THE ROARING TWENTIES
1920 - 1929

December 13, 1920 Friday

Sheriff Albert E. Jones and Undersheriff Gary Kerr, along with Federal Agents, raided the farm of John Slam near Morrison, capturing the owner and his still of forty gallons of whiskey. The still was smashed by the Revenuers.

December 30, 1920 Monday

Frank Garramone of Golden and Frank Riley of Fairmount were arrested today after Sheriff Jones raided their stills. Garramone was sentenced to sixty days in jail and Riley was fined one hundred dollars.

Sheriff Gary Kerr

January 10, 1921 Friday

Today Gary Kerr took over the office of Sheriff from Albert E. Jones. Last November, Jones did not try for re-election. The Decocratic Party submitted nine candidates for Sheriff in the primary held on September 14, 1920, and Kerr ran against Orville Dennis in the same primary on the Republican ticket defeating the son of Joseph Dennis by nearly four hundred votes. In the general election, Kerr defeated H.T. Curry by over sixteen hundred votes. This morning Sheriff Kerr announced that his Undersheriff was Charles Duncan and his Deputies would be Clyde Hocking, George Kane, Dorsey Trew, Bert Hill, Walter Overcamp, Farrington, Senter, and Harness.

January 15, 1921 Wednesday

Today Sheriff Gary Kerr went to Arvada to investigate citizen complaints regarding a local "massage parlor". The Sheriff visited a short while with the owner of the establishment and convinced him that such a business would do better located elsewhere. The owner agreed.

After leaving Arvada, Sheriff Kerr picked up Deputy James Mencimer, newly appointed for the Inter-Canyon area, and the two law men raided a still in the canyon, arresting three men and confiscating twenty barrels of beer.

May 5, 1921

At a ranch near Morrison, three men had constructed an elaborate moonshining system. A special room had been built in the hayloft of the barn, and alfalfa piled high to conceal it. A small tunnel was dug through the alfalfa into the room which contained a one hundred and fifty gallon capacity still. Electric wires had been strung along the entrance to the barn to signal the approach of anyone coming close to the special room. Sheriff Kerr had figured out the alarm system, and with Deputy Mencimer, captured the still, arrested the three ranchers, and dumped thirty two barrels of beer and forty five gallons of whiskey.

January 1, 1922

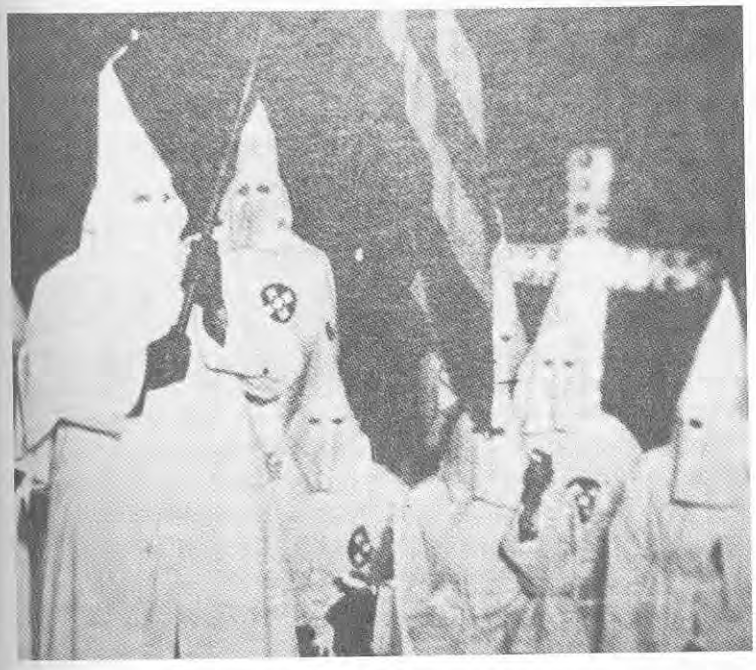
Today Sheriff Kerr asked the Board of County Commissioners to place the Undersheriff on a fee basis for his money instead of a salary. It was common knowledge among Sheriffs that receiving your money from serving civil process, making arrests, or time spent in court was more beneficial to the lawman than receiving a straight salary. The County Commissioners agreed and placed Undersheriff Olson (newly appointed) on a fee basis.

