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Investigator, Nannie Lee Burns,
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Interview with W. B. McAlpin,
10 B NR Miami, Oklahoma.
Comanche.

WITH BUFFALO BILL.

It was while I was serving as a Texas Ranger and had been awarded the championship for my rifle shooting that I met Buffalo Bill's manager and he offered me a much larger salary than I was receiving, to go with that show. It was finally arranged that my wife, Beata, and I were to put on a shooting act wherein each in turn shot an apple from the neck of the other and I was also to get together a company of full blood Indians to accompany the show.

I returned to the Comanche country and gave a feast and gave to the tribe... Buffalo meat, venison, turkey and prairie chicken and picked out sixteen horses and the squaws who chose to go along and took this band and with my wife and the Indians joined Buffalo Bill's show at the Exposition at New Orleans.

The Indians were to receive \$10.00 per week and their expense. The squaws who went along were to have their expenses and anything that they might earn from the sale of their bead-work, etc. Under Buffalo Bill we sailed from New York on a Hamberg-American Steamer of which Captain Vogle was the captain. As we had to take our horses we could not take a fast steamship so the trip took nearly three weeks. Our horses were placed in box stalls and even they were sea-sick on the trip over.

We landed first at Liverpool and went direct from there to London.

We remained one month in England and while there our show was attended by the Royal Family. Queen Victoria liked it so much that three streets in London were named for

Buffalo Bill. One was named, Buffalo; one was named Bill, and the other Cody. Queen Victoria requested that Ne-neta and I appear before her and she decorated both of us and bestowed upon my wife the title of Princess Ne-neta.

From England, the show crossed to Hamburg, Germany, and at Charlottenburg, three miles out of Berlin we next appeared for a month. Here the Kaiser and his wife attended

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our show and in their appreciation of the shooting act of Ne-nets and myself, she was presented with a diamond studded medal with the royal coat-of-arms and I was presented with the Iron Cross and Diamond Crown. In Germany there were booking agents and we were offered a much better offer than we had in our present position, so my wife and I left the show and were booked to appear next in Russia.

In Russia.

The booking agent here had booked Annie Oakley, the star, to appear in Russia but from the fact that in her act she used American guns and shells invented by Dr. Cerver, she was not allowed to cross the border but we were favored as the Kaiserein of Germany who was a daughter of Queen Victoria and a sister of the Czarina of Russia wrote to the Czarina at St. Petersburg and we, after a delay of fifteen days, were permitted to proceed to the Russian capital. We also used military guns but it was only the personal letter of the Czar that put us across the border.

While I was in Russia, I shot a match against the Russian champion in March, 1890, and winning it I was decorated by

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the Czar and given another medal, a gold double-headed eagle, lettered in Russian, a large diamond, called the Eastern Star valued at \$22,000.00 and my salary was raised to a thousand roubles for a single performance.

We remained in Russia for three months, appearing in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Warsaw.

Leaving Russia we returned through Germany to Berlin but now my wife and I were appearing in the theaters, park and gardens.

In traveling through Switzerland we met Dr. Carver, the endurance shot. In Italy, the Pope gave me a gold cross set with diamonds and combined with it was a rosary.

Back to America.

We returned to America and misfortune had overtaken my father's business so I invested \$55,000.00 of my earnings in a business at Newport News, thinking that the income would help my parents. Misfortune overtook this venture as the business house burned up completely shortly after I bought the business.

My wife and I continued to appear in our shooting act at various places over the country, and knowing that a

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mistake of either of us meant the death of the other, we made an agreement that if at any time one should accidentally kill the other that we would die together, and each time before our act we kissed each other good-bye.

Back to Europe.

We made a second trip to Europe with Dr. Carver and Dr. Whitney and appeared in several European capitals, including Paris.

Returning to America we began to take contracts for ourselves over the country, and appeared one season with P. T. Barnum when he was alone in the show business, and also went into Medicine Show business with Healy and Bigelow, a Kickapoo Indian Medicine Show. Sometimes we put on our own show and sometimes we were with other companies.

We could put on a two-hour show alone. W. V. Mallenberg wrote an original play for us called, "Life on The Plains." We continued to fill various engagements and appear both together and apart until one night when I was appearing in a show in another part of the country, my wife decided to put on our act at Lynn, Massachusetts, with a young man there.

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He moved and she killed him. She was acquitted by the judge provided she would not shoot again and if she ever put on that act again the charge was to be held against her. After this I continued to appear as Texas Jack. She returned to her people and spent much of her time with them and while I was appearing with a Spanish-Mexican Show she died in either 1892, or 1893 at Fort Sill. Later when I returned, I had a religious ceremony performed over her grave.

Alone.

Now I took various assignments which took me to the different parts of the country.

