EDWARD ZANE CARROLL JUDSON (NED BUNTLINE)--
THE GRANDDADDY OF DIME NOVELISTS

BY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
(JOURNALISM and MASS COMMUNICATION)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1973

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INTRODUCTION

In the spirit of westward expansion in 1846, politician and editor, William Gilpin stated:

> The untransacted destiny of the American people is to subdue the continent--to rush over this vast field to the Pacific Ocean--to animate the many hundreds of its people to look /westward/...[1]

During the 1840's a group of "animators" of the West began to emerge. These writers, who were later called dime novelists, were the earliest promoters of western legends. They began creating new frontier heroes for the public, using settings in the trans-Mississippi West.

Hired by publishers to turn out sensational stories in modern production line style, dime novelists represented a "hard pressed hack's" view of what the public should have. Seldom relying on accurate accounts, their material relied constantly on the words "true," "authentic," or "factual accounts", in both title and context.

One of the earliest of these novelists was Edward Zane Carroll Judson. Using the "nom de plume" of Ned Buntline, he wrote more than two hundred serials and paperbacks with the stated intent of "writing trash for the masses." Through his efforts, he became something of a mythmaker for frontier adventure stories and tales of

rugged individuals battling an unknown wilderness.

At first, like many American authors, Buntline took up his pen and filled reader's shelves with narratives of ships and hardy men. However, as America continued to cast its eye westward, he began writing tales of the wilderness, of settlers on a new frontier, and of rugged frontiersmen. His format for writing became embodied in the dime novel literature, a literature that formally began in the 1860s and continued into the 1900s. Journalism historian Edwin Emery remarked that by 1900 even as literacy increased and people became more selective in their reading habits, the public still bought dime novels by the millions.[2]

A study of Buntline's activities as a novelist and journalist serves a twofold purpose. First, it will show how an unscrupulous journalist-novelist preyed on the public's appetite for sensational and unusual tales of adventure. A second objective of this study will show how Buntline, thinking he knew what the East expected of the West, created the legend of William F. Cody as frontier hero. Historian Allan Nevins has stated that folk legends furnish us with unquestionable information about ourselves:

> In legend...we find values that become the greater the nearer we approach modern times, and the farther we leave primitive social conditions behind...not even American historians can ignore legends and ballads.[3]

By looking at the methods Buntline used to generate myth, especially in the case of Cody, this study will further our understanding of how folk myth is created. Additionally, it will show how myth fit the larger, societal theme of westward expansion.

Three studies have been done on Buntline. Frederick Pond, a friend and associate of Buntline, wrote a fragmentary and incomplete biography in 1919 entitled, The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline. A thesis written in 1937 by Mary Washburn Hasty, E. Z. C. Judson, Adventurer, Journalist, and Writer of Tales, was limited in scope and centered on Buntline's early magazine effort in 1844-45. The most recent study of Buntline's life was Jay Monaghan's 1952 work, The Great Rascal, which amplified Pond's earlier sketch.

Several studies have focused on the era of cheap fiction in America. Albert Johannsen's two volume study, The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime & Nickel Novels, is a comprehensive study of this publishing house which gave the term dime novels to cheap fiction. A brief extract of Judson's career is contained in one volume but the author stated: "The life and adventures of Colonel Judson are so lurid and varied, so much of the same character as those of the heroes of his own sensational novels, that it is impossible to write a fair account of him in the small space available here."[4]

Edmund Pearson's Dime Novels discussed the rising popularity of cheap fiction during the 1860-1890 period and cited Buntline's influence in the field. Frank Luther Mott's five volume study, History of American Magazines, referenced Buntline's magazine and noted the rise of sensational literature in the Civil War era.

Various references have been made to Buntline's promotion of Buffalo Bill. William F. Cody, in Buffalo Bill's Own Story, told of his initial meeting with the novelist and of the subsequent stage show which resulted from this association. The most authoritative work on Buffalo Bill is Donald Russell's, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill, which attempts to sift fact from fiction in the Cody myth.

To determine the status of past and current scholarly research relative to Ned Buntline, his role as mythmaker for the West, and his part in the promotion of the Cody legend, a Datrix computer search was conducted by Xerox University Microfilms of all theses submitted to them from March 1938 to 1970. Results showed that they have no record of any study relating to Ned Buntline. A search of Journalism Abstracts yielded the same results.

No study now exists which documents Buntline's efforts as a novelist/journalist and examines his role in contributing to a type of fiction that has been called "the literary outcropping of a pioneer people."[5]

While the American public acquired the reading habit in the mid-19th century, writers like Buntline played on their curiousity of the West and created legends for profit. This study will describe Buntline's efforts to exploit this mass audience for profit and attempt to explain his role as mythmaker for the Western Plains.

Two questions for which this study seeks answers are:

1) How did Buntline employ topical themes, that is for the 1840-1880 public,--temperance, nativism, and rugged individualism--in his novels and serialized stories to attract the masses and enhance his sale of books?

2) How did Buntline create and generate folk-myth? Did folk-myth serve a purpose in the American society of 1840-1880?

Although one might make various distinctions in defining myth, by differentiating between myth, sagas, or folk-lore, this study subsumes these terms under the heading myth or folk myth. Therefore, the definition of myth in this study will mean creating a deified public image of a person, place, or event in combination with truth and fiction. That is, at the heart of each folk myth is truth, however, the writer embellishes the tale to make it seem more appealing than reality.

This definition of myth was used in evaluating Buntline's novels and serial stories in an effort to show the types of heroes and legends he created. Additionally, this study accepts Joseph Campbell's standards of myth

as valid and will demonstrate how his functions of myth were applicable in the Cody-Buntline association.

In completing this thesis, I have received considerable help and encouragement from others. I must thank the United States Marine Corps for the privilege of being able to study at the University of Wisconsin; Professor Douglas C. Jones, my thesis adviser, who gave a lecture with a "story in it" which provided the basis for this study; my typist, Mrs. Donna Mlsna; and a friend and colleague, Walter S. Deforest. My thanks also goes to the Wisconsin State Historical Society; Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois; National Archives; and Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. for providing me with primary source material for this study.

A special word of thanks is reserved for my family; my wife, Vicki, and son Chris, who have provided me with love and support in this effort.

FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Mission of the North American People, Geographical, Social and Political (Philadelphia, 1874), p. 130, quoted in Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 40.

2. Edwin Emery, The Press and America (3rd ed.; New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 290.

3. Allan Nevins, The Gateway to History (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 82-83.

4. Albert Johannsen, The House of Beadle and Adams, II (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), p. 167.

5. Ibid., I, p. xxiii.

CHAPTER I

JUDSON DISCOVERS A MARKET

THE RISE OF SENSATIONAL LITERATURE

The sensational adventure story began in the era of Jacksonian democracy. The common man, more literate than ever before, acquired the reading habit with the penny press. The transition to tales of men against the sea, forest, or frontier was not a difficult one. These heroes were simple men who lived amidst danger and overcame great odds with courage and honesty. The average citizen was able to understand and identify with these tales of adventure, moreso than with the works of a Sir Walter Scott, Edgar Allen Poe, or Nathaniel Hawthorne.[1]

Technological changes in printing made numerous weekly story papers possible. These papers catered to the mass audience's desire for "sub-literary" adventure stories. This literature, a forerunner of the dime novel, was frequently called "steam literature" or "shilling shockers."[2]

Simultaneously with the appearance of these adventure tales was publication of Western periodicals. Pioneer editors were interested in promoting a western literature and felt that eastern periodicals had failed to

recognize Western talent. Historian Merle Curti said: "These western literary pioneers believed that the time had come for the creation of a western literature differing from that of the East in much the way that life differed in the West."[3]

A contemporary writer of the 1830s remarked that novelists and historians had done very little for the great mass of people, being more concerned with nobility and the rich than with the common people.[4] However, a novelist did appear who began writing tales of adventure for the common man. His name was Edward Zane Carroll Judson, better known as "Ned Buntline." And his novels had a definite appeal to the workingman of America.[5]

Judson's writing career began while he was a seventeen year old midshipman in the Second Seminole Indian War 1835-1842. He resigned from the Navy in 1842 and headed for the Yellowstone Region. There he served two years as a fur trapper for the Northwest Fur Company.[6] Taking his experiences as a sailor and fur trapper with him, he went to Cincinnati in 1842 where he began several western periodicals. Before examining these magazines, some background on his Navy career is in order.

MIDSHIPMAN JUDSON

Levi Carroll Judson wanted his son Edward to become a lawyer like himself. The elder Judson was supposed to

have instructed his son that he would personally supervise the choice of his profession.[7] Instead Judson rebelled and enlisted in the U.S. Navy on August 2, 1837, as a second-class boy. Young Judson did not remain in the enlisted ranks for long. On February 10, 1838, he was meritoriously commissioned a midshipman by President Martin Van Buren.[8]

According to Judson, he received the commission as a result of his heroic action off Staten Island, while attached to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. As punishment for quarrelling with an officer, he and seventeen others were told to row across the East River to Staten Island. Given instructions to fill the boat with sand and return before nightfall, their mission took longer than expected.

Rowing in the dark, the men noticed a steam ferry coming straight at them. The steamer hit their boat on the side, throwing everyone overboard. Judson remained calm, helped everyone reach the rowboat, and then signalled for help. A ship, the Helen Morley, rescued the sailors and returned them to land. When the men returned to their base, they told the officers of Judson's valor and he was subsequently promoted.[9]

Following his promotion, Midshipman Judson was reassigned to the Gulf of Mexico squadron, aboard the ship-of-war Levant. Some years later, a sailor who had served with Judson aboard the Levant recalled his first meeting with him. He said that as they headed for the Gulf, Judson challenged thirteen of them to a duel in one

day. According to this account, Judson came out of the duels unscratched while four of his adversaries were marked for life.[10] Shortly after this incident, Judson was transferred to the revenue cutter Otsego.

The Otsego was one of three ships of the squadron called "The Mosquito Fleet" commanded by Lieutenant Commander J. T. McLaughlin. This squadron assisted General Zachary Taylor in the Second Seminole Indian War and had the mission of patrolling the coastal and inland waterways in the vicinity of Key Biscayne, Florida.[11]

Official records of the "Fleet's" activities show that the heat and swamps claimed more casualties than fights with the Seminoles.[12] However, Judson logged in his memory experiences in the war and saved them for later use. He wrote one tale while in the Navy that established his pseudonymn of "Ned Buntline."

THE CAPTAIN'S PIG

The Knickerbocker Magazine, published in New York and edited by Lewis Gaylord Clark, had an 1837 circulation of 5,000, at $5.00 a year.[13] Midshipman Judson submitted his first adventure tale to the Knickerbocker entitled "The Captain's Pig". He confided that the pen name of Ned Buntline (a buntline is a rope reinforcing the bottom of a square sail) had to be used to hide his true identity from the ship's captain.[14] Editor Clark rejected the article.

Undaunted, Buntline financed the publication of the story. He said that when the captain read the pamphlet, he offered a reward of $100 for the name of either author or publisher. But the captain found neither.[15] With the printing of this article, "Ned Buntline" was born, a name that became synonomous with sensational, distorted adventure stories.

Buntline eventually tired of Navy life and submitted his resignation after some five years of service. He was discharged on June 8, 1842.[16] He went to the Yellowstone River area and became a fur trapper for the Northwest Fur Company.[17] Details of his activities in the Yellowstone Region remain unknown. However, it appears that the urge for writing was stronger than the one for adventure as a fur trapper.

On May 3, 1844, an advertisement for Ned Buntline's Magazine appeared in the Cincinnati Daily Enquirer.

EDITOR NED

Cincinnati was the chief magazine center in the West from 1840 through the Civil War. By the census of 1850, the city was ranked fourth among American cities in the number of serial publications. Historian Frank Luther Mott said that Cincinnati's chief aim was directed at becoming the literary capital of the West, in an attempt to be independent of New York and Boston.[18]

Numerous publishing houses appeared in the city, one

of which was Robinson and Jones. This firm, specializing in cheap romance thrillers and serial publications, soon developed an extensive business. In May 1844, Robinson and Jones acted as advertising agents for Ned Buntline's Magazine.[19]

A prospectus for Buntline's magazine described it as a thirty-two page monthly publication. Robinson and Jones publicized it as superior to anything being printed in the West. As a gimmick to get free publicity for the magazine, all editors of Western newspapers who printed the ad were to receive a free, one year subscription.[20]

Contents of Buntline's publication were to include: biographical sketches of historical figures; yarns of the sea; moral and scientific essays; and army and navy news. Additionally, the magazine was to contain only "Western writers of acknowledged worth."[21]

The appeal of this publication to Western writers marked a departure from earlier magazine efforts. Up to this point, many serial publications contained pirated material from English and French authors. Editor Buntline was adamant about European literature flooding the market. He clearly stated his policy:

> We are too strongly imbued with a home feeling, and the necessity of encouraging our own literature, to say much in favor of works which every-day become more piratical.[22]

Throughout his life, Buntline would maintain an intense

feeling of nationalism often bordering on the extreme.

Buntline sent a copy of the magazine East to Lewis Gaylord Clark, hoping to get a favorable review in the widely read Knickerbocker. The editor who once spurned him, now gave his magazine a word of praise. In the July 1844 Knickerbocker, Clark noted the appearances of Ned Buntline's Magazine and said it appeared capably edited and well staffed.[23]

Despite the Knickerbocker's praise, the appearance of Buntline's magazine was short-lived. It lasted six months as Buntline shifted his interest to another publication effort.

WESTERN LITERARY JOURNAL AND MONTHLY REVIEW

In October, 1844 Judson met Lucius A. Hine a 25-year-old law school drop-out. Together, they started a new publication called the Western Literary Journal and Monthly Review.

Hine had considerable publication experience from William D. Gallagher of Cincinnati. A leader in the development of Western periodicals, Gallagher published the Cincinnati Mirror and The Western Literary Journal while reporting for the Louisville Courier Journal and Ohio State Journal.[24] Hine eventually took over as publisher of Gallagher's periodicals.

Judson may have needed a man with Hine's expertise to start a new publication. But his primary reason in

forming the partnership was financial support. Hine furnished $1,000 for the venture, while Judson supplied $500 and his name as editor.

The Cincinnati Enquirer announced the appearance of a "new western literary enterprise" on October 19, 1844. It was an appeal to local and regional pride:

> Citizens of Cincinnati and the West--we ask from you a liberal patronage for a periodical conducted by your own citizens, contributed by your ablest writers...Western readers would do well to subscribe to such a work and lay their Eastern publications aside.[25]

Robinson and Jones were the publishers and promoters of Judson's latest effort, so this advertisement was probably their handiwork. The first edition appeared in November and gave some idea of the magazine's objectives.

Judson attempted to appeal to local pride by having William Gallagher write the introduction for the first edition. Gallagher wished the new magazine success and added that there were several obstacles to publishing a western periodical:

1. The western newspaper press is indifferent to literary works that have originated in the West. At the same time, the press gives publicity to similar works published in the Atlantic cities and to reprints coming from the European press.

2. Western writers fail to contribute to periodicals published in their own section.

3. Subscribers fail to make payment for the periodicals that they take.

4. Western periodicals fail to separate editing and publishing departments.[26]

Judson commented that the Literary Journal would be careful to avoid these pitfalls. Moreover, his objective for the magazine was to give the western people a good and readable periodical by advancing American literature. His long term goal was to have a larger circulation than any publication in the Union. Readers were told in the first issue to look for a series of his adventures in the Seminole Indian War. Judson told his subscribers: "these stories are written by one who was engaged in that perilous service, and if these stories are roughly told, all have the merit of truth."[27]

A subscription to the Literary Journal cost $3.00 a year and Judson said for this price readers got more material than was offered by any other magazine in the Union. While Judson was somewhat presumptuous, the magazine did attract some reputable talent.

The Literary Journal was similar in format to periodicals being published at the time. Frank Luther Mott in his analysis of American magazines wrote that the Journal showed real promise. William Henry Venable, evaluating literature of the Ohio Valley, said that almost all the leading writers of the West contributed to Judson's magaine. Several of these writers deserve mention.[28]

Albert Pike, editor of the Arkansas Advocate and Memphis Appeal, was a well-known figure in the West. He wrote a letter to Judson which appeared in the Journal, welcoming "Ned" and his new journalistic effort. Lyman C. Draper was also a contributor to the magazine. He wrote an article for the Journal entitled, "General George Rogers Clarke." In 1854, Draper became Secretary of the Wisconsin State Historical Society.[29]

Lady writers were not forgotten. Julia Dumont wrote an article in the first December issue encouraging higher education for women. Her argument in "Female Training" was that too few parents feel the same desire for their daughters to be educated as they do for their sons. Later, she became the first woman to acquire recognition as a writer in the Mississippi Valley.[30]

Amelia Welby, a reputed poetess for the Louisville Courier Journal, wrote a number of poems for the magazine.

Together with these authors, Judson's contributions and editorials in the magazine reflected a style of writing that would later become popular in dime novel formats. That is, Judson combined historical fact with touches of excitement and adventure to make the account more appealing to the reader. Later, this would be a Ned Buntline trademark.

His adventure tales in the Literary Journal included: "The Right of Search," "The Last of the

Buccaneers; A Yarn of the Eighteenth Century," and a series of articles called "Sketches of the Florida War."[31]

The best example of his combination fact/fiction appeared in his "Sketches." This series consisted of tales of his participation in the Second Seminole Indian War, 1835-1842. By the time these stories were published, the Seminole War was still fresh in the public's mind, especially in the region where Judson's magazine circulated.

