

GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE.

Northern Pacific Time Table
 "Montana Short Line."
 New Time Table Taking Effect Nov. 1st, 1884

TRAINS ARRIVE FROM THE EAST, HELENA
 No. 1—Pacific Express, 7:25 p. m. Mountain time
 TRAINS GOING EAST FROM HELENA
 No. 2—Atlantic Express, 8:10 a. m.
 TRAINS ARRIVE FROM THE WEST
 No. 2—Atlantic Express, 7:20 a. m.
 TRAINS GOING WEST FROM HELENA
 No. 1—Pacific Express, 5:55 p. m.

Wickes Branch.
 Arrive Helena at 7:45 p. m.
 Leave Helena at 10:20 p. m.
 Arrive Helena at 10:20 p. m.
 Leave Helena at 10:20 p. m.

Helena and Butte Accommodation
 Leave Helena at 8:20 a. m.
 Arrive at Garrison at 12:20 p. m.
 Leave Garrison at 1:15 p. m.
 Arrive at Helena at 2:30 p. m.

Pullman Palace and Dining Cars run through between St. Paul and Minneapolis and Helena and Portland on Atlantic and Pacific express trains.
 Time from Helena to Portland, 56 hours; to St. Paul, 52 hours. Chicago, 70 hours.
 S. G. FULTON, General Agent.

THE WHITE BUFFALO.

An Exciting Chase on the Plains of Montana—Indian Superstition.

IA. L. O., in The Northwest Magazine.
 The color of the buffalo, or American bison, is uniform throughout the herds—dark brown to almost black, and any specimen varying markedly from that color may be considered an accidental freak of nature, like a black fox or a white crow, and I have seen several of the fine "silk" robes, as they are called from the peculiar soft and silky character of the hair, and other curious pelts, but in many years of experience as a plainsman I saw but one white buffalo. Nor from the lips of the many white and Indian hunters whom I have met did I ever hear of any other that deserved the name. Once a yellowish or very light brown buffalo was killed in the Yellowstone region and it is sometimes erroneously recalled as having been white. I also hear of a "white" buffalo among the display of taxidermists' articles in the Dakota department at the New Orleans Exposition, but those who have seen the specimen say it is far from a pure white. It is therefore safe to say that the only white buffalo deserving the name, of which there is any authentic account, is the one I am about to describe.

It was in September, 1875. Three other hunters and hide buyers and myself were following a camp of about two hundred lodges of Teton Sioux under old Medicine Bear. Dr. Peck, (since swept away by the encroaching Missouri), was in our party for the purpose of seeing a great buffalo hunt. We were on Frenchman's creek, a tributary of Milk river, which flows from the north into the Missouri. The exact location must have been seventy-five to eighty miles north of "the Muddy" and twenty miles, or thereabout, north of the Canadian boundary.

The country was full of buffalo. That morning the main herd had passed our camp, occupying hours in the movement, and as we advanced toward the Indian lodges we could look in any direction over the rolling prairie and see lone or clustered black forms—the unsightly bodies of feeding buffaloes. When we reached the Indian encampment the backs of the party, the soldier band, had broken into the main herd, and in every direction, were riding down stragglers, detaching small bands from the rushing mass, whooping, shooting and spearing. As his custom on occasions of such a grand hunt, the backs were gaily painted and feathered and, as they rushed to and fro on their fleet ponies, carrying on the work of butchery, a scene was presented such might well be commemorated in American classics—the arena, the limitless prairie; the game, countless numbers of the noblest of the bovine species; the hunters, the wildest representatives of the untamable native races of the northwest. The buffaloes are gone, the Indians are going; such a pageant will never be witnessed again.

My companions and I were watching the scene with intense interest, though to all but the doctor (who was wild with delight) it was no novelty, when an exclamation from a squaw, who was skinning a buffalo near us, called our attention to the "white buffalo." When I first looked at this beautiful creature, as her course turned around a low hillock half a mile away, I thought she was one of the not uncommon "silk" buffaloes, and that the sun shining upon her glistening broadside gave her, to my eyes, the peculiar color. But in a moment her direction changed, so that I knew it was no trick of the sunlight that made her look dazzlingly white. She was, as I afterward found, a cow about four years old and of unusually delicate and symmetrical form as well as of a milky white color. Even her hoofs and horns were white. I had heard from the Indians gossip of this wonderful animal, but from the marvelous character of the stories told had given little attention to them, and concluded that the "white buffalo" was only one of the mythical narrations in which Indian folk-lore abounds. They told of her unnatural color; that she was always surrounded by other buffaloes who protected her from the hunters; that she was

very fleet, and on occasions had been known to mysteriously disappear; that they always had bad luck in the hunt when she appeared on the prairie; that she was, in fact, "bad medicine,"—an evil spirit. In common with all ignorant races of people, the Indians are very superstitious, and readily clothe any unusual or unexplainable natural appearance with a supernatural character. This tendency is fostered by their religion—a species of pantheism that reverences all natural objects.

