirant, refused to be abashed by Webb's discouraging remark. "That's just the point," he continued, "they're going to be suspicious, so we've got to make them think that everything's ship-shape and that they're among friends." With a flourish, that might well have come from a Napoleon, Bat played his trump card, "J. J., we've got to go meet them."

Webb exploded, "Like hell we have! And get the blooming daylight shot out of us — not for me, son."

"I'll do it," Bat continued. "I'll go out with my gun in my coat pocket and ask them if they saw any strays on the road in. Then I'll talk to them until we get close enough to camp for you men to step out with your rifles and order them to throw up their hands."

Slow to catch the point, but swayed by the possible dramatic effect of the scene as Bat painted it, Webb hastened to amend Bat's plans. "I'll go meet them — your place is here to direct Morrow and Riley. Is that all right with you fellows?" With this Webb turned to the other two members of the posse.

Morrow and Riley nodded assent, and Webb refused

to be moved from his resolve that it should be he who would go out to meet the bandits.

After a several hours' wait in cramped positions at the whittled peep-holes, Riley saw two horses slowly approaching from the northeast. He called the other three men to view them. The two horsemen indicated by their actions that they were afraid to approach the camp.

After they had hesitated for a short time, Webb stepped out and halloed to them. With their hands on their guns the two horsemen came closer. Webb shouted to them against the wind, "See any strays along the way?"

Dave Rudebaugh, the spokesman, answered Webb with a direct question of his own, "Got any room for us to stable our horses and get a bite to eat? Look's like a storm brewing in the northwest."

"Yeah, we can put you up;" said Webb, and then added lest he seem too hospitable, "of course you'll have to bunk it on the floor like the rest of the hands. Bring your blankets in with you," and he indicated the blanket rolls behind their saddles.

Webb again asked them about strays; this discussion filled the short interval that elapsed from the time Webb met them until the party was within forty feet of the shelter.

The sheriff and his other two deputies stepped

out from behind the shelter with rifles in their hands. Bat sang out the well-known demand of the law, "Put 'em up, you two — you're covered. Get their guns, J. J."

West at once threw up his hands, but Rudebaugh hesitated between throwing up his hands and going for his gun.

The click of Webb's Colt in his rear and Webb's dry warning, "I wouldn't try it, fellow, if I was planning to eat breakfast in the morning," decided the issue for Rudebaugh; he sullenly elevated his hands.

The four peace officers and their captives spent that night in Lovell's cattle camp as a northwestern blizzard swept the prairie outside. Next morning they escorted their prisoners across a snow-chastened countryside to Dodge, where the prisoners were lodged in the two-story calaboose until a special train arrived to take them to Kinsley for a preliminary trial.<sup>46</sup>

The two prisoners and William Tilghman, the latter being suspected as an accomplice to the "gang," were held in jail for lack of \$4,000 bail each until the June term of the district court.<sup>47</sup>

Tilghman was fully exonerated before the June

<sup>46</sup>The story concerning the capture of Dave Rudebaugh and his companion was adapted and dramatized from an account in the Ford County Globe, Feb. 5, 1878; and an account in the Dodge City Times, Feb. 2, 1878.

<sup>47</sup>Ford County Globe, Feb. 5, 1878.



term of court as being not only not implicated but as knowing absolutely nothing about the affair.<sup>48</sup>

Bat was severely criticized by the Kinsley Republican for taking matters into his own hands and not cooperating with the Edwards County law officers. Frost, the editor of the Dodge City Globe, defended Bat in the next edition of his paper:

We are personally not on squeezing terms with the sheriff, but when as an officer, he is unjustly assailed, we feel it our duty to defend him, as well as any other officer in our county. We know that he has the stuff in his make-up to be a good officer and when he does right, we will be found telling him so with the same spirit of justice that will guide us to tell him that he is wrong when we consider him so. We think that our sheriff's hunt for the train robbers has accomplished more than the hunt of all the other posses, even if his departure was not heralded with the blasts of trumpets and extra editions of the local newspapers.<sup>49</sup>

Two days later after the capture of Rudebaugh and West, Bat Masterson, Charlie Bassett, J. J. Webb, John Clark, and H. Lovell started on a journey to the south in search of the two other train robbers.

Frost, editor of the Globe, who was not on "squeezing terms" with the sheriff for political reasons, gave Bat and his party a fine tribute, "...If the robbers are not captured, it will not be for want of bravery, coolness or strategy, on the part of Sheriff Masterson and

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<sup>48</sup>Ford County Globe, Feb. 5, 1878.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., Feb. 5, 1878.

his posse."<sup>50</sup>

In this hunt for Gout and Dugan Sheriff Masterson and his men were unsuccessful. However, in the middle of March Gout and his friend Dugan slipped into Dodge to secure supplies, thinking that they could come in and get their needed supplies without being detected by the law officers of Dodge; they had not reckoned with the shrewd and alert Bat Masterson. Sheriff Bat Masterson, Deputy Bassett, and City-Marshall Ed Masterson were on them and had them in jail before they had been in town twenty minutes. The two robbers were taken to Kinsley, where they "lanquished" in jail for the want of \$4,000 bail each.<sup>51</sup>

Frost, editor of the Globe and Bat's political opponent, again commended Bat on his efficiency: "Hurrah! for our officers! They have done well."<sup>52</sup>

Bat was now fully recognized in Dodge as a man who could well take care of the offenders of the law. He was twenty-four years of age and an unusually handsome man. The story is told that one day a stranger in Dodge asked some man on the street corner where he could find Bat Masterson. One of the bystanders, a local lawyer, spoke up, and said: "Look for one of the most perfectly made men you ever saw, as well as a well-dressed, good-

<sup>50</sup>Ford County Globe, Feb. 12, 1878.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., March 19, 1878.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., March 19, 1878.

looking fellow, and when you see such a man, call him 'Bat' and you have hit the bull's eye."<sup>53</sup>

After the capture of Gout and Dugan Dodge City was rather a quiet city for the period of a month with the exception of some cowboy's or group of cowboys' imbibing too much fiery liquor and then trying to shoot up the town. Mayor A. B. Webster wrote an editorial in which he exhorted the police force of Dodge City to enforce rigidly the ordinance against the carrying of firearms within the boundaries of Dodge.<sup>54</sup>

It was the direct result of this attempt to lower the number of shooting fracas in Dodge that caused a sad tragedy for the Masterson family.

On the ninth of April, 1878, at ten o'clock P.M., some pistol shots rang out on the south side of the railroad tracks in Dodge.<sup>55</sup> Marshal Ed Masterson and Assistant-Marshals Nat Haywood hurried to the spot to ascertain the cause of the commotion. They found that six cowboys just off the trail had been getting a little too much liquor for their own and the city's good. They were dancing and enjoying themselves generally, but were making a public

<sup>53</sup>Wright, Robert M. Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital, p. 299.

<sup>54</sup>Ford County Globe, March 5, 1878.

<sup>55</sup>The south side of the tracks was considered the more lawless side of Dodge, as it was here that most of the joints and houses of ill fame were located.

nuisance of themselves by being too noisy and troublesome.

John [known by his friends as "Jack"] Wagner, one of the troublesome six, was more intoxicated and noisy than the others and was making himself especially obnoxious.<sup>56</sup>

About this time Ed noticed that Wagner was carrying a six-shooter, contrary to the city ordinance forbidding such a practice. Ed proceeded to disarm him without very much difficulty and then turned the six-shooter over to Wagner's boss, A. M. Walker, with the advice that he had better check it with the bartender according to law.

The dance went on and everything seemed to be peaceful and harmonious. Ed and Nat Haywood stepped outside the Lady Gay Dance Hall to get a breath of fresh air. Within a very short time Walker and Wagner also came through the door. Wagner staggered against the side of the door and his coat caught on the edge of the door frame. Wagner's coat was pulled back far enough for Ed Masterson, who was watching them for signs of trouble-making, to see that Wagner again had his gun in his shoulder holster.

Ed immediately stepped forward to disarm him.

"I'll take that gun," he said with firm tones.

But Jack Wagner was too much inebriated to heed

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<sup>56</sup>According to the Dodge City Times, April 13, 1878, Wagner had fallen from his horse a short time previously and it was thought that he was partially insane.

even the voice of the law — besides this fellow had bothered him enough. "Like hell you will!" he swore thickly. "Who the hell you think you are anyway?"

A scuffle ensued and the men inside, hearing the commotion and always eager to see a good rough-and-tumble, poured out of the dance hall to see the fun.

Nat Haywood stepped forward to assist Ed, but Walker drew his revolver and told him, "Keep your damn nose out of this if you don't want your head shot off."

Nat paid no attention to him and again started to reach for his gun. When he made this movement, Walker stuck his gun in Nat's face and pulled the trigger; the gun snapped, but failed to fire. This frightened Nat so that he ran down the street for help.<sup>57</sup>

About this time a pistol was discharged and Marshal Ed Masterson slumped to the board walk, shot at close range through the abdomen.

Bat Masterson and some other law officers, who had been strolling in the general direction of the Lady Gay after the first pistol shots had been fired earlier, rushed toward the scene when the scuffling and shouting

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<sup>57</sup>This information<sup>was</sup> secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937. It is interesting to note the following announcement in the Dodge City Times, April 20, 1878, "Assistant-Marshal N. L. Haywood has resigned his office of his own accord, preferring to follow other vocations." Perhaps, that was the best thing for him to do.

began; they were within forty feet of the scene in front of the Lady Gay when the shot that was fatal to Ed Masterson was fired.

