

QUEEN ANN BASSETT
ALIAS
ETTA PLACE



By
Doris Karren Burton

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ALIAS
ETTA PLACE

**Queen of the Rustlers or
Queen of the Outlaws?**

By
Doris Karren Burton
With
Dr. Thomas G. Kyle

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Cover Photo: Anna Bassett



GEORGE ALBERT BULLOCK AND BUTCH CASSIDY.
 Courtesy of Bullock's grandson, George Decker. Bullock and Cassidy worked for the Carter Cattle Co. near Fort Bridger, Wyoming, and became close friends, having this photo taken together in Salt Lake City.

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Etta Place
Sundance Kid

Ann Bassett (Inlay)

Uintah County Library
Regional History Center

Bill Webb

QUEEN ANN BASSETT ALIAS ETTA PLACE

By Doris Karren Burton

"Like an antelope she was born running, and like an antelope takes to water, she took to education, knowledge and experience—while moving."¹

"In more ways than one she earned the title (Queen Ann) by which she was known from prairie to ocean and from the land of the Rio Grande to Athabasca. Wherever men rode and cattle ranged, the name of Queen Ann Bassett was acclaimed with admiration and respect."²

INTRODUCTION

I was working in the Outlaw Trail History Center in the Uintah County Library when an old man named Mecham came in looking for information on freighters. He told me his father and grandfather had been freighters who drove freight wagons through Nine Mile Canyon between Vernal and Price, Utah. (This was part of the Outlaw Trail.)

I began showing him pictures and histories of the freighters and discussing Nine Mile Canyon with him. Then the subject of outlaws came up, and he said his folks had told him many stories about them. He stated outlaw Bob Meeks was his father's cousin,

and the Mecham home was once a stop-over for the outlaws who traveled between their havens of Brown's Park, the Strip, and Robber's Roost in the 1890s. He told me about Bob Meeks getting shot and where he was buried. He mentioned Ann and Josie Bassett of Brown's Park sometimes accompanied the outlaws on these stops. Mrs. Mecham especially liked Butch Cassidy, but told them never to bring Harvey Logan back to her home. He said, "My mother told me when Dad saw the picture of Etta Place and Sundance Kid (Harry Longabaugh) taken in New York, he showed it to her with the exclamation: 'This is no Etta Place, this is Annie Bassett.'" ³

Josie claimed to be Butch Cassidy's girl friend at age fifteen while he was in Brown's Park. A jealousy always existed between the sisters, Ann and Josie, but no one seemed to know the exact cause. Mr. Mecham said his father knew the reason. They were both in love with Butch. He told how the two sisters got in a knock down drag out in the Mecham pasture. Butch had to pull the girls apart and reprimanded them for fighting over him. When he told me this story, I could hardly imagine the two girls in such a fight. However, I recently read in the Bassett Women, about just such antics between the girls:

Even in their later years, a quarrel between Josie and Ann could end in fist fights and hair pulling. Ann seemed compelled to attack

Josie's composure, and Josie was too strong-willed to resist Ann's challenges. ⁴

Mecham also said when he was a young boy Butch came to visit them several times after he returned from South America. He told the same story others who knew Butch have told—how generous he was and how he liked children. Mecham's father worried about Butch taking chances coming to the Uinta Basin where many people knew him. Mecham said, "My dad made me promise to never tell, and I dared never to go against my father, but I guess its okay now they are all dead."

Mr. Mecham's story seemed unbelievable at first, and I thought this man had read too many outlaw books. Then I took some books from the shelf to compare Etta and Ann's pictures. He had never seen the books and was exited to read them. I was still skeptical until I started doing research to see if this could possibility be true. I was amazed at what I found. The pictures were most convincing, both had a definite downward slope on the lower lip. I began to get excited!

Then I confided in two friends about the possibility Ann might be Etta: Ed Kirby, of Sharon, Connecticut, National Outlaw Hall of Fame member and author of the book, Saga of Butch Cassidy, was very impressed with my findings, and agreed Ann could very well be Etta. The second confident was OTHA (Outlaw Trail History Association) member, Bill Webb from Kansas. Bill began to help me

research the subject. He traveled to Denver where he found material in the Colorado archives. Everything we found fell right into place.

Bill knew Dr. Thomas G. Kyle of Los Alamos, New Mexico, who works for NASA. Kyle has worked out a computer analyst program where he can compare pictures to determine if they could be the same person. Bill contacted Kyle, and he began working on pictures of Ann Bassett and Etta Place. He reported back to us with an estimate indicating the probability the two pictures were the same person was well over 5000 to one. He stated, "I figure the probability is about twice this, but I want to be conservative and intentionally underestimated the odds that went into calculating this number."

The 1-5000 chance is based only on the photo analysis. The number greatly increases when adding the fact they were in the same areas at the same time and knew the same people. Dr. Kyle makes a statement in his final paragraph determining the two pictures are the same person. (Read Dr. Kyle's complete report, including pictures, beginning on page fifty-one in this book.)

COMPARISONS OF ETTA AND ANN

The following comparisons between Etta Place and Anna Bassett will advance the theory Queen Ann Bassett, Queen of the Rustlers, was Etta Place, Queen of the Outlaws. To prove this, time comparisons, physical comparisons, photos, and

stories will be used to show similarities in these characters. The close association and friendship with the outlaws will also be shown.

PINKERTON RECORDS ON ETTA PLACE:⁵

Nationality: American (Ann Bassett was American)

Occupation: Unknown, Criminal occupation. (Ann was tried as a cattle rustler in Craig, Colorado)

Age: 27 to 28 years (1906). (Ann born 1878, 28 years old in 1906.)

Height: 5ft 4 to 5 inches, (Ann given as 5ft 3 inches.⁶ Shoes could account for this difference, Pinkerton files were not always accurate.)

Weight: 110 to 115 lbs. (Ann's weight given as 115.)⁷

Build: Medium (fits Ann)

Complexion: Medium Dark (fits Ann)

Remarks: Wears hair high on top of head in a roll from forehead. (Ann generally wore her hair in this fashion.)

Eyes: blue or gray, (Ann's eyes were gray.)⁸

Etta Place was a fairly late addition to the gang's female hangers-on. She did not fit the pattern of the typical outlaw's moll, starting with her classic good looks.⁹

Ann Bassett was not merely good-looking, she was an extremely attractive young lady. She possessed an "hour glass" figure.¹⁰ She probably would not have been in Texas before this time. She was living in Brown's Park, other than the time she was at school in Salt Lake City and Boston.

Etta Place: Screen writer, William Goldman said she was too elegant to be labeled a common whore. He said, "To me she had to be a school teacher."¹¹

Ann Bassett was very intelligent and she absorbed school work as if by some process of mental osmosis.¹² Her father was a former school teacher and passed his knowledge onto his children. One room in the Bassett home at Brown's Park was a library with well-stocked shelves of books. The Bassetts brought some volumes from their eastern home, others were given to them by Judge Conway, a wealthy English nobleman who had arrived in the park in 1869. This library included Shakespeare's Complete Works, Shelley, Keats, Longfellow, general literature, travel and biography.¹³ During the 1890s, one man who could frequently be found in the

Bassett library, chair kicked back, with feet propped up on a table, was the outlaw Butch Cassidy. Cassidy was a voracious reader, some of his favorite works being on Scottish history, Dickens, and medieval literature.¹⁴

Ann was an actress. She could play the role of a cultured young gentlewoman full to over-flowing with gentility plus the innate Bassett charm; or she could be a perfect little hell-cat capable of throwing and breaking things, in command of a vocabulary which would cause a livery-stable hanger-on to blush for shame. She was spirited and high strung,¹⁵ and a tempestuous daredevil.¹⁶

Ann was attractive to men and used them, merely for the fun of the thing. She was calculating, even coldly so. She was wrapped up in her own emotional and mental reactions. It is doubtful if she ever experienced anything but self love.¹⁷

Etta Place: Butch Cassidy said, "Etta was the best housekeeper on the Pampas, but she was a whore at heart."¹⁸

Ann Bassett: Old timers, from Vernal and Brown's Park, now in their nineties have always said, "Ann Bassett was not Queen of the Rustlers, she was Queen of the bedrolls. One old timer who had been amorous of the beautiful Ann since he was a youngster, made a trip to her Blue Mountain homestead in

Utah, with the idea of sharing her bed but found it occupied when he arrived.¹⁹

Etta Pace was close to Fannie Porter, the madam, who ran a high-class bordello in Texas. Whether the association was on a professional basis or purely personal is uncertain.²⁰

Ann Bassett was close to Mrs. Baker who ran the Baker House Hotel in Craig, Colorado, which is rumored by old timers to have been a high-class bordello. The word of these men in Vernal and Craig implied Ann was a loose lady.²¹

Etta Place: Reports from South America stated Etta was a great horse woman and could outshoot most men.

