

The Last Buffalo Hunt

(Medicine Hat News)

IT WAS just over thirty-four years ago when Mr. Samuel McKay, of Atlee, Alta., returned to Medicine Hat from his last buffalo hunt, having bagged two bulls on the trip, which are said to be the last wild buffalo killed in Southern Alberta.

It was on June 7, 1888. Medicine Hat was but a small village in those days and was in the district of Assiniboia; Mr. McKay, having heard that signs of buffalo had been found north of the Red Deer river by freighters from Swift Current to Edmonton the previous year, thought that he might be able to capture some calves, by making the expedition. Accordingly he made preparations for the trip. There being no bridge or ferry-boat on the Red Deer river at that time he built a skiff, about three feet by twelve feet, which he used for the dual purpose of boat and wagon box to facilitate the crossing of the river.

In the latter part of May, 1888, Mr. McKay and a man by the name of Alex. Gardipee set out, taking a good milk cow along so that if calves were found there would be plenty of milk with which to feed them. After travelling about three days they arrived at the Red Deer at a point about one and a half miles east of where Mr. Andrew Gordon afterwards established his ranch. After soaking the boat over night, the lumber expanded, closing up the seams. It was used for rowing the wagon and equipment across, it being necessary to take the wagon apart to get it across the stream. The horses and cow swam across. Having assembled their wagon they loaded on the boat and went on north.

On the first of June, 1888, Mr. McKay located a small herd of eleven (11) head of buffalo, about five miles south of where the village of Cereal, Alberta, now stands. After close examination of the herd, to his disappointment, Mr. McKay found that there were no calves, for some cause unknown.

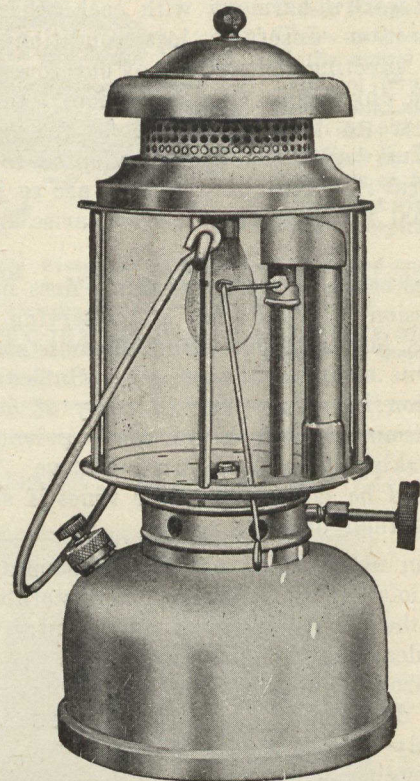
It was a mixed bunch, cows and bulls, so in order not to make a useless trip Mr. McKay shot two of the bulls. He could have slaughtered the whole bunch, but as their hides were of no commercial value at that time of the year, he let the other nine escape. Some time that fall Indians killed the rest of the buffalo somewhere north of the Saskatchewan Landing, which is probably in the Rosetown district in Saskatchewan. Mr. McKay afterwards sold the heads of the two buffalo he shot for fifty dollars apiece here in Medicine Hat.

AUTOMOBILISTS AND FOREST FIRES.

IN many parts of this continent it is found that automobile registrations and forest fires are increasing about proportionately. A great many people are touring about the country, seeking out places away from the railways and main highways and, unfortunately through carelessness with fire, some of them misuse and destroy the forests. There is no desire on the part of forest authorities to bar citizens from the forests, but there is no reason why forest fires should follow in the wake of the automobile. All that is needed is that every tourist who camps for the night or stops at noon to boil his kettle in the woods should personally see to it that his fire is dead out before he leaves it. Those who go into the woods for either business or pleasure see the value of the forests and should catch the enthusiasm for the conservation and proper utilization of this great Canadian resource.

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