

In the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, the ending is sensational, but it is not true. Butch and Sundance did not die in San Vicente, Bolivia, in a hail of bullets. Instead they and Sundance's lady friend Etta Place drifted up to Mexico City before continuing on to the United States. 1.)

From 1889 until 1900, Butch Cassidy was the leader of a band of outlaws known as the Wild Bunch. Cassidy's gang operated in Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Idaho 2.) but was rumored to have pulled off robberies as far north as Alaska and as far south as Mexico. The Wild Bunch was notorious for carrying out daring train and bank robberies and for their uncanny ability to avoid capture.

Pinkerton Detective Charles A. Siringo tells of his regard for the outlaws:

"My longest job was pursuing the most daring band of highwaymen the country has ever known, the Hole-in-the-Wall gang also known as the Wild Bunch..." 3.)

In the 1890s Bert Charter owned a ranch in the tiny community of Baggs, Wyoming. Baggs is located in southern Wyoming right up against the Colorado border. When Cassidy and the Wild Bunch staged a holdup, Bert Charter provided some of the gang's get-away horses. 4.)

"Butch and the Wild Bunch found it convenient to hang around Baggs and Craig Colorado. If they were hunted for law breaking in Wyoming, they would slip over the border into Colorado or vice versa." 5.)

Their get-away plan and practice was to have Bert Charter station fresh horses at predetermined locations. Riding fresh mounts, the gang could easily outdistance a posse who had to depend on just one string of horses.

In her book *Butch Cassidy, My Brother*, Lula Parker Betenson tells how her brother Butch arrives back in the United States and returns to his boyhood home in Circleville, Utah. In the fall of 1925, Butch shows up at the family ranch in a new Model T. He is soon reunited with his father, two brothers and his sister Lula. Lula was just an infant when he left home in 1884. While becoming reacquainted, he provides his own version of a number of his experiences including what he believed to be a trumped up charge that led to his prison sentence and his eventual pardon by Wyoming's Governor W. A. Richards. He wants to learn everything he can about his mother who died before he returned home. He stays for about a week. The reunion between Butch and his family poses a bit of a problem for researchers who believe that Butch and Sundance died in Bolivia. 6.)

After leaving Circleville, Butch kept it a secret as to where he was headed next. It is believed that he settled somewhere in the northwest. Was he headquartered in Oregon or in Washington State? We don't know.

In her book *Lula* includes a number of letters that were addressed to her by people who saw, recognized or spent time with her brother Butch after he was back in the states. We learn in a letter written by a Mr. W. H. Boedeker of Dubois, Wyoming, that Butch still has some business to attend to in Wyoming. It has to do with the Wild Bunch and some buried money. 7.)

There is one piece of information relevant to Butch's trip to Wyoming. During the time when he was out of the country in Mexico or in South America, his friend Bert Charter moved from Baggs, Wyoming, to Jackson Hole. The two men must have kept in touch because Butch knew where Bert Charter was living and how to get there.

If Butch was living in the Pacific Northwest, then he probably came through Idaho and over Teton Pass on his way to Jackson Hole. He was driving a Model A Ford. 8.) From Wilson, a village at the base of Teton Pass, he crossed the Snake River. A little over a mile before getting to the Town of Jackson, he turned north onto a narrow dirt road. At that time all of the roads into the valley or in the valley itself were either dirt or gravel. 9.) The road took him up Spring Gulch between East and West Gros Ventre Buttes. In about five miles he came to Bert Charter's ranch. The Charter outfit was located on sagebrush flats just south of the Gros Ventre River. Off to the west are the snow covered peaks that make up the Teton Range. To the east are the Gros Ventre mountains.

25 years had passed since Bert Charter furnished horses for the Wild Bunch. The old friends probably spent several days talking about old times. Butch also had stories to tell Bert and his family about his adventures in Mexico and in South America.

All of Bert Charter's ranch hands knew ahead of time that the man who was coming to stay at the ranch was the famous outlaw Butch Cassidy. But Charter had warned them not to address Butch by his outlaw name. Butch's sister Lula thought that when he stayed with the Parker family in Utah that he might have been going by the name of Bob Parks. Was he still using the Bob Parks alias? 10.) We don't know. There is no record of the name or alias he used while he was in Jackson Hole.

Even before Butch left the Charter place there was a rumor going full-circle among Bert's crew as to the purpose of Butch's trip and where he was headed after he left the valley. The rumor was that he was headed for Lander, Wyoming, to look for a cache (loot from a robbery) buried by the Wild Bunch. 11.)