The party started drifting down the board walk toward the Peacock Saloon; it was in front of this place of business that the murder of Ed was avenged. Five shots were fired. Both Wagner and Walker were wounded; the crowd scattered like a bunch of chickens on the sight of a hawk. The fun was over; this was serious business!<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup>It is difficult to decide whether Bat shot Walker and Wagner or whether it might have been any one of the law officers with Bat or whether it might have even been Ed Masterson.

Thomas Masterson, Jr., said in an interview, Nov. 4, 1937, that Bat shot both of the men.

Ham Bell, an eye-witness to the shooting episode, said in an interview, Nov. 27, 1937, that it would have been difficult to tell just who killed Wagner and who wounded Walker. He said that, personally, he would not make any statement one way or another.\*

\*Wyatt Earp in his biography, Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, is quoted as making the following statement: "...Ham Bell, who witnessed the shooting from a window of the Lone Star, has told me of what followed.

"Bat Masterson, fully sixty feet away as his brother fell, fired four shots. The first slug hit Wagner squarely in the pit of the stomach and killed him. Bat came on, shooting at Walker who was shooting back. Walker was hit three times, once in the lung, and twice in the right arm. None of his shots at Bat took effect. With his gun-arm out of commission, the cowboy turned and ran for cover in the Lone Star."

Ham Bell, according to his statement to the author of this thesis in an interview on Nov. 27, 1937, said that he was in the Peacock Saloon, which statement agrees with the account of the shooting episode in the Ford County Globe, April 16, 1878.

The Dodge City Times, April 13, 1878, makes the fol-

Wagner, being shot, staggered into Peacock's Saloon; he threw his arms around Ham Bell and cried, "Catch me, I'm dying!"

Ham Bell shoved him off into the middle of the floor with the words, "I can't help you now."<sup>59</sup> Wagner remained in a heap on the floor until some friends carried him to Mr. Lane's room, where he died at ten o'clock the next morning. He was buried April 11, 1878, on Boot Hill.<sup>60</sup>

Walker came rushing into the building and tried to give his gun to Ham Bell. Bell said, "Throw it on the floor if you don't want it." Walker threw his six-gun on the floor of the Peacock Saloon and ran out the back door of the saloon.<sup>61</sup> He fell some distance in the rear of the saloon, where he was picked up by friends and carried to a room over Wright and Beverly's Store. He was badly wounded

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lowing statement concerning the shooting fracas: "...Marshall Masterson and Assistant-Marshall Nat Haywood tried the second time to disarm Wagner. While in the act Masterson was shot in the abdomen. Walker in the meantime snapped a pistol in the face of Officer Haywood. Masterson [which one?] fired four shots, one of them striking Wagner in the bowels from the left side. Walker was struck three times, one shot in the lungs and his right arm was horribly shattered with the other shots."

Ed Masterson might have shot Wagner and Walker; for he still had strength enough after being shot to walk across the road to the business side of the street, about two hundred feet.

<sup>59</sup>Information secured in an interview with Ham Bell, Nov. 27, 1937.

<sup>60</sup>Ford County Globe, April 16, 1878.

<sup>61</sup>Information secured from Ham Bell in an interview, Nov. 27, 1937.

in the left lung and the right arm.<sup>62</sup>

Ed Masterson walked across the street and staggered into Hoover's Saloon. In the agonies of death, he spoke in a hoarse whisper to George Hinkle, "George, I'm shot." With these three words he sank on the floor. Hinkle extinguished the fire in his clothes which had been started by the pistol of Wagner, fired at such close range.<sup>63</sup> "The wound in his side was large enough for the insertion of an

<sup>62</sup>There has been a great deal of discussion as to whether A. M. Walker died from his wounds received in this shooting fracas.

Ham Bell said that Walker did not die as a result of the wounds received on this occasion.

Wyatt Earp in his biography, Dodge City, the Cowboy Capital, makes the following statement: "...Walker got down trail into Texas, where he died of pneumonia induced by the lung wound."

By following the newspaper items in the Dodge City Times, the following information concerning Walker has been secured:

April 20, 1878: "Alfred Walker who was wounded at the time of the shooting of Marshal Masterson is still in a critical condition, but will probably recover if mortification can be prevented."

May 11, 1878: "Mr. Walker of Texas, father of the man who was wounded in the recent shooting scrape, arrived some days ago and is attending his son. The wounded man is slowly recovering."

June 1, 1878: "Alfred Walker, who has been confined to his bed ever since the unfortunate shooting scrape last April, was removed to Kansas City last Friday where he is still under medical treatment...."

Walker's father died at Fort Scott on his way back to Texas, but no other news concerning Alfred Walker was printed in any of the papers; it is possible that he may have died from pneumonia induced by his lung wound, but there is no evidence other than that given by Wyatt Earp.

<sup>63</sup>Ford County Globe, April 16, 1878: "Wagner when dying said that he shot Marshal Masterson and there is little doubt in the minds of any but that it was he who killed our marshal."



entire pistol." He was carried to Bat's room, where he died an hour later without ever regaining consciousness.<sup>64</sup>

Four men, John Hungate, Thomas Highlander, Thomas Roads, and John Reece, who had accompanied Walker and Wagner to town from their cattle camp, were arrested and tried before Judge Cook as possible accomplices in the affair. It was dark when the shooting episode occurred and no one seemed to know very much about it, even though a number of people were present. They were released for lack of evidence, being to blame only for being in bad company.<sup>65</sup>

Ed Masterson was taken to Fort Dodge for internment, as there was no respectable burial plot in Dodge City.<sup>66</sup> Bat was the only relative who was able to be present at the funeral, as Thomas Masterson, Sr., and his wife were unable to make the journey from Wichita at that time.<sup>67</sup>

The Dodge City Fire Company, of which Ed was a mem-

<sup>64</sup>Ford County Globe, April 16, 1878.

<sup>65</sup>Dodge City Times, April 13, 1878.

<sup>66</sup>It is interesting to note that in the Dodge City Times, May 4, 1878, there was a notice that no more burying would be permitted on Boot Hill, as the site had been sold to Fringer and Marshall. At this time about twenty people had been buried on the Hill — either Bat, or his brother, had sent Wagner there.

There was no respectable burial plot in Dodge for Ed at the time of his death, but the Dodge City Times, May 18, 1878, carried the announcement of the opening of Prairie Grove Cemetery by William McFee one-half mile northeast of the court house — Dodge was becoming almost respectable.

<sup>67</sup>Ford County Globe. April 16, 1878.

ber, refused to let Bat pay any of Ed's funeral expenses.<sup>68</sup>

The <sup>Ford County</sup> Dodge City Globe printed the following eulogy to Ed Masterson:

Everyone in the city knew Ed Masterson and liked him. They liked him as a boy, they liked him as a man, and they liked him as their marshal. Never before was such a funeral shown in Dodge City. The Marshal died nobly in the discharge of duty; we drop a tear upon his grave and remember:

Whether on the scaffold high,  
Or in the battle's van,  
The fittest place for man to die,  
Is when he dies for man.<sup>69</sup>

After the death of Ed Masterson, Charlie Bassett was appointed city marshal in the place of the deceased.<sup>70</sup>

In May Wyatt Earp returned from Fort Worth, Texas, and became an assistant-marshal to Bassett.<sup>71</sup> About this time the Kinsley Republican carried the following comment: "We hear that Dodge City pays its marshal \$100 a month and from all we can learn, he must deserve it."<sup>72</sup>

Despite the untimely death of Ed Masterson, his and Bat's younger brother Jim accepted a position on the Dodge City police force in June of that same year as an assistant to Charlie Bassett.<sup>73</sup>

In the early part of July the Comique,<sup>74</sup> owned by

<sup>68</sup> Ford County Globe, April 16, 1878.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., April 23, 1878.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., April 16, 1878.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., May 14, 1878.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., May 28, 1878.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., June 11, 1878.

<sup>74</sup> In an interview, August 25, 1937, Merritt Beeson said that almost all of the cowboys called the theatre "the com-ee-cue."

Dick Brown and Ben Springer, opened with the two comedians, Jim Thompson and Eddie Foy, as its principal attraction.<sup>75</sup> The Dodge City <sup>Ford County</sup> Globe by way of comment wrote: "Foye [sic] and Thompson at the Comique 'lay over' anything we have ever seen in the Ethiopian line."<sup>76</sup>

Dodge City and Bat Masterson made the following impression on Foy:

There was just one train a day into Dodge from the east, and the whole town turned out to meet it. City officials, police and county constabulary, merchants and their families, gamblers, cowboys, dance hall girls, bad men and bad women, they were all there on the little station platform, mingling amicably or at least courteously. Thompson and I were engaged to work at the combined concert and dance hall and gambling house owned by a man named Springer, and as we were a star attraction from Chicago, Ben met us at the train and proceeded to introduce us to everybody of consequence in town. Almost the first person to whom he introduced me was a trim good-looking young man with a pleasant face and a carefully barbered mustache, well-tailored clothes, hat with a rakish tilt and two big silver-mounted, ivory-handled pistols in a heavy belt.

"This is our sheriff, Mr. Masterson," said Springer. "Bat, we call him."

Masterson and I soon took a liking to each other and were friends thenceforward.<sup>77</sup>

As a matter of fact, Foy and Bat were such good friends that Foy later said that all the men in the western towns seemed to like him when Thompson and he played in them, but Bat Masterson was the only man who understood him.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup>Ford County Globe, July 9, 1878.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., July 9, 1878.

<sup>77</sup>Foy, Eddie and Harlow, Alvin F. Clowning Through Life, pp. 97-98.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. ?

