

Outlaw haunts execution site

United Press International
SAN DIEGO — Yankee Jim got around.

They named a town for him in Northern California where he found gold. They hanged him in Southern California for trying to steal a schooner out of San Diego harbor.

And some people say the world has not heard the last of Yankee Jim.

Now he is said to haunt the spot where he died, tromping across the floor of a house built on his execution site, angry because the hangman did a sloppy job.

What little historical information is available about James "Yankee Jim" Robinson indicates the man who roamed the foothills east of Sacramento during the Gold Rush is the same man who died at the business end of a noose in San Diego in 1852.

Historical marker No. 65 stands in front of the Whaley House in San Diego's Old Town. The house, built in the 1860s, was the home of an early California businessman, Thomas Whaley.

Whether Whaley knew it or not, his home apparently was built on the spot where the town's gallows stood some 15 years before.

A story in the San Diego Herald's Aug. 27, 1852, edition reported Yankee Jim had been caught trying to steal the Plutas, a large schooner anchored in San Diego Harbor.

Yankee Jim was found guilty of attempted grand larceny and sentenced to death — ship-stealing in a harbor town apparently was taken as seriously as horse theft elsewhere in Old West.

In 1956 — 104 years later — the Whaley house was established as a historical site and June Reading was given the job of restoring it.

She had heard stories told by

the last resident of the home, Whaley's youngest daughter, Corinne Lillian Whaley, who died in 1953. In her last years, Mrs. Whaley had refused to use the second floor "because there was something up there that bothered her. That's all she would say."

It was three years later when Mrs. Reading heard "the unmistakable sound of footsteps across the floor." When she looked in the room, it was empty.

Mrs. Reading said she and others have heard the footsteps several times over the years. She said she believes it is Yankee Jim and she thinks he has cause for his restlessness.

She said he was pleading for mercy when the hangman kicked the wagon out from under his feet. But the rope was too short for Yankee Jim's 6-2 frame and the fall failed to break his neck. It took him 45 minutes to choke to death.

About 400 miles north — 15 miles northeast of Auburn in Placer County — Historical Marker No. 398 designates the town of Yankee Jim's. Once said to be an important gold mining center, the community is now populated by a handful of residents who recently celebrated the installation of their first street light.

According to an inscription on the marker, gold was discovered by Yankee Jim, "a reputed lawless character," in 1850 and the town came to be known by his name. He was careful to keep his rich mine a secret, according to the History of Placer County that was published in the late 1800s. At some point he disappeared from the region.

In 1852 fire swept the town, destroying nearly half its buildings. It was the same year Yankee Jim was hanged in San Diego.

Doctor says alcoholics can't drink socially

United Press International
CHICAGO — Former alcoholics simply cannot risk trying to be social drinkers even though a few have succeeded, says a physician who treats alcoholics.

"While some day we may be able to offer goals of controlled drinking to selected patients, at our present level of knowledge, we should continue to recommend abstinence as the treatment that offers the best chance of optimal functioning," Brian R. Nagy of the Southern Tier Alcoholism Rehabilitation Service, Elmira, N.Y., wrote in an issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

"Without question, AA has 'saved' more alcoholics than any other treatment, organization or institution," Nagy wrote.

The Rand Corp. in June 1976 issued a report on alcoholism that seemed to imply that alcoholics could return to social drinking, Nagy said. However, he said the Rand report did not say alcoholics could safely return to social drinking.

"Since many alcoholics are apparently going to return to some degree of drinking anyway, and since there is still a sizable group that for whatever reasons has not benefited from other alcoholism treatment or AA, can alcoholics be taught to drink in a more normal fashion, i.e., can they return to social drinking without the adverse consequences?"

"The patient may choose to return to some degree of controlled drinking. If he is able to control his drinking, all will rejoice."

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 Among other criteria, the nominee must be at least a senior with 95 credit hours and graduate no later than Aug. 31, 1979, or he must be a graduate student with one semester and no less than 12 credit hours. Veterinary medicine students are eligible if they become seniors by February 1979.
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