THE WORLD WAR ONE YEARS 1910-1919

June 2, 1910

L.H. Twyman had borrowed some money from Edwin Simmons in order to build a flying machine. Today, Simmons filed a suit in the Jefferson County Court for the seizure of the "flying machine". Apparently, Twyman was not paying his loan agreement. Sheriff Heater went to Denver this afternoon with Civil process in hand to transport back to Jefferson County an airship. Sheriff Heater was astonished to find a heap of metal with a large propellor on top that, according to Twyman, was supposed to fly. Twyman called it a "helicopter". Sheriff Heater decided to leave the airship in Denver. He posted a sign on the flyhing machine that it was held for the Courts and returned to Golden.

September 11, 1910

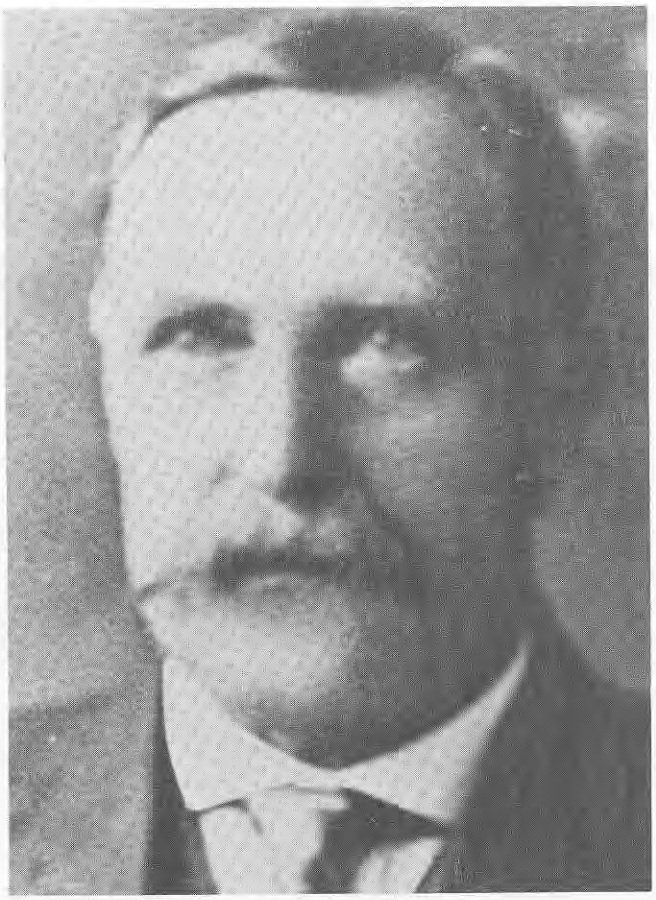
Two months prior to the general election to be held this year, several influential people in Jefferson County spoke out in the local newspapers that Sheriff Heater was using the power of his office for personal gain. The whole issue rested upon the Sheriff's use of free passage on the electric train cars which connected Golden with Denver. The Railroad Company had given Heater a free pass, and some citizens firmly believed that the Sheriff was giving special investigative gifts to the Railroad in lieu of payment. Today the Sheriff went to the newspapers for his rebuttal. He advised that during the last twenty months in Office he had made at least five hundred trips on the electric railroad, carting at least one hundred prisoners and Deputies on business related matters. "I have saved the County over 500 dollars." This last line certainly brought the point in question to his favor.

October 28, 1910

William Hans was renting a room in the home of Dingman Dahon who lived on West Colfax near Garrison Street in Lakewood. Today Dahon ordered Hans to leave the house and the two men began a heated debate regarding the separation of personal property. The argument quickly turned into a fist fight, and the fist fight quickly turned into a fight to the death. Dahon took his rifle and fired three shots at Hans, each shot missing the boarder. Hans, not to be outdone, took a hatchet and hit Dahon over the head twice, inflicting deep and terrible wounds. Hans ran outside screaming for help.

Sheriff Heater caught the next eastbound electric train for Lakewood and arrived in the early afternoon to find the house completely surrounded by curious neighbors. Everyone was afraid to enter the house, including William Hans who stood outside with the curious, waiting for the Sheriff to do something.

Dingman Dahon was still inside the house, armed with his rifle, and hurting bad with two deep wounds to his head. Without hesitation, Sheriff Heater walked up the pathway to the house, opened the front door and stepped inside. The neighbors outside held their breath awaiting the inevitable gunshots. In a few moments the Sheriff appeared in the doorway with a subdued, but bloodied, Dingman Dahon. William Hans could not believe that the Sheriff escaped with his life, and his consternation was even more profound when Sheriff Heater grabbed him from the crowd and placed him under arrest. All three men took the westbound electric train back to Golden.