Foy also relates an episode ~~in his life~~ in which Bat probably saved his life:

There was only one time that I was ever shot at, though I've been threatened often enough. Ben Thompson, the Texas scrapper, gave me an opportunity one evening to increase my reputation for courage — with others, I mean; not with myself. Thompson was not highly popular in Dodge, Bat Masterson being one of his few friends. Thompson, about two-thirds drunk, blundered in back of the scenes at our place one evening between acts....Seeing me, he drew his gun and called out, "Getcher head outa the way. I wanta shoot out that light."

The light was an oil lamp on the table at my elbow, and on the other side of me from him. Thompson didn't like me, possibly because he knew that I didn't like him. Now I was fooled with a sudden foolish obstinacy. I wasn't going to move my head just because a drunken bum like Thompson wanted to shoot out a lamp. Neither was I going to let him think that he could scare me. So, although I had turned my head to look at him, I didn't lean back, but just sat with my eyes fixed on him as impudently as I could.

"Getcher head outa the way, I told you," he yelled. "I'm gointa shoot out that light. If you want it through yer head, too, all right!"

With that he pointed his gun full at me, while I sat staring full at him, hypnotized by my own stubbornness. For a long moment we confronted each other — and then Bat Masterson burst into the scene, threw the muzzle of Thompson's gun upward, and partly by coaxing and partly by shoving got him out. When they had gone, I found my hand shaking so that I couldn't put on my make-up. I was limp for the rest of the evening.<sup>79</sup>

During the remainder of the summer and the ensuing fall business in Dodge was good. The cattle business was booming and liquor and beer flowed freely over Dodge's many bars. In the latter part of July G. M. Hoover shipped

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<sup>79</sup>Foy, Eddie and Harlow, Alvin F. Clowning Through Life, pp. 108-110.

in his fourth car load of Anheuser beer for that season.<sup>80</sup>

In July Bat captured a fugitive from justice wanted by Fort Lyons. Bat had received a telegram from the authorities in Fort Lyons that he should look out for a man named Davis who had taken the east-bound train; however, they did not include any description of the fugitive. Bat went to the train and looked over the passengers.

Finally, he caught sight of one whose actions he considered suspicious. Bat walked up to the man whom he had singled out of the group of passengers and spoke to him, "Hello, Davis; how do you do."

The stranger was completely off his guard and answered to his name with a smile, thinking that he had met an old friend.

Bat immediately took him to the jail and gave him a free night's lodging until he could be sent back to Fort Lyons, at which place he had been sentenced to the penitentiary for three years.<sup>81</sup>

The same week that Bat captured the fugitive from Fort Lyons four cattle-herders fired a few shots in Dodge, contrary to the city ordinance. Wyatt Earp and Bat ordered them to stop, but the herders refused to obey their orders. Then Bat and Wyatt fired at them, attempting to hit their

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<sup>80</sup>Ford County Globe, July 23, 1878.

<sup>81</sup>Dodge City Times, July 27, 1878.

horses.

One of their shots at the fleeing herders took effect. Bat and Wyatt took to their horses and captured one of the men whom they had wounded in the leg; his name was George Hoy.<sup>82</sup>

Hoy died a month later after a leg amputation.<sup>83</sup> Shooting up the town was becoming more and more unprofitable in Dodge City.

In the middle of August, 1878, the city council of Dodge passed an ordinance against gambling and prostitution within the city's limits.<sup>84</sup> Dodge was making rapid strides toward law and order and Bat Masterson was doing his share to further the progress. The Dodge City Times paid Bat and his deputy, William Duffy, the following tribute:

Sheriff W. B. Masterson and Deputy William Duffy are indefatigable in their efforts to ferret out and arrest persons charged with crimes. Scarcely a day passes without reward for their vigilance and promptness. We do not record all these happenings because evil doing is of such common occurrence. There is a pleasant contemplation in the fact that we have officers who are determined to rid the community of a horde that is a blight upon the well being of this over-ridden section.<sup>85</sup>

In the latter part of August Bat started for Hot Springs, Arkansas, for medical treatment and a rest. He had been having spells of vertigo since the hot weather had started.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Dodge City Times, July 27, 1878.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., August 24, 1878.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., August 16, 1878.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., August 16, 1878.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., August 30, 1878.

In August the following news item appeared in the  
*Ford County*  
 Dodge City Globe:

Clay Allison, one of the Allison brothers, from the Cimarron, south of Las Animas, Colorado, stopped off at Dodge last week on his way home from St. Louis. We are glad to say that Clay has about recovered from the effects of the East St. Louis scrimmage.<sup>87</sup>

It was this same Clay Allison who was supposed to have made all of the law enforcing officers of Dodge take to cover when he came to town with the intention of "cleaning them out." The story was related by Charles Siringo and was supposed to have occurred in October, 1878; the episode has been quoted and misquoted by a number of western historians. It is as follows:

Riding up the main street Ferris and I saw twenty-five mounted cowboys, holding rifles in their hands, and facing one of the half dozen saloons, adjoining each other, on that side of the street.

In passing this armed crowd one of them recognized me. Calling me by name he said: "Fall in line quick, H--l is going to pop in a few minutes."

We jerked our Winchester rifles from the scabbards and fell in line, like most any other fool cowboys [sic] would have done.

In a moment Clay Allison, the man-killer, came out of one of the saloons holding a pistol in his hand. With him was Mr. McNulty, owner of the large "Turkey-track" cattle outfit.

Clay, who was about half drunk, remarked to the boys in line that none of the S----b's were in that saloon.

Then a search was made in the next saloon. He was hunting for some of the town policemen, or the city marshal, so as to wipe them off the face of the earth. His twenty-five cowboy friends had promised to help him clean up Dodge City.

After all the saloons had been searched Mr. McNulty

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<sup>87</sup>Ford County Globe, August 6, 1878.

succeeded in getting Clay to bed at the Bob Wright Hotel. Then we all dispersed.

Soon after, the city law-officers began to crawl out of their hiding places and appear on the streets.

Clay Allison had sworn to kill the first officer found — and no doubt would have done so.<sup>88</sup>

This story of Clay Allison's invasion of Dodge has been told by several writers to throw discredit on Bat Masterson's character. At no place in his story does Siringo mention the name of Bat Masterson; neither does he say anything about Clay Allison's wanting to kill the sheriff of Ford County. Some writers have selected Bat as the goat of this incident.<sup>89</sup> It seems that the law-officers

<sup>88</sup>Siringo, Charles A. A Lone Star Cowboy, pp. 101-102.

<sup>89</sup>Dane Coolidge in his book, Fighting Men of the West, includes a picture of Bat Masterson in his book with the following subscript: "Bat Masterson, the fighting Town Marshal of Dodge City, who absented himself when Clay Allison came."

At the time Allison came to Dodge Bat was carrying out the duties of Sheriff in Ford County — Bat was never city marshal of Dodge either at this time or any other.

Later in his book, pp. 81-82, Coolidge gives this account of Allison's invasion of Dodge:

This cleared the boards for Bat Masterson of Dodge City who had been reported for some time as giving out the word that Clay Allison had better stay away. Dodge at that time was the toughest city in the world, according to the boasts of its press agents; and more than one good Texan, while shooting up the town, had been downed by City Marshal Masterson. There was a general feeling against him, especially among the trail-herders who came up from southern Texas, and when Allison announced that he was going to clean up the town he did not lack for help....

There is no doubt that he would have done so; but the officers, one and all, had retired to their lairs. Including the famous Bat Masterson.

It would be foolish to attempt to criticize such a highly inaccurate treatment of this incident. However, one



were rather wise to keep under cover as long as Allison did not actually threaten the safety of the citizens of Dodge. Life must have seemed just as dear to them as life seems to people today — and what man wants to face a group of men armed with rifles and foolhardy with whiskey?

In October a tragic event occurred in Dodge City; Dora Hand, alias Fannie Keenan, an actress who showed much promise,<sup>90</sup> was shot without warning as she lay asleep in her bed. She was shot in her side under the arm and was killed instantly. The killing of Dora Hand was an accident; because James Kennedy, who shot her, thought that he was shooting at Mayor James Kelley [Hound-dog Kelley].

Kelley and Kennedy had disagreed while both of them were intoxicated and Kelley had got the better of Kennedy. Kennedy, the son of a wealthy Texas cattleman who had driven a large herd of cattle to Dodge for his father,<sup>91</sup> decided to get even with Kelley. He went to Kansas City and bought the best horse that money could buy for his escape

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may notice, in passing, that the Texans were not the fearless, swift-as-lightning gun-artists so often pictured in fiction; some of them were brave, to be sure; but some of them were cowardly and unfair, as was shown in the shooting scrape in which Ed Masterson lost his life.

<sup>90</sup>There has been some discussion as to Dora Hand's acting ability; some people say that she actually had promise; while other people say that she was a member of the higher class of sporting girls. The evidence is not decisive on either side.

<sup>91</sup>James Kennedy's father, according to Wyatt Earp's biography, Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, p. 216, was the business partner of Richard King, the cattle baron.

when he should kill his enemy.

While he was gone, Mayor Kelley had suddenly become ill and had moved away from his former abode. Dora Hand had gained his permission to occupy his house during his absence.

When Kennedy got back in Dodge, he waited until about four o'clock in the morning to attempt the murder of the mayor. At that time he went up to the mayor's house and fired two shots through the door at the spot where he knew the bed was located. Then without ever dismounting he rode away in a direction just opposite to that in which his father's ranch was located.<sup>91b</sup>

The law-officers had several reasons to believe that it was Kennedy who had committed the murder, but they did not start after him until late afternoon. Sheriff Bat Masterson, Wyatt Earp, Charlie Bassett, and Duffy then started in pursuit of him. They went south to Meade, where they knew he would have to pass on his way home.

