

"Maidenly—unmaidenly?" Calamity muttered, staring hard at him. "Charley Davis, when you left me, with a betrothal kiss clinging to my lips, I was a maiden, and as modest as they make 'em. But terrible changes have come since then. I am now a world's dare-devil, people say. Ask me nothing, for I tell yer the same measure—nothing. In Whoop-Up—this trail takes you there, by turning to your left at the canyon below—in Whoop-Up you may by chance hear all that the world knows of the story. Go hear, and then you will not be surprised."

She spoke with a fierce earnestness that was thrilling, and then drew up her bridle as if to go.

"Hold on, Jennie, shall we not meet again?" Davis exclaimed, very anxiously—"very soon, I hope."

"Probably. I'm not hard to find," saying which the girl dare-devil rode on up the ravine, leaving the stranger to pursue his way on to Whoop-Up afoot.

The Saga of Pecos Bill

Pecos Bill wasn't a man of flesh and blood. He was an idea, a vision, a cowboy demigod. His voice broke while still in his mammy's womb and his first words upon emergin' were "Gimme a drink." He was born with a full set of teeth, a full head of red hair, and seven bristly hairs on his chest. Three days after he was born, he started chawin' 'baccer. He was weaned on panther piss, made in his pappy's portable still from a gallon of Pecos River water (hence his nickname), a gallon of pure, double-twisted and distilled white lightning', a cupful of gunpowder for seasonin', and three rattlesnake heads for taste. At the age of three he was already a hell of a poker player.

It was precisely on his third birthday that Bill's pappy went to stake out a claim in the Texas Panhandle. He'd hitched up a team of oxen to their prairie schooner, tied a milch cow and a horse to the rear end, and stowed a cage with a dozen chickens and a barrel of his own brand of popskull someplace in the wagon. He put his children, all nineteen of 'em, among them a set of quintuplets, in the rear where they couldn't interfere with the drivin'. Bill was the youngest and he sat farthest back. Now, after crossin' the Pecos River, jest havin' reached the far bank, the left front wheel hit a big rock and the jolt chucked li'l Bill clear out of the wagon and into the river. (That's still another reason for Pecos Bill's moniker.) Well, with so many youngsters an' all the squallin' and noise they made, Bill wasn't missed. In the evenin', when the whole gang of them made camp, their pappy rounded them up to count heads. He found out that they were one head short.

"Bill's jest a wee nipper," said his mammy, "nary six feet tall. We shorely had him around yestiddy. Mebbe we oughta go back and look for him?"

"Naw, he's all of three years old," said Bill's daddy, "old 'nuff to fend for hisself. He'll play his hand as it's been dealt to him. I ain't worryin' none."

"Waal, iff'n you say so," answered his wife.

Now, what happened to Bill was this: He crawled out of the river, spat out a dozen or so fingerlin's, and crawled off into the chaparral, where he found himself face-to-face with an ancient gray-haired grandpappy coyote by the name of Methuselah, on account of his age and wisdom.

"Here, little doggie, nice little doggie," said Bill.

"Doggie, hell!" said Methuselah. "I ain't no goddam dog. I'm a coyote, boy! Waal, you're like a lost calf a-lookin' for his mammy's teats. I reckon I've been dealt the hand to take care of you. Come along."

So that granddaddy coyote took Bill to where the whole pack of 'em was scratchin' themselves and chawin' on bones and introduced him all around. Methuselah took Bill to a lady coyote sucklin' two pups. "That's your chuckwagon," he told Bill. "That's the nipples enough for one more."

"Heck," said Bill, "I never tech the stuff. I'd rather have whiskey."

Well, Bill settled in with the coyotes and in two shakes of a lamb's tail plumb forgot that he was human, being convinced that he was a coyote too.

In this new family of his Bill was known as "No Tail" for obvious reasons. Old Methuselah taught him everything a self-respecting coyote ought to know—how to catch a rabbit, how to lift his right leg to pee, how to howl at the moon. In no time at all Bill became the best moon howler in the pack. Methuselah also showed him how to run down a deer and told him to avoid skunks for the sake of his nose. The only varmint givin' Bill any trouble at all was the Wowsler, a fearful critter sired by the Great Oligocene Saber-toothed Tiger of the West upon the Giant Fur-covered Catfish of the Big Muddy. This oversized monster had a tail like a fish, the body of a lion, and teeth like a chain saw. Its voice was thunder, its breath fire. Its glance could strike an ordinary feller dumb. Waal, if I'll Bill fought the Wowsler for a full day. In the end Bill whupped the varmint and knocked him down for the count. As the Wowsler was lynin' senseless on the ground, Bill disdainfully lifted his leg over him and let him have it while the delighted coyotes whooped it up. Bill was now the champeen and top dog among the pack. A winsome young blondish coyote lass was

makin' eyes at Bill, shakin' her rump at him, sayin', "It so happens that I'm in heat and willin'. How about it?"

Nobody knows what would've happened if fate hadn't interfered. It would've been a prime case of this here miscegenation, and god knows how the pups would've turned out, if a cowboy named Slim hadn't come gallopin' in at a dead run, a-shoutin' and a-shootin' his six-gun scatterin' the coyotes before him like chaff in the wind. Young Bill didn't run away like the others. He was busy with his freshly killed grizzly, tearin' off its legs and gnawin' on the paws.

"What in hell are you doin' mother-nakkid among those varmints and eatin' yer meat raw?" Slim wanted to know.

Bill had never seen human bein's since he fell off his pappy's wagon. He had plumb forgot what they looked like. He stood his ground, growlin' and barin' his teeth.

"Stop that tomfoolery," said Slim. "It ain't human."

"I ain't human," answered Bill. "I'm a coyote. My name's No Tail."

"You're ramsquaddled with loco weed. You ain't a coyote. You're human like me."

"You're a damn liar! Am I not the champeen moon howler? Don't I lift my right leg to pee? Hain't I got fleas?"

"Ev'rybody's got fleas. I got fleas. If you're a coyote, whar's your tail? Coyotes got tails."

"It was bitten off by a painter when I was a baby, Granddaddy Methuselah told me."

"You're a feather-headed fool. Come along. I'll show you somepin'."

Slim took Bill to the nearest creek: "Look in the water. Whadaya see?"

Bill looked at their reflections in the water. He was stupefied. "I'll be danged!" he exclaimed. "Leapin' lizards! I'm a friggin' human. I reckon I've got no choice but to jine up with your kind."

Bill mounted up behind Slim and they rode off in the general direction of civilization. Thus Bill rejoined the human race.

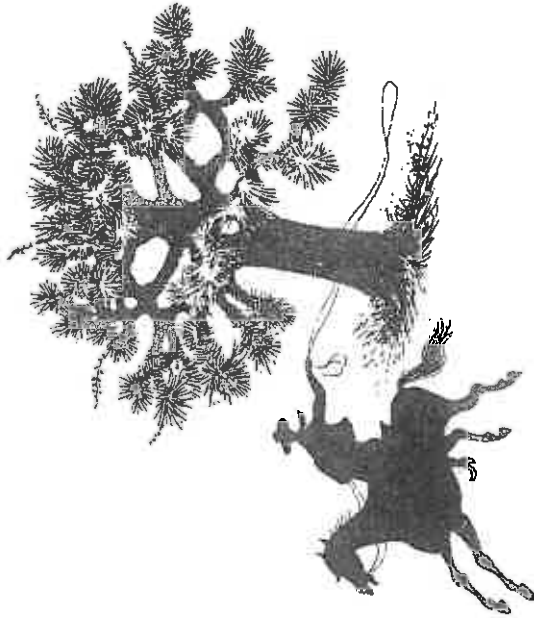
Pecos Bill got along well among the two-leggeds. Folks took to him, though they sometimes wondered about him when he took off all his clothes and hunkered down on his haunches, howling at the moon like a coyote. He turned out to be a born cowboy, better than the best. Fast thing he did was get himself a hoss. As he warn't an ordinary fellow, so his hoss warn't an ordinary pony. He raised him from a colt on a diet of strychnine juice, baked tarantulas, and bob

wire. That made him grow fast, but it also made him ornery. He grew into a boomerang stallion, a can't-be-tode hoss, a one-man bronco. Bill was the only one who could ride him. His name was Widow-Maker 'cause nobody who ever tried to ride him survived the experience, except Bill's friend Slim. Slim was a one-A bronc buster and Bill let him try. Slim got on and Widow-Maker boiled over, his ears back, sidewindin', jackknifin', sunfishin', and chinnin' the moon. It was a real whing-ding. Widow-Maker bucked Slim off, cat-backed him all the way from the Panhandle to the top of Pike's Peak. He would've froze and starved to death up there if Bill hadn't fetched him back with his five-hundred-mile-long lasso. "Your hoss has a bellyful of bedsprings," was all Slim had to say.

Bill was always mounted, never afoot 'cept when he was haulin' supplies in his buckboard. On those occasions he hitched a grizzly bear and a saber-toothed tiger to his wagon, usin' a live twelve-foot diamondback rattler for a whip. Talkin' of snakes, one day Pecos was ridin' through Raton Pass when he came up against the Nueva Mexico Cascabela Grande, an outsized rattler, half a mile long, with yard-long fangs, which amused itself by scarin' travelers out of tryin' to use the pass.

"Git out of my way," Pecos told the serpent. He had learned to talk rattlesnake language from the coyotes.

"Make me!" said the Cascabela Grande.



To have a fair fight, Bill let the snake have three first bites. Then he let his wolf loose. First he yanked all the rattler's fangs out and then he whittled it round and round, the whole half mile of it, fanning loops and straight lines, curlin' it around hills and tall trees, and that gave Bill the idea of calf ropin'. He invented it. Nobody had ever done it afore him. He was always amusin' himself with his reata. When a mountain got in his way, he jest threw a loop over it and drug it to one side. He roped himself a tornado and spurred it along from Denver all the way to Austin. When the tornado couldn't buck Bill off, it turned itself into rain and dripped away from under him. Bill shinned down some thirty thousand feet on a streak of lightning' and came down so hard on his ass that it had calluses like sheet iron from then on till to the end of his days. Thus he became the all-time champeen roper of the West.

One day Bill ran into his pappy. He didn't recognize him, but his daddy recognized Bill. "Son," he said, "by yore brand I know you for my young-one. I'm yore pal!" Bill was still a mite frothy over his parents not havin' gone lookin' for him arter he fell out of their prairie schooner, but he was happy, all the same, to be reunited with his family after all that time.

When they arrived at his folks' ranch, they surprised his mammy sweepin' a bunch of some forry howlin', tommyhawk-swingin' 'Paches out of her backyard with a broom. She was a hardy old lady whom Bill could admire. His pappy owned a spread of about a million acres on which he ran some fifty thousand cattle.

"You call that a ranch?" commented Bill. He staked out all Texas for a bigger ranch and fenced in New Mexico for a calf pasture. He built for himself, his pappy and mammy, and all his many brothers and sisters a house so big that he needed a relay of horses to get from the front door to the back door. He had to fence in his considerable spread. He did it all alone. He rounded up a million badgers, and a million gophers, and a million prairie dogs to dig the holes for his fence posts, somethin' those critters like to do anyhow. Once during a long dry spell he dug a deep trench and diverted into it most of the Gulf of Mexico. His ditch became known as the Rio Grande. From then on he never lacked water.

Bill's pappy had a large crew of buckaroos ramrodded by a feller called Hellfire Jake. Hellfire was ten feet tall, had hands the size of children's coffins, and had seven Colts .44 and a dozen large bowie knives stuck in his belt. Bill caught himself the biggest mountain lion he could find, put a saddle on the critter, and rode over to where his

pappy's vaqueros were sittin' around the chuck wagon. Some feller offered him a king-sized plate of pork and beans but he waved it aside as no fit chow for a grown man. He fixed himself a meal of live horny toads, gila monsters, and scorpions, with a barbed wire salad on the side, washing it all down with a gallon of boilin' coffee fortified with three pounds of wolf pizen. After he was done, he wiped his mouth with prickly-pear cactus and inquired, "Who's the boss around here?"

Hellfire got up and said: "I was, but you be."

Like any good cowpuncher, Pecos Bill was afraid of only two things—a decent woman and to be seen afoot. He spent a good deal of dineros, though, on the soiled doves of the prairie and was a frequent, and welcome, guest in a hundred cathouses, from the Pecos to the Powder. But when he finally fell for a "good" woman, he fell hard. Her name was Slue-Foot Sue and she was every bit as red-headed as Bill. She was a first-class horsewoman and Bill was smitten when he saw her bareback astride the Great Fur-bearin' Rio Grande Catfish, which was twice as big as a whale. Sue was beautiful. She had green eyes and plenty of wood by the woodpile, front and back. You could span her waist with one hand, but couldn't set her down in a tub. Bill was crazy about her wondrous hourglass figure. He moseyed up to her and planted a big juicy kiss on her ruby red lips, sayin': "I'm Pecos Bill and you're the heifer for me. I'll put my brand on you."

They got hitched, but their love had a sad end. The morning after their wedding night Sue asked Bill for a favor: "Let me ride your Widow-Maker. I can handle him."