Sheriff Joseph Dennis

November 9, 1910 Tuesday

Joseph Dennis was born in Chasewater County, Cornwall, England in 1862. He came to America with his father in 1867 and settled in Pennsylvania. In 1879 Dennis moved his entire family to Golden. Joe Dennis worked a short time in the mines around Golden, and then became a grocery clerk for Smith Grocery (now Wood's Mortuary) for the next ten years. In 1891 Joe Dennis entered the livery business at the stables on 12th

Street (where the Post Office is located) and soon joined up with Carlos Lake in the horse business. Lake and Dennis opened their own livery on Jackson Street between 12th and 13th Streets, and when Carlos Lake sold out in 1898, Sam Cunningham (Allen Heater's Undersheriff in 1909) joined Dennis in the prospering business. In 1890 Joe Dennis served as Golden Alderman, and kept this office for the next five years. When Carlos Lake was elected Sheriff in 1898, Dennis immediately joined his old business partner and was appointed Deputy Sheriff. Dennis served as a Deputy for the next nine years, and then in 1907 he was appointed Undersheriff for Sheriff Casper Whipple. Dennis took a two year leave when Allen Heater was Sheriff with the intent on campaigning for the office himself.

Today the general elections were held. The Democratic Party landed a victory in nearly all governmental contests, except for the office of Sheriff. Joseph Dennis defeated Allen Heater by a slim margin of fifty two votes. Out of a total of twenty seven precincts the race for Sheriff could not be decided on until the votes from the Manhatten precinct were counted. Since Dennis lived in that area of Lakewood, the voters pushed him over the top for the victory. The other Democratic victories meant very little now for Allen Heater.

February 23, 1911

Today, Sheriff Joe Dennis made all the prisoners in the Jefferson County Jail whitewash, paint, and clean up their jail cells. Meanwhile the Board of County Commissioners agreed to replace all the old jail cots with new sleeping cots.

August 2, 1912

Twenty miles south of Golden on the South Platte River sat a hotel that served alcohol and put stage passengers up for the night. (Today the location is covered by Chatfield Reservoir) George Bellow, a stage driver and a heavy drinker, had a grudge against the hotel, its guests, its bartender, its owners, and summarily all the people who lived along the South Platte River. Today, just as the sun was setting, Bellow appeared at the hotel and demanded a drink of whiskey from the bartender, Mrs. Charles Walbrecht. Charles Walbrecht owned the hotel. Mrs. Walbrecht knew Bellow as an unreliable stage driver and an habitual drunkard and naturally refused the man his request. Bellow pulled out a .44 calibre pistol and fired, the bullet slicing across Mrs. Walbrecht's face and burying into the floor. In an instant Bellow dashed from the bar and into the diningroom. Ethel Cathey, the waitress, scrambled for cover as Bellow fired several bullets at her, missing her each time.

At a table in the dining room eating supper were Mr. and Mrs. Harry Berman, California tourists; J.A. Paine, the stage station agent and telegraph operator for the hotel; and James McWhorter, a Kansas City pool hall proprieter. In the doorway was a bleeding Mrs. Walbrecht screaming for her guests to run for cover. Bellow fired once again at Mrs. Walbrecht she screamed and covered her face with her blood smeared hands. The bullets struck Mrs. Walbrecht in both of her arms. She fell to the floor, crawling on her hands and knees around a table toward the rear door.

Bellow wheeled about and opened fire on the hotel's guests.

James McWhorter took a bullet in his elbow as he was rising from the table.

Bellow fired three more rounds at the dinner table. Wood splinters and powder smoke filled the air. Mr. and Mrs. Berman dashed for the back door and made it safely outside. J.A. Paine, the stage line operator, was close behind the Berman family and ran as fast as he could for the telegraph shed.

Mrs. Walbrecht made it through the back door ahead of her terror stricken guests and crawled into a nearby hay field. Bellow reloaded two .44 calibre pistols and followed the crowd through the door. Bellow saw Mrs. Walbrecht and fired several bullets after her. A bullet tore a gaping hole in Mrs. Walbrecht's left thigh. She rolled onto her back and lay still. Bellow turned his attention now to the hotel guests who were huddled in a small group at the rear door of the hotel.