Orders had gone forth that this white buffalo must be killed so that the evil spirit might be exorcised. She had been seen more quickly by hunters than by us and some of the most active of the young bucks were immediately in pursuit, anxious to display their prowess and skill, though no doubt secretly filled with fear. We whites were so much interested in the fate of the beautiful animal that we, too, started in the direction of the race across the prairie now left clear by the fleeing herd. As one after another of the pursuing Indians turned aside to join the main hunt it seemed that another supernatural escape of the "white spirit" was to be recorded, for truly the stories of her fleetness had not been exaggerated to the usual extent. But one young buck, mounted on a swift and hardy pony and anxious to distinguish himself, kept up the chase and after a hard ride was successful. His peculiar whoop of exultation drew attention to his success and to his locality and the chiefs of the hunt hastened in his direction and were soon followed by the entire band.

We were among the first to arrive. The gallant knight errant who had thus successfully overcome the spirit of evil supposed to be inclosed in the form of that noble and beautiful animal, dismounted from his horse and was standing motionless, silent and stolid beside her carcass. The chiefs held a very brief council and then stripped the successful hunter of all his arms and scanty paraphernalia, except his breech clout, took his horse from him and directed him to walk back to the home camp on the Missouri. This was intended as a punishment upon the slayer of the cow in order that the tribe might be in a safe position to plead in case the Deity was offended by the slaughter of this being of supposed supernatural character; they wanted to be on the safe side in any event. It may be here added that the young man was abundantly rewarded and honored for his bravery when the band returned from a successful hunt and (as will appear) a propitious disposition of the cow.

When preliminaries had been thus arranged with the gods the buffalo was very quickly and deftly skinned. The longest pole that could be obtained in the vicinity was cut, and upon this the snow white, silky robe was suspended high in the air, as an offering to the sun, the Supreme Deity of the Sioux. Then began a sort of religious ceremony in the form of a dance around the pole, accompanied by prayers and incantations. They asked for plenty of grass upon which the buffalo feeds, good luck in the hunt, success against their enemies, and a variety of minor blessings. This was kept up the remainder of the day and for into the night. Next morning when they started again on the trail of the buffalo herd, runners were sent back at intervals to observe whether the robe still remained in its place.

Two of the white hunters, who admired but did not reverence this handsome robe, conceived a violent desire to possess it and regarded it as a great pity that it should remain on the pole to be destroyed by buzzards or rotted by the elements. Next night, as we smoked around our fire on the outskirts of the Indian encampment, we discussed how it was possible to obtain the robe. A young French half-breed named Louis, one who, from long acquaintance and several favors, was very friendly with us, was among the Sioux. Him we took into our counsels. Knowing that his absence from the camp would not be remarked, nor his purpose suspected, we offered him ten dollars, a bright good eagle, if he would ride back, capture the robe and bring it to us. Louis was almost as superstitious about the white buffalo as were the Indians, though he was a Christian in religion. The pay was good enough, but he did not like the mission; but after some coaxing and mild ridicule of his fears, his pride as well as his cupidity was excited and he started. Shortly after midnight he stole into our wakened camp and, with a whisper of relief, delivered up the coveted robe and received his pay, besides a liberal present. Early next morning a courier was dispatched to look after the sacrifice and returned with the news that it was gone. It was immediately concluded that the sun had taken the offering, and the Sioux expressed much satisfaction at the auspicious omen. (The white men felt a satisfaction they did not express.) As the continued hunt was unusually successful it was promptly concluded by the tribe that the killing of the cow was most remarkable luck and the removal of the robe by the sun one of the most signal marks of favor ever bestowed upon the tribe.

During the following days that we remained with the wandering Indian camp we kept the white pelt carefully concealed in our blankets. By unanimous consent it was given to Dr. Peck, and when we reached Fort Peck again he tanned it in his office with chemicals. Soon afterward he left the northwest and returned to his home in New York State, and I have never since heard from either him or the hide of the most beautiful and singular animal I have ever seen on the prairie.

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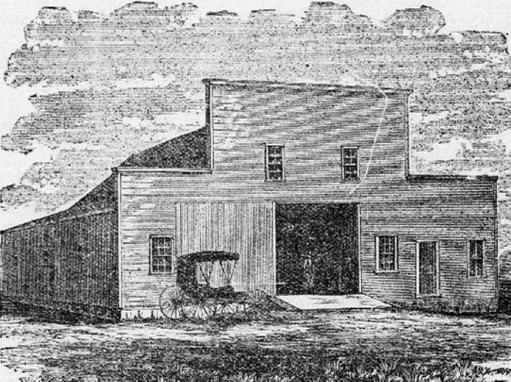
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