

Site 6: The Dives Pelican Feud and the Murder of Jacob Snider by Jackson Bishop

The flat bottom of the gulch to your left (Cherokee gulch) is known as Pelican flats. As mentioned in the materials related to Site 4, there was a feud between the owners of the Dives and Pelican mines which resulted in the murder of one of the owners of the Pelican, Jacob Snider, May 20, 1875, by Jackson Bishop, a lessee on a portion of the Dives. After shooting Snider in Georgetown, Bishop came up this way, convinced an individual at the Denver Mine (further up the road) to make him a meal, then walked back along the road to somewhere in this vicinity where he perched behind a rock shooting at the men at the Pelican Boardinghouse below. The tale is as follows:

The owners and lessees of both the Pelican and Dives mines had been in court almost from the beginning. Things became more intense in April 1875 as explained by author Liston E. Leyendecker in his monograph: "The Pelican Dives Feud; A Study in Frustration and Terror," Essays and Monographs in Colorado History, Colorado Historical Society, 1985, Number 1:

"...on April 17, 1875, Judge Amherst W. Stone issued an injunction ordering McAfee [one of the lessees of the Pelican] to cease all operations in that portion of the Dives Lode described as Shaft Number One East and all the working from or connected with that shaft. At the same time that the injunction was issued, [John] McMurdy's lawyers [McMurdy was an owner of the Dives] stated that they requested it as part of a suit in ejectment that they planned to institute against McAfee during the June 1875 court term.

"Though the forces of law were at work, however, they did not operate swiftly enough for Bishop, who was restrained because of the main lawsuit from mining the disputed property. During May 1875, as the tension between the Pelican and Dives factions mounted in their dispute over the seized ground, Jackson Bishop's frustration over his own argued claim reached a peak. On May 20, when Sheriff Baily assembled his posse to deliver Judge Stone's injunction against the Pelican force, Bishop requested that he be deputized to go along. Baily refused him because of his [known to be violent] character. Nevertheless, Bishop accompanied the posse and observed the fruitless negotiations between the acting sheriff and the Pelican miners. When he learned that Judge Stone's writ could not—or would not—be served that morning, he became enraged. 'There appears to be no law for me,' he said to Baily, 'and I will get law for myself.'

"The lawman tried to calm Bishop, who rode part of the way back to Georgetown in his company. Then stopping a short distance outside of town, Bishop flourished his revolver and threatened several

people he met on the road. John Fillius, who was unarmed, received the full intimidating treatment. Bishop threatened to shoot him, forced him to dismount, and made him plead for his life before allowing him to continue on his way. Fillius, who had no connection with the Pelican Mine, was harassed only because he sympathized with that faction. Others who saw Bishop at this time said that he was wrought up to a frenzy short of insanity. Except to get out of his way, however, no one paid much attention to him, for during this time of lingering tension, tempers were likely to flare.

“Shortly before 1:00 p.m., Bishop also accosted Jacob Snider, with whom he had been on bad terms for several years because of a dispute over the Good Hope Lode. Snider, having arrived in Georgetown that morning. . .had sent Henry Teller . . .three separate messages, the last of which reached Central City at 11:20 a.m. That being done, he rented a horse and rode unarmed toward the Pelican where he intended to talk with the miners and to deliver their mail.

“Just after leaving the city limits, he encountered Bishop, and they exchanged a few words. Suddenly Snider wheeled his horse and galloped full speed back into town. Bishop pursued him, drew a Colt Navy revolver, and fired just as they crossed a bridge at the town’s edge. In spite of Bishop’s reputation as a crack shot the bullet passed over Snider’s head.

“Snider rode to Clark’s Livery Stable [vicinity of today’s Ram restaurant] on Alpine [6th] and Rose streets and attempted to enter, but his passage was blocked by a buggy standing just inside the entrance. As he reined his horse, Bishop overtook him. The crazed gunman struck his victim on the back of the head with the butt of his pistol, and the hapless banker fell from his horse. As he lay on the ground, one of his feet remaining in its stirrup, his assailant reversed his weapon and, leaning over in his saddle, shot Snider in the back of the head, killing him instantly. The murderer then turned his horse, gave a whoop (doubtless reminiscent of his days with Quantrill) and loped out of town in the direction of the Dives Mine.