The Second Seminole War was a continuation of an earlier conflict that began after the War of 1812. In this first effort, the federal government tried to confine the Seminoles and Negroes to a specified area in Florida, and then tried to move them to a reservation located west of the Mississippi River. The second effort was a seven year campaign of United States forces and state militia against forces of Seminole and Negro warriors. By 1842, most of the Seminole Indian chiefs had signed treaties which allowed 300 or more of their people to live unmolested in the Everglades and in portions of southwest Florida.[32]

Many of the stories that Judson wrote were based on his experiences while attached to the "Mosquito Fleet" commanded by J. T. McLaughlin.

The first number of his "Sketches" was entitled, "A Cruise in Lake Okachoobee /sic/." In this account, he told of a three day canoe scout in the Everglades near Okeechobee. Judson described the region as being so dense

with foliage that the sun failed to penetrate it. However, the soldiers continued to row through the snake-infested swamp. Action was not long in coming. The patrol was greeted by "a shrill war-whoop and the twanging of arrows from the Indian foe." The battle was over in minutes, as the soldiers fired their muskets and charged the Indians with fixed bayonets. According to Judson, "those redskins ran for their canoes and fled in fright at the sight of soldiers."[33]

Judson's version of the scout was much more thrilling than the actual record. Lt. McLaughlin's report showed that he frequently took detachments of his men to patrol the inland waters. He added that his patrols always found signs of Indians but rarely made contact.[34]

The January and February 1845 issues of the Journal contained an account of the chase and capture of the Indian chief Chiachee in the Everglades. As the men began their pursuit, Judson compared a veteran soldier, Ned, to a new recruit before battle. He said: "The old war-worn vet puts into his cheek another leaf of tobacco, hitches his trousers, and holds no parley with unmanly fears." The youngster is said to have a more excitable nature.[35] This technique of making himself the hero appeared in his other stories.

Action began when the patrol discovered five empty canoes and saw Indians fishing on the banks. After a canoe

chase and brief skirmish, all the Indians were either killed or captured except for their chief who Judson called "Chiee."[36]

Judson described "Chiee" as the scourge of the Florida coast. "Chiee" successfully evaded the patrol for several days until he was eventually tracked down and captured alive by the patrol.[37]

The "Chiee" which Judson described in his Journal was the soldiers shortened version for Chief Chiachee.[38] His village was discovered near Lake Okeechobee on November 7, 1841, by Captain R. D. Wade, 3rd Artillery. Captain Wade captured Chiachee who subsequently guided him through the Everglades to other Indian camps. Returning to Fort Lauderdale six days later, Wade reported that because of Chiachee's help he captured forty-nine Indians without loss to his own men.[39]

After Chiachee's capture, Judson undoubtedly had an ocassion to meet the Indian chief while in McLaughlin's command. Chiachee had a brother, Chai, who served as a guide for Lt. McLaughlin. In December 1841, McLaughlin requested that Chiachee be sent to his command to serve with Chai.[40] It is not known whether McLaughlin's request was granted but both Indians served as guides for soldiers operating in the Everglades and Key Biscayne area.[41]

In fairness to Judson, there is little doubt that he participated in scouts and patrols in the Everglades

but he often twisted events of these missions to create thrills--and action that took place only in his head. He stated that many of his accounts were gathered from Indians either from "benign kindness or /through/ the talkativeness of intoxication."[42]

Judson's technique of writing about chases, narrow escapes, and making antagonists "scourges of this or that" would be another characteristic that always appeared in his writings. Later, other writers would also follow Judson's lead by incorporating this format in dime novels.

Besides these adventure stories of the Seminole War, Judson followed the Knickerbocker's example by including an "Editor's Table" in each issue. These "Tables" included his comments and evaluations of authors and their books being printed at this time.

"Shilling Shockers," so called because they sold for 12 1/2 cents, were a popular source of adventure and escapism for the public of the 1840s.[43] Joseph Holt Ingraham was one of the most popular authors of these action packed thrillers. His book, Lafitte, the Pirate of the Gulf was listed as one of the best sellers for the period.[44] James Fenimore Cooper said that the success of Ingraham's works could be attributed more to the thrilling treatment of his subject than on his ability to write.[45] Judson also joined in the criticism.

In his first "Editor's Table," Judson claimed that

Ingraham had written a great deal on subjects that he knew nothing about and relied more on his powerful imagination than on accurate accounts. The target of his criticism was Ingraham's then current book, The Midshipman. "When Ingraham takes a cruise and learns the ropes of Navy life, he should then write a book about the sea and not before," Judson maintained.[46] Despite this criticism, Judson was shrewd enough to realize that Ingraham's novels were selling well both in the United States and abroad. It would only be a matter of time before Judson followed in Ingraham's imaginative footsteps.

James Fenimore Cooper was another writer frequently discussed in the "Editor's Table." Cooper's books, Pathfinder and Deerslayer were selling over 175,000 copies at this time and Judson praised him for his style.[47]

He commented on Afloat and Ashore; or the Adventures of Miles Wallingford. Judson said that he admired the way Cooper got his hero into a situation that would dishearten any but an American. Then, at the last minute, he allowed his hero to be rescued from danger by his "cool courage and right-timed energy."[48]

From these two authors, Judson learned several lessons which carried over into his later novels. He realized that Ingraham's method of writing cheap thrillers was appealing to the public and making money for the author. In Cooper, he was impressed with his "pure American hero"

who braved the raw elements of nature and emerged the victor.

THE SUCCESS OF THE JOURNAL

By December 1844, Judson boasted that his magazine had been so successful his subscribers extended as far South as Key West, Florida and went all the way to the far Northwest. He did not provide an exact number of subscribers but gave some hint on circulation figures. He said: "Out of a very large edition; we have not one hundred of our first issue left. If within the present month we receive 300 or more subscribers, we shall publish a second edition of at least 1500 copies."[49] In an attempt to increase circulation, he moved the business to Nashville in February, 1845. Judson explained his reason:

> We have received a great number of subscribers from Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi which has induced us to issue a special South-western edition of our work...we will secure the best writers of the 'South-west' and with the present 'Western Stars,' we will issue the best and cheapest sixty-four paged periodical in the Union.[50]

Meanwhile, Robinson and Jones continued printing the magazine in Cincinnati.

In Nashville, Judson changed the title to the Southwestern Literary Journal in an attempt to appeal to local pride. He acquired a new associate editor, Hudson

A. Kidd, but Hine's name remained on the banner. And he contracted A. Billings and Son to publish the magazine. His April "Editor's Table" was full of optimism, as he commented that his Journal had proved Easterners to be wrong in assuming nothing of literary merit could come from the West. He added that while Eastern magazines had their agents and puffers located in every city and town, the Journal had succeeded without them.[51]

If there were any difficulties in sustaining the magazine, Judson appeared oblivious to them or perhaps he imagined it was viable. April marked the last appearance of the magazine. Reasons for the failure were varied.

In his study of the Western book trade, Walter Sutton said that periodicals such as Judson's were often too literary in a second-rate fashion. Consequently, they failed to appeal to the mass of readers who thrived on the adventure stories found in the cheap publications of the period.[52] Mott attributed the failure to a shooting scrape that Judson got into in Kentucky and as a result, he had to leave the country.[53] However, one of the most insightful reasons for the Journal's failure came from a subscriber to the magazine.

Two months before the Journal's failure, a reader predicted its demise and cited three specific reasons:

1. The vastness of the Western frontier is a serious obstacle to the cultivation of literature.
2. The people of the West prefer the Eastern periodicals and newspapers than Western literary efforts.
3. The poverty of the Western public makes it impossible for any Journal to succeed in this area.[54]

Of all the reasons given, this latter point was the most valid. The Literary Journal sold for $3.00 a year which was a substantial sum for the economy of the mid-1840s, especially in the agricultural oriented South and West. As to Mott's allusion to the shooting scrape, one did occur but it was some time after the magazine had ceased publication.

THE NASHVILLE EPISODE

After his failure in Nashville, Judson returned to Cincinnati where he started a newspaper, Ned Buntline's Own, and began writing stories for the Knickerbocker. His newspaper was a scandal sheet, its purpose to expose gamblers, their crooked games, and the steamboats on which they operated.[55] For the Knickerbocker, Judson began writing an autobiographical series called "Ned Buntline's Life Yarn." An example of these tales appeared in the March, 1846 issue of Knickerbocker.

The Knickerbocker said that Buntline had been in Gallatin, Tennessee where he learned of three outlaws who were wanted for murder in that city. The men were reported

to be hiding in nearby woods. Buntline pursued the murderers by himself, captured two of them and collected a reward of six hundred dollars.[56] Again, Buntline made himself a hero. The Nashville Union, December 27, 1845, reported the capture of the criminals but failed to mention Buntline. If the Nashville press overlooked his participation in the capture, they compensated for it by printing stories of his hanging.

The Nashville Union reported that on March 14, 1846, Judson shot and killed Robert Porterfield in a duel occurring in the city. Citizens of Nashville were infuriated by the shooting because it was rumored that Judson was having an affair with Porterfield's wife.

When Judson was arraigned in court, an angry mob, led by the deceased's brother, filled the gallery and shouted "hang him" or "shoot him." In fact, a number of shots were fired at him. Later, Judson boasted in the Knickerbocker that out of 23 shots fired only three hit him. However, once the shots were fired, Judson bolted from the courtroom and ran to the City Hotel across the street from the courthouse.[56]

The mob followed him to the hotel and cornered him in a third story room. However, Judson jumped before they reached him. He claimed that he fell forty-seven feet, three inches without cracking a bone. In fact, his left hip was severely injured. As a result, he walked with a

limp for the rest of his life.[57]

After the fall, the sheriff took him to jail but the mob persisted. That night, they broke into jail, took him from his cell and hanged him over the rail of an awning post.

Accounts of what happened next were unclear. As he hung on the railing, the rope broke and he fell to the ground still alive. Judson always maintained that the rope was cut by a friend. In any event, the crowd had missed their chance at revenge and dispersed, as the sheriff carried his prisoner back to jail.[58]

Following the hanging episode, a grand jury convened and declared the duel a matter of self-defense, since Porterfield was armed and had fired first. Judson wrote the Knickerbocker and informed Editor Clark that he had been acquitted. He added that he was still confined to bed because of his injuries but expected to leave Nashville and head East in several days.[59]

Judson's forte for sensationalism and his entry into the magazine market was well-timed. The decade of the 1840s marked a time in which illiteracy was declining while the popularity of reading increased. People became interested in the West and pioneer editors such as Judson responded by promoting the traditions and legends of the West in their periodicals. Although his magazine failed, Judson knew how to make a Western story appealing to an audience. Next

time, he would try his skills on an Eastern audience.

CHAPTER I FOOTNOTES

1. Dixon Wecter, The Hero in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 341-42.

2. Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 94.

3. Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943), p. 287.

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CHAPTER II

NED BUNTLINE - NOVELIST, JOURNALIST, REFORMER

DECADES OF REFORM AND NATIONALISM 1840-1860

Social reform swept the United States in the decades before the Civil War, with almost every institution and belief under attack. Emerson captured the mood when he asked: "What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Remaker of what man has made..."[1]

Movements targeted among other things, education, religion, criminal codes and intemperance. Horace Mann initiated a vigorous educational crusade under the slogan "Let the intelligent meet the ignorant."[2] The American Bible Society promoted the gospel by distributing millions of copies of the Bible.[3] "Demon Rum" was blamed for all vice, so cold water was promoted by temperance societies.

Together with these movements, a spirit of nationalism and patriotism developed as a result of the tremendous influx of immigrants and westward expansion. Immigrants began flooding the country and crowding the new centers of industry in the East. As a result, jammed tenements and narrow streets of Atlantic coastal cities were crowded with thousands of low income workers.[4]

Nativist societies, intent on keeping "America for Americans," developed to curb the rising tide of immigration. All immigrants, especially Catholics, were considered threats to American institutions. This spirit was reflected in a statement issued by a New York nativist society, concerning some 5,000 immigrants: "Among these new arrivals are at least 100 whose ideas make them implacable foes to the best interests of American society, if not to its peace and safety, and probably some 1,000 paupers."[6]

Nationalism and patriotism were also reflected in the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" affecting the country. A toastmaster effectively summarized this view: "The Eagle of the United States--may she extend her wings from the Atlantic to the Pacific..."[7] The United States went to war with Mexico in 1846, and a year later the toastmaster's wish was fulfilled. By the terms of the Treaty of Guadaloupe Hildago which ended the war, the United States acquired an area of more than 500,000 square miles and became a transcontinental republic. The spectacular victories in the war with very small loss of life strengthened American pride and self-confidence.[8]

Ned Buntline was an example of a man caught in this spirit of reform and intense patriotism. While the Mexican War was still fresh in the public's mind, he wrote a fanciful tale, depicting rugged, "true Americans" battling the enemy. Then in New York City, he drafted a so-called

sociological novel which depicted ethnic crime, vice, and *depravity in the Bowery*.

Next, he began publishing another scandal sheet, using the same title of his previous effort, Ned Buntline's Own. Printed as a medium of reform, it attacked everything from prostitution to James Gordon Bennett, Sr. of the New York Herald. Additionally, Buntline's paper served as a mouthpiece for his native American activities--political gambits which may have helped cause two riots and resulted in several deaths, as will be seen.

Finally, by the end of 1850, Buntline turned his attention westward and wrote yet another tale of rugged individualism: Commanche's Dream.

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN WAR

After his failure in the South with the Literary Journal and his near hanging, Buntline went to Boston where he began writing adventure stories for a publishing house operated by Maturin M. Ballou and Frederick Gleason. Ballou and Gleason had been very successful in promoting sensational fiction. Their weekly story paper, The Flag of Our Union, had an average circulation of 80,000. Subscriptions were $2.00 a year.[9]

By 1846, Ballou and Gleason had expanded their business by hiring new talent to write novelettes. As an inducement both to writers and subscribers, these

entrepreneurs promised that "original $100 prize tales from the pens of the most popular authors will always form an attractive feature of our publications."[10] The offer of $100 attracted such writers as Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, who was later given credit for the first dime novel; Prentiss Ingraham, whose father had been criticized by Buntline for his novels; and Ned Buntline.[11]

Buntline wrote two tales for Ballou and Gleason. One was advertised as a hundred dollar prize tale--The Black Avenger of the Spanish Main. Buntline dedicated this 100 page thriller to his friends and shipmates in the U.S. Navy. He asserted that the story was based on fact. Some years later, Mark Twain incorporated a phrase from this adventure story into his classic, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Huck Finn asked: "Who goes there?" Tom Sawyer replied: "the Black Avenger of the Spanish Main."[12]

Bunline's second adventure story, The Volunteer: or The Maid of Monterrey, was a fact/fiction version of the battles at Monterrey and Buena Vista during the Mexican War. The hero of the novel was a youth named George Blakely, the leader of a band of Kentucy volunteers who joined General Zachary Taylor in Mexico. According to Buntline, the Kentuckians arrived just in time to assist General Taylor in the battle. Blakely and his men then followed "Old Rough and Ready" to Buena Vista and assisted him in capturing the city.[13]

Buntline described "the maid of Monterrey" as Edwina Canales, a heroine of the Mexican Army. Her purpose for fighting was "to show that where a woman led, men would follow." Since her father was a famous Mexican general, Buntline said that it was only fitting for her to fight.[14] Additional "Buntline" touches included a band of Texas Rangers led by Captain Ben McCullogh /sic/ who assisted Blakely and General Taylor; and a group of American deserters composed of Irish, German, and French Catholics who assisted Santa Anna.[15]

Sifting through the distortion and sensationalism, there were several grains of truth in the novel. General Taylor's army consisted primarily of volunteers which included several Kentucky Regiments.[16] During the battle at Buena Vista, a force of Kentuckians commanded by General Tom Marshall was credited with keeping open the vital Riconanda Pass between Monterrey and Saltillo which led into Buena Vista.[17]

The name Canales was hated by Texans along the Rio Grande River. Canales was a Mexican general who had led numerous forays across the Rio Grande into The Republic of Texas before the War. A contemporary of the period wrote: "General Canales had a bloody record on the border and Texans had scores to settle with him...To strike him /Canales/ in his own hills--slaughter his band...was a thing above all others Ben McCulloch most desired to do."[18]

Finally, Buntline's reference to McCulloch and his Texas Rangers was an allusion to one of the most popular heroes of the period. Both the Boston Evening Transcript and New York Herald frequently reported McCulloch's Rangers in their columns.[19] After the battles at Monterrey and Buena Vista, the Rangers were highly praised by General Taylor in Congress. Taylor wrote on June 8, 1847:

> The services rendered by Major McCulloch and his men, particularly in reconnoitering the enemy's camp...and advising us of his presence, were of the highest importance.[20]

McCulloch's Rangers were discharged after six months service in the Mexican War, at which time they returned to Texas and continued to fight Comanches. Buntline made this a topic for a later novel.

In his study of myth and American heroes, Marshall Fishwick said that heroes are mirrors of the times who emerge at a moment when men's emotions are highly charged.[21] It might be added that such heroes appeal to both imagination and reason. If this is the case, then Buntline's characters were well suited to appeal to the American public during the Mexican War.

For the average American in the 1840s, there were two distinct Wests: a domesticated, agricultural West with its routine existence, and a Wild West beyond it. This was an area in which the rugged individual roamed free,

unbound by societal ties.[22] Winning this "Wild West" was a theme attached to the Mexican War, and fell within the scope of Manifest Destiny. It was only natural that public interest in this region intensified and emotions became highly charged.

