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THE LYNCHING OF EDGAR VANOVER

YESTERDAY, EDGAR VANOVER, A SOLDIER OF FORTUNE WHO FOUGHT UNDER WILLIAM WALKER IN NICARAGUA, WAS LYNCHED ON THE BEEF GALLOWS NEAR THE WOODEN BRIDGE OVER CLEAR CREEK AT FORD STREET. HE WAS HUNG NOT FOR A CRIME HE COMMITTED, **BUT FOR A CRIME HE THREATENED TO COMMIT.**

MR. VANOVER, REPORTEDLY A MAN OF FINE APPEARANCE AND STRONG PHYSIQUE, WAS APPROXIMATELY THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OF AGE WHEN HE AND HIS PARTNERS, ED CHINN AND MARK TAYLOR, STARTED A SALOON ON FIRST STREET, A BLOCK BELOW JACKSON STREET.

ON THE MORNING OF THE LYNCHING, VANOVER AND HIS PARTNERS DISAGREED, CAUSING VANOVER TO SELL HIS SHARE OF THE SALOON TO HIS PARTNERS. HE BEGAN DRINKING HEAVILY, PERHAPS BY WAY OF CELEBRATION, AND SOON BEGAN TO THREATEN THAT HE WOULD KILL SOMEONE BEFORE THE DAY WAS DONE.

ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO KNEW THE MAN, VANOVER WAS A PLEASANT FELLOW WHEN SOBER, BUT WAS INCLINED TO BE QUARRELSOME WHEN UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL. AFTER MAKING THREATS TO HIS FORMER PARTNER, VANOVER VISITED TWO OTHER SALOONS, DEMONSTRATING HIS MARKSMANSHIP BY SHOOTING SUNDRY GLASSWARE.

WHEN HIS FORMER PARTNER, CHINN, TOOK AWAY VANOVER'S DERRINGER, VANOVER WENT INTO THE BOSTON STORE WHERE JOHN KING OFFERED HIM A DRINK. AN ARGUMENT AROSE AND VANOVER RENEWED HIS THREATS, APPEARING SERIOUS ENOUGH THAT KING RETURNED TO HIS WAGON AND LOADED A SHOTGUN, JUST IN CASE.

AFTER KING, VANOVER HEADED TO HIS FORMER SALOON, WHERE HE FOUND CHINN OUTSIDE WITH A LOADED GUN. CHINN WARNED VANOVER TO STAY OUT BUT THE BRAVE AND

UNARMED, VANOVER JUST CONTINUED WALKING FORWARD. VANOVER BARED HIS CHEST AND TOLD CHINN TO "SHOOT AND BE DAMNED."

CHINN'S BULLET MISSED AS DID BILL FORD'S SHOTS, ALTHOUGH ONE BALL DID GO THROUGH THE LEG OF VANOVER'S TROUSERS. ANOTHER MAN JOINED IN THE SHOOTING, BUT NONE OF THE BULLETS STRUCK VANOVER BEFORE HE TOOK FLIGHT. HE WAS FOLLOWED BY A POSSE THAT SURROUNDED WILLIAM YOUNG'S CABIN, WHERE VANOVER HAD TAKEN REFUGE.

WITH VANOVER LISTENING, THEY DISCUSSED HIS FATE, TRYING TO DECIDE IF HE SHOULD BE DEPORTED OR HUNG, BUT MANY FEARED VANOVER WOULD RETURN AND RETALIATE IF DEPORTED. A VOTE WAS HELD AND AN ALMOST UNANIMOUS VOTE FOR HANGING WAS REACHED.

VANOVER HEARD THE DECISION AND WALKED CALMLY FROM YOUNG'S CABIN, ALLOWING FOX DIEFENDORF TO BIND HIS HANDS. HE ACCOMPANIED THE CROWD TO THE OLD BEEF GALLOWS AND WITH A HANGING ROPE AROUND HIS NECK, HE WAS ASKED FOR ANY LAST WORDS.

"ALL I'VE GOT TO SAY," SAID VANOVER, "IS THAT FOX DIEFENDORF IS A BLANKETY, BLANKETY, BLANK."

THUS ENDED THE COLORFUL LIFE OF EDGAR VANOVER.

1. *Full Particulars of the late Lynching Case at Golden City, September 10, 1859, Rocky Mountain News.*
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/cgi-bin/colorado?a=d&d=RMW18590910&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-----0-#>
2. *Idaho Springs: Saratoga of the Rockies*, Ethel Morrow Gillette, 1978, pp 24.
3. *Colorado Transcript*, October 5, 1922.
<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/cgi-bin/colorado?a=d&d=CTR19221005.2.13#>