

Author's  
MIND MAP  
'Gap Novels'

Original timeline:  
ca: 1819 to 1867

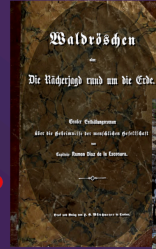
based on  
Karl May's  
Winnetou &  
Rodriganda  
Universes



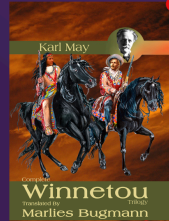
**1875**  
Karl Friedrich May 1842 - 1912  
Author of late 19th century  
German adventure fiction.



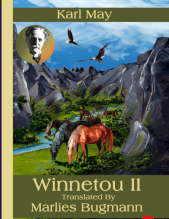
**Karl May's  
alter ego:  
Old Shatterhand**



**Adjusted timeline:  
ca. 1819 to 1858**



After separating from Winnetou, chipmunk, return to N.Y.  
Late 1863 to early 1864



Sept. 1874

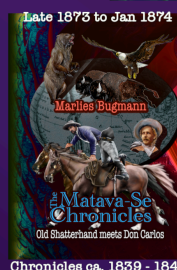
● Available from  
Verlag Marheinecke

Ca. Oct 1872 to early Jan 1873

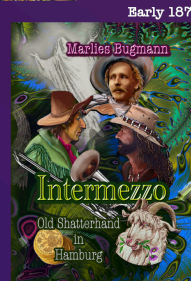


1873

Private Edition 'Gap Novels'  
available from  
tasmanianartist.com only



Chronicles ca. 1839 - 1843



Early 1874

October 2023

**EXPERIMENTAL 'STORY WITHIN STORY' WORKS; 'GAP NOVELS' FILLING THE GAPS LEFT BY KARL FRIEDRICH MAY WHEN ASSEMBLING THE WINNETOU TRILOGY, UTILIZING MAY'S OWN TEXTS FROM A VARIETY OF DIFFERING GENRES, CROSSING OVER INTO THE 'TRAVEL ADVENTURE' GENRE, WITH EXCERPTS PRESENTED AS BEING TOLD BY THE VARIOUS PROTAGONISTS, AS WELL AS 'CHARLES, AKA OLD SHATTERHAND' DURING HIS TRAVELS IN THE WILD WEST, AND DURING THE PERIOD OF 1860 TO LATE 1874.**

**The 'Gap Novels'**

Their purpose: to create a framework within which to present some of Karl May's early short works (rarities) as adaptations, excerpts of his 'Colportage' novels (romances with content considered 'risquee' within the cultural pruderies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and written under pseudonym) also as adaptations, and new work within the adjusted chronology to enable crossovers between the *Rodriganda* and *Winnetou* universes.

*"This play was written for my own amusement, and not with the remotest thought that it would ever be seen by the public eye. [...]"* and *"The play, no doubt, abounds in defects, but as I was born in slavery, and never had a day's schooling in my life, I owe the public no apology for error."* From *The Escape; or, A Leap For Freedom. A Drama in Five Acts.* By William Wells Brown, 1858. William Wells Brown is one of two former black slaves who inspired the creation of one character in *The Mission at Silverlake*, see relevant P.S.

My 'Gap Novels' have a second purpose; each contains the remark:

[This novel] is not available through publishing industry distribution (i.e. bookstores), or as an e-book—no ISBN is affixed. Part of the first chapter is available as a free download; a link to my private edition of the full book, a paperback, on Lulu.com, for purchase as a POD print, is provided in the PDF. The work is also not listed on Lulu.com's own online shop, and is, therefore, not searchable there, and only available through the link provided at the end of the free download of the first part chapter (or from the author). This novel may not be for fans of the traditional Karl May oeuvre.

I have written them, in equal priority with the first purpose, that of creating a framework for some of May's rarer and lesser known works (as adaptations), for my own amusement. Karl May fans may find them amusing, too, hence they can be obtained through Lulu's 'Select Access', which means only via a link from tasmanianartist.com, as explained above.

**The *Kulisse***

It is a German word, which can be defined as: Painted panels, props, film sets, movie towns, green-screen scenery, curtains, sound scapes; the *Kulisse* is what fills the space, edge-to-edge, of the TV screen, the motion-picture frame, the theatre stage top to bottom, and side-curtain to side-curtain for the players to act out the play underscored by colourful, dramatic backdrops.

The *Kulisse* of my 'Gap Novels' is made up of salient points of American history in front of which the characters of Karl Friedrich May and their trials and tribulations are placed, and which might not, or rarely with a few scant remarks, have received a mention—largely because they went either unreported or unnoticed, yet should have been because they were instrumental in shaping said history, for better or for worse.

