

Crazy Hole Time Travelers

By

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This book goes out to my wife for being so sweet and understanding with me spending countless hours on my laptop...

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Chapter 1

This Crazy Hole time travelers adventure starts off with John Mathers.

It was 1995 in Ohio, and eleven-year-old John Mathers had just returned home from watching the new Young Guns movie with his grandfather, Dr. Mickey Mathers, and John's best friend, Billy.

Mickey was the only father figure young John had during his youth since his father left when John was three years old. So John would spend countless hours listening to Mickey's stories about old western outlaws.

Mickey also gave John old dime novels that he read over and over again. One of John's favorite stories was about an outlaw named Bart Stone who had half of his right ear sliced off during a saloon fight. Bart traveled with his sidekicks Charlie Chandler and Jimmy Templeton where they roamed all around the Arizona, New Mexico, west Texas, Colorado, and Nevada areas. They robbed banks, trains, and stagecoaches from 1880 to 1883. Jimmy was caught during one of the robberies in 1882 and sentenced to a year in Arizona's Yuma Territorial prison. He was released on September 1883.

Bart was also suspected of killing three men but was never arrested or went to trial so it was all unsolved crimes.

After 1884, Bart and Charlie disappeared and were never seen again in the Phoenix area. Some folks heard stories they moved to San Francisco and lived the good life off all the money they stole. Some heard stories they were shot and killed in the Superstition Mountains in 1883 after he buried their loot from robbing the Mountain Rock bank.

Hundreds of treasure hunters spent countless hours while they searched the Superstition Mountains for Bart's suspected buried loot. They explored those rocky and dangerous trails and always came up empty-handed. This was a goal of Mickey's during his golden years of retirement from teaching history. He started research and hoped he could find the buried treasure. This would be an excellent find for his book he had in work on old western outlaws.

In the movie theater, John sat mesmerized and munched on popcorn while he watched Emilio Estevez play Billy the Kid on the silver screen. This was the second time he saw this movie after it came out a couple of weeks ago.

John also wore a bullet on a gold chain around his neck. He loved that bullet as his grandfather gave it to him last year and told him it was rumored to have once belonged to Billy the Kid. It probably didn't, but John believed his grandfather. So while he watched the Young Guns movie and when Emilio would shoot someone, John touched his bullet.

The movie ended, and Mickey drove John and Billy back to Julie's house. Julie was John's mother. After Mickey parked in her driveway, John and Billy hopped out of his car.

"Let's play. Go get dressed, and I'll meet you in my backyard, Billy," John said while he ran to his front door.

Billy ran over to his house next store to John's.

Fifteen minutes later, John ran out the back door and into his back yard. He was dressed in a black cowboy outfit with a black hat and had a paper bag in hand. He had a cap pistol in a holster that hung off his belt. He pretended to look mean while he strutted to the other side of the house.

Up against the corner of the house were pieces of cardboard taped together and marked with a Sharpie. It looked like a bank tellers window from the old west. John dragged the teller's window out to the middle of the yard and dropped the paper bag behind the cardboard tellers window.

Billy ran over into John's backyard in black pants, white shirt, and a black bow tie. He knew his position while he ran over behind the teller's window.

From the kitchen window, Mickey watched John and Billy play. Mickey smiled as he thought it was cute.

John walked twenty feet away from the cardboard bank. He pretended he rode a horse into town and stopped. He pretended he got out of the saddle of his invisible horse. He gave Billy the one-eyed evil stare then whipped out his cap pistol.

He strutted over to Billy. He got inches from the cardboard bank and aimed his cap pistol at Billy, who raised his arms pretending to shake in fear.

"Give me all your money!" John commanded.

Billy pretended to shake in fear while he held out a plastic bag full of pennies through the window.

John snatched the bag of pennies and shoved them in his pants pocket.

"Move just one inch and the famous old western outlaw, John Mathers, will shoot you square between your eyes!" John snarled at Billy then whipped out a piece of paper from his shirt pocket. The paper had a taped picture of John in his cowboy outfit with a handwritten "Famous Outlaws Of The Old West" titled with some drummed up words about John's outlaw ways.

