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BUFFALO DAYS

(Continued from page one)
thrown back the next morning, we looked upon a white world.
My buffalo camp was at the point of what was known as Three-Mile Ridge, twelve miles west of Dodge. We drove out to the buffalo camp. John stayed at this camp, getting his first taste of roughing it, while I traveled back to Dodge with the next load of hides and meat. Here I met my cousin Charles Wright, and since both John and Charles wanted to get into the buffalo-hunting business, I hired them and Mike McCabe at \$50 per month; and we headed an expedition southeast, making the crossing of Arkansas River at Fort Dodge and pushing on for forty miles to Kiowa Creek, west of Medicine Lodge. Here we were in camp a month, and took 305 buffalo hides and twenty thousand pounds of short-cut hams. The meat brought two and one-half cents per pound, and I gave half of the proceeds to freighters for hauling it to market. The hides I hauled myself. These hides were sold to Eugene Le Compte for \$3.05 each.

The Great Blizzard

On one of these trips to the hide market at Dodge City, John and I, each driving a team, joined the Nixon freight outfit, loaded with meat, at Kiowa creek, and traveled with it to Mulberry Creek, where we struck the old Government road from Dodge City to Camp Supply. On the way a blinding blizzard of wind and snow swooped down from the north, and men and animals were soon white with frost and struggling in an icy gale that became a real threat to life itself. At Mulberry Creek we had a brief council and decided to press on to Dodge City. The Government road along here for miles was a wide and deeply beaten trench from one to two feet deep. The howling gale drove the snow across this, banking it on the other side, and leaving a plain trail for the teams to follow, but at length we came to the mouth of the Creek Valley as it debouched into the wide valley of the Arkansas, and the trail shallowed, and was soon apparently lost.

Another council was held, and it was agreed to stick together and try to reach John Hunt's ranch a point on the trail. Here a saloon, store, and ranch houses would afford shelter that was rapidly becoming a necessity if we were to survive. Ice formed on our beards, eyebrows and eyelashes until we could scarcely see our way.

At last the lead team, driven by Levi Richardson, stopped, bringing the whole cavalcade to a halt. Staggering back through the howling gale to the other drivers, he announced that one of his lead mules was frozen to death. John Moor saw that Richardson was completely blinded by the ice that had formed on his beard and eyelashes. Cupping his hands around his own mouth and over Richardson's eyes, he blew his warm breath on the matted ice until he could brush it away and Richardson could see.

Pat Baker, who was driving the second team, volunteered to go forward and drive the lead team.

"I can make those blankety-blank leaders move!" he shouted above the storm, and a few minutes later was cracking his blacksnake whip over their backs. But they did not move. He then went forward and seized one lead mule by the bridle bits and strove to drag them around from the drive of the gale. As he struggled with the stubborn animal, he staggered against a wall—and found that the mules had reached the ranch, and were standing with their heads against a door! Snow had drifted entirely over it.

In a short time we were inside, and while the teams munched their food under the wind breaks, we, half-frozen, were gathered about the fires and steaming food and drinks, inside the houses. Only the unerring instinct of the faithful mules had brought us to safety.

The Topic of Conversation



One of the drivers was Bat Masterson, who later gained considerable fame. Years afterward, I was in New York City, and called at the Astoria Building, inquiring for Bat Masterson. A polite clerk answered that Mr. Masterson was in, and went to inform him that he had a visitor.

In a moment Masterson appeared and said: "Do you want to see me?"
"If you are Bat Masterson, I do."
"Well, I'm what's left of him."
"Do you remember being with Nixon's wagon train on January 27, 1873?"
"I was right there."
"Who drove the first wagon?"
"Pat Baker."
"No, it was driven by Levi Richardson. Pat Baker was next."
"You are right."
"Well, who drove the next wagon?"
"I did."
"And who drove the next?"
"Columbus."
"Yes, sir; and who came next?"
"Jimmie."
"And who was next?"
"The Moor brothers."
"Right again. I am Wright Moor, driver of the last wagon."

From that moment we two comrades of the old frontier sat down to live again, for a time, the experiences of those stirring days, and pay tribute to the faithful dumb animals whose unerring sense of direction and surroundings, superior to man's greater intelligence in such an exigency as that of the blizzard, had saved our lives.

