

GREAT HERDS OF BUFFALO THAT ROAMED WEST BECAME EXTINCT WHEN THE RAILROAD CAME

Small Herds Survived But the Great Day of the Bison Ended in 1878; Roosevelt Had Some Experience at Buffalo Hunting

One sight that used to be common in the days of the Old West before the iron line outposts of the frontiersmen and pioneers had brought about conditions that caused its extinction was vast herds of buffalo, who in unbelievable numbers roamed over mountain and plain.

Up until the seventies the bison was very plentiful, and it was not until several years later that they were very nearly exterminated. The building of the Union Pacific Railway was the signal that started the slaughter of the animals, all of them along the road being slain soon after the project was completed. This divided the herds into two groups, the southern and the northern. The former were practically all killed by 1875, and the latter not until 1882.

Of course there were small herds which survived, but they were alive only because of their wariness which had been sharpened by the quest of hunters for hides and meat. Some were killed after this time, and the story of the hunt is as thrilling as any that have been written in the history of American sport annals. Theodore Roosevelt was one of these men who found buffalo after they were nearly extinct. His story of a hunt was written by the ex-president and is as follows:

In the fall of 1889 I heard that a very few bison were still left around the head of Wisdom River. Hither I went and hunted faithfully; there was plenty of game of other kind, but bison not a trace did we see. Nevertheless a few days later that same year I came across these great wild cattle at a time when I had no idea of seeing them.

In Idaho Mountains
It was, as nearly as we could tell, in Idaho, just south of the Montana boundary line, and some 25 miles west of the line of Wyoming. We were camped high among the mountains, with a small pack-train. On the day in question we had gone out to find moose, but had seen no sign of them, and had then begun to climb over the higher peaks with an idea of getting sheep. The old hunter who was with me was, very fortunately, suffering from rheumatism, and he therefore carried a long staff instead of his rifle; I say fortunately, for if he had carried his rifle it would have been impossible to stop his firing at such game as bison, nor would he have spared the cows and calves.

About the middle of the afternoon we crossed a low rocky ridge, above the timber line, and saw at our feet a basin or round valley of singular

Twins' Mother Returns to Screen



Cleo Ridgley left the screen four years ago to marry James W. Horne, a director. She has remained away playing the real life role of mother to twins, but returns to real life as a villainess in "The Woman in the Case."

beauty. Its walls were formed by steep mountains. At its upper end lay a small lake, bordered on one side by a meadow of emerald green. The lake's other side marked the edge of the crowning pine forest which filled the rest of the valley, and hung high on the sides of the gorge which formed its outlet. Beyond the lake the ground rose in a pass evidently much frequented by game in bygone days, their trails lying along it in thick zig-zags, each gradually fading out after a few hundred yards, and then starting again in a different place, as game trails so often seem to do.

Bison Hoof-Marks
We bent our steps toward these trails, and no sooner had we reached

the first than the old hunter bent over it with a sharp exclamation of wonder. There in the dust were the unmistakable hoof-marks of a small band of bison, apparently but a few hours old. They were headed toward the lake. There had been half a dozen animals in the party; one a big bull, and two calves.

We immediately turned and followed the trail. It led down to the little lake, where the beasts had spread and grazed on the tender, green blades and had drunk their fill. The footprints then came together again, showing where the animals had gathered and walked off in single file to the forest. Evidently they had come to the pool in the early morning, walk-

ing over the game pass from some neighboring valley, and after drinking and feeding had moved into the pine forest to find some spot for their noon-day rest.

It was a very still day, and there were nearly three hours of daylight left. Without a word my silent companion, who had been scanning the whole country with hawk-eyed eagerness, besides scrutinizing the signs on his hands and knees, took the trail, motioning me to follow. In a moment we entered the woods, breathing a sigh of relief as we did so; for while in the meadow we could never tell that the buffalo might not see us, if they happened to be lying in some place with a commanding lookout.