"See, I'm in the history books," John said while he shoved his pretend newspaper in Billy's face.

From inside his house, Julie walked up to Mickey, who still watched John from the kitchen window.

"What's so interesting, Dad?" Julie asked while she stood by Mickey's side and placed an arm around his shoulder.

"John's playing with his friend, Billy," Mickey replied.

Julie looked out the kitchen window and saw John with his cap pistol aimed at Billy. She gave a look that she disapproved then glanced at her watch. "He needs to be doing something more constructive than playing those kinds of games," she said.

"Oh, he's all right. He's just doing this for fun," Mickey said.

Outside at the pretend bank, Billy scratched his nose.

John saw this and pretended to be pissed while he closes one eye, took aim, and fired his cap pistol at Billy.

Billy clutched his chest in extreme fake pain.

He staggered backward from the cardboard bank.

He twirled on one foot then dropped to the ground.

He twitched on the ground. He went limp and pretended to be dead.

"Johnnie, it's time for your baseball game. The coach said you're pitching today, sweetie!" Julie yelled from the back door.

John looked irritated at his mother then looked back at Billy.

"I'll rob the stagecoach after baseball, Billy," John told him.

Billy stood up. "Okay," he replied, then ran off to his house.

"Mom! Never call an outlaw sweetie!" John yelled out a little embarrassed while he ran to Julie.

During the next five years, John became more and more infatuated with old western outlaws. It was because of the movies and books that glorified the lives of criminals such as Jesse James, and Billy the Kid, that infatuated John.

It was now 2003 and John, now nineteen years old, and moved to the Phoenix, Arizona area. His mother and grandfather had died, and he was on his own.

He found an apartment in Mesa, to the east of Phoenix. John had his grandfather's uncompleted manuscript titled "Arizona Old Western Marshals and Outlaws," and it was the unfinished chapter of Bart Stone that drove him to choose Phoenix as his new start in life.

He had grand plans to discover the buried treasure of Bart Stone and finish his grandfather's manuscript and become rich off the sales of the book. John got an apartment and lived off

the rest of his money from the sale of his mother's house and the money his grandfather left him.

John spent countless hours at the library where he conducted research on Bart Stone.

He found a picture of Bart in a book titled "Outlaws and Lawmen of Arizona," and it showed his right ear with part of it sliced off. But he could never find any leads on any buried loot from Bart Stone.

John eventually met Melvin (Mel) Lincoln, an eighty-year-old Apache Indian with a long white ponytail. Mel spent most of his free time at the library where he read newspapers and magazines.

Mel befriended John and told him countless tales about the old west around the Phoenix area during the 1880s. His stories of the old west were passed down from Mel's grandfather Victorio and his great grandfather, Merijildo, a tracker during the eighteen-eighties. Numerous stories were about outlaw Bart Stone and his sidekick Charlie Chandler.

John's library research and stories by Mel also revealed information about numerous old towns near Phoenix during those times.

The town of Oak Creek was once located eight miles northwest of Miners Needle in an area a few miles north to the unincorporated area of Tortilla Flat. The town was close to Canyon Lake. Oak Creek was founded in 1867 and was abandoned around 1887. The only remains of Oak Creek are a few faded tombstones hidden amongst some bushes.

Stone Valley was located in what is now Desert Ridge. It was founded around 1869 and abandoned in 1895.

Rattlesnake was once located near Sun City. It was founded in 1873 and abandoned around 1892.

Mountain Rock was located in what is now Gilbert. It was founded around 1877 and abandoned in 1894.

And of course, all these towns circled Phoenix, which was settled in 1867. This was where most of the residents of those abandoned towns moved for grander opportunities.

The Butterfield Overland Stagecoach made daily runs to all of the towns, as a trail linked all cites together. The main office of the Butterfield Overland Stage Company was located in Phoenix.

John also learned of a rail line that ran from Dodge City to Albuquerque then to Phoenix. By 1880 it had stops at Oak Creek, Stone Valley, and Rattlesnake before ending in Phoenix.

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company operated the rail line with its main office located in Phoenix. Greedy management eventually bankrupted the company in nineteen oh two, and the rail line was abandoned after the train was sold.