Here's whar Bill made his big mistake. He couldn't say no to Sue. Widow-Maker tossed her so high that she bumped into the moon and broke her neck.

After that, Bill took to drinking. As an infant, he had been reared on bumlebee whiskey—the drink with a sting. That was too tame for him now. He needed stronger stuff. No liquid refreshment was powerful enough to fill his need. One evenin' he came howlin' into the Bucket of Blood, in Virginia City. He told the bardog: "I want a man's drink, not a tenderfoot's tipples!" The bardog knew jest what Bill wanted. He had served him before. So he mixed Ole Pecos a cocktail of strychnine, wormwood, mashed blackwidow spider, gunpowder, fine-chopped chili peppers, snake venom, shredded locoweed, and tarantula juice. Bill spit it out, all over the bardog's counter.

"You call this swill a drink!" he roared. This is fit only for a Yankee schoolmarm! I want a *real* drink!"

A miner sittin' next to him tried to be helpful. He filled a huge beaker with bang-juice—that is, nitroglycerine—sayin', "Hyar, Bill, try this for a kick."

Bill emptied the beaker with one mighty swallow. His eyes sparkled. He smacked his lips: "Now this is a hoss of a different color! This here is what I call a *real* drink! Fill'er up!" The miner did. Bill took another swig. There was a terrific explosion. When the dust settled, there were Bill's pants still standin' upright, tucked into his boots, but of Bill himself not a trace could be found. He had plumb vanished, taken the Big Jump in a blaze of glory, gone to the Big Roundup in the Sky. But some folks could never accept this.

"Bill didn't blow up into smithereens, into tiny pieces so small you couldn't see them with a magnifyin' glass," they said. "He ran into an eastern dude with gold-painted boots, a ten-foot-high velvet Stetson, and chaps as big as the sails from a boat. The dude tried playin' cowboy by chawin' 'baccar and was dribbling the ambeer all over his fancy embroidered vest. Ole Pecos Bill watched it and jest laughed hisself to death."

The Taming of Pecos Bill's Gal Sue

Pecos Bill was born in the middle of a big storm, amid thunder and lightning. He was different from his brothers and sisters, emerging from the womb with hair on his chest and a big boner. He was weaned on red likker and panther piss. He was raised on bear meat and mountain oysters sprinkled with strychnine. The day after Bill's birth was clear and the sun was shining. Ole Man and his whole gang were camping out, feasting on bobcat-liver pudding and scorpion salad when all of a sudden the sky darkened, turning day into night. At the same time, the air was filled with a tremendous hum, as from a hundred railroad engines. The din made the earth tremble and the cows stampeede.

"By Ned!" Ole Man shouted. "It's a swarm of them cussed monsterquitoes. Doggone, Ole Woman, get me the big kettle!"

Ole Woman went over to the wagon to fetch the outsized kettle they used for rendering lard. She covered little Bill, who was playing in the sand, with this huge iron pot to protect the newborn from the ferocious, bloodsucking giant monsterquitoes. She also put in a chopping ax for Billy to use in case of need. She didn't notice the big coon-tailed rattler also crawling under the kettle to get away from the ferocious insects. It was so dark she had to light up her lamp to do all this. The rest of them crawled into their prairie schooner, covering themselves as best they could.

Well, the monsterquitoes smelled that tender flesh and blood of the newborn baby and started diving on the big kettle. So powerful were these pesky critters that their stingers went right through the kettle's iron walls, but little Bill knew just what to do. As soon as one of the nippers penetrated through the kettle wall, he chopped it off with his ax. The monster insects then lifted off the kettle but found that they still could not get at his rich sweet blood, because their stingers were gone. They set up a big wailing and howling and flew off. Ole Man and Ole Woman found Billy sitting on the ground, playing with the coon-tailed snake. Billy was giggling. The rattler struck again and again, but the snake venom was too weak to cause even a slight rash on Billy. Ole Man killed and skinned the twelve-foot varmint and Ole Woman fried up a big dish of snake meat. With the skin Ole Man made himself a handsome hatband. Ole Man and Ole Woman claimed a hundred acres, built themselves a sod house, cleared some land, and began farming. One day when Bill was one year old and the whole gang of them was outdoors doing one thing or another, Bill was left alone in the sodhouse where he cut his teeth on a bowie knife. Suddenly, a loud roaring, growling, and screaming came from the cabin.

"What's that?" said Ole Woman.

"Nuthin'," said Ole Man, "Billy is jest worrying' a grizzly who got in thar. I can't help that varmint none. Thar b'ar has to fend fur hisself."

Bill strangled the bear with his bare hands and had nary a scratch. When the folks got to him, he had already cut up the grizzly into streaks with his bowie knife. For a few weeks they dined on bear stew, bear soup, bear pudding, bear lights and liver, and bear sausage. They were glad when it was gone and they could eat something else than just bear.

When Bill was three years old, he played by the Pecos River, fell in, and was carried away by a flood. He was swept downriver for some ten miles. He was sailing along, close to the shore, when a big coyote leaped over the embankment, grabbed him by the scruff and so saved his life. Her name was Granny, because she was female and a grandmother many times over. She was the boss lady of the pack and took a liking to Bill, adopting him into the tribe. It didn't take long for Bill to become the pack's chief. He quickly forgot that he was human. He thought that he was a coyote. He took on coyote ways. He tore around on all fours hunting rabbits, prairie dogs, gophers, and mice. He howled at the moon with the best of them. He had a coyote gal to cuddle with.

When Bill had been swept away by the flood, Ole Man and Ole Woman had been busy with the other twelve younguns—too busy to miss him. A day later Ole Man was counting noses. "Whar in tarnation is Billy?" he said. "That boy's always lost."

"My darlin' Billy is gone an' lost," said Ole Woman "Oh, what's become of my Billy Boy?"

"Don't git yerself all riled up," Ole Man told her. "He's all of three years, old enough to fend fur hisself."

"Iffen you say so," said Ole Woman. When they thought of him, which wasn't often, Ole Man and Ole Woman called their lost son Pecos Bill, because it was the Pecos River that had carried him off. That's how Bill got his nickname.

Bill lived with the coyotes for seven long years. One fine morning he went down to the river to quench his thirst. There was somebody there before him, the strangest living thing he had ever seen. The weird creature was walking on two legs. One of its cheeks was swollen and brown juice kept dripping from its mouth. Something monstrous was attached to the top of its head and around its neck hung a bright red flap of what had to be part of its skin. Its fur was exceedingly strange too—blue over its legs and blue-and-white-checked all over its upper body, even the forelegs. Its feet were horrible to behold, hairless and leathery, with spurs like a wild turkey's at the heels, shiny and glittering, making a tinkling sound whenever the creature moved.

"What in hell are you a-doin', boy?" the creature said to Bill, "mother-nakkid an' runnin' around on all fours?"

"I'm a coyote," answered Bill. "Coyotes walk on all fours. I'm naked because I have no fur. It's a birth defect. I can't help it. You shouldn't rub it in."

"Stop pulling my leg, boy," said the creature. "You ain't a coyote. You are a man like myself."

"No!" said Bill. "I ain't."

"Look at your reflection in the water, you darn fool," said the creature.

Bill looked and got the shock of his life. He looked like the creature, not like a coyote. In this way Bill found out that he was no coyote but a man.

"What's your name, boy?" asked the man.

"Bill, I think. I remember somebody at some time calling me that. What's yourn?"

"Snaggletooth Charlie is my moniker."

"Well, Charlie, since I turn out to be a man, I'll jine up with you to live among humans." With that, Bill got on his pet grizzily, using his pet rattlesnake like a whip. "That's a funny pony you're ridin'," commented Snaggletooth.

Bill followed Snaggletooth to his cattle camp to meet Bowlegs Jim and Big Ears Dick and the other cattle herders. He was also introduced to Cowchip Kate, Snaggletooth's girl.

His new friends were called herders, not cowboys. Cowboys hadn't been invented yet. It was Pecos Bill who invented them. It happened this way: Bill asked the fellows, "How do you catch them steers and cows?"

"Well," they said, "we take a rope, and make it into a loop, and lay it on the ground, and put a lump of salt in the middle. Cattle are crazy about salt. Then, when they step into the noose to lick up the salt, we pull the rope and catch them in the loop, one at a time."

"That seems to be a poor way of doin' it," said Bill, "and what then?"

"Then we drag 'em into the barn, into the stable."

"Why do you do things in sech a dumb way? Why don't yer let 'em run free, feed on all that prairie grass?"

"They'll scatter over the whole countryside. They can outrun us. We could never catch 'em again."

"There must be a better way than that," said Bill. "Let me be by myself for a while and think of somethin'."

Bill went out into the prairie. He caught himself a mustang for riding. Then he made himself a long rawhide rope and put a loop into it. Then he practiced catching cows with his rawhide rope. When he had got the hang of it, he returned to camp. He showed his new friends how to rope cattle on horseback.

"Now this here," he told them, "I call a 'lasso,' an' what we're a-doin' is 'roping.'"

Pecos Bill taught them everything. He taught them how to get the whole herd together into one bunch. "Let's call this a roundup," he said. He then invented a gadget with which he could mark the cattle to identify which outfit the animals belonged to. He made a big fire and in it heated up his new gadget. "That's a brandin' iron," he explained, "an' now we're a-goin' to do some brandin'." After they had done this, Bill told them, "Let's see who's the best bronco rider in this bunch." So they competed against each other in bronco busting and fancy riding. Naturally, Bill won. "This was a rodeo," he said, "and now you are no longer herders. From now on, you're *cowboys!*" In this way Pecos Bill, on the spur of the moment, invented the American cowboy.

Bill, as you can imagine, was very popular with the girls. He had used them up at a prodigious rate, but not until he met sweet Sue-foot Sue did he fall for one. Sue was very pretty, and spunky and great fun, but she was very bossy. In any kind of relationship she wanted to wear the chaps. If Bill told her not to do a thing, she was sure to do it. If he told her to do something, she would not do it even for a million. So there was a problem. On the morning after their wedding he told her not to go near the river at a spot where it rushed through a narrow canyon, ending at a waterfall with a hundred-foot drop. Naturally, that's exactly where she went for a swim. Bill saw her being carried away by the swift current. Quick as a flash, he got out his lasso and jumped on the back of the Great Pecos Catfish, which was twelve feet long and a lot faster than the current. "Yippie-tie-hie-oooh!" yelled Bill, "Come on, Cat! Let's get her afore she gits to the falls!" After an exciting chase downriver Bill managed to get his rope over Sue just as she was about to go over the edge. He sat her before him on the Great Pecos Catfish, which swam upriver as fast as if it was swimming with the stream. Safely ashore again, Bill told Sue, "Never do this again!" "Maybe I won't," answered Sue.

Now the day after, Sue got it into her mind to go out riding while Bill was busy herding cows. "That's fine by me, my pretty li'l coyote," said Bill, "only never go over thar to them blue mountains younder, 'cause that's Apache country." (Bill loved his Sue so much that he called her his pretty little coyote, and whenever there was a full moon, he sat down before her window and howled. It was a throwback to his days as a coyote.)

Naturally, that's exactly where Sue went riding—in the Blue

Mountains. It was not long before she had plenty of company—fully a hundred Mescaleros painted for war. Again it was a case of Pecos Bill to the rescue. He came riding up like a storm, twirling his lariat, and he roped all those hundred Apaches into one loop, dragging the whole bunch of them, at a dead run, through about ten miles of prickly pear and chaparral until they cried "Uncle."

"You all better behave yourselves from now on!" Bill told those Mescaleros, and they swore a solemn oath never to bother Sue or anyone else from Bill's ranch again.

Bill had a horse called Widow-Maker. It was sure death for anyone but Bill trying to ride him. Bill told Sue: "Sluefoot, my purry li'l coyote, never, never git on Widder-Maker. He'd break yore neck fer sure!" And what did Sue do on the third day after their wedding? You guessed it. She jumped on Widow-Maker's back, digging her spurs into his flanks. Widow-Maker didn't take it kindly. He catbacked, skydived, blowed the plug, sunfished, warped his backbone, jackknifed and, finally, chinned the moon, bucking Sue right out of the atmosphere into space.

Now Sue always wore her fanciest outfit when she went out riding, trying to make an impression on the menfolks. So she had put on her very chic dress with an enormous bustle made of whalebone and horsehair. When she came down to earth out of space, she landed

hard on her fanny and bounced right back again, and again, and again. She tried to hold on to one of the moon's horns, but couldn't do it. She kept coming down and bouncing back, higher and higher and higher, while Bill sat on a fence, chomping on a chaw of 'baccet, grinning from ear to ear. "Help, Help! Billy, save me!" Sue screamed. But Bill just sat there, twirling his thumbs, doing nothing.

Finally, Sue bounced back so high she landed on the moon, plumb in the middle. She kept rocking back and forth up there, yelling for all she was worth: "Please, Billy, please, get me down from here. Please, Billy, and I'll never disobey you again!"

So Bill took his lariat and threw a loop over one of the moon's horns and pulled the whole shebang down to earth—moon, Sue, and all. He threw the moon, which was like a huge crescent, back into space and it acted like a boomerang, going clear around Mars and coming back again. So Bill had to throw it back a few times more until it stayed put where it belonged. Then he said to Sue, "My purty li'l coyote, will you keep your promise and do what I tell you?"