Hunter Shows Skill

The old hunter was thoroughly roused, and he showed himself a very skillful tracker. We were much favored by the character of the forest, which was rather open, and in most places free from undergrowth and down timber. As in most Rocky Mountain forests the timber was small, not only as compared to the giant trees of the groves of the Pacific Coast, but as compared to the forests of the Northeast. The ground was covered with pine needles and soft moss, so it was not difficult to walk noiselessly. Once or twice when I trod on a small dry twig, or let the nails in my shoes sink slightly against a stone, the hunter turned to me with a frown of angry impatience; but as he walked slowly, continually halting to look ahead, as well as stooping over to examine the trail, I did not find it very difficult to move silently. I kept a little behind him and to one side, save when he crouched to take advantage of some piece of cover; and I crept in his footsteps. I did not look at the trail at all, but kept watching ahead, hoping at any minute to see game.

It was not very long before we struck their day beds, which were made on a knoll where the forest was open and where there was much down timber. After leaving the day beds the animals had at first fed separately around the grassy base and sides of the knoll, and had then made off in their usual single file, going straight to a small pool in the forest. After drinking they had left this pool, and traveled down toward the gorge at the mouth of the basin, the trail leading along the sides of the steep hill, which were dotted by green glades; while the roar of the cataracts by which the stream was broken ascended from below. Here we moved with redoubled caution, for the sign had grown very fresh and the animals had once more scented and begun feeding. When the trail led across the glades we usually skirted them so as to keep in the timber.

Herd Discovered

At last, on nearing the edge of one of these glades we saw a movement, among the young trees on the other side, not fifty yards away. Peering through the safe shelter yielded by some thick evergreen bushes, we speedily made out three bison, a cow, a calf, and a yearling, grazing greedily on the other side of the glade, under the fringing timber; all with their heads up hill. Soon another cow and calf stepped out after them. I did not wish to shoot, waiting for the appearance of the big bull I knew was accompanying them.

So for several minutes I watched the great, clumsy, shaggy beasts, as all unconscious they grazed in the open glade. Behind them rose the dark pines. At the left of the glade the ground fell away to form the side of a chasm; down in its depths the cataracts foamed and thundered; beyond, the huge mountains towered, their crests crimsoned by the sinking sun. Mixed with the eager excitement of the hunter was a certain half-melancholy feeling as I gazed on these bison, themselves part of the last remnant of a doomed and nearly vanished race. Few, indeed, are the men who now have, or ever more shall have, the chance of seeing the mightiest of American beasts, in all his wild vigor, surrounded by the tremendous desolation of his far-off mountain home.

The Bull Appears

At last, when I had begun to grow very anxious lest the others should take alarm, the bull likewise appeared on the edge of the glade, and stood with outstretched head, scratching his throat against a young tree, which shook violently. I aimed low, behind the shoulder, and pulled the trigger. At the crack of the rifle all the bison, without the momentary halt of terror-struck surprise so common among game, turned and raced off at headlong speed. The fringe of young pines beyond and below the glade cracked and swayed as if a whirlwind were passing, and in another moment they reached the top of a very steep incline, thickly strewn with boulders and dead timber. Down this they plunged with reckless speed; their surefootedness was a marvel in such seemingly unsteady beasts. A column of dust obscured their passage, and under its cover they disappeared in the forest; but the trail of the bull was marked by splashes of frothy blood, and we followed it at a trot. Fifty yards below the border of the forest we found the stark black body stretched motionless. He was a splendid old bull, still in his full vigor, with large sharp horns, and heavy mane and glossy coat; and I felt the most exulting pride as I handled and examined him; for I had procured a trophy such as can fall henceforth to few hunters indeed.