Bob Crisp was one of Bert Charter's young cowboys. Over several days while Butch Cassidy was staying at the Charter Ranch, Bob worked up his courage to ask Butch if he would give him something to remember him by. Eventually he found an opportunity to talk to Butch in private and asked his question. Butch reached in his pocket, pulled out a silver dollar and handed it to Bob. Bob had the silver dollar mounted on a belt buckle that he wore for the rest of his years as a cowboy. Bob Crisp's long-time friend Buddy Boyce inherited that buckle, and it is one of Buddy's most prized possessions. 12.)

After leaving the Charter ranch, Butch Cassidy drove north through Jackson Hole. He crossed Togwotee Pass until he came to the mountain community of Dubois, Wyoming. He knew the country around Dubois like the palm of his hand. In the 1880s he and his companion Al Hainer had signed on to work as cowboys for John Porter Simpson. The Simpson Ranch was located about three miles east of Dubois on Jakey's Fork of the Wind River. Growing up in Circleville, Utah, Butch learned how to punch cows and work horses. 13.) At Telluride, Colorado, he helped to train and race horses. 14.) He was considered to be a top hand by anyone who hired him.

He was very fond of John Porter Simpson's wife Margaret who "possessed a knowledge of simple medicines and herbs." He traveled all around the Dubois area on horseback delivering Margaret's home-made remedies. 15.) When an influenza epidemic broke out, Butch rode to Lander to get medicine for the children. 16.) It is no wonder that people in rural communities liked him and helped to conceal his true identity.

John and Margaret Simpson had the highest regard for Butch. Even after John Simpson's brother Will Simpson prosecuting attorney for Fremont County sent Butch to prison for rustling a \$5.00 horse, John and Margaret stood up for Butch. 17.) His prosecution and conviction tore the family apart. For years John and Margaret refused to talk to Will. 18.)

W. H. Boedeker wrote to Lula Parker Betenson to tell her about her brother's visit to Dubois and his father's life-long friendship with Butch:

Dec. 5, 1970

"I am writing this letter to tell you of the fond friendship that was between my father H. E. Boedeker and your brother Butch Cassidy. And it lasted in till Butch came back to Dubois and Lander in 1929."

"In 1929 when I was running the old Frontier Cafe in Dubois, Wyo. Butch Cassidy and two young fellows came in the cafe and had T-bones. And Butch talked to me for hours about the old timers around Lander... Later he asked me if (my father) Hank Boedeker was still alive and I told him that he was still marshall in Lander at that time. I also remember one time Butch was hid out on Weggins Fork (Wiggins Fork of the Wind River) my father packed him some grub..." 19.)

It's interesting that Butch was best friends with a law man and that the Marshall "packed him some grub" when he was hiding from the law. Based on the son's letter it appears that Butch met up with his old friend once he got to Lander.

W. H. Boedeker (the Marshall's son) continues:

"Butch Cassidy had come back to Wyoming to try to find a cash (cache) they had buried up on the old Washaki trail." 20.)

Leaving Dubois, Butch headed east. The road (present-day Highway 287) follows the Wind River down through the foothills of the Gros Ventre Mountains. Once on the open plains it runs parallel to the Wind River Mountains. This vast range extends to the east for over 100 miles. Bands of pronghorn antelope dotted the Wyoming prairie while bald and golden eagles soared overhead. The majestic scenery and wildlife were not wasted on Butch. He loved wildlife 21.) and the seemingly endless expanses of wide-open country. 22.) In his younger days he made this same trip on horseback when he went to Lander to get medicine for the children in Dubois. It would have been an easy day's drive in the Model A.

In an interview with the staff at the Casper Star Tribune dated Oct. 16, 1968, Bill Marion told how Butch Cassidy owned the old Quien Sabe Ranch (in the Lander area) around 1893. The Wild Bunch was known to have holed up there. In 1966 Mr. Marion and his son-in-law Dr. L. E. McGonigle took a metal detector out to the Quien Sabe Ranch. They found nothing at the ranch house, but on Hoodoo Creek about a mile from the house "the metal detector howled". They dug up three or four broken mason jars. The only metal present were the mason jar lids. Mr. Marion stated, "I am positive that is where Old Butch had a cache." 23.)

There is not enough evidence to prove that Butch Cassidy recovered a cache at the Quien Sabe Ranch. What we do know is the following: He returned to the United States from South America, and in 1925 he visited his family in Circleville, Utah. In 1929 he traveled through Jackson Hole to Dubois and proceeded on to Lander. On the trip he confided with a few friends that the explicit reason for making the trip was to find a cache over near Lander. He only told a few people about why he was making the trip, but the rumor spread to others such as Bert Charter's ranch hands. The fact that the broken mason jars were found on a ranch once owned by Cassidy does lend some credibility to the idea that Butch could have gone to the Quien Sabe Ranch and that he could have recovered (did recover?) the cache. I'll let you take it from there... Robert LeRoy Parker alias the outlaw Butch Cassidy remains to this day one of the most interesting, colorful and enigmatic individuals in the history of the old west.