One day when riding through the country near Alpine, Texas. I heard some shots and being low on water rode over to see the cause and found the family of James Pell, including his wife, three children and the cowboys all dead. They had been shot. Following the tracks that led toward the Rio Grande, I overtook the Mexicans who were in the sage brush and dropped around them and killed eight of the ten Mexicans when they attacked me. After the remaining

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two fled I hid myself and waited for them to return when I secured the other two and then I fastened the ten bodies to their horses and took them to the Ranger's office in Austin.

Here I was told that I had broken the law of Texas; that I was not a Ranger now and that I must stand trial for what I had done even though I had rendered the State of Texas a favor, as I no longer held the commission of a Texas Ranger. At a formal trial I was sentenced for life to Fort Leavenworth. It was understood that I was not to be considered a prisoner but was to serve as a gun-guard until such time as a pardon could be procured for me.

At Fort Leavenworth.

I was not a prisoner at any time. I always wore my gun. I was a guard on the west wall and was free to receive letters and was respected by the governor. I held the key to the gun case. It was while here that I heard Mother Booth of the Salvation Army for the first time and here I was converted.

Through the efforts of W. P. Campbell, one time president of the Oklahoma Historical Society and the

warden and other friends I was, after three years and two months, paroled and left Leavenworth in 1906 and came directly to Kansas City, Missouri, to Colonel Scott, the Division Superintendent of the Salvation Army, and was sent by him direct to Chicago to report to Commander Estell. Later, I received a full pardon from the Governor.

With the Salvation Army.

I laid aside my guns and dressed in Indian costume. I was to visit the various posts and lecture at each and help in a general way with the collections.

I continued doing these things until in 1910 it was arranged for me to make a horseback ride around the world, under the auspices of the Salvation Army:

On Horseback.

My friend, Joe Miller of the 101 Ranch, was to furnish my horses and the Muskogee Phoenix sponsored the ride.

I still wore my hair long, so tacking it up, taking off my feathers and putting them in a flour sack and donning a big Stetson hat on May 22, 1910, I started from in front of the office of the Muskogee Phoenix. I was to

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have three years for the trip: I rode one horse and the other carried a light pack-outfit by the means of which I was to camp out every night. In addition to my camp-outfit, I carried a slicker and blanket. I was accompanied by my dog, a black bulldog named Texas Jack, who was trained to look after my horse. I was to register at the post office of every town I passed through.

Miss Alice Robertson gave me my first cancelled stamp and also my last when I returned three years later. Wagoner, eighteen miles away from Muskogee, was my first over-night stop.

My first horse was poisoned and died twenty miles north of Wagoner. I wired Miller to send me another, and shipping my belongings to Chetopa, Kansas, proceeded to that place. I received my horse at Wichita, Kansas, and I went on west and on the desert my dog died.

The Phoenix, the Indian Farm and Home and other papers printed the story of my trip so I will pass that over by saying that I went from San Francisco to South America, then to Japan, China, India, Arabia, Africa, from Cairo, Egypt

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to Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, England and from there back to New York, and by horseback back to the office of the Phoenix on May 2, 1913, twenty days ahead of the scheduled time for my return. My eighth horse dropped dead before the office. Here my pictures were made and were published in the various papers. I brought back more than a million stamps of the post offices in the towns that I had passed through.

The horses that I had ridden were branded and so advertised the 101 Ranch.

Walking.

Two years later in 1915, I entered the race and walked against Edward Payton Weston, the English Champion, and Dan O'Leary, the Irish Champion from New York, to California. On the way I fell insensible in Colorado but recovered and finished in a hundred and two days while it took my opponents a hundred and four days to walk the same distance. I was still giving all my efforts to the Salvation Army, and they financed my expenses in the horseback ride and in the walking marathon, and for one

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of these events alone I turned over to General Booth a check for \$50,000.00, the price of the victory in the race. This check was sent from the First National Bank of Muskogee.

Marriage.

On December 2, 1930, I was married to Mrs. Maud Pyle of Anderson, Indiana, the widow of one of my fellow workers in the Salvation Army and we came directly to Miami, where we have made our home since.

Comments and Conclusion.

I have never used my father's name since he disowned me at the age of nine years until I came to Miami in 1930, preferring to be known as William Hicks.

My life has been an eventful one and I have had many strange experiences and many narrow escapes.

I have faced death in many phases; on the battle field, on the stage, in a death tussle with a drunken Indian, he being chased by the wild beasts, and I like to recall those days.

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Only last week, Wm. Birkmire, one of the men who accompanied Buffalo Bill over-seas as a musician, came to see me and I showed him and his wife some shooting acts that I used to do and taught his wife a new one.

My father sent for me when he was dying, but I was with a show and did not reach him until after his death but was present at his funeral when he was buried in the Arlington Cemetery at Washington, D. C.

