

## THE SPIRIT OF JAMES KIDD IS MISSING

By: Tom Kollenborn (c) 2001 (1986)

When James Kidd was reported missing on December 29, 1949, there was little notice given to the event. Authorities finally suggested that Kidd probably disappeared from his small motel cabin on North 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Phoenix shortly after October 10, 1949. Police reported no sign of foul play.

Kidd's disappearance would have been reported sooner had somebody missed him. Records indicate he had no living relatives and extremely few friends. He lived such an obscure life that few people knew about his day to day activities.

James Kidd, like many other prospectors before him, could have vanished without a trace except he left behind a half million dollars in several banks around Arizona. The money was found several years after his disappearance and he had made much of this money investing in the stock market through E.F. Hutton Company. The source of Kidd's investment money has never been found, however he was known to do a lot of prospecting in the mountains west of the Globe-Miami area.

James Kidd was born in Ogdensburg, New York, on July 18, 1879. Census records indicate he lived in Reno, Nevada, and Los Angeles, California, before moving to Miami, Arizona, in 1918. Miami Copper Company records suggest Kidd worked for the company from 1920-1948. He worked as a pump man until he was injured on the job and later suffered a heart attack.

Kidd had a prospecting partner by the name of Walter Beach. Together they worked on a variety of claims for more than twenty years. Beach died in 1947, and his death devastated Kidd. James Kidd could not drive, he had never mastered the mechanics of driving an automobile and depended solely on Beach for all his driving needs. When Beach died it left Kidd alone to travel from his home to his mining claims.

Kidd and Beach prospected the drainage of Haunted Canyon and Pinto Creek. It is believed they had active gold claims somewhere near Cherry or Oak Flats, although the claims were never recorded at the Gila County Court House.

At the time of Kidd's disappearance, there were stories about Kidd being kidnapped and murdered for the rich gold claims he had allegedly discovered somewhere in the drainage of Haunted Canyon. This story, like many more lacks proper documentation.

James Kidd was known for his keen interest in the supernatural. In other words, he believed in ghosts. When he made out his will in Douglas, Arizona, in the 1930's, he left his entire estate to anyone who could prove there was a visible spirit; a spirit that we could see. When his will was found and probated in the late 1960's, his estate was worth more than \$500,000. The court battle that ensued created issues involving the State's claim on private property if there were no heirs.

When the case finally made it to court many interesting things emerged.

James Kidd was not a part of our bureaucratic red tape. He never owned an automobile, never had a driver's license, had no fingerprint record, had no military record, had no police record and not one photograph of him existed. The prospectors who lived in the hills surrounding Globe all know who James Kidd was, but didn't know anything about him.

Kidd was a very frugal man. He spent money on newspapers. He was never seen in a church. He had little or no interest in women and never married according to Arizona, California, Nevada and New York records. He smoked cigars and would make one last all day. His only hobby was prospecting along Pinto Creek and Haunted Canyon.

*Next week, Part II*

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Did James Kidd have a rich gold placer or mine on the eastern fringe of the Superstition Wilderness Area? Did he save his money from his job at the Miami Copper Company to gather his fortune? Not one man in a hundred thousand saved up the kind of money Kidd had at the time of his disappearance.

The following are some answers to the mysterious disappearance of James Kidd.

The last year James Kidd worked for Miami Copper Company he suffered a heart attack. The heart attack was not a major one, but it really slowed him down. His doctor warned him that he didn't have to many years left. A friend of Walter Beach's told my father the following story in 1950.

James Kidd paid a man he knew to drive him to his claim in the eastern part of the Superstition Wilderness Area from his motel room in Phoenix. This man helped him pack supplies into his camp near his mine. Kidd asked the man to return in a month and check on him. He told the man if he found him dead just to bury him on his claim and not to bother notifying the authorities because he had no relatives or close friends.

The man returned in mid-November and found Kidd in extremely poor health. The weather was wet and cold and the man told Kidd he needed to be moved to a hospital. Kidd insisted on staying and the man took his order for supplies and told him he would return.

The man returned two weeks later and found Kidd near death. Again, Kidd begged him to leave him to die in his camp.

The man decided to spend the night and the next morning he found the grim reaper had visited Kidd's camp during the night.

Kidd had insisted that nobody know he was dead. He was buried near his mining claim and discovery. Buried with Kidd was a gold Elgin octagonal pocket watch with his name and date of birth inscribed on it. This watch he didn't want to be separated from, not even in death. If this story is true, the mystery of James Kidd's disappearance will be verified when this watch is found.

Many of the individuals who provided information for this story are no longer with us. James Kidd wanted to die in obscurity and out of the reach of anyone who wanted to remove him from his claim. He received his wish in death from a friend who believed James Kidd should receive his last wish before he died. The disappearance of James Kidd may be solved someday, but the location of his remains is still a mystery.

James Kidd, prospector, miner, spiritualist, ghost chaser and eccentric left a small fortune behind to anyone capable of proving the existence of a visual soul. The battle of Kidd's fortune raged in an Arizona courtroom until a psychological firm finally won their case and made claim to Kidd's fortune.

For more information read *The Great Soul Trial* by John Fuller.



*James Kidd's claim is believed to lie just east of Pinto Peak in the Superstition Wilderness Area.*