



Corral of rough-hewn logs, above, can be found at Butch Cassidy homesite.

At right is log cabin where Butch grew up; below, piece of old machinery is decorated with rust.



This stove at old Parker ranch "retired" long ago. Parry Jackson of Fremont says his step-granddaddy, Bill Long, carried guns, below, when he rode with Wild Bunch.



## On the Butch Cassidy trail

Butch Cassidy, one of the West's most famous and colorful outlaws lived in the little Southern Utah town of Circleville.

It's a peaceful, picturesque community encircled by snow-capped mountains; a place where time seems to have stood still.

Out at the old homestead where Butch grew up, a few souvenirs of the past still remain.

If they could talk, perhaps they could explain why he began to carry a gun.

But they are silent. And the only sound for miles around is the cry of a bird — too rugged and pioneering to fly South for the winter.



Deseret News photos by Arlene Braithwaite

# Outlaw's sister sets the record straight

By Rose Mary Pedersen  
Deseret News staff writer

CIRCLEVILLE, PIUTE COUNTY — "My brother didn't eat with a knife like the rest of the cowboys. He had manners! He never killed a man, either. Bob wasn't that sort."

Lula Parker Betenson, last surviving member of Butch Cassidy's immediate family, likes to set the record straight when she talks about her outlaw brother.

Not that she condones all those wild and woolly bank robberies. She knows he did wrong.

But wrong or not, he had many good ways, she declares getting a little misty-eyed. And you just couldn't help having a soft spot in your heart for him.

Now a spritely 92, Mrs. Betenson still lives in Circleville, the scenic little Southern Utah town where her big brother grew up.

Back then he was known as Robert LeRoy Parker, and was the eldest of 13 children. (Mrs. Betenson was child number nine.)

"Cassidy", his famous alias, came from Mike Cassidy, the shady feller who taught him how to use a gun. "Butch", from a job he had in a

butcher shop in Rock Springs, Wyo.

"But the children always called him Bob," recalls his younger sister.

"So a few years ago, I decided to write his story from the family's point of view and clarify a few things. It was something I just had to do."

In her book, written with the help of Bountiful author Dora Flack, Mrs. Betenson points out that probably Butch never intended to go bad and form the Wild Bunch.

He just sort of got caught up in all the excitement, and then couldn't find a way out.

She also points out that he never became a hardened gunslinger, but was noted for leaving big tips and paying mortgages for the poor with money he'd taken from the rich.

"They called him the Robin Hood of the West. People write to me all the time telling me heartwarming things he did."

Journalists write to her all the time, too — eager to set up interviews.

She has talked before dozens of clubs and civic groups since writing her book; has been guest of honor at many banquets; has traveled exten-

sively; has attended glittering premieres.

And she gets a twinkle in her eye talking about the time she appeared on the Mike Douglas Show and was serenaded with the theme song from the movie, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid."

Speaking of that movie, Butch Cassidy's sister has seen it seven times!

Paul Newman could very easily be on the Parker family tree, she notes — he looks so much like her brother.

As for Robert Redford, who plays the part of Butch's buddy the Sundance Kid, she has become great friends with him and made a quilt and booties for one of his children.

What about that memorable scene in the film where Butch and Sundance are cut down by bullets in South America?

Mrs. Betenson confides that she never could have watched the movie if it had been true.

Actually, though, Butch didn't die in Bolivia at all, but returned to Circleville. And she vividly remembers the poignant homecoming.

"I baked bread and a bulberry



Lula Parker Betenson

pie and went on over to Dad's. Bob stood up . . . I didn't recognize him at first, but by his features I knew he had to be family.

"Then Dad said, 'Lula, this is LeRoy!' (that was Bob's middle name).

"I cooked dinner . . . we visited until the wee hours of the morning. I could tell he was happy to be with us, grateful his wandering days were over. But there was a certain sadness in his eyes, too. He kept talking about mother . . . he knew how much he had hurt the family."

A few days later, Butch went up into the mountains to a cabin, according to his sister. Then, eventually, he went away and never returned — never robbing another bank, never holding up another train.

When he finally died, he was in his 70s.

And to this day, the burial place of the West's most famous and colorful outlaw remains a family secret.

"As Dad used to say, Bob was hunted all his life, and now he deserves to rest in peace," declares Mrs. Betenson.