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Nebraska Folklore: Pamphlet 19, Reminiscences of Dad Streeter

Nebraska Department of Public Instruction

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Nebraska

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NEBRASKA

FOLKLORE
PAMPHLET NINETEEN

~~DUPLICATE~~

REMINISCENCES
OF
DAD STREETER



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FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT
NEBRASKA FEBRUARY 1939

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REMINISCENCES OF DAD STREETER
February, 1939

These reminiscences of George W. Streeter, who prefers to be known as Dad Streeter, relate experiences and events in which he participated while living in Nebraska during the 1880's. The manuscript was first submitted to the Federal Writers' Project in Utah (where Mr. Streeter now resides in Ogden), and then, through the National Office in Washington, D.C., to the Nebraska Federal Writers' Project. In order to preserve the flavor and flow of the rough narrative, editing was reduced to a minimum.

During the years covered by the reminiscences, "Dad" lived the life of a roving cowboy—constantly moving from Nebraska to Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado and back to Nebraska again. His life was spent on horses, either breaking bucking mustangs—which required a fine sense of balance and ability to anticipate what the wild horse would do next—or rounding up steers for the branding irons.

In addition to his stories of the range, his accounts of bull-whacking, mule skinning and stage-driving, the pranking of tenderfeet and missionaries, his meetings with Cattle Kate, Calamity Jane and Buffalo Bill, the hazards of prairie fires and blizzards, frontier justice and encounters with Indians, are a valuable contribution to the folklore of the West.

The
REMINISCENCES OF DAD STREETER

Came West in a Prairie Schooner

I was born June 20, 1867, in the State of Illinois, (I don't know in what locality). When I was one year old father, mother, my little sister and myself started west in a prairie schooner. We stopped in Missouri for the winter. The next spring we came to Nebraska. Father took a homestead about 13 miles northeast of Seward City on the Blue River, near where the town of Ulysses is not located.

Father started to build a house, but before it was completed another baby came—a little brother. Mother named him Seward, for the town of

Seward, where we did our trading. I think Schooner would have been more appropriate, since he was born in the old prairie schooner we had used for our journey.

A great many Indians passed by our homestead going to and from their hunting grounds. They were friendly and often came to the house to beg. One cold day when mother was alone, except for us little ones, a party of six Indians walked into the house without knocking, throw off their blankets and warmed themselves by the stove. They were entirely naked, for they had nothing underneath their blankets except the paint on their bodies. Mother gave them something to eat after which they left without doing any mischief except nearly scaring mother out of her wits. The old Chief, who weighed about two hundred pounds and was over six feet tall, said to mother as they were leaving: "Nonawa nootho is Washtano," meaning, "Little White Squaw good."

Father, by using the special privileges given Civil War soldiers, was able to prove up on his land in six months. So the next spring he sold out, and once more hitched the team onto the old schooner and headed west.

We moved to Indianola, Nebraska. The Sioux-Pawnee Battle had just been fought near the headwaters of the Republican River over some disputed hunting grounds. The Sioux, who won the battle, went on the war-path against the white settlers in the region. They headed down the river killing and burning the homes of settlers on the way. The people of Indianola, having been warned of their coming, had hastily constructed a sod wall about four feet high that enclosed a space large enough to hold all the people and their most valued possessions. The Sioux, upon finding Indianola fortified, did not attack. Instead they turned south until they came to Sappy Creek, which they followed to the Republican River and on East, leaving death and destruction in their path.

I Begin Horse Twisting

In the spring of 1880, shortly after the last day of school, I met a "waddy" in Indianola who was looking for a broncho buster. He was offering five dollars a head for the breaking of ninety head of horses. Upon hearing of his mission I said: "Stranger, don't look any farther, I'm your man." He laughed and said he would get canned if he brought a kid like me to do a job of that kind, as these were a tough bunch of horses. One of them had thrown and killed the rider on his first try. I told him to go on, and if he couldn't find anyone to take the job to come back and get me. He answered: "I'll not be back." But in a week's time he hunted me up and said: "Come on, Kid. You can have a try at it for I hate to go back without anybody."

We arrived at the ranch about noon the next day and found the foreman, Mr. Twist, in bed with several of his bones broken. He explained that he had tried to ride one of the horses, which nearly killed him, and advised me to go home while I was all in one piece. I told him I didn't want to give up now without a try. He said: "All right. I admire your nerve. Who are you, how old are you and is your life insured?" To which I answered: "They call me 'Dad' Streeter. I will be fourteen at my next birthday. My life insurance consists of my ability to cope with any o-

emergency that may arise." To which he said: "Bravo, and may the good angels watch over you and keep you from all harm." I don't know if the man was religious or not, but that sounded like it anyway. From that day we became the best of friends.

The horses were kept in a small pasture by themselves. After dinner some of the men drove them into the corral to let me give them the once over. They were as fine a bunch of horses as I had seen up to that time. They were half-breed mustang and Hambeltonians who had inherited the fiery temper and indomitabile will of their ancestors.

The men pointed to the horse that had injured Mr. Twist, saying: "You had better leave him to the last, for he is a bad one." I replied: "No, I will ride him first. If I succeed I may be able to ride the rest of them." So I caught and saddled him and the men helped drag him out in front of the house, where Mr. Twist could watch the performance from his window. I mounted and he went into action. After a few moments I decided I would like a rest, so I reached down and grabbed the nose piece of the hackamore with my right hand and his right ear with my left. By giving his neck a sudden wrench I layed him flat on his side. I sat on him for a few minutes before letting him up to complete his bucking. All the men cheered and said they had never seen that done before. The foreman said: "You'll do, kid!"

I finished breaking them all in a reasonably short time without being thrown or having any serious mishap, except while I was riding one of the horses through the sand dunes several miles from the ranch, when he fell with me. I immediately followed a tradition of the range, which is if your horse falls and you don't come clear of him in the fall, never let him get up first until you see if you are entangled in any of the trappings. So I pulled his head up in order to put the nose piece of his hackamore over the saddle horn and started to investigate. To my horror I found that in the fall my left foot had been forced through the stirrup, causing the horse to lay on it. To let him up would mean certain death, but I could not reach the latigos to remove the saddle. While I lay there, realizing that the chances of saving my life were very slim, I heard a woman's voice calling: "Stay with him, I'm coming as fast as I can." She unfastened the latigos and let the horse get up. Imagine my surprise at beholding a one-legged woman! She saw the dust from her house, which was nearly a mile away, throw down her crutch and came hopping on one leg to see what she could do to help! To this day I have never seen a crippled woman without thinking of the one that saved my life that day.

I received \$450.00 in cash, more money than I had ever seen before, for breaking in these horses. Before leaving for home, Mr. Twist called me to his bedside and presented me with a bill of sale for a beautiful horse, which he said was a bonus.

The horse's name was Ned, and we became great pals. I taught him many tricks, such as playing dead, drinking beer from a bottle, coming to me at full speed when I blew a blast on a whistle that I always carried on my watch chain.