John had previously hiked all over the mountains around Phoenix using the information he found at the library, the Internet, and from Mel's stories. He never located Bart's buried loot and was extremely disappointed.

John also frequented all the antique stores around Phoenix and hoped of finding some information on Bart Stone hidden in some old desk or other objects. He came up empty-handed but bought all sorts of old western junk that eventually cluttered up his apartment.

In 2004, John's money was running out, and he had one thousand six hundred and ninety-eight dollars left. So he landed a job with the Western Snacks and Vending Machine Company located in Apache Junction. He worked as a driver who went around and stocked vending machines in various businesses around the Phoenix area.

But John's obsession with old western outlaws continued, and he didn't give up on his grandfather's manuscript, he just put it on the back burner.

Also, during 2004 John met Angie Dawson. She was nineteen years old, beautiful with shoulder-length hair. She

started working at the Western Snack and Vending Machine company as a clerk in the accounting department.

Chapter 2

It was Friday, August 18th, 2006, and John's obsession for old western outlaws was still burning inside him.

At first, Angie thought his obsession, interest as John described it, in old western outlaws was cute, but it now started to wear on her. She tolerated his passion, hoping John would grow out of it soon. But it was beginning to wear on her.

One restaurant that John would frequently take Angie was called the Outlaw Steak House where the interior walls were filled with memorabilia, old photos, and news articles on famous western outlaws and lawmen.

It was early evening on that Friday.

John took Angie to the Outlaw Steak House, and they sat in a booth. But this night, Angie appeared annoyed while they ate their steak dinners.

"John, this place is dumb, and I'm sick and tired of coming here! Why can't we eat somewhere nice and romantic for a change?" Angie said, then sipped on her iced tea.

"Are you kidding Angie? Look at all the cool history this place has to offer," he replied, stabbing his fork at a photo of Bart Stone on the wall of their booth. "Like Bart Stone over here. Legend has it that he and his partner Charlie Chandler shot and killed Town Marshal Clint Bartley after they robbed a bank. They later buried some loot in the Superstition Mountains and left the area. Nobody heard from them again, and it's still believed their loot is still buried somewhere in those mountains. My grandfather wanted to find that treasure, but," John said.

Angie interrupted him. "Enough! You should be working on a college degree for a better paying job." "And what's with that stupid necklace?"

John reached in his shirt and pulled out his bullet on a chain. "What's wrong with it? It's a bullet that came from Billy the Kid's pistol right after he was killed. My grandfather gave it to me when I was eight years old," John said while he admired his bullet.

Angie rolled her eyes. "I'm surprised you don't have his dirty long johns hanging above your bed. Listen, I hate to change this interesting subject, but since I came here, you owe me."

John frowned, as he knew exactly where she wanted to after this place. "I hate the mall!" he quietly said to himself.

Angie gave him a dirty look," as she heard his comment.

They finished their dinner and John drove Angie to the Paradise Valley Mall in his 1995 Mustang, which was in dire need of a paint job and Bondo work.

John was totally bored while Angie dragged him by the hand through the Paradise Valley Mall.

They strolled through Dillard's, and John paced totally bored while Angie looked at the woman's clothes.

They left Dillard's and walked around the mall. Angie stopped at Macy's and John cringed. Then his eyes sparkled when he saw the Western Antique's store with a grand opening sign in the window.

"I'll tell you what, I'm going to check out that new store while you go in Macy's," John said while he looked at the antique store.

Angie saw the store and rolled her eyes. "Don't blow all your money on worthless crap," she replied. "I'll meet you outside Macy's in thirty minutes," Angie added.

A quick kiss and she walked off to Macy's and John strutted off to the antique store.

John entered the Western Antique's store and loved the sight of all the old western junk all over the place. He saw old western clothes, cowboy hats, wanted posters and etc.

John was in heaven while he walked around and admired the old western junk in the store.

Something caught his eye, and he walked over and stopped.

He saw a small old faded wood chest with the initials "PY" engraved on the top. The label on the chest stated that the contents inside were guaranteed to be from around the 1880s and earlier. There was something about this chest that compelled John to check it out. The top of the chest creaked when John opened it. He peeked inside and looked through the cellophane covering that prevented people from stealing the contents.