"Maybe I will," said Slue-Foot Sue.



was Bill who taught the broncho how to buck. It is a matter of record that he dug the Rio Grande one dry year when he grew tired of packin' water from the Gulf of Mexico.

According to the most veracious historians, Bill was born about the time Sam Houston discovered Texas. His mother was a sturdy pioneer woman who once killed forty-five Indians with a broom-handle, and weaned him on moonshine liquor when he was three days old. He cut his teeth on a bowie-knife, and his earliest playfellows were the bears and catamounts of east Texas.

When Bill was about a year old, another family moved into the country, and located about fifty miles down the river. His father decided the place was gettin' too crowded, and packed his family in a wagon and headed west.

One day after they crossed the Pecos River, Bill fell out of the wagon. As there were sixteen or seventeen other children in the family, his parents didn't miss him for four or five weeks, and then it was too late to try to find him.

That's how Bill came to grow up with the coyotes along the Pecos. He soon learned the coyote language, and used to hunt with them and sit on the hills and howl at night. Being so young when he got lost, he always thought he was a coyote. That's where he learned to kill deer by runnin' them to death.

One-day when he was about ten years old a cow-boy came along just when Bill had matched a fight with two grizzly bears. Bill hugged the bears to death, tore off a hind leg, and was just settin' down to breakfast when this cow-boy loped up and asked him what he meant by runnin' around naked that way among the varmint's.

"Why, because I am a varmint," Bill told him. "I'm a coyote."

The cow-boy argued with him that he was a human, but Bill wouldn't believe him.

"Ain't I got fleas?" he insisted. "And don't I howl around all night, like a respectable coyote should do?"

"That don't prove nothin'," the cow-boy answered. "All Texans have fleas, and most of them howl. Did you ever see a coyote that didn't have a tail? Well, you ain't got no tail; so that proves you ain't a varmint."

Bill looked, and, sure enough, he didn't have a tail.

"You sure got me out on a limb," says Bill. "I never noticed that before. It shows what higher education will do for a man. I believe you're right. Lead me to them humans, and I'll throw in with them."

Bill went to town with this cow-hand, and in due time he got to enjoyin' all the pleasant vices of mankind, and decided that he certainly was a human. He got to runnin' with the wild bunch, and sunk lower and lower, until finally he became a cow-boy.

It wasn't long until he was famous as a bad man. He invented the six-shooter and train-robbin' and most of the crimes popular in the old

The Saga of Pecos Bill

It is highly probable that Paul Bunyan, whose exploits were told in a recent number of *The Century Magazine*, and Pecos Bill, mythical cow-boy hero of the Southwest, were blood brothers. At all events, they can meet on one common ground: they were both fathered by a liar.

Pecos Bill is not a new-comer in the Southwest. His mighty deeds have been sung for generations by the men of the range. In my boyhood days in west Texas I first heard of Bill, and in later years I have often listened to chapters of his history told around the chuck-wagon by gravely mendacious cow-boys.

The stranger in cattle-land usually hears of Bill if he shows an in-cautious curiosity about the cow business. Some old-timer is sure to remark mournfully:

"Ranchin' ain't what it was in the days Bill staked out New Mexico."

If the visitor walks into the trap and inquires further about Bill, he is sure to receive an assortment of misinformation that every cow-hand delights in unloading on the unwary.

Although Bill has been quoted in a number of Western stories, the real history of his wondrous deeds has never been printed. I have here collected a few of the tales about him which will doubtless be familiar to cow-men, but deserve to be passed on to a larger audience.

Bill invented most of the things connected with the cow business. He was a mighty man of valor, the king killer of the bad men, and it

Men and Steel, by Mary Heaton Vorse (1920), p. 20.

By Edward O'Reilly. From *The Century Magazine*, Vol. 106 (October, 1923, No. 6), pp. 827-833. Copyright, 1923, by The Century Co.

days of the West. He didn't invent cow-stealin'. That was discovered by King David in the Bible, but Bill improved on it.

There is no way of tellin' just how many men Bill did kill. Deep down he had a tender heart, however, and never killed women or children, or tourists out of season. He never scalped his victims; he was too civilized for that. He used to skin them gently and tan their hides.

It wasn't long before Bill had killed all the bad men in west Texas, massacred all the Indians, and eat all the buffalo. So he decided to migrate to a new country where hard men still thrived and a man could pass the time away.

He saddled up his horse and hit for the West. One day he met an old trapper and told him what he was lookin' for.

"I want the hardest cow outfit in the world," he says. "Not one of these ordinary cow-stealin', Mexican-shootin' bunches of amateurs, but a real hard herd of hand-picked hellions that make murder a fine art and take some proper pride in their slaughter."

"Stranger, you're headed in the right direction," answers the trapper. "Keep right on down this draw for a couple of hundred miles, and you'll find that very outfit. They're so hard they can kick fire out of a flint rock with their bare toes."

Bill single-footed down that draw for about a hundred miles that afternoon; then he met with an accident. His horse stubbed his toe on a mountain and broke his leg, leavin' Bill afoot.

He slung his saddle over his shoulder and set off hikin' down that draw, cussin' and a-swearin'. Profanity was a gift with Bill.

All at once a big ten-foot rattlesnake quiled up in his path, set his tail to singin', and allowed he'd like to match a fight. Bill laid down his saddle, and just to be fair about it, he gave the snake the first three bites. Then he waded into that reptile and everlastingly frailed the pizen out of him.

By and by that old rattler yelled for mercy, and admitted that when it came to fightin', Bill started where he let off. So Bill picked up his saddle and started on, carryin' the snake in his hand and spinnin' it in short loops at the Gila monsters.

About fifty miles further on, a big old mountain-lion jumped off a cliff and lit all spraddled out on Bill's neck. This was no ordinary lion. It weighed more than three steers and a yearlin', and was the very same lion the State of Nuevo León was named after down in old Mexico.

Kind of chucklin' to himself, Bill laid down his saddle and his snake and went into action. In a minute the fur was flyin' down the cañon until it darkened the sun. The way Bill knocked the animosity out of that lion was a shame. In about three minutes that lion hollered:

"I'll give up, Bill. Can't you take a joke?"

Bill let him up, and then he cinched the saddle on him and went down that cañon whoopin' and yellin', ridin' that lion a hundred feet at a jump, and quirtin' him down the flank with the rattlesnake.

It wasn't long before he saw a chuck-wagon with a bunch of cow-boys squattin' around it. He rode up to that wagon, splittin' the air with his war-whoops, with that old lion a-screechin', and that snake singin' his rattles.

When he came to the fire he grabbed the old cougar by the ear, jerked him back on his haunches, stepped off him, hung his snake around his neck, and looked the outfit over. Them cow-boys sat there sayin' less than nothin'.

Bill was hungry, and seein' a boilerful of beans cookin' on the fire, he scooped up a few handfuls and swallowed them, washin' them down with a few gallons of boilin' coffee out of the pot. Wipin' his mouth on a handful of prickly-pear cactus, Bill turned to the cow-boys and asked:

"Who the hell is boss around here?"

A big fellow about eight feet tall, with seven pistols and nine bowie-knives in his belt, rose up and, takin' off his hat, said:

"Stranger, I was; but you be."

Bill had many adventures with this outfit. It was about this time he staked out New Mexico, and used Arizona for a calf-pasture. It was here that he found his noted horse Widow-Maker. He raised him from a colt on nitroglycerin and dynamite, and Bill was the only man that could throw a leg over him.

There wasn't anythin' that Bill couldn't ride, although I have heard of one occasion when he was thrown. He made a bet that he could ride an Oklahoma cyclone slick-heeled, without a saddle.

He met the cyclone, the worst that was ever known, up on the Kansas line. Bill eared that tornado down and climbed on its back. That cyclone did some pitchin' that is unbelievable, if it were not vouched for by many reliable witnesses.

Down across Texas it went sunfishin', back-flippin', side-windin', knockin' down mountains, blowin' the holes out of the ground, and tyin' rivers into knots. The Staked Plains used to be heavily timbered until that big wind swiped the trees off and left it a bare prairie.

Bill just sat up there, thumbin' that cyclone in the withers, floppin' it across the ears with his hat, and rollin' a cigarette with one hand. He rode it through three States, but over in Arizona it got him.

When it saw it couldn't throw him, it rained out from under him. This is proved by the fact that it washed out the Grand Cañon. Bill came down over in California. The spot where he lit is now known as Death Valley, a hole in the ground more than one hundred feet below sea-level, and the print of his hip-pockets can still be seen in the granite.

I have heard this story disputed in some of its details. Some historians claim that Bill wasn't thrown; that he slid down on a streak of lightning without knockin' the ashes off his cigarette. It is also claimed that the Grand Cañon was dug by Bill one week when he went prospectin'; but the best authorities insist on the first version. They argue that that streak

of lightnin' story comes from the habit he always had of usin' one to light his cigarette.

Bill was a great roper. In fact, he invented ropin'. Old-timers who admit they knew him say that his rope was as long as the equator, although the more conservative say that it was at least two feet shorter on one end. He used to rope a herd of cattle at one throw.

This skill once saved the life of a friend. The friend had tried to ride Widow-Maker one day, and was thrown so high he came down on top of Pike's Peak. He was in the middle of a bad fix, because he couldn't get down, and seemed doomed to a lingerin' death on high.

Bill came to the rescue, and usin' only a short calf-loop, he roped his friend around the neck and jerked him down to safety in the valley, twenty thousand feet below. This man was always grateful, and became Bill's horse-wrangler at the time he staked out New Mexico.

In his idle moments in New Mexico Bill amused himself puttin' thorns on the trees and horns on the toads. It was on this ranch he dug the Rio Grande and invented the centipede and the tarantula as a joke on his friends.

When the cow business was dull, Pecos Bill occasionally embarked in other ventures; for instance, at one time he took a contract to supply the S. P. Railroad with wood. He hired a few hundred Mexicans to chop and haul the wood to the railroad line. As pay for the job, Bill gave each Mexican one-fourth of the wood he hauled.

These Mexicans are funny people. After they received their share of the wood they didn't know what to do with it; so Bill took it off their hands and never charged them a cent.

On another occasion Bill took the job of buildin' the line fence that forms the boundary from El Paso across to the Pacific. He rounded up a herd of prairie-dogs and set them to dig holes, which by nature a prairie-dog likes to do.

Whenever one of them finished a nice hole and settled down to live in it, Bill evicted him and stuck a fence-post in the hole. Everybody admired his foresight except the prairie-dogs, and who cares what a prairie-dog thinks?

Old Bill was always a very truthful man. To prove this, the cow-boys repeat one of his stories, which Bill claimed happened to him. Nobody ever disputed him; that is, no one who is alive now.

He threw in with a bunch of Kiowa Indians one time on a little huntin'-trip. It was about the time the buffalo were getting scarce, and Bill was huntin' with his famous squatter-bound named Norther.

Norther would run down a buffalo and hold him by the ear until Bill came up and skinned him alive. Then he would turn it loose to grow a new hide. The scheme worked all right in the summer, but in the winter most of them caught colds and died.

The stories of Bill's love-affairs are especially numerous. One of them may be told. It is the sad tale of the fate of his bride, a winsome little

maiden called Slue-Foot Sue. She was a famous rider herself, and Bill lost his heart when he saw her riding a catfish down the Rio Grande with only a surcingle. You must remember that the catfish in the Rio Grande are bigger than whales and twice as active.

Sue made a sad mistake, however, when she insisted on ridin' Widow-Maker on her weddin'-day. The old horse threw her so high she had to duck her head to let the moon go by. Unfortunately, she was wearin' her weddin'-gown, and in those days the women wore those big steel-spring bustles.

Well, when Sue lit, she naturally bounced, and every time she came down she bounced again. It was an awful sad sight to see Bill implorin' her to quit her bouncin' and not be so nervous; but Sue kept right on, up and down, weepin', and throwin' kisses to her distracted lover, and carryin' on as a bride naturally would do under those circumstances.

She bounced for three days and four nights, and Bill finally had to shoot her to keep her from starvin' to death. It was mighty tragic. Bill never got over it. Of course he married lots of women after that. In fact, it was one of his weaknesses; but none of them filled the place in his heart once held by Slue-Foot Sue, his bouncin' bride.

There is a great difference of opinion as to the manner of Bill's demise. Many claim that it was his drinkin' habits that killed him. You see, Bill got so that liquor didn't have any kick for him, and he fell into the habit of drinkin' strychnine and other forms of wolf pizen.

Even the wolf bait lost its effect, and he got to puttin' fish-hooks and barbed wire in his toddy. It was the barbed wire that finally killed him. It rusted his interior and gave him indigestion. He wasted away to a mere skeleton, weighin' not more than two tons; then up and died, and went to his infernal reward.

Many of the border bards who knew Pecos Bill at his best have a different account of his death.

They say that he met a man from Boston one day, wearing a mail-order cow-boy outfit, and askin' fool questions about the West; and poor old Bill laid down and laughed himself to death.