Ann Bassett was a veteran horsewoman capable of capturing and breaking out wild horses single handedly if need be.²² She spent most of her Brown's Park days riding the range with the cowboys.

1896: Etta Place spent the fall and winter at Robber's Roost with Butch Cassidy and newlyweds Elzy Lay and Maude Davis, a Vernal girl.

STORIES LINK ETTA AND ANN

These following stories will show how Ann

and Maude Davis were close friends, and how Ann could have very well made her first appearance as the infamous Etta Place. They will also show the close relationship between Ann and Elzy Lay, and how he trusted Ann Bassett.

Author, Ed Kirby, stated Etta first appeared as a definite character in history at the time Elzy Lay and Maude Davis were married. The winter of 1896, when Etta was only seventeen, she and Butch wintered with the honeymooning couple in the Roost country.²³ In 1884, Elzy Lay came to Brown's Park on a hay crew to the Bassett Ranch. He stayed a year with the Bassetts and then returned to Rock Springs, Wyoming, where he joined forces with Butch Cassidy. Elzy and Butch returned to Brown's Park at times, and their rumored robbery activities were never questioned by the local folks.²⁴

Lay was helping hay in Ashley Valley with another young outlaw, Albert Davis. Here he met Albert's sister, and Ann Bassett's friend, Maude Davis. Maude fell for the handsome outlaw.

Sometime later, Maude accompanied her brother, Albert, to Brown's Park when he joined the hay crew in the Hoy meadows. Maude stayed with her friend, Ann Bassett during this time. Elzy showed up on a visit to the Park. A dance was held at the Hoy ranch, and Elzy again met the beautiful brunette from Vernal. The romance blossomed. The love struck girl was not disheartened even after Elzy told her about the association he had with the outlaws. Elzy returned to the outlaw hideout at Big Springs in

Bear River (Yampa) Canyon. Maude returned to her Vernal home.

Under Ann's supervision, plans were made for Maude to meet Elzy at the outlaw canyon hideout. A minister was persuaded to accompany Ann and Maude across the Yampa River where Elzy and Maude were married on the mountainside. The winter of 1896, Elzy and new bride, Maude, along with the raven haired Etta Place and Butch Cassidy spent the winter at Robber's Roost.²⁵

That fall arrangements were made for Maude to travel to Robber's Roost where Blue John, a member of the outlaw gang, took her by wagon to meet her husband. Later a pack string of supplies jingled down the canyon and up the trail, another girl dismounted. A small tent was unloaded for her, and she and Butch set up housekeeping.²⁶ (This was typical of Ann, she wouldn't arrive in a wagon but mounted on a horse.) The outlaws spent the fall and winter planning the Castle Gate robbery.

Blue John took the girls back to civilization in March, about a month before the Castle Gate holdup. Maude bore a premature baby in August. The baby was named Marvel Lay. When Marvel was older, Maude told her about spending the winter in Robber's Roost. Marvel asked her mother about Etta Place. Maude told her she loved and admired Etta Place, stating she was the most beautiful woman she had ever seen.²⁷

With Ann and Maude being such good friends, and Ann in love with Butch Cassidy, it seems

logical Ann was the one who spent the winter with Butch at Robber's Roost. Shortly after the time Maude and Etta left Robber's Roost, Ann Bassett left Vernal. She spent the summer and fall in Cleveland with relatives, returning on September 30 of 1897.²⁸ Ann later wrote in her memoirs about attending Miss Potter's School for Girls in the exclusive suburbs of Boston, during this time. She told how she was going to be expelled for using profane language and putting her horse through wild antics during her riding lesson. She said her uncle came from Cleveland to talk matters over with the authorities. She claims she was reinstated until the end of the term when her uncle arranged for her to continue her schooling in his home city.²⁹

Carl W. Breihan author of the book Wild Women of the West, said Etta was Butch's girl. He made the statement; Cassidy, the Sundance Kid, Lay, and "the boys" took up a collection to send Etta Place back East to attend a finishing school. He said at the same time Ann Bassett's father sent her to Boston, Massachusetts, to attend Miss Potter's School for Girls. Breihan stated Ann didn't have any intention of going to school, so Etta went in her place. Breihan wrote the following:

Etta's greatest accomplishment at the school was her frequent outburst of western euphemisms calculated to entertain her eastern girlfriends, while she labored hard to enjoy the equestrian arts under the formal

tutelage of a French riding master. In his absence, Etta would frequently ditch the sidesaddle to ride bareback and astride her mount, displaying her considerable ability at horsemanship by putting on a rodeo. Needless to say, she was on probation most of the two years she attended the school.

When Ann wrote her story for the Colorado Historical Society in 1952, she tells this same story about herself attending Miss Potter's school and having trouble with the riding master. In telling her school story, Ann said, "I threw my right leg up over the side saddle and raked the horse's flanks. Then uttering a wild yell which must have scared him half to death, I put him through several range stunts while the girls screamed with glee. I was brought before the stony-faced faculty, on the carpet, with all the girls of my riding class also there to testify to my use of profane language."³⁰

Ann had begun sitting astraddle horses and riding them unaided since age of three. She refused to ride side-saddle and insisted on riding like the boys. She spent most of her time in the bunkhouse with the cowboys. Here the "saddle-galled" cowpunchers congregated to sing range ballads and squeak out doleful tunes on the fiddle. Somewhere



This picture was found in Rosalie DeJournette's collection of Brown's Park pictures by her son, Dick DeJournette. When Ralph Chew, an old time Brown's Park resident who knew Ann well, was asked if he knew the lady. He said, "This is Ann Bassett, wearing the outfit she wore in the Park."

in a secluded corner an absorbing round of poker was sure to be in session. The most irresistible magnet leading Ann to the bunkhouse was the forbidden reading of the Police Gazettes and other magazines the cowboys stowed. Here she heard and learned to use their profane language.

Carl Breihan stated Etta Place went to the school in Ann Bassett's place, so explain Ann telling and writing this same story, over and over, to the detail, of herself attending the school. Ann and Etta were obviously the same person.

ANN'S LIFE INFLUENCED BY OUTLAWS & INDIANS

Ann was the first white child born in Northwestern Colorado. As her mother had no milk, she was wet nursed by a Ute Indian woman in Brown's Hole who had given birth at the same time.³¹ Ann was always friendly with these Indians and one day a squaw presented her with a beautifully made buckskin dress trimmed with long fringe and beads. When she grew older a squaw made her a buckskin suit which she said was the first genuine cowgirl costume.³²

I turned a deaf ear to mother's long-winded lectures upon the conduct of, and correct clothing for, "little ladies," and early adopted buckskin breeches for my personal use. Capering about on a skittish bronc, plastered,

to a lopsided contraption called a side-saddle, while swathed in yard-long riding togs was not my idea of frolic. I cared not a whit for social customs, and could not understand a world designed especially for privileged little boys to romp in, to enjoy sports and play, sternly denied to "little ladies." With spirit and determination I wore my befringed, buckskin breeches. My point was difficult to prove in a puritanical sphere where girl's legs were strictly hush-hush, and anything resembling trousers for women or girls taboo.³³

Ann always wanted to be like her mother in her domination of the range and the people around her.³⁴ It was Elizabeth Bassett, Ann's mother, who ran the Bassett Ranch and bossed her outlaw ranch hands. Trouble had prevailed even when Ann was a young girl with the Two-Bar and other big cattle companies trying to encroach on the Brown's Park ranchers, calling them rustlers. This was somewhat true as they all branded the slicks they found and built up their herds, but the big cattle companies wanted the land all to themselves. It was Elizabeth who formed the Bassett Gang, including Isom Dart, Matt Rash, and even her own sons. She led the Bassett Gang against these big cattle companies, trying to run their cattle out of the Park.