Kennedy rode right into their midst. They ordered him to throw up his hands, but he refused to do so, striking his horse savagely with his quirt to make a quick get-away.

The officers fired several times at him, striking him in his left shoulder and hitting his horse three times.

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<sup>91b</sup>His father's ranch was located in Texas.

The horse fell and Kennedy was pinned under him.<sup>92</sup>

Kennedy was brought back to Dodge for medical treatment and for trial. He recovered from his wound after a long siege of illness and after four inches of bone were taken from his arm.<sup>93</sup>

He was tried before Judge Cook after he had partially recovered and was acquitted.<sup>94</sup> One wonders if he was acquitted because he didn't kill the person he really intended to.

Christmas was drawing near and the cattle-herders had all gone back down the trail to Texas. Peace presided in Dodge City. The first year of Bat's duties as sheriff of Ford County was approaching its end.

The first major duty of Bat's office as sheriff of Ford County in the year of 1879 was that of escorting Dutch Henry, the infamous horse thief of the plains, from Trinidad, Colorado, to Dodge City; this occurred in the early part of January.<sup>95</sup>

Dutch Henry was a horse thief, a road agent, and

<sup>92</sup>The story of the slaying of Dora Hand and the capture of James Kennedy was secured from the Dodge City Globe, Oct. 8, 1878; the Dodge City Times, Oct. 5 and Oct. 12, 1878; Wright's Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital, pp. 174-175; and Wyatt Earp's biography, Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, pp. 218-220. All of the versions were quite similar.

<sup>93</sup>Ford County Globe, Dec. 17, 1878.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., Oct. 29, 1878.

<sup>95</sup>Dodge City Times, January 11, 1879.

a murderer. He had the appearance of a refined and gentlemanly cattle baron, with his coal-black hair and eyes, his long face, and his sensitive Roman nose. He was always dressed in a good suit of black cloth with a white linen shirt and handkerchief; yet he was a shrewd outlaw who always seemed able to sway a jury to a verdict of not-guilty.<sup>96</sup>

At the time Dutch Henry was captured in Colorado, he was wanted in the state of Nevada, as well as in Dodge City. Dodge sent Bat Masterson after him, knowing that if anyone could bring him back, Bat would. The state of Nevada offered Colorado \$500 for him, but by some political connections Bat secured his custody. The Dodge City Times said, "Bat mentioned some of the unmentionables and got him [Dutch Henry] for nothing."<sup>97</sup>

However, all of Bat's efforts were in vain, for Dutch Henry again employed the best lawyer possible and by some "trick of the trade" secured an acquittal from the jury.<sup>98</sup>

In the middle of January Bat was appointed a United States Deputy Marshal.<sup>99</sup>

In March trouble was anticipated in Canyon City,

<sup>96</sup>Description secured from a news item reprinted from the Trinidad Enterprise by the Dodge City Times, Jan. 11, 1879.

<sup>97</sup>Dodge City Times, January 11, 1879.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., Jan. 25, 1879.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., Jan. 18, 1879.

Colorado, between the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad Company and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Company. The former railroad company claimed that the latter company had not complied with the terms of its lease and it was determined to take the railroad into its own hands for operation, if it had to use force.<sup>100</sup>

Bat Masterson, acting in the capacity of his new position as United States Deputy Marshal, deputized thirty men and set out for Canyon City in anticipation of having to quell any possible strife between the employees of the two companies. However, nothing happened at this time between the workers and Bat returned with his armed force when he thought that all possibility of trouble had passed.<sup>101</sup>

In June Bat was again called to Colorado; this time he took a party of fifty armed men to Pueblo to prevent trouble between the workers of the two railroads. He was placed in charge of the railroad property there until he was relieved by United States officers. The Dodge City Times said, "And our boys didn't smell any powder. Their vote is for peace."<sup>102</sup>

Bat was developing a reputation for bravery and justice, but he was also making enemies in his attempts to bring law and order to the frontier. Several men would

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<sup>100</sup>Dodge City Times, June 14, 1879.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1879.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., June 14, 1879.

have liked to take his life in revenge; and this is just what was tried by three men who came from Missouri.

In May three men from Clay County, Missouri, on their way to Leadville, Colorado, stopped over night in Dodge and drank too much of Dodge's plentiful supply of hard liquor. With each drink of the "fire-water" they became more and more convinced that they were bold and strong enough to "take" Dodge City.

Wyatt Earp, assistant-marshal, took one of the more vociferous ones by the ear and was leading him to the calaboose when another of the men told the captured one to "throw lead" at Earp. The one whom Earp was leading by the ear attempted to get away. About this time Bat appeared on the scene and used the broadside of his six-shooter on the irate Missourian's head. Then the three men were taken to the jail for safe keeping.

The next night after the three men had been confined in the city's cooler they attempted to assassinate Bat. They assembled in the rear of a store building and sent a little negro boy to tell Bat that a man wanted to see him in that vicinity. The little negro boy became suspicious and warned Bat. Later all three of them were arrested, fined, and told to get out of town. The Dodge City Times made the following comment: "Dodge City is hard to 'take';

pistol brigands find it a 'warm bath'."103

Life in Dodge settled down for a period after this, so that there was very little that Bat could do in line of professional duties. In early September he captured two horse thieves who had stolen eight horses in Fort Griffin, Texas, from J. B. Matthews. They gave their names as Charley and Jack Lyons.104

November, and election time, was drawing near; the opposing political factions starting throwing mud at each other, and Bat received his share of criticism. It was in response to such criticism that W. H. LyBrand wrote the following letter to the editor of the Dodge City Times:

Spearville, Kansas, September 17.

To the Editor of the Times:

In reply to a communication published in the last issue of the Ford County Globe in reference to candidates for the office of Sheriff, we beg to state that the most diligent inquiries among farmers and settlers in this neighborhood have thoroughly convinced us that W. B. Masterson is beyond doubt their choice for the office. Judging from the fact that no one acquainted with the excellent success with which he has so far discharged the duties of his office could be induced to cast his vote for another candidate and the high esteem and respect with which Masterson is regarded by all authorities, not only in this, but in other counties of the state as well, is sufficient guarantee of his superior qualifications for the office. Outside of a few soreheads, only the friends of the evil-doers desire the election of a man who will as Sheriff be less dangerous to them and their associates.

W. H. LyBrand<sup>105</sup>

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103 Dodge City Times, May 10, 1879.

104 Ibid., Sept. 6, 1879.

105 Ibid., Sept. 20, 1879.

Of course, the editor of the Times would have been expected to print the most complimentary things about Bat, because Bat was planning to run on the Independent ticket for sheriff in November and Klaine (the editor) was supporting the Independent ticket in his paper.

The Times announced Bat's candidacy with the following editorial news item:

W. B. Masterson, the nominee for the office of sheriff; Bat is acknowledged to be the best sheriff in Kansas. He is the most successful officer in the state. He is immensely popular and is generally well-liked. Horse thieves have a terror for the name of Masterson. He was the unanimous choice of the Independent Convention, and will be elected by a heavy majority. Every hater of horse thieves will rejoice over Bat's triumphant election; and friends of good order and peace will contribute to his success.<sup>106</sup>

The opposing political party, known as the People's Ticket, thought that Bat had been spending too much of the tax money collected from the settlers and ranchers of Ford County. The Dodge City Times heard of this adverse criticism and printed the following news item: "Bat Masterson is Sheriff of thirteen unorganized counties. Of course, it costs something to run so much."<sup>107</sup>

However, later it was discovered that the tax payers probably did have a reason for criticism, although the high expenditure was not caused by Bat. In December John B. Means was arrested for forging script against Bat Masterson

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<sup>106</sup>Dodge City Times, Oct. 25, 1879.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., Oct. 25, 1879.



for conveyance of prisoners to the state penitentiary. Means had been using this money to gamble; he received free conveyance to the state penitentiary.<sup>108</sup>

Other people were accusing Bat Masterson of fraud in his dealing with the citizens of Ford County. One of the rumors must have been circulated quite widely; for some man, who felt that he was well enough known by the gossipers so that it was not necessary to mention his name, wrote the following letter to the Dodge City Times:

To the Editor of the Times:

I desire to inform the people of Ford County that all parties circulating the report that Bat Masterson charged \$25 or any other amount for the finding and returning of my stolen pony last fall is telling an unmitigated falsehood as was ever uttered by any evil-minded persons. My transactions with Mr. Masterson have always been satisfactory, I expect to vote for him and work for his election.<sup>109</sup>

Nevertheless, Bat was defeated in the election for sheriff by George Hinkle; the vote was 404 votes for Hinkle and 268 votes for Bat. The entire Independent ticket was defeated. The Dodge City Times commented: "There is a good deal of speculation as to the cause of the late defeat in Ford County of the Independent Ticket....We conjecture the most powerful influence was in the beer keg; of course, the people fighting for honesty and reform wouldn't use money."<sup>110</sup>

In November Bat's younger brother, James, was

<sup>108</sup>Dodge City Times, Dec. 20, 1879.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., Nov. 1, 1879.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., Nov. 8, 1879.

appointed city marshal of Dodge City.<sup>111</sup> Bat continued in the office of sheriff until January, when the newly elected officers took their oaths.