Buffalo Bill's "Wild West"

BUFFALO BILL'S "WILD WEST"
PRAIRIE EXHIBITION, AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHOW,
A DRAMATIC-EQUESTRIAN EXPOSITION

OF
LIFE ON THE PLAINS,
WITH ACCOMPANYING MONOLOGUE AND
INCIDENTAL MUSIC
THE WHOLE INVENTED AND ARRANGED BY

W. F. CODY

W. F. CODY AND N. SALSURY, PROPRIETORS AND MANAGERS
WHO HEREBY CLAIM AS THEIR SPECIAL
PROPERTY THE VARIOUS EF-
FECTS INTRODUCED IN
THE PUBLIC PER-
FORMANCES

OF
BUFFALO BILL'S "WILD WEST"

MONOLOGUE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I desire to call your attention to an important fact. From time to time it will be my pleasure to announce to you the different features of the programme as they occur. In order that I may do so intelligently, I respectfully request your silence and attention while I am speaking. Our agents will pass among you with the biographical history of the life of Hon. William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") and other celebrities who will appear before you this afternoon. The Management desires to vouch for the truth and accuracy of all the statements contained in this book, and respectfully submitted to your attention, as helping you to understand and appreciate our entertainment. Before the entertainment begins, however, I wish to impress upon your minds that what you are about to witness is not a performance in the common sense of that term, but an exhibition of skill, on the part of men who have acquired that quality while gaining a livelihood. Many unthinking people suppose that the different features of our exhibition are the result of what is technically

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called "rehearsals." Such, however, is not the fact, and anyone who witnesses our performance the second time will observe that men and animals alike are the creatures of circumstances, depending for their success upon their own skill, daring and sagacity. In the East, the few who excel are known to all. In the far West, the names we offer to you this afternoon are the synonyms of skill, courage and individual excellence. At the conclusion of the next overture our performance will commence with a grand processional parade of the "Wild West."

Overture, grand processional parade of cowboys, Mexicans, and Indians, with incidental music. I will introduce the different groups and individual celebrities as they pass before you in review.

Enter a group of Pawnee Indians. Music. Enter Chief. Music. Enter a group of Mexican vaqueros. Music. Enter a group of Wichita Indians. Music. Enter Chief. Music. Enter a group of American Cowboys. Music. Enter King of Cowboys. Music. Enter Cowboy Sheriff of the Platte. Music. Enter a group of Sioux Indians. Music. Enter Chief. Music.

I next have the honor of introducing to your attention a man whose record as a servant of the government, whose skill and daring as a frontiersman, whose place in history as the chief of scouts of the United States Army, under such generals as Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock, Terry, Miles, Hazen, Royal, Merrit, Crook, Carr and others, and whose name as one of the avengers of the lamented Custer, and whose adherence throughout an eventful life to his chosen principle of "true to friend and foe," have made him well and popularly known throughout the world. You all know to whom I allude—the Honorable William F. Cody, "Buffalo Bill."

Enter Cody. Bugle Call. Cody speaks.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Allow me to introduce the equestrian portion of the Wild West Exhibition.

Turns to review.

Wild West, are you ready? Go!

Exeunt omnes.

First on our programme, a ——— mile race, between a cowboy, a Mexican, and an Indian, starting at ———. You will please notice that these horses carry the heaviest trapping, and that neither of the riders weigh less than 145 pounds.

Next on our programme, the Pony Express. The Pony Express was established long before the Union Pacific railroad was built across the continent, or even before the telegraph poles were set, and when Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, it was important that the election returns from California should be brought across the mountains as quickly as possible. Mr. William Russell, the great government freighter, who at the time was in Washington, first proposed the Pony Express. He was told

that it would take too long—17 or 18 days. The result was a wager of \$200,000 that the time could be made in less than ten days, and it was, the actual time being nine days, seventeen hours, leaving seven hours to spare, and winning the wager of two hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Billy Johnson will illustrate the mode of riding the Pony Express, mounting, dismounting and changing the mail to fresh horses.

Music. Enter express rider, changing horses in front of the grandstand, and exit.

Next on our programme, a one hundred yard race between an Indian on foot, and an Indian on an Indian pony, starting at a given point, running fifty yards, and returning to the starting point—virtually a race of a hundred yards.

Race as described above. Music.

Next on our programme, an historical representation between Buffalo Bill and Yellow Hand, fought during the Sitting Bull war, on the 17th of July, 1876, at War Bonnet Creek, Dakota, shortly after the massacre of Custer. This fight was witnessed by General Carr's command and the Sioux army, and resulted in the death of Yellow Hand, and the first scalp taken in revenge of Custer's fate.

Duel as described above. Cody, supported by cow-boys, etc., Yellow Hand by Indians. Music.

I have the pleasure of introducing Mr. Seth Clover. Mr. Clover will give an exhibition of his skill, shooting with a Winchester repeating rifle, at composition balls thrown from the hand.

Clover shoots as above. You will notice shooting two balls thrown in the air at the same time. You will notice that Mr. Clovis [*sic*] is obliged to replace the discharged cartridge before he can shoot at the second ball.

Shoots as above. Obscuring the sight by placing a card over the rifle.

Shoots as above. If any gentleman has a half-dollar he would like to have mutilated and take home as a pocket piece, if he will throw it in upon the track, where we can get it, Mr. Clover will try and oblige him.

Shoots coin as above.

Shooting at a nickel.

Shoots as above. You will notice that the mark is hardly larger than the bullet shot at it.

Shoots as above. Shooting a number of composition balls thrown in rapid succession.

Shoots as above. Exit.

I have the pleasure of introducing Master Johnny Baker, of North Platte, Neb., known as the Cowboy Kid. Master Johnny is 16 years of age, and the holder of the boy's champion badge for rifle and revolver shooting, and stands ready to meet any opponent of his age. Master Baker will give an exhibition of his skill, holding his rifle in various positions.

Holding the rifle sideways.

Holding the rifle to the left shoulder.

Holding the rifle upside down, on the top of his head.

Standing with his back to the target, bending forward, and shooting between his knees.

Leaning backward, over a support, and shooting over his head.

Standing with his back to the target, and taking aim by the aid of a small mirror.

Shooting composition balls thrown in air.

Shoots each shot as above. Exit.

Miss Annie Oakley, the celebrated wing and rifle shot. Miss Oakley will give an exhibition of her skill, shooting with a shot gun at Ligowsky patent clay pigeons, holding the gun in various positions.

Shoots pigeons sprung from trap.

Shooting double, from two traps sprung at the same time.

Shoots as above.

Picking the gun from the ground after the trap is sprung.

Shoots as above.

Shooting double in the same manner.

Shoots as above.

Shooting three composition balls, thrown in the air in rapid succession, the first with the rifle held upside down upon the head, the second and the third with the shot gun.

Shoots as above. Exit.

Next on our programme, the cowboy's fun, or the riding of bucking ponies and mules, by Mr. —, Mr. —, and Mr. —. There is an impression in the minds of many people that these horses are taught or trained to buck, or that they are compelled to do so by having foreign substances placed under their saddles. This, however, is not the fact. Bucking, the same as balking or running away, is a natural trait of the animal, confirmed by habit.

Riders announced, and mount in succession. Watch Mr. Taylor pick up his hat.

Taylor rides past at full speed, leans out of his saddle and picks hat from the ground.

Watch Mr. Taylor pick up his handkerchief.

Taylor rides past at full speed, leans out of his saddle, and picks up handkerchief.

Hon. William F. Cody, champion all round shot of the world.

Enter Mr. Cody.

Mr. Cody will give an exhibition of his skill, shooting with shot gun, rifle and revolver at clay pigeons and composition balls, shooting first with a shot gun at clay pigeons, pulling the traps himself. (Shoots.) Shooting clay pigeons in the American style of holding the gun, the butt of the gun below his elbow. (Shoots.) Shooting clay pigeons in the English style of holding the gun, the butt of the gun below the arm-pit. Please notice the change of position. (Shoots.)

Shooting clay pigeons standing with his back to the trap, turning and breaking the pigeon while it is in the air. (Shoots.)

Shooting with his back to the trap, gun over his shoulder, turning and pulling the traps himself. (Shoots.)

Holding the gun with one hand. (Shoots.)

Holding the gun with one hand, pulling the trap with the other. (Shoots.)

Shooting clay pigeons double from two traps sprung at the same time. (Shoots.)

Shooting clay pigeons double, pulling the traps himself. (Shoots.)

Shooting twenty clay pigeons inside of one minute and thirty seconds.

Any gentleman desiring to hold the time on this feat, will please take it, not from the pulling of the trap, but from the first crack of the gun. (Shoots.)

Mr. Cody will shoot next with a Winchester repeating rifle, at composition balls, thrown from the hand while he rides upon his horse. (Shoots.)

Missing with the first shot, hitting with the second. (Shoots.)

Missing twice, hitting the third time. (Shoots.)

Hitting three balls thrown in the air at the same time. (Shoots.)

Hitting a ball thrown from behind. (Shoots.)

Hitting a ball thrown to either side. (Shoots.)

Hitting a number of balls thrown in the air in rapid succession. (Shoots.)

Hitting a ball thrown in the air while he rides past it at full speed, a shot accomplished by no other marksman. (Shoots.)

Mr. Cody will next attempt the great double shot, hitting two balls thrown in the air at the same time. (Shoots.)

Mr. Cody will next attempt the great double shot! Hitting two balls thrown in the air at the same time, as he rides past at full speed. (Shoots.)

Hitting composition balls thrown in the air, while marksman and object thrower ride side by side at full speed, thus forming a picture of combined horsemanship and marksmanship never before presented to a public audience. (Shoots.)

Hitting composition balls thrown in air with an ordinary Colt's army revolver. (Shoots.)

Next on our programme, the Deadwood stage coach, formerly the property of Gilmore, Salisbury, & Co., and plying between Deadwood and Cheyenne. This coach has an immortal place in American history, having

been baptized many times by fire and blood. The gentleman holding the reins, is Mr. John Higby, an old stage driver, and formerly the companion of Hank Monk, of whom you have all probably read. Seated beside him is Mr. John Hancock, known in the West, as the Wizard Hunter of the Platte Valley. Broncho Bill will act as out rider, a position he has occupied in earnest many times with credit. Upon the roof of the coach is seated Mr. Con Croner, the Cowboy Sheriff of the Platte, to whose intrepid administration of that office for several consecutive terms, covering a period of six years, Lincoln County, Neb., and its vicinity are indebted for the peace and quiet that now reigns. Mr. Croner's efforts having driven out the cattle thief and hoodlum element who formerly infested that section of the country, noticeably, the notorious Middleton gang. The coach will start upon its journey, be attacked from an ambush by a band of fierce and warlike Indians, who in their turn will be repulsed by a party of scouts and cowboys, under the command of Buffalo Bill. Will two or three ladies and gentlemen volunteer to ride as passengers.

After passengers are seated in coach.

It is customary to deliver parting instructions to the driver before he starts on his perilous journey, something in the following fashion: Mr. Higby, I have intrusted you with valuable lives and property. Should you meet with Indians, or other dangers, *en route*, put on the whip, and if possible, save the lives of your passengers. If you are all ready, go!

Coach is driven down track, meets Indians, turns, followed by Indians. Battle back to stand. Cody and cowboys come to rescue.

Battle past stand. Cody, coach and cowboys re-turn to stand. Exit [*sic*] omnes.

Next on our programme, a one-quarter mile race between Sioux boys and on barebacked Indian ponies from the Honorable William F. Cody's ranche [*sic*] at North Platte, Neb., starting at _____

Race as above. Music.

I would next call your attention to an exciting race between Mexican thoroughbreds. These animals are bred with great care, and at considerable expense, their original cost being sixteen [hundred?] dollars per doz. All up! No jockeying! Go!

Race as above. Music. "We Won't Come Home till Morning."

A portion of the Pawnee and Wichita tribes will illustrate their native sports and pastimes, giving first the war dance.

War dance by Indians.

Next the grass dance.

Grass dance by Indians.

Next, the scalp dance, in which the women of the tribe are allowed to participate.

Scalp dance by Indians and squaws.

Keep your eyes on the burros!

Burros return. Music. "Home Again!" or "We Never Speak as, Etc."

I have the pleasure of introducing "Mustang Jack," or as the Indians call him "Pet-se-ka-we-cha-cha," the great high jumper. Jack is the champion jumper among the cowboys of the West, and stands ready to jump with anybody in any manner or style for any amount of money. He will give you an exhibition of his skill, jumping over various animals, beginning with the small burro.

Jack jumps over burro.

Jumping twenty-four feet in two jumps, and clearing the burro in the second jump.

Jack jumps as above.

Jumping the Indian pony, Cha-sha-sha-na-po-geo, a feat which gave him his name of "Mustang Jack."

Jumps as above.

Next, jumping the tall white horse, "Doc. Powell," sixteen and a half hands high. The best recorded standing high jump is one of five feet and three inches made by Mr. Johnson, of England. In order to clear this horse, Jack is obliged to make a jump of nearly six feet, thus beating the record daily.

Jumps as above.

Next on our programme the roping, tying and riding of wild Texan steers by cowboys and Mexicans.

Performance as above.

Next on our programme the riding of a wild elk, by Master Voter Hall, a Feejee Indian from Africa.

Saddled elk ridden as above.

