

R. T. Frazier Saddlery Company History

Builder of the Famous Pueblo Saddle

Pueblo, Colorado 1898-1958

Robert Thompson Frazier was born in New Philadelphia, Ohio on October 3, 1850 the second of 6 children 5 Boys and 1 Girl Parented by John Frazier originally of Indiana and Julia Frazier of Ohio. The early life of R. T. Frazier is very difficult to trace there is very little written about him or his family so I was able to find various tidbits of information from old census, tax and licenses that were issued. It appears according to the 1870 census records R. T. Frazier is listed as living on a farm with his family at 19 years of age in Dallas, Marion County, Iowa this census also listed his Father's occupation as a Farmer.

It has been mistakenly written in the past that R. T. Frazier fought in the Civil War which is completely untrue. R. T. Frazier was between 11 and 14 years of age by the end of the war 1865 so the numbers do not work the Union did not have children fighting. This fact was stated in the 1920 and 1930 U. S. Census records of Pueblo City, Pueblo County, Colorado that Robert Thompson Frazier had no prior Military Service and he was not a Veteran also R. T. Frazier was listed as 79 years of age. In the 1880 U. S. Census records from Leadville, Lake County, Colorado listed the occupation of R. T. Frazier as a miner he was listed as 30 years of age.

In 1874, gold miners at Oro City discovered that the heavy sand that impeded their gold recovery was the lead mineral cerussite that carried a high content of silver. Prospectors traced the cerussite to its source, and by 1876, had discovered several lode silver-lead deposits. The city of Leadville was founded near to the new silver deposits in 1877 by mine owners Horace Austin Warner Tabor and August Meyer, setting off the Colorado Silver Boom. By 1880, Leadville was one of the world's largest silver camps, with a population of over 40,000.

Confederate scout, cowboy and stage actor with "Buffalo Bill" Cody's travelling revue, Texas Jack Omohundro died here in the summer of 1880, of pneumonia, one month before his 34th birthday. He was living there on a small estate with his wife, ballerina Giuseppina Morlacchi. It was during this period that Leadville saw its most dangerous days, finally brought under control by little-known American Old West lawman Mart Duggan.

In 1881 it is believed R. T. Frazier went to work for Peter Becker of Colorado Springs a Saddle Maker who had just moved to Leadville to go into partnership with Samuel Leonard. Peter Becker was a Deputy Sheriff in Colorado Springs as well as a Saddle and Harness Maker. In 1881 Becker and Leonard Saddlery and Harness was the first Saddlery on the Western Side of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. R. T. Frazier apprenticed under Peter Becker a Master Saddle and Harness maker from Germany. Working in Leadville with Peter Becker continued until approximately 1884 when R. T. Frazier moved and went to work at the S. C. Gallup Saddlery Company of Pueblo, Colorado.

The relationship between S. C. Gallup and R. T. Frazier started in 1884 as employee and employer and during this period R. T. Frazier had an opportunity to learn the Marketing portion of a Saddlery Business. While the relationship seemed to have gone well with R. T. Frazier remaining in the employ of S. C. Gallup Saddlery Company for many years. Also in 1893 R. T. Frazier married (Kitty) Katherine R. Henley originally of Mattoon, Coles, Illinois Kitty was 25 years of age and R. T. Frazier was 43 years of age at the time of their wedding. Katherine R. Henley Frazier was better known as "Katie" or by her close friends and Family "Kitty" she was born in 1868 and relocated to Pueblo, Colorado in 1892.

In 1892 after 8 years with the S. C. Gallup Saddlery Company R. T. Frazier was able to achieve buying into the Saddlery and a partnership with S. C. Gallup. The maker mark for the S. C. Gallup and Frazier Saddlery was a Texas Longhorn Steer with a G&F branded on the left side. The Partnership was named The S. C. Gallup and Frazier Saddlery which was operated by the two men until 1898 when R. T. Frazier opened his Saddlery Business in Pueblo, Colorado named the R. T. Frazier Saddlery. When S. C. Gallup and R. T. Frazier went their separate ways R. T. Frazier continued using the Tag Line "The Original Designer, Owner and Maker of the Famous Pueblo Saddle" although the original design and manufacture was originally attributable to S. C. Gallup, Francis Gallup and E. L. Gallatin.