**The Chronology**

Around sixty years after the author's death, the *Colportage* novel *Waldroeschen*, (also colloquially described as *Hintertreppenroman*, translated this means 'back-stairs novel', because the weekly instalments of the dime novels were delivered to the back door, as they

were read by the servants of the household, those who entered via the back doors, the servants entry, the back stairs) was once described as a 'galactic monster of a novel', and 'one of the most colossal curiosities in the world of literature'[...]. In 1971, Heinz Stolte wrote an article on *Waldroeschen*, which is online with the KMG, and in which he says: "*Was für ein galaktisches Ungeheuer [...] gewaltige[r] Kolportageroman Karl Mays [...] diese[s] Ungeheuer von Roman, eine[ ] der kolossalsten Kuriositäten der Weltliteratur[...].*"

In January of 1998, Klaus Hirsching wrote an admirable 68 pages investigative report, also online with the KMG, with comprehensive suggestions to correct May's chronology, and rescue what can be rescued of the train-wreck soap opera, which, to put it into context, was the most famous, most popular early romance, and the most-read dime novel of its time. He wrote: "*Es schockierte mich immer wieder, dass die Hauptakteure des Romans für 16 lange Jahre auf einer Insel verbannt sein sollten, während sich ihre Getreuen zuhause vor Gram verzehrten. Ich hatte das Gefühl, dass etwas mit dem Zeitablauf nicht stimmte. Eine systematische Analyse zeigte dann auch bald, dass der historische Hintergrund diese Zeit um einiges zusammenschrumpfen lässt!*"

Like for many others, my major stumbling block in *Waldroeschen* is also the timespan Don Carlos, aka Matava-Se, aka Dr Sternau and his friends were forced to spend marooned on a small, unknown island in the Southern Ocean. In contrast to Mr Hirsching's efforts, my timeline adjustments are far more drastic, doing away with plot-directing politics and wars; the outcomes of the latter were always a given, no matter how much effort the fictional characters expended in bringing about a different ending. And like Mr Stolte, I want to leave no doubt that I consider Karl May to be a wholly brilliant, a great writer, at least more than a writer of dime novels.

However, what worked in 1882, week after week, and delivery after delivery, in written format, will no longer work for a 'broad readership' in the 21st century, because the television soap operas (or streaming of them) have taken over that role, and reading a book is no longer the all-consuming pastime it once was during the era of non-existent illiteracy in some countries; those were the days. As a comparison, Australia, the country in which I live, boasts 50% reading and writing difficulties in its population. Imagine having to explain to a reader who Bismarck was, and why Napoleon was involved in Mexico. Back to basics, and stripping the colossus down to the bare essentials might be a drastic measure, but at least Matava-Se has a chance of continuing.

The new, imagined *Winnetou*-trilogy-centric chronology, incorporating the adjusted *Rodriganda Romances* chronology, allows for crossovers, sequels, prequels, sidequels, and other gap-closing works with Old Shatterhand as the first person narrator, and a few guest narrators.

The *Winnetou* trilogy was compiled, or rather, assembled, from several different, earlier stories written before Karl Friedrich May had clearly defined his own Wild West persona, Old Shatterhand, and that of his 'blood brother' the Apache chief, Winnetou. The Apache appeared in those earlier stories, but less refined and still more 'savage' in parts than the educated, 'noble warrior chief' that he eventually became in the 1893 trilogy. Volume I was written as an entirely new work, followed by volume II with part 1, an adventure in the Confederate South with 'Old Death', and part 2, a tale of a railroad attack, white hunters, and Indians stirred up by a white villain, and with 'Old Firehand'. Volume III was similarly assembled with part 1, a railroad attack story and subsequent hunt into gold-rush California with 'Sans-Ear', and part 2 (in which Winnetou dies) with another railroad attack and subsequent pursuit of the villains with detective Walker. These four older stories needed to be connected into one coherent trilogy. Karl Friedrich May did this by briefly mentioning 'other adventures' had in the meantime in the Wild West, as well as in his fictional Orient, or Africa, and leaving enough scope in the gaps (in time and space) for such adventures to take place. However, he never wrote about them.

Realistically, Karl Friedrich May wrote far too many stories for a sensible chronology—it cannot be achieved. The only thing to do is to categorically ignore ‘non-Wild-West’ stories (e.g. those set in the Orient, Africa, South America, Europe, Asia, on the high seas, Southeast Asia—have I left anything out?) and use the blinkered approach of limiting oneself to the one genre; in my case: the *Winnetou* trilogy including the adjusted *Rodriganda Romances*. This, in tandem, creates an entirely new timeline in which crossovers, prequels, sequels and other such ‘side stories’ can be accommodated.

Karl Friedrich May’s ‘days-of-...’ *Colportage* novels (cheap literature, penny dreadfuls, dime novels), with Prussian, Saxon, Bavarian and other Germanic colloquial content may not represent ideal material to translate into English; perhaps the culture clash is too severe; however, certain segments, arcs, or excerpts are well worth presenting.