Next on our programme the attack upon a settler's cabin by a band of marauding Indians, and their repulse, by a party of scouts and cowboys, under the command of Buffalo Bill. After our entertainment you are invited to visit the Wild West camp. We thank you for your polite attention, and bid you all good afternoon.

Battle as above. Review before the grand stand. Adieux and dismissal by Mr. Cody.

FINIS

2. BUFFALO BILL

In the same year that Roy Bean was appointed justice of the peace, another masterpiece of showmanship was being created. This was the Wild West, Rocky Mountain, and Prairie Exhibition, which opened at Omaha, Nebraska, on May 17, 1883, and its star, Buffalo Bill. Of all the types of showmen produced by the "historic West," none was more characteristic than the "professional Westerner," in long hair and fringed buckskins. For this rôle no one was more perfectly cast than William F. Cody, born on a farm in Scott County, Iowa, in 1846, who was endowed by nature and experience to be the epitome of all that was "tough, wide, and handsome" in the Old West. Having lived all his life on the plains, in almost every capacity—herder, hunter, pony express rider, stage-driver, wagon master in the quartermaster's department, and scout of the army, to quote his press-agent—and finding all Indian wars fought and himself out of a job in 1869, at the age of 26 Buffalo Bill discovered his true mission. As a buffalo hunter employed by the Kansas Pacific to supply meat to construction crews, he had won his name, killing 4,280 buffalo in one year. Always something of a show-off, he now took to performing stunts of horsemanship and marksmanship and fell in with the promotion schemes of James Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York *Herald*, who had employed him as a guide on a hunting trip, and Ned Buntline (E. Z. C. Judson), the author.

In February, 1872 Buffalo Bill came to New York at Bennett's expense for the opening of Fred G. Maeder's play, inspired by Buntline, *Buffalo Bill, the King of Bordermen*, taking a bow before the audience, and in December of the same year he made his first stage appearance in Chicago in Buntline's *The Scouts of the Prairie*. Ned Buntline, from whom Buffalo Bill parted after his first theatrical success, was only the first of the four creators of Buffalo Bill. The second was Major John M. Burke, the

¹ *Law West of the Pecos*, The Story of Roy Bean, by Everett Lloyd (1936), pp. 74-75, 66-67.

world's greatest press agent, who publicized Buffalo Bill's duel with Yellow Hand in 1876 and was publicity man of his "Wild West," which Nat Salsbury, who was Number Three, suggested. The fourth was Prentiss Ingraham, author of over two hundred dime novels about Buffalo Bill. In this way, "Unlike those popular heroes who grow in folklore fortuitously, Buffalo Bill was the subject of the deliberate and infinitely skilful use of publicity."¹

Although Buffalo Bill lived to see himself and the Wild West show outmoded, as he had once seen the passing of the Old West, the legend of the West, which was partly his creation as he in turn was its creature, still lives in Western pulp-paper magazines and movies and in the hearts of Americans.

ON THE purely patriotic level our nerves are apt to be true. Such is the case with that "typically good man," Washington, whose integrity is traditionally taught by means of what the Doubter in the Sazerac Lying Club characterizes as the "doggonedest biggest lie as was ever told in this here Club." Yet in spite of more robust and even back-woody traits and episodes in young manhood, the juvenile Washington of Parson Weems' cherry-tree legend is of a piece with the "supercilious postage-stamp" likeness that the older Washington has become in the hearts of his countrymen.

As human being and folk hero, as American image and symbol, Lincoln is more satisfying. His "log cabin to White House" career fits the Horatio Alger pattern (which is essentially the fairy-tale pattern) of the poor boy who makes good; his genius as a folk story-teller helped in the making of his own legend; and he suffered the martyrdom which is the hero's apotheosis. He is also the perfect exemplar of the Freudian formula which sees in his homeliness the potentiality of our own impotence and of the American democratic creed of the self-made man. ("Any boy can become President.") Rather than too good to be true, Lincoln was great because he was not afraid to be common.

Although Americans as a rule have clung less tenaciously to the ideal of the good life than to that of the useful one, following Mr. Hoover's "American way" of "stimulating their ingenuity to solve their own problems," the doctrine of plain living and high thinking has produced spiritual heroes—saints and martyrs in whom self-abnegation is combined with service. That saints are not far from cranks is seen in the fanatic Johnny Applesseed, whose resemblance to Saint Francis is balanced by his likeness to a Yankee peddler, as the primitive Christian in him merged with the footloose type of hero. His "benevolent monomania" of "planting apple seeds in remote places" has overshadowed his less beneficent fixation of sowing the seed of dog-fennel, from a belief that it possessed valuable anti-malarial virtues. His inner meaning as a mystical pioneer cast in the unique rôle of a savior among wastrels is the intent of these lines written to be spoken in a pageant:

"My name is Johnny Applesseed. I lived in this part of the country a long time ago, when it had hardly been touched. I liked the Indians and I liked the white people and I liked the animals, and I didn't hurt any of them. I planted seeds and set out apple trees for the settlers and I took care of them. I told the people about God, and I tried to be a good man myself. I tried to be a good American, on this land we had found. Maybe I was, a little. Maybe I'm not dead yet."¹

"I Cannot Tell a Lie"

NEVER did the wise Ulysses take more pains with his beloved Telemachus, than did Mr. Washington with George, to inspire him with an *early love*

¹"The Return of Johnny Applesseed," by Charles Allen Smart, *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 179 (August, 1939), pp. 233-234.

From *The Life of George Washington*, by Mason Locke Weems (fifth edition), 1806. Parson Weems, itinerant preacher and book peddler, published *The Life and Memorable Actions of George Washington* in 1800. The cherry-tree story was first included in the fifth of the more than seventy editions of the work.

of truth. "Truth, George," said he, "is the loveliest quality of youth. I would ride fifty miles, my son, to see the little boy whose heart is so honest, and his lips so pure, that we may depend on every word he says. O how lovely does such a child appear in the eyes of everybody! his parents doat on him. His relations glory in him. They are constantly praising him to their children, whom they beg to imitate him. They are often sending for him to visit them; and receive him, when he comes, with as much joy as if he were a little angel, come to set, pretty examples to their children.

"But, Oh! how different, George, is the case with the boy who is given to lying, that nobody can believe a word he says! He is looked at with aversion wherever he goes, and parents dread to see him come among their children. Oh, George! my son! rather than see you come to this pass, dear as you are to my heart, gladly would I assist to nail you up in your little coffin, and follow you to your grave. Hard, indeed, would it be to me to give up my son, whose little feet are always so ready to run about with me, and whose fondly looking eyes, and sweet prattle make so large a part of my happiness. But still I would give him up, rather than see him a common liar."

"Pa," said George very seriously, "do I ever tell lies?"

"No, George, I thank God you do not, my son; and I rejoice in the hope you never will. At least, you shall never, from me, have cause to be guilty of so shameful a thing. Many parents, indeed, even compel their children to this vile practice, by barbarously beating them for every little fault; hence, on the next offence, the little-terrified creature slips out a *lie!* just to escape the rod. But as to yourself George, you know I have *always* told you, and now tell you again, that, whenever by accident, you do anything wrong, which must often be the case, as you are but a poor little boy yet, without *experience* or *knowledge*, you must never tell a falsehood to conceal it; but come *bravely* up, my son, like a *little* man, and tell me of it; and, instead of beating you, George, I will but the more honour and love you for it, my dear."

This, you'll say, was sowing good seed!—Yes, it was: and the crop, thank God, was, as I believe it ever will be, where a man acts the true parent, that is, the *Guardian Angel*, by his child.

The following anecdote is a *case-in-point*. It is too valuable to be lost, and too true to be doubted; for it was communicated to me by the same excellent lady to whom I am indebted for the last.

"When George," said she, "was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a *hatchet!* of which, like most little boys, he was immoderately fond, and was constantly going about chopping every thing that came in his way. One day, in the garden, where he often amused himself hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he unluckily tried the edge of his hatchet on the body of a beautiful young English cherry-tree, which he barked so terribly, that I don't believe the tree ever got the better of it. The next morning the old gentleman, finding out what had befallen his tree, which, by the by, was a great favourite, came into the house; and

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with much warmth asked for the mischievous author, declaring at the same time, that he would not have taken five guineas for his tree. Nobody could tell him anything about it. Presently George and his hatchet made their appearance. 'George,' said his father, 'do you know who killed that beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden?' This was a *tough question*, and George staggered under it for a moment; but quickly recovered himself: and looking at his father, with the sweet face of youth brightened with the inexpressible charm of all-conquering truth, he bravely cried out, 'I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.'—'Run to my arms, you dearest boy,' cried his father in transports, 'run to my arms; glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son is more worth than a thousand trees, though blossomed with silver, and their fruits of purest gold.'"

It was in this way by interesting at once both his *heart* and *head*, that Mr. Washington conducted George with great ease and pleasure along the happy paths of virtue.

Honest Abe

I. THE YOUNG STORE-KEEPER

As a clerk he proved honest and efficient, and my readers will be interested in some illustrations of the former trait which I find in Dr. Holland's interesting volume.

One day a woman came into the store and purchased sundry articles. They footed up two dollars and six and a quarter cents, or the young clerk thought they did. We do not hear nowadays of six and a quarter cents, but this was a coin borrowed from the Spanish currency, and was well known in my own boyhood.

The bill was paid, and the woman was entirely satisfied. But the young store-keeper, not feeling quite sure as to the accuracy of his calculation, added up the items once more. To his dismay he found that the sum total should have been but two dollars.

"I've made her pay six and a quarter cents too much," said Abe, disturbed. It was a trifle, and many clerks would have dismissed it as such. But Abe was too conscientious for that.

"The money must be paid back," he decided.

This would have been easy enough had the woman lived "just round the corner," but, as the young man knew, she lived between two and three miles away. This, however, did not alter the matter. It was night, but

From *Abraham Lincoln, The Backwoods Boy*; or How a Young Rail-Splitter Became President, by Horatio Alger, Jr., pp. 64-66. Copyright, 1883, by Horatio Alger, Jr., New York; John R. Anderson & Henry S. Allen.

he closed and locked the store, and walked to the residence of his customer. Arrived there, he explained the matter, paid over the six and a quarter cents, and returned satisfied. If I were a capitalist, I would be willing to lend money to such a young man without security.

Here is another illustration of young Lincoln's strict honesty:

A woman entered the store and asked for half a pound of tea.

The young clerk weighed it out, and handed it to her in a parcel. This was the last sale of the day.

The next morning, when commencing his duties, Abe discovered a four-ounce weight on the scales. It flashed upon him at once that he had used this in the sale of the night previous, and so, of course, given his customer short weight. I am afraid that there are many country merchants who would not have been much worried by this discovery. Not so the young clerk in whom we are interested. He weighed out the balance of the half pound, shut up store, and carried it to the defrauded customer. I think my young readers will begin to see that the name so often given, in later times, to President Lincoln, of "Honest Old Abe," was well deserved. A man who begins by strict honesty in his youth is not likely to change as he grows older, and mercantile honesty is some guarantee of political honesty.

II. SPELL "DEFIED!"

"Spell, *defied!*"

This question was put to a class in spelling by the master.

The first pupil in the straggling line of backwoods boys and girls who stood up in class, answered with some hesitation: "D-e-f-i-d-e, defied."

The master frowned.

"Next!" he called sharply.

The next improved upon the effort of the first speller, and in a confident tone answered:

"D-e-f-y-d-e."

"Wrong again! The next may try it," said the teacher.

"D-e-f-y-d!" said the third scholar.

"Worse and worse! You are entitled to a medal!" said Crawford, sarcastically. "Next!"

"D-e-f-y-e-d!" was the next attempt.

"Really, you do me great credit," said the teacher, a frown gathering on his brow. "You can't spell an easy word of two syllables. It is shameful! I'll keep the whole class in all the rest of the day, if necessary, till the word is spelled correctly."

It now became the turn of a young girl named Roby, who was a favorite with Abe. She was a pretty girl, but, nevertheless, the terrible word puzzled her. In her perplexity she chanced to turn toward the seat at the window occupied by her long-legged friend, Abe.

Ibid., pp. 34-35.

Abe was perhaps the best speller in school. A word like *defied* was easy enough to him, and he wanted to help the girl through.

As Miss Roby looked at him she saw a smile upon his face, as he significantly touched his eye with his finger. The girl took the hint, and spelled the word correctly.

"Right at last!" said Master Crawford, whose back was turned, and who had not seen Abe's dumb show. "It's lucky for you all that one of the class knew how to spell, or I would have kept my word, and kept you all in."

III. WORKING OUT A BOOK

All the information we can obtain about this early time is interesting, for it was then that Abe was laying the foundation of his future eminence. His mind and character were slowly developing, and shaping themselves for the future.

From Mr. Lamon's Life I quote a paragraph which will throw light upon his habits and tastes at the age of seventeen:

"Abe loved to lie under a shade-tree, or up in the loft of the cabin, and read, cipher, and scribble. At night he sat by the chimney 'jamb, and ciphered by the light of the fire, on the wooden fire-shovel. When the shovel was fairly covered, he would shave it off with Tom Lincoln's drawing-knife, and begin again. In the day-time he used boards for the same purpose, out of doors, and went through the shaving process everlastingly. His step-mother repeats often that 'he read every book he could lay his hands on.' She says, 'Abe read diligently. He read every book he could lay his hands on, and when he came across a passage that struck him, he would write it down on boards if he had no paper, and keep it there until he did get paper. Then he would rewrite it, look at it, repeat it. He had a copy-book, a kind of scrap-book, in which he put down all things, and thus preserved them.'"