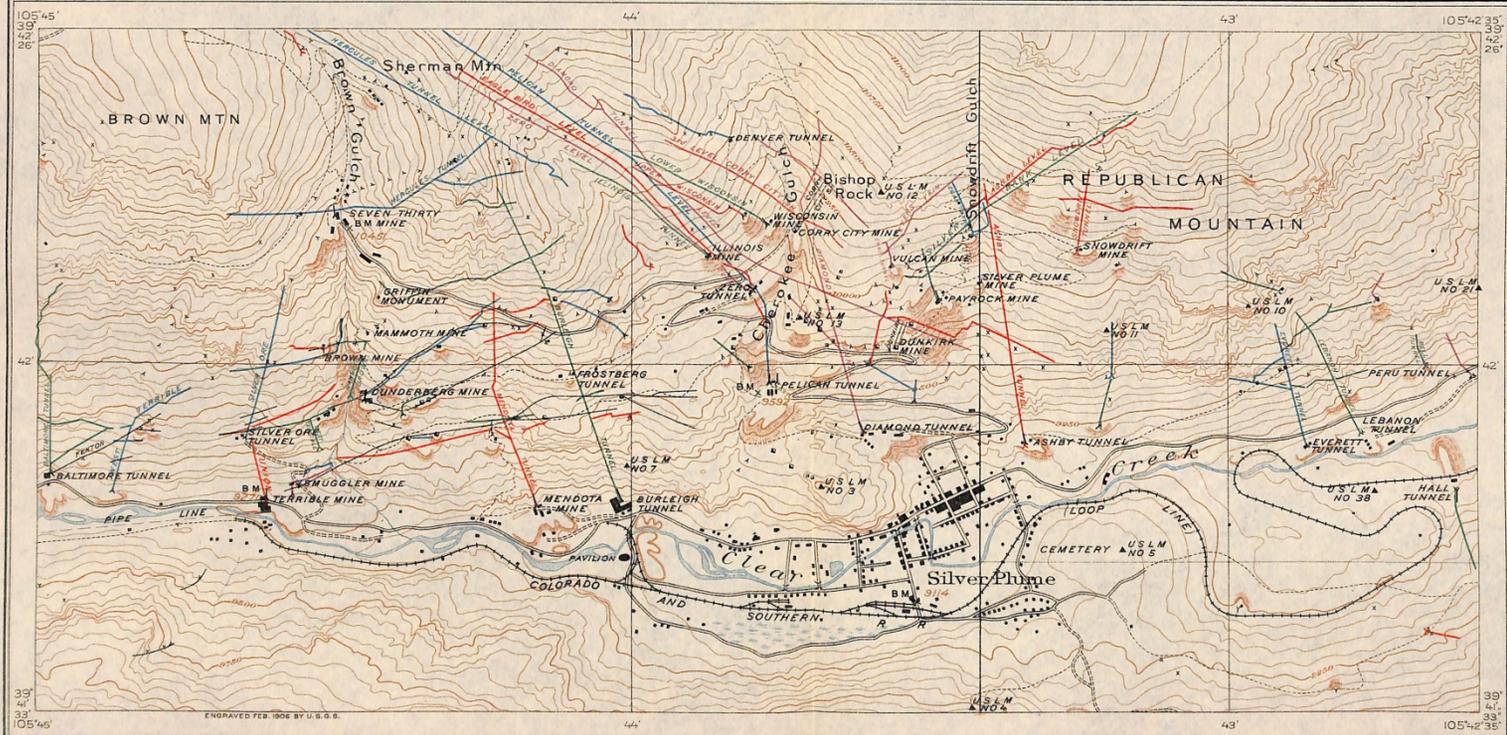
“. . .A short distance from Georgetown, Bishop met a wagon bearing his brother Sam, Deputy Sheriff King, E. Y. Naylor, and another man who were just returning from their unrewarding session at the disputed properties. Bishop trained his pistol on Naylor and commanded the vehicle to halt. The outlaw then stated: ‘I’ve just killed Jake Snider. I shot him. Yes, I shot him through the head.’ He threatened to shoot Naylor, who responded that Bishop had no ‘cause to kill’ him. Jackson replied, ‘No, I think you are a gentleman, and I won’t kill you.’ Deputy King admitted later that he was afraid to arrest Bishop at the time because Jackson’s brother was sitting in the back of the wagon.

“Bishop continued up the road, waving his weapon and harassing other travelers while he told them of his deed. About an hour after killing Snider, he appeared at the Denver Lode about a quarter mile above the Pelican and Dives workings. He informed H. D. Steele, who was at the cabin of the Denver Mining Company, that he wanted something to eat—and added menacingly, ‘I’m going to have it, too.’ According to Steele, Bishop was carrying six revolvers and a repeating, long-range rifle. Steele fixed him a meal—which Bishop insisted on eating outside the cabin—and heard the intruder say that he had ‘killed old Snider’ and was going to kill twenty more men, even if it took him all season. Steele later admitted that he had several opportunities to capture Bishop, but feared retaliatory measures by Bishop’s brothers and friends.’

“The murderer kept a watch on the Pelican Mine while he ate. He observed two men start from the Dives carrying axes, which he mistook for rifles. Concluding that they were out after him, Bishop walked down the open wagon road to meet them. When he was about a hundred yards away, he crouched behind a rock and aimed his rifle at the two men until he realized that they were carrying no visible weapons. Then he climbed on the rock and sat until they had passed by. Afterwards, he continued down the road until he came in sight of the Pelican boarding-house. There he remained until nearly nightfall, firing at Pelican workmen as they moved about inside. Bishop failed to hit any of his targets but came close enough to tear one man’s clothing with his shots. At twilight, Bishop followed two men into a patch of woods but was unable to overtake them. He left the mine at dusk and rode over the hill in the direction of Georgetown.”

Later accounts indicated that Bishop rode over to Empire and disappeared. He was never caught.

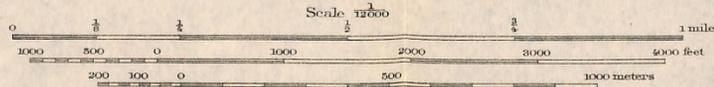
The USGS map for the area shows the location of the Denver tunnel and a site labeled “Bishop Rock.”



E. M. Douglas, Geographer.
Frank Tweedy, in charge of section.
Topography by Pearson Chapman.
Triangulation by Frank Tweedy.
Surveyed in 1904.

MAP OF THE SILVER PLUME MINING DISTRICT, COLORADO
SHOWING SKELETON OF PRINCIPAL UNDERGROUND WORKINGS

Mine workings compiled
from mine maps by H. F. Clarke.



Contour interval 50 feet.
Datum is mean sea level,
1906