

# The Murder of Al Fulton Part II

By Robert Hutchison

Around 1878, Harry Fulton came to Flagstaff, Arizona. Eight years later, he helped establish the Arizona Wool Growers Association and was elected its first president.

Governor Conrad Meyer Zulick was instrumental in having Fulton appointed as the first sheep inspector for Yavapai County in May 1887. Also, important to note is the fact that Zulick's attorney general happened to be Briggs Goodrich. Briggs' brother was a prominent attorney in Cochise County. His name was Benjamin Goodrich. Both these men were uncles of James Lane Scott III, who would be murdered with James Warren Stott and William Jefferson Wilson on August 11, 1888.

In 1886, Harry Fulton invited his younger brother, Al Fulton, to join him in the sheep business. Al was in his early twenties. He became a sheep herder for a rancher named Woods. (Woods Canyon and Woods Canyon Lake were named for him.)

According to a story written by Stan Brown, columnist for the Payson Roundup, we learn that, while driving a flock of sheep from Holbrook toward the Mogollon Rim to winter pastures, Al Fulton was murdered. The following article, published in the August 10th, 1889 "Champion" Newspaper in Flagstaff (page 3, column 3) reads: "Found Dead (title): F.B. Parker, who recently arrived in town, gives us the following information: The body of Al Fulton was found by Parker and Juan Padia at Chevron Creek in Yavapai County." He also states that a wound in the back of the head indicated he had been violently dealt with. Mr. Parker says "it is his opinion that Babe Shaw was the man who done the deed. Previous to that, he threatened the life of and used abusive language toward the deceased. They found considerable money on his body in small silver coins..." They then buried the body (it should have been a skeleton after a year).

## Facts

Apache County Deputy Sheriff James Dennis Houck registered his brand for sheep in Apache County on September 25, 1888 at 3:00 p.m. During this same month, Al Fulton was murdered and his huge flock of sheep disappeared forever. Note: One mile below the murder site is the 13 Rock Ranch, owned by Apache County Deputy Sheriff Hugo A. Larson. He was a well-established sheep herder and had the facilities to handle a lot of sheep and to cut the waddle brand into the animals' noses. These two deputies, Houck and Larson, were present at the "Hanging Tree" during the murders of Stott, Scott and Wilson the previous month on the date of August 11, 1888 (see parts 1-5 in previous issues of GYMOAZ).

By Houck's own admission, he places himself near the murder scene, herding sheep at Chevron Creek in December, 1888. Geographically, this location is one and a half miles from Al Fulton's skeleton. In Holbrook, Houck swore in a deposition complaint that "Charley Deusha and McNeil (the poet bandit) shot at him from across Chevron Creek and killed the mule he was riding." This report was filed and dated in Holbrook, in February, 1889. St. George Creaghe would now be Owen's successor as Apache County Sheriff. Creaghe was listed as one of the deputies at the "Hanging Tree."

Newspaper: "Houck mortgaged his herd of 2,500 sheep in 1890 and, by 1891, he was a partner in the Houck and Craig Sheep Farm at Holbrook."

Arizona Silver Blet 1900: "The facts are that Houck is holding several thousand head of sheep on the west side of Tonto Creek..." (12 miles west of Al Fulton's gravesite). Mr. Houck, having refused to pay taxes on the sheep, Deputy Sheriff Voris last week, levied on 216 head and drove them to Globe, Arizona. They will be sold to satisfy the taxes next Saturday afternoon at

4:00 o'clock." Is this the same Voris that was named to be one of the spectators during the illegal hangings of Stott, Scott and Wilson in 1888?

Our research shows no record of Houck purchasing sheep from any sale barn/stockyard or person prior to his partnership with Craig in 1891. by 1897, J.D. Houck partnered with his brother, Chester Isaiah, who came from Wisconsin. By 1899, Houck's gambling debts from Prescott caught up with him and Chester Houck severed the partnership.

Chester Houck became sheriff of Navajo County and J.D. Houck became a deputy sheriff in Maricopa County. While employed there, J.D. killed one Mexican and disfigured the face of another by shooting them with his pistol. He became "the Cave Creek King" at the location in 1901 until his suicide in 1921, according to the Arizona Republic, March 31, 1921.

Based on these facts and testimonies, we will work on proving that Al Fulton was murdered by J.D. Houck.

\*Information provided by Wilson Investigation from the Arizona State Library Archives and Records Management 1901 W. Madison St., Phoenix, AZ