When Ann was five years old, she changed the brand on her first calf and officially became a cattle rustler. "I built a fire and put a branding ring in

it. When the ring was white hot I made the Two-Bars into a pig-pen brand by adding two more lines at-right angles to the bars."³⁵

When Ann's mother died in December 1892, Ann was fourteen years old. A difficult age for this young tomboy who was becoming a lovely young woman. She was boisterous and carefree and spent most of her time in the bunkhouse with the cowboys, refusing to be ladylike.³⁶ Ann's father "realized he must attempt to tame or control this girl-child who was, by instinct, a cross between a Texas cowpuncher and a Ute Indian."³⁷ Ann's unruliness distressed her father, Herb, and he sent her to school at a Catholic convent. At the end of one year, the nuns asked Herb not to send Ann back, they considered her incorrigible.³⁸ Herb Bassett's greatest difficulty was trying to decide what on earth to do with Ann; as time passed, it became a question of what to do with Ann next.³⁹ However, Herb never gained any control over Ann. When she became eighteen, she did as she very well pleased, and I believe she spent that winter in Robber's Roost with Butch Cassidy.

The outlaws had watched Ann grow from a tomboy to a lovely woman. From the time Ann was a young girl, the Bassett Ranch had always been home to such infamous men as Elzy Lay; Butch Cassidy; Sundance Kid; Isom Dart, (the Negro Ned Huddleston); Matt Rash; and many other outlaws. Ann spent her time with the Wild Bunch. She was a

beautiful woman and many men fell for her charms. Among the many young men interested in the beautiful Ann, was outlaw, Matt Rash. Some authors say she also had a fling with Elzy Lay. Elzy obviously trusted Ann immensely, and the trust and friendship could have grown the winter spent at Robber's Roost. After Ann returned from her schooling in Cleveland and Boston, she returned to Brown's Park. She tells a story which happened after her return to the Park which shows the trust Elzy had in her:

Early one morning Sam and I were at the corral in Zenobia Basin, slapping a bronc around. We heard a whistle we both instantly recognized, coming from some spot among the deep, rocky caverns not far distant. Sam leaped to attention and sent me scampering to the house with an urgent request for corral poles. I was to ask the men working for us to go out and cut these needed poles at a place several miles from the cabin. When the wood choppers were safely out of the way, we gave the signal and Elza joined us.

He was still following the double path which kept him constantly at hair-trigger attention. At that moment, the law was hot on Elzy's trail, spurring him to great and greater speed to evade them. While we ate lunch he explained some unfinished business he wanted us to take care of for him. He had twenty thousand dollars in currency hidden

away. This was in a cleverly concealed place near Powder Springs, about forty miles from Brown's Park.

He had made a perfect map of the location, which he gave to us with minute directions to be followed, should it become necessary for us to lift his cache. We were then instructed what to do with the money if he should meet with serious accident, be locked up, or killed. However, if we heard from him within a year, and he was at large, that would release us from the man-sized job of finding and forwarding the money to his mother, whose address he had given us.⁴⁰

Ann and Sam traded horses with Elzy, and he rode away from Brown's Park on a fresh mount. In about eight months Sam received a letter from Elzy from Nevada. It never mentioned the cache, but Ann and Sam knew this was letting them know all was well, so, they didn't touch the cache. Dishonest financiers had robbed Elzy Lay's widowed mother of an inheritance. The lust for vengeance started Elzy on a career of crime. The beautiful Ann and her family were always friends with members of the Wild Bunch, helping them in any way they could, whether it be providing a meal or a fast get-a-way horse.

ANN RECEIVES THREAT TO LEAVE PARK!

Ann's exposure to the outside world had created a big change in her. She found how pleasant it was to be attractive to men. She dressed

herself in the height of fashion; carried herself straight and held her head high. People recognized Ann Bassett's back from a block away; she adopted eastern speech patterns and an eastern accent, and used them until they became her customary way of speaking. She even flaunted convention by using forbidden rouge on her cheeks. Ann combined city ways with her Bassett charisma.

Ann was twenty years old when she returned to Brown's Park in 1898 from finishing school. It was a trying time, as the Two-Bar and other big cattle outfits were now desperate to squeeze these little cattlemen out of the park, calling them thieves and rustlers. Ann would continue her mother's battle against the cattle barons who banded together and hired James Hicks alias Tom Horn to get rid of the problem one way or another.

Ann Bassett met James Hicks while he was helping on outlaw Matt Rash's roundup crew as a cook. Ann stated he was obnoxious and a braggart, and she did not like the boastful, descriptive accounts of the human slaughter he had accomplished single-handed as an Indian fighter.⁴¹

Matt Rash, Isom Dart, the Bassett brothers and many others had received notes which were placed on their doors to get out of Brown's Park. On July 7th Matt Rash stopped by the Bassett Ranch on returning from a trip to town. He rode up to his summer cabin on Cold Spring Mountain and was found dead with one bullet through the back and abdomen, and another in the right breast. The

murder stunned the community.

Ann appeared to be the most grief-stricken, as Matt whom she had known from childhood had lately been squiring her to parties in Craig as well as in the Park. The thought of Matt suffering this slow death, all alone on the mountain, was enough to make her feel she had lost the love of her life. She mourned deeply, and vented her grief in wild anger and threats of revenge against the murderer.⁴²

It is doubtful Ann Bassett's sudden love for Matt Rash was genuine while he lived, but according to Ann, Matt had written a will on May 20, 1900, leaving his huge estate to her. The estate consisted of his ranch and some 600 head of cattle, as well as personal property. Ann said Matt had given her the paper for safe-keeping, but she had since lost it. Ann petitioned the court to settle the will in her favor. However, Matt's family arrived from Texas, and they settled out of court with Ann receiving \$250 a "drop in the bucket" from the sizable estate. A Routt County judge appointed Sheriff Charles W. Neiman to administer the Rash estate. However, Ann Bassett was not called "Queen of the Cattle Rustlers" for nothing, when Neiman took over, he found only 485 head of Matt's 600 head of cattle.⁴³ No one ever got the best of Ann Bassett!

Mr. Hicks (Tom Horn) arrived in town and tried to blame Matt's murder on "the damn Niger,"(sic) Isom Dart, and gave an account of a quarrel he had witnessed between Rash and Dart.

Isom Dart's real name was Ned Huddleston.

Isom was a black man, and a former slave. After arriving in this country, Isom joined the Tip Gault Gang in August 1875. Later Isom became acquainted with the Bassetts and soon moved to the ranch, cutting firewood, carrying water, cooking and tending to the five small Bassett children, whom he adored. Isom was also an expert horse trainer and also trained get-away mounts for the Wild Bunch.⁴⁴ He had also been a member of the Bassett Gang.

Ann blamed the Two-Bar for Matt's death and began getting rid of their cattle whenever possible by driving them into the Green River where they were swept away by the swift currents of Lodore Canyon, or pushing them across the river at a ford and driving them away across the mountain, or shooting them. She also wrote a letter to Two-Bar foreman, Hi Bernard, telling him how despicable she thought he was.⁴⁵

Bernard recalled running into Ann Bassett riding across Brown's Park and described her as a small imp of a girl, sitting astraddle a superb horse, which fitted as if she had grown on it. She had at least one gun strapped around her waist. When he spoke he received a reply which gave him the idea "gray wolves were natives, and belonged, while I was nothing but a worm crawling out of bounds."⁴⁶

On October 3, in the early hours of dawn, Isom Dart was shot from ambush at his cabin. Dart's murder was also heartbreaking to Ann as Isom Dart had looked after her since childhood.

