



# Young Ole Devil (An Ole Devil Hardin Western Book 1)

*J. T. Edson*

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The brainchild of Amazon Kindle Number One Bestselling Western Writers Mike Stotter and Ben Bridges, Piccadilly Publishing is dedicated to issuing classic series fiction from yesterday and today!

## YOUNG OLE DEVIL

'He's reckless, irresponsible and can't - or won't - avoid getting involved in fights no matter what duty he's supposed to be carrying out!'

That was the sort of comment which the senior officer of the Texas Light Cavalry might, with some justification, have made about the hot-headed Lieutenant Red Blaze during the War between the States. However, it was uttered by Colonel William Barrett Travis shortly before his departure to take command of the garrison at the Alamo Mission in San Antonio de Bexar early in 1836.

He was speaking about a young officer to whom Major General Sam Houston intended to entrust a dangerous mission. The officer in question was to become famous as the iron-hard disciplinarian who commanded the Confederate States Army of Arkansas and Northern Texas. His name was Jackson Baines Hardin - the man who became known as the 'lil ole devil' for fighting...

John Thomas Edson was born at Worksop, Nottinghamshire, on February 17 1928, the son of a miner who was killed in an accident when John was nine. He left Shirebrook Selective Central School at 14 to work in a stone quarry and joined the Army four years later.

As a sergeant in the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Edson served in Kenya during the Emergency, on one occasion killing five Mau Mau on patrol. He started writing in Hong Kong, and when he won a large cash prize in a tombola he invested in a typewriter.

On coming out of the Army after 12 years with a wife and children to support, Edson learned his craft while running a fish-and-chip shop and working on the production line at a local pet food factory. His efforts paid off when Trail Boss (1961) won second prize in a competition with a promise of publication and an outright payment of £50.

The publishers offered £25 more for each subsequent book, and with the addition of earnings from serial-writing for the comic Victor, Edson was able to settle down to professional authorship. When the comic's owners decided that nobody read cowboy stories any more, he was forced to get a job as a postman (the job had the by-product of enabling him to lose six stone in weight from his original 18).

Edson's prospects improved when Corgi Books took over his publisher, encouraged him to produce seven books a year and promised him royalties for the first time. In 1974 he made his first visit to the United States, to which he was to return regularly in search of reference books. He declared that he had no desire to live in the Wild West, adding: "I've never even been on a horse. I've seen those things, and they look highly dangerous at both ends and bloody uncomfortable in the middle. My only contact was to shoot them for dog meat."

His heroes were often based on his favourite film stars, so that Dusty Fog resembled Audie Murphy, and the Ysabel Kid was an amalgam of Elvis Presley in Flaming Star and Jack Buetel in The Outlaw.

Before becoming a recluse in his last years, JT's favourite boast was that Melton Mowbray was famous for three things: "The pie, Stilton cheese and myself but not necessarily in that order."

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