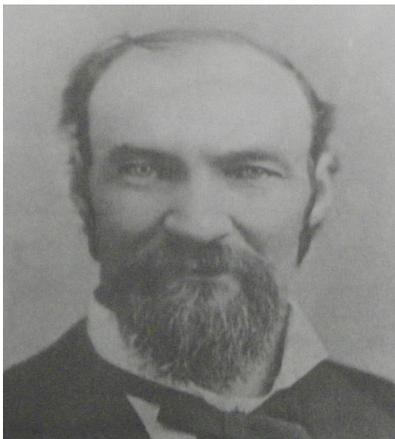




A History of the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office

Sweetwater County, originally Carter County, was created in 1869 while Wyoming was still Wyoming Territory. Its first sheriff was John Boyd, appointed by Governor John Campbell on December 21 of that year. (In its brief history, Carter County had only one Sheriff: John R. Murphy.)

The Sweetwater County of 1869 - and indeed until 1884 - was immense, extending from the Wyoming/Utah/Colorado border in the south, all the way north to the present day border of Montana, encompassing what are now Sublette, Fremont, Park and part of Big Horn Counties. The county seat, later moved to Green River - at gunpoint by some accounts - was the gold rush town of South Pass City, south of Lander.



Sheriff John McGlinchey

Sweetwater County's first elected Sheriff, John McGlinchey, was also its second. However otherwise uneventful his four years in office may have been, his term is remembered for the attempted robbery of a small Union Pacific station about 20 miles from Green River in 1872.

Just after midnight the station operator, an 18-year- old girl, was accosted by a band of armed bandits whose intention was to stop and rob the next train. Showing remarkable courage and resourcefulness, the girl dropped her head to her arms on the table in front of her and pretended to sob in terror, the whole time surreptitiously tapping out a message for help on the telegraph key. At about 1:40 AM, a train arrived; not the scheduled run the gang had anticipated, but a special train commissioned by Sheriff McGlinchey and a heavily armed posse. The gang was captured and all served sentences at the territorial prison in Laramie.



Then and now - at left, the Sweetwater County Courthouse (and attached county jail) in Green River around the turn of the 20th century, and the current Sweetwater County Detention Center, completed in 2005.

At age 24, Sheriff P.H. McPhee (elected 1874 and 1880) was probably the youngest sheriff ever elected in Sweetwater County. Sheriff William Adolphus Johnson (elected 1878) was known as an excellent pistol shot. Joseph Young (elected 1884 and 1886) had the misfortune of being in office during the infamous Rock Springs Massacre of 1885, when white miners rioted and killed at least 28 Chinese miners.

As the years passed, Wyoming's counties multiplied and the original five counties of the Wyoming Territory (Uinta, Sweetwater, Carbon, Albany and Laramie) shrank. By 1886 Sweetwater County's borders were fixed at their present form. Wyoming achieved statehood in 1890 and Sweetwater County's first post-territorial sheriff was Thomas Whitmore, a Civil War veteran, originally from Lake County, Ohio.

Eleven men served as Sheriff of Sweetwater County from the year of statehood until World War II; among them Chris Jessen, a former Green River Chief of Police. Sheriff Mike Maher, who held office from 1943 to 1954, had been among the original seven patrolmen of the Wyoming Highway Patrol.



Deputy Sheriff Ed Phillips

George "Mac" Nimmo, elected in 1954, 1958, and 1962, was the first Sweetwater County Sheriff to attend the FBI's National Academy. Nimmo went on to found the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy in Laramie, which was later moved to Douglas. Sadly, it was during Nimmo's first term as sheriff that Deputy Sheriff Ed Phillips was shot and killed in the line of duty on March 4, 1955. Phillips is the sole deputy to be killed in the line of duty in Sweetwater County.

Sheriff Jim Stark, a champion boxer and veteran of the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, saw duty after World War II with both the Rock Springs Police Department and Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office. Stark served as Sheriff from 1977 to 1986.



Sheriff Rich Haskell

Sheriff Richard Haskell is currently serving as the 26th Sheriff of Sweetwater County. Today the Sweetwater County Sheriff's Office employs a staff of 105.

Multi-band radio may have replaced the telegraph and semi-

automatic pistols the Colt Peacemaker, but the tradition remains; the legacy of the county peace officer upholding the law in the largest county in Wyoming and the eighth largest in the United States at 10,352 square miles.