

# Who Was the Original Buffalo Bill?



DEATH OF BILLY COMSTOCK



THE GREAT BUFFALO-KILLING MATCH



COLONEL CODY ("BUFFALO BILL")

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

ASK the average American who was the original "Buffalo Bill" and the chances are that he will answer without hesitation "Why, William F. Cody, of course." And therein he will be wrong, for there were at least two other men, who earned that title and were known by it, before William Frederick Cody made it famous throughout the civilized world. This does not mean that Cody did not deserve the title, for he won it away from one of the others, fairly and squarely, in one of the most spectacular contests ever staged on this continent. But it does not detract any from his fame to pay tribute to the prowess of these other two and to set forth their claims to having been the "original Buffalo Bill," even though Cody was the greatest "Buffalo Bill" with all that that title implies.

The man from whom Cody won his title by "right of conquest" was William Comstock, a celebrated guide, hunter and one of the favorite scouts of General Phil Sheridan during the Indian war on the southern plains in 1867-69. Comstock is one of the "mystery men" of the frontier, in that but little is known of his early career. Public interest in him has been revived recently by the Wisconsin State Historical society, as shown by the following story sent out by the University of Wisconsin news service:

Some Wisconsin town is entitled to considerable fame as the birthplace of William Comstock, a pony express rider and Indian scout who was a comrade of Buffalo Bill during his romantic pre-circus days. Comstock is known to have been born in Wisconsin and to have left early to go west and become a daring scout.

The state historical society, according to Charles E. Brown and Alfred O. Barton, Madison, is anxious to learn where he was born, who his relatives were, and from what part of Wisconsin he went west.

Colonel Homer Wheeler, formerly of the Fifth cavalry, who knew Comstock when he was chief scout and interpreter at Fort Wallace, Kan., devotes part of a chapter of his book "Buffalo Days," published by Bobbs-Merrill, to Comstock. He is the authority for the statement that Comstock was "born in Wisconsin of good parentage and left home at an early age and was one of the original pony express riders at the time Cody and Wild Bill were similarly employed. He was the first owner of the Rose Creek ranch, situated on that stream, about eight miles from the post."

During his service at Fort Wallace Comstock had gained such renown as a buffalo hunter that for some time he had been known among the officers there as "Buffalo Bill" Comstock. In the meantime, William F. Cody, who had done some scouting for the troops at Fort Ellsworth and Fort Fletcher, had been offered a job as hunter by the Goddard Brothers, who had contracted to feed the laborers who were building the Kansas Pacific railroad

west along the Smoky Hill river. Cody proved himself a skillful hunter and filled his job so well that one of the workers made a jingle about him which went as follows:

Buffalo Bill, Buffalo Bill,  
Never missed and never will;  
Always aims and shoots to kill  
And the company pays his buffalo bill.

His fame as a buffalo hunter was spread by the officers at Fort Hays and came to the attention of the officers at Fort Wallace who believed that their "Buffalo Bill" Comstock had more right to that title than the Fort Hays officers "Buffalo Bill" Cody. So they raised their share of a purse of \$500 to be given to the winner of a buffalo killing contest between Cody and Comstock. Soon posters began to appear in the stations along the new railroad which read as follows:

GRAND EXCURSION  
to  
FORT SHERIDAN  
Kansas Pacific Railroad  
BUFFALO SHOOTING MATCH  
for  
\$500 A SIDE  
and the  
CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE WORLD  
between  
BILLY COMSTOCK (The famous scout)  
and  
W. F. CODY (Buffalo Bill)  
Famous Buffalo Killer for the Kansas Pacific Railroad.

Since the Kansas Pacific railroad was arranging the excursion, it was perhaps natural that it should give the title "Buffalo Bill" to its hunter. But their confidence in him was soon justified. The match was held 20 miles east of Fort Sheridan where buffalo were plentiful and the prairie was level enough for the great crowd of spectators (including Mrs. Cody, who had come on an excursion train which had been run from St. Louis) to see the chase. Cody was mounted on his famous hunting horse "Brigham" and armed with his equally famous needle-gun "Lucretia Borgia." Comstock used a Henry rifle which shot faster but did not hit so hard.