I am tempted also to quote a reminiscence of John Hanks, who lived with the Lincolns from the time Abe was fourteen to the time he became eighteen years of age: "When Lincoln—Abe—and I returned to the house from work, he would go to the cupboard, snatch a piece of corn-bread, take down a book, sit down on a chair, cock his legs up as high as his head, and read. He and I worked barefooted, grubbed it, ploughed, mowed, and cradled together; ploughed corn, gathered it, and shucked corn. Abraham read constantly when he had opportunity."

It may well be supposed, however, that the books upon which Abe could lay hands were few in number. There were no libraries, either public or private, in the neighborhood, and he was obliged to read what he could get rather than those which he would have chosen, had he been able to select from a large collection. Still, it is a matter of interest to know what books he actually did read at this formative period. Some of

Ibid., pp. 38-42.

them certainly were worth reading, such as "Aesop's Fables," "Robinson Crusoe," "Pilgrim's Progress," a History of the United States, and Weems' "Life of Washington." The last book Abe borrowed from a neighbor, old Josiah Crawford (I follow the statement of Mr. Lamon, rather than of Dr. Holland, who says it was Master Crawford, his teacher). When not reading it, he laid it away in a part of the cabin where he thought it would be free from harm, but it so happened that just behind the shelf on which he placed it was a great crack between the logs of the wall. One night a storm came up suddenly, the rain beat in through the crevice, and soaked the borrowed book through and through. The book was almost utterly spoiled. Abe felt very uneasy, for a book was valuable in his eyes, as well as in the eyes of its owner.

He took the damaged volume and trudged over to Mr. Crawford's in some perplexity and mortification.

"Well, Abe, what brings you over so early?" said Mr. Crawford.

"I've got some bad news for you," answered Abe, with lengthened face.

"Bad news! What is it?"

"You know the book you lent me—the 'Life of Washington?'"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, the rain last night spoiled it," and Abe showed the book, wet to a pulp inside, at the same time explaining how it had been injured.

"It's too bad, I vum! You'd ought to pay for it, Abe. You must have been dreadful careless!"

"I'd pay for it if I had any money, Mr. Crawford."

"If you've got no money, you can work it out," said Crawford.

"I'll do whatever you think right."

So it was arranged that Abe should work three days for Crawford, "pulling fodder," the value of his labor being rated at twenty-five cents a day. As the book had cost seventy-five cents this would be regarded as satisfactory. So Abe worked his three days, and discharged the debt. Mr. Lamon is disposed to find fault with Crawford for exacting this penalty, but it appears to me only equitable, and I am glad to think that Abe was willing to act honorably in the matter.

II. THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

A Kentuckian was once asked what he considered the boundaries of the United States. "The boundaries of our country, sir?" he replied. "Why sir, on the north we are bounded by the Aurora Borealis, on the east we are bounded by the rising sun, on the south we are bounded by the procession of the Equinoxes, and on the west by the Day of Judgment."

—THE AMERICAN JOE MILLER

1. THE EAGLE SCREAMS

IN A wild country, it was good business for "wild men" to go about scaring a people with strange noises and by "making terrible faces playfully." But as the hunter was displaced by the second and third orders of "back settlers," the squatter and the homesteader, the roarers and screamers were not only out-hollered but out-licked by a new type of boaster and tall talker. This was the boomer and booster, drunk not with his own powers but with the bigness of the country and the illusion of inexhaustible resources and opportunities.

Here history repeated itself. As the backwoodsman's antics and war-cries were partly in imitation of the Indian,¹ so the advocates of Western expansion and settlement borrowed from the backwoodsman the elbow-room motif. This had been given expression for all time by Daniel Boone when in 1799, at the age of 65, he was asked why he was leaving Kentucky for frontier Missouri: "Too many people! Too crowded! Too crowded! I want more elbow room!" The frontier also had a saying: "When you see the smoke of your neighbor's chimney, it's time to move."

"The backwoodsman," says the Crockett Almanac for 1838, "is a singular being, always moving westward like a buffalo before the tide of civilization. He does not want a neighbor nearer than ten miles; and when he cannot cut down a tree that will fall within ten rods of his log house, he thinks it is time to sell out his betterment and be off."

But to the expansionists and the promoters of free land and the West, elbow-room meant room for improvements, for free enterprise, and so for more neighbors—in terms of nothing less than a continent and manifest destiny.

With the movement for territorial expansion and free land, the country entered upon one of the greatest advertising campaigns in history—the booming of the West. This was a campaign in which statesmen and orators joined with land and railroad companies, farmers' organizations, departments of agriculture, bureaus of immigration, boards of trade, and chambers of commerce. The theme of countless speeches, immigrant handbooks, emigrants' and railroad guides, state and regional guidebooks and gazetteers, state year books, rural almanacs, real estate directories, and government reports was "The sky's the limit," "Watch us grow," "We don't have to prove it—we admit it."

¹ Cf. "The Histrionic West," by Stanley Vestal, *Space*, Vol. I (June, 1934), No. 2, pp. 13-16.

In style this propaganda rivalled the "expansive eloquence" of the ring-tailed roarer and the stump-speaker. Its flamboyant ballyhoo proved that, more than the protective coloration of the homespun hero playing the tough guy and the smart aleck, tall talk is the highfalutin style of all provincial Americans whose motto is "Braggin' saves advertisin'."

In the vanguard of Western expansion was another screamer, the American eagle. This "favorite fowl of orators" was derived from the American emblem in the Great Seal and in coinage—not, according to Franklin, the most appropriate emblem of America. But the bird suffers not so much from the "bad moral character"—"generally poor, and often very lousy" and a "rank coward"—ascribed to it by Franklin, as from sheer triteness.

From the apex of the Allegheny to the summit of Mount Hood, the bird of America has so often been made to take flight, that his shadow may be said to have worn a trail across the basin of the Mississippi. . . .

The scream of the expansionist eagle is heard in the swelling peroration of Samuel C. Pomeroy's impassioned plea for the Homestead Bill, whose passage climaxed the ten-years' debate in Congress on the free land question. Both the "patriotic epidemic" and the spread-eagle oratory of expansionism are taken off in the mock-speech on the Oregon question by the comedian, Yankee Hill, whose peroration is in the tall-talking tradition of "Change the Name of Arkansas? Hell, No!"

2. THE WONDER STATE

In his speech on the land policy of the United States, cited above, the Hon. Richard Yates expressed the hope that "we will not be governed by the narrow considerations of a sectional jealousy. . . . A railroad in Illinois, like a light-house on the seacoast, is the common property of the nation. . . . We have one country; our interests are one, our history is one; our destiny is the same—a glorious destiny of free and sovereign States to unexampled power and renown." But it was the destiny and the prerogative of free and sovereign states to claim, each in its own way, "unexampled power and renown."

State nicknames, which have become part of the folklore of American places, crystallized these local aspirations or pretensions to uniqueness and excellence: the Boomer's Paradise (Oklahoma), the Garden of the West (Illinois, Kansas), the Land of Heart's Desire, or the Land of Sunshine (New Mexico), the Land of Plenty (New Mexico, South Dakota) the Wonder State (Arkansas).

As an instance of the willingness with which state governments took the lead in "telling the world of our wonderful possibilities," one may point to the concurrent resolution of the Arkansas Senate approving the nickname, "The Wonder State,"—virtually an argument in favor of changing the name of Arkansas. The objection to the earlier nickname of "The Bear State" is typical of the desire of the self-conscious West to

¹ Mr. Cathart, of Indiana, in the House of Representatives, February 6, 1846. Cited by Thornton, in *An American Glossary* (1912), Vol. II, p. 985.

² Cf. the similar nicknames of cities: The City Beautiful, the City of Magie, the City of Opportunities, the City of Prosperity, the Crown City, the Queen City.

live down its frontier past, commemorated in such uncomplimentary terms as the Pike State (Missouri) and the Grasshopper State (Kansas).

The prince of state greeters and boosters was Robert Love Taylor (1850-1912), the "Fiddling Governor" of Tennessee and the apostle of "Love, Laughter, and Sunshine," who devoted his sky-painting talents as orator, editor, and writer chiefly to booming the South. His "village apocalypse quality" and "inventive, epic earnestness" have been praised by another village improver, Vachel Lindsay, in his poem, "Preface to Bob Taylor's Birthday." For all his Pollyanna optimism and mush-and-syrup sentiment, Taylor had something of the folk touch in his art of improvisation and a backwoodsy homeliness in his native figures and allusions. Above all, he had a big heart, which went out to all things big, such as Uncle Sam, Dixie, and Tennessee, or any state that exerted or felt the influence of the sunny South. Here is tall talk in the plug hat, swallow-tailed-coat, and striped trousers of a "glad-handed" Uncle Sam.

The advertising pages of *Bob Taylor's Magazine*, a monthly addressed to "all Parts of the Prosperous South," were filled with the "come-on" invitations of Southwest railroad and land companies and "commercial clubs," for whose promotion Taylor set the pace in his editorials and essays and, in October, 1906, gave the cue with the following query:

Have you a Board of Trade, or a Chamber of Commerce, or a Boosters' Club? . . . A Southern Town now without a live Board of Trade might as well disincorporate and go back into the woods.

One of the most elaborate of these advertisements rivaled Taylor's lush pen in depicting the farm lands of the Nueces River Valley as a paradise on earth worthy of Theodore Roosevelt's characterization of Texas as the "garden spot of the land."

3. God's Country

Besides manifest destiny, free land, and state pride, the West had another string to its bow—the long bow which it drew in order to live down its wild and woolly reputation and to attract settlers. This was the myth of a land flowing with milk and honey—part of the American dream of a promised land of plenty, opportunity, and "beginning," which had first attracted settlers from the Old World to the New and was now transferred to the fabulous, far-off West. To make its ardors outweigh its endurances, orators, promoters, and guidebook writers painted this unknown country in the rosy hues of fairyland.

The land of "nature's bounty" was "God's country," defined as "a special part of the United States or the country as a whole, viewed nostalgically as almost a paradise."¹ "God's country" was sometimes the

¹ *A Dictionary of American English on Historical Principles*, edited by Sir William Craigie and James R. Hulbert, Vol. II (1940), p. 646.

The idea of a country "under God's care" or "that God remembers" is encountered frequently in the West, especially in the language of boosters: "Colorado is a land whereon the Creator has stamped his eternal monogram" (the Colorado Association); "Out in Arizona where God is all the time" (the Hon. David Kinchloe, of Kentucky, in the *Congressional Record*). See "Rocky Mountain Metaphysics," by Thomas Hornsby Ferrill, *Folk-Say, A Regional Miscellany: 1930*, edited by B. A. Botkin, pp. 305-316.

country one was going to—perhaps, always going to and never reaching, like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow; and it was sometimes the place that one was going back to. Or perhaps it was only in the heart—not a place but a state of mind. To Boone in retrospect it was real enough—the Kentucky he had left behind him. "I have traveled," he said in his old age, "over many new countries in the great Mississippi Valley; I have critically examined their soils; their mineral wealth; their healthful climates; their manufacturing situations; and the commercial advantages given them by nature. I have discovered where these endowments were given most bountifully in many localities, singly and in groups, but I have never found but one Kentucky—a spot of earth where nature seems to have concentrated all her bounties."¹ For many a pioneer settler, however, who, while in quest of God's country, often had to ask: "Is this God's Country or not?" and "Had God forsaken us?" there was only this consolation left at the end of the search:

We learned that God's Country isn't in the country. It is in the mind. As we looked back we knew that all the time we was hunting for God's country we had it. We worked hard. We was loyal. Honest. We was happy. For 48 years we lived together in God's Country.

The potency of this phrase was part of the "pioneer myth." This assumed that land, which should be as free as the air and the sunshine, was a symbol of the inalienable rights of man; that all land was good land and all settlers were good farmers; that in its "green pastures" one should not want; that the land had certain imperishable values of its own from which one could derive, not only sustenance and profit, but also strength and courage; and that the pioneer, "inured to self-reliance" through hardship and discouragement, was a soldier of civilization and of God.

4. "WITHAL THERE IS AN EFFECT OF CLIMATE"

In a land of violent extremes and abrupt contrasts of weather and climate, the quest for health and happiness put a premium on optimum environment. Land advertisements boasted of such advantages as dry, bracing air; three hundred (or more) days of sunshine a year; and—negatively—no killing frosts, hail, blizzards, hot winds, heat waves, tornadoes, cyclones, whirlwinds, hurricanes, earthquakes, and similar afflictions. "Why Shovel Snow and Shiver?" was one rhetorical question. "No chills, no negroes, no saloons, no mosquitoes," went a sweeping statement from Arkansas.

The guidebooks were equally reassuring.