Given the fact that a great many Germans emigrated to the United States in the 1800s, even new *Winnetou* & *Old Shatterhand* novels can benefit from those statistics; after all, wherever Germans have put down roots in other countries and continents, their social get togethers have always included songs being sung and stories being told. All of the ‘Gap Novels’ I have created since ‘lockdowns’ created a new normal for me, and include the ‘story/stories within story’ concepts, featuring early works by the creator of *Winnetou* and *Old Shatterhand*.



## **The Calculation for the Adjusted Chronology**

Rodriganda Formula (calculating in the reverse from a factual date in 1867)

1867

Max von Habsburg's execution (Sternau unsuccessfully attempts to rescue him in the original German *Waldroeschen*); this is a historic fact.

1866

Rescue from the island (about a year before Max's execution; considering travelling times from the South Pacific with a sailing ship via Africa and around the cape).

**DEDUCT 16 YEARS#** (the original *Waldroeschen* term marooned on the island), then continue to work backwards to Karl Sternau's birth, thus:

1850 (walking into the pirate's trap in Guaymas, and subsequently being marooned on an island)

Minus 2 years (duration of events in Spain, Germany, Atlantic, first Mexico visit).

1848

Opening events in Rodriganda, Spain, Sternau 28 years old.

1820

Sternau's birth, 20th March.

1819

Sternau's Conception through rape by Duke de Olsunna on Miss Wilhelmi, ca late June.

One or two years before Olsunna's disgraceful behaviour towards Miss Wilhelmi, he was wooing a Spanish ballerina, Valdez, in competition with old Don Rodriganda, and Rodriganda's accountant, old Cortejo; during a confrontation both, Rodriganda and Cortejo are killed, the ballerina disappears without a trace. This detail is of value for a plot detail in *Fables of the West*.

1817 or 1818 Hanetta Valdez ballerina episode in Rodriganda.

1819 ca late June Sternau's conception in Spain by Olsunna.

1820 20 March Sternau's birth in Germany to Wilhelmi married to Sternau.

1839 Sternau 19 years old, travels across the United States and the Rocky Mountains (receiving his name Matava-Se) and Mexico to the Yucatan Peninsula, then across the Gulf of Mexico, north into New Mexico back to California, shipping out from Guaymas via Papua / New Holland back home to study in Paris.

1844-48 studies to become a surgeon with Prof. Letourbier in Paris.

1848 Sternau leaves Paris for Rodriganda, Spain; he is 28 years old.

Assuming that the events in Rodriganda, including 1 month imprisonment in a Barcelona gaol, and escape from Spain across the Pyrenees to Germany take several months, the events in Germany probably take place during 1849; at that point, coinciding with the circus performance, Kurt Helmers is 5 years and several months old; he was born in 1844. The circus travels past, and gives a performance, while Sternau is already on his way to catch Landola and free Mariano.

A circus travels through Rheinswalden in Germany in 1849, Gustavo Escosura (erstwhile guide to young Karl Sternau through New Mexico and California in 1843) sees it and tells the Apache in America, when he returns to New Mexico, the demonstration of 'western skills' was executed by Matava-Se.

Add at least 2 years duration for events in Spain, in Germany (including wedding of Don Carlos and Rosa de Rodriganda in Rheinswalden), on the Atlantic, and in Mexico.

1850 Sternau and friends are trapped and abducted from Guaymas.

(Sternau, the brothers Joop and Anton Helmers, Schosh-in-liett, and Mokashi-motak, Mariano, and the ladies Karja, Mokashi-motak's sister, and Emma Arbellez).

1850 Sternau's daughter, Rosa (nicknamed Waldroeschen) is born.

**#Plus 7 years marooned on island**

1857 Sternau and friends are rescued from the island; Sternau is 37 years old.

1858, when Sternau and friends have returned home, Kurt Helmers is 14 years old.

1866, Kurt Helmers is a 'Gardeleutenant' at age 22.

1874 Rosita (Don Carlos' daughter) is 25 years old / Sternau is 54 years old, and Kurt Helmers is 30 years old.

(#At this point, the English translation *The Rodriganda Romances* diverges from the German *Das Waldroeschen* by nine years. The duration of being marooned on the island is reduced from 16 years to 7 years, returning the heroes of *The Rodriganda Romances* to Mexico BEFORE young Charles May, aka Old Shatterhand, sets foot on American soil.)

1840 Winnetou is born

1874 Winnetou dies.

## THE MEXICAN CONNECTION

### How Mexican President Juarez connected the *Winnetou* and *Rodriganda* Universes.

#### Universe *Rodriganda*:

May's German *Waldroeschen* is not for the faint-hearted. In order to strip it down to the bare bones, several aspects need to be eliminated: Bismarck, Napoleon, and Max of Habsburg to begin with; and then deal with the 16 years of being marooned on an unknown island in the South Sea at 42 degrees southern latitude, which is not survivable without substantial infrastructure.