The characters and themes which Buntline included in his novel could easily have been lifted bodily from accounts in the Eastern press. The New York Herald reported on July 21, 1846 the activities of a woman called "The Maid of Orleans," no other name given. She was described as an active participant in defending an Army outpost close to the Mexican border. The report added: "Her bravery proves that this sex has not been unrepresented in the bloody scenes occurring on the Rio Grande."[23] Both the Herald and Boston Evening Transcript gave full coverage of Taylor's activities at Monterrey and Buena Vista, including reports of McCulloch's Texas Rangers.[24] These press accounts were bound to have stirred a certain curiosity and imagery in the public mind.

Buntline's fact/fiction account in The Volunteer played on this curiosity and intensified the attraction of the "Wild West". Circulation figures for the novel could not be ascertained, but it was reprinted in 1852, 1860, 1863, and 1865.[25]

After writing this novel, Buntline left Boston and went to New York where his attention shifted to reform and

politics.

NED BUNTLINE--REFORMER

Between 1840 and 1850, the Bowery was one of the toughest districts of New York City, in terms of crime, gangs, and violence. Streets and sections in the Bowery had names reflective of the area: Cat Hollow, Gates of Hell, and Murderer's Alley. An intersection called "The Five Points" had the distinction of being the most violent and run-down section in the Bowery.[26] Here the tenements housed thousands of German and Irish immigrants, as well as Negroes. Murder, assault and prostitution were commonplace.

When Buntline arrived in New York, the area of Five Points provided him with material for another novel. An 1847 advertisement in the New York Tribune proclaimed the completion of The Mystery and Miseries of New York.[27] Buntline described the book as "a sociological survey of the city, dedicated to the clergy in hopes that they may see the evils which it describes."[28] A reviewer for the Tribune gave a different version of Buntline's novel: "It professes to describe many of the secret haunts and practices of vice in this city, the whole being woven into a fictitious narrative."

The first part of this five volume series appeared in January 1848 and sold for 25 cents. Buntline deliberately

spaced the publication of these short novels "to judge the effect of each of them." He said that his purpose for writing the series was twofold: "1) to do all the good we can with it and 2) to make it as popular and financially rewarding as possible." Each novel contained themes of sex, gambling, abortion, and prostitution prevalent in the Bowery region.

Buntline blamed the immigrants for most of the problems in the city. He criticized the foreigners and street beggars, primarily Irish, Germans, and Italians for the poor living conditions in the slums. "Rarely do you find an American beggar," he said. His solution to the problem was for all immigrants to move West:

> We have plenty of room in this country for immigrants, if they would only seek the unsettled parts; however, most of the newcomers either lack the means or the inclination to go to the interior, and thus become a burden on seaport towns.

Following an earlier pattern, Buntline included himself as a hero in the novel. A man named "Ned Shorter" was described as a well-distinguished fellow and veteran of the Florida War. According to the novel, Shorter was feared by Negroes in the Five Points because he frequently brawled with them in Bowery bars.

Buntline had completed four installments of the Mysteries and Miseries when the play New York In 1848 began its run at the Olympic Theater. The Bowery crowd packed the theater each night to watch a local hero, Mose

Humphreys, being portrayed on stage. Humphreys, who was a printer for the New York Sun and volunteer fireman, had gained considerable fame in the city. His feats as a fireman and brawler were equal to those of Paul Bunyan's in the minds of New York citizens.[29]

It did not take Buntline long in seeing the value of making Humphreys a hero of reform in the city. In his fifth and final installment of Mysteries and Miseries, Buntline lifted the character of Humphreys from stage and made him the Bowery savior of fair maidens and hero of the oppressed in the novel.

With the conclusion of the Mysteries and Miseries, Buntline promised that he would continue to fight social evil. He instructed his readers to be watchful for a large newspaper entitled, Ned Buntline's Own.

NED BUNTLINE'S OWN

The appearance of Buntline's scandal sheet in July 1848 marked his return to journalism; albeit of the sensational variety. The New York Sun printed a prospectus for Ned Buntline's Own which said that this publication would be a medium of reform in government and community, at a cost of only $3.00 a year.[30] The paper was published in New York City for thirty-six successive weeks, from July 1848 to about June 1849.[31] It waged attacks against houses of prostitution; gambling; intemperance; and the

New York Sun and Herald.

Each week, Buntline directed his attack at some vice plaguing the city. He explained: "I will look calmly at various evils, and if I can, suggest some remedies...While I make a set of rascally thieves and gamblers my enemies, I am winning thousands of valued, appreciated friends..."[32] Some indication of his primary motive in publishing this scandal sheet was found in his concluding statement: "My course is onward...I am doing well; I am making money..."[33]

His boldest "reform" attempt was directed against the newspaper giants of New York--Moses Y. Beach's Sun and James Gordon Bennett's Herald. Buntline expressed his motives for attacking the Sun:

> ...One may think that my attack upon the Sun and its publisher originate in personal motives...It originates entirely in a desire to put a stop to Madame Restell's advertisements in that paper; to force its publisher to refuse to prostitute his columns to every keeper of a house of ill-fame...in short, to make his advertising columns fit for a young girl to read without sin and temptation being thrown in her way.[34]

Madame Restell was a female physician whose advertisement appeared daily in the Sun. The advertisement proclaimed that she was able to cure all forms of female irregularity.[35] Additionally, the Sun contained numerous ads for boarding houses and rooms to rent. Sun ads that frequently appeared from June to August 1848 and to which Buntline alluded as being offensive to young girls included:

1. Dr. Ralph's Practical Private Treatise on the Disease of the Genital Organs.

2. Madame Costello's Female Periodical Pills.

3. Grand Surgical-Medical Office--treats all diseases /from consumption to syphillis/.

The press of New York saw through Buntline's facade of reform and called for his arrest. A contemporary Sunday paper stated: "...Having narrowly escaped hanging at the South, for his cowardly and immoral practices, /he/ came here with the avowed purpose of making money, caring little how, or by what means that end is accomplished..."[36] The Sunday Courier said that the District Attorney was neglecting his duty if he failed to bring Buntline's newspaper before notice of the Grand Jury. Another contemporary newspaper claimed that Beach should procure the indictment of Buntline as a public nuisance, for he deserves all that the law will allow."[37]

Despite these charges, Buntline continued printing his scandal sheet. This time he attacked the Herald and libelled the sister-in-law of James Gordon Bennett, Sr.

Initially, Buntline had attacked the Herald for advertising foreign books. A specific charge was levied at the Herald's ad for Dr. A. M. Mariceau's, The Married Woman's Private Medical Companion.[38] The ad claimed that in six months 54,000 copies were sold in the United States. Moreover, it warned that the book was only for the married, as it disclosed important secrets of married life.

Bennett tended to ignore Buntline's attacks, as one newspaper described:

> Ned attacked Mr. Bennett of the Herald, who thought no more of him than the cur who snapped at his horse's heels.[39]

However, in August 1848, the Herald began reporting Buntline's various activities in the city.

A front page account of Buntline being threatened by a local gambler was printed in the Herald on August 31. Samuel Suydam, a prominent gambler in New York, found Buntline in a local gambling house and threatened to kill him. The threat had been prompted because of various articles which were printed in Ned Buntline's Own exposing Suydam's gambling activities. Judson agreed to stop attacking Suydam in his paper and the matter was settled.[40]

The following month, Bennett reprinted an account of Buntline's Nashville hanging. The purpose of this reprint was that "readers might be better informed to judge /Buntline's/ qualifications to improve the city."[41]

Buntline's scandal sheet often printed names of prostitutes and the addresses where they were employed. His knowledge of these establishments was gathered by first-hand experience. Buntline paid ten dollars a week room and board for a nineteen-year-old girl at Fanny White's, reputed to be one of the most frequented houses of ill-fame in the city. Moreover, he was often a visitor at Kate

Hastings' house on Leonard Street.[42]

The association with Kate Hastings' house proved to be a nemisis for Buntline. In April, 1849, Bennett published a front page story about Buntline being horse-whipped by a prostitute on Broadway. According to the Herald's report, Buntline was walking down Broadway when Kate Hastings jumped from her carriage and rushed toward him. She began beating him with a cowhide whip and demanded to know why he had published her name in his paper. It was alleged by some of the bystanders who witnessed the affair that Buntline drew a pistol to defend himself. The entire episode lasted only a few minutes and "The well-whipped editor and Lion-Queen of Leonard Street parted ways."[43]

Several days later, the Herald printed letters from the editor and madam. Buntline said that the Herald account was inaccurate; no pistol was drawn. Then he added: "I think that the editors who make so much ado over the case must be hard up for items, especially the Herald."[44]

Following Buntline's statement, the Herald printed Miss Hastings version of the incident. She said: "I was told that a derogatory article concerning me and the character of my house was printed in Ned Buntline's Own... I saw him (Judson) in the street and gave him warning that he was going to get a beating next time that I saw him." Miss Hastings went on to say that when she saw Judson a few days later in Broadway, she felt the time had come for

him to get his promised whipping.[45]

Buntline filed assault charges against the woman. When the case was tried on April 18, Miss Hastings repeated the story which had been printed in the Herald. She also produced, as evidence, several obscene letters that Buntline had been sending her. The verdict was somewhat of a moral victory for Kate Hastings. She was found guilty of assault on the editor and fined six cents.[46]

Buntline, irritated by these reports in the Herald, attacked Miss Georgianna C. Crean, sister of Mrs. James Gordon Bennett, in his next issue. The Sunday Courier reported that the charges made against the lady were totally unfit for publication.[46] Thomas V. Paterson, Buntline's assistant editor, said that he called her a whore.[47]

Bennett read the remarks and had Buntline arrested for slander. Buntline was jailed and held for $2,000 bail. Friends collected the necessary money and had him released.[47]

As Buntline continued his so-called reform efforts, he was shown to be more of an active participant in the vices he attacked than a force for social good. Throughout the months of the newspaper's existence, accounts appeared in the New York press showing him to be a hypocrite.

Once when he addressed a temperance group, it was reported that he had spent the entire day in a local bar preparing his speech on the advantages of "cold-water." A newsman who covered this lecture commented that people

will swallow anything and alluded to P. T. Barnum's dictum, "there's a sucker born every minute."[48] Reports of Buntline's intemperate habits continued.

Publication of the scandal sheet continued through the summer of 1849. However, Editor Judson became involved in a riot which led to the paper's demise and his imprisonment.

ASTOR PLACE RIOT

While publishing his scandal sheet, Buntline was engaged in various nativistic movements. A year before his newspaper appeared, he helped found the anti-foreign, anti-Catholic, United Sons of America dedicated to making "America for Americans."[49] This secret organization was absorbed by the Know-Nothing party in 1852. In fact, Buntline was said to have given the party its name.[50]

Ned Buntline's Own advocated the cause of nativism along with its other reform attempts. Buntline played on the "threat to native Americans" in sensational stories designed to attract readers, build circulation and thereby increase profits. According to Buntline's assistant editor, "He only promoted the nativist cause to extract more money from the public."[51] During the week of May 7-10, 1849, he was successful in extracting more than money from the public. He incited a riot at the Astor Place Opera House.

New York City was celebrating "Anniversary Week"

as various reform groups met in the city to celebrate their founding. Additionally, two stage versions of Macbeth were scheduled to open that week. William Charles Macready, a British actor, brought his acting troupe to Niblo's Astor Place Theater and opened Monday evening (May 7). On the same night, Edwin A. Forrest, an American actor, opened in the neighboring Broadway Theater.[52]

By curtain time that evening, few people had gone to see Forrest, while Niblo's was packed with toughs and rowdies from the Bowery district. When Macready appeared on stage, he was greeted with a chorus of jeers, groans, and catcalls. As the play progressed, the Bowery toughs protested louder and began throwing rotten apples, lemons, and eggs at the actor. Their actions were successful in stopping the play.[53]

The following day, there was much excitement in the city about the affair. The Courier and Enquirer accused Edwin Forrest of promoting the disturbance, an assertion he flatly denied.[54] Macready threatened to return to England. However, an appeal signed by a group of prominent citizens including Washington Irving, John Jacob Astor, and Herman Melville, urged him not to abandon his engagement. After two days of discussion, Macready agreed to resume his performance on Thursday evening, May 10.[55]

Buntline was seen on Thursday morning hurriedly driving a horse and carriage through the city streets, and

distributing inflammatory notices about the play. These circulars read:

> Workingman, shall Americans or English rule in this city? The crew of the British steamer have threatened all Americans who shall dare express their opinions this night at the English Aristocratic Opera House. We advocate no violence but a free expression of public opinion to all men. Signed: The American Committee.[57]

That same day, the Herald, in an editorial, warned city officials of possible violence resulting from the Macready performance and urged precautionary measures be taken.

By curtain time that evening, a small contingent of police had been stationed inside the theater and along the streets surrounding Astor Place. As an added security measure, several regiments of local militia were ordered to be on the alert for possible duty. Meanwhile, a crowd of some 3,000 people had formed outside the Astor Place.[58]

Once the performance began, a gang of Bowery toughs again greeted Macready with jeers and catcalls. They were arrested. The mob in the streets heard of these arrests and they began to protest. A reporter for the New York Evening Express said that Ned Buntline and a group of adult leaders ordered a gang of youths to begin throwing stones at the theater. Then, Buntline began shouting to the crowd: "Damn John Bull!" "Tear it down!" At which time, the youths attempted to tear down the theater doors.[59]

The police had tried unsuccessfully throughout the

evening to control the hostile crowd. As the crowd began advancing toward the theater, a regiment of militia was called to assist the police. The troops came led by their commander, Colonel Abram Duryee. However, the troops met increased resistance as they attempted to push the crowd back. Some of the soldiers had their muskets snatched from their hands. The Express reporter said that when the troops arrived, "brickbats and stones began to be fired freely at them; some with so much violence as to strike fire from their bayonets."[60]

Several soldiers were struck to the ground by the flying debris. At this time, an order was given to fire warning shots above the heads of the crowd and a volley of some eight to ten shots was fired. Someone in the crowd yelled, "they have only blank cartridges, stone them again." When the stones were thrown this time, someone ordered the soldiers to fire into the crowd. After three volleys, the crowd was dispersed leaving 23 dead and 51 persons injured.[61]

Who gave the order to fire into the crowd, no one could positively determine. The results of an investigation into the Astor Place shooting was issued May 15: "That the deceased came to their deaths by gunshot wounds, the guns being fired by the military, by order of the civilian authorities of New York..."[62]

Ned Buntline was among fifty-three persons arrested for inciting the riot. Both the Herald and Evening Express

accused him of being one of the primary instigators and organizers of the violence at Astor Place.[63] When he was released from jail on $1,000 bond, Buntline issued an extra edition of his paper to refute these charges. He claimed that the Herald and other newspapers had obfuscated the facts. Moreover, he denied all participation in the riot:

> ...I was merely an observer who went to the opera house to see if reports about a huge mob were true. The police arrested me because of my articles about corruption within the police department.[64]

CASE OF THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK VS. E. Z. C. JUDSON AND 8 OTHERS

Almost four months after the affair, the trial of the Astor Place rioters began, on September 13, with Judge Charles P. Daly presiding. In the opening remarks of the defense, Judson kept to his earlier statement that he was merely an observer and reporter at the riot. He flatly denied that he was a participant. The district attorney took a different approach to the case. He said that he would show Judson to be the one person entirely responsible for the disaster.[65]

As testimony was given by various witnesses, it appeared that evidence was gradually pointing to Judson as both organizer and instigator of the affair. Several witnesses identified Judson as the man directing a gang of youths to stone the theater and heard him shouting,

"Now boys, another shower before the military comes."[66]

After ten days of trial proceedings, the Herald stated: "One of the most striking developments in the case is the position taken by Judson or Ned Buntline during the riot. Until the trial began, the extent of his involvement was unknown."[67] It appears that Judson started the riot as a means of advancing his own notoriety. This was the opinion of the Herald when it stated that Judson availed himself of the general excitement created by Macready's appearance to claim all the merit of the outbreak.[68]

The case was given to the jury on September 26. After nearly three hours deliberation, the jury found all those charged in the affray guilty of rioting. When Judson was summoned for sentencing, he was described as possessing "the usual combination of ignorance, impudence, and folly." Judson made a brief statement before he was sentenced. He said that he accepted his fate like a martyr of old because he had been tried by a prejudiced judge and jury.[69]

Judge Daly gave Judson a maximum sentence of one year's imprisonment on Blackwell's Island and a fine of $250. The judge commented that the sentence was not commensurate with the degree of guilt. Judson's associates in the riot were given lesser sentences.[70]

With the editor in prison, Ned Buntline's Own ceased publication and in its place a new scandal sheet began. Buntline's assistant editor, Thomas V. Paterson,

began printing a biography of his former editor's career. The Herald printed several extracts from Patterson's sheet in its columns "to show the public a brief sketch of Judson's illustrious career."[71]

The Herald and Tribune even exchanged barbs about Judson. Bennett charged that the Tribune had printed Judson's scandal sheet in its job printing office. Bennett also equated Horace Greeley, Charles A. Dana, and Albert Brisbane with Buntline. He said: "Buntline has become the beau ideal and subject of sympathy of our modern socialists and reformers--all compounded under the general term of the Tribune establishment."[72]

Greeley countered Bennett's charges in the Tribune. He wrote: "Judson may have been a great rascal but we never saw anything half so shocking or obscene in his paper, as we have seen in the Herald." Greeley continued by saying that grand juries should not only do their duty in eliminating scandal sheets like Judson's but should go after the bigger ones as well. The allusion to the Herald was quite clear.[73]

Greeley neither confirmed nor denied Bennett's charge that the Tribune printed Buntline's paper. He simply stated that Tribune pressmen advertise and execute some printing for other offices, a matter in which he did not interfere.[74]

THE ST. LOUIS INCIDENT

After his release from prison, Buntline continued his nativist activities by lecturing in the principal cities of the East. This was followed by a tour through Pittsburg, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. He settled long enough in St.