Eating Skunk

Shortly after my broncho busting expedition there was an epidemic of croup, in Indianola, for which the best known remedy at that time was skunk oil. The Big Horn Drug Store, which had recently been established in Indianola, was offering very attractive prices for this oil. So father started killing skunks, which were very plentiful. He would skin them and sell their hides for fifty cents apiece. Mother would put the carcasses in a large kettle and fry out the oil, which brought a dollar a pound. It was a profitable business for a short time.

During the height of the epidemic I came home one day and found everyone gone: the children were at school, father was away killing skunks, and mother was out nursing the sick, for she was an expert nurse and in constant demand. I was very hungry from my long ride in the hot sun, so I immediately looked for something to eat. I found bread in the cupboard and a great kettle of cooked meat on the stove, of which I proceeded to eat my fill. I had eaten more than two pounds of the delicious meat when mother came in. She immediately asked if I had found anything to eat; I told her I had filled up on that splendid meat. She threw up her hands in horror, saying: "That is skunk meat. I was cooking it to extract the oil." Then I tried to throw up, but my effort was useless. It was down to stay. Still I had to admit it was good, although I have never indulged in that luxury again.

Whacking Bulls and Skinning Mules

When I reached the age of fourteen, in 1881, I was as tall and weighed as much as I do now, when I am over seventy. I thought myself a man and old enough to shift for myself. So, one morning, I saddled my horse and rode to Sidney, Nebraska; a town on the U. P. Railroad where the freight outfits and stage coaches started for Deadwood, a mining town in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

When I came to Sidney I went to the office of the Niobrara Transportation Company and asked for a job driving a stage coach. They didn't need a stage driver but were looking for a bull whacker. So I took the job of bull whacking, which consisted of driving twenty head of oxen hitched to a large wagon that carried about 15 tons of supplies. A trailer, carrying ten tons of additional supplies, and sometimes a water tank fastened behind the trailer to furnish water for the cattle, was often attached to the freighting wagon. The yoke of twenty oxen with three wagons strung out behind one another made quite an impressive picture. Twenty miles was considered a good days drive.

The oxen were teamed up in this manner: A hitch, consisting of a long chain reaching from the ring in the lead team's yoke to the front axle on the lead wagon, guided the freighting wagon. This chain had to be strong enough to pull the entire load. Then there were smaller chains, about 12 feet in length, from each of the other yokes back towards the wagon and welded where they intersected the large chain. These shorter chains only had to be strong enough to hold what each team could pull.

When I hitched up my team the herder would drive the oxen up to the wagons while I hold the lead team's yoke and called their names, after which they would take their places. Then all I had to do was lower the

yoke in place, put the bows around their necks through the holes in the yoke, and put in the bow keys until all ten teams were hitched ready to travel.

When I unhitched I reversed the process.

I found freighting to be a lonesome and unromantic job, because, though there were always two of us, we were not much company for each other, for when I was driving he was sleeping and when I was sleeping he was out herding the oxen.

The man who worked with me, while much my senior, was a very congenial companion. He possessed a wealth of frontier experience and knowledge about freighting, such as how to grease a loaded wagon. We did this by removing the linchpin from the wheel to be greased, then, if the wheel was on the left side of the wagon, you made the oxen pull to the right until the wheel came off far enough to apply your axle grease. By turning the oxen to the left the wheel would come back on the axle again.

In the mornings I would hitch up the oxen at the first signs of daylight and drive until ten o'clock in the morning, when I turned the cattle loose to graze. At this time I cooked my breakfast and slept until three in the afternoon, when I hitched up and drove until dark. Then, after unhitching the team, I would cook my supper, which consisted of coffee, sourdough biscuits, sowbelly and beans; after which I slept until early dawn.

While driving I usually walked beside the wagons. But when there was snow, or when crossing streams, I sat on the lazy board. This was a broad thin board with one end fastened firmly to the bottom of the front wagon and extending horizontally three feet past the lower edge of the box on the left side between the wheels, giving it a very comfortable springy seat.

I had only made a few trips with the oxen when the boss gave me a mule team of the same number of wagons and animals. The hitch was very much the same, only the mules, instead of using yokes were harnesses that consisted of collars, hames, a broad saddle band and chain tugs. Each mule had a small rope, called a jerk line, fastened to his bit that passed through the hame ring of the high animal to each span and extended back to the front wagon. This rope made a line of communication between the driver and the jerk mule.

If the driver wished to turn to the right he gave the line a series of short light jerks, if to the left a steady pull; these the team obeyed instantly. If more speed was required the driver would crack his whip. If he wished to stop the train he would holler "then!" and set the wagon brake.

A good jerk mule was always worth a good price, since he guided the entire team. A common jackass could not possibly fill the bill. The jerk mule, with his mate (who was guided by a jockey stick—a stout stick about three feet long, running from his halter ring to the hame ring on the jerk mule), guided the end of the long chain. The other teams pulled the

load. The wheelers, who were hitched to the wagon like an ordinary team, guided the wagon tongue. On the high wheeler was a stock saddle for the driver.

Unhitching was a reverse of the process of hitching. We never unhooked any tugs and always let the harness lie where the mule walked out of it until we hitched up again.

Driving Stage

I had only made one trip to Deadwood with the mule team when one of the stage drivers quit. That gave me the job I had been waiting for, which consisted of driving from four to eight horses hitched to a Concord coach. The size of the stage and the number of horses used depended on how many passengers were leaving Sidney, which was the starting point. Some of the rigs could carry twenty passengers and their baggage. Our average time was ten miles per hour, over all kinds of roads—there were no good roads. All the driver was required to do was to drive. The hitching and unhitching was done by flunkies, who were kept at the stage stations along the route for that purpose.

We would drive twenty miles, change horses, drive twenty more miles, change horses again and eat our dinner; then reverse the process on the return route. Eighty miles was a day's drive. Our orders were:

"Do not allow anyone, except an officer of the law or of the company, to ride on the boot with you. Make each station on time or expect to get fired. If a horse drops by the way out the tugs and drive over him, sending a man back from the next station for the harness."

We were sometimes changed from one division to another in order to break the monotony.

One day I had only one passenger, a large fat man, who became violently seasick from the swaying of the stage. Thinking fresh air might make him feel better, I invited him to ride on top of the stage with me, although it was against the rules. All went well until we reached Break Neck Hill, which was a long steep grade going down to the White River near Fort Robinson.