Sixteen years without sufficient supplies, food, protection and tools on a small island (so small that no ship has ever noticed it) in the middle of the Roaring Forties, where the winds are famous for 'roaring', and ice during winter is commonplace, is practically unsurvivable. The eight people marooned on the island were placed there with only the shreds of shirts and breeches they had been wearing while being captive in the bilge of a pirate ship for months. No tools, no food, nothing was left to them by the pirate who marooned them, except a few blankets. Not a good prospect for survival.

The sixteen years must be reduced to a survivable term—seven years may be possible, if there are caves, trees, livestock, and edible plants, as well as fresh water, and as long as accidents and illnesses do not take their toll.

The leading characters' offspring (conceived before the marooning) would in this case also not yet be of marrying age, and thus remain in the distant background, and not take over the parents' role towards the end, as Kurt Helmers did in the original *Waldroeschen*, by sailing to Mexico and rescuing the old heroes who once again, and subsequent to their rescue from the island, became caught in a trap.

The result can no longer be titled *Waldroeschen*; but as *The Rodriganda Romances*, the main character Matava-Se, aka Don Carlos de Olsunna, aka Doctor Karl Sternau, suddenly has a chance at being a credible character in a soap opera that spans half a century. With *The Rodriganda Romances*, the characters and events have also left the constraining chronology of *Waldroeschen*, and thus are now free to cross over into the world of May's *Reiseromane* or travel novels.

To turn *Waldroeschen* into *The Rodriganda Romances* was excellent entertainment with the challenge presented by not only the reinvention of Matava-Se's life, exile and return as a hero, but also locating the necessary research materials made possible by cyberspace and the WWW. The phrase 'to be continued' comes to mind. With *Out of Vandaemonia* I already took advantage of Karl F. May's comments within his adventure novels of having travelled in Australia, and continued *Winnetou's* and *Shatterhand's* adventures in the antipodes; *Clipper Run* brought them back to the Wild West.

As the attentive reader of Karl F. May's works knows, Don Carlos' acquaintance in Mexico, the native Zapotec and President of Mexico, Benito Juarez, had also availed himself of the services of a young Apache chief by the name of *Winnetou*, to ride on secret missions for him. Karl F. May said so in *Winnetou II* while the greenhorn, (travelling incognito, not as Old Shatterhand, but as Detective Charles May) fought the KKK together with Old Death, and *Winnetou*, in the deep Confederate South.

#### Universe *Winnetou*

As a Karl F. May translator, I focussed on his Wild West oeuvre, especially the novels and stories that feature *Winnetou*. By selfishly ignoring May's 'Orient', and Hadji Halef (with very few exceptions, e.g. *Satan und Ishariorh*, or *The Rose of Shiraz*, because they, too, have a Wild West connection), and the eliminations cited above in this soliloquy, suddenly, crossovers, sequels, prequels, sidequels etcetera, make the re-imagining possible, especially when a new ingredient is added: historic facts—things that actually occurred during the implied time-slots

of the fictional adventures with the fictional heroes. However, while Karl F. May also used historic facts in his *Colportage* as well as his fictional novels, he made them an intrinsic part of the plot, they directed (sometimes the majority of) the plot and outcome, especially in *Waldroeschen*, while the interesting life story of Don Carlos suffered near-fatal interruptions.

The experimental treatment of May's old heroes, that is: placing them into a background of historic events that frame their adventures, but not direct the plot, is an entertaining and worthwhile means of finding history not taught in schools.

How many readers are aware that Winnetou is in fact a Mexican? For in 1840, when the Apache chief was born, his pueblo on the Rio Pecos was in fact a part of Mexico at the time. It was in 1848 when the United States got the better of Mexico and annexed 55% of their territory, and with it New Mexico.

### **The Meeting of the *Rodriganda* and *Winnetou* Universes**

And there it is: the connection between the heroes of *The Rodriganda Romances*, Matava-Se, Itinti-ka, Shosh-in-liett, Mokashi-Motak, Karja, Emma, and those of the *Winnetou* adventures; Winnetou also features in May's *Jugenderzaehlungen*, or boys' adventures, and so, Hobble-Frank, Frick Turnerstick, Juggle-Fred, Bloody-Fox, and distant relatives of Captain Joop Helmers of *The Rodriganda Romances*, the owners of Helmers' Home on the edge of the Llano Estacado, John and Barbara Helmers, are also a part of the re-imagined fictional universe of the Saxon poet—all thanks to the Mexican President Benito Juarez.