Inside the chest, he saw an old journal from Peter Yoemans.

He saw an old Weekly Phoenix Herald newspaper. He saw an old worn-out leather holster.

He saw numerous dime novels and some other old newspapers from the Phoenix area.

He had to have this chest!

John smiled while he grabbed the chest and placed it under his left arm. He walked around the store and admired the other junk.

John walked by numerous cowboy hats on display on a shelf.

There were all advertised as being remakes from the 1870 – 1890 era. John picked up and looked at a black Stetson. He placed it on his head, and it was a perfect fit. He walked off with it.

He walked around the store and saw old vintage cowboy shirts and pants.

John saw a glass counter by the cash register, and his eyes sparkled again. He rushed over to the counter.

He stopped at the glass counter and placed the chest and hat on top of it.

He looked inside the counter and saw numerous old pistols.

He drooled at the sight of the firearms.

A salesman walked over to John behind the counter.

"Do you see one you like?" the salesman asked John.

"Oh yeah, John replied while he looked at all the pistols for sale. "I like that Colt Peacemaker," he said while he pointed at it.

"Excellent choice," the salesman said then unlocked the door at the rear of the case. He slid the door to the side, reached in and removed the pistol, and he handed it to John.

John looked the Colt over. He aimed it and thoughts that pistol could have once belonged to an outlaw went through his mind. He smiled. "I'll take it," he said then handed the pistol back to the salesman.

He walked over to the cash register. He scanned in the items.

"That'll be one thousand, eight hundred thirty dollars and seventy-eight cents," the salesman said.

John removed his checkbook from his back pocket. He wrote out a check for that amount and left him with only twenty dollars in his checking account. But he didn't care, as he now owned a piece of old western history.

Ten minutes later, John walked out of the antique store, proud of his newly purchased junk.

He walked over and stood outside the entrance to Macy's with the wooden chest under his one arm and a shopping bag that contained the cowboy hat and pistol in his other hand. He waited for Angie to come out of Macy's.

Fifteen minutes later, Angie walked out of Macy's with two shopping bags. She bought two blouses and one sundress. She saw John with the chest and shopping bag. She eyed the antique store then looked back at John.

"Did you bought more crap for your apartment?" she asked.

John smiled and patted the wooden chest.

"How much did this cost you?" Angie asked.

"One thousand, eight hundred thirty dollars," John said under his breath, as he really didn't want Angie to hear him.

"How much?" Angie said, unsure she heard correctly.

"One thousand, eight hundred thirty dollars," John said louder.

"Why in the world would you waste what little money you have on junk?" Angie said, then walked away and rolled her eyes.

John could care less. He knew she would forget about it as she always did.

Later that day, John sat on his couch in his apartment. It had all kinds of old western junk on the wall - pictures of outlaws, copies of old newspaper articles, etc. John looked at his new chest, cowboy hat, and pistol that lay on his coffee table.

On TV played the Young Guns movie.

John looked at the carved "PY" on top of the chest. It looked like it was carved with a knife.

He got curious and reached for a book at the other end of the coffee table. It was his grandfather's college textbook he used when he taught history. It was called "Old Western Outlaws" and had short biographies of all the outlaws from 1800 -1900 complete with pictures if available.

John opened up the book and looked at all the outlaws with a last name in the Y's. He didn't find any outlaws with the "PY" initials.

"He must not be an outlaw," John said quietly to himself.

He opened up the chest and remembered the cellophane that covered it. He got off the couch and went into the kitchen.

He came back with a knife and quickly cut the cellophane away.

He reached inside and removed the diary for Peter Yoemans. He placed it down on the coffee table.

He reached inside and removed the old Phoenix Herald newspaper. He placed the newspaper down on the coffee table.

He reached inside and removed a couple of dime novels on outlaws. One of them was on outlaw Bart Stone. He placed them down on the coffee table.

John picked up the newspaper and read it, and it was dated September 25th, 1884. He saw the article titled "Marshal Clint Bartley Killed."