As there was snow on the ground I knew my brake would not do any good, so I got out to put the rough-lock on, and to my horror it wasn't there. It had probably been taken out for repairs and not put back. So I took the desperate chance of going down the hill without a brake. My wheelers, although a large powerful team, were not able to hold the heavy rig, so we found ourselves gaining speed every second. I was lashing the loaders with all my might to keep them out of the way, realizing that if the wheelers became tangled in the loaders' stretchers they would cause a pile up that would kill both the passenger and myself. My passenger, not realizing that, and thinking I was trying to scare him, made a grab for the lines. In defense I threw them on the horses backs. Then he tried to take the whip away from me, but that was useless, although he was much the larger and stouter, because it took too much of his time and energy to keep from falling off the seat. We reached the bottom of the hill in safety, but right at the bottom was a small stream that was only partly

frozen over, so when the front wheels went in, instead of rolling up over the ice they went under and held fast. The abrupt stop caused us both to sail through the air for about fifty feet. We landed without any serious injury. The horses broke loose from the stage and ran into a clump of willows. When the shock had subsided the willows straightened up, lifting the lead team off the ground. I got out my ax, which we always carried for emergencies, chopped down the willows, got the team out, hitched on the rig again, and by driving at a good run the balance of the way, reached the station on time.

The manager of the line, Mr. Crabtree, was there. My passenger immediately told him about my reckless driving, swearing he would never ride over that line again if he didn't fire the crazy kid, who drove him in. The boss looked at him, and said: "You go, le eyed—you can ride or walk, but that kid is the best driver I've got."

That winter was exceptionally cold and stormy, and it was almost impossible to make the horses face some of the blizzards that came howling down from the north. I stayed with my job until spring, then quit and started south for a warmer climate. My record showed that I had driven almost a year without being late or having a wreck that the horses couldn't drag in.

Cattle Kate and Calamity Jane

That morning after I quit I put my saddle on Ned, went to the store and bought a half sack of flour, a package of soda, a slab of dry salt sowlbelly, a little salt, a frying pan and a can to carry sourdough in. I filled the saddle pockets with the smaller articles, tied on the others behind my saddle and hit the trail for Texas. I depended on my old .45 Colt to furnish fresh meat along the way.

I slept on the ground, rolled in a saddle blanket. I did most of my traveling in the night, keeping as much under cover in the daytime as possible on account of the roving bands of Indians, whom I did not care to meet alone for fear they would take a fancy for my scalp or horse. I finally reached Dodge City, Kansas. There I met a herd of about five thousand head of cattle bound for a ranch on the Yellowstone River, near Miles City, Montana. The herders were short of help, so I hired out to them for the duration of the drive.

After reaching our destination I once more put my saddle on Ned and started south. When I reached the Platte River and the Old Heart Ranch, which had been turned into a hotel, saloon and gambling hall, I stopped for the night. During the evening, when whiling away the time watching a game of stud poker, where they were using great piles of silver dollars for chips, with plenty of gold for larger bets, a young woman walked in with a gun in her hand and shouted: "Hands up everybody." Then she went to the poker table and raked all the money in sight into her apron; after which she backed out of the door and rode away without anyone raising the least objection.

I asked the bartender who she was. He replied: "That's Cattle Kate, and I don't blame her for what she's done. She owns a small ranch west of here on the Sweet Water; where she, Jim Averil and his little kid

nephew live. Old Henricks, of the 71 outfit, is sore at them for taking up government land that he claimed as part of his range, and to which he has no right or title. That tall fellow, who was playing stud, is her foreman; the rest of them belonged to the 71 outfit. Kate's foreman sold a bunch of steers today and got the money, then these skunks got him drunk and were fleecing him in fine style when Kate appeared on the scene. I guess she got all of her money and more, and I'm glad of it."

The next day I traveled on and met another cattle herd near the north boundary of Indian Territory, known as the Staked Plains. It was a prairie-dog town, of about 125 miles in extent, that the old Santa Fe trail crossed. The little prairie dogs would come out of their burrows at the least sound and stand straight up on their hind parts on a little knoll beside their holes, giving the whole landscape the appearance of being covered with stakes spaced ten feet apart each way, and extending as far as the eye could reach.

This herd of cattle was headed for a place on the Little Missouri River, near the Montana and Dakota line. I joined them and went north again. One of the herders was a young woman they called Calamity Jane. She could do a man's work, and was a number one cow hand. She derived her peculiar appellation from her habit of telling a hard luck story to nearly every stranger she met, and, after gaining his sympathy, prevailing upon him to give her a few dollars to help her out of her difficulties. I confided to her one day that she wouldn't be so bad if she would only cut out her drinking, swearing, lying, gambling and mooching.

Everything moved along quietly except when we came to a town. Then we usually raised a little hell for our own amusement; such as waking the citizens by racing our horses through the streets, or firing our six shooters and yelling at the top of our voices in imitation of a band of wild Indians. Anyone who tried to interfere with the fun was held face down on the ground and spanked with a pair of leather chaps or an empty cartridge belt until he promised to be good. Before leaving town our boss usually settled all damages, for he was an honorable man, and his patience must have been sorely tried at times.

I Attend College

We reached our destination late in the summer, when I decided to go to school again during the coming winter. I had finished high school. But I had heard father and mother speak very highly of the Methodist University at York, Nebraska. So I decided to go there, although it was a long ride from my present location.

I reached York, Nebraska, two days before the beginning of the term, which was to last six months, or one-hundred eighty days. So I made my budget accordingly. I paid a six month food bill in advance for my horse, rented a room for myself, with fuel and light furnished, where I could do my own cooking, paying six months rent. I purchased the following articles of food with the idea of having just enough to last until the last day of school: 185 bread tickets; 185 milk tickets, good for one quart each; a 100 pound barrel of oat meal; 100 pounds of sugar; 200 pounds of potatoes; and a \$10.00 coupon book, with which to purchase smaller articles at the store as I needed them. The hundred pounds of sugar was

mostly for my horse. I visited him frequently, and always took him some bread and sugar or a bottle of beer, of which he was very fond, and for which he never forgot to thank me in his horse language.

By going to a haberdashery I found what the college boys were wearing and outfitted myself with appropriate clothes. These included, among other things, a tall, silk hat, a swallow-tailed coat and white spats. When I dressed for school the change was so marked that I doubt if my own mother could have recognized me. Sometimes I would look in the mirror and indulge in a good laugh at myself.

Soon after my arrival I met a building contractor by the name of Beal. I signed with him as an apprentice to learn the carpenter trade. The understanding was that I work for him before and after school and on Saturdays, during the winter school terms; without pay the first year, my board and room the second, and a dollar a day thereafter.

I studied hard, so always received high marks on my examination papers. I took part in most of the sports, and excelled in the broad jump and wrestling, but would have nothing to do with football. It was too rough a game for me to indulge in, for up to that time I had never done anything more dangerous than fighting a mad bull, twisting a wild steer down by the horns (bulldogging), or riding an outlaw horse. So I was afraid I would not be able to hold my own in a football skirmish.

Everything went smoothly until my spending money gave out. Then I sold my outfit, piece by piece, until all I had left was my horse and six shooter. After the school term was finished I tied a piece of baling wire around my horse's neck, buckled on my gun and started for Wyoming.