It is complained that the "wind blows." As it blows elsewhere, so it blows in Colorado—occasionally. Sometimes these winds are momentarily disagreeable, but they serve nature as one of her sanitary measures and their effect is refreshing and beneficial.²

¹ "Kentucky," *The Southern Guide*, Vol. I (January, 1878), No. 1, p. 59.

² *The Resources and Attractions of Colorado for the Home Seeker, Capitalist and Tourist* (Union Pacific Railway, Omaha, 1888), pp. 61-62.

Withal there is an effect of climate, and something of freedom caught from the outdoorness of life. Sunshine and green salads all the year will promote cheerfulness. Where there are no bitter winds, no sleet or hail, no blizzards to kill flocks and herds, no "cold snaps" to freeze poultry on the perch or water-pipes in the kitchen, it is not at all surprising that people laugh and are affected by the great world of sun and summer in which they dwell.¹

Emigrant and Western songs fell in line with the chauvinism, utopianism, and arcadianism of the guidebooks, reflected in many a state song and poem of the "sweet singer" or boosting variety and many a popular song of nostalgia for this, that, or the other "wonder state."²

The boast of a climate "so healthy that people rarely die, except from accident or old age," as in the Nueces River Valley land advertisement, was a common one.³ One of the best of the stories on this theme is related by Barnum, as he heard it from a sleight-of-hand artist named Henry Hawley.

Related to the stories of life-prolonging air are the stories of air that restores life.

In East Texas it is the wind that revives corpses.

Truth of it is, Dad was dead, but when that coffin bust open and that strong healthy plains wind hit him it just filled his lungs full of good revivin air, and Dad nor no one else could stay dead.⁴

In Florida it is the sunshine, as on the occasion when the corpse of a gangster had been imported from Chicago so that a funeral could be staged by the local dealer in cemetery lots.

The coffin was taken to the graveside and the lid was opened to give the bystanders a glimpse of the beautiful way the corpse had been laid out, a masterpiece of the undertaker's art. As the Florida sunshine bit the body, there was an immediate stir. The gangster arose with a yell, feeling for his gun. The bystanders had to kill him again before they could go on with the funeral.⁵

Variations on the theme are found in the stories of a dying person being revived by the air expelled from a bicycle or automobile tire, which had been pumped up in California or Arizona, or of an incurable victim of tuberculosis being healed by a single ray of Florida sunshine.⁶

¹ *California for the Settler*, by Andrew Jackson Wells (Southern Pacific Company, San Francisco, 1915), p. 62.

² See *The Facts of Life in Popular Song* (1934), by Sigmund Spaeth.

³ "I saw a cowboy in California once who was a hundred if he was a day. It's astonishing how old these greasers get to be. I have traveled a great deal in Mexico, and it don't occur to me just now where I ever saw a graveyard. There's the Tombstone district in Arizona, and I know there isn't a tombstone in it. The people just dry up and blow away, and maybe you think it don't blow down there sometimes." . . . *Ten Wise Men and Some More*, by William Lightfoot Visseret (1909), p. 89.

⁴ See "The Wind" by Frank Neff and William Henry, Part Four.

⁵ Told by B. A. Russell, of Miami, Florida, in *Tall Stories*, by Lowell Thomas (1931), pp. 236-237.

⁶ *Tall Stories*, by Lowell Thomas (1931), pp. 232-235.

Rival claims of salubrious climate are accompanied by mutual recrimination in which state rivalry is keen. Thus Florida papers cast aspersions on California as a "terrible place, going rapidly to the bad with frost, storms, earthquakes, and other calamities. California and other resort places reciprocate."¹ To the older feud between Florida and California has more recently been added the competition between California and the Rio Grande Valley.

But we have the healthiest climate in California. It is so healthy we had to shoot a man in order to start a graveyard.

That's no comparison with our Valley climate for health. One of our citizens went out to California, took sick and died there. They shipped his remains back to the Valley, the friends of the deceased were gathered around the corpse. When they opened the casket he raised up, greeted his friends and walked off.²

Tacked on to Hawley's yarn is the tale of the "monstrous large gun," which "required one pound of powder and four pounds of shot to load it properly" and with which Hawley shot off four-and-a-half bushels of wild pigeons' feet and legs (without killing a single bird) when the flock rose off the ground just a half second ahead of his shot. The great number of pigeons and the large field of buckwheat which it was feared they would destroy reflect the abundance of crops and game associated with the marvels of climate and soil. Here brags about rich land and big crops shade off into yarns of varying degrees of exaggeration. The boosters' club gives way to the liars' club—with an occasional knock for the famine that often followed the feast or the bust that followed the boom.

In 1851 the Commissioner of Patents reported an "address delivered by A. Williams, Esq., at a meeting in San Francisco, for presenting the premium of a silver goblet, offered by Mr. C. A. Shelton for the best varieties of vegetables and grains." Among other prize products are an onion weighing 21 pounds, a turnip "which equalled exactly in size the top of a flour barrel," another weighing 100 pounds, a cabbage measuring 13 feet, six inches around, a beet weighing 63 pounds, and carrots three feet in length, weighing 40 pounds, not to mention a single potato, "larger than the size of an ordinary hat," of which twelve persons partook at a dinner in Stockton, "leaving at least the half untouched." Then the speaker added ironically:

And we have some still larger and taller specimens of other things nearer home, here in our own city, to which many who hear me will bear witness from experience, and which come to maturity "*monthly in advance*"—rents, the tallest kind of rents, put up higher than the pines, and sometimes harder to get around than red-wood!³

¹ *North America*, by J. Russell Smith and M. Ogden Phillips (1942), p. 349.

² *Thomas W. Jackson with all the "Funny Ones"*, by Thomas W. Jackson (1938), p. 79.

³ *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1851*, Part II, Agriculture (1852), pp. 3-7.

5. LAUGHING IT OFF

Praise of the wonders and glories of the new country was offset by a healthy skepticism which viewed with alarm instead of pointing with pride. Hardship and failure gave rise to inverse exaggeration and defensive boasting—of the kind that proceeds from having too little rather than too much.

A common symbol of disillusionment was the returning emigrant or prospector admonishing the westward traveler to turn back. In the frontispiece of "Major Wilkey's" *Narrative*,¹ the fashionable young man in the smart chaise behind the spirited horse, proclaims: "I am going to Illinois!" whereas from the lips of the broken-down owner of a "broken down wagon!—a broken winded horse!—a broken hearted wife!—a broken legged dog! and, what is still more to be lamented, the irreparable broken constitutions of my three Fever and Ague sons, Jonathan, Jerry, and Joe!"—the reply emanates: "I have been!" A modern parallel is furnished by *The Grapes of Wrath*, in which the Joads, on their way to "where it's rich an' green," and they can get work and a "piece a growin' land with water," are laughed at by a ragged man who inquires:

"You folks all goin' to California, I bet." "I tol' you that," said Pa. "You didn' guess nothin'." The ragged man said slowly, "Me—I'm comin' back. I been there. . . . I'm goin' back to starve. I ruther starve all over at oncet."²

Disappointed victims of gold fever, who had been advised "not to be too sanguine of success," turned back with mottoes properly amended to express their disgust. "Busted, by thunder!" set the pattern in slogans for all settlers who did not have the "grit, grace, and gumption" necessary to tough it out in a tough country.

Disillusionment in turn was seasoned with stoical humor of the type known as "laughing it off," or smiling in the face of adversity. Grasshopper plagues were commemorated in the wagon inscription, "Hoppers et al but the wagon-sheet," in the saying that the grasshoppers had eaten everything except the mortgage, and in the story of the grasshopper who ate the farmer's team of mules and then pitched the horseshoes for the wagon. In Nebraska one could stand by the side of a field and hear the grasshoppers threatening. "On the potato vines they would eat downward, and when they came to a potato bug would calmly kick it and go on their devastating way."³

On the Great Plains, it has been said, "If you ain't burned up by drought and winds hot as hell or frozen out by blizzards and hail storms, you're

¹ Although the author of this anonymous satire on land frauds maintains that "never could there be experienced just such another confounded take-in," Major Wilkey's misfortunes in "Edensburgh" may have furnished suggestions to Dickens (even to the name of the place) for the somewhat-similar experiences of Martin Chuzzlewit in the city of "Eden," published four years later.

² *The Grapes of Wrath*, by John Steinbeck (1939), p. 257.

³ *Pioneer Life in Nebraska*, Pamphlet One, *We Settled the Plains*, Series One, compiled by Workers of the WPA Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Nebraska (Oct. 1941), p. 3.

eat up by grasshoppers, speculators, and politicians."¹—and, it might have been added, centipedes, snakes, bedbugs, fleas, and other pests that infested the primitive shelters of pioneer settlers. This is the plaint of Western "hard times" songs like "The Lane County Bachelor," which prove that only a thin line separates stoicism from revolt.

—And Nothing but the Continent

MR. SPEAKER: When I take my eyes and throw them over the vast expanse of this expansive country: when I see how the yeast of freedom has caused it to rise in the scale of civilization and extension on every side; when I see it growing, swelling, roaring, like a spring-freshet—when I see all *this*, I cannot resist the idea, Sir, that the day will come when this great nation, like a young schoolboy, will burst its straps, and become entirely too big for its boots!

"Sir, we want *elbow-room*—the continent—the *whole* continent—and nothing *but* the continent! And we will *have* it! Then shall Uncle Sam, placing his hat upon the Canadas, rest his right arm on the Oregon and California coast, his left on the eastern sea-board, and whittle away the British power, while reposing his leg, like a freeman, upon Cape Horn! Sir, the day *will*—the day *must* come!"

Manifest Destiny

MR. CHARMAN, the population of the Valley of the Mississippi already constitutes more than one third of the entire population of the Union. And, sir, the time is not distant when the seat of empire, the stronghold of numerical power, will be west of the Alleghanies. The handwriting is on the wall. It is *manifest destiny*, sir. It is written on the signs of the times in clear, fresh and unmistakable lines. . . .

The same flag that flashes its stars to the sun on the banks of the Hudson and Potomac is hailed by millions of rejoicing freemen on the banks of the Mississippi and the Columbia.

Within the last five years three new States have been added to the Union, and there is the territory at the head of the Missouri and the Arkansas, the Territories of Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Oregon—

¹ "Legends of Fehold Feboldson," by Paul R. Beath, in *Nebraska Folklore Pamphlets*, Number Eight, p. 7. Lincoln: Federal Writers' Project in Nebraska, September 15, 1937.

² . . . specimen of eloquence' from an authentic speech made by General Buncombe, in the House of Representatives, in the days of 'Fifty-four Forty or Fight,'" *Kwickerbocker Magazine*, XLVI (August, 1855), No. 2, p. 212. New York: Samuel Hueston.

From "Speech of Hon. Richard Yates, of Illinois, on the Land Policy of the United States, and in Defense of the West," delivered in the House of Representatives, April 23, 1852.

and the vision of an ocean-bound Republic is now a reality. Sir, what a mighty theater for American enterprise! What a mighty course for the race of democratic liberty! . . .

It is already our boast as a nation, sir, that we enjoy more of liberty, a more universal diffusion of knowledge, and a more exalted national character than any nation on the globe. But the striking feature of the American character is its enterprise—an enterprise that knows no obstacles, counts no cost, fears no dangers, triumphs over all obstacles. . . .

Uncle Sam

THE most striking and picturesque in all history is the picture of a lean and sinewy old man, with long hair and chin whiskers, and wearing an old-fashioned plug hat. His pantaloons are in stripes of red and white, and his blue swallow-tail coat is bespangled with stars. He is the personification of the United States, and we call him Uncle Sam.

He is the composite of the wild-cat and the cooing dove, the lion and the lamb, and "summer evening's latest sigh that shuts the rose." He is the embodiment of all that is most terrible. The world stands appalled at his wonderful power, and bows in admiration to his matchless magnanimity.

He is the tallest figure on this mundane sphere, and when he steps across the continent and sits down on Pike's Peak, and snorts in his handkerchief of red, white, and blue, the earth quakes and the monarchs tremble on their thrones. From the peaceful walks of life he can mobilize a mighty army in sixty days, and in ninety days he can destroy a powerful navy and demolish an empire. He is boss of the Western Hemisphere, Sheriff of Cuba, justice of the Peace of Porto Rico, and guardian *ad litem* of the Philippine Islands. He is as brave as Caesar and as meek as Moses.

He is as fierce as a tiger, and as cool as a cucumber. He wears the tail feathers of the eagle of France in his hat, and the scalp of Mexico in his

Extract from "Speech of Governor Taylor, on Presenting a Flag to the Fourth Tennessee Volunteers, November, 1897, at Knoxville." From *Eckoes, Centennial and other Notable Speeches, Lectures, and Stories*, by Governor Robt. L. Taylor, pp. 78-79. Copyright, 1899, by S. B. Williamson & Co. Nashville, Tennessee.

belt. He laughs at the roar of the Russian bear, and is always ready for a schooner of German beer.

All that is left of Spain is her "Honah," since her combat with Uncle Sam. No longer the lion of England roars at our door, but the twain now stand together for liberty and humanity.