March 1, 1922

Today the Board of County Commissioners decided to remove Undersheriff Olson from the fee basis of payment and resume his designated salary of $500.00 a year. The Commissioners felt that any lawman who was paid on a fee basis had the tendency to turn toward corruption, or exceptional violence, or a lawman would perform only those fee services he considered worth his time and disregard those services he considered less profitable.

April 14, 1922 Good Friday

Just before midnight sixty men gathered just south of Golden (where Heritage Square is now) to commemorate the cruxifiction of Christ. The spokesman of this group, a preacher from Denver, before the light of sixty blazing torches, read the proclamation introducing themselves to the people of Jefferson County . . . ." Moral, law abiding people, white or black, male or female, of whatever religious faith, having nothing to fear from our Klan. But we do warn the immoral, the undesirable! We are loyal Americans and wish to be known that the Ku Klux Klan stands as constituted and operated for law enforcement only through the channels provided by our National, State, and local governments; breach of which by any Klansman is a violation of his sacred obligation and forfeiture of his membership . . . ."



The Ku Klux Klan in Golden, Good Friday, 1922.

September 27, 1923

A large wooden cross was erected atop Castle Rock overlooking Golden. Six white robed Klansmen, on horseback, patrolled the base of Castle Rock, keeping traffic flowing properly and discouraging any curiousity seekers from going up to the summit to see what was happening. Just after dark, the cross was set afire, illuminating the large hooded assembly. Two tents had been erected nearby where membership initiations were now being conducted.

June 19, 1924

A week ago, a hiker found the remains of a headless corpse three miles west of Golden up Golden Gate Canyon. Sheriff Kerr and Coroner Woods responded to the scene and began an investigation into what appeared to be a murder. Coroner Woods estimated the time of death to be at least two years ago, due to the condition of the body. Nearby, Sheriff Kerr found an old hat, and a bullet hole through the hat band, but could not find the skull to assist him in the identification. That afternoon, Sheriff Kerr notified all law enforcement agencies in western United States to check their records for missing persons matching the meager description he had to offer.

Today the Sheriff of York County, Nebraska arrived in town to inquire into the identity of this headless corpse. Apparently, the Sheriff was missing one of his Deputies. His name was John Afferbach and was assigned two years ago, just prior to his disappearance, to transport a prisoner named Harry Randolph from Montana back to Nebraska. When the Deputy failed to return to York County, a search was begun along the tracks of the railroad that snaked across the plains between the two States, but he was never found. In June of 1923, one year ago, Harry Randolph was sighted in Lincoln, Nebraska by law enforcement authorities and the fugitive was killed in a gun battle. For the Sheriff of York County, this headless corpse was a very long shot in the discovery of his missing law man.

Sheriff Kerr took the York County Sheriff to Wood's Mortuary (where it stands today) and showed him the remains, including the clothes and the bullet scarred hat, of the dead person. Immediately the visitor from Nebraska recognized the hat as John Afferbach's.

This afternoon the Sheriff of York County made preparations to return the body of John Afferbach back to Nebraska for burial. It was now evident that Harry Randolph had somehow overpowered Afferbach, forced him south into Jefferson County, and shot him in the head just west of Golden, Colorado. In essence, Afferbach became the first law man to die in the line of duty in Jefferson County, Colorado.

November 4, 1924 Tuesday

Today the grandson of James M. Johnson, the fifth Sheriff of Jefferson County, and the son of Jonas M. Johnson, the twelfth Sheriff, was elected the twenty fifth man to serve as Sheriff of this County. Walter H. Johnson, a Democrat, defeated incumbent Gary Kerr by over one thousand votes. Walter Johnson was born on his family's ranch (near Camp George West) in 1886. He graduated from Golden Senior High School in 1904 and enrolled in the Colorado School of Mines in 1905 where he stayed for two years. In 1909, Johnson enrolled and graduated from the University of Colorado. In 1912 Johnson took over the family cattle business and remained thus employed until today when he was elected Sheriff.