In December the Craig Courier reported Ann

and Eb Bassett had each received a warning note suggesting they also leave the country. The Denver Post came out with the following:

WAR ON A WOMAN
NEW FEATURE TO THE ROUTT COUNTY
TROUBLE

Outlaws Growing Bolder

They Warn Miss Anna Bassett to Leave the Country Within Thirty Days or Suffer the Consequences.⁴⁷

The note read:

Nov. 12, (1900) - Anna Bassett, Lodore, Colo: You are requested to leave that country for parts unknown within thirty days or you will be killed thirty days for your life. "Committee"⁴⁸

Three months after the murder of Matt Rash a man came creeping up to the house on the Bassett Ranch. He took advantage of a dark night when a strong wind was blowing and rain was pouring down on the building. He hugged the wall and stepped over the yard fence where he could walk on the grass and avoid the sound of boot heels on the stone walk. A small shaft of light guided him to the front door of the living room. The latch-string no longer hung outside to welcome strangers as it had in the past, it was pulled inside, leaving an inch hole where

the lamp light shown through. Ann Bassett was the target this time and she tells the story:

I sat at a table in the living room playing solitaire. Four young boys, Carl Blair, Gail Downing, and my brothers George and Eb Bassett, were lunching in the adjoining kitchen. Suddenly the night was shattered by blasts of gunfire. Two bullets came splintering through the door, imbedding themselves in the opposite wall, less than six inches from where I had been seated. There could be not the slightest doubt for whom these bullets were intended. I dropped to the floor and rolled under the table. The boys doused the lamp and jumped to a side window, to shoot out into the night in the direction the gunfire had come.

We remained in the darkened house and speculated on why our shepherd dog had not given the alarm of a night prowler's approach; he did not bark all during the night, which was most unusual. That faithful old watch dog never barked again, he had been strangled to death by the spiteful marauder.⁴⁹

This was the final scare and many ranchers who had received notes left Brown's Park including Ann Bassett. She went to Craig, Colorado, and stayed with friends. Later Ann came to Vernal and was here in January, 1901.

Ann Bassett was upset, mad and wanted to get out of the country. Who would she turn to after losing her home and everything she cared about in Brown's Park—to her old love and outlaw friends Butch and Sundance. In Ann's memoirs she continually defended Butch Cassidy and Elzy Lay's actions, telling of time they spent in Brown's Park, but firmly stating they were not "Badmen." She said, "Everyone knew there was a large reward offered for the capture of Butch, dead or alive. I AM PROUD TO SAY NOT ONE OF US WANTED THAT KIND OF MONEY! If anyone knows how Butch Cassidy met death, be sure they have never told."⁵⁰

ANN LEAVES FOR TEXAS

While the Wild Bunch's principal area of operation was the tri-state area of Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado, all of their favorite women lived in Texas, or did they? Tough females connected to the Wild Bunch have been listed as: Laura Bullion, Lillie Davis, Etta Place, Annie Rogers, Maud Walker and Fannie Porter, a Texas madam. Other females, whom writer and editor Jim Dullenty call "the real women in Butch's life,"⁵¹ were sisters, Josie and "Queen Ann" Bassett, Dora Lamorreux, Maude Davis and Mary Calvert. All were associated with Cassidy in Wyoming, and Utah, where they spent most of their time. Closest to Butch and Sundance was Etta Place. Ironically, of the six women identified with the gang in Texas, only Etta could not

claim deep roots in the Lone Star State. Perhaps she came from Brown's Park!

Members of the Wild Bunch went to Fort Worth in late September or early October, 1900. The outlaws took different routes but all met up in Fort Worth. As Butch planned capers very precisely, this was probably pre-planned. Just what the Texas Connection was is unknown. It could have been the Texas girls, or perhaps Mike Cassidy.

The alias "Butch Cassidy" evolved from Butch not wanting to embarrass family members by using his real name. Butch borrowed the last name from a small-time rustler, Mike Cassidy, with whom he served an apprenticeship as an outlaw. Later Butch worked for awhile in a butcher shop in Rock Springs, Wyoming, where he picked up the nickname "Butch."⁵² The earliest history of the Wild Bunch says rustler Mike Cassidy left Utah to avoid prosecution and was last reported in Mexico.⁵³ No one knows exactly what happened to Mike Cassidy, however, the name Mike Cassidy next turns up in Fort Worth, Texas, in the late 1880s. Cassidy was an unscrupulous character with a mysterious past who went into the saloon business locally and then promptly began breaking every liquor ordinance on the books. He lived in Fort Worth many years running a series of cheap saloons



Ann Bassett rode this Vernal, Utah, stage coach when she traveled to Craig on her way to Texas in 1901. Uintah County Library, Regional History Collection.



Vernal, Utah,
Main Street

Uintah County Library
Regional History
Collection

and living at a number of different addresses on the south end of town known as Hell's Half Acre. If he were the same Mike Cassidy as Butch's mentor, he certainly would have provided a valuable friend to an outlaw on the lam when Butch and the boys came to Fort Worth at the turn of the century.

The Women of the Wild Bunch met them in Texas. According to the local Vernal newspaper, Ann Bassett left Vernal for Texas:

February 2, 1901:

A Vernal Express article on February 2, 1901, states: Miss Annie Bassett left on this mornings stage for Texas. She will visit at Grand Junction and Denver enroute.

It was Butch who Etta had spent the winter with in Robber's Roost, but she now had her eye on the Sundance Kid. Ann Bassett soon tired of one man, and Sundance liked the women. Butch objected to taking Ann/Etta to South America but finally gave in.⁵⁴ Before leaving for South America, Butch bought Etta a gold lapel watch at Tiffany's, and Sundance and Etta Place had their picture taken at DeYoung's New York Studio. The Wild Bunch had just previously had their picture taken while staying in Fort Worth. It is believed this famous Wild Bunch photo taken at the Fort Worth studio of John Swartz was Sundance's idea. Sundance a notoriously fancy dresser who, according to his biographer, was the only member of the Wild Bunch to own

monogrammed shirts.⁵⁵ So, he may have also wanted to have a picture taken with the beautiful lady, Etta alias Ann. Ann would have loved the excitement of having her picture taken in New York with Sundance. This picture is the one we have had analyzed by expert Dr. Thomas Kyle who believes the lady in this picture with Sundance is Ann Bassett.

Ann loved excitement and adventure. Even when she was sent to Salt Lake City to the Catholic convent on the train, she said, "I was whirled away on a new pilgrimage of investigation which carried a special glamour."⁵⁶

February 20, 1901:

Butch, Sundance and Etta Place boarded a ship in New York City on February 20, 1901, which took them to South America.⁵⁷ Some say it left a day later. Edward M. Kirby, author of The Saga of Butch Cassidy, states Butch did not leave on this ship with Etta and Sundance but stayed behind for one more robbery in the west with other Wild Bunch members, Harvey Logan and Ben Kilpatrick. He then left for South America on a later date.⁵⁸

The Pinkerton records indicate Etta and Sundance returned to the United States on July 29, 1902. After an absence from her home of nearly two years, Ann Bassett again surfaced:

January 24, 1903:

Another article appeared in the Vernal Express:

After an absence of two years from this vicinity, Miss Anna Bassett has returned and is at presently the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ranney at Cederview (sister, Josie.) Miss Bassett has spent a large portion of her time TRAVELING.

ETTA PLACE ALIASES

There may, however, have been more than one Etta Place or more than one person who used the name as an alias. As author, Ed Kirby, stated, "Etta is truly the mystery woman of the Wild Bunch Story." Some sources indicate she was born in eastern Utah in 1878, or 1879, and grew up in the Castle Gate-Price region. Others in the East claim she was born in New York or Pennsylvania and her mother's name was Place. Since Harry Longabaugh's mother's maiden name was also Place, a blood relationship between the two has been suggested. It has been further noted Etta's father was an Englishman named Ingerfiled. Still another source tells us Etta attended finishing school in Boston and studied to be a school teacher in Buffalo, New York, later teaching school in the Denver area.⁵⁹

Ann's own sister, Josie, could have used the alias and made a trip with the outlaws. This could account for the fellow who claimed to be Sundance Kid's son, saying Etta was a disgruntled housewife.

