

[The Early Days In Silver City]

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Silver City, N. M. Interview

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Sitting in the relief office making plans for the day I noticed two elderly men giving each other the once over.

One spoke up remarked " I know you".

The other replied, "Don't I know it, but I can't place you".

"I'm Pat Deene." "Oh", replied J. R. Kinyon. "Don't I know it. You use to push a cart of book's around Ft. Bayard."

"Oh yes and you used to peddle eggs around the country in a one horse cart."

"Don't I know it," replied Mr. Kinyon a very small fellow. "Weren't those the great old days —Say do you remember when the R. R. went through Silver City with the Station up in the West part of town?"

"I should say I do, and wasn't that some flood that washed the tracks away?"

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“Yes, it sure looked as if the entire town was going. Don't I know when the water started down from Brewer Hill and Silver Heights something really was going to happen.”

“Yes, but it was a wise thing when the R. R. Company didn't build back but placed their station at the edge of town.”

“Say, do you remember the joke about the high waters around here.”

“No what was it?”

“Remember when over one local physician in 1890 got married and he with his bride were going to El Paso for their honeymoon. On the same train was one of our prominent business men who was on his way to El Paso to get married. As you know the R. R. was in a canyon as today, and everytime it rained the train was held up for hours.” [?]

“On this special occassion it rained after the train left town, but soon enough to catch it, before it got high-land. That afternoon Dan Cupid must 2 have sure been sore for that train had to back into Silver City and remain until the next day. A wedding had to be postponed for a day, and the couple on their honeymoon had to go through the ordeal of rice and old shoes the second time on their belated honeymoon.”

“Well you don't remember the train robbery at Stein's [pass?] in 1887 do you?” asked Patty Deene.

“I should say I do” remarked Mr. Kinyon. “I happened to be riding that train. I had gone overland to Safford and Solemisville prospecting. I decided to come home Thanksgiving to be with my family at Silver City. I boarded the train at Wilcox.”

“There was a large shipment of gold on the train. Just out of Steins Pass we could see a large bon-fire. One of the trainmen remarked, “Wonder what the big fire is, I hope we don't run into any trouble.”

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"The bon-fire we discovered to our sorrow was on the R. R. Then as today curiosity got the best of some of us so we had to find out why the train came to an abrupt stop, and what the bon-fire was put on the track. We found ourselves looking into the barrel of guns."

"The trainsmen and guards soon overcame their surprise, and when the fireworks started you should have seen we nose people scatter for protection. I imagine all of us had learned our lesson to not be so nose. I know I had my lesson."

"One of the bandit's was killed there, and the other's were soon caught and properly taken care of. In those day's when a criminal was caught [hewasn't?] usually given a long drawn out trial but quickly dealt with under the old oak tree with a rope where sometimes he was left hanging as a lesson to other people who came into the country and wished to cause trouble. Don't I know those were the good old days."

"I should say they were, when I was a kid we smoked grapevine, and corn shucks 3 now look at the young boy's and girls with their tailored cigarettes."

"Gee, don't I know it," replied Mr. Kinyon. "We would slip out the horse and saddle and ride fifteen or twenty miles to a dance or the entire family would go in the wagon or coach. The Entire country side would start gathering early in the day for a good dance. Boy wouldn't these young punks look funny with a gun strapped on their hips, I'll bet they can't even get in a barn with the door shut and hit the wall."

"Don't I know It," interrupted Mr. Kinyon.

"Oh didn't we used to have some fun at those good old square dances?"

"Don't I know it, how I wish for those days again."

Informants: J. R. Kinyon

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Pat Deene