Louis to begin another activist newspaper and become involved in another riot.

In 1852, Buntline began publishing a weekly newspaper in St. Louis called Ned Buntline's Novelist which advocated strict adherence to his idea of American pride and principles. At this time, citizens of St. Louis were politically polarized. The Know-Nothing party was growing in numbers, as the Whigs swung their support to them. On the other hand, a large German element in the city supported the Democrats.[75]

City elections were scheduled in April, 1852 and the rivalry became heated between these political factions. On the morning of April 5,1852, the polls opened. Voting began without interruption. Then word came that a fight had broken out between Germans and supporters of the Whig candidate for mayor. Rumors spread throughout the city that the Germans had driven the Whig candidate from the polls. A mob of nearly 400 people gathered in the streets to teach "the damned Germans a lesson."[76]

The St. Louis Missouri Democrat reported that Buntline mounted a horse, rode in front of the mob, and urged the crowd to follow him. When the Americans and Germans met, Buntline was knocked from his horse. Some reports said that members of his own group knocked him down.

James F. Milligan, a participant in the riot on the side of the Native Americans, testified some years later that he shot at Buntline and saw him fall wounded in his

thigh.[77]

After the hour long riot, two people were dead and a house destroyed. A total of 14 persons were indicted and most of them were convicted. However, Buntline was released on $500 bail, to be forefeited if he failed to appear daily in court until his case was tried. After much delay in an attempt to find jurors, his case was called for trial in January, 1853.[78] By this time, Buntline had left the city. He had to face these charges some twenty years later when his Buffalo Bill show toured St. Louis.

The Know-Nothing movement collapsed in 1856 and Buntline turned from his role of political activist to his familiar role as a novelist of cheap fiction.

THE COMANCHE'S DREAM

Novelist Buntline began writing frontier thrillers for the New York Mercury in 1856. This weekly story paper maintained an average circulation of 145,000 until its demise in 1896. Contents of the paper were primarily serialized adventure stories which later appeared in paperback form.[79] Cauldwell S. Whitney, owner and publisher, attracted the most popular writers of cheap fiction by paying them well.[78] Buntline was reported to be making several thousand dollars a year from his association with the Mercury. However, his contributions were erratic because of his frequent drinking sprees.[79]

In his association with the Mercury, Buntline looked to the western plains for new material to incorporate in his novels. He did not have to search far because the period of the 1850s offered a volume of material.

By 1850, there was a tremendous influx of emigrants in the southwestern plains region of Texas. These people were either destined for California in search of gold or in search of land and a home on the frontier. Several roads were made through southwest Texas to facilitate the flow of emigrants westward. At the same time, the Comanches became increasingly hostile to the encroachment of white settlers upon land that they had traditionally held. As a result, reports of Indian attacks on emigrant trains and individual settlements became commonplace in this period.[80]

Comanche hostility was not limited to whites. Pressure of settlers forced eastern tribes west into Comanche territory. When the Comanches moved into the Southern Plains, many tribes were already there. Most were driven out. The Lipans were one Apache tribe that remained. The Lipan Apache-Comanche enmity dated back to the early 18th century, and warfare was continuous between the two tribes to 1875.[81]

To preserve some semblance of peace on the frontier, the government of Texas activated some nine companies of mounted Texas Rangers. The Rangers remained the primary

defenders of the Texas plains until military posts were established, when they assumed a secondary role in protecting the frontiers.[82]

Buntline wrote a fact/fiction account of one such imagined activity on the Texas plains for the Mercury. The novel was entitled Stella Delorme-The Commanche's /Sic/ Dream. The setting for the novel was the Rio Grande area of Texas and the cast of characters included the Lipan Apaches, a Comanche brave, Lagona, the heroine Stella Delorme, and Major Ben McCulloch of the Texas Rangers.[83]

Buntline made the white maiden "Stella Delorme" a victim of numerous Indian raids perpetrated by either the Lipans or Comanches. However, on more than one occasion, she was rescued by McCulloch's Rangers. Buntline described this band of Rangers as "one of the most gallant that ever rode astride a horse." Moreover, when they were engaged in an Indian fight, "McCulloch's Rangers left bodies of warriors who will never tread the warpath again."[84]

As usual, Buntline's account was inaccurate and sensationalised. Buntline frequently had the Comanche brave, Lagona, come to the aid of Stella Delorme and rescue her from the Lipans. However, this situation was contrary to all existing evidence. At this time, the Lipans were generally allied with the Texans against the Comanches than fondness for the white man.[85]

The allusion to McCulloch's Rangers in the novel was an enlargement of press accounts about this group

which had appeared in the Eastern press as early as August, 1846. For example, the New York Herald in that year reported that Comanches had raided numerous towns and villages in the Rio Grande Valley. The Herald added that McCulloch's Rangers were out avenging these raids.[86]

Another reason for Buntline's use of McCulloch's Rangers in the novel may have been that he recalled the Ranger Captain from his earlier story.

Through this novel and others that followed, Buntline exploited violence on the frontier. His characters were cast in the mold of Daniel Boone and set in the context of an untamed wilderness. The scene had shifted west of the Mississippi to the Plains region which was the mid-19th century stage for rugged individualism.

Buntline's novel, published and circulated in New York, showed the Eastern audience that despite Indian raids by Lipans or Comanches, there was always a Ben McCulloch and his Rangers to the rescue. These men were taming the frontier against overwhelming odds, at least in the novels. Buntline was apparently unaware that such a format for promoting and exploiting the West would be copied several years later in books termed "dime novels."

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CHAPTER III

COLONEL JUDSON GOES WEST

During the Civil War and subsequent years, land was the attraction which induced millions to look westward. The vast public domain stretched out West of the Mississippi beckoning to the immigrants pouring in from Europe, to the Civil War veterans uprooted and perhaps ruined by war, and to the ambitious or discontented of Eastern cities.

The federal government and railroads assisted the public by publicizing this vast domain and making it easy for settlers to acquire land. The Homestead Act of 1862 granted 160 acres to a settler who satisfied various legal requirements, chief of which was making the claim his permanent residence for five years.[1] In the twenty-two years following 1850, railroads were granted 155,000,000 acres from the public domain. These grants were concentrated in a five year period beginning in 1862, the time of the Pacific railway charters, when some 108,397,000 acres, or about 70% of the total were granted.[2]

Amidst this activity of land promotion, many Easterners probably agreed with Thoreau when he wrote: "To the East lay the city, to the West the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more, and with-

drawing into the wilderness."[3]

CHEAP FICTION FOR THE MASSES

During this furor of western expansion, two young brothers recognized the existence of an untapped audience for fiction. In 1860, Erastus and Irwin Beadle began a speculative project of publishing Western adventure stories designed for a mass audience. Although these stories had appeared some thirty years before, the Beadles had the distinction of being the first to issue them in a continuous series and at a fixed price of ten cents, instead of publishing them sporadically.[4]

Because the price was always ten cents, these paperbacks were called "dime novels." The first of these novels appeared in June, 1860 and was advertised in the New York Tribune:

BOOKS FOR THE MILLION!
A DOLLAR BOOK FOR A DIME!!
128 PAGES COMPLETE, ONLY TEN CENTS!!!
BEADLE'S DIME NOVELS NO.1!
MALAESKA
Indian Wife of the White Hunter.
BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS[5]

These low priced, action packed thrillers gained quick public popularity. Circulation figures for Mrs. Stephens' novel remain unknown. However, several months later when Beadle published a novel by Edward S. Ellis, Seth Jones, it was reported that nearly 40,000 copies were sold in the

first few weeks.[6]

Competing publishers in the cheap fiction market soon recognized the success of the Beadle's venture. As a result, western novels which had previously been priced at 25 cents were now reduced to a dime to compete with the Beadles. This competition continued until the 1900s when the price dropped to a nickel.[7]

Introduction of dime novels on a mass scale was well suited for the Civil War period. Bales of these paperbacks were distributed to the Union armies in camps, barracks, and hospitals, where they were called "orange-backs" or "yellow-backs" depending on the color of the cover.[8] The novels provided soldiers escape from the rigors of military training. One weekly newspaper put it: "(Dime novels) were the soldier's solace and comfort in camp and campaign, and contributed...to ameliorate the trials and sufferings of army life..."[9] Earlier novels measured about seven by four and a half inches, later ones were trimmed even more, making them easy to carry.[10]

The novels did not escape criticism. Anthony Comstock, the early pornography crusader, warned parents that these books were "boy and girl devil traps."[11] Sociologist William Graham Sumner surveyed them and said: "The literary material is either intensely stupid, or spiced to the highest degree with sensation...boy readers obtain a theoretical and literary acquaintance with

methods of killing and vice..."[12]

Despite these attacks, writers and publishers continued to publish dime novels at a record pace. Beadle's total sales between 1860 and 1865 approached five million. These figures are not sensational when compared to modern standards but for the period they marked a revolution in nineteenth-century American publishing.[13] One of Beadle's instructions to prospective novelists: "Authors must be familiar with characters and places which they introduce and not attempt to write in fields of which they have no intimate knowledge."[14]

Another feature of Beadle's success in cheap fiction was the standardization of themes and formulas which could be used by any number of writers, altering them to the shifting demands of the market. Basically, the Beadles drew from formats of earlier "blood and thunder" writers like Ned Buntline. These themes included Indian fights, pursuits, separations of hero and heroine, and romanticization of the West.[15]

Buntline, who became an occassional contributor to Beadle's publications, best described the dime novelist at work:

> I once wrote a book of 610 pages in sixty-two hours, but during that time I scarcely ate or slept....I never lay out a plot in advance. I shouldn't know how to do it, for how can I know what my people may take it into their heads to do? First, I invent a title, and when I hit on

> a good one I consider the story about half-finished...Then I take a bound book of blank paper, set my title at the head of it and begin to write about the fictitious character who is to be the hero of it...[16]

There can be little doubt that fiction produced by these writers was entirely subliterary. It was the presumably close relationship of these cheap fiction novels to the "Wild West" perception of a vast inarticulate public that made them popular.

CIVIL WAR SCOUT AND PUBLICIST

In the summer of 1861, New York like many other northern states was busily recruiting volunteers for the Union Army. The governor of New York, acting under federal conscription laws, accepted volunteers for enrollment, organized them in units, appointed their officers, and then offered them to the Union Army.[17] It was by these laws that Colonel Charles C. Dodge was authorized to raise volunteers for a regiment of calvary in New York City.[18]

Rumor had it that even Ned Buntline had raised a company of 84 backwoodsmen for an Albany regiment.[19] Judging from Buntline's past experiences, this action appeared quite plausible. However, he remained a writer for the New York Mercury through September, 1862. Then, he enlisted in Colonel Dodge's Regiment--The First New York Mounted Rifles.[20]

Two separate accounts were given concerning

Buntline's enlistment. Both stated that he was intoxicated. Captain Benjamin O. T. Onderdonk, while on recruiting duty in New York City met Buntline for the first time. He said that he heard drumming in the street and saw a boy beating a snare drum, followed by a man carrying a flag. Both entered the captain's office where the man said: "Sir, my name is Edward Z. C. Judson and I have come to honor this organization by ordering into it."[21]

Captain Onderdonk said that initially the commanding officer refused to enlist Buntline, who was drunk. But Buntline said, "I will go somewhere else where my services are appreciated."[22]

Buntline returned to the recruiting office several days later unaccompanied by snare drums or flags. Duty Officer Major W. H. Schieffelin was unaware that Buntline had previously been refused enlistment. Schieffelin recalled that Buntline appeared to have been drinking. Nevertheless, he was recruited on September 25, 1862 and based on his past military service, promoted to sergeant a month later.[23]

Sergeant Judson was assigned to Company K and joined the "Mounted Rifles" in Suffolk, Virginia. He reported to regimental headquarters dressed in a buckskin suit, with two colt revolvers and a bowie knife hanging from a belt around his waist.[24] Colonel Dodge assigned him as an independent scout for the regiment and gave him

separate quarters. Additionally, Sergeant Judson was told to take his orders directly from regimental headquarters, as opposed to the normal chain of command.[25]

It appears that Colonel Dodge was familiar with Ned Buntline's activities as a novelist. He apparently believed some of the yarns which Buntline had circulated. When questioned why he assigned Buntline as a scout, Dodge replied:

> "He (Judson) served in the Mexican War, was a scout on the Plains and being a versatile writer deserved some consideration. He could benefit the Regiment by writing stories about it..."[26]

The Regiment's activities were not to be found in contemporary newspapers.[27] Nevertheless, the men in the regiment maintained that Colonel Dodge and Buntline's friendship was based on the publicity Dodge received from Buntline's newspaper articles. Lieutenant John Dolan who served with Judson said: "We used to laugh at Judson for the puff pieces he gave Dodge in the papers."[28]

The officers and men in the Regiment also regarded Buntline's scouting activities as a joke. A common saying among the troops was: "Boys, don't take your boots off tonight-for Ned Buntline's drunk-and the Colonel's gone to headquarters." A boyhood acquaintance of Buntline's who served in the same company and regiment with him said that the only real scouting ability Judson showed was his knack of finding Suffolk whiskey.[29]

In the magazine Turf, Field and Stream, Buntline recorded one instance of a patrol which he had led. At a battle at Blackwater Creek, Virginia, between October and November 1862, Colonel Dodge asked for a volunteer to scout the banks of a stream before the calvary crossed. Buntline said that he dutifully rendered his services.[30]

According to his account, Buntline discovered rebel troops not far from a bridge crossing the stream. "A full two hundred riflemen poured a concentrated volley on me, as I rode back to report to the commanding officer," he wrote. Then he was given a special squad of sharpshooters in order to select the best locations for the artillery. Once the artillery pieces were emplaced and began firing, the soldiers forded the stream and successfully repulsed the rebel troops.[31]

Two men who served with Buntline in the battles around Blackwater Creek gave different versions of this fighting. However, in their depositions, both men admitted having a personal dislike for Buntline because of the preferential treatment he received. Colonel Walter S. Poor, then a private in Company A of the New York Mounted Rifles, said that Buntline reported the company could safely ford Blackwater Creek. When the troops attempted to cross, they were attacked by an enemy force guarding the crossing.[32]

According to Captain Onderdonk, Buntline, after scouting the banks of Blackwater Creek, returned to the

lines and asked for volunteers. No one came forward. Finally, Colonel Dodge had to order a troop of calvary to accompany him. After several unsuccessful charges, the confederates were repulsed.[33]

Onderdonk's hostility toward Judson reached its peak early in 1863. This time Judson was reduced in rank and eventually discharged from the Army.

PRIVATE JUDSON BECOMES "COLONEL-CHIEF OF SCOUTS"

By 1863, Captain Onderdonk had advanced to Lieutenant Colonel in the regiment. At the same time, he had become quite dissatisfied with the special privileges Sergeant Judson received from Colonel Dodge, especially his not having to stand guard duty. Around February 12, Colonel Onderdonk told Judson that he would stand guard duty like the other enlisted men. Judson refused. Then he explained that he was physically unfit for such duty.[34]

Sergeant Judson stripped and showed various scars on his body. Onderdonk said that he then ordered Judson to resign his warrant as sergeant. Again Judson refused. Thereupon, he was reduced to the rank of private. In consideration of his wounds, none of which were received in Civil War fighting, he was granted a 15 day leave and returned to New York City.[35]

The City of New York, in 1863, was crowded with

volunteer soldiers either on leave or attempting to return to their units. Under these circumstances, it seems unlikely that Judson would have been arrested. However, Judson accidentally met one of his ex-wives, Lovanche Suart, while on leave in the city. The two had been married in 1853 but separated six months after the marriage.[36]

At the time of the meeting with Lovanche, Judson was married to another woman, Kate Meyers. Nevertheless, Lovanche Suart and Judson were remarried on January 20, 1863 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in New York.[37] This second marriage was also short-lived.