Moor Brothers and Wright
Mike celebrated our return to Dodge City by getting on a protracted spree, and was left at Dodge. We three boys formed a partnership. I loaned my brother John and cousin Charles two hundred and fifty dollars each, to enter the firm on an equal footing with me. Under the new arrangement I shot the game and the other boys did the freighting and marketing and looked after the camp. Three men were hired as skinnners, and again we turned toward Kiowa Creek.

Spring had come—the spring of 1873. All nature had awakened from the sleep of winter; the prairies grew green and lush with grass, and sprinkled with flowers; the voice of mighty achievement called to the spirit of adventure. For a time all went well, and profits piled up rapidly. Every day we saw some new and thrilling brush with big game.

And then the shadow of death hovered near. John was stricken with pneumonia, and I took him to the Dodge City hospital, where for weeks he struggled in the grip of the dread disease. At last good medical care and youthful courage and strength prevailed, the shadow passed on and the outfit which had been in Dodge for six weeks, waiting for John's recovery, again turned to the big-game country,

this time trekking to the Cimarron river and remaining there all summer. Other outfits joined us for protection against roving bands of Indians, who looked with bitter foreboding upon their vanishing meat supply. At that time the Cimarron was believed to be the boundary line between Kansas and the Indian territory.

Millions Upon Millions
A general belief grew and prevailed that the great buffalo herd was extinct; but some argued there must be another herd, as the herd that had gone north consisted entirely of prime animals. At last a neighbor hunter, John Webb, and I determined upon a scouting trip to ascertain the truth of the situation. Saddling our favorite mounts, and carrying no supplies but a sack of salt and plenty of ammunition, we turned our faces to the unknown wilderness.

Our direction of travel was south and we crossed the north prong of the North Canadian river, known as Beaver creek, at a point about 20 miles east of where Beaver City, Oklahoma, is now. Continuing south across Wolf creek, another prong of the North Canadian, we turned west on the divide between the North and South Canadian rivers, and somewhere in this lonely land, now the Panhandle of Texas, we found the great herd, millions upon millions, fattening on the grass of those mighty uplands. Pushing on westward through living lanes opening before us as we advanced, and camping at night in the midst of browsing, drowsing thousands, we came in sight of the breaks of Blue river or the South Canadian. Tascosa, Texas, is now at the mouth of Blue river. Here we turned north. For five days we had ridden through and camped in a mobile sea of living buffalo.

The Council of War
On our return, the buffalo hunters held a council and listened to our report. Differences of opinion marked the council. There was considerable doubt as to the government's attitude toward the hunters should they go out of the Indian territory into Texas, a sovereign state. A hunter by the name of Frazier united the council by a proposal that a conference be held with Major Dodge. Frazier and I were chosen as envoys. Returning to Dodge City, we dressed for the occasion in new shirts, trousers, and hats, and went down to Fort Dodge, six miles distant from Dodge City, for the interview.

The major was gracious in his reception and fired volleys of questions at us. We did not get their import at the time, but the information thus obtained later appeared in an article on the habits and history of the buffalo, written by the major. Finally, I asked the all-important question. "Major, if we cross into Texas, what will be the government's attitude toward us?"

"Boys," replied the major, "if I were a buffalo hunter, I would hunt buffalo where the buffalo are." That settled the question.

Texas or Bust
Charley Wright now withdrew from the partnership, and in September, 1873, John and I, with four teams and 10 men, set out for the wilds of Texas, crossing the Neutral strip now Beaver county, Oklahoma. We hunted a while on the South Canadian and then turned back, pitching camp on the Palo Duro creek in Hansford county. On this trip to the Canadian we made our own trail, striking four miles west of the old ruins of the John C. Freemont and Kit Carson Adobe Walls. Upon our return to Dodge City, we followed the old Fort Bascomb government trail across the Arkansas river.

Building Adobe Walls Post
So passed the winter of 1873. In March, 1874, A. C. (Charley) Myers, Dodge City dealer in hides and hunters' supplies, bought Hank Sutter's outfit of eight six-yoke teams and moved a branch store south to Hutchinson county, Texas. He too crossed the Neutral strip at the mouth of the Hansford county Palo Duro creek, and followed the creek up to a point four miles below the ruins of some old adobe walls, supposed to have been built

some years before by Prant's Fort traders. He located his new trading post on this site and called it Adobe Walls.

About 40 hunters and teamsters in the party erected a stockade corral and built in one corner of the corral a storehouse of cottonwood logs.