In the Land of Dixie

I LOVE to live in the land of Dixie, under the soft Southern skies, where summer pours out her flood of sunshine and showers, and the generous earth smiles with plenty. I love to live on Southern soil, where the cotton-fields wave their white banners of peace, and the wheat-fields wave back their banners of gold from the hills and valleys which were once drenched with the blood of heroes. I love to live where the mocking-birds flutter and sing in the shadowy coves, and bright waters ripple in eternal melody, by the graves where our heroes are buried. I love to breathe the Southern air, that comes filtered through jungles of roses, whispering the story of Southern deeds of bravery. I love to drink from Southern springs and Southern babbling brooks, which once cooled the lips of Lee and Jackson and Forrest and Gordon, and the worn and weary columns of brave men, who wore the gray. I love to live among Southern men and women, where every heart is as warm as the Southern sunshine, and every home is a temple of love and liberty.

I love to listen to the sweet old Southern melodies, which touch the soul and melt the heart and awaken to life ten thousand precious memories of the happy long ago, when the old-time darkeys used to laugh and sing, and when the old-time black "mammy" soothed the children to slumber with her lullabies. But, oh, the music that thrills me most is the melody that died away on the lips of many a Confederate soldier as he sank into the sleep that knows no waking—

"I'm glad I am in Dixie."

Extract from "Address of Welcome by Governor Taylor to the Ex-Confederates, at Ex-Confederate Reunion, on Confederate Day, at Tennessee Centennial, June 24, 1897." From *Eckoes, Centennial and other Notable Speeches, Lectures, and Stories*, by Governor Robt. L. Taylor, pp. 26-27. Copyright, 1899, by S. B. Williamson & Co. Nashville, Tennessee.

A man who attempted in his much-celebrated stay at Walden Pond (described in his classic work *Walden*, or *Life in the Woods*) to experience and express transcendentalism through practical experience, Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) was always an exponent of the values to be found in nature as opposed to those represented by the economic and technological growth that marked early-nineteenth-century America. Yet although he stood against the inevitable future, he could not help but recognize the new deity in the very technology he feared.

Walden is generally taken as the work of an inspired loner seeking truth from isolation in pure nature, and Walden Pond and its woody surround have come to represent the very soul of the universe. But as Thoreau pointed out, “The Fitchburg Railroad touches the pond about a hundred yards south of where I dwell. I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am, as it were, related to society by this link.”

When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion,—or, rather, like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve,—with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreathes, like many a downy cloud which I have seen, high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light,—as if this traveling demigod, this cloud-compellor, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don’t know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it. . . .

The stabler of the iron horse was up early this winter morning by the light of the stars amid the mountains, to fodder and harness his steed. Fire, too, was awakened thus early to put the vital heat in him and get him off. . . . All day the fire-steed flies over the country, stopping only

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that his master may rest, and I am awakened by his tramp and defiant snort at midnight, when in some remote glen in the woods he fronts the elements incased in ice and snow; and he will reach his stall only with the morning star. . . .

We have constructed a fate, an *Atropos*, that never turns aside. (Let that be the name of your engine.)*

Another American who saw in the emergence of technology a replacement of old deities was Henry Adams (1838–1918), the grandson and great-grandson of American presidents, whose autobiography, *The Education of Henry Adams*, is, in a sense, an attempt to understand his role and America’s role in a new world dominated by technology.

Adams frequented the great expositions of 1893 and 1900 seeking answers to explain whatever was the force driving American society—as the Virgin had driven medieval European society, focusing the energies of virtually everyone in both common daily endeavors as well as the building of grand cathedrals. By Adams’s time, invisible forces had been uncovered—X rays, radium’s emissions, and the like. Even Adams’s physicist friends could not really explain the nature of electricity, though it had long been successfully harnessed in such devices as the electric tram. Nowhere did these forces strike Adams more deeply as mysterious than when he stood before the exhibitions in the hall of dynamos.

To Adams the dynamo became a symbol of infinity. As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross. The planet itself seemed less impressive, in its old-fashioned, deliberate, annual or daily revolution, than this huge wheel, revolving within arm’s length at some vertiginous speed, and barely murmuring—scarcely humming an audible warning to stand a hair’s breadth further for respect of power—while it would not wake the baby lying close against its frame. Before the end, one began to pray to it; inherited instinct taught the natural expression of man before silent and infinite force. Among the thousands of symbols of ultimate energy, the dynamo was not so human as some, but it was the most expressive. . . .

In these seven years [from 1893 to 1900] man had translated himself into a new universe which had no common scale of measurement with the old. He had entered a supersensual world, in which he could measure nothing except by chance collisions of movements imperceptible to his senses, perhaps even imperceptible to his instruments, but perceptible to each other, and so to some known ray at the end of the scale. . . .

[These rays] were occult, supersensual, irrational; they were a revelation of mysterious energy like that of the Cross; they were what, in terms of medieval science, were called immediate modes of the divine substance. . . .

The force of the Virgin was still felt at Lourdes, and seemed to be as potent as X rays; but in America neither Venus nor Virgin ever had value as force—at most as sentiment. No American had ever been truly afraid of either.*

Stackalee

Just as white American tradition makes heroes out of outlaws, so African American culture confers hero status on its most famous scoundrels. Stackalee—sometimes called Stagolee—reigns supreme as the most notorious bad man of all. Numerous tales have been published and countless ballads made to detail his exploits. The ballads are almost always in a rhyme scheme and rhythm that belong to the African American tradition known as the toast, a style of speech that has more recently evolved into rap.

THE LEGEND OF STACKALEE

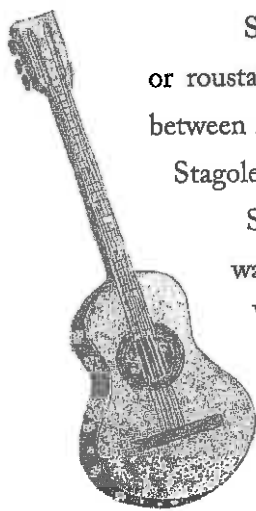
Stackalee was a big Negro bad man born on Market Street in St. Louis in 1861. He was born double-jointed and with a full set of teeth and red eyes. "A gipsy told his mother, Told her like a friend, Your double-jointed baby, Won't come to no good end." So says one of the legends which celebrate his name.

Stackalee was named for the famous boat he worked on. He was a stoker or roustabout on the Mississippi-Ohio River packet *Stacker Lee*, which plied between Memphis, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and Vicksburg. People spell his name Stagolee sometimes, but mostly they call him Stack.

Stack was a fine musician. He could play the guitar and the piano, and he was always moaning the blues or beating out some rag. Women loved him. When he hugged the girls he squeezed the breath out of them, and they liked that.

Stack's own girl was born on Market Street in St. Louis in 1861, just like Stack himself. Her name was Stack o' Dollars. They called her that because she not only *had* a stack of dollars but always bet them all in a gambling game. She was a big fat girl with diamond teeth and *some smile*. She smoked cigars and could lick any man in town in a fist fight. Stack did like a spirited woman. She wore a Stetson hat, too—a bigger one than Stack's.

Stack always wore a Stetson hat, the five-gallon size. He dearly loved a Stetson, and had a whole row of them, all different colors, hanging on pegs in the



• STACKALEE •

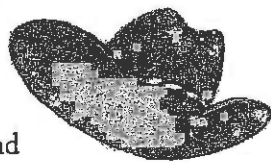
house on Market Street. Everybody says he sold his soul to the Devil in return for a magic spell on his favorite Stetson. He could get away with anything as long as he wore that hat. And he was never caught as long as he had it.

Stackalee was a gambler, a gunman, and a killer. Nobody knows how many notches he had on his gun for the men he had killed. He feared no one. He even challenged Jesse James once, but that was a mistake. Nobody was a match for Jesse James in *any* kind of fight, and the minute Jesse let go of him Stack beat it for the mountains.

Once in the mountains he met up with two deputies who were out looking for him in order to collect the \$5,000 reward on his head. So he sat down to chat with them and pass the time of day. Stack learned their names and then shot their initials in their hats before they discovered who he was. He nearly split his sides laughing to see how fast they left the neighborhood.

But every bad man gets caught up with, one way or another, it seems, and the Devil was getting tired of Stack's devilment. He was tired of waiting to snatch Stack's soul to hell, too.

Stack was in a gambling game one night in St. Louis. He was winning, seemed as if he couldn't lose, and he was so busy scraping in the money that he forgot about his hat which he had hung on the back of his chair. This was the Devil's chance. In the guise of a nice young man named Billy Lyons he took the hat and headed for a barrel house down the street, where he knew Billy Lyons to be. With a yell in his throat and a gun in each hand Stack tore after him. When he got there, there was Billy Lyons all right, smoking a cigarette, easylike, expecting nothing; but the Stetson hat was not in sight.



Stack shot him on sight and killed him dead for stealing the magic Stetson that had always saved him from the law. Onlookers said Billy had not left the barrel house all evening, but Stack did not believe that.

The police wagon came and hauled Stackalee off to jail. But the Devil got cheated out of Stack's soul, after all, for they did not hang him. The judge sentenced him to a stretch of seventy-five years in Jefferson penitentiary, and there he is. He has served thirty-four years and has forty-one still to go. So the Devil is still waiting.

THE BALLAD OF STACKALEE

It was in the year of eighteen hundred and sixty-one
In St. Louis on Market Street where Stackalee was born.
Everybody's talkin 'bout Stackalee.

It was on one cold and frosty night
When Stackalee and Billy Lyons had one awful fight,
All about an old Stetson hat.

Stackalee got his gun. Boy, he got it fast!
He shot poor Billy through and through; the bullet broke a lookin glass.
Oh, oh, Lord, Lord, Lord.

Stackalee shot Billy once; his body fell to the floor.
He cried out, "Oh, please, Stack, please don't shoot me no more."

The White Elephant Barrel House was wrecked that night;
Gutters full of beer and whisky; it was an awful sight.

Jewelry and rings of the purest solid gold
Scattered over the dance and gamblin hall.

The can can dancers they rushed for the door
When Billy cried, "Oh, please, Stack, don't shoot me no more."

"Have mercy," Billy groaned. "Oh, please spare my life;
I've got two little babies and an innocent wife."

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• STACKALEE •

Stack says, "God bless your children, damn your wife!
You stole my magic Stetson; I'm gonna steal your life."

"But," says Billy, "I always treated you like a man.
'Tain't nothin to that old Stetson but the greasy band."

He shot poor Billy once, he shot him twice,
And the third time Billy pleaded, "Please go tell my wife."

Yes, Stackalee, the gambler, everybody knowed his name;
Made his livin hollerin high, low, jack and the game.

Meantime the sergeant strapped on his big forty-five,
Says, "Now we'll bring in this bad man, dead or alive."

And brass-buttoned policemen all dressed in blue
Came down the sidewalk marchin two by two.

Sent for the wagon and it hurried and come
Loaded with pistols and a big Gatling gun.

At midnight on that stormy night there came an awful wail—
Billy Lyons and a graveyard ghost outside the city jail.

"Jailer, jailer," says Stack, "I can't sleep.
For around my bedside poor Billy Lyons still creeps.

"He comes in shape of a lion with a blue steel in his hand,
For he knows I'll stand and fight if he comes in shape of man."

Stackalee went to sleep that night by the city clock bell,
Dreaming the devil had come all the way up from hell.

Red devil was sayin, "You better hunt your hole;
I've hurried here from hell just to get your soul."

Stackalee told him, "Yes, maybe you're right,
But I'll give even you one hell of a fight."

When they got into the scuffle, I heard the devil shout,
"Come and get this bad man before he puts my fire out."

The next time I seed the devil he was scramblin up the wall,
Yellin, "Come an get this bad man fore he mops up with us all."

Then here come Stack's woman runnin, says, "Daddy, I love you true;
See what beer, whisky, and smokin hop has brought you to.

"But before I'll let you lay in there, I'll put my life in pawn."
She hurried and got Stackalee out on a five thousand dollar bond.

Stackalee said, "Ain't but one thing that grieves my mind.
When they take me away, babe, I leave you behind."

But the woman he really loved was a voodoo queen
From Creole French market, way down in New Orleans.

He laid down at home that night, took a good night's rest,
Arrived in court at nine o'clock to hear the coroner's inquest.



• STACKALEE •

Crowds jammed the sidewalk, far as you could see,
Tryin to get a good look at tough Stackalee.

Over the cold, dead body Stackalee he did bend,
Then he turned and faced those twelve jury men.

The judge says, "Stackalee, I would spare your life,
But I know you're a bad man; I can see it in your red eyes."

The jury heard the witnesses, and they didn't say no more;
They crowded into the jury room, and the messenger closed the door.

The jury came to agreement, the clerk he wrote it down,
And everybody was whisperin, "He's penitentiary bound."

When the jury walked out, Stackalee didn't budge.
They wrapped the verdict and passed it to the judge.

Judge looked over his glasses, says, "Mr. Bad Man Stackalee,
The jury finds you guilty of murder in the first degree."

Now the trial's come to an end, how the folks gave cheers;
Bad Stackalee was sent down to Jefferson pen for seventy-five years

Now late at night you can hear him in his cell,
Arguin with the devil to keep from goin to hell.

And the other convicts whisper, "Whatcha know about that?
Gonna burn in hell forever over an old Stetson hat!"
Everybody's talkin 'bout Stackalee.