January 1, 1925

Today Gary Kerr left the Sheriff's residence and moved into another home at 14th Street and Maple in Golden. Sheriff Walter Johnson moved into his new home on Washington Avenue. This morning, Johnson announced that O.L. Hall would serve as his Undersheriff and would basically keep those Deputy Sheriffs who served the last two years for Gary Kerr, which brought his total Departmental strength to eleven personnel.

May 2, 1925

This morning a large white-brown plume of smoke could be seen north of Golden in the foothills. The Golden Fire Department headed up Coal Creek Canyon toward Carter Lake where the smoke cloud was increasing in size. Sheriff Johnson, with Undersheriff Hall and several Deputies followed the Fire Department into the canyon. The fire had now burst into the trees, and was leaping from tree to tree southbound through the canyon. Nearby, a cabin was in danger of being consumed in the fire, but was spared when the wind shifted.

By early afternoon the large fire was controlled by the Fire Department and Sheriff Johnson began to look for the cause of the fire. In the middle of the charred timber, near the banks of the Lake, Johnson located the remnants of a moonshine factory. It became apparent that someone was operatng this large still when it suddenly exploded causing recent forest fire. The Sheriff was not surprised to find this still since he had been searching Coal Creek for a reported moonshine operation for several months.

Sheriff Johnson went to the cabin which was nearly burned to the ground and found the wives of D.L. Wood and L.K. Anderson inside. Inside the cabin Johnson found evidence of illegal liquor distribution and placed the two women under arrest. The husbands were not around, so while the Fire Department mopped up the hot spots in the trees outside, Sheriff Johnson settled down to wait in the cabin for the return of the two moonshiners.

May 3, 1925 5:00 am

Ray Carter opened the door of D.L. Wood's cabin in Coal Creek Canyon and was immediately arrested by Sheriff Johnson for illigal distribution of moonshine.

At daybreak Deputy Robinson went to Denver to the residence of Wood and found the man in a very hostile and violent mood. Wood smacked the Deputy in the eye, not causing any serious harm, and screamed, "I'll clean out the damned Sheriff's Office!" Wood was promptly arrested for illigal moonshining and assault and brought back to the Jefferson County Jail.

August 8, 1925 Saturday Night

Tonight every available Deputy Sheriff and Arvada constable was directing traffic around Wadsworth and Ralston Road in order to allow the largest gathering of people, 10,000 was the estimate, to hold a parade through the downtown streets of this City. A four hour parade of 10,000 women marched down Wadsworth in support of the convention of male members of the Ku Klux Klan. These women wanted to become active members in this organiation. Robed, but unmasked, the mass of women marched with arms folded, and raised left palms in the air in unison to greet the large assemblage of spectators.

February 26, 1926 Sunday

Today the Governor of Colorado declared as a tribute to lawmen throughout the State and was christened, "Law Enforcement Sunday". The Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist Churches of Golden pooled their resources and acquired a guest speaker to address the congregations on the evils of liquor and the laws of prohibition.

November 2, 1926 Tuesday

Last week Sheriff Johnson announced that he had returned to the wallets of the taxpayers in Jefferson County over $12,000.00 worth of fines levied against illegal moonshiners in 1925 alone. Also in 1925 Sheriff Johnson cared for and maintained a record 291 prisoners in the Jail, which, naturally, caused his meal and housing budget to increase accordingly.

Today the voters of Jefferson County demonstrated their support for Johnson and re-elected him to another two year term as Sheriff.

December 5, 1926 Sunday Night

Deputy Sheriffs Dorsey Trew and Dave Temple arrived at the Pleasant View home of Albert Reesler to quell a fight that had erupted over a female. Reesler and his friend dragged Edith Astor, who rumor had it was the heir to the fortune of John Jacob Astor who went down with the Titanic, to the ground outside the home and began to beat her senseless. Another female, Jean Kargelon tried to intervene and was slashed across the arm by a knife weilded by Reesler's friend, F.E. Sprague.

