

**'FALLEN ANGEL OF WEST'
PROVED BENEFACTOR
FOR HILLSBORO, N.M.**

By Louise Cheney

Written Especially for Sundial
EPT 6/23/68

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 triggered the great westward migration as men surged west like a rip tide via every conveyance of the times, all in quest of gold. For the most part the males went alone, leaving wives and sweethearts in the safety of the civilized east. So for a short spell the far west was practically a womanless world. But, not for long for in the wake of the men came the madams, often romantically called the love merchants. With them came an array of feminine lovelies all set to give the lonely men a home away from home. They, too, were prospectors for they were in search of a fast buck even though they didn't plan to dig it from the earth or wash it from the streams.

Every western buff knows the story of Julia Bulette, the dark eyed, raven haired, British beauty who set up shop in Virginia City, Nev., soon after the discovery of the great Comstock lode. Beloved by the men she was abhorred by the women. Although Julie was more famous, she was not the only woman Britisher to capitalize on her assets, namely beauty, sex and personality. There was a not her who became what was known in those days as a Cyprian sister and she is still remembered in New Mexico today for during the great influenza epidemic in the First World War she ministered to the ailing and proved herself an angel of mercy. Her name was Sadie Orchard.

In 1886 Sadie, like Columbus, sailed the ocean blue in search of a new world, the ocean in this case being the Atlantic. In due time she set foot on U.S. soil and for some reason hied herself to a little mining town in New Mexico by the name of Hillsboro. At that time it was booming. There she practiced what is often called "the oldest profession in the world." And since there were lonely men out there the shekels rolled in. Soon she established a house of her own and hired other lovelies to help her ply her trade. Soon

after she bought her house a man by the name of J.W. Orchard started courting Sadie and asked her hand in marriage. Orchard had no money, little personality and was a weakling but Sadie jumped at the chance to become a respectable married woman so she gave her consent. Orchard let the fiery Sadie rule him absolutely and seemed happy to do so.

BORN IN LONDON

Sadie had been born in London and it was there she grew up. She talked with an East End Cockney accent and could swear like the proverbial sailor. Evidently by her language she had been in contact with the London dock wallopers on the waterfront. But Sadie didn't look tough in the least. She was tiny and dainty and dressed like a fashion plate in expensive finely. She could ride as well as any man in New Mexico Territory and used a side saddle expertly. When she mounted her high spirited steed she wore a high silk hat, a silk scarf about her throat, a sparkling white shirt waist, hand made leather boots and kid gloves. She looked like a titled English lady until she opened her mouth and when that happened everyone knew full well that Sadie was no lady for her vocabulary was liberally sprinkled with profanity.

Since Orchard had no job and certainly was not looking for one, Sadie decided to make a business man of him. She opened a stage line and called it the Lake Valley, Hillsboro and Kingston Express Line. Her rolling stock consisted of two Concord coaches and a freight wagon. She let Orchard run the business but she also held on to her house. Orchard soon became disenchanted with the stage business in all probability because there was a certain amount of elbow grease connected with it and he was allergic to that particular brand of fat. When Orchard reneged Sadie took over with vigor, in fact she handled the reins both literally and figuratively for all the men were busy searching for that elusive gold and drivers were hard to come by. Undaunted Sadie mounted the driver's box of one of her coaches, whipped up the horses and made the runs. Later she boasted that she was never held up or robbed while driving. One time when she was pushing a coach through a narrow cut called Box Canyon between Hillsboro and Kingston,

some renegade Indians attempted to hold her up and take her horses. Furious at the daring of the redskins, Sadie unlimbered her long whip, jumped down and once on the ground began to lash the would-be bandits. They took to the tall timber fast. They took nary a horse but all had sore backsides. And after that no Indian dared to attack a stage coach that was driven by Sadie Orchard. One of the coaches which is said to have been the one the Indians stopped is now in the New Mexico Museum in Santa Fe.

NO CHURCH

Kingston was near Hillsboro and while it was a bustling town of 5,000 souls with a multiplicity of saloons and dance halls and even a theater at which once the lovely Lillian Russell had appeared there was no church. Sadie decided that Kingston must have a house of worship so she launched a campaign to obtain funds with which to build one. She canvassed the saloons, the dance halls and the sin parlors. The miners poured forth gold into the hat she passed. So did the gamblers, the madams and the soiled doves. Sadie's own band of lovelies even stripped off their diamond rings and bracelets. When Sadie counted up she had \$1,500 and she saw that a church was built.

Sadie built a palatial hotel in Hillsboro where she served rich food and imported spirits. The service was so lavish that it drew all the political big wigs of the territory. Sadie played the grand dame in satin silk. Often she dressed in a fine riding habit and went galloping over the country on her fine mount. She compared herself to English royalty riding to the hounds and told herself that she put up as good a front as any bona fide duchess or princess in the British Isles.

She was on a first name basis with all the high officials of the territory, even the various governors who served during her life time. Some times she even gave them pet nicknames and they ate it up. Letters found after her death proved that they corresponded with the pert Cockney madam. No respecter of title or rank Sadie once even questioned the actions of Albert Bacon Fall who was solicitor for New Mexico Territory.

Sadie was obsessed with giving out the illusion that she was a bona fide lady, hence her fine clothes. She also demanded that her girls dress in the height of fashion.

Finally the Nineteenth Century sang its swan song and the lusty new Twentieth came bustling in. Times had changed somewhat by then. Orchard had somehow taken no doubt her hair but Sadie and her house remained in Hillsboro. At the beginning of World War I Sadie was still a madam. She was 45 and quite affluent. In 1917 when the U.S. stepped into the fray and the men marched away to war, Sadie's business declined due to a lack of customers. Then the terrible influenza epidemic gripped the country and Hillsboro was hit hard. It was then that Sadie proved herself and earned the undying gratitude of the entire community. She shed her finery and put on cotton clothing. She busied herself with the sick. She gave solace to the dying and succor to the living. She acted as nurse and cook for the stricken, even doing their washing. She helped layout and bury the dead. She even supported the family of a man who had run afoul of the law and ended up in prison as he had been one of her best customers. She gave herself whole heartedly to the cause of humanity and the town loved and praised her.

Sadie lived on for some 25 more years. In 1940 she was 70 and that is when she died. Another World War was ranging and England, her native land, was hard pressed by Hitler's relentless bombing. Sadie, a colorful character certainly belongs to the spacious saga of the west.

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