

The Unconventional Soldier is about the battle for African gold.

An Unconventional Soldier

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An Unconventional Soldier

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The Pen & The Spindle

An

Unconventional

Soldier

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An Unconventional Soldier is about the way in which national and international events impact the lives of ordinary people. These events are seen from the perspective of one man.

The man was John Young Filmore Blake who was born in Bolivar, Missouri, on October 6, 1856. His father was Thomas Kinkade Blake whom everyone called TK. His mother was Clara Chitty who bore more children than lived. Those who did survive into adulthood were, Jesse Columbus known as Gabe, Missouri Elizabeth, William known as Pone, Larkin Lafayette known as Doc, Paulina Jennie, Thomas Taylor, Clara F, and John Y.F. known as Bo or Beau.¹

By the time John Blake was born the border conflict between Kansas and Missouri had started. Kansas was for the abolition of slaves and Missouri was a slave owning state. The conflict would spiral into the Civil War which started in 1861.

Two years before the Civil War, TK loaded his family into a cart and went to settle in Texas. He must have seen the inevitability of war and tried to spare his family and his assets from the consequences of war. This did not stop his older sons from fighting for the Confederates.

When the war ended in 1865 Texas was as unsettled and as dangerous a place to live as any other Southern state. There were constant Indian raids and white gangs roamed the countryside almost unchecked. The Texas communities could

- 1775 American Revolution begins.
- 1828 *The Cherokee Phoenix* first edition.
Gold discovered in Georgia, USA.
- 1829 Indian Removal Act.
- 1835 Boers trek into the African interior in protest against the abolition of slavery in the Cape Colony. They will create two Boer republics to the north of the British Cape Colony – the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State.
Treaty of Echota, handing over Indian land to white settlers, signed by a group of Cherokee leaders.
- 1837 Forced Indian removals from the American east, known as the Trail of Tears.
- 1848 California gold rush.
- 1855 Start of the border conflict between Kansas and Missouri.
- 1861 Start of the Civil War.
- 1865 End of the Civil War.
- 1866 Fenian failure to secure Canada from the British opens the door for the Clan-na-Gael to gain power among Irish Americans.
- 1867 The discovery of diamonds at Kimberley, South Africa.
- 1871 Clan-na-Gael members approve a constitution and begin an assertive recruitment campaign.
President Burgers allows the British to annex the Transvaal Republic.

not defend themselves against the attacks because, as Confederates, they had been disarmed after the war. The inevitable happened. The Blake family lost their Texas ranch in a raid.

TK relocated to Bentonville, Arkansas, taking with him his youngest son, John Blake. His other sons and daughters, with the exception of Paulina Jennie who had died after the raid, dispersed.

In 1871 John Blake went to the Industrial University of Arkansas to study pre-college subjects. In 1876 he was accepted into West Point.

After completing his West Point training he served in the United States Army as an Indian Scout leader. He resigned his commission in 1889 and went to live in Michigan, but after several years of civilian life and, devastated by the politics that was robbing him of his personal rights, he emigrated to Rhodesia.

Rhodesia was a colony started by the mining magnate Cecil John Rhodes. The colony had come into being for one purpose only, and that was to produce gold. The problem was, Rhodesia did not possess a viable commercial gold lode, and Cecil John Rhodes knew this.

John Blake went to work for Cecil John Rhodes as a prospector. When he emigrated he had hoped to leave behind all the hatred and suppression that swelled around him. In Rhodesia, he discovered that the repression of people was as horrific. He rebelled. He turned whistleblower and exposed Cecil John Rhodes' fraud to investors in a series of articles to newspapers.

One of the consequences of this revelation, after the carefully couched report written by John Hays

1880 Start of the first Anglo-Boer War.

1881 First Anglo-Boer War ends with Boer victory.

1883 Clan-na-Gael palace revolt. Alexander Sullivan of Chicago ousts the moderate executive and begins a campaign of violence against Britain and her allies.