The R. T. Frazier Saddlery opened in 1898 and immediately R. T. Frazier started developing the Mail Order Business which he saw as being the way of the future. The R. T. Frazier Saddlery printed their first catalog in 1899 and they were soon on the way to becoming one of the largest mail order Stock Saddle Makers in the World. The Pueblo Stock Saddle which helped build the R. T. Frazier Saddlery reputation offered a Double Rigging which was a much more secure and stable seat for the rider although the saddle was heavy and harder on the horse. Along with other refinements the Pueblo Stock Saddle became a favorite of performers and riders of rough terrain because of their stability although many people referred to them as Horse Cripplers.

In approximately 1908 The R. T. Frazier Saddlery entered into a contract with The Miller Brother's 101 Wild West Show wherein Frazier would supply Saddles, Tack and Harness equipment. The Millers' neighbor Major Gordon W. Lillie, who performed as Pawnee Bill, motivated the Millers to produce a Wild West Show of their own. The Millers made their transition from putting on local shows to the national scene in 1907, when they performed at the Jamestown Exposition in Virginia.

In 1908, the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show began the tour circuit in Brighton Beach, New York. Joe Miller, the eldest son, was an exceptional equestrian and star performer. Over the course of the show's history, its cast included Bill Picket, Bessie Herberg, Bee Ho Gray, Tom Mix, Jack Hoxie, Mexican Joe, and an elderly Buffalo Bill. The show ran until 1927 when after years of financial problems and unsuccessful attempts to sell the show The Miller Brothers closed the show and went into Bankruptcy. How many years R. T. Frazier actually supplied products for the show is unclear and the original contract did not seem to have a time frame involved.

By 1915 The R. T. Frazier Saddlery was at the peak of their production employing 50 or more Saddle Makers during their busiest times just prior to World War I. Also in 1915 R. T. Frazier Designed and hired the building of his home at 2121 Elizabeth Street Pueblo, Colorado which is

From the Vintage Gun Leather.com

now on the Historic Register of Properties in Pueblo and this home still has the original carriage house(garage).

Robert Thompson Frazier passed away on July 27, 1931 at the age of 80 years old leaving the Saddlery Business to his wife Kitty who had assisted R. T. Frazier in the Saddlery over the years. I cannot find any documentation in census or birth records of children, either paternal or adopted, by R. T. and Kitty Frazier. So I am left to believe they were childless. Kitty Frazier continued to operate the R. T. Frazier Saddlery until 1958 when Kitty was 90 years of age. Katherine (Kitty) R. Frazier passed away on December 21, 1959 in Pueblo, Colorado at the age of 91 years of age.



R.T. Frazier - Approx. 1895



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Oval Makers Mark



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Floral Oval Makers Mark

From the Vintage Gun Leather.com



R.T. Frazier Registered Trademark Saddle Mark



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Triangle with F Holster Mark