He read the news article and then saw a photograph of Clint standing out in front of the Oak Creek Marshal's Office.

"Bart Stone, Charlie Chandler, and Jimmy Templeton were chased by Marshal Bartley and a six-man posse after they robbed the stagecoach in route from Oak Creek to Phoenix.

They chased Bart and Charlie into the Superstition Mountains, and a gun battle pursued not too far from Miners Needle. It is believed Bart fired the fatal shot that killed Marshal Bartley. Bart, Charlie, and Jimmy slipped away into the desert," John read the article out loud then laid the newspaper down on the coffee table.

John picked up the dime novel on Bart Stone, and he opened it up.

"Bart Stone was born around eighteen fifty-three in a farm in Texas. He was the youngest son as his brother Willy was older. His father was a drunk and would beat Bart in an attempt to keep the young lad on the straight and narrow path," John read out loud then laid the book on the coffee table, as he already knew this information.

John picked up his pistol, and he looked it over. He aimed it and pretended to shoot it. He laid the pistol back on the coffee table.

He picked up Peter Yoemans diary. He flipped and scanned through the pages; then he stopped at a page of interest.

"I talked today with Betty Grayson, now seventy-eight years old and she's the sister of outlaw Charlie Chandler. She

told me on Charlie's deathbed, he told her Bart buried their loot in a cave. It was a cave that scared him to death. But she didn't know where this cave was located. She stated that she didn't approve of Charlie's outlaw ways. March 12th, nineteen thirty-eight," John read out loud from the diary.

John's eyes widened with joy after he read that page and was so glad he bought this chest. He flipped and scanned through some more pages. He stopped at another page of interest.

"I finally located some kin of Bart Stone. His older brother, Willy Stone, eighty-four years old, was a retired preacher and also disapproved of his younger brother being an outlaw. He told me that Bart drew a map to the location of some buried loot in a cave called Crazy Hole. Willy let me look at the map, but I couldn't copy it. I had to quickly redraw it from memory in my journal immediately after my meeting with him. Willy also stated he believed the map to be one of Bart's many lies. September 15th, nineteen forty-two," John read out loud from the diary.

John noticed that the next page was ripped out of the journal. "Rats, he ripped out the map," John said disappointed.

He flipped and scanned through some more pages. He stopped at another page of interest.

"I hiked in the Superstition Mountains with the treasure map I drew from meeting Willy. I couldn't find the cave called Crazy Hole. October 2nd, nineteen forty-two," John read out loud from the diary.

He flipped and scanned through some more pages. He stopped at another page of interest.

"Paid some old Indian twenty dollars, and he told me the location of the cave called Crazy Hole. I know that's where Bart's loot is buried, so I'm going to keep it my secret. February 16th, nineteen forty-three," John read out loud from the diary.

John's heart raced as he found all of Peter's entries interesting. He also was saddened that his grandfather didn't discover this information before he died.

He flipped and scanned through some more pages. He stopped at another page of interest.

"I learned more about this Crazy Hole from an old, old Indian. He said to go in the cave, and that right is the way. And if you say a particular month, day and year, before entering another tunnel inside Crazy Hole you will arrive there. I think I know what that means," John read out loud from the diary.

He turned the page and found another entry.

"I finally located the cave called Crazy Hole. I found a dead end. I remembered what that Indian said, and I mentioned a month, day, and year. I entered a tunnel to the right. I discovered something so amazing. So amazing I can't write it down, as I want this to be my secret. A secret that can make me richer than Bart's buried loot. March 7th, nineteen forty-three," John read out loud from the diary.

That was the last entry in Peter's journal but noticed that another page was torn out. He closed the journal and laid it down on the coffee table.

"I guess he meant he knew the locations of other buried loot," said John.

He looked back at the chest. Something felt odd as he stared at the chest, and he looked inside.

He felt inside the chest then he looked at the outside.

He looked inside and noticed the bottom was made from different wood than the rest of the chest. It wasn't as faded as the rest of the chest.

He stuck his hand inside and measured the distance from the bottom of the chest to the top with his arm. He used his same arm and measure the bottom of the chest to the top on the outside. There was a three-inch difference, and that created some suspicion.

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