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1809 1909 The Lincoln Centenary By James A. Edgerton Copyright, 1908, by the American Press Association

THE hour when a great white soul comes to earth should be held in perpetual memory. The soil his foot first pressed is hallowed ground. Time and place are so sacred as when they mark the advent of those sent of God to help men. They form the links that bind heaven and earth. They lend an added lustre to every time and every place. Just as one who wears the human form worthily confers nobility on all of the sons of men. Abraham Lincoln made every one in human guise more precious. He reminds us of our better selves. He was a symbol of the homeliest and commonest, yet of the highest and rarest human things. We cannot think of him without becoming more loving, more charitable and more true. There is not an element in him that does not make one better to contemplate. The pure in heart can read all of his life without a blush, and the gentlest and most timid can view his every deed without a shudder. His life had goodness without cant, intellectuality without dogmatism and power without tyranny. He had most of the talents with none of their abuses. There are many great men we can admire and respect, but Lincoln we can love. He was born a hundred years ago this year. It is fitting, therefore, that the land for which he lived and died should honor the event as it has honored but one other of its sons. We have not enough of the supreme soul that we can spare the example of one that is not for their sake that we cannot love them, but for the sake of all the rest. They do not need our praise, but we need their stimulus. By uplifting them we uplift ourselves. They set a



spiritual magnets to draw us to their height. By contemplating them we unconsciously grow like them. No one can measure the moral force of our Lincoln centenary. All men are in substantial agreement as to their verdict concerning him. The only difference is in the degree of their praise. There is no sectionalism in his appreciation. The south could not spare his gentle memory more than the north. Never was a victor less like a conqueror. It is as impossible to feel resentment toward him as toward a dead father. We grow like what we love. It is this fact which lends such a beautiful significance to the universal regard for Lincoln, that makes so inspiring the widespread celebration of the centenary of his birth. A nation which builds itself around such an idea will not only have a "new birth of freedom," but will have a new birth of peace, of manhood and of nobility that will place it in the forefront of the nations of all time. It will be an inspiring spectacle when at the same hour on Feb. 12, assembles in all parts of the nation turn their faces toward the tomb at Springfield. It may well be that this ceremony will become worldwide and that Americans in all parts of the earth will join the celebrators at Springfield in repeating certain of Mr. Lincoln's utterances with their faces toward his place of rest. Among the eminent Illinoisans who form the

of misinformation we are in concerning Washington, in those cases we have to depend on the Sparkes and Weemes for some historical fairy tales.

Lincoln has not entirely escaped from these romances even as it is, but they started their fiction factories so soon that it has been possible to overtake and brand most of the output. For example, there were a lot of the oldest inhabitants in several northern states who felt, it their bounden duty to reflect on his paternity. All of these stories have been traced to their origin, proved to be erroneous and branded. Then somebody came to the surface who said he had heard somebody say that he had heard somebody else say that Mr. Lincoln was not born on the birthplace farm, but in an entirely different part of Kentucky. He made some sort of affidavit on the ground of this hearsay testimony. Now, it is fortunate that this happened while there were reliable, truth loving people on earth who knew just where Lincoln was born. Thus the thing could be demonstrated beyond cavil, nailed down and established for the ages. This saves posterity a lot of unnecessary speculation, investigation and trouble. Suppose these stories had been sprung after everybody that knew Lincoln was dead. All this inaccuracy might have trickled its way down through the centuries. A very large portion of ancient history belongs in the fiction department of our libraries.

We are fortunate in another respect. Many of those who have written lives of Mr. Lincoln associated with him daily. He was grand enough to seem to care for his secretaries and partners. The telegraph operators at the war department, the attendants at the White House, the common soldiers who saw their commander in chief, all had some sort of intimate acquaintance with him. Almost equally notable will be the celebration at the Lincoln birthplace farm, which will then be dedicated and thrown open to the public as a national park. At this Kentucky ceremony President Roosevelt has promised to be present; also Mark Twain, Governor Folk and others distinguished in politics, law and letters. There is a generous emulation without rivalry between the two committees that have in charge the respective celebrations at the birthplace and the tomb. Thus the two ends of Mr. Lincoln's pathway will be bright with glory, while the fame of his life will stretch like a rainbow between them. The chief celebration will be neither at Springfield nor at the Rock Spring

FIGHTING THE BAD MEN OF THE PLAINS BY BUFFALO BILL FROM "TRUE TALES OF THE PLAINS"



I HAVE often been asked for stories about the "bad men" of the west in the early days. I am going to tell now of my first "run in" with the worst kind of white men that then infested the frontier. These were horse thieves. And horse stealing is even to this day a crime that cannot be ranked with cold blooded murder.