The Bermans and J.A. Paine scattered in all directions. Bellow was more familiar with Paine so he followed the telegraph operator to the shed. Slamming and locking the shed door behind him, Paine feverishly sent off a quick signal over the wires to Miss Jardine at Pine Grove. Unknown to Paine, the Pine Grove operator heard a distress signal but not the message. Miss Jardin sent off another quick message to Golden and to the County Sheriff.

Bellow succeeded in smashing down the flimsy door to the telegraph shed and placed the muzzle of one of his guns to the back of Paine's head and said, "I'll blow Hell out of you if you call for help or even touch those keys!" Paine was terrified. Bellow backed out of the shed leaving a shocked and terror stricken telegraph operator standing alone, unable to touch the keys even if he had the nerve to do so.

Bellow located a gallon of gasoline and spashed its contents over the back wall of the hotel. After the match was struck, the fire immediately leaped up the wooden walls of the hotel and rippled through the wooden shingles. Guarding the burning building, lest someone would venture forward with a bucket of water, Bellow waited until the hotel was fully consumed with fire, and then turned his mad purpose once again to the survivors of his previous attacks. None were found. Miss Cathey, the waitress, and the guests from California had escaped across the bridge that spanned the South Platte and were hiding in a tall weed patch.

Bellow circled the burning hotel searching for anyone. Mrs. Walbrecht was heard faintly calling for help, but Bellow was unable to locate her in the unharvested hay field. McWhorter groaning from the hole in his elbow lay near Mrs. Walbrecht in the hay field. Bellow was unable to find him as well. Bellow yelled a few threats, which were heard by all the survivors, ran across the hay field in a headlong dash and came to his own cabin suckng for air in his smoke filled lungs.

Bellow saddled one of his stage animals, fired three more pistol shots in the direction of the burning hotel a quarter of a mile to the north, and spurred his mount southward.

Miss Cathey and the Berman family left their place of concealment and carried the wounded Mrs. Walbrecht and Mr.

McWhorter to a tool house left untouched by the fire. Meanwhile, Paine had regained his courage and sent a telegraph message to Golden and another message to the Sheriff's Office in Arapahoe County.

By the end of the day, Undersheriff Sam Hess and Deputy Sheriff Ed Dennis (the Sheriff's son) were heading south overland toward Sedalia where Bellow had taken the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to La Junta, Colorado.

August 4, 1911 Sunday

This morning Undersheriff Hess and Deputy Ed Dennis located George Bellow in La Junta, Colorado. When the discovery was made, a gun battle erupted on main street of the samll town. The lawmen and Bellow squared off in the middle of town for the last fight, when, much to the astonishment of the Jefferson County lawmen, Bellow stepped out into the open, put his .44 calibre pistol to his head and pulled the trigger.

March 24, 1913 Monday

Today the Jefferson County Board of Commissioners canvassed bids for a new Jefferson County Jail and Sheriff's residence. The bid was finally given to Lyon and Axtell of Golden for a figure of $14,652.00. The Pauley Iron Works would construct the interior of the new Jail for a sum of $7,274.00. Both contracts specified a completion date of September of 1913.

The site selected for the new justice complex was directly adjacent and south of the present Courthouse. A section for females, a separate section for adult males, and yet another section for juveniles was planned. The Sheriff's residence was to be built directly in front of the new Jail. The news media had, in the past, complained to the Board of County Commissioners of the non availability of Sheriff Dennis, so now, the Sheriff would live at the Jail in order to give the public better access to their elected official.

Sheriff's Office, Residence, and Jail built in 1913. Located next to the 1878 Courthouse at 16th and Washington Avenue.

December 1, 1913

Today Sheriff Joseph Dennis moved himself and his family into the new Sheriff's residence. The old Jail in the basement of the Courthouse was to get remodeled and an abstract company was to move in. The janitor of the Courthouse, Gary Kerr, was to live in a small room in the basement of the Courthouse. For Gary Kerr, his rise from the janitor's closet in the basement of the Courthouse to the residence across the parkng lot would take place in just seven years. Gary Kerr would be elected Sheriff in the Fall of 1920.

December 31, 1913

Today Sheriff Dennis ordered all slot machines in Jefferson County closed down.

August 25, 1914

Jack O'Ryan and Charles Revell were in the new Jefferson County Jail, being held for theft. Somehow they received a small file, a razor, and a small piece of metal in which to pull loose the mortar on the brick wall enclosing them in and escape. Sheriff Dennis suffered through his and the new Jail's first jail break.