Bat must have come in for his share of the fun-poking and ridicule that every defeated political aspirant receives. Young and confident as he was, Bat resented some of the more barbed remarks. In November he wrote the following vituperous letter to the Times:

To the Editor of the Times:

In answer to the publication made by Bob Fry of the Spearville News asserting that I made threats that I would lick any s-- of a b---- that voted or worked against me in the last election, I will say it is as false and as flagrant a lie as was ever uttered; but I did say this: that I would lick him, the s-- of a b----, if he made any more dirty talks about me; and the words of s-- of a b---- I strictly confined to the Spearville editor, for I don't know of any other in Ford County.

W. B. Masterson<sup>112</sup>

The feud between Bob Fry and Bat Masterson continued, but fortunately they never met. However, Fry was on the look-out for Bat as was shown by the half-serious and half-facetious remark printed in the Dodge City Times:

Bob Fry of the Spearville News exhibited to the Honorable Nelson Adams, while on the train going west the other evening, a self-cocking revolver that he was carrying for Bat Masterson. Better hitch yourself to a cannon, Bob.<sup>113</sup>

In January Bat Masterson and Bassett returned from

<sup>111</sup>Dodge City Times, Nov. 15, 1879.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., Nov. 15, 1879.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., Nov. 22, 1879.



### A GENTLEMAN OF FORTUNE

After his defeat in the candidacy for sheriff of Ford County, Bat became a gentleman of fortune, a man looking for a permanent location. In February, 1880, he struck out for Leadville, Colorado, to investigate business conditions there.<sup>115</sup> He returned in March with the news that business was on the up-grade in Gunnison County, Colorado, and that anyone with money could make a small fortune there.

On his word Charlie Bassett, Mysterious Dave Mathers, and two others left in a wagon for Gunnison County the same month.<sup>116</sup>

Bat was selected as one of the delegates to the Republican Ford County Convention; after his duties at that meeting were completed, he also started toward Gunnison County.

Either Bat had made a bad guess as to the business possibilities in Gunnison County or business suddenly became worse, for he wrote to W. W. Sutton in May that he was in Denver and would presently return to Dodge; Gunnison was the worst fraud that he had ever seen: there were no mines near either Pitkin or Gunnison City. Bat said in the letter that

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<sup>115</sup>Dodge City Times, Feb. 28, 1880.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., May 1, 1880.

the closest mines were at Ruby City and even there the snow was three feet deep in the streets. He advised all of his friends to keep away from Gunnison County if they had any possible chance of making a living where they were.<sup>117</sup>

Bat returned in June; the Dodge City Times reported: "Bat does not give a glowing account of the silver state."<sup>118</sup>

Later in June the following news item appeared in the Dodge City Times:

William [Billy] Thompson had a difficulty with a Texas man in Ogallala a few days ago, a number of shots were fired. Billy received five shots. He was not dangerously hurt.<sup>119</sup>

There was more to the incident than was apparent in the small news item; Billy was in trouble again. Bat and Ben Thompson, Billy's brother, were good friends; so Ben asked Bat to help get Billy out of Ogallala. Robert Wright relates the story as follows:

Bat was a most loyal man to his friends. If anyone ever did him a favor, he never forgot it. I believe that if one of his friends was confined in a jail and there was the least doubt of his innocence, he would take a crowbar and "jimmy" and dig him out, at the dead hour of midnight; and, if there were determined men guarding him, he would take these desperate chances. This was exemplified in his action in saving Billy Thompson. Billy and Ben Thompson, mentioned in a previous chapter, were brothers, high rollers, and desperate men, as well as gamblers. Billy was shot all to pieces in a gun play at

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<sup>117</sup>Dodge City Times, May 29, 1880.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1880.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1880.

Ogallallah [sic], Nebraska. They wired Ben Thompson at Dodge City about the shooting, but Ben had outlawed himself at Ogallallah, was well known there, and had many enemies in the town. He did not dare to go. Bat and Ben were friends, and Bat said: "I'll go, but he don't deserve it." But he promised to bring Billy out. Now Bat was a stranger in Ogallallah and Billy Thompson was at the only hotel there, desperately wounded and shot all to pieces. The citizens were down on him, waiting for him to get well enough for them to hang him. The chances were desperate and Bat knew it and had to keep under cover. By chance, Billy's nurse was an old-timer and a great admirer of Bat. By some chance, unknown to anyone, Bat got to him, and the nurse was only too glad to help him all he could, secretly of course, for the nurse knew the chances he was taking in helping Bat. Through this nurse, Bat got word to a lot of his friends, as well as friends of Thompson, who wanted to help him if they could. This was their plan and it worked admirably. When the fast, west-bound express was heard to whistle at Ogallallah at twelve o'clock that night, the friends of Thompson were to commence a sham battle at the big dance hall across the railroad track, some distance from the hotel, by a perfect fusilade [sic] of shots. Of course, everyone ran out of the hotel for the scene of action. Then Bat got the nurse to throw Billy Thompson across his shoulders and to follow with his clothes.

Bat landed Billy in a sleeper and locked the door, just as the train pulled out, and no one saw them. Then attention was attracted elsewhere, and they landed next morning at William Cody's (alias Buffalo Bill's) ranch who happened to be at home in North Platte. Bill was kind hearted and was always willing to help the weak and needy, so they got the best of care, and Mr. Cody had several relays of teams stationed overland toward Dodge City. Mr. Cody, I think, accompanied them for the first few days. It was a long way across country for a badly wounded man, but they made it all right without accident.<sup>120</sup>

In the middle of July, 1880, the Dodge City Times printed this news item which substantiates Wright's story:

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<sup>120</sup>Wright, Robert M. Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital, pp. 301-303. This story was also substantiated by Thomas Masterson, Jr., in an interview Nov. 4, 1937.

W. B. Masterson arrived from a visit to Ogallala this week. He says Nebraska is dry and many people are leaving that state. He came by wagon, and was accompanied by Texas Billy Thompson. The latter has recovered from his wounds.<sup>121</sup>

After this incident Bat was in and out of Dodge City at various times for several years; Dodge was a good stopping point for him between locations, because his brother, James, was still acting as city marshal of Dodge.

In the latter part of the year 1880 Bat seems to have taken up semi-permanent residence in Kansas City, for the following news item appeared in a December issue of the Dodge City Times: "W. B. Masterson, former sheriff of Ford County, spent several days here. He lives in Kansas City. Bat was welcomed by a host of friends."<sup>122</sup>

In March, 1881, Bat served as a deputy in one of Wyatt Earp's posses in Tombstone, Arizona.<sup>123</sup> He was following his profession of gambling in that city at the time.

Bat was in New Mexico a month later when he was called back to Dodge City to see that his brother, James, got a square deal with A. J. Peacock and Al Updegraph.

In April, 1881, James Masterson and A. J. Peacock, who were partners in a dance hall and saloon business in Dodge City, had a serious disagreement over the question of dismissing one of their barkeepers, Al Updegraph.

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<sup>121</sup>Dodge City Times, July 17, 1880.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., Dec. 11, 1880.

<sup>123</sup>Lake, Stuart N. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, p. 254.

It was the desire of James Masterson that Updegraph should be dismissed from their employment, but Peacock insisted that Updegraph should continue as one of the barkeepers in their business establishment. Bad went to worse until there became an open breach between them with insults on both sides too disagreeable for either to bear. In one of the more unpleasant quarrels their anger reached such a pitch that both of them drew their pistols and fired several shots at each other — or rather, in the general direction of each other. Fortunately both men were so excited with anger that they failed to injure each other.

The gamblers and sporting men of Dodge City took sides in the disagreement. James felt that the balance of "man-power" was against him; at least, conditions in Dodge at that time were dangerous to his life. At this stage in the quarrel, either James or some of his friends wired to Bat Masterson, who was somewhere in New Mexico at the time.

No one knows just what the message reported, but it was of such a nature that Bat boarded the next train for Dodge with his gun buckled to his side and strapped down on the hip.

On April 16 (Saturday) Bat swung down from the train platform and started down the board walk in search of his brother, Jim. Before he had walked past the railroad grade, which bordered the tracks, he sighted Peacock and



Updegraph, coming across the street.

Loosening his revolver in its holster, Bat shouted to them, "Just a minute, you two. I want to talk to you."

With the sound of Bat's voice, which both of them recognized, Peacock and Updegraph went for their guns and ran for cover behind the nearby calaboose.

Such a movement meant only one thing on the frontier, and Bat was well-schooled in frontier tactics. He took cover behind a slight embankment left by the railroad graders who had cut the grade through Dodge.

No sooner were both parties behind their temporary fortresses than the shooting began. The shots from Peacock and Updegraph were in direct line with the business houses on the north side of the street. One bullet passed through the front of Doctor McCarty's drugstore; one, through the front of the Long Branch Saloon; and one, through the front of G. M. Hoover's Wholesale Liquor Store. Bat's bullets were taking large chunks of wood out of the corners of the heavy timbers of the two-story calaboose.

During the few minutes of firing some unknown person fired three shots at the Peacock-Updegraph party from across the street and to Bat's right. According to a statement by Al Updegraph, which appeared in the Ford County Globe, it was one of these shots that wounded him in the

lungs. The ball passed completely through his body.<sup>124</sup>

When the shooting subsided between the two parties, with the help of several shots from interested bystanders, it was found that both Bat's and Peacock's guns were empty and Updegraph's revolver had only one shot left in its chambers.

A. B. Webster, the mayor of Dodge City, stepped up to Bat and placed him under arrest. Bat, his anger worked off, submitted without resistance. It is rather obvious that he would have had sufficient assistance from his and Jim's side of the faction if he had desired to resist arrest; for Bat, the sporting man, had plenty of sporting friends in Dodge City, and it was these men (the gamblers, barkeepers, et alii) who were really the gun artists in those days.