A few days after the remarriage, Mrs. Lovanche Judson personally visited General Harvey Brown, commanding general of Fort Hamilton, New York. She complained of ill-treatment and told him of her husband's over-extended leave. General Brown subsequently ordered that Judson be arrested. Private Judson was arrested and brought to Fort Hamilton dressed in a combination of uniform and civilian clothes.[38]

After a brief stay at Fort Hamilton, Judson was sent back to his unit and imprisoned at Fort Monroe, Virginia. During his confinement, Judson felt that he was being unjustly treated. He wrote a letter to the Commanding General of the 7th Corps, Potomac forces, appealing his case:

> ...[I] overstaid [sic] my furlough through unavoidable circumstances, [sickness], I have been arrested and held here as I understand as a deserter.[39]

Despite his appeal, Judson was tried at a General Court Martial, on April 27, 1863, and found guilty of being absent without leave. He was confined to the Regimental guard house for two months and ordered to forfeit ten dollars a month for the period of his confinement.[40]

Sometime later, the reason for Judson's alleged illness was explained in a letter from Cauldwell S. Whitney, publisher of the New York Mercury, to President Abraham Lincoln. Whitney requested President Lincoln to review Judson's case and grant him a pardon:

> Private E. Z. C. Judson...having been on a furlough, was persuaded into drinking [emphasis added] and overstayed his leave. A malacious officer characterized this as desertion, and he was sentenced to two months in the guard house. His health is much impaired...[41]

Judson's confinement ended on June 27, 1863. Shortly thereafter, he was admitted to Chesapeake Hospital, Fort Monroe, Virginia. In a letter to his sister, Mrs. Irene McClintock, Judson said that he had been hospitalized because he was wounded in action at Suffolk, Virginia.[42] Some years later, a New York World reporter said: "I suppose Ned Buntline has more bullet holes in him than any other living American. He carries in his right knee a

bullet which he received in Virginia..."[43] However, the Surgeon General's records show he did not receive any war-related wounds. He was hospitalized for rheumatic fever.[44]

Private Judson was reassigned to Company A, 22nd Veterans Corps, called the Invalid Corps, in August 1863. This unit was located in Scranton, Pennsylvania.[45] Unfit for further active duty, he travelled at will. In Baltimore, he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly. He was also charged with impersonating an officer for wearing second lieutenant's bars on his uniform.[46] Following his release in Baltimore, he again impersonated an officer, having his photograph taken in a Colonel's uniform.[47]

On August 23, 1864, Judson was honorably discharged.[48] When he returned to New York, he displayed his picture in the Colonel's uniform and told everyone he had served as "Colonel--Chief of Scouts."[49] He used the title "Colonel" throughout the remainder of his writing career.

In New York, Buntline chronicled additional exploits and accounts of the Civil War in a book entitled Life in the Saddle; or The Calvary Scout. The book was first published in 1864, but subsequently appeared as a series in the New York Mercury.[50]

During his two years service with the New York Mounted Rifles, Buntline had witnessed the popularity of the Beadle paperbacks among the soldiers. He also recognized

that a market existed for the type of literature he had written a decade earlier. Writing "trash" for the masses now became his goal, as he remarked:

> I found that to make a living /emphasis added/, I must write trash for the masses, for he who endeavors to write for the critical few, and do his genius justice will go hungry if he has no other means of support.[51]

"TRASH FOR THE MASSES"

After the Civil War, New York was doing more publishing than her two rivals--Boston and Philadelphia. Magazine and weekly story paper subscriptions and circulations spiralled in the city. Consequently, Ned Buntline had little trouble finding a publisher for his novels.[52]

Buntline continued writing for the New York Mercury, but he also revived Ned Buntline's Own Series in April, 1865. He added to the old bannerhead a picture of himself in a Civil War soldier's uniform. In the series, he wrote a fact/fiction account of Abraham Lincoln's assasination entitled The Parricides. This novel caught the attention of the editors of Hilton's National Publishing House.[53]

Hilton's books were competing with Beadle for the dime novel market. The editors at Hilton's offered to absorb Buntline's series and distribute his novels through their organization. Buntline agreed and wrote a total of nine novels for the series. In advertising Buntline's

novels, Hilton's announced:

> These novels, now presented to the public, form one of the most admirable series of popular fiction that has ever been issued. They are marked by their faithful delienation of character...and force of expression. No current novels can be more highly recommended for family reading....[54]

After writing the nine novels, Buntline broke his association with Hilton's and began contributing copy to the New York Weekly. He had previously sold several stories to this paper while imprisoned during the Civil War.[55] While the New York Weekly followed the Beadle's pattern of publishing adventure stories for the masses, Francis S. Smith and Francis S. Street, the publishers, carried the format one step further. Instead of publishing "blood and thunder" thrillers in a hundred page or more novel, Street and Smith serialized them. The biggest advantage in serialization was that less demand was placed on the reader's span of attention. As each issue appeared, the excitement of the hero combatting superior odds gradually mounted. When the reader reached the end of the story, he discovered that the finish would be printed in a subsequent issue.[56]

The Street and Smith formula for serialized adventure stories proved successful. The publishers announced in 1867 that circulation continued "upward and onward to over 120,000 copies," and by 1872, they boasted of a circulation well over 319,000.[57]

"EDWARD MINTURN" AND TEMPERANCE

Judson began writing for the New York Weekly in April, 1867 without using his nom-de-plume of Ned Buntline. Instead, he used a variety of pen names. The use of several pen names in writing for story papers was quite common in this era of cheap fiction. Consequently, positive identification of pseudonyms to an author is dubious at best. However, the stories Judson wrote for Street and Smith under new guises were so reflective of the novelist in content, characterization, and writing style that one can almost be sure that they were written by him.[58]

In Judson's first serial for the paper, Ethelbert The Wanderer, he used the pen name of Edward Minturn. The story was labelled as a descriptive account of Southern life based on the author's long residence in that region. As the series began, the reader was introduced to "Colonel Ethelbert Carroll" in his Nashville home.[59]

Drinking sprees interfered with Buntline's writing for the New York Weekly as it had handicapped him with the Mercury. Consequently, he decided to return to the temperance stump and carry his cold water campaign West.[60] While his real motives for going West will probably never be known, it seems that two additional factors may have influenced his decision. First, after the Civil War, the West promised adventure and Buntline was never one to

be left out of the action. Second, he had just begun writing for the Weekly and may have seen the West as providing new material for serial stories in the paper. Between February and May 1868, Buntline left New York for California and the San Francisco press announced his coming.

The San Francisco Evening Bulletin of May 1, 1868 printed a front page story, telling its readers:

> TO LOOK OUT FOR A VISITOR OF NOTE.
> Ned Buntline, an individual who has filled the newspapers for the past 30 years...is coming to the Pacific to carry out his temperance reform.[61]

Buntline scouted the California coast for two months before delivering his first temperance lecture. When he finally addressed the temperance legions, his theme remained the same--"demon rum is causing the decay of the cities." Buntline said that in his travels he discovered many ghost towns. These he blamed on the abuses of liquor.[62]

This reform effort was promoted in much the same way he had advanced temperance in New York City. That is, he usually obtained inspiration for his lectures from a protracted drinking spree.[62] As evidenced by reports in the San Francisco Evening Bulletin, for the months July to September 1868, Buntline's lectures attracted large audiences. Moreover, these accounts proclaimed that "Old Ned" had been very successful in his reform effort.[63]

By the summer of 1869, Buntline had tired of these

reform attempts. It seems that the combination of Buntline and temperance never did set well together, so the novelist moved eastward. He had heard about an Indian skirmish at Summit Springs, Colorado in which soldiers of the Fifth Calvary had surprised a combined Sioux and Cheyenne force. The battle took place on July 11, 1869. What made the battle significant was that the Indian Chief Tall Bull had been killed. Tall Bull had been the reputed leader in many raids on the frontier and his death was reported in many newspapers.[64]

Recognizing it would provide good copy in the Eastern story papers, Buntline went to Fort McPherson, Nebraska.

NED BUNTLINE MEETS BUFFALO BILL

Ned Buntline reached his destination some two weeks after the skirmish and declared his intention to write thrillers about the Indian warfare. According to his usual writing pattern, this meant either finding a suitable hero for his novel or conjuring up one in his head after his visit at the outpost. It did not necessarily mean that Buntline had a specific person in mind as hero before he arrived.

When Buntline arrived at Fort McPherson, a company of the Fifth Calvary was preparing to pursue an Indian raiding party that had attacked O'Fallon's Station on the

Union Pacific Line. William F. Cody had been assigned to accompany the expedition as scout. The expedition was not important except to Cody, who on this occasion met Ned Buntline. It started a relationship which Buntline was to exploit.

As the expedition was preparing to leave Fort McPherson, Major William H. Brown, commanding the patrol, told Cody that this scout was going to have a guest, "Old Ned Buntline, the novelist."[65] Cody then described Buntline:

> I saw a stoutly built man nearby who wore a blue military coat. On his breast were pinned perhaps twenty badges of secret societies and gold medals. He walked a little lame as he approached us...[66]

When he came up to join the scouting party, Major Brown said: "Cody, allow me to introduce you to E. B. /sic/ C. Judson, known as Ned Buntline."[67]

During the first meeting, the medals and badges which Buntline was wearing and so impressed Cody included:

> A badge of the Sons of America; the head of Washington set on a gold shield with two American flags crossed above it; a badge of the Order of the United Americans; and a Masonic pin.[68]

Beginning the patrol to O'Fallon's station, Buntline had been diffident about his ability to ride a horse. However, he soon gained the respect of Cody by being first to swim his mount across the rain-swollen South Platte River. On the patrol, Buntline plied Cody with questions

and listened to the scout's version of Indian fighting and frontier life. Buntline even had an opportunity to ride Cody's horse, Powder Face.[69]

The scout failed to discover any Indians. However, Buntline had learned enough from Cody to fill many more dime novels with the daring exploits of frontiermen.

The meeting between Buntline and Cody has become somewhat distorted in the telling. Many historians and biographers, who have recorded this meeting, have relied on Luther North's version of the story. According to this account, Buntline was directed to Major Frank North, brother of Luther North, when he arrived at Fort McPherson. Men at the fort told Buntline that Major North was "The fightn'st Indian fighter of the bunch." However, North refused to talk with the novelist and directed him to see Bill Cody. Buntline supposedly roused Cody who was asleep under a wagon and this resulted in their first meeting.[70] Based on existing evidence the meeting between Buntline and North could not have taken place.

Major Brown led detachments from Companies F, I, and L on the patrol to O'Fallon's Station on 24 July 1869. That date also marked the first meeting of Buntline and Cody. It so happened that Frank North was in Omaha on July 24, as an interpreter at a murder trial of some Pawnee Indians.[71]

Therefore, it appears that Buntline could not have

met North, making Cody's version of meeting the novelist just as the expedition was to start the correct one.

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CHAPTER IV

CREATING A FOLK-MYTH

In mid-19th century America, heroes were apparently part of the American value system. To the Eastern public, there existed the idea that a person could escape the crowded city and move West. Here was an unknown wilderness, full of danger and challenges. If the risk was taken to move into this region, then the reward was the possibility of changing one's life.

Rugged frontiersmen helped the individual in his decision-making process. These men and women were evidence of people coming to grips with the challenges of frontier life--Indians, nature, and sometimes atrocities among one another.

Ned Buntline played a role in creating folk-heroes and legends with which prospective emigrants could identify. The novelist used his talent as a teller of tall-tales to provide live Western heroes for an Eastern audience. To gain some perspective of Buntline's role as myth-maker of the West and of the Buffalo Bill legend, some understanding of the creation of myth and heroes is necessary.

Mythology serves three basic functions in society: it attempts to explain the social and physical environment,

it supports the social order of a particular era, and it guides the individual in understanding his society.[1] Besides these criteria, several sequential steps are necessary to create a folk myth hero:

1. Destiny calls the potential hero which takes him from a familiar setting to an unknown area, sometimes called the threshold of adventure.
2. The hero crosses this threshold of adventure and he alone must meet the danger.
3. The hero proves to be the superior man and overcomes all obstacles.
4. He returns to his own society apotheosized.[2]

The hero himself must possess certain characteristics. While these qualities may vary according to the particular setting, the following traits remain constant. The hero is typically capable of feats that are beyond the ability of ordinary men. Thus, such a man as Buntline's Ben McCulloch was able to ward off successive Indian attacks.[3]

The hero must possess a strength of spirit, a determination to continue even in the face of defeat. Whatever his mental condition, the hero cannot be himself without his physical strength and power. As will be seen, Buntline's "Buffalo Bill" possessed such power that he was able to overcome tremendous odds in battle.

Coincident with strength is the characteristic heroic virtue of courage. In almost every case, this is the one indispensable trait of the heroic role. Heroes may often

be cruel, unjust, or intemperate, but they are never cowards:

> (Heroes) do not falter or give away. They do not despair in the face of helpless odds. They have the strength and stamina to achieve whatever they set their minds and wills to do. They would not be heroes were they not men of courage.[4]

Buntline returned to New York from his Western travels and combined the elements of myth and hero characteristics into the first "Buffalo Bill" story ever written. Following this story, he continued to capitalize on the perfect example of what scholars have called the folk-myth hero.

COLONEL E. Z. C. JUDSON WRITES EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE NEW YORK WEEKLY

In the fall of 1869, Buntline signed a contract to write exclusively for the New York Weekly and submitted to the publishers a serial based on his visit with William F. Cody. Under terms of the contract, he received between $10,000 to $20,000 a year for his serials. His salary was extremely high in comparison to other serial writers. Frank Leslie's Weekly paid Mayne Reid $8,000 for his serials, while the New York Weekly paid a frequent lady contributor, Mary Jane Holmes, $4,000 to $6,000 for her serials.[5]

Street and Smith announced in the November issue of their paper that Colonel Judson, widely known as Ned

Buntline, had just completed a new story entitled Buffalo Bill--King of Border Men. Readers were assured of the veracity of this story;

> The hero of this novel is one of the(author's) warmest, chosen friends, by whose side he has ridden many a mile in chase of buffalo...as also in the more exciting work of reducing the red warriors of the West to the laws of the paleface.[6]

"Watch for an Apollo on horseback, a true story written by a man who is acquainted with scouts and hunters!" These were the phrases that aroused reader interest. Finally, on December 23,1869, Buffalo Bill was introduced to the world. There was such a demand for the story that 20,000 extra copies had to be printed.[7]

Buntline's serial, later published in book form, became the format upon which subsequent writers expanded and enlarged the myth of Buffalo Bill. Excerpts from the novel are presented to show the hero-image of Cody that Buntline was creating for the Eastern public.

The cast of characters in "Buffalo Bill-King of Bordermen" included: Buffalo Bill, his fictitious twin sisters Lillie and Lottie; Wild Bill Hitchcock /sic/; and the M'Kandlas gang /sic/.[8]

Action begins in the first chapter with Buffalo Bill's father shot dead on his own doorstep by "Jake M'Kandlas." Buffalo Bill swears revenge but Wild Bill intercedes. Wild Bill kills singlehanded eleven members

of the "M'Kandlas gang":

> Like tigers mad for blood, with flashing, clashing knives...they sprang and leaped at each other... until the last man of the crowd lay dead before the hero.

In subsequent chapters, Cody's fictitious twin sisters are abducted by that "fiend incarnate Jake M'Kandlas," by Indians, or by a band of border ruffians. Each of these antagonists meets a "fate worse than death" from Buffalo Bill or Wild Bill and the girls are saved.

Each hero must overcome insurmountable odds as in this fight with Cheyennes:

> Wheeling and circling here and there never missing a shot--it seemed as if there were twenty rather than two--our hero (Buffalo Bill) and Wild Bill dashed on carrying death at every leap.

Buntline even managed to get Cody's horse in on the action, "...Powder Face kicking, plunging, and snorting as he dashed his red hoofs into the dead and dying, while the Indians, utterly terror mad, sought only to escape." The yarn continues as Buffalo Bill pursues a band of 200 border ruffians, kills 150 of them, and emerges unharmed.

The reader is assured either in text or footnote that each of these episodes is "founded entirely on fact."

Issac Cody, Buffalo Bill's father, was not murdered by the "M'Kandlas gang," as Buntline stated in the

novel. He died from complications of a severe cold and an old stab wound which he received while recruiting immigrants to Kansas.[9]

Buntline's reference to the McCanles gang, not M'Kandlas, was a continuation of an earlier account of William Butler Hickok's fight with this group. Colonel George Ward Nichols of Harper's Monthly Magazine published an interview with "Wild Bill" in February, 1865 which contributed to Hickok's notoriety. This story formed the basis for many sensational accounts that appeared later, including the yarn about the McCanles gang. Hickok added to the credibility of this version by not denying it.[10]

Evidence shows that Wild Bill did not kill eleven men by stabbing them, as Buntline recorded in his novel. Rather, Wild Bill shot and killed four unarmed men without justification. Those men killed were David McCanles, his twelve-year-old son, and two friends. These four men comprised the group which dime novelists described as "the notorious McCanles gang of cutthroats."[11]

The significance of Buffalo Bill-King of Border Men to a mass audience was that while the novel contained many half-truths and inaccuracies, it marked the birth of the arch-type Western hero. This hero soon came to portray the image of the true rugged individualist for the Eastern audience.

Just the name, "Buffalo Bill", seemed to connote

the picture of a rough hewn frontiersman to the public. Buntline was by no means the originator of the sobriquet. He simply borrowed the nickname from one which was already popular on the frontier. Cody acquired the name while contracted to the Kansas Pacific railroad to provide meat for construction crews. A jingle that circulated is said to have added to the legend:

> Buffalo Bill, Buffalo Bill
> Never missed and never will;
> Always aims and shoots to kill,
> And the company pays his buffalo bill.[12]

Before Cody met Buntline, his life on the plains was neither more skillful nor daring than many of his companions. Buntline established a pattern for him to follow, as he had for his heroes in earlier adventure stories. However, he and his successors made the divergence between fact and fiction even greater. Where earlier heroes had been represented as slaying several opponents, Cody now began slaying hundreds.

Buntline created the character. Cody gave the character credibility by not denying the exploits; and his living presence, or simply being, was powerful inducement to a faithful following that such things--and such people--could really happen. All of the many writers who later followed the Buffalo Bill trail simply emulated the legend Buntline had founded.

EASTERN PUBLIC REACTION

The Eastern public soon began demanding more "Buffalo Bill" stories. Cody's widow wrote:

> It (the serial) was exactly what the Eastern public had been waiting for, and now every week...Buffalo Bill rescued maidens in distress, killed off Indians by the score and hunted buffalo in his sleep...[13]

It appears that public reaction, as registered in letters to the New York Weekly about the serial, gave credence to her statement.