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Rectangle Holster Loop Mark



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Saddle Skirt Mark

From the Vintage Gun Leather.com



R.T. Frazier Pueblo, CO Shoulder Holster Mark



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Saddles Nickel Snap Cover

From the Vintage Gun Leather.com



R.T. Frazier Pueblo Saddles Brass Snap Cover



R. T. FRAZIER'S SALESROOM



THIS IS OUR
UNITED STATES



REGISTERED
TRADE MARK

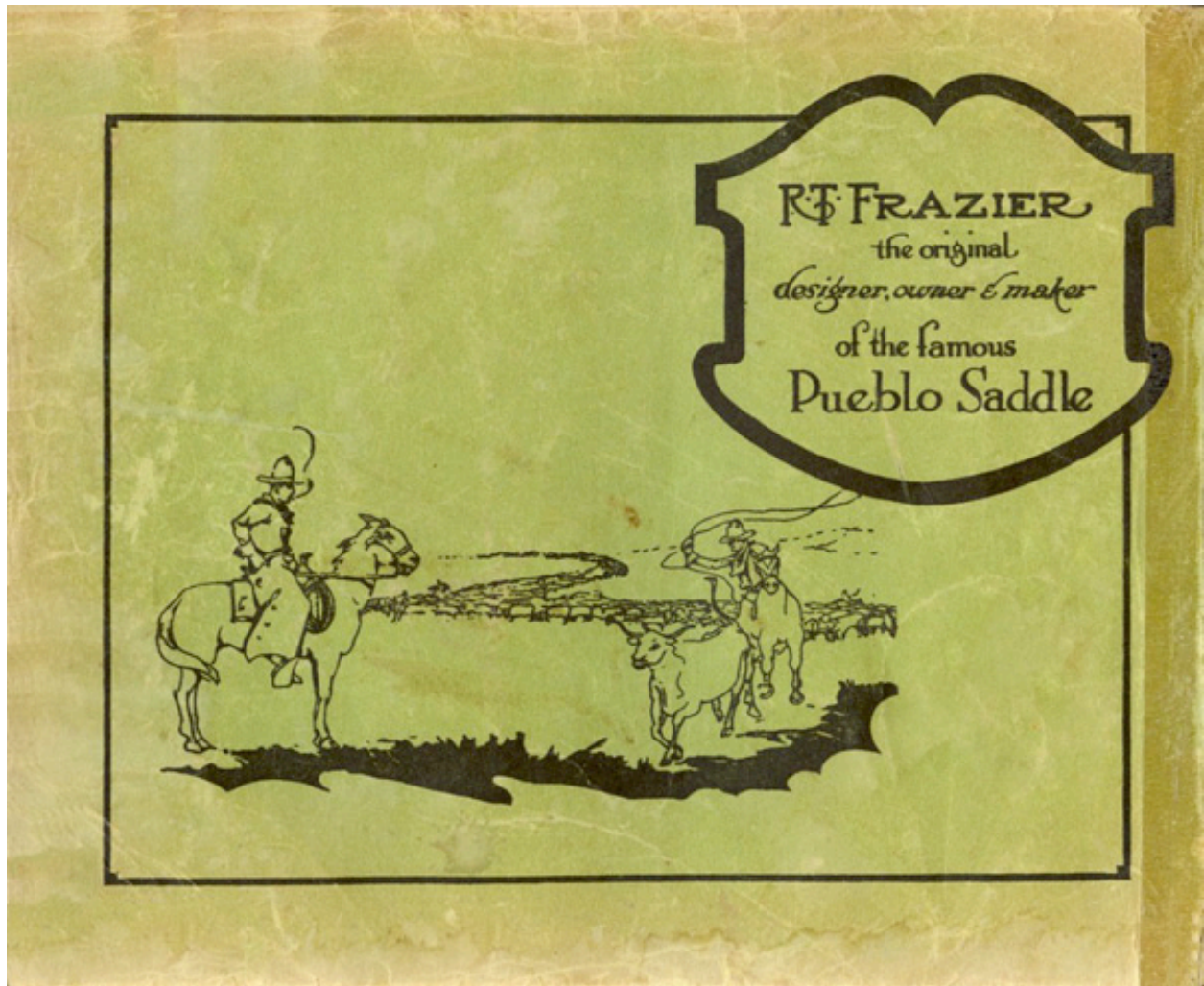


R.T. Frazier Saddlery Shop Sales Floor 1925



TO SHOW YOU WHERE THE FRAZIER FAMOUS PUEBLO SADDLES AND HARNESS ARE MANUFACTURED.

R.T. Frazier Saddlery Work Shop Early 1900s



R.T. Frazier Catalog #27 Back Cover 1926

From the Vintage Gun Leather.com



R.T. Frazier House: 2121 Elizabeth St., Pueblo, CO