Acting the Tenderfoot

My appearance caused peals of laughter from nearly every one I met, since I was dressed in my college clothes, consisting of a tall silk hat, a swallow-tailed coat and white spats, riding barebacked on a horse with only a piece of wire around his neck and a big six-shooter strapped around my waist. They evidently took me for a tenderfoot, a monstrosity, an escaped lunatic, or one of Barnum's freaks, who walked and talked like a man.

I stood the kidding without losing my temper, and finally came to the H. R. Ranch on the Laramie River, where I asked the foreman for a job. After several minutes of uncontrollable laughter he informed me that he was full handed. I replied that I had never heard of a cow outfit being full handed, and thought they always had room for a man that could ride. Then he laughed some more and with a wink at the others that had gathered around, said: "Well, that's different, if you can ride. I have twenty head of horses here that I want rode, and I'll pay you forty dollars a month with board, and five dollars extra for each horse you ride." He, of course, did not expect me to be able to ride any one of them, for they were all outlaws. Afterward some of the boys told me he had been offering to give one, or more, of the horses to any man that could ride them.

I took the job after the boss had agreed to loan me a saddle. I

turned old Ned loose to do as he pleased and was preparing to make myself at home when pandemonium broke loose. The boys had restrained themselves as long as they could. But I was too good a fun prospect to pass up. They soon overpowered me, cut off the forks of my coat tail, threw rocks on my silk hat until there was little left of it except the rim, and nailed my spats good and solid to the bunkhouse door.

The boys stopped their razzing when they saw me ride a wild horse the next morning. They cheered themselves hoarse when he didn't throw me. I rode the twenty horses several times around, in turn. At the end of the month the boss called me to the house and paid me what he had agreed to. He said: "Turn them ---'s out, we don't have any use for such horses as them. I was just trying you out to see if you could ride. You sure showed us that you could and here is a present for you besides." He gave me the nicest saddle I have ever seen. It had a steel tree, a solid silver horn, cantle, skirt corners, and was beautifully stamped with the profile of a lady on each fender. It also had long tapaderas on the stirrups. It was a saddle of which any horse twister would be justly very proud. I bid the boys goodby and again started south.

Serenading Missionaries

I hadn't traveled far into Kansas when I again met a trail herd, this time headed for the Powder River. I hired out to them. We reached Culbertson, Nebraska, the same day, May, 1880, that the first passenger train arrived from the East. The train carried several preachers who came with the avowed purpose of converting the cowboys. They advertised that they would hold services that evening in an old frame saloon building that was unoccupied except for a very small Post Office in one corner.

We all came to the meeting at the appointed time, but instead of going inside we rode around and around the building, yelling like wild Indians and firing our six-shooters through the building, always aiming high so as not to hurt anyone inside. Our purpose was to scare the wits out of the two ministers, which we evidently did, for when we peered through the windows they were on their knees; although whether they were praying for the souls of the cowboys or their own salvation I never knew.

By working in relays we kept up the siege until daylight, when our foreman put his head in the door and announced that there was a train leaving for the East in fifteen minutes and if they wanted to go he would give them a safe escort. They all went without even bidding us goodby, while we went on with our herd. In a few days we were overtaken and halted by a party of the U. S. Cavalry and charged with firing upon a Post Office.

The officer in command was a reasonable fellow, and evidently not knowing what to do with twenty-five roughneck cow pokes and five thousand head of cattle, obligingly allowed us to go on our way. After reaching our destination I hit the back trail down through Wyoming. I came to an Indian camp on Wind River, where I met Black Cole, who was Chief of the Arapahoe tribe at that time, and asked for something to eat. He took me to his tepee and pointed to a large kettle of boiled meat and said, "Eat," which I immediately did, for I hadn't eaten for two days.

After I had consumed about three pounds of the meat he asked me if I know what I was eating. I guessed every kind of meat I could think of, to all of which he answered, "No." Then he reached through the flap of the tepee and pulled in a large bloody dog hide with the ears and feet on, and said: "That's what you eat. You likem?" I said; "Yes, I likem," but I didn't want any more. I thanked him and went my way.

I Meet a Bully

I went to the L Ranch on Medicine Creek, a tributary of the Republican River in Nebraska, and hired out to Mr. Lion, the foreman. My job was to ride the fall roundup, but while we were preparing to start I got into an argument with the bully of the outfit that ended up in a rough and tumble fight. It was a decisive victory for me, thanks to my training as a wrestler. I thought the matter ended, but the next morning, when I was saddling my horse, I was startled by the roar of a gun. When I turned to see what was going on I found a neighboring rancher had arrived in the nick of time to kick the bully's gun to one side as it went off, thereby saving my life. He proceeded to beat the man into insensibility. Then, turning to me, he said: "Come with me, kid. I'll give you a job. It might not be safe for you to hang around here any longer."

I accepted the job with my new friend, whose name was Mr. Thomas. A few days later, when we were driving a bunch of cattle, we met the bully, who started at once to abuse me again. Mr. Thomas, without saying a word, rode up beside him, grabbed him around the neck, pulled him off his horse and gave him such a pommeling that I was afraid he had killed him. When he finally came to we caught his horse, loaded him on it and took him home. Mr. Thomas said: "I guess that will teach him his range manners."

There was no excitement until about two weeks later, when one of the boys came across me and my horse lying side by side, apparently dead. Both of us had been struck by lightning. They took the saddle from the dead horse and took it and me to the nearest ranch, where they layed me out so I would dry straight. They were keeping a death watch, when about two o'clock that night I suddenly sat up and yelled: "Where is the black horse I was riding?" I don't know who was the most scared, them or me. I was as well as over. I went back to the L ranch, where I again met Mr. Lion. He told me he had sent his would-be bad man East to a hospital for repairs, and asked me to work for him again. This I did.

Fighting a Prairie Fire

Soon after arriving at the ranch, after the roundup, we noticed a black cloud in the south which we decided was a prairie fire coming our way with a strong breeze to help it along. Our foreman said: "We don't need to worry. It will stop when it reaches the river." But it didn't. The draft caused by the head fire was strong enough to draw any burning articles, such as large weed stalks or buffalo chips, high in the air. So it had no difficulty in crossing the river, although it was over one-half mile wide. Before we could reach the river it had gained such proportions that we could do nothing to stop it. All we could do was fight it from the side. Our outfit had their sulky (riding) plows that they kept for this purpose, and a neighboring rancher had the same. He worked on one side of the wire and we on the other, with the object of keeping

it narrowed down in order to save as much of the feed for the cattle on the range as we could.

We hitched four horses on each plow and the three plows, following one behind the other, bared a strip of ground about three feet wide. The horses were driven at top speed as close to the fire as the heat would permit. They were followed up by men who set fire to the grass along the side of the furrows next to the main fire. An old blanket, coat or large sack was used to beat out the fire that might try to go the wrong way. Since each man came to where the man ahead had worked, he had to mount his horse and ride ahead at full speed until he came to where he could work again. In that way we fought the fire to the Platte River, a distance of about two hundred miles.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show

A short time after this fire I read an ad in the North Platte paper, that said: "WANTED TO BUY! HORSES THAT CAN BUCK. BRING THEM TO MY RANCH FOUR MILES WEST OF NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA. WM. F. CODY."

