

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS, Editor and Owner

Entered in the post-office at La Grande, Oregon, as second class matter.

BUFFALO BILL.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, after a life of thirty years, has gone to pieces in Denver. Last week the sheriff sold the bucking bronchos, the Indian ponies, the cars, seats, canvas, everything, at public auction to satisfy the debts and that will be the last of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.

Buffalo Bill, the old scout, has followed his last train, his Indians have gone back to their reservation, his cowboys back to real ranches, his borrowed European troops back to home service, and Buffalo Bill has gone back to "Scout's Rest," his ranch near the North Platt.

His only concern now is to save his ranch from the financial wreck. He bought it for a plaything, as a place in which to entertain distinguished visitors in the days when money rolled in upon him and he was worth upwards of a million dollars. Now, if they take this ranch from him he will be "dead broke" and homeless and he is nearly 70 years old.

There is grave danger that this man, the ideal of Young America, the embodiment of all that is dashing, daring, heroic, who has figured in the public mind for half a century as one of the most picturesque and gallant heroes of American life, may close his days in poverty. The debts of his show aggregate \$100,000, the property of the show was worth about \$50,000. His creditors may have to seize the ranch to make up the balance.

But, at any rate, Buffalo Bill says he is through with the show business. He made a fortune at it and spent it with a lavish hand. Last year the show lost money. This year a mistake was made in sending the show into Birmingham and Atlanta in June, entirely out of season, the expenses averaging \$4,000 a day and the receipts never covering it. That was a fatal mistake.

Other factors in the bankrupting of the show were the moving pictures of Wild West scenes and the many imitations of his Wild West show that flooded the country in recent years, and by their very tawdriness, detracting from the fame of the real thing.

Buffalo Bill is a Kansas Product. His boyhood was spent in Salt Creek valley in Leavenworth county. His father, Isaac Cody, was murdered there, the first man killed on Kansas soil in the struggle for human liberty in that state, and he and Buffalo Bill's mother are buried on the summit of Pilot Knob, a high mound that overlooks the city of Leavenworth. Buffalo Bill's first job was as a freighter on the old trail across Kansas. He killed his first Indian in Kansas. He was a pony express rider on the route across Kansas, and his name of "Buffalo Bill" was gained by killing buffaloes to supply meat for the builders of the Kansas Pacific Railway. He was town marshal in Hays, Kas. When he married he brought his bride to live in Kansas and his first work as a gov-

ernment scout was done in that state. The old plains men who made it possible for civilization to spread out over the Kansas prairies have nearly all followed the last trail and even the memories of them are fast dying. Buffalo Bill is the last link between the days of the wagon train, the plains man, the buffalo hunter, the Indian fighter, the scout, the pony express rider and the present era of the transcontinental express train.

There is no more prairie; the cowboy is becoming a myth; the few Indians that remain are getting to be most uninteresting, civilized persons; the buffalo have long ago disappeared they are irrigating the sagebrush desert and raising early spring vegetables where the mustang used to prance and the antelope roamed. In fact, for a number of years there has been no Wild West left outside of Buffalo Bill's show. And now that is gone, too, and with it has disappeared the last link of the Wild West phase of our history.

Other Wild West shows and other Bills may come to keep alive the border drama, but they will be cheap imitations. Buffalo Bill has taken with him the poetry that made him more than an actor and greater than the greatest of scouts.

His life story, to the youth of this country, is the finest story in American history; his career more thrilling than the knights of old, and the despair of every boy who has the real spirit of adventure—and what boy has not?

As scout and Indian fighter "Buffalo Bill's" fame rests on a firm foundation. Our greatest generals have borne official witness to his gallant services, and throughout the west his name is honored wherever frontier memories are cherished. Novelists have taken liberties, it is true, with "Buffalo Bill" and all sorts of romances, fierce and tender, have been woven around him, but the truth is stronger than the fiction.

Through all the changes of his career, whether on the plains surrounded by soldiers, scouts, cowpunchers and Indians, or in later years a cavalier in buckskins at the head of his Wild West aggregation, "Buffalo Bill" has remained unchanged.

A tall, perfectly proportioned man, as handsome as a picture, long haired and keen eyed, who sits his horse as if born in the saddle; a man without book learning, but with the modesty of a woman and a simple dignity that won its way everywhere.

In later years prominent men here and abroad have yielded admiring friendship to Buffalo Bill; he has been applauded by autocracy and decorated by foreign potentates, but his truest friends are the children.

William Frederic Cody was born in Iowa in 1846. In 1854, when he was 8 years old his father, Isaac Cody, making advantage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, which provided for the organization of those two territories and opened them for settlement, took up a claim in Salt Creek valley in Leavenworth county, and moved his family from Iowa. Their new home was a large log house of two rooms.

Isaac Cody was a free-soil man and in the section where he settled were many who favored slavery in Kansas

and they hated the newcomer. A year afterward he was stabbed while making a free-soil speech in Rively's store in Leavenworth. From this wound he never fully recovered, but he became strong enough to join Col. Jim Lane's command and take part in "The Battle of Hickory Point." Later he erected a sawmill at Grasshopper falls, now Valley Falls. In 1856 the Emigrant Aid society, realizing that the only hope for the admission of Kansas as a free state lay in getting more free-soil settlers to come, sent Isaac Cody to Ohio and as a result he brought back to Kansas 60 families who settled in Grasshopper Falls.

In 1857 Isaac Cody died from the effect of the knife wound in his lung, and was buried on Pilot Knob. Soon thereafter the sawmill burned. The Cody family was in destitute circumstances, and "Bill" Cody, only 11-years old went to work to help support the family.

