

Dodge City (art in Liberty  
1928 579, P.12+)

The conversion of Dodge City  
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## JIM BISHOP: REPORTER

### A Duel in the Long Branch

Dodge City was a rough town in the 1870s. A dusty road was called Front street. There were hitching rails, some boarding houses and shops, and a place called the Long Branch. A sign in the middle of the road said: "The Carrying of Fire Arms Strictly Forbidden." Underneath it said: "Try Prickly Ash Bitters."

In the latter part of the decade, as the Kansas Historical Quarterly reminds me, William B. "Bat" Masterson was sheriff. He was paid \$75 a month. He wasn't great. In the summer of 1878, Deputy Marshal McCarty was shot in the Long Branch. Fannie Keenan, alias Dora

Hand, was also shot and killed.

**CITY MARSHAL** Edward J. Masterson was slaughtered by drunken cowboys. On October 27, 1877, George Wilson, the only man in jail, escaped. The most exciting news occurred on April 5, 1878, when Frank Loving and Levi Richardson duelled with guns in the Long Branch.

The Ford County Globe reported the story as follows:

"There is seldom witnessed in any civilized town or country such a scene as transpired at the Long Branch saloon, in this city, last Saturday evening, resulting in the killing of Levi Richardson, a well-known freighter, by a gambler named Frank Loving.



"For several months Loving had been living with a woman toward whom Richardson seems to have cherished tender feelings and on one or two occasions they have quarreled and even come to blows. Richardson was a man who had lived for several years on the frontier, and though well liked in many respects, he had cultivated habits of bold and daring, which are always likely to get a man into trouble. He was young and strong and reckless.

"Loving is a man of whom we know but very little. He is a gambler by profession; not much of a rowdy, but more of the cool and desperate order, when he has a killing on hand. He is about 25 years old.

"As stated in the evidence, they met, one said: 'I don't believe you will fight.' The other answered: 'Try me and see,' and immediately both drew murderous revolvers and at it they went, in a room filled with people, the leaden missiles flying in all directions. There is no telling how long the fight might have lasted had not Richardson been pierced with bullets and Loving's pistol been left without a cartridge.

"Richardson was shot in the breast, through the side and through the right arm. It seems strange that Loving was not hit, except a slight scratch on the hand, as the two men were so close together that their pistols almost touched each other.

Eleven shots were fired, six by Loving, five by Richardson. Richardson only lived a few moments after the shooting. Loving was placed in jail to await the verdict of the coroner's jury, which was 'self defense' and he was released."

**DODGE CITY** must have been a great place. Much tougher, I would guess, than Greenwich Village.

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