1886 The presence of gold in the Transvaal Republic confirmed.

1887 The Chickasaw government votes to disenfranchise non-traditional Chickasaw.

1889 Cecil John Rhodes creates the British South Africa Company and receives a Crown Charter for land north of the Transvaal Republic which will become known as Rhodesia.

1890 The Pioneer Column, Rhodes' private army, is sent into Rhodesia to claim the land from the local nations.

1895 The Jameson Raid is carried out between New Year's Eve and New Year 1896. The Raid fails and all raiders are captured by the Boers.

1896 Bulawayo, the capital of Rhodesia, is besieged by the local nations. The siege lasts from March to June.

Cecil John Rhodes travels to Rhodesia to placate the angry leaders of the local nations. He has a heart attack while there.

1897 The House of Commons in London holds an investigation into the Jameson Raid.

Hammond which told investors that they had to wait for their potential rewards, was the Jameson Raid. The Jameson Raid was based upon the Jameson Plan which Rhodes had formulated. It was basically a plan to invade and annex the Transvaal Republic and take away Boer control of the gold rich deposits. The Jameson Plan was a disaster and ruined Cecil John Rhodes.

John Blake made more than one enemy when he turned whistleblower, but he also made many unexpected friends.

One of these new 'friends' was Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal Republic where the presence of gold had been confirmed in 1886. The city of Johannesburg had sprung up around the gold mines. It lay about thirty miles south of Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal Republic.

Paul Kruger asked John Blake to go to London and present the Boer side of the story to those who were looking into the Jameson Raid. John Blake was a neutral, an American of good standing and a leader among members of the American community in Johannesburg. Paul Kruger must have felt that he would make a credible representative among not only the Boers who were known for their infighting, but among the British investors and politicians. John Blake obliged and spent fifteen months in Europe and England on Boer business.

When he returned to Johannesburg he discovered that there was a war looming on the horizon. The British Empire intended to implement Cecil John Rhodes' plan. At the time John Blake stepped off the train in Johannesburg, the War

1897 Cecil John Rhodes travels to London to testify before the House of Commons committee. John Blake travels to London to represent the Boers.

1898 Theodore Roosevelt leads his Rough Riders into war against the Spanish in Cuba. The Rough Riders come straight out of the Wild West Shows.

1899 The start of the second Anglo-Boer War.

1900 The Clan-na-Gael declares neutrality in the Anglo-Boer War and deserts its fighters in the field.

The Gold Standard Act.

1902 The second Anglo-Boer War ends.

Movement to secure an independent Indian state starts.

1904 The Boer War Show opens at the St Louis Exposition. It draws capacity crowds.

1905 Sequoyah Constitutional Convention. Four of the Five Nations in Indian Territory create a structure and constitution for a separate Indian state, the State of Sequoyah. It is turned down by the Roosevelt government. The Chickasaw are the only nation among the Five Nations to support the assimilation of Indian Territory into the State of Oklahoma.

1907 John Blake dies under mysterious circumstances. Oklahoma State is created.

Office in London was instructing its officers in India and other colonies on how to conduct war in Africa.

Now, while all of this was in play, the Irish were active as well.

Ireland had been colonized by the British well before the imperial surge of the nineteenth century. By the 1840s the Irish had organized an underground resistance known as the Fenian movement. The Fenians used America as a safe haven, and during the Civil War they recruited members from the soldiers fighting on both sides of the conflict. After the war the Fenians decided to attack Canada and drive out the British. They failed.

There was another organization waiting in the wings and when the attack on Canada crippled the Fenians, the Clan-na-Gael sprang into action. It became the most formidable terrorist machine of its time. The Clan-na-Gael infiltrated all departments and institutions in the United States, and it had connections with all countries, communities, and individuals who stood to lose if Britain remained strong. The Clan-na-Gael was also known to make alliances with countries, communities, and individuals whose own struggles and agendas could be used to advantage the Irish and the Clan-na-Gael.