One reader commented: "I have been a steady reader of your paper for three years and Ned Buntline's Buffalo Bill is the most interesting you have published." Another reader said: "The New York gang are all up on Buffalo Bill."[14]

A lady reader was so impressed with the "authenticity" of the series that she wrote: "Having been much interested in the exploits of "Wild Bill" and "Buffalo Bill" in the Weekly, I have just received a confirmation from my son in the West that they both do exist."[15]

After eleven successive weeks, the final installment of "Buffalo Bill--King of Border Men" was printed on March 10, 1870. Buntline assured readers that this was not the last of his stories about the life of Buffalo Bill. "I have only touched on a small portion of his life," he said.[16]

Subsequent issues of the Weekly found Buntline

generating additional tales.

TAMING THE WEST

Buntline followed his "Buffalo Bill" serial with the adventures of another frontier scout and hunter. Street and Smith advertised that Ned Buntline had completed his "last" story entitled "Little Buckshot--The White Whirlwind of the Prairies." The character, "Little Buckshot," was described as a living hero, one of the best scouts and Indian fighters on the Plains.[17] As they had done previously, the publishers emphasized the realism of this story proclaiming: "We have learned that Little Buckshot is wanted by Red Cloud, Big Horn, and Black Elk, great chiefs of the Sioux and Dacotahs."[18] The tale was also labelled must reading for all emigrants going West.

The series began in the June 30 issue of the New York Weekly. Buntline identified "Little Buckshot" as Conrad Wentworth, a scout and guide for the second U. S. Calvary. He said: "Like our famed Buffalo Bill, he (Wentworth) is a live reality, not a fanciful character. The title is one selected from one of several names by which he is known among the Indians of the West."[19]

Like the Buffalo Bill series, this was another story based on rugged individualism and survival in the West. For example, an emigrant camp located at the Great Falls of the Missouri is raided by Sioux. In typical hero

fashion, "Little Buckshot" arrived in the nick of time to prevent a massacre of the settlers:

> The yells and screeches of the massed Indians felt the lead of their enemies as ever nearer than before boomed the terrible double-barrelled gun of Little Buckshot.[20]

General George Armstrong Custer or as Buntline spelled it--General Custar--is included in this tale battling Red Cloud and a band of half-breed Indians led by John Reshau/sic/. General Custer is described as patrolling the plains in search of marauding Indians with "his fair hair streaming out beyond his broad shoulders."[21]

To the Eastern public, General Custer, Red Cloud, John Reshaw, and the emigrant camp at Great Falls, Montana had relevancy for that period. Although he never cited it by name, Buntline was describing events along the Bozeman Trail, a road that was the focus of Sioux discontent in 1867.

The trail was located in the Powder River area. Numerous military forts had been constructed along the route to protect emigrants and miners headed for the mining regions of the Northwest. Sioux raids against both the military posts and settlers were always to be expected. However, as the Union Pacific railroad pushed into that region, the trail gradually lost some of its

importance as a highway into the Northwest.[22]

The advancement of rail transportation westward undoubtedly served as an inducement for those intent on moving into the mining region. At the same time, some reassurance was given that scouts and soldiers like Wentworth and Custer were making the frontier a little safer for travel.

THE MYTH OF BUFFALO BILL CONTINUES

Buntline followed up his earlier serial about Buffalo Bill with short sketches of the scout's life. The first sketch, "Buffalo Bill's First Fight," was printed in the New York Weekly on June 23, 1870. This sketch enlarged the account of Buffalo Bill killing his first Indian at the age of twelve. As Buntline put it: "...a gang of Cheyenne came bearing down on the camp of the cattle drovers, Bill jumped up; pistol in hand...fired and saw one (Indian) drop."[23] After the fight was over, Buntline credited Cody with killing two out of some sixty Indians. Subsequent writers added their own version of the fight and continued to perpetuate the myth.

In July, the New York Weekly printed another sketch of Cody's life. This account was entitled "How Buffalo Bill Got Even--An Overland Incident." Using a familiar ploy, Buntline said this was a factual incident, verified by the hero and those who know him. Despite the claim of

veracity, the episode was a fictitious report based on the reality of Cody's having worked for Russell, Majors, and Waddell, an Overland freight company.[24]

Buffalo Bill's legend was slowly growing and soon became a topic for eastern newspapermen.

In September, 1871, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. and a party of the eastern press went to Fort McPherson at the invitation of General Philip H. Sheridan. The purpose of their visit was to do some buffalo hunting. Shortly after the arrival of the group, the New York Herald on 23 September reported that the party was to be led by "the renowned Buffalo Bill" and planned to conclude their ten day hunt at Fort Hays."[25]

Ned Buntline wrote an article in the Weekly which coincided with this buffalo hunt. He told readers that Buffalo Bill had been annoyed by boasts of hunters saying that they could kill more buffalo than him. Anyone wishing to challenge this scout, Buntline said, may write to him at Fort Sedgewick on the Platte.[26]

In the meantime, eastern newspapermen must have been impressed with their first sight of Buffalo Bill on the Plains. Cody, who probably recognized the value of additional publicity coming from this hunt, dressed especially for the occasion. He wrote: "I rose fresh and eager for the trip, and as it was a hobby and high-toned outfit which I was to accompany, I determined to

put on a little style myself." He dressed in a new suit of light buckskin, with buckskin fringes on the seams, put on an ornamented crimson shirt, and wore a broad sombrero. Then he mounted a white horse and rode from the fort to the camp of the hunters.[27]

During the ten day outing, dispatches were filed in the Herald telling readers about the progress of the buffalo hunt. Arriving at Fort Hays on October 2, the party had hunted for 194 miles and killed some six hundred buffalo. Bennett and company bid farewell to General Sheridan and Cody, and returned east.[28]

BUFFALO BILL IS INVITED EAST

After the eastern press group returned to New York, Cody wrote Buntline and told him that he planned to visit New York in December. The New York Weekly reported that such a visit would make Buntline a happy man. Moreover, it would enable him to show Cody the city. However, this particular trip never materialized, as Cody explained in a subsequent letter. Cody said that he, together with the Fifth Calvary, had been ordered to the Arizona territory.[29]

Cody never made the trip to Arizona, either. Instead, he remained at Fort McPherson, assigned as chief scout and hunting guide for Grand Duke Alexis' vist on the Plains.[30] The event would be significant for Cody, as it added to the growing legend of Buffalo Bill. Even before

the hunt began, some idea of how the legend had grown was reflected in the first meeting between scout and dignitary.

The Grand Duke arrived at North Platte on January 13,1872 in a special Union Pacific train. The Herald gave this report:

> Buffalo Bill was seated on a spanking charger, with his long hair and spangled buckskin suit he appeared in his true character...

"Your Highness," said General Sheridan, "this is Mr. Cody otherwise and universally known as Buffalo Bill. Bill, this is the Grand Duke." "I am glad to know you," said the hero of the Plains.[31]

Some time after the Grand Duke's visit, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. invited Cody to visit New York and sent him $500 for expenses. General Sheridan granted him thirty days leave and General Anson Stager sent him railroad passes for the trip east.[32]

While Buffalo Bill had been serving as scout on the Plains, the man who had created the myth was not idle. Buntline, together with dramatist Frederick G. Maeder, had adapted the Buffalo Bill--King of Border Men serial for stage. Opening night was slated for February 20 at the Bowery Theater. Either deliberately planned by Buntline or by pure coincidence, the timing of the performance corresponded with Buffalo Bill's trip to New York. The

Eastern public would soon be introduced to the equivalent of our modern day western movie.

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21. Ibid., September 15, 1870.

22. Douglas C. Jones, The Treaty of Medicine Lodge (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), pp. 8, 26.

23. New York Weekly, June 23, 1870.

24. Ibid., July 28, 1870.

25. New York Herald, September 23, 1871.

26. Ibid., September 21, 1871.

27. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 233.

28. New York Herald, October 3, 1871.

29. New York Weekly, November 23, 1871.

30. George F. Price comp., Across The Continent With The Fifth Calvary (D. Van Nostrand Publisher, 1883), p. 619. Records of the Fifth Calvary show that they left Fort McPherson for Fort McDowell, Arizona Territory, on 12 December 1871. Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill, p. 175. He states that Cody remained behind in preparation for Grand Duke Alexis' trip.

31. New York Herald, January 14, 1872.

32. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 243.

CHAPTER V

BUFFALO BILL--FRONTIER HERO

CODY VISITS NEW YORK

Cody arrived in New York around mid-February, 1872, and was escorted from the railway station to the Union Club. Here James Gordon Bennett, Sr. and several members of the party who had hunted with Cody out west had arranged a dinner and formal reception. After dinner, Cody went in search of Ned Buntline. He found him at the Brevoort Place Hotel.

Buntline and the hotel proprietors, Overton and Blair, insisted on Cody's becoming their guest. Cody agreed to divide his time between the Union Club, the Brevoort House, and Ned Buntline's headquarters.[1]

During his visit, Cody was feted as the guest of honor at dinners given by Bennett and August Belmont. At the Academy of Music, Cody attended a masked ball where dressed in a buckskin suit he became the center of attention. He danced and exclaimed, "(I) exhibited some of my backwoodsmen steps, which although were not as graceful as some were a great deal more emphatic."[2] While Cody was practicing his ballroom footwork, final rehearsals for the stage dramatization of "Buffalo Bill"

were being conducted at the Bowery Theater.

Buntline and Cody frequently attended play rehearsals. Both the novelist and dramatist Maeder received assurances from Cody that the scenes portrayed an accurate picture of real frontier experiences.[3] "Buffalo Bill" opened on February 19. The Herald predicted that the real hero of the play would be there too.[4] When Cody and Buntline arrived at the theater, they found it packed from pit to gallery.

During the performances, the audience learned that the real Buffalo Bill was present. The crowd demanded his appearance. Forced on stage to meet, J. B. Studley, the actor playing the role of Buffalo Bill, Cody had an attack of stage fright. The few words he uttered were inaudible to the crowd. However, it mattered little. The Herald reported: "When the real Buffalo Bill was recognized, the audience rose en masse and greeted him with an ovation as such actors at the more aristocratic theaters never received."[5]

That night, the owner of the theater offered Cody $500 a week if he would play the part of "Buffalo Bill." Cody refused the offer, explaining that he could never talk before a crowd of people.[6]

The drama was easily understood by the audience. Crowded into four acts were hair-breadth escapes, burning prairies, trappers' last shots, Indian war dances, and

guerilla raids. A reviewer said: "Bowery audiences seem to detest any sentimentality but relish that which is sensational and terrible."[7] Some idea of the sensationalism was depicted in this account:

> The highest pitch of the excitement was reached in the 3rd act, where Jake McKandlass, a noted border ruffian, meets Buffalo Bill, and a terrific hand to hand conflict with bowie knifes ensues. The audience were spell bound-breathless--during this fierce encounter.[8]

The report continued by saying that when Buffalo Bill defeated the villan, such a roar of approval followed that it sounded like a screaming whirlwind.

It seems that after the success of the play, Cody began spending more time with Buntline and less with Bennett and the others. Cody and Buntline were frequently seen riding horses through Central Park, dressed in buckskin suits.[9] The pair also visited Cody's relatives in West Chester, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia. Cody met his uncle, Brevet Brigadier General Henry R. Guss, and a cousin, Lizzie Guss.[10]

Buntline took Cody to the Chestnut Street Theater to see the play Peril; or On The Beach at Long Branch, at the invitation of its author, B. T. Campbell. The next evening the two visited a group of the Patriotic Order of the Sons of America, an organization Buntline had founded.[11] Buntline also arranged an interview for Cody

with the Philadelphia Public Record. The reporter wrote:

> From the wild cognomen, "Buffalo Bill," it has been the impression of many persons that he was semi-barbarian or a regular border ruffian. On the contrary, Mr. Cody is a fine specimen of a well-bred, bright minded, western pioneer. By ladies, he would be termed handsome...In his numerous scrimmages with Indians, his exploits have made him a terror to them as well as white border ruffians.[12]

After the Philadelphia visit, the men returned to New York. Cody's sojourn East had come to an end, as he boarded a train and returned to his scouting activities on the Plains. Even as Cody returned West, the "Buffalo Bill" drama was being performed drawing capacity crowds.[13] To keep the Buffalo Bill image before the Eastern public, Buntline, his head full of new Buffalo Bill adventures, picked up his pen and dashed off another serial for the New York Weekly.

FROM LEGISLATOR TO ACTOR

The sequel to the earlier Buffalo Bill serial appeared in the New York Weekly shortly after Cody's return to Fort McPherson. Buffalo Bill's Best Shot; or The Heart of Spotted Tail started serially in the paper on March 25, 1872.[14]

In the serial, Buntline alluded to the Grand Duke Alexis' visit and Cody's duties as scout on that royal buffalo hunt. Other incidents in the serial were reflective of his earlier story of Buffalo Bill with

numerous Indian fights, timely escapes, and plenty of action. However, the story was significant from another standpoint.

There has been much discussion concerning the question of who started the legend of Buffalo Bill killing Chief Tall Bull at Summit Springs. Buntline has been criticized for starting the story when actually he got there too late to see it.[15] On the other hand, various biographers and historians have credited Buntline with creating the myth but have failed to cite page or publication.[16]

It seems that Buffalo Bill's Best Shot contains the first reference to the Summit Spring incident. Buntline failed to go into detail about the fight; nevertheless, he credited Cody with killing the famous Indian Chief. In the serial, Buffalo Bill is captured by Sioux warriors while scouting the plains, and is transferred from his horse to an Indian mount. Buntline continued:

> Buffalo Bill knew the horse he was on. It was a tall, raw boned gray, from which, when with General Carr, he had shot Tall Bull an Ogallalla /sic/ Sioux, capturing the horse. (emphasis added)[17]

Together with this reference to Summit Springs, numerous accounts have been added to the legend by those associated with Cody and subsequent dime novelists. Later evidence showed that Buffalo Bill was not even an active participant in the fight. Cody was with another command

acting in reserve. This element joined the main body of troops just as the village was captured.[18]

After Cody had returned to Fort McPherson, he wrote Buntline. The letter was printed in the Weekly concurrent with the new Buffalo Bill serial. Cody told the novelist that if he came across any new adventures, Buntline would be the first to know. However, he added, "I think you have enough now to keep your pen at work for a month of Sundays."[19] Cody's assessment was correct.

Buntline followed the Buffalo Bill's Best Shot serial with another account. This one entitled Buffalo Bill's Last Victory; or Dove Eye, the Lodge Queen, which ran from July 8 to October 14. Readers of the story were introduced to Buffalo Bill's partner on the plains--Texas Jack (Omohundro).

SCOUTS OF THE PRAIRIE

Buntline, always an opportunist, had recognized the tremendous appeal of Maeder's play. He also witnessed the crowd's roar of approval when the real Buffalo Bill appeared on stage. The novelist capitalized on the idea of linking his serial stories to the stage by persuading Buffalo Bill to return East. This time, the audience was to see the real Buffalo Bill as the star performer.

Letters were sent by Buntline to Cody urging him to return East with the promise of fame and fortune.

Mrs. Cody said that Buntline's letters continually told us of all the money we could make. "The more Will and I read, the more we were tempted."[20]

Will Cody was indeed tempted by the letters. Nevertheless, he said that he still remembered his first appearance on stage, at the Bowery Theater; this in itself was enough to make him decline the offer. Officers at the post distrusted Buntline, and urged Cody to stay where he was well off. Cody confided in his friend Texas Jack, who urged him to try the stage.[21]

His decision on whether to accept the invitation as actor was compounded when he was elected to the Nebraska State Legislature. Now he weighed the two alternatives, to be a legislator or an actor. Finally, he told his wife, "I know I'd be a fizzle at legislation. I don't know just how bad I'd be at actin. I guess maybe I'd better find out."[22]

Buffalo Bill Cody and Texas Jack Omohundro arrived in Chicago on December 12, 1872 to meet Buntline. They had failed to bring along the Indians Buntline had requested and advertised in that day's paper. The Chicago Evening Journal announced the appearance at Nixon's Ampitheater on December 18 of "The real Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack and ten Sioux and Pawnee Chiefs in Ned Buntline's great drama Buffalo Bill."[23] Not only was Buntline shocked to discover the absence of the scheduled Indians, but the scouts,

too, were equally astounded that they were stars in a play that had never been written. However, these proved to be minor setbacks for Buntline.

The novelist turned playwright solved the Indian problem by hiring ten local waterfront toughs and paid them 25¢ a performance. In a local hotel, Buntline hired all the clerks as copyists, and produced the play in four hours.[24] Incredulous as this may seem, it was quite plausible in view of Buntline's ability. He based his play on Maeder's adaptation of Buffalo Bill--King of Bordermen.

After he had finished writing the play, Buntline handed scripts of the play to Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack; he instructed them to memorize their roles in the performance. Cody said that they ordered "refreshments" to prepare themselves for the task. However, the memorization work did not last long, as the scouts gave up after an hour or two of study.[25]

The cast of characters for the play, of course, included the two scouts together with a renowned actress and a temperance character. Mlle. Morlacchi was to play the role of Dove-Eye, an Indian maiden.

