

# JOSEPH WARD

Desert Poet. Prospector. And a Manxman.  
*His Life and Adventures.*

1879-1928.

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I came to a ranch on Aok Creek, and there saw an old Southern teamster, who burned a skunk alive in a tree stump. I pitied the creature; and marvelled at the innate cruelty of this son of Alabama. However, I knew better than to cross him, even to save a skunk. He was an evil-looking specimen of humanity—no wonder General Grant had his hands full with men such as this.

After this, Major Garlic and I rode in a buggy to Phoenix, 100 miles to the South. He was taking Frank Gushing's outfit from Zuni, N.M., to Tempe, Arizona. He told me that I should have been the greatest photographer on earth had I been trained! I've often wondered if he lied, or knew me, or what he was talking about. However, I'm still on top, and he's not; he's now where he cannot tell the difference. I don't hold him any ill will.

I visited the ruins of Casa Grande and pondered on the greatness of the past in brooding melancholy. Then I made my famous foot trip to Yuma, 200 miles via Buckeye, Hula Bend, Texas Hill, and Hula City, examining canals, etc., and possible plans to make a settlement, although I never could decide as to whether I should chose a southern plantation with slaves, verandas, grapes, Spanish señoritas and guitars, etc., or a northern home with cattle on a thousand hills, ranches in the valley, wood and coal in the stove, the chilly evenings, and the scented hay, etc.

I could not decide, however, so I returned to Phoenix, and was beating my way back over Montezuma Summit, sitting on a can of cinders, first car behind the engine, when she stopped. On enquiry, I learned that several cars had become disconnected and were wrecked and several cattle killed. The Deputy-Sheriff came, and thinking that I was a wanted man who had robbed a house, he took me to Geila Bend and placed me under guard, but I eventually convinced them of my innocence and was released.

I then went down the river and stayed with Mrs. Jordan and her son. Two days later, the Deputy-Sheriff camped there on my trail and meeting Mrs. Jordan, he told her that I was the greatest criminal of the day—murderer, horse thief, and robber, etc. It took her breath away, and although I returned some time later and endeavoured to explain things, she was never the same.

After this, I journeyed to Texas Hill, Mohawk Summit, Greta City, Placers, Yuma. When I think of Yuma, I think of the story of the soldier and his blankets, and when he went to Hell, returned for them, though why he had blankets at Yuma was an accident he himself could never explain.

My last trip to Arizona I made in '95, and before I went, the Chinaman who owned the restaurant at Yuma, said were he a citizen he would go to the New River and raise hogs. However, I don't like that waste.

18 miles norwest of Bakersfield, I broke my shoulder flying through a wire fence to dodge a constable, and I was 13 hours with the arm hanging from the shoulder. Two months later, no exercise brought aukylosis all growing together.

I *went* from 'Frisco to Cooper Medical College, and there was placed under ether and had the shoulder re-set; they could have heard me squealing in Africa when the students would wrench my arm behind my back.

They would laugh, those accursed students. It is the regret of my life that I didn't kill them all, and yet they did me good; but we are so heartless and forgetful; we don't even thank God enough. He doesn't want our thanks, anyway; he knows us so well, and the hollowness of our sincerity, and God is no fool.

In 'Frisco I fell in love with a woman, much too good for me, so being broke, I sneaked out of town on a Stockton boat, overalls on, suit in bag. Not for worlds would I have had her see me then.

I went to Josemiletates to wear away her memory, but of no avail. For six weeks I did not sleep, so terribly ardent was my misery, because I know *now* for the first time what I had missed in life—wife, child, home, and love. I never recovered, nor shall I ever. Beyond words are the thoughts of the soul, and these failings must not be revealed.

### **RAILROAD STRIKE, JULY, '94.**

The original cause of the strike would be lost sight of, and elements would burn. San Francisco, Chicago, and many cities, did chaos reign. Order must be restored at all hazards, trains run, no man or set of men must be allowed to stop them.

The above are my opinions, and the strikers at Whatcheir House wanted to mob me for it. I saw men with gatling guns going down Market Street at 2 a.m. en route to Sacramento, where the strikers had captured the depot; we all failed of our civic duty; compromise must result.

A big bluffer, champion pugilist in Riverside, tried to run things once at "Waterman Ranch, east of San Bernardino. I had just rolled in labouring, had got a job in a few squares, and was playing checkers upstairs. The bully, to whom I had never spoken, knocked the board off our knees, and pretended that it was an accident. We all were too timid to remstrate with him, on account of the current tales of hs prowess with his fists, and of his splendid achievement in whipping the local blacksmith.

In the morning, at daybreak, he wasn't there to help Andrew and me to clean the stables, and later, when I complained, he insulted me. I, grabbing a pitchfork, executed a

war-dance in front of him, and I scared him by just missing his face with a devilish swipe.

I cooled off and went to work, while he sneaked I away. I watching him. Later, at breakfast, when I asked for a dish, they'd pass it in silence. Pour Andrew trembled like a leaf when he prepared the meal.

I was looked upon as a criminal; as a matter of fact. I wouldn't have actually hit him for the world. It was all bluff, but it worked.

After a few days I took to the mountains, glad to escape, as I had legally committed a penitentiary offence.

Years later, meeting Bill, we laughed till his plowing team stopped. Relating Andrew's little affair, Bill said that the man had really twenty times the nerve I had, but he was completely thrown off his guard. In other words, he said a psychological phenomena.