There were at that time two great highways of western travel, the old Santa Fe trail, which started from Independence and led west to Santa Fe, and the Salt Lake Trail, which crossed the Missouri river at Leavenworth and ran northwest across Kansas and on to Salt Lake and California. It became a beaten highway at the time of the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo and later the thousands of gold hunters journeyed over it to California.

All the freight to and from the far west went in wagon trains over those two trails and the greatest of all the freighting firms was that of Russell, Majors & Wadell, with headquarters in Leavenworth.

Alexander Majors had known Isaac Cody and to him young "Bill" Cody applied for work.

"But what can a boy so small as you do?" Majors asked him.

"I can ride, shoot and herd cattle, but I'd rather be an extra on one of your trains."

"That's a man's work and dangerous, besides," answered Majors.

"I'll tackle it," answered Cody.

In a book which he wrote before he died in Kansas City, Mr. Majors thus described that meeting:

"When that boy Cody came to me, standing straight as an arrow, and looked me in the face, I said to my partner: 'We will take this little boy, Mr. Russell, and we will pay him a man's wages because he can ride a pony just as well as a man can.' I remember when we paid him \$25 for that first month's work. He got it in half-dollars, fifty of them. He tied them up in his little handkerchief, and when he got home he untied the handker-

chief and spread the money all over the table."

Cody's work was to ride up and down the long "bull trains" as they creaked across the prairies and carry messages between the different sections of the train and between different trains.

Buffalo Bill had made a host of eastern friends on the frontier. For several years while stationed at Fort McPherson, it had been his delight to arrange buffalo hunts and rough-riding exhibitions for the entertainment of prominent visitors. Among these were August Belmont and other wealthy New Yorkers, who in 1872, invited the noted scout to visit New York. He went in buckskins, the picturesque embodiment of what a frontiersman should be. Crowds followed him through the streets and stories of his adventurous career were upon every lip.

It happened that Cody, escorted by a party of clubmen, visited a theatre one evening where a well known impersonator had advertised his first appearance as "Buffalo Bill."

The original sat behind the curtains of a private box, amazed to note the enthusiasm produced by a bad replica of himself.

The natural thought that slowly formed in the scout's shrewd brain was this: If an imitation could win such favor how much more successful would the real article be. That thought was the turning point of his career.

After his return to the west he wrote to Buntline asking him if he would write a play for him. Buntline answered that he would and for him to meet him in Chicago and to bring along some real Indians. Buffalo Bill took Texas Jack and Wild Bill with him. He reached Chicago twenty-four hours before the play that Buntline advertised was to be given.

"What's the play going to be?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"Why," said Buntline, "I haven't written the play yet." So he sat right down and in a few hours had the great realistic border play, "The Scouts of the Plains," all ready. "Now," he said, "get plenty of blank ammunition and rope to tie the hero to the burning stake." While the stage manager was rehearsing the Indians, Buffalo Bill was committing to memory his few lines. They opened to a packed house, and it went with a hurrah. The audience did not see very good acting, but enough bloodshed to give them a good nightmare every night for a week.

A shrewd actor-manager recognized the golden possibilities concealed in

ONLY FIVE DAYS MORE OF WEST'S REMODELING SALE

FINAL PRICES NOW IN EFFECT

Men! This Week Ends Your chance to take advantage of our \$15.00 SUIT SALE

Where you can buy your choice of hundreds of newest styles in high grade men's suits at wholesale cost and below.

SEE THE WINDOW

\$5.00

Buy your choice of all remaining style in a large assortment of

WOMEN'S TAILORED SUITS NEW WOOL DRESSES SILK AND WOOL COATS

Come and make your selection before sizes are gone Don't delay.

All Oxfords and Pumps Reduced 20 Per Cent



Greater Savings in entire line summer dress fabrics

The Test of Time

Time determines whether the policies under which a bank is operated are safe.

This bank has been in business twenty-six years.

It has grown steadily until it has become one of the strongest and most prosperous financial institutions in the West.

The soundness of its policies is attested by the long list of conservative business men who transact their business here; also by an earned surplus of \$1,300,000.00, the work of time and the result of conservative management.

This bank has facilities for taking care of more high grade business and offers its services to those who appreciate the best in banking.

La Grande National Bank La Grande, Oregon

Capital, \$100,000.00 Surplus, \$130,000.00 Resources, 1,100,000.00

DESIGNATED DEPOSITORY OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. UNITED STATES POSTAL SAVINGS DEPOSITORY.

LETTER BUCK ROUND-UP SEPTEMBER 11-12-13, 1913 Excursion Fares Tickets on Sale Sept. 10, 11, 12, 13 - Final Return Limit Sept. 16, 1913 Wild and Wonderful FURIOUS AND EXCITING

Buffalo Bill's maiden effort and he promptly effected a partnership. The result of the move was seen in the new famous Wild West show.

How England's aristocracy welcomed Buffalo Bill is a matter of history. The camp of the Wild West in London was the meeting ground of distinguished people.

His social success abroad was in fact one of the most remarkable experiences in his remarkable career. It was jubilee year, when London was crowded with royalties and notables. They feted him and courted him, invited him to their homes, cheerfully accepted his hospitalities in return and sent him home unspoiled, the same modest, unassuming man that he was in his old scouting days.

Yet the Prince of Wales gave him royal friendship, princes of the royal blood rode disguised among the Wild West cowboys as his guests, while titled ladies of the court sat in the old Deadwood coach.

Notice

Next Thursday, the 28th will be the Last Day's Sale On Furniture at 602 O Avenue

FOR SALE—Four room house, good condition, two beautiful lots, 1401, cor. Y and N. Fir. \$800.00 cash. No trades. Until Sept. 15, address R. L. Bills, 1143 1/2 E. 30th N. Portland, Ore. Adv. 8-25 9-15 p.