An Italian actress, Giuseppina Morlacchi came to the United States in 1867 under the management of John De Pol. De Pol invented a press-agentry device by insuring her legs for $100,000 before her first appearance

in a play at Banvard's Museum in New York. In this performance, she introduced the can-can to America, a dance that became her trademark.[26]

The temperance character, Cale Durg, was a role Buntline filled himself. Buntline had assumed this fictitious name in a serial he wrote for the New York Weekly. In the story, Cale Durg (Buntline) was the hero and depicted as "a free rover of the wilderness."[27]

Prior to that night's performance, the Chicago Daily Tribune announced the title for the play:

> The real heroes of the Plains, Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack in a great sensational drama entitled, The Scouts of the Plains, written expressly for them by Ned Buntline. Morlacchi as Dove-Eye. Matinees Wednesday and Saturday--Every lady visiting the matinees will be presented with portraits of the boys.[28]

This type of advertising appeared continually while the show was on tour. Buntline supervised the distribution of advertisements but the real manager for the show was Major John M. Burke.[29]

Prior to joining Buntline's troupe, Burke, born in Washington, D.C., had been a stock company actor, manager of a tent show dramatic group, and newspaper editor. In associating with the "Scouts," he wore his hair long and became "Arizona John," although it is doubtful that he had ever been west before he met Buntline and Cody in Chicago.

On the evening of December 16, crowds gathered outside Nixon's Theater waiting to see the "Scouts" debut. This was one description of opening night:

> The mere mention of the fact that Buffalo Bill was to appear in a play had been enough. The house was crowded. Every well-known man with whom Will had ever hunted was there, while the galleries and balconies were crowded with those who had read the stories of Buffalo Bill as written by Ned Buntline.[30]

The play never materialized as Buntline had planned it. However, it made little difference to the audience.

During the entire performance, Cody never once spoke a word of his assigned role; instead, he entertained the audience with impromptu tales about Indian fights and buffalo hunts. The audience failed to discern the difference; they had come to see the scouts in live action and their wish was fulfilled. Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack yelled, fired their six-shooters, and chased the "Chicago" Indians across stage. Moreover, they succeeded in saving the heroine. Gate receipts for the first night show registered $2,800 and the play drew both criticism and praise from the Chicago reporters.[31]

Cody, in his autobiography, quoted the Chicago Times saying that if it took Buntline four hours to write the play, it was difficult for anyone to see what he was doing all that time. No one has ever been able to find the Times statement.[32]

The Chicago Daily Tribune reporter recognized the

complete absurdity of the play but, at the same time, saw its immediate success with the crowd. He summarized the play:

> With the aid of numerous bloody conflicts; the beautiful Indian maiden (Mlle. Morlacchi) with an Italian accent and weakness for scouts; the poetical trapper (Buntline) who talks of the superiority of water to rotgut...the vengeance wreaked upon the murderous redskins--all these put together, furnish rare entertainment for the toiling masses who attend the show.[33]

Indeed the show attracted the masses, as shown in subsequent reports:

> Chicago Daily Tribune December 18, 1872
> Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack, and Cale Durg attract more people than the house can hold. Crowds are turned away nightly.
>
> Chicago Daily Tribune December 19, 1872
> 2,000 bad breathes and twice as many unclean feet patronize the long neglected Nixon Theater to see Buntline's show...

Following their Chicago performance, the troupe moved west to St. Louis.

In St. Louis, the "Scouts of the Prairie" opened at Debar's Opera House, on December 23, 1872. A new actress was added to the cast, Senorita Eloe Carfano, billed as "Hazel-Eye," a character Buntline had included in many of his serials. Again, the "Scouts" performed before a packed theater. A reporter for the Missouri Democrat said, "Ned Buntline, Buffalo Bill, and Texas Jack

nightly shoot, stab, and lasso counterfiet Indians... the house last night was jammed with spectators."[34]

The law caught up with Buntline while the troupe was in St. Louis. It appears that some of the local townspeople still remembered his participation in the riot in the city about twenty years before. Buntline had jumped bail in that case. When Buntline was introduced to the judge, the judge was surprised at the novelist's appearance. He asked: "Is this Ned Buntline whose yellow-covered literature I have heard of? I expected to see a big piratical looking fellow, as tall as that door, with bowie knife and pistols in his belt."[35] Buntline replied that the judge was not the first person who had been disappointed in his appearance. Moreover, he said that he was innocent of the charges.[36]

The judge placed his bond at $1,000 on the rioting indictments. When he discovered that the defendent was broke, he had him jailed. Meanwhile, Buntline's friend, Captain George B. Martin, contacted Carlos S. Greeley, treasurer of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, who provided money for his release. This proved to be a costly act of friendship for Greeley. That night, Buntline jumped bail again and the troupe moved east.

The show opened at Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati on December 30, 1872. There it received the same ovations as in Chicago and St. Louis. Next, "the

Scouts" moved into upper New York State and then into Boston. During the months of February and March 1873, the troupe played in other New England cities."[37]

At Rochester, New York, Buntline arranged an interview for Cody with city reporters. Then Buntline, Buffalo Bill, and Texas Jack visited Professor Henry A. Ward, for whom Cody had collected animal specimens. At Providence, Rhode Island, as was typical of the period, the show was preceded by a skit. Four dances were performed by "the great danseuse Mlle. Morlacchi."[38]

The troupe opened for a week in Boston on March 3, 1873. The Boston Transcript announced that "Those who delight in sensations of the most exciting order will not fail to see the distinguished visitors from the Western plains before they leave."[39] At the close of the week's performance, the play brought receipts of $16,500.[40]

Before leaving Boston, Buntline had made arrangements with Niblo's Theater in New York for some changes in the drama. New scenery, depictive of the Plains, and the scouts riding their horses on stage were several alterations that the theater management and Buntline had agreed on. Buntline maintained that his purpose for these recommendations was to show the people that Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack can live on the stage, as they do on the Plains.[41]

Another change Buntline made somewhere between Chicago and New York was the substitution of the "Chicago toughs" as Indians for presumably real Indians. At least, the playbill for New York separated Indian rolls in the cast:

Scouts of the Prairie

Buffalo Bill, by the hero himself..Hon. W. F. Cody
Texas Jack, by the hero himself....J. B. Omohundro
Cale Durg.....Ned Buntline
Mormon Ben.....Harry Wentworth
Phlem O'Laugherty.....Geo. C. Davenport
Carl Pretzel.....Walter Fletcher
Hazel-Eye.....Senorita Eloe Carfare

Indians

Wolf-Slayer.....Shirlev H. France
Big Eagle.....Joseph J. Winter
Little Bear.....Geo. B. Beach

Pawnee Chiefs

Ar-fi-A-ka played by Grassy Chief; As-ge-tes, by Prairie Dog; As-sin-An-wa, by Water Chief; Te-co-tig-pown, by Big Elk; Kit-kot-tons, by Great River; and Chuk-kah, by Seven Stars.[42]

Prior to the "Scouts" arrival in New York, Buntline had written a new serial for the New York Weekly entitled "Texas Jack, the White King of the Pawnees;" it began on March 24, 1873. It seems that the serial served as a publicity device for the performance by keeping the adventures of the scouts before the public. Buntline also made a minor change for the New York show; for some unknown reason, he abandoned his idea for enacting the

show on horseback.

NEW YORK GREETS "SCOUTS OF THE PRAIRIE"

Just a year before, Buffalo Bill had been an object of curiousity in the city, as the guest of Bennett and Buntline. Now, the Eastern public waited anxiously to see him perform.

The play opened at Niblo's Gardens on the evening of March 31 and reporters from the Herald and Times were on hand to cover the attraction. Bennett's Herald reflected the long-standing feud with Buntline: "Ned Buntline is simple maundering imbecility. Ludicrous beyond the power of description is his temperance address in the forest." Evidently, Bennett remembered Buntline's method of temperance from the time when the novelist attempted to conduct a "reform" of the city some years earlier.[43] The Herald, however, was charitable to the real "Scouts" in the play:

> Buffalo Bill is a good looking fellow, tall and straight as an arrow, but ridiculous as an actor... Texas Jack is not quite so good-looking, not so tall, not so straight, not so ridiculous.[44]

Summarizing the performance, the Herald said: "Everything was so wonderfully bad it was almost good."[45]

The New York Times critic recognized "a flavor of realism and nationality" in the performance. He also spotted the audience's love of violence and bloodshed on

the stage:

> Honorable William F. Cody exhibited on his first appearance before a metropolitan audience a surprising degree of aplomb, notable ease of gesture and delivery...His use of the revolver and rifle indicate extensive practice, and were vastly relished by the audience....(an audience) that especially enjoyed the violence and bloodshed culminating all the acts.[46]

To gain added publicity for the show, Buntline and Cody rode down Broadway in full western costume six or eight times a day. Both the play and these stunts achieved their desired effect for the two week period in New York. That is, it aroused and intensified Eastern curiosity about the West.[47]

From New York, Buntline and company moved southward into Philadelphia, on April 21, and then into Richmond, on May 12. A playbill in the Richmond Dispatch announced that the town had been invaded by live Indians, with Buffalo Bill in command. Ned Buntline was said to be in arms and eager for the fray at the Richmond Theater.[48]

The morning before that night's performance, Buntline and his troupe rode to the theater in a horse-drawn wagon. The scouts were dressed in their buckskin outfits, while the Indians were in war-paint. A familiar cry heard among the citizens of Richmond when they viewed this sight was "them is the Modocs come to town."[49]

The people of Richmond, like crowds in other cities

jammed the theater that evening. Again theater critics praised the show:

> Richmond theater-goers have certainly had a chance at the sensational this time, with the exhibition by the Indians and scouts representing a realistic picture of life on the plains....(It) has proved most satisfactory to those who are fond of blood and thunder...[50]

BUNTLINE AND CODY PART

The "Scouts" closed at Port Jervis, New York, on June 16, 1873. Buntline reported that he had cleared $20,000, while Cody was disappointed that he was only $6,000 ahead.[51]

Cody, with Texas Jack, returned to Nebraska and decided to dispense with Buntline. No one seems to know why. Buntline had already planned future performances. First, he decided to move the show from the stage and take it outdoors under canvas. Next, he planned to take the show to London in late summer. However, these plans and his role as publicist of Buffalo Bill were supplanted by others.[52]

Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack persuaded Wild Bill Hickok to join them in forming a new play. To handle publicity for this new troupe, Buntline was replaced by John M. Burke. Burke followed through with the Buntline format and helped form Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show." Buntline's role as a dime novelist and serial writer of

"Buffalo Bill" stories was replaced by Prentiss Ingraham. He became the most prolific Buffalo Bill writer with over 120 novels.[53]

Buntline, however, was undaunted by these setbacks. He wrote a new play, based on another 1872 dime novel, Dashing Charlie, the Texas Whirlwind, and produced it with Dashing Charlie--a U. S. Army Scout, and someone called Arizona Frank--fresh from the Apache Wars.[54] Buntline acquired a troupe of Comanche and Kiowa Indians from P. T. Barnum to supplement this new "wild west production." This performance remained in the East and played in medium-sized towns, opening on August 25, 1873 in Paterson, New Jersey.[55]

Buntline's play failed to generate the interest and excitment which the "Scouts" had attracted. The exact date of the play's termination is unknown; it seems safe to speculate that by the close of 1873, the performance had stopped.

THE "BUNTLINE SPECIAL"

By the mid-1870s, Buntline had returned to his temperance lecture tours, denouncing the evils of liquor in public, while consuming it in his leisure. He continued to write for the New York Weekly, while frequently contributing stories to Beadle and Adams' Banner Weekly. During the summer of 1876, his interest shifted westward

again--this time to Dodge City, Kansas and to U. S. Marshall Wyatt Earp.

Buntline, always one for marksmanship, had heard about Marshall Earp and his shoot-outs with various toughs in the "Cowboy Capital." Although details of his visit with Earp are sketchy, Buntline's gift to Earp and five Dodge City lawmen--Bill Tilghman, Bat Masterson, Charlie Bassett, and Neal Brown--is legendary in itself.

Buntline had requested the Colt firearms company to make five special forty-five caliber pistols of regulation single action style, with certain modifications. The barrels were to be some four inches longer than the standard twelve inch length. Each gun had a detachable walnut stock with the word "Ned" carved deeply into the wood. Thus, the famous "Buntline Special" was born. Wyatt Earp said of the weapon: "There was alot of talk in Dodge about the specials slowing us on the draw...Mine was my favorite gun and I carried it throughout my career as marshal."[56] However, he did not have it at OK Corral in Tombstone a few years later.

Toward the close of the 19th Century, Buntline was becoming something of a legend. A New York World reporter was detailed to interview the novelist in 1885 and gave this description: "The Colonel weighs about 200 pounds; his short-cut hair is nearly gray and so is his moustache...he always dresses in the fatigue uniform of

the army, blue and brass buttoned with patriotic badges and decorations on his breast."[57] The reporter said that he appears very active and lively, and it looks as if he will see a good portion of the next century.

Buntline had written several serials for the World in 1885. However, his association with the paper was short-lived. On Friday, July 16, 1886, Buntline died of a heart disease. Both the Herald and World reported his death. The Herald gave a brief summary of his life and simply stated: "Judson's history was remarkable."[58]

In the World report, it seemed the man noted for his myth-making, had, in turn, become a legend. The World said that he had received his title of Colonel while serving as Chief of Scouts in the Civil War. Moreover, he carried more wounds in his body than any other living American.[59]

CHAPTER V FOOTNOTES

1. William F. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story (n. p. Memorial Edition, 1917), p. 245.
2. Ibid., p. 246.
3. New York Herald, 18, February 21, 1872.
4. Ibid., February 19, 1872.
5. Ibid., February 21, 1872, p. 5.
6. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 248.
7. New York Herald, February 21, 1872.
8. Ibid.
9. New York Weekly, April 1, 1872, p. 4.
10. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 249.
11. New York Weekly, March 25, 1872.
12. Philadelphia Public Record found in New York Weekly, March 25, 1870.
13. New York Weekly, June 24, 1872, p. 7.
14. Ibid., March 25, 1872, p. 1.
15. Donald Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 154.
16. Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal, pp. 6-7. John Burke, The Nobelist Whiteskin, pp. 19-22.
17. New York Weekly, June 10, 1872, p. 3.
18. Frank North Folder, Elmo Scott Watson Collection, Newberry Library. George F. Price, comp., With the Fifth Calvary (New York: D. Van Nostrand, Publisher, 1883), pp. 138-39.

19. New York Weekly, April 22, 1872, p. 4.

20. Louisa Frederici Cody, Memories of Buffalo Bill (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1919), p. 230.

21. William Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, pp. 258-59.

22. Louisa Cody, Memories of Buffalo Bill, p. 232.

23. Chicago Evening Journal, December 12, 1872. Monaghan, p. 19-20.

24. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 262.

25. Ibid.

26. Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill, p. 195.

27. New York Weekly, July 29, 1871, p. 1.

28. Chicago Daily Tribune, December 16, 1872.

29. Louisa Cody, Memories of Buffalo Bill, pp. 242-43.

30. Ibid.

31. William F. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, pp. 264-65. Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill, p. 196.

32. William F. Cody, p. 265. Johannsen, House of Beadle and Adams II, p. 173.

33. Chicago Daily Tribune, December 19, 1872.

34. St. Louis Missouri Democrat, December 26, 1872.

35. Ibid., December 27, 1872.

36. Ibid.

37. New York Weekly, March 3, 1873, p. 4. The itinerary for the show included: February 1, 1873--Rochester, N. Y.; February 10--Kingston, N. Y.; February 11-15--Troy, N. Y.; February 17--Pittsfield, Mass.; February 18-20--Providence, R. I.; February 21-22--Springfield, Mass.; February 24-25--Hartford, Conn.; February 26-27--New Haven, Conn.; February 28 to March 1--Worcester, Mass.; March 3-9--Booth's Boston Theater.

38. New York Weekly, March 17, 18, 24, 1873.

39. Boston Transcript, March 3, 7, 1873.

40. Johannsen, House of Beadle and Adams II, p. 57.

41. New York Weekly, April 7, 1873, p. 2.

42. New York Times, April 1, 1873, p. 4.

43. New York Herald, April 1, 1873.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. New York Times, April 1, 1873.

47. James M. Cain, "The Man Merriwell," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 199, (June 11, 1927), p. 129.

48. Richmond Dispatch, May 10, 1873.

49. Ibid., May 12, 1873.

50. Ibid., May 14, 1873.

51. William F. Cody, Buffalo Bill's Own Story, p. 266. Jay Monaghan, The Great Rascal, p. 29.

52. Ibid.

53. Johannsen, House of Beadle and Adams II, p. 59. Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill, p. 388.

54. New York Weekly, October 13, 1873, p. 7.

55. Ibid., September 1, 1873. Buntline's new show played in: Paterson, N. J.--August 25, 1873; Altoona, Pa.--August 29; Johnstown, Pa.--August 30; Pittsubrg, Pa.--September 1. Following the Pittsburg performance, the show moved to Michigan and played at: Saginaw City, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Niles.

56. Stuart N. Lake, Wyatt Earp-Frontier Marshall (Boston and New York: Houghton and Mifflin Co., 1931), pp. 145-46.

57. New York World, June 28, 1885.

58. New York Herald, July 18, 1886.

59. New York World, July 17, 1886.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Ned Buntline's role as a communicator in the 1840-1880 period represented a journalist/novelist feeding the public's curiousity for the unknown. He became a myth-maker because he had some capacity for capitalizing on a need in society. But everything started with Buntline's primary motive--making money. As he said:

> I might have paved myself a far different career in letters, but my early lot was cast among rough men on the border; they became my comrades, and when I made my name as a teller of stories about pirates, Indians, and scouts, it seemed too late to begin again...Besides, I made more money than any writer in New York or Boston.[1]

Initially, he fed a growing reading public's love of the sensational by drawing on his past experiences at sea and in the Seminole Indian War. The themes he incorporated in these initial tales--man vs. nature or Indian vs. white man--were easily grasped by an unsophisticated public in the 1840's--and portrayed a basic human struggle they could understand. Toward the end of the decade, the public had shifted its attention westward in a growing response to the spirit of Manifest Destiny, and had become caught up in a war with Mexico brought on by

that spirit.

