

REAL SHOTGUN KITTY BIGGER THAN LIFE

by
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Women of Amargosa country are more spirited and vivacious than most. A little sharper and exuberant at times too. They have been that way for many a year.

In the early 1900's two remarkable women settled a stage stop from each other. Celeste (Cettie) Fairbanks at Fairbanks Spring at Ash Meadows and Kitty (Shotgun) Tubb at Death Valley Junction. Though markedly different in some ways, both were lively,

independent and fair minded young women and they became firm friends.

Pretty and pleasingly plump, "Shotgun" Kitty had a raging temper when roused. She had run off from home when very young and at sixteen had advertised herself for marriage in a Philadelphia

newspaper. Big Bob Tubb, a teamster, happened to be in town getting supplies. He answered the advertisement, inspected Kitty, knew he had the right mate and took her back to the Amargosa desert. It was Kitty who organized the settlement of "Bob's Place," later to become

Death Valley Junction.

The energetic young woman ran the store, cooked for the men of the boarding house, looked after the four or five girls of the "house" and served in the saloon. She also played poker with the teamsters and prospectors, nursed them when sick,

sympathized at their troubles and shot them when they got out of line.

"She sure was a dead shot," recalled an old friend. "Shot straight from the hip and never, I swear, did she miss. No one messed with

Continued on Page 10

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Kitty Never Missed



NOT SO TOUGH—Shotgun Kitty Tubbs appears sweet and tender in this family portrait. She was, however, known as dead shot.

Continued from Page 1

Kitty though many would sure like to have. She was all woman." In later years Kitty Tubb measured five by five — like a barrel — but she still moved around pretty quick.

Rancher Pete Peterson told how once he played Kitty for a painting. He had one of a pair painted by Rosa Bonheur. Kitty had the other. Both wanted the male so they set up a poker deck. "Kitty won of course," sighed Pete. "But we took a vow that whoever outlived the other would get both paintings. When she died in 1957 I thought I'd leave when awhile in her house so I could keep coming back to look at them and remember wild Kitty."

The fire that consumed the old Tubb home at Ash Meadows at the end of 1971 destroyed the paintings.

Cettie who was married to Ralph Jacobus (Dad) Fairbanks had a busy life running a boarding house for

travellers passing through Amargosa en route to Greenwater or the gold camps of Southern Nevada. It was not uncommon to see 500 wagons outside the Fairbanks hostelry at Ash Meadows.

Cettie was a slip of a woman, but like her friend Shotgun Kitty was strong and resolute. Unlike Kitty she did not hold with drinking or card playing. Her husband paid \$125 for a 500-gallon barrel of whiskey to be freighted to the Fairbanks saloon. Placed on a platform it had a spigot in bottom of the barrel and it sold for two bits a cup.

Cettie eyed the barrel dolefully. One evening when all was quiet she got up and turned on the spigot full force. Too late men came running out of the saloon to see the whiskey vanishing in the dust of Ash Meadows. One old desert rat dropped to his knees and drunk up what he could from a whiskey puddle.

Cettie was certainly the

most unpopular female on the Amargosa desert for a while. But she didn't care for she had done what she thought was right. Full of spit and spunk, Cettie Fairbanks was also kind and gentle. The two women often consoled each other for both had more than a fair share of problems in that desert society.

They took turns driving the twelve miles to each other's homes to enjoy a few hours of feminine relaxation. Pretending for short while that each was living a quiet normal life in an ordinary town. Anywhere but the Amargos desert.

Yet both were to stay in this country. Kitty lived out her days on a ranch at Ash Meadows. Cettie went on to Greenwater and later with her husband built up the town of Shoshone. Both game much to Amargosa where sour dough prospectors and desert rats remember these early pioneer women with pleasure and admiration.