Bat was tried in the police court for disturbing the peace; he was convicted and fined \$8 for such a breach of law and order. Later several state warrants were issued for the arrest of other persons implicated in the shooting, but they were permitted to leave town with the understanding that they would not return.

The indignation of the people of Dodge City was at a high tide over this shooting fracas. The Ford County Globe made the statement that if such an occurrence happened again,

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<sup>124</sup>Ford County Globe, May 10, 1881.

the people of Dodge City would not wait for the law to take its course.<sup>125</sup>

The Walnut City Blade printed the following caustic comment: "It costs \$8 to shoot a man through the lung in Dodge City — such was Bat Masterson's fine."<sup>126</sup>

One week after the shooting fracas, Al Updegraph, who was slowly recovering from the wound in his lungs, felt it his duty to clear his name of any possible taint in his home town, Medicine Lodge, Kansas. He wrote the following letter to the Medicine Lodge Index and it was later reprinted in the Ford County Globe:

...I desire to make a brief statement of the shooting affair for the purpose of correcting the erroneous statement of the affair heretofore published, that all concerned may know that I am not entirely to blame for it all. When I arrived here from Medicine Lodge, I went into the employ of Peacock and Masterson as bar-keeper. During the time I was so employed, a friend of Masterson's robbed a woman of \$80 by entering her room while she was absent. I advised her to have the party arrested which she did through the local officers. Masterson thereupon came to me and insisted that I should make the woman withdraw the complaint, which I refused positively to do. He, Masterson, thereupon informed me that my services as bar-keeper was no longer needed and I must quit. Mr. Peacock, the other member of the firm, thereupon insisted that I should stay, as I was right. Masterson, having claimed to be a killer, then undertook the job of killing me, and

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<sup>125</sup>The story of the shooting scrape between Bat Masterson and the team, Peacock and Updegraph, was drawn from the following sources: Ford County Globe, April 19, 1881; interview with Ham Bell, Nov. 27, 1937; and an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937.

<sup>126</sup>Ford County Globe, April 19, 1881.

attempted it on the following evening by coming into the saloon and cocking his revolver in my face. I got the better of him by a large majority and notwithstanding his reputation as a killer he hid out and next morning was arrested upon my complaint....[Updegraph's statement of the actual shooting incident between Bat Masterson and Peacock and himself coincides with the story printed in the Ford County Globe and related previously in this thesis.] The parties who participated in the affair against me were by the citizens bounced out of town, and I invite anyone who doubts this statement to correspond with any respectable man in this place who, I am satisfied, will corroborate this statement.

Respectfully yours,  
Al Updegraph<sup>127</sup>

Before either accepting or rejecting Updegraph's story as true or false several points should be considered. Bat had demanded a solvency of the partnership between Jim and Peacock and had taken Jim with him to New Mexico; there was no one in Dodge to uphold the Mastersons' end of the discussion. Updegraph was making the statement for his friends in Medicine Lodge where further evidence or corroboration of his statement would not be considered. Then the characters of the two men should be considered. Al Updegraph was a bar-tender and a heavy drinker — in fact, he was such a heavy drinker that at the time of his death from small pox in February of 1883, the Dodge physicians made a joint statement in the Ford County Globe that of the four cases dying from small pox (including Al Updegraph) each of the deceased was a hard drinking man and undoubtedly did not draw a sober

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<sup>127</sup>Ford County Globe, May 10, 1881.

breath for weeks before his death. All of them were men who had no regular habits but drinking.<sup>128</sup>

Jim Masterson had been city marshal of Dodge City and was well liked and respected by his many friends. When Al Updegraph died the Ford County Globe carried the following simple announcement: "Al Updegraph, an old time sport of the West, died in this city Friday night."<sup>129</sup>

The entire affair was an unfortunate one for the Masterson brothers, because the promiscuous shooting and the endangering of the citizens and property made a number of people in Dodge angry with them.<sup>130</sup>

Shortly after the shooting affair Bat settled in Trinidad, Colorado, where he leased the gambling concession in one of Trinidad's several sporting establishments.<sup>131</sup> He was still looking for his life's vocation and did a great deal of traveling in the West during this time.

In November, 1881, the Ford County Globe printed a story by a Doctor Cockrell, taken from the New York Sun, to which it had been sent by Cockrell. The story stated that the author, while in Gunnison, Colorado, had a real killer pointed out to him by a friend, a Mr. Brown.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Ford County Globe, Feb. 6, 1881.

<sup>129</sup>Ibid., Feb. 6, 1881.

<sup>130</sup>Statement of Ham Bell in an interview, Nov. 27, 1937.

<sup>131</sup>Information secured from Thomas Masterson, Jr., in an interview, Nov. 4, 1937.

<sup>132</sup>Ford County Globe, Nov. 22, 1881.

As Cockrell and Brown were seated in the railroad station at Gunnison, Brown leaned over and whispered to Cockrell, "Do you see that mild-eyed man sitting over there on the other side of the stove? That's Bat Masterson, the killer."

With mouth sagging at the sight of a real killer, Cockrell whispered in awed tones, "Is he really an honest-to-goodness killer?"

Brown hastened to assure Cockrell, with one eye cocked in the general direction of the brawny god of the six-gun, "Listen, Doctor, they may talk about killers, but the majority of the so-called killers can't hold a candle to Bat Masterson — Bat has killed twenty-six men, not counting Mexicans and Indians."

With the number twenty-six Cockrell's jaw dropped even farther until it threatened to make a permanent separation from his face.

Sufficiently pleased with the impression on his audience, Brown continued: "They tell the story that at one time a thousand dollar reward was offered for the capture of two Mexican bandits, dead or alive; Bat was a little low on cash and decided to go after the two men, although Mexicans, according to his opinion, weren't worth shooting.

"Well, if these two bandits had known that Bat

was after them, they would have just turned their toes up to the sun and have died — but, of course, they didn't know that such a killer as Bat Masterson would ever concern himself with anything so lowly as Mexicans.

"Bat slipped up to their camp one night when they were gathering wood and drawing water in preparation for the evening meal. Bat finally got both of them located and made sure that there were only two of them. Of course, he's not afraid of anybody, man or beast, in the open; but he knew that even brave men can be shot down from ambush."

At this point Cockrell, with his jaw still hanging loosely and his eyes bulging, impatiently motioned Brown to omit the generalizing and to get on with the story — at the same time he kept one eye trained in the general direction of the suspicious Bat Masterson to detect whether he suspected them of gossiping about him.

"Well," said Brown, continuing, "Bat stepped out in the open and ordered those two men to throw up their hands. They made the mistake of preparing to fight. Before they had any more than touched the butts of their guns, Bat drilled them both right through the center of their hearts with two shots, a shot for each man. He said later that he was glad at the time that they had gone for their guns, because Mexicans weren't any good anyway and their being dead facilitated transportation.

"Bat cut off their heads and slung them on his saddle in a gunny sack. When he got to town, he took the heads out of the sack; and, lo and behold! the sun and the heat, when he had crossed the desert, had swollen them, so that they could not be identified as the two bandits for whom the reward was offered — that taught Bat a lesson about cutting heads off bandits."

With the shrill whistle of an approaching train outside the station Cockrell jumped half-way from his seat; Brown stated absent-mindedly that he believed the train was Cockrell's.

Cockrell with the movements of a frightened rabbit grabbed his valises and jumped aboard the puffing train, waiting at the platform; that was the last time he saw the king of killers and he had no regrets.<sup>133</sup>

The story was so absurd that the Ford County Globe, in reprinting it, made no comment, assuming that its readers would consider it a good joke.<sup>134</sup>

Bat spent the next year, 1882, in Trinidad,

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<sup>133</sup>The story concerning the two men, Cockrell and Brown, and Bat Masterson was adapted and dramatized from a feature article in the Ford County Globe, Nov. 22, 1881.

<sup>134</sup>Much has been said and a great deal more printed concerning the number of men killed by Bat Masterson during his life time. As far the author of this thesis has been able to discover through careful research, Bat Masterson killed Sergeant King and, possibly, Walker and Wagner — the latter two have been discussed previously in this thesis.



Colorado, where he continued to operate a gambling concession in one of the saloons in that city.<sup>135</sup> He had been given the name of a killer in southwestern and central Kansas and was undoubtedly disgusted with the infamous reputation he had acquired among people who didn't know him. The type of reputation he had acquired was shown rather well in a news item in the Caldwell Commercial, which was reprinted in the Ford County Globe:

The Times of Dodge City says that Jack Bridges has been city marshal of that town. Jack like Wild Bill and Bat Masterson belongs to the killer class and it is only a question of time when he will lay [sic] down with his boots on.<sup>136</sup>

Bat had a bad taste in his mouth as far as Dodge City was concerned; this was shown rather well in a letter which he wrote to the editor of the Ford County Globe in February, 1883, exonerating himself from certain charges that had been brought against him by the editor of the Dodge City Times:

...I have no desire to return to the delectable burg, as I have long since bequeathed my interest in Dodge City and Ford County to the few vampires and murdering band of stragglers who have controlled its political and moral machinery in the last few years...<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup>Information secured from Thomas Masterson, Jr., in an interview, Nov. 4, 1937.

<sup>136</sup>Ford County Globe, July 25, 1882.