### **Universes Merged**

NOTA BENE: as mentioned above, I have selfishly excluded any incorporation of Karl F. May's 'Orient' Novels, and their timelines and chronologies, for the already stated reason—that the number of adventures written in the first person voice is too great—he was a prolific writer, and besides his Wild West and Orient novels, he wrote 'historic period dramas' that played in old Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Bohemia, and fictional lands that exist on no map. As such, and for the purpose of the 'Gap Novels', their settings that hold stories within stories comprising both, the *Waldroeschen/Rodriganda Romances* and *Winnetou* timelines and chronology, are strictly limited to the period between 1860 (when the young greenhorn and the young Apache meet), to Winnetou's death in September 1874.

The universe of *The Rodriganda Romances* and the universe of *Winnetou*, including that of May's eight *Jugenderzaehlungen* (Boys's Stories) are combining, intertwining and merging here and there and facilitate rarities, and early romances as the stories told within.

Karl F. May's Wild West was based on a fantasy universe, the adventures were fairytales. It is not up to me to judge whether or not he was aware of actual events in the New World; most likely 'not really'. In the works where Old Shatterhand or Kara Ben Nemsi figure, he wrote in the first person narrative, which meant, he got into much trouble for 'lying' to his readers, because he insisted that it was he who had travelled through the Wild West and experienced all of the adventures as Old Shatterhand (likewise as Kara Ben Nemsi in his fictional Orient).

He left two factual dates to posterity: The first one is his own birth date of 25th February 1842; the second is the date on which Maximilian I of Mexico was executed by Benito Juarez, on the 19th June 1867. The latter underpins the formula I used to arrive at a timeline in which several of May's genres can cross over. The formula is also central to *The Rodriganda Romances'* timeline and plot, as the latter is not a full translation of May's own *Waldroeschen*. I have included copious amounts of notes in *The Rodriganda Romances*.

Fictional dates Karl F. May recorded are Winnetou's birth year of 1840, and his death on 2nd Sep 1874.

A fictional timespan (not a date) Karl F. May recorded as a part of one of his plots are the 16 years during which the main protagonists of his German original *Waldroeschen* were

marooned on an unknown, unnamed island, with not a single tree growing there, along the 42nd parallel south in the South Pacific.

Those sixteen years ended a few months prior to Maximilian's execution (in Karl F. May's universe of *Waldroeschen*).

Karl F. May also combined two important crises in Benito Juarez' career into one fictional event: War of the Reform 1858-60, and French invasion 1862-67, yet kept the most prominent historical figures' names intact without changing them as one would for fictional purposes. Some landmark descriptions (after Don Carlos and his friends escaped the South Sea island) fit the earlier events of the War of the Reform, others the events during the French invasion. The abridged and adjusted translation of *Waldroeschen*, titled *The Rodriganda Romances* focusses solely on the adventures surrounding Matava-Se, aka Don Carlos de Olsunna, aka Dr Karl Sternau, and takes advantage of May's contraction of the two Mexican crises into one fictional event based on real political upheaval in Mexico. Hence *The Rodriganda Romances* conclude around 1858. See extensive notes in *The Rodriganda Romances*.

There were three important wars in America: the Mexico-America war of 1846-1848; Mexico lost it, and with it 55% of its territory to the US. During the 1830s and 1840s, large armies of Plains Indians raided northern Mexico, when all of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, much of Colorado, all of New Mexico as well as Texas, were still a part of Mexico. Those armies would push south at times as far as today's Mexico City. This war by the Native Indians against the white European colonialists, especially those in Mexico, weakened Mexico's capacity to withstand the US's push west and south to annex those lands. After the Guadalupe-Hidalgo treaty in 1848, those regions, together with the subsequent purchase of a wedge of land south of Arizona and New Mexico, were integrated into the United States of America. The third important war in America was the Civil War, free states against slave states. That took place from 1861 to 1865.

Fictional Winnetou was born in 1840, in a pueblo along the Rio Pecos, in New Mexico, so Karl F. May tells us in his *Winnetou*; Winnetou was a Plains Indian, an Apache, the pueblos belonged to the Pueblo Indians. However, by the time 1840 came along, things had changed quite dramatically.

### **Short History of the Upper Pecos Valley and its surroundings:**

Ancestral Pueblo People built above ground, multi-family pueblos, or villages, by the mid-1100s. Near Glorieta Pass, the pueblos dotting the landscape, estimated at between fifty to one hundred, consolidated into the larger settlement at Pecos Pueblo. It's commanding location near the pass invited lively trade between the Plains Indians (among them Apache and Comanche), and the Rio Grande Pueblo Indians. But because it had become famous throughout the Pueblo world, it also attracted the attention of the Spanish Conquistadors, and by the mid-1500s it had become a target for them during their explorations into the Southwest.

