
An Obituary

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Would Have Written It

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ALL I know is what I read in the papers. It took "sand" to get along right with the boys on the ranch in them days when I lived in the Indian Territory.

When I went to school we learned lessons a'right but we didn't proceed with the language as we did for the school ma'am. We lived among people of pioneer stock. Their "drawl" was like the voice of the wind in its whirl between the rolling hills and plains as it came through the trees of the forest.

Boy, I grew up with those kids who had the back bone to live the life of pioneers. Aback of a "bronc" who'd bust loose at a rattler's strike was our play boy stock in trade to stay seated.

Ma's cows just had to be at the hay pile at milking time and 'twas my job to see to it. Pa's yearlings and calves must be at the barnyard at the settin' of the sun.

When I grew up the riding of the range just had me and from old Claremore to Mulhall's ranch I stepped out. "Like as nature of things" we just stepped it there until herding, branding and lassoing became as much of me as breathing the air itself.

From its monotonous daily grind I drifted with the boys to the rodeo trail. I was unusually handy with the rope. It just seemed to spell the tune of my mood in its coils as I flung it for what we called "a stunt." So in the rodeo I natural like took to showing off and that stuck to make me a show-man.

We boys just had to "wise-crack" galore, to let off steam and somehow mine always got a laugh. How I drifted stage-wise you all know. Mr. Ziegfeld had to have a Western act and I seemed to fit the bill. The fool stunt kinda got me because I didn't understand to be paid for what I naturally did. So I got to talking to myself as I did "my turn." It made it easier for me. Bless me if that talking thing didn't just start the ball a-rolling.

They liked my talk, which, of course, was just my fool way of thinking about things. By gosh, it stuck and so I became a show-man. My act just became the excuse for me being there. So from there we just stepped out.

You know you couldn't grow up with people like

I did, and if you kept your ears open. fail to know the truth about people and things as they naturally are. You just couldn't live with people, animals, prairies and forests as I did and not know God. With all that natural background denied to all the fellows around my act they just didn't understand, so it seems I just grew to tell them how to look at life and things around us. It came natural to me, because I lived that way—seeing things and people as they were.

They loved fun as I did but they couldn't make fun without sporting, so I kinder thought I'd help them along and they soon began calling me the wit-philosopher. It was grand to help make people laugh and be happy. It seems I was blessed to "help along" as I went the way my career ordained.

Of course the show business just had me and the movies had to have some of me, and as always I just couldn't help letting them have their way. Between the stage and the screen I learned it wasn't just me. The people would just fix up what they wanted and there I was to give it to them. It wasn't my fault at all.

Ha, ha, I forgot about the newspapers. They weren't going to be beat—not much—and so I just went their way 'cause they wanted me to.

As for me, it was what I liked. What better than making others have a laugh, by telling them what they already knew. It made 'em happy, so I fancied I got to be kinder liked by them. That was worth it all.

The big guy, like the little fellow, took to my thunder and somehow it was my fate to run into all kind of folks and seems like they all liked my way. I never saw a human I didn't like.

Why God lent me so much I've never known. It seems he wanted me to see the whole world and what it looked like and know something first hand of all His creation. That is perhaps why I rode the pony, the train, the boat and the airplane.

That old alarm clock stunt of mine really seemed to symbolize something in my living and my going. It rang me off the air and it seems it "sprang a loose" when God called to me that day Wiley and me went out.

God bless you all. I do hope I did my best.

WILL.