The Clan-na-Gael was effective because it was created as a Masonic-styled organization. The organizational compatibility between the Clan-na-Gael and other Masonic lodges made it possible to infiltrate these lodges and co-opt senior ranking members. The Clan-na-Gael had branches not

THOMAS KINKADE (TK) BLAKE FAMILY

Father

Thomas Kincade Blake sr

Mother

Elizabeth Owen

Wife

Clara T Chitty

Children

Jesse Columbus (Gabe)
married Elizabeth Ann
Eddleman whose brother was
David Jones Eddleman

Missouri Elizabeth married
Jesse West; married Tom
Russell

William (Pone) died at the
Battle of Elkhorn, Civil War.

Larkin Lafayette (Doc)
married Virginia Wall; married
Theda Crowder

Paulina Jennie married
Robert West

Thomas Taylor married
Bertha

Clara Flora married F.W.
Derrickson

John Young Filmore Blake
(Bo) married Katherine
Elizabeth Aldrich

Sons

Aldrich Blake
Ledyard Blake

only across America but in cities and regions around the world. Its orders and plans could be conveyed as fast as the nearest telegraph station transmitted messages to like-minded men across the globe.

The only real problem the Clan-na-Gael faced was the enemy inside. The Irish terrorist organizations crippled themselves because British Intelligence officers could always buy one or other senior member of an Irish secret society. The Clan-na-Gael was not immune to infiltration.

At the time John Blake stepped off the train in Johannesburg in 1898, John Devoy, a powerful and credible member of the Clan-na-Gael, was on the imperial payroll. John Devoy had authorized money for an earlier war between the Boers and the British Empire, and the Boers had won. Now, he worked for the British Empire.

The Clan-na-Gael had an interest in the Transvaal gold. It wanted to make sure that the Boers kept the gold under their control.

Clan-na-Gael members voted to supply men for the Boer army. They looked around for someone to lead these men and decided to approach John Blake. He was exactly what they needed. He was in the Boer President's confidence by 1898. He had excellent contacts both in southern Africa and in America, and he was not Irish. The Clan-na-Gael was afraid that if they hired one of their own he might turn traitor at an inconvenient moment. John Blake was also a trained military man, a disciplinarian, and a leader.

In October 1899, John Blake led the Irish Brigade against the British, but the Clan-na-Gael

THOMAS KINKADE BLAKE FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Thomas Kinkade Blake's Brother

Larkin H Blake

Wife Rachael

Son James Wyeth Blake

Daughter Bettie (Betty)

Blake married William

Penn Adair Rogers

Known as Will Rogers

whose circus
name was The

Cherokee Kid

Will Rogers

Mother Mary Schrimsher

Grandmother Elizabeth

Hunt Gunter

Elizabeth Hunt Gunter

Father John Gunter sr

Mother Ghi-go-ne-li

(Catherine)

Brother John Gunter who
signed the Treaty of Echota

John Gunter sr

Brother Augustus Gunter

Great Nephew Thomas
Montgomery Gunter, the
Arkansas Representative
who sponsored John Blake's
West Point application.

Thomas Montgomery Gunter
and **Thomas Kinkade Blake**
were both born in Tennessee.

Thomas Montgomery Gunter
lived and died in Fayetteville,
Arkansas, north of Bentonville,
Arkansas. Thomas Kinkade
Blake's brother **Larkin H**
Blake also lived in Fayetteville.

changed its mind and abandoned its fighters in the field. After the war John Blake returned to America for revenge. He took on an enemy he could not conquer and his life spiraled downwards as the Clan-na-Gael closed doors and turned hearts against him.

Then, in 1906, he rallied, dropped the battle against the Clan-na-Gael, and centered himself on the real fight of his life. He died under mysterious circumstances in January 1907, perhaps murdered by those who did not want him to pick up the pieces of his old life.

In 1871, my father started me to school at the Arkansas State University, at Fayetteville.

In 1876, while still at the University, I received the cadet appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, through the kindness of Hon. Thomas M. Gunter, M.C. an old friend of my father.

John Blake. A West Pointer with the Boers. 1903.



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