<sup>137</sup>Ibid., Feb. 20, 1883. The letter in full is as follows:

Editor of the Globe: — Sir: Having noticed a short squibb in the last issue of the Dodge City Times in reference to myself and as it was evidently written with a view of doing me a malicious and willful wrong, I deem it as a

It must have been with a feeling of triumph, and power that Bat returned to Dodge in June, 1883, to see that his friend Luke Short received a square deal from the honorable law enforcing officers of Dodge City.

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duty devolving on me to refute the malicious statement contained in that brief paragraph. I am actuated in writing this explanation of the rescue referred to by the editorial nonentity of the Times in order to give what friends I have left in Ford County who read the Times an opportunity to judge for themselves whether my statement or that of the Times is correct.

I am accused by 'Old Nick' of the Times of having rescued a prisoner from the custody of a Iowa sheriff by force and that I first tried to get possession of the prisoner by means of false papers in my possession and finding that that could not be done I resorted to force which is as infamously false as it is ridiculous. I will dispose of the whole statement by saying that I had no false papers in my possession or papers of any kind and that I did not demand the prisoner from the Iowan sheriff or attempt to take him by force; and furthermore had nothing whatever to do with the prisoner, but simply went to the train in company with Miles Mix, a deputy sheriff of Chaffee County, Colorado, who had a copias warrant for the arrest of the prisoner on the charge of murder committed in Chaffee County two years ago. I was solicited by Mix to accompany him to the train which I did as a matter of courtesy and nothing more. Mr. Klaine can ascertain the truth of this statement by referring to any official in this place or to Sheriff Landes of Iowa if he feels so disposed, but I am satisfied he has no desire to do so, as he has never been accused of either telling or writing the truth by anyone who knows anything of his Missouri or Kansas reputation. He concludes his scurrilous article by saying that some residents of Dodge City are anxious that I should return but adds that Trinidad is a more congenial place for me. To this I will say that... [previously quoted under footnote 137]...In conclusion I will say that Dodge City is the only place I know of where officials have taken people by brute force and without the sanction of law and that on all such occasions the officials who committed the unlawful act never failed to receive a laudatory puff from the long-haired Missourian who edits the Times.

Respectfully,  
W. B. Masterson  
Trinidad, Colorado  
Feb. 12, 1883

A city ordinance had been passed in Dodge which forbade gambling within the limits of the city.<sup>138</sup> Luke Short, who was a gambler, would have abided by the ordinance, but it was not being strictly enforced against all persons, and Luke was one of the gamblers who weren't being favored. He wired to several of his friends that he was being discriminated against by the law officers of Dodge, mainly by Mike Sutton, the prosecuting attorney of Dodge.

Mysterious Dave Mathers, Wyatt Earp, Bat Master-son, and others responded to Luke's appeal.<sup>139</sup> When they arrived in Dodge the city officials immediately wired to Colonel Thomas Monnlight, the adjutant-general of Kansas. Monnlight came and acted as the chairman of the peace commission which presided in Dodge for several days.<sup>140</sup> Bat and his friends stayed in Dodge and demanded that Short be given his rights as a citizen of that city. By the evidence provided in the Dodge City Globe it is apparent that Short got what he wanted: "Luke Short returned to the city Sunday and we believe that he has come to stay."<sup>141</sup> Not only did Short get what he wanted, but the other gamblers also got a square deal. "The gambling gentry smile and are again happy, since they are allowed to spread their

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<sup>138</sup>Ford County Globe, June 5, 1883.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1883.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1883.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1883.

layouts again. All games were in full blast early yesterday morning."<sup>142</sup>

Two brief items in the Dodge City Globe show rather well just what influence Bat had on the enemies of Luke Short in Dodge:

As soon as Bat Masterson alighted from the train on his late arrival into this city, Mike Sutton started for his cyclone building on Gospel Ridge where he remained until the truce was made.<sup>143</sup>

On the return of Luke Short and his friends it didn't take Mike Sutton long to arrive at the conclusion that Kinsley was a much healthier locality and that town is now his abiding place. When Dodge City becomes too hot for Mike Sutton, hell itself would be considered a cool place — a desirable summer resort.<sup>144</sup>

This was the second time that Bat had returned to Dodge to see that what he considered justice was done — and it was not the last time that he returned for this same reason.

Bat was severely criticized for his action in protecting Luke Short's business interests by Klaine, the editor of the Dodge City Times; however, he was ably defended

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<sup>142</sup>Ford County Globe, June 5, 1883.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1883.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., June 5, 1883.

Stuart N. Lake in his biography, Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal, pp. 359-361, reported Earp as saying that the trouble between the city officials and Luke Short resulted from a controversy as to whether Short should employ a lady piano player in his business establishment, the Long Branch Saloon. Lake's account does not agree with the newspaper story; however, Lake's story is undoubtedly more colorful and makes a more interesting anecdote; perhaps that is the reason he used it.

by the editor of his home town paper, The News, published in Trinidad, Colorado. The Ford County Globe reported the defense in the following feature article:

Out in the wild, wild West journalism has a breezy sweep which is in fresh contrast to the effete writing of the Eastern press. The Dodge City Times at the time of the arrival of Luke Short and his friends contained an announcement that Shot Gun Collins, Dynamite Jack, Dirty Shirt Tom, Cyclone Bill and other notorious characters had come in to 'down the town.' One of the characters referred to in this bitterly sarcastic manner was Bat Masterson of Trinidad, Colorado, and his home paper, The News, resented the slur cast by the Times with energy and force. The News maintained that the editor of the Times had stolen horses in Clay County, Missouri, and was obliged to swim across the Missouri River to escape. He is, 'said the Trinidad Addison' a vile creature. Dirty Shirt Tom, forsooth! The editor of the Times had not washed himself for eleven years when he knew him. He used to stand out in the sun and the flies would gather round until the city council condemned him as a nuisance and ordered that he be washed every week by the police at the expense of the city. This is good old fashioned English. There is no innuendo, no sarcasm, but simple, plain, straightforward charges. We await the reply of the Dodge City Times with interest.<sup>145</sup>

In September, 1883, Bat was back in Dodge again. The Ford County Globe printed the following news item: "Bat Masterson arrived in Dodge City a few days since. We understand that he will engage in the mercantile business at this place."<sup>146</sup>

But Bat's intentions had been misinterpreted

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<sup>145</sup>Ford County Globe, June 19, 1883. This story is included for the amusement of the reader, not for its possible authenticity.

<sup>146</sup>Ford County Globe, Sept. 4, 1883.

again; business was light in Trinidad, election time was drawing near, and Bat was back to see that his friends got justice. As usual he created suspicion among his enemies, and drew the general attention of Dodge's citizens. The party who opposed his friends began circulating rumors concerning Bat's probable intentions; so that P. F. Sughrue, who was running for sheriff, felt it necessary to defend himself in the Ford County Globe with this statement:

Some of the opposition, or Singer faction, are circulating a report among stockmen that in the event I am elected sheriff, W. B. Masterson will be my undersheriff, which I positively assert is false; not that Mr. Masterson wouldn't be fully competent and acceptable to a great many people in this county, but he is not a resident of this state and has no intention of becoming such. I am sure, however, that he would reflect as much credit to the office as Mysterious Dave who will be Mr. Singer's right hand man.

Respectfully,  
P. F. Sughrue<sup>147</sup>

Bat was called away from Dodge for a few days just before election. Some of his political opponents had been accusing the editor of the Ford County Globe of having Bat as an associate editor; the editor of the Globe reported facetiously in his paper: "...But as Mr. Masterson has left the city, the Globe will be rather a tame paper this week."<sup>148</sup>

Like a bad penny Bat turned up in Dodge on election day; his presence seemed to have a profound influence

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<sup>147</sup>Ford County Globe, Oct. 16, 1883.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., Nov. 6, 1883.

on some of the people of Dodge according to the Globe.  
"...his [Bat's] presence about the polls on that day had a moral effect on our would-be moral element that was truly surprising..."<sup>149</sup>

After the election Bat returned to Trinidad, feeling, one can imagine, very well satisfied with his success. The next time that he returned to Dodge to make front page news was at election time in 1884.

Bat, like a children's disease, broke out in a mild rash again in the month of November, 1884; this time in the form of a special edition newspaper which he called the Vox Populi. The Globe reported: "...The editor is very promising; if he survives the first week of his literary venture, there is no telling what he may accomplish in the journalistic field."<sup>150</sup>

The paper was nothing but an instrument in the hands of its editor, Bat Masterson; the paper did not survive its first edition, but the editor did, which was more than some people expected, considering the things that Bat printed concerning his political opponents.

The Trinidad News, which was still following the adventures of one of its favorite sons, made the following comment:

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<sup>149</sup>Ford County Globe, Nov. 13, 1883.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid., Nov. 4, 1883.

Bat Masterson is the editor and proprietor of a daily paper called the Vox Populi. Bat is an easy and a graceful writer and possesses real journalistic ability. The News will be glad to hear of his making a howling success.<sup>151</sup>

In commenting on the item included in its paper, reprinted from the Trinidad News, the Globe stated:

Yes, the Vox Populi was a howling success, that is, if we know anything about the kind of success, for the howling over the issue of that paper still goes on. Bat with his paper was on the winning side of the election.<sup>152</sup>

During the year of 1885 Bat was in and out of Dodge, still looking for a permanent location and his life's work. He was an aggressive man and came under the censure of the reactionaries and the stand-patters of Dodge. The Globe in defending him stated: "Bat Masterson has his failings like other people, but he is a gentleman and does not sail under false colors."<sup>153</sup>

Later in the year he was still making trips to Colorado for the purpose of finding a desirable location for permanent establishment. In July the Globe wrote: "Bat Masterson went up to Pueblo Saturday expecting to return today."<sup>154</sup>

In August, 1885, Bat made a trip to Denver, Colorado, and later to Rawlins, Wyoming; at the latter place he

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<sup>151</sup>Ford County Globe, Nov. 18, 1884.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., Nov. 18, 1884.