Having located a herd of buffalo, the two men rode into it, followed by referees. The herd split, with Comstock chasing one bunch and Cody the other. Cody soon had his bunch running in a circle and he dropped 38 of them, all within a small space. Comstock, who rode at the rear of his bunch shooting them down, killed 23 but they were scattered over a route of three miles. After a short rest another herd was sighted and again Cody was the winner by a score of 18 to 14.

The third run of the day was the occasion for a spectacular stunt by Cody. He took the bridle and saddle off Brigham, dashed into his bunch of buffaloes and shot down 12 more, then drove the last directly toward the wagons from which his wife and some of the other spectators were viewing the match. When the great beast was less than 50 yards from the wagon he sent it tumbling to earth as the grand finale of the hunt. His final score was 69 to Comstock's 48. Cody continued to hunt for the Kansas Pacific until it reached Sheridan and in the space of 17 months he killed 4,290 of the animals, an additional reason for his right to be known as the champion buffalo slayer of the plains.

A few months after this match Comstock's career came to a tragic close. While out on a scouting expedition on Walnut creek with Lieutenant Beecher (later killed at the battle of the Arica-karee or Beecher's Island in eastern Colorado), Comstock and Grover

were ordered to visit the camp of Chief Turkey Leg of the Cheyennes, who was a special friend of both scouts, on the headwaters of the Solomon to learn if any of his people had taken part in a murderous raid in the Saline valley. Their reception was very cool one and finally Turkey Leg told them that they had better leave, since his young men were greatly excited and he could not control them.

Accordingly they started out, accompanied by the chief's son and six other young warriors who professed the deepest friendship for the scouts. But in the midst of a friendly conversation some of the braves fell quickly to the rear and opened fire. Comstock fell from his horse at the first fire, instantly killed. Grover, badly wounded, also fell to the ground. Then, using the body of his dead comrade to protect himself, he opened fire on the Indians and quickly drove them out of range. For the rest of the day he held them at bay. Then under cover of darkness, he managed to escape and reached Fort Wallace two days later, half dead from the pain of his wound and the exhaustion of his long journey.

Nor was Comstock the only one to have a claim to the title of "Buffalo Bill," prior to Cody's. "Nearly thirty years later, after the name had rocked the arena in every capital in Europe and America, a rival claimant was brought forward as the original possessor of the title," writes Richard J. Walsh in "The Making of Buffalo Bill," published by Bobbs-Merrill last year. He continues:

He was William Matthewson of Wichita. It was said that in 1869, the year of the great drought, when grasshoppers darkened the Kansas skies and fell on the crops as thickly as a blizzard, Matthewson had gone out to kill buffalo, sending back wagontrains of meat to feed the starving settlers. And in their gratitude they dubbed him Buffalo Bill.

"How did William Cody happen to call himself Buffalo Bill?" an interviewer asked Matthewson.

"Well," he replied, "you see God worked for me when he was a young fellow. I reckon he had begun to read Indian stories and see how much was to be made by that kind of a reputation, and he was always fond of talk and show. I never was any hand to wear my hair long and go swaggering around the country blowing about what I had done. Cody knows he had no real right to the name, but if he wants to show off as a dime novel hero, I have no objection."

The querulous outbreak shocked and grieved the public of 1894. Reporters hurried to quit Cody about Matthewson. He replied: "I never laid eyes on him and of course never worked for him. But this is the first intimation I have ever had that any reputable person other than myself has ever claimed the title of Buffalo Bill. A few years ago there were as many claimants for my name as there were wild yellow flowers that gave their name to the state. It reminds me of a portion of a sonnet finishing: But as fondly loves on to the close, As the sunflower gives to his God as he sets The same look he gave as he rose.

The aptness of the quotation was not made clear by the interviewer.

Considering that in the sixties the plains were black with fifteen million buffalo and that thousands of men were killing them, it was not strange that many a nickname was based on the magic word. There was Buffalo Jones, there was Buffalo Chips, and there were other Buffalo Bills.

"But Cody seems to have won the title fairly," says Walsh in conclusion, and then tells of the famous contest with Comstock, after which "the referees declared Cody winner of the prize money, and, by the same decision, as he claimed, finally confirmed his right to be known as Buffalo Bill."

