

Zadock M. Crutchfield, known by everyone as Zed, came to Cerrillos from Texas in mid-1889 with the best of credentials. Three years later, mid-1892, he vanished from Cerrillos, either to save his life, or as a consequence of losing it. What was Cerrillos Constable Zed Crutchfield's great sin? He practiced the cardinal rule of the western lawmen who survived more than a short time on the job. He shot first.

Zed's father, Rev. Isaac N. Crutchfield, brought his whole large family to Cerrillos in 1889. Isaac had served the year before as pastor at Magdalena, Socorro County, and would go the following year to the Methodist church at Glorieta. Rev. Isaac was the fifth pastor of the Cerrillos Methodist church. Zed's brother, Rev. John Milton Crutchfield was pastor #6 in Cerrillos the following year.

The Methodists first organized in Cerrillos in 1884, and they built their church on the south side of Waldo Street, west of Third Street (now a vacant lot). The adobe building was similar in size and appearance to St. John's Catholic Church, which was situated at the corner of Waldo and First Streets (now the location of the parking lot of "new" St. John's). Both churches were built at about the same time.

It may be that Zed took his father's sermons a little differently than his brother, but for whatever reason Zed didn't follow the family calling. Instead, he got himself elected Constable of Cerrillos, which is to say Zed became the deputy sheriff of the second biggest town in Santa Fe County.

Zed's first year on the job was ordinary enough; dealing with dogs and hogs running loose, a man who had rented a horse and buggy under suspicious circumstances, warning hunters not to shoot off their guns until they were well outside of town, and harassing the railroad hobos to get them to move on down the tracks.

Then came the day of July 21, 1891, which began innocently enough. James Fairweather, a young Englishman who had been employed at the Cash Entry mine two miles north of town, came down to Cerrillos, his paycheck in his pocket, with the intent of cashing the check and then taking the next train to Kingman Arizona where a new job awaited. While waiting for the train young Fairweather seems to have had a drink or two, and may or may not have quarreled with some miners in a saloon. At one point he may have discharged his revolver into the air. There are different versions of what happened. But we know that Constable Crutchfield was called. Zed found Fairweather inside Sam Sing's California Restaurant, the only Chinese restaurant in Cerrillos (on the south side of the

tracks, east side of First Street). Crutchfield entered the building and fired his revolver. Fairweather died almost instantly.

The coroner's jury, assembled that same afternoon, found it justifiable homicide, and Fairweather, who had no family and no known relatives, was buried at the Cerrillos Protestant Cemetery the next day. Presumably, they removed his boots first.

A year later it happened again. During the Fourth of July celebrations in Cerrillos a teamster named Rogers got into an argument with German Montoya. Both men had been drinking. Again, the facts are confused, but Rogers drew a .45 caliber hand gun which he and Montoya struggled over. Zed became involved in the scuffle and, depending on whom you believe, either the .45 accidentally discharged or, while Rogers' gun was being fought over, Zed pulled his own weapon and shot Montoya in the stomach. The bullet passed through Montoya's body and hit his brother, who was standing behind him, also in the stomach. Both wounds were fatal.

The difference this time was that both dead men were locals, whose family was from La Cienega, and there were many angry relatives. It came finally to the question of whose gun fired the fatal bullet, and the decision was made to disinter the corpse with the bullet to discover whether it had really been an accident or Zed was a murderer. That's when Zed disappeared. After July 13, 1892 Zed Crutchfield was never heard from nor seen again. It was widely assumed he had lit out for Texas, but it is also possible, given the resources and the sentiments of the Montoya family, that what's left of Constable Zed's body lies today at the bottom of one of the many abandoned mines in the Cerrillos Hills.