



MY FIRST BUFFALO HUNT IN MONTANA

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It takes the most vivid imagination to picture the broad prairies covered with buffalo, and from sheltered spot, the location of an Indian tepee, yet this, which was once the condition, is but the small part of the whole truth. To most of the people now, the buffalos and Indians are but traditions, but to some who are here, they are still a reality—the realities of bygone days.

My first trip to Choteau, the present seat of Teton County, was made in July, 1872. This was then the Black-foot and Piegan Agency. It was a few miles west of the present town of Choteau. I was in company with Hiram Upham and William Phillips. They were both employed at the Agency. During my stay I held my first service among the Indians in Montana.

The next trip was early in January, 1873, on horseback from Sun River, where I held service at the Agency, and then with Mr. B. W. Sanders, a teacher of the Indian School at the Agency, we went to the main camp of Indians six miles below the Teton River.

Here arrangements were made to hold services in the evening in a large log cabin belonging to Mr. Howard, whose wife was a Piegan.

The hour of worship found the cabin filled to its utmost capacity, there being a few whites and some half-breeds, but far the greater number were Indians, most of whom we had to speak to through an interpreter. The preaching was in English, and was then given by an interpreter to the Indians.

During the course of the preaching, an Indian came to the door of the cabin and whispered a few words to some of his comrades. Instantly all was confusion. Some rushed for their rifles, bows and arrows, and in a few moments the building was deserted.

I was informed that a party of Flat-head Indians had made a raid on the ponies of the Piegans, and had driven off a large number. No ponies could be found, except those belonging to Mr. Sanders and myself, they having been tied up close to the tepees. These were

readily offered to the Indians, and two started on them while a large number followed on foot.

Evidently the thieving Flatheads hearing the two on ponies, thought there were many more in the chase, for they abandoned the stolen animals and fled. Inside of an hour the ponies were all brought back, and quiet was restored. The Indians could not say enough of praise for our kindness in lending them our ponies, assuring us that it was through our kindness that their ponies had been saved.

We all returned to the cabin, the Indians coming in without further invitation. Then we finished the services that had so untimely been interrupted.

of twenty-five young warriors for a buffalo hunt on what is now known as the Freeze-out Flat.

At this time buffalo were plentiful—to tell of the large herds and the great number of them that roamed the prairies would today seem an exaggeration. From almost any peak of prominence they could be seen for many miles, their dark forms standing out in clear relief against the whiteness of the snow.

Arriving at the Freeze-Out Flats, the Indians took their post at the foot of a draw, while one brave passed the circuitous route and sought the bench above. We did not wait long before a herd of buffalo came rushing down the coulees on a genuine stampede.

From then on it was a running chase



A Family of Piegan Indians.

Because of the kindness the Indian braves had received of us, they promised us a rare treat the next day. Early in the morning we set out with a party

and fight, the warriors riding beside the buffalo and shooting from their ponies. One young Indian succeeded, by riding at the very front of the herd, in killing

nine—the rest all killed a large number.

By this time a large number of squaws, with pack ponies, had arrived from the camp and took charge of the slain buffalo, while the braves rode leisurely off as unconcerned as though it were an everyday occurrence. The squaws skinned the dead animals, cut them up, and with the ponies, packed the meat to the main camp about eight or ten miles distant.

That night we had a feast, oh, such a feast—roasted buffalo, fried buffalo, par-boiled buffalo and buffalo tongue, considered a great luxury, until we could eat no more.

This was my first buffalo hunt in Montana.

The Last Roundup

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early days in the vales, in the gulches, and on the bench-lands. Now and then and especially in the holiday season an

old time cowpuncher winds his way to town partly because of a desire to associate with other people, and partly because of a desire to share in the festivities of Christmas. Then it is that fragments of the story so full of interest and adventure fall, to be gathered up and moulded into thrilling novel, then it is that the generation of today more fully appreciate the noble courage of these men, who blazed the trails, drove the savage, induced the railroad and made possible the vast empire that is growing in the heart of the treasure state.

Yet the cowboy is at once the best known and the most widely misrepresented type of western man. In the east the popular conception is that he is a half wild man, delighting in dangerous quarrels, and in shooting-up the town. But it is false. This conception is gained from the exceptions. True there have been and there still are those cowpunchers, who have the mistaken idea that it is typical of the vocation to en-

gage in wild adventure and boisterous outlawery. But they are few and are hated by the large majority of their class. The novelists and playwrights who give the blear-eyed, hard-hearted villain a prominent part in the western story, do it for the sake of spectacular display and not for the sake of portraying the prevailing type.

On the contrary the cowboy is big hearted, whole-souled, and radiates a wealth of good cheer. He is plain and blunt and honest. He admires his straightforward companion and expects respect in return. Accustomed to a free life on the plains, he is naturally impatient of restraint. The air he breathes is full of the spirit "that one man is as good as another." He is liberal to a fault, and will give his all to his fellow workman because he feels sure of its return. He does not shoot up the town, and his means prevent gambling. Most range bosses demand that their men neither drink nor

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The Tenderfoot.

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