This description fit Josie. She married Jim McKnight because she was pregnant. She divorced him June 16, 1900, after six years of marriage. She had two sons, and the youngest one, Chick, did not like nor trust his mother. "She had gone away and left him when he was just a little fellow."⁶⁰ Josie went to Craig, Colorado, and ran a boarding house until 1902 when she married a local druggist. This marriage did not last too long. Ann went to her sister's home when she returned from her TRAVELS. Josie never liking Ann to out do her, may have been the second Etta Place. It would, however, have been Butch whom Josie went to see. She was in love with him at fifteen when he lived at the Bassett Ranch in Brown's Park. Lula Betenson, Butch's sister, wrote about her brother coming home for a visit after he was presumably killed in South America. Butch told Lula, Elzy Lay was his best friend, and he especially liked the Bassetts, and Josie was his favorite.⁶¹ If Ann was the Etta who spent the winter with Butch in the Roost, she may have had a roving eye and took a liking to Sundance. Butch as we mentioned earlier said Etta was a whore. Ann may have accompanied Butch to the Roost just to show Josie she could win the battle.

Sundance liked the women and may have had a variety of women use this alias. However, our evidence indicates Ann was the Etta shown with Sundance in the New York Photograph.

James A. Horan stated Butch and Sundance were back in the U.S. and participated in another

train holdup on **July 7, 1903.**⁶² They seem to have been back and forth to South America many times. Sundance had a social disease which he had to be treated for and it was reported he and Etta visited a hospital in 1902.⁶³

ANN RETURNS TO BROWN'S PARK

When Ann returned to Brown's Park in 1903, things had calmed down, but she still was out to get revenge on the Two-Bar. She decided to set her cap for the Two-Bar foreman, Hi Bernard. Frank Willis describes Ann's entrapment of Hi. Ann wrote a note to Hi, suggesting an interview at her cabin on Douglas Mountain. When Hi arrived he found the petite Ann, curved in all the right places, waiting for him in a pretty dress and wearing a seductive perfume with the light of friendship shining in her soft eyes. She proposed a partnership with Hi. Hi had never been married, but he did like pretty women. The enticing Ann turned Hi to butter, and he fell under her charms. Hi Bernard said, "Ann was not the stern little gun-toter I had seen patrolling the range, but a girl wearing a pretty blue dress which went well with shiny hair. I was invited into a cozy cabin and frankly told why I was sent for. Ann was contemplating a partnership arrangement to stock the Douglas range with cattle, using the Bassett ranches as a winter base. She outlined the program in a very business-like way and said, 'You are a cowman, and if you are interested just think the

matter over and advise me of your decision."⁶⁴ By the time dinner was ready, Bernard had an answer for the sly Ann. The forty-six-year-old man and the twenty-six-year-old Ann were married. It was strictly cattle to Ann, and she did not pretend otherwise, but Bernard was struck by the love bug and would be the one to be hurt.

The news spread through Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming, that the sweetheart of the murdered Matt Rash had married Hi Bernard who had supposedly cooperated with Tom Horn. They waited to hear what owner, Ora Haley, would say about the Two-Bar manager marrying a woman who had loudly condemned him as a murderer and had destroyed many Two-Bar cattle. A few days later, Hi received a wedding present in the form of a telegram from his boss, stating he was fired.

Ann Bassett had contempt for men, possibly coming from the role reversals between her strong mother and her unassertive father. She used men whom she considered poor weak creatures. Ann believed she could marry Hi Bernard and then, through her sexual attractiveness and her natural womanly superiority, make him comply with her own plans. Hi found Ann to be cultured and ladylike, yet bad-tempered and obscene, seductive but manipulative. Using Hi, Ann began to build a cattle ranch. After their first year of marriage, Ann became "bull herder" for four summers for the Brown's Park and Douglas Mountain ranchers. She herded around two hundred and fifty bulls, and was paid a

dollar a head. It was at this time Ann began keeping a log like her father Herb Bassett had done.⁶⁵

ANN ARRESTED FOR CATTLE RUSTLING

Ann was soon bored by her older husband. She still felt she should do away with a few Two-Bar cattle every once in a while for a little excitement. The break finally came when Hi came home from an extended trip to Denver to find the cabin on Douglas Mountain occupied by not only his wife but Tom Yarberry a cowboy who was supposed to be staying in the bunkhouse. This was not the only thing Ann did while Hi was in Denver, she constricted the Two-Bar by closing off her water hole on Douglas Mountain. This was her legal right, but it caused her many problems. After Hi left, Ann kept a group of ungainly cowhands around her ranch.

On March 18, 1911, a stock detective was sent up to Ann's ranch to see what evidence he could pick up of rustling. Posing as a prospector he went off into the hills each day supposedly looking for ore, but in reality he was sitting on a ridge overlooking Ann's cabin. He soon reported some freshly killed beef hanging in Ann's storeroom. Bill Patton, Two-Bar manager, went up and found the hide and entrails lying in plain view of the road. Patton filed a complaint with the sheriff. Ann and Tom Yarberry were arrested for cattle thievery.

Was she guilty? You can bet she was! She had talked of her hatred for the Two-Bar from one

end of Routt County to the other since the deaths, more than ten years before, of Matt Rash and Isom Dart. She was not only guilty of this, but she was having Tom Yarberry take many cattle—which did not belong to Ann—down to a butcher shop in Vernal.

The trial was held in Craig, Colorado, where Ann had attended school, attended dances and parties, and all the town was aware of the feud between Ann and the Two-Bar. The case came to trial in August 1911.

Ann and Tom were defended by a very prominent pair of lawyers. Ann had asked Judge A. M. Gooding of Steamboat Springs to represent her. Not wanting to get involved in the case, Gooding set the very high fee of one thousand dollars payable in advance. Ann didn't bat an eye, she lifted her skirt and extracted a roll of bills from the top of her silk stocking, and coyly peeled off ten one-hundred dollar bills.⁶⁶

The trial resulted in a hung jury. It was rescheduled and in August of 1912, Ann had her lawyer send word she was ill in Texas and could not appear. Her bail was declared forfeit.

A year later the trial came before the court for the second time. Ann appeared in all her well-dressed femininity, but Yarberry had jumped bail and Ann stood



Etta Place
In Mexican Revolutionary

Utah State
Historical
Society

trial alone. After eight hours of deliberation, the jury acquitted her of all charges.

Craig newspaper brought out the first "extra" in its history, and the Denver Post described what happened when the jury's verdict became known:

BUSINESSES CLOSE, BANDS BLARE-- TOWN OF CRAIG GOES WILD WITH JOY

The festivities included a parade headed by the town band; a banquet held at the Baker House Hotel; and afterwards everyone went to the movies. During the silent film, the projectionist flashed HURRAH FOR VICTORY! on the screen. After the movie, they repaired to an all-night dance, where Queen Ann reigned over her adoring subjects. A Denver reporter referred to her as "Queen of the Cattle Rustlers," and from that day on she was known as "Queen Ann."

ANN SPENDS TIME IN MEXICO

Where was Ann and what was she doing in August of 1912 when she didn't appear for her trial? She was working in Mexico!

ANN BASSETT: was working in Mexico and wrote this letter to Mrs. Baker of the Baker House Hotel in Craig, Colorado.

Abundanca Copper Camp
Sonora, Mex. 7/17/12

My dear Mrs. Baker.

I expect to be with you about first of August and hope you will have my room in the annex. The one I had last year if convenient. I am enjoying my life in Mexico - and find many things of interest

here. I am not so troubled as last year, and fat as a pig. Altho haven't felt quit well for two or three days. We start on a camping and hunting trip into the Gardo Mountains tomorrow. The supt. and wife - a niece of theirs and the contractor and me. I am the bookkeeper for their co. I play in luck some times and this is one time.

I am coming back here, altho some of my dear friends there may plan otherwise. I do not entertain the slightest uneasiness. You will, I presume have the old crowd of boys, and I look forward to a pleasant visit.