January 14, 1915

Last November Joe Dennis soundly defeated his Democratic challenger, C.P. Hoyt, to remain in office as Jefferson County Sheriff. Today, Sheriff Dennis named his Son, Orville, as his Undersheriff. Sheriff Dennis went on to announce as his Deputies, Ed Dennis (his other son), R.G. Nixon, William Wagenback, George Brood, Oscar Johnson, and Lucian Ralston.

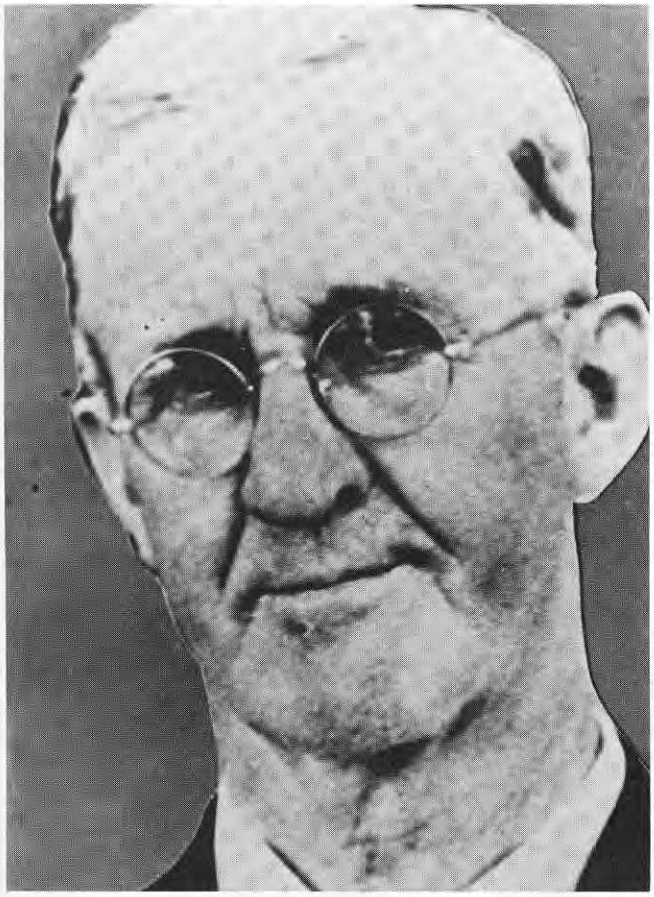
January 1, 1916

Today the Federal Prohibition Law went into effect. Sheriff Dennis wasted no time and arrested Frank Daniels at his home in Lakeside for selling homemade booze.

October 5, 1916

Today Batterys B and C of Colorado were transfered to the Mexican Border to begin America's involvement in World War I.

Undersheriff Orville Dennis was returning from New Orleans from an extradition process involving Samuel W. Berry, wanted in Jefferson County for horse stealing. Near Guthrie, Oklahoma, the Undersheriff allowed Berry to go unescorted to the bathroom and as the train passed a large swamp, the fugitive lifted the bathroom window and leaped to his freedom. The Oklahoma authorities assured the Undersheriff that the pursuit of Berry was unnecessary since the snakes and the bog holes would certainly terminate the horse thief. Orville Dennis returned to Golden alone.



Sheriff Al Jones

November 7, 1916 Tuesday

The City of Golden offered Joseph Dennis the job as Chief of Police, and decided to take the job when today Albert E. Jones was elected the next Sheriff of Jefferson County.

January 9, 1917 Tuesday

The tall, lean, and far sighted Sheriff Albert Jones appointed Gary Kerr as his Undersheriff today. Also, James Mencimer and Clyde Hocking were named as additional Deputy Sheriffs.

May 15, 1917

Sheriff Albert E. Jones acquired the responsibility of setting up places throughout Jefferson County where all young men between the ages of 21 and 30 were to register for the military. Today, Sheriff Jones announced that he would register no less than 1,600 young County men for the war effort.

June 5, 1917

Today Sheriff Albert Jones received orders from the Selective War Service Board to record and account for all available men in Jefferson County to serve in the military. Sheriff Jones also took over the job of hunting down any man who was avoiding the draft or registration for the draft.

November 11, 1918 Monday

George W. Parfet first received the news via the telephone from a friend that today Germany surrendered. Parfet immediately called Golden Alderman C.W. Owens who quickly passed the news onto Sheriff Al Jones.

Fred Robinson fired a canon.

J.H. Petrie rang the fire house bell.

Flags were raised all over the County.

Vernon Downing, elected Jefferson County Sheriff in 1934, as seen in his World War One uniform.