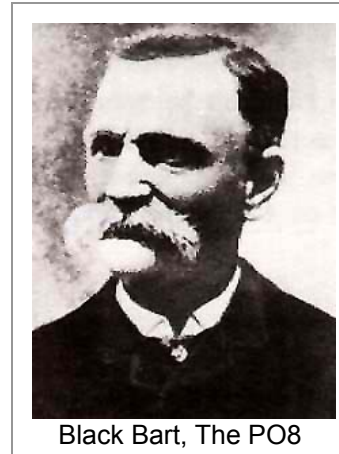


Black Bart's Poetry

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On August 3, 1877, the Wells Fargo & Co. stage between Point Arenas and Duncan's Mills on the Russian River, just north of San Francisco, was robbed. It was notable for the scrap of paper left behind in the empty treasure box missing \$300 and a check drawn on Granger's Bank of San Francisco. On the back of a waybill was written:

"I've labored long and hard for bred (bread)
For honor and for riches
But on my corns too long yove (you've) tred (tread)
You fine-haired sons _____."



Black Bart, The PO8

Black Bart, 1877

This was one of many daring thefts by the same highwayman, Charles E. Bolton, alias Charles E. Boles, alias Black Bart, "The PO8." On July 25, 1878, he held up the stage between Quincy and Oroville, taking \$379 in currency, along with jewelry and the US Mail. He left this message:

"Here I lay me down to Sleep
To wait the coming morrow
Perhaps Success perhaps defeat
And everlasting Sorrow

Let come what will I'll try it on
My condition can't be worse
And if there's money in that Box
'Tis munny (money) in my purse."

Black Bart -The PO8

As the number of robberies attributed to Bart grew, California Governor William Irwin announced a \$300 reward for Bart's capture and conviction. Wells Fargo contributed another \$300 and the US postal authorities increased the reward by \$200. James B. Hume, chief investigator for Wells Fargo led the hunt for Black Bart.

“The PO8” finally was caught after his last stage robbery on November 3, 1883 between Sonora and Milton. A laundry mark—F.X.O.7—on the handkerchief he left behind served as the clue to his capture. At the time, it was determined that Charles E. Bolton robbed the Wells, Fargo & Co Express stages on these routes and dates:

Sonora to Milton, July 26, 1875
San Juan to Marysville, December 28, 1875
Roseburg to Yreka, June 2, 1875
Point Arenas to Duncan’s Mills, August 3, 1877
Quincy to Oroville, July 23, 1878
Laporte to Oroville, July 30, 1878
Cahto to Ukiah, October 2, 1878
Covelo to Ukiah, October 3, 1878
Laporte to Oroville, June 21, 1879
Roseburg to Redding, October 25, 1879
Alturas to Redding, October 27, 1879
Point Arenas to Duncan’s Mills, July 22, 1880
Weaverville to Redding, September 1, 1880
Roseburg to Yreka, September 10, 1880
Roseburg to Redding, November 20, 1880
Roseburg to Yreka, August 31, 1881
Lakeview to Redding, October 11, 1881
Downieville to Marysville, December 13, 1881
North San Juan to Smartville, December 27, 1881
Ukiah to Cloverdale, January 26, 1882
Little Lake to Ukiah, June 14, 1882
Attempt to rob stage from Laporte to Oroville, July 13, 1882
Yreka to Redding, September 17, 1882
Lakeport to Cloverdale, November 24, 1882
Lakeport to Cloverdale, April 12, 1883
Jackson to Lone, June 23, 1883
Sonora to Milton, November 3, 1883

Bolton-Boles-Bart pleaded guilty to the stage robbery of November 3, 1883 before Judge P.H. Kean in San Andreas and was sentenced to 6 years in the California State Prison. He entered San Quentin on November 21, 1883 and served four years and two months before his release for good behavior.

Outside of prison, newspaper reporters mobbed him. One asked, *Did he intend to rob stages again?* Bart shook his head no. Another question: *Had he any more verses up his sleeve?* Bart replied, “Young man, didn’t you hear me say I would commit no more crimes?” Black Bart headed away from the San Francisco Bay Area as far south as Visalia, and disappeared.