I had recently bought a very beautiful snow white horse with a black mane and tail. As a buckner he was one of those hell-roaring singe cat varieties you read about but very seldom see. He had one redeeming trait, when he had thrown his rider he would always stop and wait for him to get on again, and by his looks seemed to say: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again." He was always willing to do his best at every try.

I led him over to Mr. Cody, who said: "I never buy a pig in a poke; get on and see what he can do." After riding him imagine my surprise at hearing Mr. Cody say that he would not give me a dollar for my horse because he did not have a man that could ride him. He also said that if I would go with the circus the next summer and ride the horse at each performance he would pay me as much as any man in the circus. He would give me one hundred dollars for my horse and a liberal advance on my salary with which to buy such things as I might need for myself. I said: "Give me one hundred for my horse now, and I will join you here in the spring," which he did.

When I returned from school in the spring I found the show making ready for an early start. There were four bronco riders, Buck and Zack Taylor (brothers), William Hickock (Wild Bill), and myself. There was also a young man by the name of Clemens, who rode his horse at full speed around the ring and throw knives and tomahawks at targets with wonderful skill; a sixteen year old girl, named Annie Oakley, who claimed to be the world's champion rifle shot. Dr. Carver claimed the title at that time, but he refused to shoot with Miss Oakley, and after having been challenged several times told her he was satisfied to be called the champion gentleman and to let her be called the champion lady rifle shot. Annie used a twenty-two caliber single shot Ballard rifle. One of her pastimes was shooting the ashes from the boys' cigarettes, or a dime held between their thumb and finger. I didn't smoke cigarettes or hold any dimes for her to shoot at for fear of losing my nerve at the most critical moment, and getting my fingers burned.

These were the people I lived and worked with. There were many

others, including a gun crew that showed an artillery piece in action; a bunch of Sioux Indians in a stage holdup scene; Turks, with their turbans and tall saddles, and many other workers, actors and side show freaks. The show was very appropriately named the Wild West, for our boss encouraged us in enacting wild and woolly capers on the street with the assurance that if we were arrested for disturbing the peace he would pay our fines and expenses. Sometimes he would go to a bank and get his saddle pockets filled with nickles and dimes, after which he would ride his horse along the main street sowing them like a farmer sows wheat, just to see the children scramble for them.

Mr. Cody always had a large American flag raised on a tall pole at the ranch to let his friends know when he was at home. For their accommodation he ran a free bus at regular intervals between the ranch and his saloon in North Platte, with free drinks at both ends of the line. The team consisted of six o'lk hitched to an old Concord stage coach, which was usually driven by Buck Taylor. It was well patronized, for Bill had many friends on such occasions.

I enjoyed my work and the travel connected with it, especially the applause of the crowds. My boss was kind and generous to a fault, and would often allow us to draw money far in advance. That made spend-thrifts of everybody, and when we came home in the fall there were very few that were not indebted to Mr. Cody. To those that were he gave work around the ranch, feeding and caring for the animals during the winter.

Sleeping in a Blizzard

I went to Medicine Creek, Nebraska, where Mr. Lion had offered me a job for the winter. He had several large stacks of wild hay that we had saved from the prairie fire by placing fire guards around them, which consisted of plowing a circle of three or four furrows near the stacks, then another circle about one hundred yards farther out, and burning the grass between the two. This method was very effective when not in the direct course of a head fire.

He took an outfit out to gather up some old cows, or other poor cattle, to bring them home and feed through the winter. This was a practice that had never been followed before in that part of the country. The cattlemen figured that the cattle saved by feeding did not pay the extra expense, but a great many changed their minds after the hard winter of 1886, when it was estimated that fifty percent of the cattle on the range died.

We gathered quite a large bunch and started home. As we had been out longer than we had expected our food supply ran low. The boss sent me to the home ranch with instructions to get a team of mules and buckboard loaded with provisions and meet the outfit at the Lone Tree, which was a large cottonwood on the divide about half-way between the Platte and Republican Rivers. As there was not another tree within forty miles in any direction it made a wonderful land mark.

I came to the tree, but there was no herd in sight. I unhitched and tied the mules to the buckboard to await their coming, when there arose one of those early snowstorms which continued for several hours. By night

fall it had turned into a blizzard. The temperature suddenly dropped to several degrees below zero. The wind from the north howled at the rate of 40 miles per hour, driving the frozen snow before it with such force that when it struck my face it cut the flesh. My bed was with the cattle outfit, so I had nothing to wrap up in, nor did I have anything to build a fire with. Luckily I had a piece of horse blanket about two feet square that was used as a seat cushion. I put it over my head for protection and ran around to keep up circulation. I soon became exhausted, and was about to give up when I noticed that the snow was drifting to the leeward of the rig. So, after kicking it away in the deepest place, I lay down on the bare ground, curled up my feet in the tails of my overcoat with the piece of horse blanket over my head and hands. My only hope was that the snow would drift over me and keep me from freezing to death. I soon began to feel a warm and drowsy feeling, which I had often heard say people experienced before freezing. I pinched myself several times and found I was not frozen, but warm and soft to the touch, then I allowed myself to go to sleep.

I awoke in the morning to find that the snow had drifted over me to a depth of about eighteen inches, and had kept me warm. But when I crawled out the cold was more intense, and the wind more piercing than before. I finally succeeded in getting the mules hitched and started on the road for home at a brisk trot. I tied the lines to the dashboard and ran along behind, holding to the back of the buckboard, sometimes jumping on for a few minutes rest, then off to run again. In this way I reached the ranch and safety.

The next day the herd came in. They had taken a different route and had not come by the Lone Tree. The boss tried to explain and apologized for leaving me out on the prairie to freeze, but I said once was enough to risk my life working for a man like him. I demanded and received my pay, boarded the train for York, Nebraska; where I again enrolled in the college for the remainder of the term. I worked for my old carpenter boss during my spare time, for which I received my board and room. And, with the money Buffalo Bill had paid me, I paid my other expenses.

Butch Cassidy

After the school term was over I went to the Two Bar Ranch on Horse Creek, Wyoming, and hired out. The foreman's name was Short. The layout was one of ten ranches owned by the Swan Land and Cattle Company. Colonel Swan was the general manager. We were preparing to start on the calf roundup, loading the chuck and bed wagons. When I tried to put my roundup bed on the wagon I found it too heavy for me, so I let it slip back on the ground. A big husky fellow who had been watching me, stopped up and said: "Let me do that kid."

Before I could say yes or no he had grabbed it with one hand and thrown it up with the greatest of ease. Then he turned to me and said: "Let's put our beds together—meaning in one roll—and I will always do the loading."

He was a clean looking fellow, so I answered: "All right, where is yours?"

