

Scalped

“Uncle Dick” Wootten recalls the following events as taking place around 1836, while he was wintering at Bent’s Fort. Some visitors, up from St. Louis and friends of Bent and St. Vrain, were at the fort, among them a man known as Belzy Dodd. Now Dodd was as bald as a billiard ball, but mostly he wore a wig when he went out. One day there were a number of Indians hanging around in the fort and Dodd decided he would have a little fun with them. For some time he walked around, eyeing each Indian with a fierce and maniacal stare. Now the Indians considered most white men to be bit tetched, but this man had definitely fallen off his horse one too many times. Without warning, Dodd dashed into midst of the Indians, and letting out a blood curdling shriek, tore off his wig and threw it down at the feet of the stunned Indians. The Indians fled the fort like scared jack rabbits, convinced that Dodd had ripped off his own scalp. Even after the joke had been explained, none of the Indians could be induced to come near Dodd, referring to him as the *White-Man-Who-Scalps-Himself*. .