<sup>153</sup>Ibid., Feb. 17, 1885.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., July 28, 1885.



served as an umpire in the prize fight between Clow and Hands. The fight was a huge one for that day, as special trains were run from various parts of the country and a great number of people came from long distances to see the two pugilists in action. The Globe reported: "There was not less than twenty thousand dollars bet on the fight which was won by Clow in the sixth round. The Denver News<sup>155</sup> published a full account of the fight and says Masterson makes a ready umpire."<sup>156</sup>

The next time that Bat made front page news in Dodge was in March, 1886, when he made a general clean-up of Dodge, closing the saloons and ridding the town of gamblers.<sup>157</sup> This was a spectacular movement and was undoubtedly meant to be such by Bat. Shortly after this move he left Dodge for Denver, where he established himself for several years, operating a gambling establishment and a burlesque theatre.<sup>158</sup>

So Bat Masterson, an itinerant gentleman of fortune, lived, fought, and made a place for himself in the Old West — but the Old West was passing and Bat was thirty-two years of age; a man must think of marriage and a home.

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<sup>155</sup>This paper was undoubtedly the Rocky Mountain News, as there was no Denver News at this time.

<sup>156</sup>Ford County Globe, Aug. 11, 1885.

<sup>157</sup>Ibid., March 16 and March 23, 1886.

<sup>158</sup>Information secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937.

The later years of his life led him away from Dodge City and the West, but they had left their imprint on his character; throughout the remainder of his life Bat continued to be a fighting man and, of more importance, a "sporting man." He had made good friends in Dodge and he had made strong enemies; it is so with any man of principles.

## APPENDIX

### A RESUME OF THE LIFE OF BAT MASTERSON AFTER THE DODGE CITY YEARS

Bat Masterson ran a gambling house in Denver, from which at one time he is reported as having led the Mayor of Denver by the nose, when he did not like some of the latter's remarks.

Bat soon gave up the gambling establishment and leased the Palace Theatre, which featured vaudeville shows. It was in this business that he met his future wife, Emma Walters, a song-and-dance girl. He married her November 21, 1891.

While he was in Denver, Bat became very much interested in pugilism and spent many hours at the local fights.

In May, 1902, Bat moved to New York City, where he was appointed a United States Deputy Marshal by President Theodore Roosevelt. He soon resigned this position and became the sports editor of the Morning Telegraph and secretary of the company in New York City.

During the remainder of his life, until October 27, 1921, Bat occupied this position. He died at his desk October 27, 1921, shortly after he had completed his daily column on sports.

In his years in New York City Bat became close friends with such notables as Damon Runyon, William S. Hart, Luella Parsons, et alii.

Bat was a well-liked columnist and it was with interest that many sporting fans followed his column, Masterson's Views on Timely Topics.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>159</sup>This brief resume of Bat Masterson's life after the Dodge City years was secured in an interview with Thomas Masterson, Jr., Nov. 4, 1937, and from several unclassified obituaries with which he furnished me.

## Bibliography

### A. Books

Adams, Andy. The Log of a Cowboy, A Narrative of the Old Trail Days. Cambridge, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1931. 387p.

Includes the story of Bat Masterson's participation in the widely-publicized hazing of Dr. J. Graves-Brown, a pseudo-occult scientist, in Dodge City.

Coolidge, Dane. Fighting Men of the West. New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., [1932]. 336p.

A series of sketches of the gun-fighters of the West. Relates a controversial anecdote of the time Clay Allison forced Bat Masterson and other Dodge City peace officers to seek cover.

Dixon, Olive K. The Life of Billy Dixon. Dallas, Texas, The Southwest Press, [1927]. 251p.

A biography of Billy Dixon, containing an authentic account of the battle at Adobe Walls. Also includes the tale of the hazing of Fairchild, a tenderfoot, in which Bat Masterson participated.

Foy, Eddie and Harlow, Alvin F. Clowning Through Life. 681 Fifth Ave., New York, E. P. Dutton and Co., 1928. 331p.

An autobiography with literary collaboration by Alvin F. Harlow. Relates the story of Foy's having played in the Comique at Dodge City with Thompson as his partner. Evaluation of Foy's friendship with Bat Masterson and an account of the time Bat Masterson saved Foy's life. A valuable reference.

Ghent, W. J. William Barclay Masterson. (In the Dictionary of American Biography. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933, XII, 383-384).

Contains a scholarly account of the life of Bat Masterson, drawn from interviews with Thomas Masterson and Mrs. Emma Masterson (Bat Masterson's wife, now deceased) and from popular books of the Old West. Brief but unusually accurate.

Lake, Stuart N. Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal. Boston and New York, The Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931. 375p.

A biography of Wyatt Earp, a one-time marshal in Dodge City. Contains a number of anecdotes which disagree with newspaper accounts and contemporary eyewitnesses of certain historical events. Gives information concerning the early part of Bat Masterson's history in Dodge City that is not treated by any other available sources.

Raine, William McLeod. Famous Sheriffs and Western Outlaws. Garden City, N. Y. Doubleday Doran and Co., 1928. 294p.

Contains a number of sensational stories popularly accepted as being true by the average layman and the pulp magazines.

Siringo, Charles A. A Lone Star Cowboy. Cleveland, The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1919. 291p.

Includes an account of Clay Allison's coming to Dodge City and threatening to 'clean out' the law enforcing officers there.

Streeter, F. B. Prairie Trails and Cow Towns. Boston, Chapman and Grimes, [1936]. 263p.

A valuable reference book for general background material and the atmosphere of the period treated in this thesis.

Sutton, Fred E. and McDonald, A. B. Hands Up. Indianapolis,  
The Bobbs-Merrill Co., [1927]. 303p.

A series of portraits of outlaws and sheriffs of the Old West. Includes an account of the slaying of Ed Masterson. Entire book largely unsubstantiated by historical evidence.

Wellman, Paul I. Death on the Prairies. New York, Macmillan Co., 1934. 281p.

A book relating many Indian depredations committed on the western prairies. Contains an account of the battle of Adobe Walls, including a sketch of Bat Masterson's participation. A very scholarly book.

Wilson, Rufus Rockwell. Out of the West. New York, The Press of the Pioneers, 1933. 478p.

Includes the story of Bat Masterson's being employed by General Nelson A. Miles as a civilian scout in the warfare against the Indians in 1874-75.

Wright, Robert M. Dodge City, The Cowboy Capital and The Great Southwest. [Wichita, Wichita Eagle Press, 1913].  
344p.

Includes an account of the killing of Dora Hand, the slaying of Ed Masterson and other stories in which Bat Masterson played a prominent role. Much of the author's material was taken directly from the Dodge City Globe. An interesting book because of its being written by a man who lived in Dodge City at the time Bat Masterson resided there.

## B. Personal Interviews

Beeson, Merritt. Dodge City, Kansas. August 25, 1937.

Mr. Beeson gave me very little information, but showed me his historical museum and gave me his impression of Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp as he had pictured them from hearing the old settlers and cow-men talk about them.

Bell, Ham. Dodge City, Kansas. Nov. 27, 1937.

Mr. Bell gave me his impression -- that of an eye-witness -- of the slaying of Ed Masterson. He also gave me his story of what actually happened in the shooting episode of Peacock and Updegraph versus Bat Masterson.

Masterson, Thomas. Wichita, Kansas. Nov. 4, 1937.

A very enlightening interview with the only surviving brother of Bat Masterson during which Thomas Masterson gave me a brief account of the family history and of Bat's early life as he remembered it. He gave me his interpretation of the high points in Bat's career in Kansas, Colorado, and New York.

Streeter, F. B. Hays, Kansas. Unscheduled.

Doctor Streeter has given me valuable information as to his interpretation of the life and times of the eighteen-seventies and eighties; however, of more importance, he has activated my interest in local history through his books and articles relating the early day life in Kansas.



### C. Magazines and Newspapers

Ford County Globe. Jan. 8, 1878-Oct. 27, 1885. Dodge City,  
The Ford County Globe Publishing Co., 1878-1885.

A weekly publication. Files located in the Dodge City Daily Globe's vaults. One of my most valuable sources for the history of Bat Masterson's career as sheriff of Ford County and for the history of his later life in and out of Dodge City. This paper was published on Tuesday.

Dodge City Times. Oct. 14, 1876-Dec. 11, 1880. Dodge City,  
The Dodge City Times Publishing Co., 1876-1880.

A weekly newspaper. Only file in existence is located in The State Historical Library in Topeka, Kansas. This newspaper file has been valuable to me as an aid in evaluating the news items found in the Dodge City Globe of the same period. It gave the other side of the political battle that was being waged in Dodge City at the time Bat Masterson lived there. This paper was published on Saturday.

Numerous fictionized stories and articles concerning Bat Masterson have appeared in newspapers and magazines from time to time. The following have been studied and evaluated as worthless:

Hunter-Trader-Trapper. December, 1928. p. 19.

Colliers. April 16, 1904. p. 19.

Saturday Evening Post. December 17, 1904.

Hunter-Trader-Trapper. December, 1925. p. 23.

All of these stories are sensational and were written to thrill their readers with the bloodiness and adventure of life on the frontier. Many more magazine and newspaper accounts were examined and discarded for lack of historical authenticity.