## CARING FOR AUTO IN WINTER SEASON

### Suggestions for Starting Car in Extremely Cold Weather.

During the recent subzero blast which swept over the greater part of the country, many thousands of automobiles could not be started after being parked in the open. The mechanical first aid department of the Chicago Motor club offers the following aids to starting in frigid temperatures.

#### Use Lightest Lubricants.

1. Ask the agency of your car or a reliable filling station the lightest lubricants, compatible with safe lubrication, in the crank case and gear box.

2. Before stepping on the starter see to it that the gear shift lever is in neutral and depress the clutch pedal. Open the hand feel throttle one-quarter of the way or more.

3. Step on the starter and use the choke sparingly.

#### Parking for Long Period.

5. When it is expected that the car will remain parked in the open for a long period, it is wise, when shutting the motor off, to speed it slightly and then shut off the ignition and choke it at the same time. This procedure causes a gasoline vapor to be present in the cylinders when the motor is next started. This practice should be used infrequently, however, as the gasoline drawn into the cylinders tends to seep past the pistons into the crank case, where it dilutes the oil. The oil should be changed frequently if this trick is resorted to repeatedly.

6. The ignition system and carburetor adjustment must be correct in order to enjoy easy starting.

### Bad Brakes Responsible for Serious Accidents

Faulty brakes are responsible for more than one-third of the serious automobile accidents in the United States attributed to defective equipment, according to a survey made public here by the American Research foundation.

"Analysis of accident records in 13 large cities and 5 states," says the survey, "disclosed that of 4,899 motor vehicles involved in accidents in which defective equipment was reported, 39 per cent had defective brakes. For all localities investigated, improper lights account for 34 per cent of the defects reported, defective steering mechanism for 15 per cent, and other defects for 11 per cent.

"With faulty brakes classed as the commonest type of defective automobile equipment, the necessity of care in correcting variations and testing brakes at frequent intervals if automobile accident totals are to be reduced. With the speed of modern driving and the necessity for quick stops in traffic, reliable brakes spell the difference between safety and disaster."

### AUTOMOBILE NOTES

The life of a car can be greatly lengthened by keeping it tightened.

Be considerate at all times. Other users of the road have equal rights.

Rusty rims should be cleaned with a wire brush and then painted with red lead.

The first tourist camp for motorists in Norway is to be established on the main highway into Trondhjem.

Stop—when in doubt—at railroad crossings, behind street cars taking on or discharging passengers. Better to cause a delay than an accident.

The battery should be kept at its maximum charge at all times, and never permitted to stand in a discharged state.

### REMOVAL OF SNOW BY CHEMICAL PROCESS



The removal of snow by chemical process is demonstrated on ice-coated Brooklyn streets. The pellets of calcium chloride used are spread on the snow and in a short time a brine is formed which melts the snow and forms a slush which may be easily washed away.

### THE MOTOR QUIZ

How Many Can You Answer?  
Q. Under what conditions is horn blowing useless and when should liberal use of the horn be made?

Ans. Horn blowing is useless in traffic jams because it not only fails to clear the jam but causes confusion and many times angers others concerned. The proper place to make liberal use of the horn is when passing other cars, driving on curves, mountain roads and blind intersections on country roads.

Q. What three bad practices shorten the life of tires?

Ans. Turning corners at high speed, thereby shifting the weight of the car to one side; sudden stepping on the accelerator, causing the wheels to spin; rushing up to corners and slamming on the brakes.

Q. If spark plugs are missing what particular trouble would be likely to develop?

Ans. Owing to incomplete combustion gasoline may go by the pistons and rings and into the crankcase, with consequent oil dilution, causing excessive wear to moving parts, bearings, cylinder walls, and pistons. It is also accompanied by loss of power on hard pulls, hard starting, slow pick-up, and generally speaking it produces a sluggish engine.

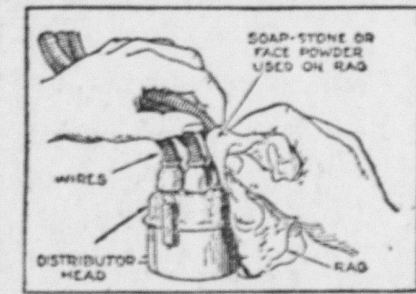
Q. What was the increase of gasoline consumption and exports for the first seven months of 1929 as compared with the same period for 1928?