"I haven't any."

I laughed at the joke and said; "All right, you can sleep with me," which he did all that summer and most of the next. That was my first introduction to Butch Cassidy, the famous outlaw, and I have never met a more congenial companion or a better friend. He called me his kid, and if I got into an altercation with anyone he would step up and say: "I have no objection to you whipping the kid, but you'll have to whip Butch first." That always settled it in my favor, for no one dared to tackle him in a rough and tumble fight, and I never saw his equal with a six-shooter. I have often seen him ride his horse at full speed around a tree while firing all six bullets in the same hole in the tree.

There was a young man with the outfit who carried a rawhide rope one hundred and twenty-five feet in length. He could throw it one hundred feet and catch the steer, or object he was aiming for, with wonderful accuracy. He went by the name of Kid, a common name for young men, of which we had several. To distinguish him from the other kids we called him Billy the Kid. He afterwards became quite notorious, often mentioned, and sometimes made the hero by writers of western fiction. I worked with this outfit during the Spring roundup; then Butch and I went to Bates Creek, where we worked for the same company. The foreman's name, at this ranch, was Booker.

While working for the Two Bar I was sent across the line into Nebraska to spy on a man who was suspected of killing company cattle. I found out where he lived, and where he had butchered a critter not so long before. Here I found a hide with the Two Bar brand on it. So I went to his house and knocked. A woman came to the door. I asked for her husband. She answered that he was away and would not be home until the next day. I asked if I could get some dinner? She said: "Yes, if you can eat what we have, which is only some meat hanging on the north side of the house. If you will bring it in I will fry some for you."

I found a large piece of beef so rotten it would hardly hang on the nail. I took it some distance from the wall and buried it, then returned to the house and asked the woman where her husband was? She said he had gone to town for supplies. Then I asked how much money he had. She replied that all he possessed was one dollar and sixty cents with which to buy supplies for the family. I then told her I would not stop for dinner but would be back for supper.

I then went to a cattle ranch not many miles away and told the foreman I wanted a pack horse load of food and wanted him to look to the Two Bar Company for his pay. Since I was riding a horse with their brand on it I had very little trouble in convincing him it would be all right. We loaded the horse with all he was able to carry in the way of sugar, coffee, rice, beans, ham, bacon, dried fruit, flour, salt, pepper, etc.--enough to last them six months. When I reached the settler's cabin and started unloading the woman asked me what I was doing. I told her I had brought something along for supper, and that what we didn't eat I was going to leave for her and the kids. She threw her arms around my neck and shed tears of joy, saying: "This is more grub than has ever been in our house at one time since I have been married."

We had a good supper, and I enjoyed watching those little ones eat.

Then I caught my horse, and as I was leaving the lady asked my name. I told her: "I am just a roving cowboy. They call me Dad."

When I got back to the Two Bar I went to the office to draw my wages. The bookkeeper, Mr. Bert Richey, said he had a pack load of supplies charged to me and started to upbraid me by saying: "You were sent to arrest that man, instead you gave him a load of supplies."

Colonel Swan was there at the time. After hearing the story he said I had done exactly the right thing and that he would pay the food bill; adding that the company was after the men who stole cattle for profit, and not a man who stole to keep his wife and children from starving.

While on my way back to the ranch home I met a bunch of young Shoshone Indians. Among them was Chief Washakie's son. He asked me for a chew of tobacco. I handed him a one pound plug from my saddle pocket, all I had. He took out his sheath knife, cut off a chew for me, then put the rest of the plug in his pocket. So I hit him over the head with my six-shooter, recovered my tobacco, and started at full speed for the nearest cow-camp, which was about ten miles away. The other Indians were in hot pursuit and yelling like demons. I was riding a splendid horse, so managed to keep at a safe distance in the lead; I reached the camp in safety. The Indians, who were not anxious for a fight with a bunch of cowboys, gave up the chase and went away.

A Rodeo

The Two Bar Cattle Company owned 160,000 head of cattle, employed 200 riders, and claimed the Territory of Wyoming as their range. It was owned by Scotch and English gentlemen who had never been to this country. So, having a curiosity to see how cattle were handled on the range they organized a party of men, women and a few children (about one hundred and fifty in all), and came to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where Colonel Swan met them with carriages, wagons, saddle horses and camp equipment. He then escorted them to the Laramie Plains, located about one hundred miles from Cheyenne, where the roundup outfit was working during the 1880's.

Six of the main cattle companies in that part of the country had outfits there, consisting of a chuck wagon and twenty-five or thirty riders each. That, with the one hundred fifty new arrivals, made quite a large gathering. Colonel Swan was chosen master of ceremonies, in charge of the entertainment to be given in honor of our guests. After supper the evening was spent around a large camp-fire, where we told frontier stories and sang cowboy songs. Then we went to bed, where we laid for hours listening to the plaintive wails of the coyotes, which our guests admitted they did not enjoy. They were not used to being lulled to sleep by that kind of music.

We got up early. We riders, after breakfast, went out to ride the range, as usual, while our friends stayed in camp to get their much needed rest.

We brought in five thousand head of cattle and proceeded to work the bunch. Each outfit cut out and branded their own animals. Our guests looked on with great astonishment, and admiration, at some of the feats of horsemanship and daring performed by the riders. The branding process lasted until about two o'clock in the afternoon. Then we had dinner,

after which some of us went fishing and others went hunting for antelopes.

We had several Shoshone Indians in camp. After supper they dressed in their feathers and war paint to give a war dance around the camp fire, and were roundly applauded by all. Then all went to bed to listen to another serenade by the coyote band.

Next morning we were all up early, and anxious to go on with the show. Our acting was extemporaneous, and designed to portray every-day life on the range.

First on the program was horse racing, because we knew of our visitors' great love for that sport. It was almost uncanny the way they could always pick the winner. Then we had bucking horse riding, in which I took part. Then we had rough and tumble wrestling. Then Billie gave an exhibition of fancy roping, while Mack, a big Irishman, showed how to twist a wild steer by the horns. Then came a tug of war, with Indians on one end and cow punchers on the other, which was very exciting. The bare back riding of bucking horses and wild steers was very thrilling. This was followed by Mammie, a very diminutive Mexican, who showed wonderful dexterity in a bull fight. Every time the bull charged he would step on the animal's head, be tossed in the air, come down on its back, slide off behind, grab him by the tail, and hold on for several minutes while fanning the bull with his sombrero, which caused roars of applause.

Butch gave an exhibition of fancy pistol shooting that was marvelous. This was followed by a free for all stunting performance. Every man that could do anything extraordinary was asked to take part. About one hundred men responded, and all did their stuff at the same time. This created a very animated scene. Next came a bronco race. About twenty-five men mounted horses that had never been ridden before. At the word "go," the blindfolds were jerked from each horse's eyes simultaneously and the horses turned loose. The first rider to cross a line located two hundred yards from the starting point became the winner. The next half hour was spent by the horses bucking, squealing, rearing and running (usually in the wrong direction), until one man finally succeeded in getting his horse across the line. The horses and men were scattered far and near, many farther from the goal than when they started.

