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Summer 2007

Review of *Captain Jack and the Dalton Gang: The Life and Times of a Railroad Detective* By John J. Kinney

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Hietter, Paul T., "Review of *Captain Jack and the Dalton Gang: The Life and Times of a Railroad Detective* By John J. Kinney" (2007). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 1491.
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Captain Jack and the Dalton Gang: The Life and Times of a Railroad Detective. By John J. Kinney. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005. 270 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth, \$17.95 paper.

The evening of July 14, 1892, a train carrying a heavily-armed posse passed slowly through Adair, Indian Territory. Also on board was John J. "Captain Jack" Kinney Jr, who headed the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas ("Katy") Railroad detectives. Their presence resulted from a tip that the Dalton gang planned to rob the Katy near Pryor Creek. Perhaps as a result of this apparent false alarm, the posse was unprepared as the train passed through Adair. It was here that the gang successfully robbed the Katy. It was also here that Kinney became "a part of history—a parenthetical person, a human footnote." And, according to some accounts, a coward. One man's footnote, however, is often another's family lore. Captain Jack was the author's great-grandfather, and Kinney's book has two goals: first, to better understand the life and times in which his grandfather lived; and second, to use this knowledge together with the conflicting accounts of the robbery to uncover what actually happened that night and, along the way, resurrect Captain Jack's reputation.

Through the use of newspaper articles, the detective's diary from 1891, oral histories, and numerous secondary sources, Kinney takes the reader on an entertaining and informative romp

that (somehow) links together Irish immigration, the history of crime detection, Gilded Age financial shenanigans, train outlawry, dueling, and the horrifying reality of southern lynchings. In the process, and despite a lack of sources focusing specifically on Captain Jack, Kinney crafts a solid portrait of a man who would otherwise be lost to history.

Armed with this background, the author sifts through the multiple and contradictory accounts of the Adair robbery. Captain Jack is far from the coward claimed by some accounts of the stickup. More important, the author convincingly demonstrates that Captain Jack ought not to be summed up by the events of one day during a lifetime of nearly eighty years.

While the book merits recommendation, there are a number of small issues worth noting. Readers looking for a precisely defined argument and guiding thesis will be disappointed. Moreover, there are points where the author wanders a little too far off track. Though part of the book's charm, this may frustrate some readers. In addition, the sourcing and footnoting is uneven in places. There are numerous passages where one would expect a footnote, and the bibliography omits listing some sources used in the text.

Overall, Captain Jack is well worth the read and provides a much-needed glimpse at the life of one of the anonymous individuals who fought against the overly famous railroad bandits of the nineteenth century.

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