Because of the Spaniards' drive to establish a colony, Franciscan missions started at the largest pueblos, and with their rule attempted to control every aspect of the Pueblo Indians' culture, including their economy and belief systems. Their ill-treatment of the native population created the first American Revolution—the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. This was the only time that American Native People successfully expelled European invaders from their country; the revolt was led by Po'pay from Ohkay Owengeh (San Juan Pueblo).

Two years later, the Spanish re-conquered New Mexico, and re-established their missions at many pueblos, including the Pecos Pueblo, but found little resistance from the Pecos Indians. Comanche raids from the Plains, as well as introduced European diseases, slowly decimated the Pecos People throughout the 1700s.

After Mexico won its independence from Spain, the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico, was opened in 1821, which led right past the pueblo remnants. In 1830, the last remaining Pecos People left for the Pueblo of Jemez, where their traditions live on.

This historic fact leaves enough space for fiction to enable a fictional band of Apache becoming semi-settled in a fictional pueblo along the Rio Pecos. Times they were a changing. Apache did not build pueblos. However, in Karl F. May's fictional universe some bands of the Mescalero Apache may well have taken one of the by then uninhabited pueblos as their permanent place of home.

This means that, in 1840, the region now known as New Mexico, was wholly Mexican. Fictional Winnetou was born a Mexican national. When he was eight years old, the Americans annexed northern Mexico, and with it New Mexico. He had become an American Indian, without the privileges of US citizenship. Mexico, unlike the United States, gave Indians full citizenship and recognized that Indians had rights to their land; however, their policy of 'mingling' also meant that pretty soon, a mixed race (of Native Indian and Spanish heritage) was commonplace.

While the timeline concerning fictional Winnetou is relatively simple, the one with Matava-Se requires a little more arithmetic, see calculation above.

Dr Sternau's birthday was the 20th March. But May did not reveal a year. By applying the imaginative calculation, one can arrive at the year of his birth, as well as the year and month of his conception.

If we are permitted to reduce the duration of being marooned on the South Seas island to approximately 7 years (which would still be a stretch to believe it is survivable), as in *The Rodriganda Romance*, the 21st century adaptation, then Matava-Se's travels during which he earned his nom de guerre, Lord of the Rockies, or Matava-Se, (predating his entrance in the opening chapter to *Waldroeschen* as well as to *The Rodriganda Romances*) would play out sometime around 1839 to 1842 or 1843 (give or take a year), during which the Wild West (the Southwest of the US) was still wholly Mexican, with the exception of Oregon Territory in the north and east, refer David H. Burr map 1839.

This would still allow Sternau to return home to Germany, then go to Paris to study medicine under a famous French surgeon, before being called to Rodriganda at 28 years of age to execute two operations, with success—one being an eye operation, the other a lithotripsy. After that, an approximately two-year-long hunt for the villains begins, which ends with Matava-Se's first 'official' visit to Mexico in 1850, and his capture and marooning with his friends on the South Sea island.

NOTA BENE: by reducing the marooning on the island from 16 years down to 7 years, the sequence of events during Sternau's travels remains the same, the 'odyssey' merely ends about nine years earlier, by dint of Karl F. May's contraction of two of Benito Juarez' battles into one, which means they had by now (in *The Rodriganda Romance*) become an entirely fictional element to serve as a background, or *Kulisse*. Matava-Se was marooned around 1850, and reappeared in Mexico after his rescue in (the newly calculated year of ca) 1857 to assist Benito Juarez to win his (in this case fictional) battles. Matava-Se returned home to Germany, and his inherited fortune and title of nobility at around 1858 (give or take a year here and there, taking into account travel times occasionally—fiction is what it is).

### **Benito Juarez' fictionalized real battles in context.**

The adventures in Mexico, after Sternau's rescue from the uninhabited island, are placed in front of a backdrop loosely based on the political turmoil Mexico experienced between approximately 1858 and 1867 (details of locales and events may equally place the plot of those Mexico adventures in either the year 1858—the description of El Refugio refers—or the years 1863-5—when Juarez fled Mexico City for the second time, finding refuge in El Paso del



Norte from where he fought to drive the French out—or 1867—when Emperor Maximilian was executed and Juarez regained full power and returned to Mexico City). May frequently contracted historical and political elements into a shorter timeframe to suit his adventure novels (see *From the Rio de la Plata to the Cordilleras*); he applied it to *Waldroeschen*; for *The Rodriganda Romances*, and with artistic licence, all of the wars, invasions, and revolutions in Mexico between 1858 and 1867 have become a generic background; in this particular case setting Matava-Se's odyssey against a background of real events in Mexico cannot possibly be done, because the various eras of trouble are too far apart for them to become a part of the plot, which May attempted to do.

May also attempted to bring an element of buccaneering into the saga with the pirate Landola/Grandeprise, which worked only partially, because the 'Golden Age of Piracy' ended around the 1720s, a hundred years before fictional Karl Sternau was born; as the odyssey progressed, Landola was reduced to land-based spy roles.