Next was the dinner call. Although much belated it was well worth waiting for. The seven professional cooks that were in camp united in their efforts to prepare a banquet for all. The mess consisted of barbecued antelope, with such an array of other delicious dishes that all marvelled as to how they did it out on a desert and over a camp fire. After it was over, the Indians favored us with another war dance, after which we all turned in.

After breakfast the next morning, while making preparation for an early start for Cheyenne, one of their spokesmen arose and called for silence. He then gave a speech, in which he said it was well worth coming six thousand miles to see our rodeo.

After seeing me ride in the rodeo Mr. Swan asked me if I would like to ride a few horses for him on exhibition. I was to receive one-fourth

of the winnings. I told him I would, so when he arrived in Cheyenne he put an ad in the paper in which he said he would pay anyone \$500.00 who would bring a horse I could not ride. The advertisement brought a number of horses, not only from Wyoming, but from all the surrounding states and territories.

Since I could always ride the horses, Mr. Swan never lost his \$500.00 offer. The bets were usually \$500.00 on the side. This gave me \$125.00 for each ride; which, along with my regular wages, made a nice income while it lasted.

One day a man from Montana brought in a horse. After I rode him my foreman asked me what I thought of him. I said, "He's easy, I could ride him with a woman's side saddle and riding habit." The man immediately put up another \$500.00. The woman's side saddle was hard to find, since all the cowgirls rode astride. We finally got one by sending a man to Cheyenne after it. I rode the horse alright, and received an additional \$125.00, making \$250.00 that I received for riding that horse.

Setting My Own Leg

Then business slacked. Horses stopped coming in, the ranchers realizing that the chances were not in their favor. I continued with the roundup, which was then being done in the Powder River country. There I had some bad luck. My horse fell with me, and broke my left leg above the knee. The foreman offered to take me to a doctor or bring one to me, but as it was about 150 miles to the nearest doctor, and the only way they had of taking me was on a pack horse, it would be a long and painful journey that would require at least six days. The weather, in addition, was very hot. So I decided to fix it myself. I had them bring me two pieces of board, about four inches wide by ten inches long, which they cut from the wagon box. This was the only source of material of that kind. I hollowed one side of each piece with my pocket knife, fitting one to each side of my leg as best as I could. After getting the bones in place I wrapped the splints to my leg with a long bandage, made by tearing up a pair of overalls. Then the boys laid me in a hammock made of a blanket suspended from the under side of the wagon bows. Thus I rode twenty miles a day for ten days, after which I rode a gentle horse for a few days until I was entirely well and able to work again. This was a valuable experience I made use of in later years, as I have had my left leg broken three times, my right one once, my left ankle dislocated three times, my right ankle once, and my left shoulder once. I never found it necessary to go to a hospital or call a physician for these accidents.

Herding Indians

After the roundup was over in the fall I was offered, and accepted, a job for the winter. The boys called it herding Indians. It consisted of riding around the Shoshone Reservation, located near Fort Washakie, Wyoming. I had to move camp at least ten miles every day in order to keep watch on what the Indians were doing. If they created mischief it was my duty to report it to the agency, or to the commanding officer at the fort. I rode my own horse, carried my bed roll and a very light camping outfit, and a little grub. Nothing more than old Ned could carry.

One night, when I was late coming to camp, I found my bed had been

disturbed. When looking around I found moccasin tracks, where an Indian had got off his horse behind a bunch of willows about fifty yards from my bed and crawled on his hands and knees to my camp. There was a print in the snow of a large knife that he carried in his right hand. When he reached the bed he had seen what he thought to be my form. It was my pillow and sack, which I always placed in the center of the bed under the tarpaulin to make it high in the center, so the water from rain or melting snow would run off and not accumulate ice on the bed. He had struck his knife into it in three places, each time striking hard enough for the knife to go through the bed and into the ground.

I feared his return, so whistled for Ned, loaded everything on his back and moved my camp to another locality, although I had already moved once that day.

A Narrow Escape

When spring came I became tired of hording Indians, so I handed in my resignation and started out to look for something else. But, before I left the Reservation, I was surprised and overpowered by a small band of Indians who disarmed and tied me to a tree. They then held a pow wow, probably to decide whether to use me for a target for their knives and tomahawks, or to build a fire and burn me alive. The prospect of either didn't give me a very comfortable feeling. I noticed an old squaw holding a very earnest conversation with a big buck, and occasionally pointing to me. After a while the buck came up to me and said: "We know you, you my brother." Then I was sure of at least one friend, for he gave me the highest compliment it is possible for an Indian to pay a white man. Then he went back to the others and talked for a long time, after which he came and untied me, gave back my six-shooter and said: "Get your horse and go, everything all right." Before leaving I asked him why he called me his brother. He answered: "A long time ago, maybe four snows, my squaw, two papoose, way up on mountain with team and a new wagon hunting pine nuts, camp for dinner. When they try to go, wagon wheel no turn, horses no pull the wagon. You come, pound wheel off and grease um wagon. You fixum. My squaw, two papoose, come home all right. Now you my brother." I said: "Yes, I know." I shook hands with him and rode away, thankful I had helped the old squaw out of her trouble four years before.

Trailing Horses

I decided to go to the Snake River country, in Idaho, so was following the old Emigrant Trail toward South Pass when, at the town of Sublette, I met a man from Walla Walla, Washington, by the name of Heyworth. He was on his way to Omaha, Nebraska, with one hundred head of horses. He was alone. The man he had helping him had quit that morning, and as men were extremely scarce in that part of the country I had no difficulty in securing employment at good wages.

We followed the old Emigrant Trail down the Platte River. Shortly after passing the town of North Platte we met a man who had recently taken a bunch of horses to Omaha. He said the market was so poor and prices so low that Mr. Heyworth decided to turn back and head for Denver, Colorado. We traveled up the South Platte, which was almost a direct route. We proceeded to within fifty miles of Denver, where we met a man from there who had sold a nice bunch, only a few days before, that did not bring enough to

1a their feed bill.

This news so discouraged my boss that he said: "Dad, I am disgusted with the whole business. I'm homesick and I'm going home."

"What are you going to do with the horses?"

"I'm going to give them to you," he replied. Whereupon he sat down and wrote me out a bill of sale for all of them and handed it to me, saying: "Do as you please with them. Sell them for what you can get. Keep out what you have coming, and what's left, if any, send to me." Then he bade me good-bye and rode away.

After recovering from the shock caused by the sudden turn of affairs I gathered up the horses and started for Greeley, Colorado, which I know was not many miles away. When within three miles of town I found accommodations for the night and pasture for the horses. The next morning I rode into town. The first man I met asked me what I would take for the horse I was riding. I answered that I didn't care to sell him singly, since I had a hundred head in a pasture about three miles from there, and the horse I was riding was my top rope horse.