With kindest of thots

I am

Sincerely

Anna (Bassett) Bernard

Lula Parker Betenson claimed Butch and Sundance came back from South America, parted company, and were finally reunited along with Etta Place in Mexico quite by accident many years later.⁶⁷ Author, Ed Kirby, said a source told him Etta

went to Mexico, spending time with Pancho Villa's army about 1916.⁶⁸ Sundance Kid using the alias Tex McGraf became involved with Pancho Villa in the Mexican Revolution. He played an instrumental part in the Revolution from 1912-1916. (Ann Bassett was in Texas and Mexico between 1912-1916.) Sundance's primary function was to demonstrate to Villa and his men how to stop and hold up trains to secure money and arms shipments. Butch Cassidy, using the alias Tod McClamy, assisted in many of these escapades.⁶⁹ According to the Vernal Express, Ann spent the winter of 1916 in El Paso, Texas.⁷⁰

After Ann came back to Vernal, she took out a homestead at South Fork on the west side of Blue Mountain in 1918. Her sister, Josie, had a homestead near South Fork at Cub Creek. After the big "not guilty" celebration which was held in Craig, Colorado, for Ann after her cattle rustling trial, she felt she was the Robin Hood of northwestern Colorado. She still held her vendetta against the cattle barons. It was soon rumored around the area Ann used her ranch as a way station for rustlers bringing cattle into Utah from the north. Ann needed money to satisfy her expensive tastes and to hire men to make the necessary improvements on her homestead. Working with the night-riders to earn money was more her style than physical labor. Fifteen-year old Duward Campbell remembered he once visited

Ann's South Fork Ranch where he found a large group of strange men assembled, which he assumed were from another part of the country. "They were probably some of Ann's riders," said Duward, "maybe from as far away as Montana."⁷¹ It has also been rumored Ann was smuggling illegally from Mexico to her South Fork Ranch.⁷² She spent much time in the cities going and coming back to South Fork like a migrating bird.⁷³

ANN'S LATER YEARS

In 1923 at age thirty six, Ann married again. This time to easy going Frank Willis a cowboy and prospector. He was living at Ann's South Fork Ranch and loved her so much he was able to put up with her violet temper and brush her tantrums aside. Willis was a miner and cowpuncher who at one time was offered five hundred dollars to get evidence to convict the Bassetts of rustling.⁷⁴ They lived in California and Arizona. The legend of "Queen Ann of the Rustlers" was left behind. Willis and Ann came back to Leeds, Utah, during the uranium boom in the 1950s.

While Ann was residing at Leeds, Utah, in the house of one of Cassidy's cousins—the McMullins—she claimed Etta Place visited her. She stated they shared tea and reminiscences.⁷⁵ Another interesting coincidence took place at Leeds. Hiram Bebee believed to be Sundance Kid also appeared at the

home of the Robert Parker McMullin family. Cassidy's cousin, Clifford McMullin stated in an interview that Bebee recovered his portion of stolen loot which had been buried beneath cedar posts in the field of the McMullin farm in 1908 and watched over by "Old Bob Parker" until Bebee returned for it. "Old Bob Parker" McMullin was believed by some members of the McMullin family to be the real Butch Cassidy.⁷⁶

Ann died in 1956. She had made Frank promise to have her remains cremated and scatter her ashes over her beloved Brown's Park. Following her instructions, Frank put her ashes in the trunk of his car and headed for Brown's Park. He stopped in Maybell and told a friend what he was doing. When he came back through, the fellow asked him if he had scattered Ann. He replied, "No, I didn't have the heart to throw Ann out." Frank hauled Ann's ashes in the car's trunk until he died in 1963. After Frank was laid to rest, the family buried Ann's ashes in an unmarked spot in the Brown's Park Cemetery where other family members were buried.

Shortly before Ann's death, she was discovered by an enterprising reporter and her story was printed in the Sunday supplement. Her neighbors were startled to find this sweet, slightly buxom old lady was the notorious Queen Ann. With a flash of her old spirit, she admitted "Everything they said of me I did, and MORE."⁷⁷ These facts lead me to believe Queen Ann Bassett, Queen of the rustlers, was also Etta Place, Queen of the Outlaws.

Notes

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5. Carl W. Breihan, Wild Women of the West, (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1982) 78.
6. John Rolfe Burroughs, Where the Old West Stayed Young, (New York: William Morris and Company, 1962), 218.
7. Ibid.
8. John Rolfe Burroughs, Where the Old West Stayed Young, (New York: William Morris and Company, 1962), 218.
9. Richard F. Selcer, Hell's Half Acre, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1991), 250.
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11. William Goldman, Adventures in the Screen Trade, 283.
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13. Ann Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann" of Brown's Park," (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, April 1952), 85, 88.
14. Kerry Ross Boren, "A Guide to Historic Sites in Brown's Park," (Unpublished manuscript held in the Uintah County Library's Outlaw Trail History Center), 42.
15. John Rolfe Burroughs, Where the Old West Stayed Young, (New York: William Morris and Company, 1962), 218-220.
16. Dick and Vivian Dunham, Flaming Gorge Country, (Denver, Colorado: Eastwood Printing and Publishing Company, 1947), 180.
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18. James A. Horan, The Authentic Wild West: The Outlaws, (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1977), 282; Schoenberger, "The Wild Bunch," National Tombstone Epitaph, April, 1989, 15; Sifakis,

- Encyclopedia of American Crime, 130; Richard F. Selcer, Hell's Half Acre, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1991), 265.
19. Ralph Chew, taped personal interview in possession of author.
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24. Anna Bassett Willis, Colorado Magazine, (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, July 1952), 225.
25. Anna Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann of Brown's Park," Colorado Magazine, 1952, .
26. Pearl Baker, The Wild Bunch at Robbers Roost, (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1965) 173.
27. Ibid, 173.

28. Vernal Express, Vernal, Utah, 30 September 1897, 4.
29. Anna Bassett Willis, Colorado Magazine, (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, 1952), 293.
30. Ann Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann" of Brown's Park," Colorado Magazine, April 1952, 292.
31. Kerry Ross Boren, "Brown's Park," (Unpublished manuscript held in Regional History Collection, Outlaw Trail History Center, Uintah County Library), 6.
32. Charles Kelly, "Queen Ann of Brown's Hole," Old West, winter 1969, 24.
33. Ann Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann of Brown's Park," Colorado Magazine, April 1952, 94.
34. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 52.
35. Ann Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann" of Brown's Park," (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, Colorado Magazine July 1952), 223.
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37. Ann Bassett Willis, "Queen Ann" of Brown's Park, (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical

- Society, Colorado Magazine, October 1952, 285.
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39. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 50.
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43. Kerry Ross Boren, "A guide to Historic Sites in Brown's Park" (Unpublished manuscript held in the Uintah County Libraries Outlaw Trail History Center), 38.
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61. Lula Parker Betenson as told to Dora Flack, Butch Cassidy, My Brother, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 187.

62. Richard F. Selcer, Hell's Half Acre, Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Christian University Press, 1991), 323 n73.

63. Edward M. Kirby, The Saga of Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch, (Palmer Lake, Colorado: The Filter Press, 1977), 69.

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65. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, (Athens,

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66. John Rolfe Burroughs, Where the Old West Stayed Young, (New York: William Morris and Company, 1962), 309.

67. Lula Parker Betenson as told to Dora Flack, Butch Cassidy My Brother, (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 186.

68. Edward M. Kirby, The Saga of Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch, (Palmer Lake, Colorado: The Filter Press, 1977), 75.

69. Kerry Ross and Lisa Lee Boren, "The Sundance Kid - alias Hiram Bebee," (Unpublished manuscript held in the Uintah County Library Regional History Room), 5.

70. Vernal Express, Vernal, Utah, 27 October 1916, 5.

71. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985), 123.

72. Glade Ross, as told to Bill Webb in March of 1992. Glade is a longtime worker and historian for the Park Service and spent most of his time in Brown's Park.

73. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, 123.

74. Grace McClure, The Bassett Women, (Athens,

Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985) 126, 139, 140.

75. Carl W. Breihan, Wild Women of the West, New York, New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1982), 85, 89.

76. The Sundance Kid - alias Hiram Bebee, unpublished manuscript held in the Uintah County Library Regional Room by Kerry Ross and Lisa Lee Boren, 7; Interviews: Clifford McMullin, St. George, Utah; Mrs. Ethel McMullin George, Leeds, Utah, by Kerry Ross Boren.