Ans. Consumption increased 14.6 per cent and exports 13 per cent.

### Powder Coated Rag Will Prevent Short Circuits

A short in the high tension wires leading to the spark plugs, caused by moisture, usually occurs where the wires are clustered together.

When this happens, dry the wires, one at a time, with a cloth on which is placed a generous amount of either soapstone or face powder, preferably soapstone. In drying the wires entering the distributor cap be careful not to remove more than one



Drying High Tension Wires With Powder-Coated Rag Avoids Short Circuits From Moisture.

wire at a time unless it is well understood how to replace them.

Keeping the wires and the outside of the distributor cap exceptionally clean and using soapstone in the manner described will result in keeping the rubber insulation in good condition and no trouble will be experienced from rain. Of course, this suggestion applies only to ordinary rubber-covered high tension wire. Special high tension wire covered with varnished fabric should not be treated in this way. Such wire should be wiped with a clean dry cloth only.—Popular Science Monthly.

### Commandments Made for Those Who Drive Cars

Just what motorists should do to promote safe driving has been given by the Automobile Club of Southern California in a list of "Ten Commandments." They are:

Keep your car in sound condition; keep your car under control; keep your eyes on the road; never fight for the right of way; go along with the procession; be courteous; know your local traffic rules; take pride in your driving skill; don't mix liquor, worry or anger with gasoline; study local maps and experiment for shorter and less congested routes.

## Get poisons out of system . . .

Doctors know that this modern scientific laxative works efficiently in smaller doses because you chew it. Safe and mild for old and young.

### Feen-a-mint FOR CONSTIPATION



**Soviet Countries**  
The Soviet union includes six constituent republics, the Russian republic (R. S. F. S. R.), white Russia, Ukraine, Transcaucasia, Turcoman and Uzbek. The R. S. F. S. R. includes 11 autonomous republics, Bashkir, Tartar, Kirghiz, Dagestan, Crimean, Yakutsk, Karelia, Chuvash, German republic on Volga, Buriato-Mongolia, Kazakskala. The estimate of population in 1926 was 147,013,000; there were 182 different nationalities with 149 languages. The Tartars are Mongolians; most of the Afghans are Aryans, though some of the tribes of Afghanistan are of Mongolian origin.



### Don't neglect a COLD

DISTRESSING cold in chest or throat—that so often leads to something serious—generally responds to good old Muterole with the first application. Should be more effective if used **once every hour for five hours.**

Working like the trained hands of a masseur, this famous blend of oil of mustard, camphor, menthol and other helpful ingredients brings relief naturally. It penetrates and stimulates blood circulation, helps to draw out infection and pain. Used by millions for 20 years. Recommended by doctors and nurses. Keep Muterole handy—jars and tubes.

To Mothers—Muterole is also made in milder form for babies and small children. Ask for Children's Muterole.



### Few Musk Oxen in Canada

There is but one herd of musk oxen upon the Canadian mainland. There are about 250 animals in the herd which is now kept in the Theion game sanctuary near Great Slave lake.

Used to It  
Henry—Can you beat it? I called him a liar, a fool and a crook—and he never said a word!  
Thomas—Force of habit, old chap. He's a football referee.—Answers.



### Is Your Rest Disturbed?

Deal Promptly with Kidney Irregularities.

If bothered with bladder irritations, getting up at night and constant backache, don't take chances. Help your kidneys with Doan's Pills. Used for more than 40 years. Endorsed the world over. Sold by dealers everywhere.

50,000 Users Endorse Doan's:

John Greenier, 29 N. Sheridan Ave., Indianapolis, Ind., says: "I was troubled with headaches. The kidney secretions burned and contained sediment. I felt tired out and had no energy. Doan's Pills put me in good shape and I have used them several times with good results."



### DOAN'S PILLS

A Stimulant Diuretic to the Kidneys

### PISO'S for COUGHS

PISO'S gives quick, effective relief. Pleasant, soothing and healing. Excellent for children—contains no opiates. Successfully used for 65 years. 35c and 60c sizes.

QUICK RELIEF