He asked me to take him to see them. I told him I would be going to see if they were all right at four o'clock, and if he was there he could go along.

I went into a cigar and soft drink place and sat down. It was a general loafing place, (Greeley, being a temperance town, had no saloons). After awhile I came out and found that the same man had brought a saddle horse and tied it to the hitch rack beside mine. He was waiting for me to come out.

"It's rather early," I said, "but if you are so anxious we can go now."

We found the horses all right. I drove them into a corral in one corner of the field, where he could look at them; thinking he might possibly have enough money to buy one. After catching three or four, at his request, I coiled up my rope, tied it on my saddle and said: "I'm getting tired of catching horses for your amusement. I'm going back to town."

"Hold on a minute, what will you take for the bunch?"

"Fifty dollars apiece, if you take them all." To my surprise, he took a great roll of bills out of his old ragged coat pocket and started counting it out to me. He had within two hundred dollars of the required amount. He said: "I will stop at the bank as we go through town and get you the rest. I live about four miles on the other side of town. I suppose you will help me drive them home?" I was certainly glad to do so.

His ranch was a beautiful place near the mountains, with a large modern home and other fine buildings. Everything was up to date. He made me welcome, and gave me a warm invitation to stay there for at least a week. I gratefully accepted.

The next day I telegraphed the money to Mr. Hoyworth, demanding a reply, and stating that I would be in Greeley for several days and would await his answer. In a few days, (the money had beaten him home), I received a telegram from Mr. Hoyworth transmitting five hundred dollars and saying he had been offering those horses for thirty-five dollars each, and as I had sold them for fifty dollars he felt like dividing the profits. "So please accept the five hundred with my compliments, signed George Hoyworth, Walla Walla, Washington." I have often wished, since, that this fine old man could know how sincerely I appreciated his kindness.

I bade my new friend, (I found by inquiry that he was Sam Wright, at that time Mayor of Greeley, Colorado), good-bye, and started for Wyoming again.

Forced into a Dice Game

I was on my way to Lander, Wyoming, when I stopped for the night at a cattle ranch near the Sweet Water River. Here I heard of the hanging, on the night before, of Jim Averil and Kate Maxwell (Cattle Kate), at their ranch a few miles from there. Everybody was greatly excited and not inclined to pay much attention to me; and I, being tired from my day's ride, went to bed.

I was awakened at midnight by a large party of heavily armed men, who came into the bunk house where I was. The spokesman said: "We, a Vigilance Committee, have assembled for the purpose of appointing a committee of one to track down and kill Mr. Henrieks, the leader of the gang of cut-throats who murdered two of our neighbors. We have decided to shake dice--aces high and high man out,—the loser to do the job, the others to pay his expenses. As proof of the job having been done he must bring back the gentleman's ears, (the left ear had a knife slit, the right a swallow fork caused by a horse bite), for our inspection.

During this explanation I dressed and started for the door, but was promptly brought back. Then the speaker shouted: "No you don't," and, pushing the dice across the table to me, said: "You start the game."

I protested, saying that I would have nothing to do with it. He said: "Oh yes, you will, and you better get busy." So I took the dice box and shook, but didn't get an ace. The turn came around to me again. Now there were only four of us left in the game. I was trembling so hard that I had to put my hand over the top of the cup to keep the dice from jumping out before I was ready. All the time I was praying that I might be lucky for just this once. My prayers were answered, for I shook an ace, and that let me out of the game.

The fellow who was stuck took it good naturedly saying he would perform the task to the best of his ability. I don't know what I would have done, or said, if I had lost the game. I would have probably died of fright, or started for South America. I did not sleep any more that night, and left early next morning.

About ten o'clock I met a stranger and we rode along together for some distance until we came to a creek. He dismounted to get a drink, and was in the act of mounting his horse again when a shot was fired from the

brush nearby. The bullet killed his horse. I yelled: "Get on with me." He jumped on the horse behind me. After taking him to a safe distance I told him to get off, as I did not feel safe carrying him any further, for I know by then it was Mr. Honricks by the marks on his ears.

Good-Bye to Wyoming

I went to Lander, where I found a state of war existing between the cattlemen and sheepmen, and between the cattlemen and rustlers. There had been so many burnings of sheep camps, poisonings of herds, so much cattle stealing, shooting and hanging that I decided Wyoming was a good place to stay out of for awhile.

Some of the leading citizens of Lander had received notices from the Vigilance Committee to leave the territory within twenty-four hours, witnessed by the insignia of the Order, which was the skull and cross-bones traced in blood. Such orders were usually obeyed.

I decided to buy a bunch of horses and drive East. I went to the Half Circle Cross Ranch, owned by Big Squaw, a Shoshone Indian woman, who had horses to sell. The old squaw was dressed in a beautifully beaded dress with many rows of elk teeth encircling the skirt. I wanted it to keep as an Indian relic, so offered her fifty dollars for it, which she refused. Then I whistled for Ned and had him perform many tricks for their amusement, after which I offered to trade him to her for the dress. She still refused, but said: "He swap ten horses for your horse." Then one of her sons offered ten head for my saddle, another five for my bed, and three horses for my silver inlaid bridle bit and spurs. I traded my whole outfit for horses. Then I bought several head at ten dollars each, making fifty in all. I bought an old saddle and bridle for five dollars, gathered up my horses and started for Omaha.

I bade old Ned good bye and I'm not ashamed to say that I shed tears at parting with my old friend that had proven his affection for me on so many occasions.

I was traveling along the Sweet Water River, when I was overtaken by a man riding his horse at full speed. As he passed I ran my horse along his and asked him what his hurry was? He replied: "I'm going for a doctor. Jim Averil's nephew is dying. After hanging his uncle and aunt before his eyes they took the poor kid to live with a neighbor and he has been sick and getting worse ever since. He acts as if he had been poisoned."

I went back to my horses, asking myself if it could be possible that those dirty skunks were killing him because he was an eye witness to the hanging? If so, the ten dollars I had donated after the dice game was money well spent.

When I got to North Platte I read an account of the poor kid's death. The coroner's jury had brought in a verdict of death by slow poisoning. I went on my way, wondering why God ever made a man that would sacrifice three human lives for the temporary possession of a small spring of water.

I went on to a place a little west of Grand Island, where I bargained

the horses to a man for fifty dollars a head. But the sheriff stopped the deal, saying he would have to hold the horses until I could prove ownership, since no one could afford to sell horses at that price unless they were stolen. I straightened everything out by writing to the Indian Agent at Fort Washakie; after which I received the money for my horses and went on to Ulysses, Nebraska, where my aunt and uncle lived. Imagine my surprise at finding my mother, brother and sisters there, who I had not seen for several years. We had a very joyful meeting. After visiting for a few days I heard of a big building boom in Ogden, Utah, and also a Carnival to be held there the next summer. My brother and I decided to go there, so, on the second day of February, we boarded the train for Utah.