Camp in The Wild

It was too late to dress the beast that evening; so, after taking out the tongue and cutting off enough meat for supper and breakfast, we scrambled down to near the torrent, and after some search found a good spot for camping. Hot and dusty from the day's hard tramp, I undressed and took a plunge in the stream, the icy water making me gasp. Then, having built a slight lean-to of brush, and dragged together enough dead timber to burn all night, we cut long alder twigs, sat down before some embers raked apart, and grilled and ate out buffalo meat with the utmost relish. Night had fallen; a cold wind laid up the valley, the torrent roared as it leaped past us, and drowned our words as we strove to talk over our adventures and success; while the flame of the fire flickered and danced, lighting up with continual vivid flashes the gloom of the forest round about.

PIER HOMES OF MILLION RATS IS TO BE RAZED

(By International News Service)

NEW YORK—An army of a million rats, driven from their homes beneath the old wooden wharves of lower Manhattan by the advent of the concrete pier, has met its collective doom in the cold waters of the Hudson and East rivers.

A rat will soon be a rarity along Gotham's waterfront. Hordes of high and low-cast rodents from every land on earth have infested New York's seawall for decades. With the advent of modern construction health officials foresee the passing of the bubonic plague peril and the elimination of the most ignominious of disease carriers.

Pity the New York waterfront rat, homeless and friendless. Not that we would suggest a drive to relieve their increasing sorrows. But a tinge of pity would not be out of place in view of the old residence that the rat has enjoyed beneath the keyboard of Manhattan's show-bus. Eventually what is left of this breed will have lost social standing among the punier inland hordes that are satisfied to infest stables, old tenements and to frolic beneath kitchen floors.

Rats From Everywhere

The New York rat is different from his brethren. He is cosmopolitan to begin with. They have no blue look among them. It is true, but had they one it is certain many famous rats would be enrolled therein. Huge rodents from the aromatic wharves of far Sumatra, pirate giants from the Chelsea piers, quaint rats from San Francisco's picturesque waterfront, to which they came, perhaps, from far Ceylon or the dimly-lighted wharves of Shanghai. Rats from Java and Edinburgh, rats from Calcutta, Bombay and Colon, more rats from Pernambuco and Stockholm—all these grace, or disgrace, the thousand alleys beneath the wooden Battery wharves.

But only an army of an estimated million rats has so far permanently disbanded. Armies of many more millions of rodents remain to be vanquished by the builders of concrete piers. According to Health Commissioner Dr. Royal Copeland, the evacuation and eternal retreat of the waterfront rat is a necessity and an end to be brought about at the earliest possible date. For it is ascertained that the greatest potential peril to the lives of New York's seven million, and for that matter, the lives of all who dwell within the borders of the nation, is the peril of the great white plague. The germ of this terrible disease is borne by the rat flea.

Piers Harbor Disease

Inasmuch as Manhattan Island is entirely surrounded by piers, few of which are rodent free, Dr. Copeland's admonition is considered timely by many physicians.

The modern concrete pier, or rather the method of constructing the concrete pier, will be responsible for the passing of the dread carriers, according to Dock Commissioner Murray Hurlbert. Rats reach their prospective homes beneath the floors of old-



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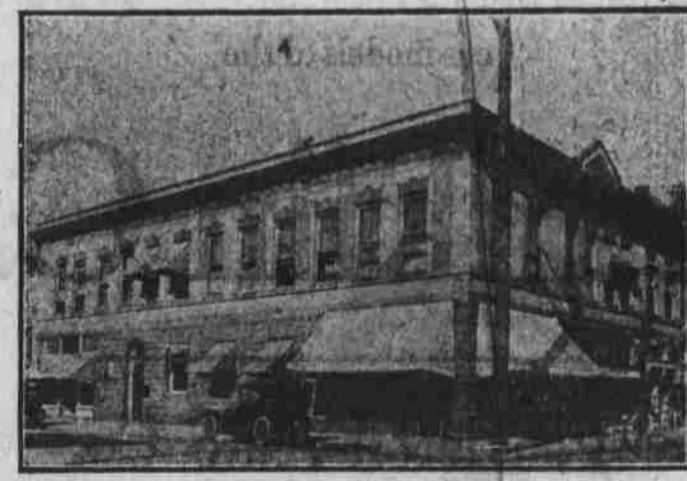
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