4.

Bob Rudd was Director/Curator of the Jackson Hole Museum from 1986 to 1991. When Buddy Boyce told him the story of Butch Cassidy's trip to Jackson Hole, Mr. Rudd realized that the information was important and previously undocumented Cassidy lore. It took a number of years before he was able to put it in writing.

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End Notes:

1. Betenson, L. P. Butch Cassidy, My Brother as told to Dora Flack. Brigham Young University Press Provo, Utah (1975). pp 169, 184 and 187.

The information about how her brother returns to the United States is based on a conversation with Butch at the Parker family home in Circleville, Utah in 1925. Butch traveling by himself and Sundance and Etta traveling together make their way to Mexico City from South America. Once they are reunited, all three go to see a bull fight. Butch has to leave because he can't stand to see animals being treated cruelly. He tells his family, "I always hated bull fights- couldn't stomach them." (See end nyote 21.) When Etta Place became ill and had to return to the states for medical attention, Sundance and Butch came with her.

2. Hatch, T. The Last Outlaws, Penguin Group (USA)LLC (2014).

Map- Wild Bunch Country, 1889-1901. opposite page xii.

When the Wild Bunch was active, the western states were actually Territories: Wyoming Territory, etc. While it would be more accurate to use Territorial names, the author preferred to use state names: Wyoming, etc. since they are more familiar.

3. Cooke, J. B. South of the Border, A Bantam Book (1989) N.Y. preface page viii.

4. Boyce, Buddy interview by Robert C. Rudd in Jackson, Wyoming, June 23, 1989.

Story telling was an important way of communicating stories and important events in Jackson Hole in the 1890s and the early 1900s. Bob Crisp told Buddy Boyce what happened at the Bert Charter Ranch in 1929. It was Bob Crisp who met Butch Cassidy, shook his hand and talked to him in person. Buddy Boyce heard Bob Crisp tell the story many times. All of the details remained the same. One date on Bert Charter: In 1897 Bert Charter was working for the Reader (horse and cattle company) near Craig, Colorado. Source: (Hatch, T. p 153.)

5. Betenson, L. P. p 84. From Ada Calvert Piper's letter to Lula, no date. Ada's father Kirk Calvert owned a general store near Baggs where Butch and his friends traded.

6. *ibid* pp. 95-96 Robert LeRoy Parker's father was Maximillian Parker. His mother was Annie Campbell Gillies. His brothers included Robert, who died at age one, Eb, Arthur and Mark. In her book Lula is the only sister identified by name. There were a total of 13 children born. At least one died, and six children were unmarried and living at home in 1925 when Butch returned home. Lula does not identify all of them by name. Lula's grandparents were from the Mormon Church of England. They pushed and pulled hand carts to Utah as members of the hand cart companies.

7. *ibid* p 203.

8. Boyce, B. interview. The fact that Butch Cassidy was driving a Model A Ford is an important detail because it helps to establish the year 1929 as the year that Butch was in Wyoming. The production years for the Model A were 1927 through 1930. Bert Charter and his son Boyd Charter claimed that Butch camped on their ranch in Jackson Hole in the summer of 1925. (Hatch, T. page 153.) Since the Model A didn't come out until 1927 and since Butch was driving a Model A, he could not have stayed at the Charter Ranch in 1925. A letter from W. H. Boedeker to Lula Parker Betenson (See end notes 19. and 20.) documents 1929 as the year that Butch was in Dubois, Lander and (we can conclude) Jackson Hole.

9. Rudd, Dr. Clayton G., in frequent conversations with son Robert about Grace and Clayton's honeymoon trip from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Yellowstone and Jackson Hole in the summer of 1932, "...it was dirt roads all the way."

End Notes- continued

10. Betenson. L.P. p. 193.

11. Boyce, B. interview.

12. *ibid* interview. Comment by Robert C. Rudd: When I was the Director of the Jackson Hole Museum, Jackson Hole rancher Jimmy Brown donated Bob Crisp's saddle to the museum. You could tell by examining the shortened stirrup leathers that Bob was a short individual.

13. Betenson, L. P. pp 40 and 41. (Butch) worked for a wrangler, Mike Cassidy, at a neighbor's ranch in Circleville, Utah, and "...was eager to learn all his skills with horses and cattle. It became known later that Mike was an outlaw." From working as a butcher in Rock Springs, Robert LeRoy Parker acquired his outlaw's first name alias, Butch. From his outlaw mentor, Mike Cassidy, Butch acquired a last name alias, Cassidy, and a way of looking at life and other peoples' property.

