

\* [MP3 Audio File](#) \*



Legal historians are apt to point out that the opinion in the Kuhl case is notable as the first ever decision where a palm print was used for identification. Equally as interesting, however, are the circumstances from which the case arose, namely, the last stagecoach robbery in America.

It all began on December 5, 1916, a dreary wintry day in Jarbidge, Nevada, after it was observed that the stagecoach from Rogerson, Idaho, was three hours late. When a search party later located the missing stagecoach, the driver was found dead amidst signs of foul play. The mail sacks had been slashed open with a knife, and the \$4,000 in gold double eagles that the stagecoach had been carrying with the mail were missing.

A local miner, Ben Kuhl, was soon identified as a suspect and brought to trial. The evidence against Kuhl was largely circumstantial and included a letter from the mail pouch smeared with a bloody palm print. Experts convinced the jury that the print was made by Kuhl, and on October 6, 1917 the jury returned a verdict of murder. As for the \$4,000 in gold coins, the money was never recovered and legend has it that the treasure remains buried somewhere in the vicinity of Jarbidge.

Narrator: Norm Nielson. Norm Nielson was advertising manager for Nevada Bell and a long-time Nevada resident. The host of the syndicated radio program "Tales of Nevada," which aired statewide, he was heard by more than one million listeners daily. Mr. Nielson was

selected Promotion Man of the Year and Marketing Man of the Year and was inducted into the Northern Nevada Business Leaders' Hall of Fame. He received the Public Relations Society of America's Silver Spike Award for Excellence, not once but twice. In addition he held the Communications and Leadership Award from Toastmasters International, the only Nevadan to be so honored.

Mr. Nielson was the author of three books: *Reno, the Past Revisited*, and *Tales of Nevada*, Vols. 1 and 2. His historical documentary on western history aired regularly on Public Television and his "Tales of Nevada" vignettes for television became regular fare on news programs. He was affectionately known as "Mr. Nevada."

Photograph of Ben Kuhl courtesy of the Nevada State Library and Archives.

Photograph of the main street in Jarbidge courtesy of the Northeastern Nevada Museum.

[Ten Famous Cases of the Nevada Supreme Court, 1865-1937](#)