Kargelon staggered into the drive way just as the two Deputy Sheriffs arrived and she began to claw at the door handle to Dorsey Trew's car. Sprague turned his knife on the two Deputies who confronted him in the yard. Sprague lunged once again for Trew and the blade sunk deep into the Deputy's chest.

Deputy Temple shot Sprague and quickly brought the situation under control. Trew was taken to a hospital. He survived the attack.

April 5, 1928

Today Sheriff Johnson endorsed and instituted in the Jefferson County Jail the procedure of fingerprinting and photographing each prisoner for identification purposes. This information was to be sent by telegram to the newly formed Colorado State Bureau of Identification and Investigation directed by Jefferson County District Attorney, Joel Stone.

August 9, 1928 Thursday Night

Just after dinner, Sheriff Johnson, accompanied by his young son, Bobbie, walked down the cell corridor locking down the cells for the night. Just behind a lever case, which housed the cell opening automations, was standing Thomas Morgan with a pipe in his hand. As Johnson passed the metal caseing, Morgan smashed the pipe down atop the Sheriff's head. Once, twice, three times the pipe struck Johnson until he slumped to the floor.

Sheriff Walter H. Johnson

Morgan slid into the exterior hallway as Johnson crawled to the lever case and before losing consciousness pulled the automatic lever sucessfully closing the jail cell doors.

Bobbie Johnson who had witnessed the beating ran to the porch steps leading into the Jail from the parking area and yelled, "Help, they're killing my Daddy!"

Neighbors heard the young boy and ran to the Jail. Sheriff Johnson, bleeding badly from several head wounds, was already on the telephone notifying his Deputies of the escape.

Sheriff's Deputies set up road blocks in an attempt to catch Morgan before he slipped into Lakewood. Morgan had sneaked through the bushes along 44th Avenue, slipping past a Golden City Constable and ran east along the river. By late afternoon the fugitive was heading east on Colfax, through Lakewood, driving a stolen Dodge.

October 17, 1928 Wednesday

On Friday, August 10th, Law enforcement officials spotted fugitive, Thomas Morgan, passing through the Colorado town of Strasberg, and that night he was seen in Holdridge, Nebraska driving a Chrysler.

Saturday afternoon, the 11th of August, Morgan was seen in a Studebaker in Hastings, Nebraska. That night he was seen in Iowa in a Buick.

Sunday morning the 12th of August Morgan crossed the southern border of Minnesota in a Buick. That afternoon Morgan dumped his stolen Buick in Independence, Kansas and ripped off a Ford. That night he robbed a store in Glencoe, Minnesota, and dumped his stolen Kansas Ford.

Monday morning, the 13th, Morgan was found in Criston, Iowa. A special agent of the Burlington Railroad recognized the man from a wanted poster and grabbed Morgan before he could steal another car and leave town.

This morning, Deputy Trew, long since recovered from the knife attack, left Iowa with Thomas Morgan securely chained and shacked. In two days Morgan would be back in his old jail cell in Golden, Colorado.

April 17, 1929 Thursday

Today the Federal Grand Jury, in session in Denver, indicted Sheriff Walter Johnson for conspiracy to violate the prohibition amendment. Charles E. Works, assistant United States Attorney, charged the Sheriff with accepting money from bootleggers in Park and Jefferson Counties.

April 18, 1929 Friday

This morning, Sheriff Johnson turned himself into the custody of the Federal authorities and presented a bond for his own release. Sheriff Johnson denied the charges pressed against him, but the shock of such allegations were very hard to bear.

May 6, 1929 Monday

Deputy Sheriff Clyde Hocking, first appointed by Albert Jones in 1918, this morning turned himself into the custody of the United States Marshal after the Federal Grand Jury indicted him for conspiracy to violate prohibition laws. He was released on a $1,000.00 bond after pleading not guilty.

May 16, 1929

Joseph Clark, a known Denver bootlegger, was found murdered just northeast of Semper (Westminster) in Jefferson County. William Scott, a ditch rider found the corpse and called Sheriff Johnson to investigate. No clues to the murder were ever found by the Sheriff's investigators. That afternoon the news media discovered that the murdered man was soon to serve as State's witness against Sheriff Johnson and Clyde Hocking on their Federal indictments.