

The OTHER DOE: Harvey after Baby

by
Jim Metz

The fourth person in a love triangle is usually the long-forgotten one. This is the fate of Harvey Doe. Harvey Doe's chief claim to fame – the only claim, really – is that he bestowed the “Doe” on “Baby Doe.”

Nonetheless Harvey Doe is an integral part of the whole saga of the woman who became the colorful, legendary Mistress of the Matchless. Not only did Harvey give his name to hometown sweetheart Lizzie McCourt, he brought her as his bride in 1877 to the then adventurous mining areas of Colorado.

They came because Harvey's father had previously secured mining interests in the region and hoped to set up the couple for a successful life. It didn't work out. Not for Harvey and his bride, nor for Harvey's father and mother who also left Oshkosh and Wisconsin in hopes of a new beginning for themselves after his lumber mill burned down just before the wedding.

The breakup of Harvey and Lizzie's marriage led, of course, to the events that put Lizzie “Baby” Doe on track to becoming Mrs. H. A. W. Tabor and a storied personality in Western lore.

For Harvey the breakup left him devastated and churning about for a time to make ends meet in Colorado. He never got beyond being a day laborer. His father died in Colorado in 1884 – after Baby Doe had succeeded in becoming Mrs. Tabor – and Harvey's mother soon moved back to Oshkosh. Not long after, Harvey also returned to Oshkosh and became a cigar maker.

True Love II took a long time to find Harvey Doe. But in 1893 he married Ida Kingsley in Oshkosh. Ida had fled an abusive marriage with George Kingsley in northern Wisconsin whom she divorced the year before when she came to Oshkosh. She brought to her new marriage two sons and a daughter.

Harvey and his second bride moved to Milwaukee and Harvey became timekeeper at the Plankinton House, a well-known Milwaukee residence

hotel whose best-known residents would be a woman, Mrs. Arthur MacArthur, and her son until the son, Douglas, secured an appointment to West Point.

Harvey Doe was well-acquainted with the fortunes of his first wife and of the sad fate which was even then overtaking her. There was no more anguish in his heart nor rancor against her. He felt sympathy for her in her efforts to turn the Matchless into a producing mine once more. He knew personally the harshness of such an effort.

By 1911, when Baby Doe Tabor and daughter Silver apparently came to Milwaukee where daughter Lily was living, Harvey and Ida Doe met them. There was sporadic but kindly correspondence between Baby and Silver with Ida and Harvey for the next four years. At one point Harvey said he would come out to Colorado to help Baby except that Ida was very sick and needed his attention.

But they did not again get together. Ida died about 1920, and on June 1, 1921, Harvey Doe died at the home of his step-daughter in Milwaukee. He was 68.