

New theories emerge about Nevada 'Shoshone Mike' case

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

This is certain: four stockmen, eight American Indians and a posse member were shot dead in the frozen Nevada desert in February 1911.

Over the past century, nearly everything else about the "Shoshone Mike" case has been questioned, revised and exaggerated, according to researchers who studied the case.

The stockmen were murdered in Little High Rock Canyon, 135 miles north of Reno, in January, but their bodies weren't discovered until Feb. 10. Lawmen and cowboys followed the suspects' trail more than 200 miles.

A posse caught up with a 12-member Indian band on Feb. 26. In a dry wash north of Golconda, the pursuers began shooting. When the smoke cleared, posse member Ed Hogle was dead and the bodies of four Indian men, two women and two children lay bleeding in the snow.

Four Indian children – ages estimated at 16, 7, 4 and 10 months – were captured and brought to the Reno jail. They were kept there for several months.

Traditionally, the story has been told as a victory of justice over savagery: a tale of noble cowboys and renegade Indians.

It happened 21 years after the massacre of Indians at Wounded Knee, S.D., where 146 Sioux Indians – men, women and children – were slain by the U.S. 7th Cavalry and 25 troopers died. The Shoshone Mike massacre occurred at a time when automobiles, airplanes and movies were in their infancy.

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