



**BUTCH CASSIDY, FAR RIGHT, AND THE WILD BUNCH POSE IN FT. WORTH IN 1901.**

Mogollon for a wider variety of leisure pursuits, including female companionship. (Today, Mogollon is a ghost town and open to visitors on weekends from mid-May to mid-October.) Cassidy was known for his dancing prowess and regularly attended dances there, and female acquaintances were said to consider him a true gentleman. Cassidy would not tolerate cussing when women were present and, as was the practice, would place a wild rag or handkerchief between his hand and his partner's waist to prevent soiling her dress.

A visit from Pinkerton agent Frank Murray to the area in the spring of 1900 precipitated Cassidy's departure. Before leaving, though, he stole all the horses from a neighbor, who was suspected of rustling WS cattle. Next, he popped up in Winnemucca, Nevada, where he robbed the First National Bank. And when the Wild Bunch posed for a photograph in Fort Worth, law enforcement caught wind of the gang's whereabouts, precipitating flight to New York, Argentina, and eventually Bolivia. People contest the fatal 1908-gun fight in San Vicente, Bolivia, that took Cassidy's life, and numerous post-mortem sightings followed. In fact, the granddaughter of one of Cassidy's Mogollon dancing partners, Mary Agnes Snider, maintains that Cassidy visited her grandmother in Silver City, New Mexico, in 1937. She claims that a man was introduced to her and her playmate as "Butch Cassidy," at which point the former outlaw said, "That's a name I want to forget."

The debate goes on, but Butch Cassidy did leave his mark on New Mexico. Tales like these about the famous gunman's presence here are still told, and a freshwater spring in the Gila Wilderness is rumored to bear his name. —*Nancy Coggeshall*

## It Happened Here: Alma, N.M.

Where Butch Cassidy cowboied, tended bar, danced, and—possibly—returned to visit.



**CASSIDY'S 1894 MUGSHOT FROM THE WYOMING TERRITORIAL PRISON.**

From 1899–1900, Butch Cassidy and members of the Wild Bunch worked at the WS Ranch in Alma, N.M., on the Outlaw Trail's southern reaches. Using the alias Jim Lowe, Cassidy worked for the Anglo-Irish ranch manager Captain William French. The WS Ranch was protected by rugged, remote terrain, and his cover as a working hand allowed Cassidy to avoid the law. But he and the Wild Bunch also affected real change, protecting the WS interests and greatly reducing cattle rustling.

When Cassidy wasn't minding cattle, he tended bar at the Alma saloon, in which he had a financial interest. He would also visit the nearby mining town of

# SnapShot



◀ **The Early Years:** Started in Dallas in 1959, the National Finals Rodeo was floundering in its temporary home of Los Angeles in 1965. That's when rodeo's year-end championship moved to Oklahoma City, and General Manager Clem McSpadden helped streamline production, draw more fans, and improve stock and payouts. The NFR had a successful 20-year run in Oklahoma City before moving to Las Vegas in 1985.



▲ **Winning in Vegas:** The richest rodeo in the world, the Wrangler NFR boasts a record total purse of \$6 million and is a red-hot commodity that features an annual attendance of more than 170,000. The 10-day spectacle takes over Las Vegas each December and turns Sin City into "Cowboy Town." The Thomas & Mack Center has hosted the NFR since 1985, and due to the city's appeal, the event has exploded in popularity.