Once I wanted a grizzly bear skin, or rather, one of my sisters wanted it for a rug. I had promised as soon as I should have time to get her one, for even those times a big grizzly could not be shot in one's dooryard. It meant a long trip through the hills and more than a little danger. After shooting a bear and skinning him I started back, but the going was hard. By sunset I saw I couldn't hope to get back to camp that night. So I looked about for a good sheltered spot to camp. Just then my horse whinnied. His call was answered from a hollow just behind the creek. I dismounted, fastened him and, rifle in hand, went on to investigate. There, hidden in a little gulch, were about twenty horses. They weren't guarded. Looking around in the dusk, I saw a dugout about a hundred yards up the hill. Lights appeared through the cracks. I clambered up to learn who was there. I knocked at the blanket door. The voices I had heard as I climbed the hill were hushed all at once. Then I heard a half dozen sharp clicks. That meant the cocking of rifles or revolvers. I began to wonder what company I had stumbled into. Before I could move back some one called:

"A friend and a white man," I replied. The door opened, and a big, ugly looking fellow stepped forth and said: "Come in."

I accepted the invitation with some degree of fear and hesitation, which I endeavored to conceal, as I thought it was too late to back out and that I would never do to weaken at that hour. I entered the dugout with my eyes fell upon eight as rough and villainous looking men as I ever saw in my life. Two of them I instantly recognized as teamsters who had been driving in Lewis and Clark's days. "Where are you going, kid, and who's with you?" asked one of the men, who appeared to be the leader of the gang.

"I am entirely alone. I left Horseshoe Station this morning for a bear hunt, and not finding any bears, I had determined to camp out for the night, and wait till morning," said I. "and just as I was going into camp a few hundred yards down the creek, I saw a bunch of your horses whinnying, and then came to your camp."

"Where's your horse?" demanded the boss thief. "I left him down at the creek," I answered. They proposed going after the horse, but I thought that would never do, as it would leave me without any means of escape, and I accordingly said in hopes to throw them off the track, "Captain, I'll leave my gun here and go down and get my horse and come back and stay all night."

"But my clever little game did not work at all, as one of the desperadoes spoke up and said: "Jim and I will go down with you after your horse, and you can leave your gun here all the same, as you'll not need it."

"All right," I replied, for I could certainly have done nothing else. "Come along," said one of them, and together we went down the creek and soon came to the spot where my horse was tied. One of the men unlatched the animal and said, "I'll lead the horse."

specimen of manhood and one of the most deadly shots with rifle or pistol that ever lived. In his enthusiasm as a Union spy he made a detour around, down into Texas and back to southwest Missouri and joined the Texas army. Though his name and accepted service as a Confederate spy, consequently giving himself the double danger of a spy's fate. Therefore by this means he became of immense service to the Union forces. For many months he was confidential secret service agent for the Confederate forces under General Price in an invasion of Kansas, and in one battle while among their advance guard he saw a maneuver of which he thought the Union general should be informed. He therefore made a dash from the rebel to the opposing lines. His action was so sudden that the southerners thought his horse had become unruly. The audacity of his movements did not dawn on them for a few moments, when, with yells, a squad took up hot pursuit. Both armies watched in breathless suspense; but, always famed for picking superior mounts, he quickly distanced all save one, who followed close up behind him, firing several shots which whistled close to his ear. Just when Hickok's horse was compelled to vault a small creek he turned in his saddle and with his unerring aim dropped the gallant pursuer from his horse and rode safely into the Union lines. Here he delivered his information to General Pleasanton, which turned the tide of the day.

Probably the most noted event in his career was his single handed fight with Jacob McCandles and his gang of nine men at Rock Creek, western Kansas, while riding pony express in 1861. This was his first great fight while covering his route, armed only with two Colt revolvers. He halted at Rock Creek Station to find the stock tender dead and his wife excited by his presence. As he approached she exclaimed:

"My heavens, Bill, McCandles and his gang are in the neighborhood, or were this morning?" This gang of bandits had been laying a trap for Hickok to get him out of the way. Rushing to the door to remount and get back, he saw several heads pop up out of the grass, and a bullet struck the door jamb. Jumping back and telling the lady to escape, he was fortunate to find a loaded rifle left by the husband which the McCandles gang did not think of, as they saw that Bill was armed only with six shooters. There were some rifles and banding between him and McCandles of a defiant nature when McCandles and nine bandits rose and, with a yell, charged for the door. They depended on taking the chance of losing some of their men and made a quick charge. "Bill's instructions were to me in such cases, 'Will, always get the leader.' This he did, as he fired straight at McCandles, the bullet catching him full in the heart, and he dropped instantly. By this time the desperadoes were close upon the cabin. Jumping aside, he emptied the revolvers through the cabin door. Four men fell dead, besides McCandles, at this stage of the game.

Although wounded with buckshot and ball, and struck over the head with a rifle that caused him to bleed at the mouth and nose, he still "stayed with 'em." At this time, as he told me himself, the cabin was filled with smoke, and anything he struck or hit was an enemy, and in the gloom prob-



"Nine bandits charged for the door." ably they assisted him in their destruction. But with his faithful bowie knife he made matters until all was quiet and still, for he had struck savages blows, following the devil up one side of the room and down the other and into corners, striking and yelling until he felt sure that every one was down.

Hickok was wounded by three bullets and eleven buckshot and cut in thirteen places. It was six months before "Wild Bill" fully recovered from the results of what was one of the most thrilling exploits in border story—one that is not created by the romancer, but is well authenticated—"Wild Bill" in single handed conflict killed ten men, men of the most desperate character.