In April, Charles Rath, a competitor, moved a branch store down and built a sod house a short distance south. It faced east, as did Myer's store. James Hanrahan then built a saloon between the two stores, close to Myer's stockade. Tom O'Keefe erected a picket house for a blacksmith shop between Hanrahan's saloon and Rath's store. All were established and doing business by the first of May.

John and I moved our supply of hides and meat to Dodge City, and our camp to the new trading post. John, in company with a Mr. Warren, who had a family in Dodge, and a freighter known as Dirty Face Jones, hauled supplies to the new stores at Adobe Walls. Each drove a six-mule team and two wagons.

Exchanging Lead Compliments
Early in May I made a trip south to the Canadian river with Mart Galloway, Phillip Sisk, Lem Wilson, Dave Campbell and John Hughes.

Six men, three teams and three saddle horses composed the group. We went down the river to the mouth of Red Deer creek, crossed the river and went up Red Deer to the head of the Washita, moving on the middle Washita to Gagesby creek. While in camp here, a small party of Indians came near the camp, but would not accept an invitation to come in, and soon passed on. The same day we moved several miles up the creek and camped in a wide flat.

Next morning, at the first sign of day, the Indians charged the camp from the south, lying on the right side of their horses and shooting under their horses' necks at the beds of the hunters as they galloped through. John Hughes and I slept on the east side of the east wagon in the camp. Hughes was next to the wagon; his gun was standing against a wagon, and my gun was under the top blanket to protect it from dew. At the first sound of the charge, Hughes sat up, seized his gun, and shot the lead horse as he came opposite. The big ball tore through the horse and his rider, who hung on the opposite side, and whistled for more victims.

The rest of the Indians rode furiously by and circled the west, taking cover in a thicket and shooting at the camp, but were too far away to do any damage. It was still pretty dark but we could see the flash of their guns and replied with deadly precision of trained marksmen with the best rifle in the world in our hands. This soon smoked the Indians out of the thicket. But even in the face of such rifle fire, two Indians made a run past the camp, picked up their dead companion's body and bore it off, joining their comrades. Then all rode away and were seen no more. Does history furnish any real parallel in horsemanship for these dashing savage Comanche and Cheyenne Indians?

Next day we crossed the North fork of Red River and camped on Salt fork. Buffalo were coming from the south in great numbers, and 10 days of uninterrupted hunting followed, in which 666 bison hides were taken, and Phillip Sisk was sent to Adobe Walls to get

John Moor and others to haul in the hides.

At about the time my companions and I had left Adobe Walls on this hunting trip, John Moor, Warren and Jones were in Dodge City after more supplies for the new post and rumors were flying that Indians were leaving the reservations to fight buffalo hunters. Jones asked Warren if he was going back and the latter replied: "No. If you and Moor are fools enough to go down among the Indians, you can go, but I am going to stay at home."

John Moor and Jones loaded and trilled back to Adobe Walls, and on arriving heard reports of Indians on the range, and accounts of encounters. Jones returned to Dodge City alone. John Moor remained and the next day Sisk came in with the request for his services to bring in the hides.

Thus the daily humdrum of events moved on to the battle of Adobe Walls, marking a crisis, a climax, and a new beginning in the history of the Panhandle of Texas.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT
In the County Court of the County of Jackson in and for the state of Oregon

In the MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARY SORENSON, deceased.

Notice is hereby given that C. M. Rexford, administrator of the above entitled estate has filed in the above entitled court and matter his final account and report of his administration of said estate and said court by an order duly given and entered therein has fixed the 4th day of November, 1933, at the hour of 10:00 o'clock A. M., at the court room of the above entitled court in the Jackson County court house at Medford, Oregon, as the time and place for the hearing of any and all objections to said account and report or to any item thereof and for the settlement thereof.

C. M. REXFORD,
Administrator.

NOTICE OF HEARING ON FINAL ACCOUNT

Notice is hereby given that Mae M. Weeks, Administratrix of the Estate of Fred W. Weeks, deceased, has filed her final account in said estate, and that Friday, the 10th day of November, 1933, at the hour of Eleven o'clock, A. M., at the County Court Room, in the County court house, in the City of Medford, Jackson County, Oregon, has been fixed as the time and place for hearing said account, and all persons having objections to said final account are hereby notified to appear and urge said objections in the manner provided by law on or before the time fixed by said court for said final hearing, above set forth.

First publication hereof, October 6th, 1933.
Last publication hereof, October 27, 1933.

MAE M. WEEKS,
Administratrix,
ALLISON MOULTON,
Attorney for Administratrix,
Oct. 6-13-20-27

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