### **Karl F. May introduces Benito Juarez to the *Winnetou* trilogy.**

In Karl F. May's famous *Winnetou* trilogy, Winnetou serves Benito Juarez on a secret mission. Since Karl F. May did not mention the purpose, the secret mission is not specific to the French invasion; it plays in the approximate middle of the two blood-brothers' 14-year-long friendship, around the years 1866-67. Since the Mexican political unrests and revolutions are contracted into a fictional, generic background, there can be any number of reasons for Winnetou to be on a secret mission for the Mexican president Juarez.

In the fictional plot, Winnetou met Matava-Se, Itinti-Ka, Captain Joop Helmers, and the other five who were rescued from the island, during one such secret messenger service, in Juarez' residence in Mexico City, where they were the guests of the president after they had successfully assisted Juarez in his (fictional) battles. This is entirely possible in Karl F. May's universe; he created the precedent, and the year would be about 1857 (early 58). Winnetou was 18 years old—old enough to be a rider for Juarez, delivering secret documents from Mexico to Texas or vice versa.

This was Matava-Se's third visit to Mexico; and this was the second time Winnetou and Matava-Se met, albeit only briefly, and without being introduced to each other.

1860 is the fictional year in which Charles May aka Old Shatterhand first meets Winnetou. They are eighteen and twenty years old respectively.

Matava-Se, before his posting to Paris for the purpose of studying medicine, was travelling through the pre-1848 Mexican Rocky Mountains, which means, Winnetou would still have been a child. It is entirely possible that Matava-Se and Inshu-Chuna met sometime around the early-1840s (1842 or 1843). (Winnetou remembers a stranger visiting when he was a child, his father called the stranger Matava-Se. This was before Klekih-Petra came to live with the Apache, which happened after 1848, and the famous revolution in Germany.)

Matava-Se, aka Don Carlos de Olsunna, aka Dr Karl Sternau, has two childhood/student friends. One is Captain Joop Helmers, the other is his brother, Anton Helmers, or Itinti-ka. All three men are of a similar age.

Itinti-ka, too, is travelling around the Rocky Mountains and the Mexico of old (pre-1848), where he distinguishes himself as an excellent horseman, and earns his nom de guerre Itinti-ka, or Thunder-Arrow. But, according to Karl F. May's fictional plot of *Waldroeschen*, the two men (Matava-Se and Itinti-ka) do not meet in the Wild West until much later, when Matava-Se is travelling to Mexico again, going after the pirate who later maroons him. It is not even made clear whether or not Karl Sternau and Anton Helmers ever met in Germany while growing up; that detail is revealed by a character in a guesthouse on Madeira: in *Waldroeschen* or *The Rodriganda Romances* that character said about Joop and Anton Helmers: "[Joop's] family did not have enough money, the parents were poor. He had a friend by the name of Sternau, who also went to High School; Sternau's father paid for Helmers' schooling, but died before the boy

could complete his studies. Joop had a younger brother, but I don't know what became of him; it is not my place to ask." The 1840s were not only turbulent in Mexico and the United States, but also in Europe, which was in that era a place of mini-ice-ages, summers of snow, rotting crops in the fields, starvation, industrial revolution, unemployment, uprisings, and general misery; they were called the Hungry Forties.

### **Last but not least, Fred Sommer.**

Karl F. May wrote a short story using that name as a pseudonym, that's all. Having said that, because Karl F. May insisted throughout his literary career that he had indeed gone to America very early on, the rumours about his 'early travels' persisted. After his death, someone went to great length attempting to make it a fact, including faking a letter sent from Fred Sommer in St. Louis, to Karl F. May in Germany. The opportunity to add a little more mystery must not be wasted. After all, fiction is what it is. Fred Sommer went to America just a few years ahead of young Charles May, ca. 1857/58.

### **Note about the connection between *The Rodriganda Romances* and *Out Of Vandaemonia***

Karl F. May, in his own German version of *Old Surehand II* re-used short parts of his German version of *Waldroeschen* (among other old, short stories) to fill that volume; those parts became stand-alone 'stories told in a tavern', (a template for the 'story-within-story' device), and served no other purpose than to enable May to also create a trilogy for *Old Surehand*, for which he would otherwise have had only two volumes, as his time did not allow for the writing of an entirely new third volume. When I translated May's *Old Surehand* in the modern two-volume fashion, I used my own design to bridge the gap between the end of *Old Surehand I* and the beginning of what was *Old Surehand III* and is now the modern version *Old Surehand II*.

The 'stories told in a tavern', which are now taken out (thus eliminating the middle volume of the *Old Surehand* trilogy), have been translated and published in other works, and the short parts of *Waldroeschen* became a 'story told at a camp fire while riding through the Australian outback', in *Out Of Vandaemonia*, although the names of the fictional characters have been altered, yet are sufficiently familiar to form an inferred, and loose, connection to *The Rodriganda Romances*.

