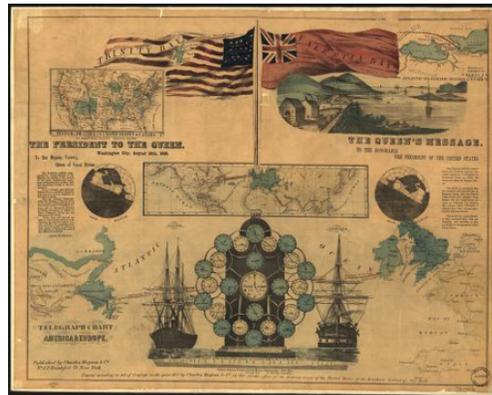


This Week in History, October 20 – October 26

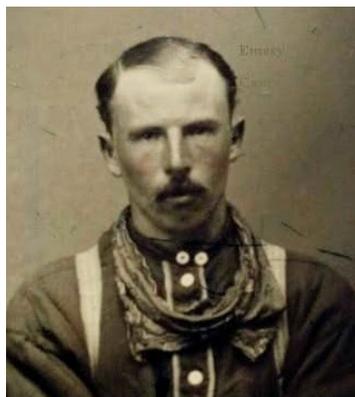
1748: British author Henry Fielding became a justice of the peace on October 25, beginning a successful career curtailing criminal activity in Westminster and Middlesex, England. Known for satirical and insightful novels about English society, including his masterpiece *Tom Jones*, Fielding had also studied law. In his time as a JP, Fielding was central in breaking up several notorious criminal gangs operating in his jurisdiction.



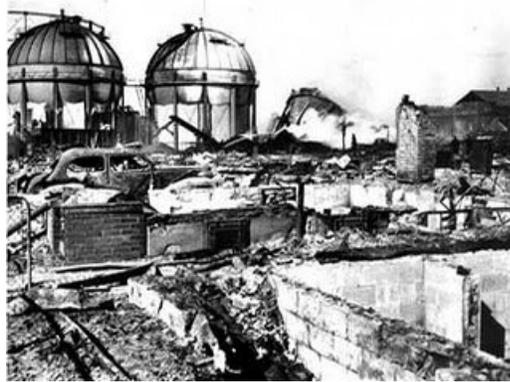
1861: Workers from the Western Union Telegraph Company joined the nation together in a coast-to-coast communications network when the transcontinental telegraph system was completed in Salt Lake City on October 24. This linking of eastern and western systems into a network allowed news to travel nationwide in minutes rather than the weeks it had taken in the pre-telegraph era.



1903: Gunman Tom Horn was hanged on October 22 for a murder in southern Wyoming, though the real reason for the execution may have been for his role in a northern Wyoming range war years earlier. Horn had been involved in the 1894 Johnson County War pitting large cattlemen against small farmers and sheep ranchers. Rumored to have been responsible for many ruthless killings in Johnson County, Horn was never charged with any of those deaths. Horn was convicted in 1903 for an unrelated murder on the testimony of one drunken witness, and despite a half-dozen more sober witnesses who placed him elsewhere at the time of the murder. Many think the jurors took the opportunity to punish Horn for the Johnson County violence.



1944: A massive natural gas explosion shook an industrial area in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 26, quickly followed by a second blast. The explosions were the result of a gas leak, and destroyed everything within a half-mile of the explosions. The death toll reached 130. News of the blasts was kept somewhat low key at the time, since there was concern that the public would fear German sabotage and panic would ensue. Investigations showed that no sabotage was involved.



2012: On October 22, cyclist Lance Armstrong was officially stripped of his seven Tour de France titles. Armstrong had long been accused of using illegal performance-enhancing drugs, but had always maintained his innocence. When the investigations of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency documented extensive evidence of doping, Armstrong dropped his denials. Unfortunately, the scandal also hurt Armstrong's cancer-research charity.