14. *ibid* pp 54 and 59. "An excellent rider (Butch) was the winning jockey many times."

15. *ibid* pp 175 to 177. Margaret Simpson knew Butch by his boyhood name of Roy Parker. It is almost like there are two completely different identities present here. One is a hard working, liked and respected, community-minded young man (Roy Parker) and two is an already-formed or about-to-be formed criminal personality with a criminal mind set (Butch Cassidy) both in the same individual. It is important to note that Butch worked for the Simpsons just before he goes to prison.

16. Hubbard, Dorothy Redmond interview by Robert C. Rudd in Jackson Hole on January 13, 1990. Dorothy's mother, Ida Simpson Redmond, was John and Margaret Simpson's daughter. Ida Simpson was ten years old when Butch Cassidy went to work for her father. Ida and Dorothy corresponded with Lula Parker Betenson about the Simpson Family and Butch Cassidy. Dorothy worked as a volunteer at the Jackson Hole Museum from about 1988 to 1990 and was a good friend of the author.

17. Betenson, L. P. p 202. Robert LeRoy Parker was sent to the Wyoming Territorial prison in Laramie, Wyoming, on July 15, 1894 at age 27 under the alias George "Butch" Cassidy.

18. Hubbard, D. R. interview Jan, 1990. Dorothy wanted it known just how serious the issue of Butch's prison sentence was between her grandparents John and Margaret Simpson and her grand-uncle the Fremont County prosecutor Will Simpson.

19. Betenson, L.P. p 200. Omitted from the W. H. Boedeker letter in the text is the sentence that Butch roomed with H. E. Hank Boedeker in the Cottage Home Hotel in Lander in the late 80's. This was when they established a bond of friendship that lasted "...until 1929."

20. *ibid* pp 200-201. The W. H. Boedeker letter is a very important document. First, it helps to establish the date 1929 when Butch was in Dubois, Lander and Jackson Hole. Second, W. H. Boedeker states that Butch was after a cash (cache) located on the old Washaki trail. So was the Quien Sabe Ranch located on the old Washakie trail? A work in progress...

21. *ibid*, pp 175 to 177. When he was a young man, Butch rescued a fawn with a broken leg. He splinted the leg and let the fawn go. The easy thing to do would have been to shoot it and put it out of its misery.

22. *ibid* p 3. From a letter to Lula from Edward M. Kirby dated November 20, 1974: "(Butch) was the product of this massive land where man was many things but most of all was free. Without question, Robert LeRoy Parker was a man of the land, a man of the back country."

23. *ibid* p 203.

Bibliography

Books

1. Betenson, Lula Parker, *Butch Cassidy, My Brother*, as told to Dora Flack. Brigham Young University Press. Provo, Utah, 1975.
2. Cooke, John Byrne, *South of the Border*, A Bantam Book, N.Y. 1989.
3. Hatch, Thom, *The Last Outlaws, The Lives and Legends of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, Penguin Group (USA)LLC 2014.

Interviews and a Conversation

1. Boyce, Buddy interview with Robert C. Rudd in Jackson, Wyoming on June 23, 1989. Story telling was an important way of communicating stories and important events in Jackson Hole in the 1890s and the early 1900s. Bob Crisp told Buddy Boyce what happened when Butch Cassidy visited Bert Charter's Ranch in 1929. Bob met Butch Cassidy and talked to him in person. He was also a careful observer. Buddy Boyce heard Bob Crisp retell the same story many times and all of the details remained the same.
2. Hubbard, Dorothy Redmond interview with Robert C. Rudd in Jackson Hole on January 13, 1990. Subject: John Porter Simpson family history as told to Dorothy by her mother Ida Simpson Redmond. Ida Simpson was ten years old when Butch Cassidy came to work for her father on the family ranch. Ida and Dorothy corresponded with Lula Parker Betenson and furnished photographs for her book. They wanted Lula to know that the sentencing of Butch Cassidy tore the family apart and that John and Margaret would not talk to John's brother the Fremont County prosecuting attorney Will Simpson for many years.
3. Rudd, Dr. Clayton G. from conversations with son Robert Rudd about Grace and Clayton's honeymoon trip from Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Yellowstone and Jackson Hole in the summer of 1932, "...it was dirt roads all the way."

Newspaper Article

1. The Casper Star Tribune dated Oct 16, 1968, an article based on an interview with Bill Marion on a trip to the Quien Sabe Ranch with a metal detector that turns up some empty Mason Jars. The article concludes with Mr. Mason's statement, "I am positive this is where Old Butch had a cache."