The Mexican War created a greater audience for frontier heroes; it brought the frontier into focus for the first time for many people, and embodied all the elements related to winning the West. It was no difficult task for a flack to switch from yarns of pirates and settings east of the Mississippi to tales of the Far West. But such a transformation called for different characteristics in his novels.

Men on this new western frontier had to draw their strength from association with an uncultivated nature. They had to possess certain traits: Genuine simplicity and truthfulness were essential, as well as generosity, bravery, and a hunger for adventure to a degree rarely found in Eastern society. This was the foundation upon which Buntline built.

Using the backdrop of the Mexican War and later the Texas frontier for his serials and novels, Buntline *showed an Eastern public how men like General Zachary Taylor or Ben McCulloch of the Texas Rangers were taming the West.* He received some help in this effort from the Eastern press which chronicled the danger on the Plains, but at the same time urged easterners to enter and settle this virgin land. Horace Greeley recommended in 1854:

> Make Public Lands free in quarter-sections to Actual Settlers...When employment fails or wages are inadequate, they may pack up and strike westward to enter upon...the banks of the Wisconsin, the Des Moines, or the Platte, which have been patiently awaiting their advent since creation.[2]

Buntline had said almost the same thing during his reform activities in New York City.

Buntline's interest in reform seemed indicative of a man caught in the temper of the times. But there was more to it than this. He saw the reform movement as another means of lining his pockets with money by exploiting the public's mood. His scandal sheet was something of a joke, especially when James Gordon Bennett, Sr. began exposing Buntline's so called "reform" effort. The notoriety and publicity that he received from his activities in New York City affected him little. In fact, it seemed to enhance his reputation to the extent that the name Buntline became equated with sensational adventure.

During the crisis preceding the Civil War, Americans continued to look westward. The book-buying public in the East had increased. To them, the West was a remote, colorful, and exciting place. The term itself became a magic word, conjuring up alluring pictures of an open and wind-swept plain over which roamed daring men to whom adventure was a daily experience. The West appeared a land of freedom, where a man was his own master and maker of his destiny.

Dime novels emerged at this time to satiate this new reading public with Western adventure stories. Erastus and Irwin Beadle carried Buntline's idea of writing Western thrillers one step further by producing them on a mass scale and offering them at a price almost everyone was willing to pay. Themes were simple. Guns spit fire and redskins drop. Wild rides through storms and danger brought rescue in the "nick of time." The hero was brave, keen, strong and able to overcome insurmountable odds. The villain was entirely despicable. The heroine was brave, beautiful, and entirely feminine.

Beadle paperbacks sold by the millions. As one historian said; "They were more truly a gold mine than most of the mineral discoveries in the West."[3] Buntline recognized that a new market existed for cheap fiction and he was quick to exploit it. In doing so, he went West and journey proved profitable for the novelist. By coincidence, he found the one man who came to personify the image of the rugged individual on the Plains for an Eastern audience.

Buntline took a relatively unknown frontiersman and created the hero myth of Buffalo Bill. First, he used the New York Weekly as the medium to write serialized episodes of Buffalo Bill's "Wild West" encounters with overwhelming odds. Then his writings generated an impulse to bring Buffalo Bill to live audiences on stage.

For a time, Buntline's serials and Cody's

performances were mutually reinforcing, each serving to intensify the myth of Buffalo Bill. When Cody went his own way, the legend had its own momentum. It had created a public curiousity about the man that needed to be satisfied. To meet the need, the public demanded to learn more of Cody's exploits and his heroic encounters. To meet the demand, other authors and publicists filled the void left by Buntline. The legend had become self-perpetuating.

While the Cody legend continued, Buntline had achieved his goal of making money. Before his death, he was asked if he had made more money than any American writer. He replied:

> I don't know about that but I have earned and spent a good deal. One or two years, I have earned not less than $50,000 to $60,000 a year. For a good many years, I averaged some $20,000 annually. I usually got $2,000 for a serial story and once I earned $12,500 in six weeks...[4]

The amount of money he said he earned seems exaggerated. However, the amount is incomparable with the legends he helped create.

The Buffalo Bill legend which Buntline created has a greater significance when viewed in the context of what Joseph Campbell has set forth as requirements for originating a myth and described as functions of myth in society. Both the requirements and functions were briefly

stated in Chapter IV but will now be shown in greater detail.

First, we shall examine the requirements for creating a hero myth, and then proceed to see how myth functions to serve society. This study suggests that Buntline unconsciously appeared to have created a myth of an enduring nature--Buffalo Bill--and to have fulfilled the requirements of mythology as stated by Campbell.

According to Campbell, there are basically three distinct phases (requirements) for creating a hero-adventure myth:

1) the departure or call to adventure.
2) crossing the threshold of adventure.
3) return of the hero and deification by the public.[5]

In the call to adventure phase, the hero leaves a familiar, routine existence for regions of the unknown and untamed. It is important to note and as Campbell pointed out that both these settings coexist in the same society.[6] And as can be seen for mid-19th century America, there existed the image of a tame, routine existence in the East, while the West represented an untamed frontier. It was in the context of this phase then that Buffalo Bill was shown accepting the challenge of taming the frontier, as man was destined to do.

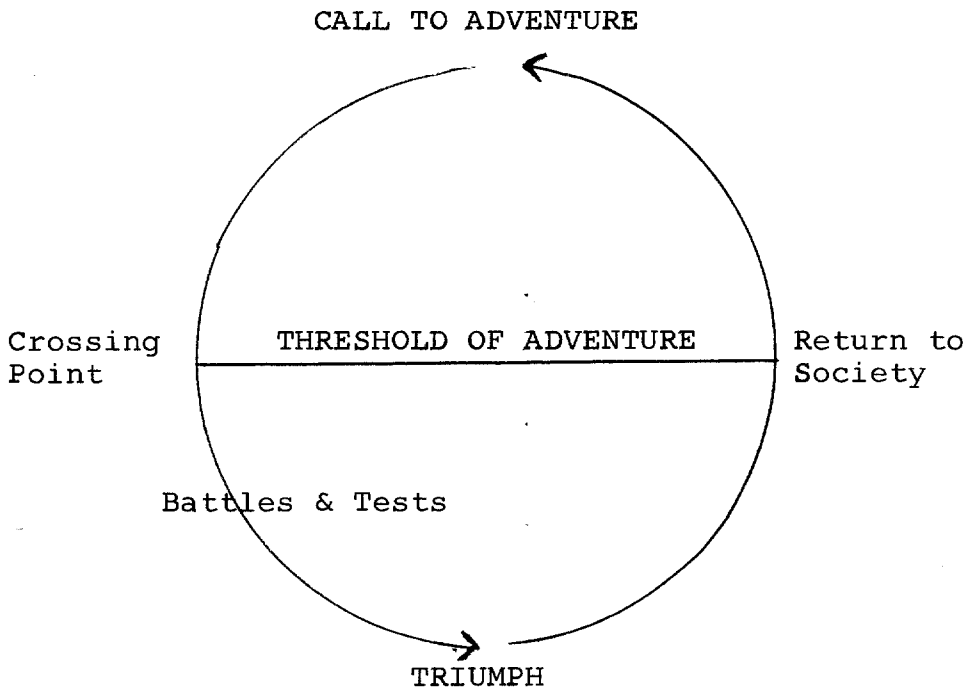
Crossing the threshold of adventure is a continuation of the first phase. Here, with the personification of his destiny to guide him, the hero continues in his quest and

must survive a succession of trials and battles. Campbell stated, "This is the favorite phase of the myth-adventure. It frequently happens that in society where the adventure is taking place, there is an atmosphere of fascination about the hero-figure making inroads into the unknown."[7] That Buntline played on the Eastern public's fascination for Buffalo Bill has been shown in quotations from his stories, as Cody overcame overwhelming odds in taming the frontier.

The final phase of the hero adventure occurs when the hero returns from his adventures and from the remote land where he performed his heroic deeds. Now he is deified by the public and he is made the focus of society. Additionally, his legend builders continue to invent for him appropriate adventures.[8]

Buntline incorporated the return phase of myth in the Cody legend by bringing Buffalo Bill to the East. Having Cody perform in his own play, Buntline established a format by which Eastern audiences saw first-hand a portrayal of Buffalo Bill taming the Plains. Subsequent publicists and Cody himself refined this method, and continued to keep the Buffalo Bill legend alive into the 1900s.

The elements of the hero-adventure that Buntline used in creating the Buffalo Bill myth can be summarized in the following diagram:[9]



Turning to the functions of myth in society and its relation to the Cody-Buntline association, Campbell cited three functions which have meaning for this study:

1) Folk myth provides a powerful picture language of communication.

2) Folk myth supports the social order.

3) Folk myth aids the individual in understanding his place in the scheme of things.[10]

In the first function of mythology, providing a picture language of communication, Campbell said that myth serves to translate for the individual events, crises, and deeds into easily understandable forms. It was in this context that the name "Buffalo Bill" became a symbol or picture for the Eastern public of the arch-type Western hero.

Buntline constructed this picture by embodying three concepts in the Cody myth--nature represented by an untamed frontier West of the Mississippi, providence or the idea that man was destined to tame the western frontier, and will or the determination of the individual standing alone and overcoming all obstacles. By no means did these elements exhaust the meaning that Buffalo Bill had for the imagination of his contemporaries, however, they provided the structural concepts around which his image or picture was created.

Therefore, society was given a model to emulate. A hero of humble origins and without formal education or inherited wealth confirmed in society that obstacles on the frontier were to be overcome by aggressive courage, directness of action, and the determined stand of the individual. Moreover, the emotions implicit in the terms--the West, rugged individualism, and Manifest Destiny--converged in the image of Buffalo Bill.

Also in the context of myth serving as a picture language of communication was the effect that the Buntline-

Cody association had on youth. That Buntline's novels had an effect on youth was stated by historian Don Russell, who even after attempting to debunk Cody mythmakers said:

> Nothing that William F. Cody did in life, not all the traveling of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show nor all the efforts of Major Burke and his corps of press agents, did as much to impress the name of Buffalo Bill upon several generations not only of young Americans but also of boys and men throughout the world as the dime novels.[11]

How many youths were influenced by Buntline's yarns, no one can say. While no one remembered very long anything that Buffalo Bill did in any one serial adventure or novel, the glamour attached to the Cody yarns and the West he personified gave to youth a picture of what they could be if they entered the unconquered frontier of the Plains.

A second function of myth is that it supports the social order. By this, Campbell said that myth fills a need in society. For the American public of the mid-19th century, the untamed, Western frontier with Indian savages and a harsh existence were primary manifestations of what was alien--a source at once of danger and a land that man was destined to conquer. It remained for the mythmakers to link the people to the task of sharing and taming this wilderness.

Heroes like Daniel Boone and Kit Carson had supported the social order of an earlier era, as reminders of men taming frontiers east of the Mississippi and in the mountains of the Far West. However, they had become

outdated in explaining events occurring on the Western Plains.[12]

This vast, somewhat mystical frontier had to be simplified for the Easterner, explained in a way to show man how he might relate to his environment in that context. There was a need for a frontier hero to inspire the toiling laborers in the East, as well as immigrants who had a need to know that the harsh frontier environment was being tamed. As a result, Buffalo Bill became an epic hero superceding previous frontier heroes. However, like them, he was interpreted as a pioneer of civilization and a standard bearer of progress.

Another function of mythology and a corollary to support the social order is that myth guides the individual in understanding his society. That is, groups of people need to have identifying characteristics as a guide to their own conduct. It was in this framework that the Cody yarns had meaning for a Manifest Destiny oriented public.

For example, to the average Easterner of the mid-19th century, the "Wild West" offered a marked contrast to routine city life. To him, this was a region of hostile Indians and numerous impediments to settlement. At the same time, the West offered an alternative for a new way of life, if a person was willing to accept the challenge. As can be seen in most of the quotations presented from Buntline's novels and in his play, Buffalo Bill provided

the Eastern public with a concrete example of a man accepting the challenge and making his own destiny, by standing as a barrier between civilization and the frontier.

Whatever subsequent effects the Cody myth had for society, one can only guess. The Cody-Buntline association provided the Eastern public with a picture of the West in its primitive state--a region where tenets of survival of the fittest and self-reliance became principal axioms of social behavior. Buntline depicted Cody as portraying all these virtues and more. He, in fact, created a personification of Manifest Destiny--regardless of the odds, the American (Cody) destiny was to overcome all, bringing justice and a new perspective to a savage land. Through the efforts of a novelist seeking fortune from his yarns, Buntline met Campbell's requirements of mythology and became the first of many mythmakers of Buffalo Bill.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES

1. Frederick Pond, The Life and Adventures of Ned Buntline (New York: The Cadmus Book Shop, 1919), pp. 106-07.

2. New York Tribune, February 18, 1854.

3. Robert E. Riegel and Robert G. Athearn, America Moves West (New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 613.

4. New York World, Sunday Supplement, June 28, 1885.

5. Joseph Campbell, Hero With A Thousand Faces (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 55, 97, 193.

6. Ibid., p. 217.

7. Ibid., pp. 97, 55.

8. Ibid., p. 321.

9. Ibid., p. 245. Campbell cites other characteristics which might be included in a hero-adventure tale. The ones shown in the diagram are basic to the Cody-Buntline tales.

10. Ibid., pp. 256-57, 382.

11. Donald Russell, The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 414.

12. Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land--The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York: Vintage Books, 1959), p. 119 and passim.

APPENDIXES

VOLUNTEER ENLISTMENT.

STATE OF New York

TOWN OF Mount Pleasant

I, Edmund J. C. Judson born in New York in the State of New York aged 37 years, and by occupation a Artisan Do hereby acknowledge to have volunteered this 25th day of Septem 1862 to serve as a ***Soldier*** in the **Army of the United States of America,** for the period of *THREE YEARS*, unless sooner discharged by proper authority: Do also agree to accept such bounty, pay, rations and clothing, as are, or may be, established by the law for volunteers. And I, Edmund J. C. Judson do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the ***United States of America,*** and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opposers whomsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Sworn and subscribed to, at New York this 25 day of Sept 1862

Edward J. C. Judson

BEFORE [illegible]
2 Lieut. Mustering Officer

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have carefully examined the above named Volunteer, agreeably to the General Regulations of the Army, and that, in my opinion, he is free from all bodily defects and mental infirmity which would, in any way, disqualify him from performing the duties of a soldier.

[illegible]
EXAMINING SURGEON.

I CERTIFY, ON HONOR, That I have minutely inspected the Volunteer, Edmund J. C. Judson previously to his enlistment, and that he was entirely sober when enlisted; that, to the best of my judgment and belief, he is of lawful age; and that, in accepting him as duly qualified to perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, I have strictly observed the Regulations which govern the recruiting service.

This soldier has Grey *eyes,* Dark *hair,* Fair *complexion,* is 5 *feet,* 8 *inches* high

7th *Regiment of* N. Y. Mounted Rifles *Volunteers,*

Capt M A Kingsley [illegible]
RECRUITING OFFICER.

Guard House
Fortress Monroe 9th Mar.
1863

Major General Dix
Comdg. 7th & Corps d'Armee

General. While on
my way voluntarily to return to my
Regiment, after having overstaid
my furlough through unavoidable
circumstances, (sickness) I have
been arrested & held here as I understand
as a deserter. General I have served
the United States nearly half my life
and never before have been under
arrest or had a charge preferred
against me. In this case I have
not been one moment out of
the uniform of my Regiment, or
by word or action exhibited a
design to leave the service
which I voluntarily entered, and
my service in my Regiment-
promoted in my first battle
with it, & three times mentioned

in General order for good conduct in the face of the enemy, ensures my attachment to it. If I have erred, I most respectfully request that I may be permitted to go, or be sent to any Regiment where those who know me & my services can try & judge upon my conduct & its causes.

Pardon me General for intruding upon your valuable time but every hour of the mental & physical agony I am enduring in the new & degrading association I find myself with, is unfitting me for duty & literally killing me soul & body. Let me then hope General from your justice & generosity the relief I pray for.

Respectfully

Edward Z. C. Judson

Sergt. & Regimental Marker

of the 1st New York Mounted Rifles

Head Quarters US Forces.
Suffolk, Va April 27th 1863.

General Orders
No 26.

Before a General Court Martial of which Col D H Wardrop 99th N.Y. Volunteers is President, convened at Masonic Hall, Suffolk Va, in pursuance of General Orders No 16. March 18. 1863. from these Head Quarters. were arraign and tried the following prisoners

10 Edward Z. C. Judson, Co K 1st N Y Mtd Rifles.
Charge - Desertion
Finding - Guilty of "Absence without leave"
"And the Court does therefore sentence him, private Edward Z. C. Judson, Co K, 1st New York Mounted Rifles as follows; That he be confined in the Regimental Guard House for the period of two months, and that he forfeit to the United States the sum of ten dollars a month of his monthly pay during his term of confinement"

By Command of
Major General Peck
Benj B Foster
Major A A General

Official
B. F. Onderdonk
Col Comdg M.R.

Expired June 27 '63

APPENDIX III

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APPROVED

DATE Dec 14, 1973