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ANN BASSETT/ETTA PLACE CHRONOLOGY

<u>Ann Bassett</u>	<u>Etta Place</u>
May 1878 Ann Bassett Born on the 25th.	
Dec 1892 Eliazabeth Bassett died on the 11th. Ann Bassett in school in Craig, Colo.	
Sep 1894 Ann Bassett sent to Catholic girls school. School told her not to return.	
Nov 1895 Outlaw Thanksgiving dinner in Brown's Park. Ann present.	
Oct 1896	Etta Place/Maude Davis spend winter at Robber's Roost
Sep 1897 Ann Bassett returns from nine months trip to Cleveland, Ohio. Bassetts rent house in Rock Springs, Wyo. Ann spent Christmas day in Craig, Colo. with Blanche Tilton's family.	
Feb 1898 Jack Bennett lynched at Bassett Ranch. Ann not present.	
May 1899	
	Ann Bassett and Blanche Tilton return from visit to Omaha, Neb.
	Apr 1900 Ann Bassett and Blanche Tilton present when Josie's husband, Jim McKnight was shot.
	Jul 1900 Matt Rash killed by Tom Horn
	Aug 1900 Ann Bassett and father visit Vernal about Matt Rash's estate.
	Oct 1900 Isom Dart killed by Tom Horn
	Nov 1900 On 15th Ann Bassett received warning letter about her rustling activities.
	Core of Wild Bunch at Fort Worth, Texas.
	Feb 1901 On Feb. 2nd, Ann Bassett left Vernal on stage to travel to Texas
	On 20th, Sundance Kid and Etta Place leave New York for South Am.
	Jun 1902 Avvon Chew first met Ann Bassett in Brown's Hole
	Jul 1902 On 10th Longabaugh and Place return to South

America

Aug 1902

Maude Davis' mother
received letter from Cassidy
referring to our family of 3.

Jan 1903

After absence of two years,
Ann Bassett returns to Brown's
Hole. She reported most of the
time was spent traveling.
After staying with Josie Bassett a
while, she moved to the Smelter Ranch.

Apr 1904

Hi Bernard and Ann Bassett married.
1907

Etta Place
allegedly returned
to Denver,
Colorado.

1910

Bernard and Ann's marriage
dissolved.

Aug 1911

1st trial for Ann Bassett and
Tom Yarberry for stealing a
Two-Bar Ranch heifer.

Jul 1912

Mrs. Baker of Craig, Colo.
receives letter from Ann
Bassett who is working
in Mexico For a contractor

Cassidy sees Etta
Place in
Mexico City bar
sometime during
Revolutionary
Period.

Aug 1912

2nd trial of Ann Bassett for
stealing heifer. Acquitted.

Moved over to Blue Mountain
to homestead near her sister,
Josie Bassett's Cub Creek Homestead.
Harbored group of hard men.
Frequently traveled to cities.

1912-1916

Ann in Texas and Mexico

Sundance
plays
inst-
rumental
part in
Mexican
Revolution.



Ann Bassett and sister Josie

Sweetwater County Museum
Green River, Wyoming

ANALYSIS OF THE ETTA PLACE PHOTOS

Thomas G. Kyle
P.O. Box 1142
Los Alamos, NM 87544

When Bill Webb telephoned asking about having the photos of Etta Place and Ann Bassett analyzed, I agreed at once. I always agree even though seldom does the hoped for identification prove true. Just one new find is worth a lot of disappointments, and maybe this will be a find. I gave Bill the usual precautions, that rare original photos should not be sent, that the photos must be glossy prints instead of something out of a plain paper copier, and that it is often possible to demonstrate beyond a doubt that two pictures are of different people, but proving definitely that the two are the same person is almost impossible (in the present case this almost impossible nearly happens, but that will be saved as a final cap at the end).

The photos arrived right away. When opening photos for analysis, there is always excitement at what might be inside. The photo of Etta Place and Harry Longabaugh was familiar. The first quick comparison of Etta and Ann showed a strong resemblance. That is not unusual. There is usually a resemblance, otherwise the photos would not even be sent. Usually the resemblance in photos comes

from a single feature. Put just one similar feature, particularly an unusual one, on a pair of photos and the resemblance often appears quite strong.

It often occurs that after examining the two photos, other features are found to be distinctly different. Say the mouth of the to-be-identified photo has a strong resemblance to the mouth in the known-identity photo, but the nose is definitely different. When explaining to someone that the nose means the two photos cannot possibly be the same person, the almost standard reply is "But those mouths look just alike." It is as if a stronger resemblance in the mouth can make up for the difference between a hooked nose and a pug nose.

Five minutes of visual examination, with no need to use computer techniques, is often enough to determine a pair of photos are different people. That was not the case with the Ann Bassett photo. I try to avoid being swayed by people who happen to look alike, but the resemblance was too strong not to build up hope that she and Etta were really the same person, that this would be a find.

The photo of Etta was a little blurred. It could be that the original photo was blurred, or the blur could come from too many or too poor reproductions. Identification is difficult even with the best of photos, so every attempt is made to get the best possible print in the beginning. No better print of Etta and Harry could be located, so it was necessary to go with what was available. The picture of Ann was quite good, much better than the one of Etta. It was

even stamped as coming from a historical collection, so it was not just a print someone had picked up at a garage sale. It was a photo with at least a little historical validity.

DECIDING IF THE TWO ARE ONE

The first step in the analysis is to digitize the photos so they can be read into the computer. Here, it might be good to point out something about what the computer does. First, the computer is not used to make the pictures look good. The computer is used to bring out details which often means pushing the contrast up very high, high enough that the picture looks terrible, or even completely remapping the gray scale which radically alters appearance. One of the advantages of using a computer when analyzing photos is the ability to run contrast up and down just like on your television set. Magnification can instantly be adjusted by zooming in and out on particular features. There is never a need to send the photos out to the lab and wait for them to come back before examining some feature in detail.

The computer makes no analysis of its own. Computers have a difficult time just determining if a picture contains the image of a person, or in locating the eyes of a portrait. The computer is strictly a tool for things like removing blur, bringing out a barely visible feature, and changing magnification. The computer can also be used for overlaying images, but that never works out as well as you might expect.

The first step in the analysis of the Etta-Ann

photos was to carry out what I call a classification of features. It involves coming up with a classification for the different features and seeing if the second image has the same **type** of features. It sounds an almost trivial thing to do, but it is a quite powerful method. If the second image has even one feature that does not fall into the same category, the two people in the pictures have been shown to be different. Notice that it requires a comparison of each feature between the two images. This overcomes the problem of being swayed by a great resemblance in a single feature. If all features fall into the same category, it is possible to arrive at a numerical value for the probability that a randomly selected photo would have the same set of features as the master photo, Ann in this case (Ann was taken as the master because her photo was better). The best example of the technique is to go through the steps using the photos of Etta and Ann.

In both pictures, the chin can be seen to be small and well rounded and without dimples. Both noses are straight with slightly flared nostrils that align with the septum in the center of the nose. The bridge of both noses appears moderately broad and well blended into the forehead. Both sets of eyes and their irises are of moderate size with the eyes being generally elongated in shape.

In both images, the mouth is of average size with slightly downturned corners and reasonably full lips. The shape of the two sets of lips agree quite well. Ann's lips are darker than Etta's, but the darkness of

lips varies from time to time. Etta's lips appear to be held together more tightly, causing the upper lip to seem less full. The indents at the corners of Ann's mouth are more prominent. Part of this difference comes from Ann being older when this picture was made than when the Etta picture was made. Most of the difference in the indents comes about because of the additional weight Ann had at this time. The additional weight also makes the face appear more full.

CALCULATING PROBABILITIES

There are still a couple of other features to compare, but this is a good place to calculate the chance of two random people having this set of features agree in classification. Conservative estimates will be used. No more than one person out of three has a small, well rounded chin without dimples or vertical crease. The nostrils being aligned with the septum is usual as is the flare of the nostrils, but the bridge of the nose is broader than usual, so it can be estimated that only one in four people would have such a nose. The average sized mouth with downturned corners and full lips can also be estimated to occur in no more than one out of three people.

Probabilities are joined together by multiplying. For example, there is one chance in two (a probability of one half) of flipping a coin and getting tails. The chance of getting two tails in a row is obtained by multiplying the chance of the first tail

(1/2) by the chance of the second tail (1/2), resulting in $1/2 \times 1/2 = 1/4$. Taking it one step more, the chance of a head is also 1/2, so the chance of two tails and then a head are $1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2 = 1/8$.

Using this same technique for the pictures of Etta and Ann and the values estimated above gives $1/3 \times 1/4 \times 1/3 = 1/36$. Up to this point, there is one chance in thirty six that two people would have features that match those compared up to here.