In *Clipper Run—Winnetou & Shatterhand in the South Sea*, events and characters from *The Rodriganda Romances*, the *Winnetou* trilogy, other Karl F. May novels, *Out of Vandaemonia*, *Captured at Sea*, as well as characters from May's *Jugenderzaehlungen* form an integral part.

*Fables of the West—Winnetou & Shatterhand on the Trail* is set along the famous trails through the American Southwest during 1873.

Winnetou would be 33 years old, Old Shatterhand 31, Matava-Se 53, Itinti-Ka perhaps 49 or 50, Captain Joop Helmers about 52.

The mystery of Fred Sommer is being unravelled in *Fables of the West*.

Likewise, in *The Matava-Se Chronicles*, the story of how Dr. Sternau, or Don Carlos received his nom-de-guerre of the Wild West, Matava-Se, is at last revealed through the journals written during the travels in the wilds of the American frontier of the early- to mid-19th century. In *The Matava-Se Chronicles—Old Shatterhand meets Don Carlos*, the timelines and threads, the loose ends, which began in *The Rodriganda Romances* and the *Winnetou* trilogy, as well as *Out of Vandaemonia*, and which lead through *Clipper Run* and *Fables of the West*, come together, and are at last tied off.

While neither the original German *Waldroeschen* nor the English adaptation of it, *The Rodriganda Romances*, have gaps in the continuity and plot timeline, the *Winnetou* trilogy has several, owing to the structure of it. Volume I is the only one without a gap, because May wrote a new part to create the trilogy; between the ending of volume I (which is actually at

the beginning of volume II), and the first story of volume II, the adventure with Old Death, is a gap; between the first and second story of volume II, before the adventure with Old Firehand, is a gap; between the end of volume II, and the first story in volume III, is a gap, and a gigantic gap of at least five years sits between the first story of volume III, the adventure with Sans-Ear, and the second story of volume III, the events at Hancock Mountain, where Winnetou dies. There are more gaps in other sections.

Karl F. May bridged those gaps by briefly mentioning what happened between the various parts and sections; however, he did not write those adventures down, they are mere narrative notes linking the parts of the trilogy's volume II and volume III.

### **Multiple Personalities; First Person Voice of Narrator in the Gap Novels:**

Karl F. May's travel novels are written in the first person, the inference being that he, in the guise of Old Shatterhand in the Wild West, and Kara Ben Nemsi in the Orient, experienced all of the adventures himself (in literary terms: Karl F. May's alter egos). The mathematical problem, as mentioned already above, is that he wrote a far greater number of adventures than a human could possibly experience in one lifetime. Some of the tales can be placed into the same time slots, they essentially happen at the same time—in different parts of the globe. Karl F. May did not travel outside Europe until 1899; in contrast, however, the fictional persona of Charles May the globetrotter, did. Although a very fine distinction, it, nevertheless, is a distinction. These are two different personalities: Karl F. May, the older German writer, and Charles May, the younger adventurer. The same narrow distinction must be made with Kara Ben Nemsi in Karl F. May's Orient novels. In those, too, Kara Ben Nemsi is the younger persona, the globetrotter who travels, and Karl F. May is the older writer, in Germany, who has never travelled in the Orient until 1899. Both, Old Shatterhand, and Kara Ben Nemsi (the two nom-de-guerres of fictional personality Charles May), are fictional characters, while Karl F. May is the flesh-and-blood author and creator of these two fictional, alter egos.

The early works by Karl F. May that I have translated, adapted, and re-interpreted for the 'Gap Novels' (status October 2023) are:

*Detective in New York:*

*'Der Samiel' / 'Die Laubthaler'*

*The Sonora Adventure:*

The Wilkinsfield segment of DHDH / The 'Wasserfex' arc of *'Der Weg zum Glueck'* / The Zilla and Pepi segment of *'Das Waldroeschen'*

*Into the Past:*

*'Die Rose von Ernstthal' / 'Wanda' / 'Der Bowie-Pater', Ch. 7 of 'Die Juweleninsel'*

*The Mission at Silverlake:*

*'Silbersee'* segment of DHDH

*Fables of the West:*

*'Am Kai'Pa' / 'Vom Tode Erstanden' / Instalment 31 of the original German Waldroeschen: 'Westmann' skills spectacle in Rheinswalden (a circus performance).*

*Intermezzo:*

*'Die Verwunschte Ziege' / 'Der Dukatenhof' / 'Die Fastnachtsnarren' / Instalments 88 to 91 of the original German Waldroeschen: 'The Griffon's Secret Mission, Germany (visiting Minister Bismarck) and instalment 96: Mexico (empty coffin).*