The ears have not yet been compared, and ears are one of the most distinctive features for identification. Etta's left ear can be seen in the photo, but Ann's ear is hardly discernable. The computer was used to enhance the ear region and make the ear more visible. After the enhancement, the image was somewhat grainy, but the agreement in shape appeared excellent. Since the enhanced image of the ear is not shown here, it will not be used in the calculation of probability (the chance of this type ear would have been estimated at one in five).

Etta and Ann share a fairly unusual feature in their right eyebrow. The half of the eyebrow next to the nose is thick and heavy and the outer half is thin and appears less dark because of the thinness. The outer half can hardly be seen in the image of Etta. The contrast has been increased in the image of Ann, and the degree of lightness in the outer half is less obvious because of the contrast, but still easily seen. Perhaps one person in five has such a thick-thin contrast in the eyebrow. This reduces the chance probability to $1/36 \times 1/5 = 1/180$.

The features have now been compared and agree. This still leaves the chance that the size or relative positions of the features might be different. Measurements are useful and can sometimes be used to show two people are different, but measurements are not nearly so powerful as one might expect. Classification of features is much more powerful than measurements.

The measurements were carried out with images on the computer screen. The first step adjusts the two images to have the same magnification. The magnification of one image is set so the distances between the eyes is the same in both images. If the two people were different, the distance between their eyes might be different, but something has to be done to adjust the magnification. Otherwise, comparing measurements between different sized images would be meaningless. So, the distance between the eyes is assumed to agree and differences sought in the size and distance between other features.

The measurements were carried out by placing a set of spots at the different facial landmarks on Etta's face. The spots were then transferred and aligned with Ann's face. Some adjustment was made to allow for the differences in the positioning of the head in the two photos. Ann's head is turned to the right by five degrees and nodded forward by four degrees. Since the pictures were made, a small error has been found in the corrections for the difference in the angle of the heads. This error caused the spot at

Ann's hairline to be displaced to the left by a bit more than the width of the spot.

The mask of spots transferred from the Etta photo to the Ann photo fits Ann's features quite well. There will always be small differences in measurements, not necessarily because of differences in faces, but because of errors in exactly locating the corresponding spot in the second photo. The chance that measurements of two different faces agreeing this well are estimated to be one chance in thirty. This reduces the probability that the two pictures are different people to $1/180 \times 1/30 = 1/5400$. One chance out of five thousand is about as good as one ever expects in ascertaining that two photos are the same person.

SOMETHING UNUSUAL CLINCHES IT

The work up to this point had probably involved looking at one or the other images for eight or ten hours. Everything was almost complete, and photos were being taken of the screen. Then, I noticed something that seems obvious now, but something that had not been noticed in those eight or ten hours of working with the photos.

That something unusual was what had been taken for a part in Ann's hair. It is located at the top center of her forehead. A closer look shows that it is not a part in the hair. All the hair seems to be missing in a narrow elongated area, and the hair just to the right of that seems to be very sparse. It could be a scar, or when asked, some people have suggested it

could be an unusual cow lick.

The opinion of several people has been sought about what this spot could be and if it could be just the way the hair is combed. Everyone questioned has expressed the opinion that there is some sort of defect in the hair in that area. A scar is the most common guess as to what it might be.

The important thing is this; Etta has what seems to be hair missing in the same location. A blowup of the central part of the Etta's head is shown with the contrast adjusted to show the missing hair region better. The irregularity in the hairline just to the left of the missing hair spot is due to a curl laying forward on her forehead. This can be seen by comparison to the full face image of Etta.

The best view of the missing hair region on Ann's photo is the image with the mask of measuring spots. It is amazing to me that I put the spot near the hairline and failed to notice the missing hair.

The chance of two women having the same sort of defect is almost nil. The chances are one in thousands and will not even be estimated. The fact that the two women match in all their features and have this same defect removes all reasonable doubt that the two are the same person. This really was the find that I hope for every time I start a new comparison. This one was real. The world now has two photos of the woman called Etta Place and knows who she was.



Figure 1. This image of Etta is a blowup of the Harry Longabaugh - Etta Place studio picture made in New York in 1901. This is how the image appeared on the computer screen.



Figure 2. This is a picture of Ann Basset obtained from the photo collection of the Denver Historical Society. Some of the sharpness of the original does not show up in this picture taken of the computer screen.

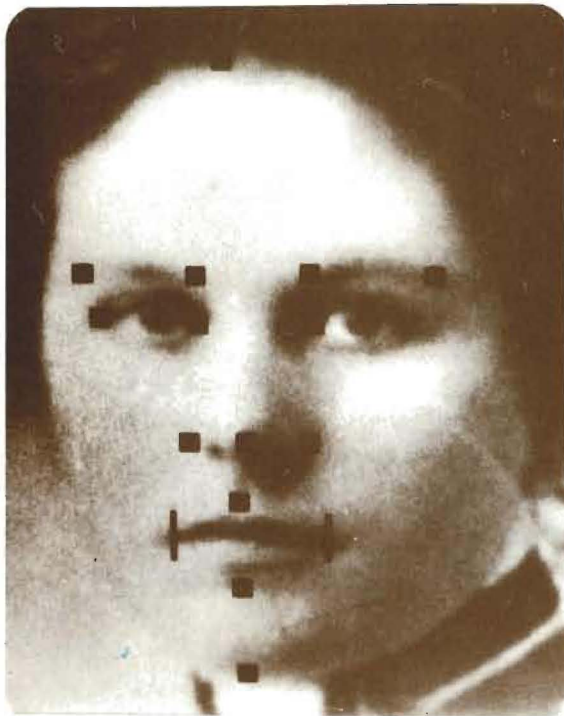


Figure 3.
The spots are placed
at what is sometimes
called facial land-
marks. The spots mark
the positions between
which measurements
were made.



Figure 4.
The spots on the
image of Etta have
been transferred to the
image of Ann. Corre-
ctions were made to
allow for the angular
positions of the heads
being different. An
error caused the spot
at the hairline to be
mispositioned. The
arrow points to a spot
that can hardly be
seen in the image.



Figure 5. This is a blowup of Etta's hairline with the contrast
adjusted so the defect pointed to by the arrow is more
obvious. Just to the left of the defect is what might be thought
another defect, but comparison to the first, lower contrast,
image of Etta shows that this apparent indent in the hairline is
due to a curl laying forward as is the indent over the temple.

THOMAS G. KYLE

Dr. Thomas G. Kyle from the Computer Research Group at Los Alamos National Laboratory uses computer techniques to aid in identification. His expertise came from enhancing photos for a government intelligence agency. According to Kyle, "Those guys brought in a lot of pictures from far off places taken in a hurry and with shaking hands."

Kyle specializes in determining if two pictures are of the same person. Instead of a magnifying glass, he uses a computer. The computer manipulates the images to bring out things most people overlook in the images. It is not a matter of the computer making the images look better. Kyle says the images usually look worse after the computer transforms them. Portrait photographers try to take pictures that hide facial defects. He tries to make such defects more obvious because something like a mole or a scar can sometimes make an identification beyond doubt.

The computer brings out things too dim for the eye to recognize in the picture. The computer cannot recognize the significance of features as well as a person can. The computer analysis is really the joint effort of the computer, the eye, and the human brain. "It's hard combination to beat," Kyle says. Once the full analysis is done, a set of images have been created that lets anyone look and reach their own decision on whether the two pictures are the same person.

Kyle was a member of the Billy the Kid Photo Project which searched for additional pictures of Billy the Kid. He has also published material showing a claimed Butch Cassidy to be an impostor. A need frequently exists for identification of people in modern day pictures in relation to crimes, and Kyle serves as a consultant in such cases. "Unfortunately," he says, "It's easier to prove two pictures are different people than that they are the same person." This means more work is done clearing people than getting them prosecuted.

Kyle spent six months last year in England at the research unit supporting Scotland Yard. His regular job is in the Computer Research Group at Los Alamos National Laboratory. Kyle has published one book dealing with light in the atmosphere and has a second book now in press. The new book deals with how to get the most out of closed circuit television security systems.

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Craig, Colorado,
Main Street

Northwestern
Colorado Museum



Brown's Park
Swinging Bridge

Dick DeJournette