

The Last
of the
Wild West
Cowgirls

A True Story

Kay Turnbaugh

Perigo
Press

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Cover photo courtesy *Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Lookout Mountain, Golden, Colorado*

www.lastwildwestcowgirl.com

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

I finished *The Last of the Wild West Cowgirls* after four years of researching and writing, and on a warm fall day I visited Goldie's grave in Green Mountain Cemetery in Boulder, Colorado, the final resting place of many of Boulder County's most famous residents. The towering, stately trees glittered with autumn's fiery colors, and leaves crunched under my feet as I wound my way from the office up the hill to Goldie's headstone. After visiting her grave and wandering past some of the other headstones, I left the cemetery and climbed to a spot with views of the city of Boulder, the plains that flowed on and on, and, in the other direction, the mountains where I knew Nederland nestled next to its reservoir. As I looked back at the cemetery, I wondered if Goldie had picked this spot because it reminded her of Buffalo Bill's choice on Lookout Mountain. It seemed a fitting resting place for this feisty woman who never let the world tell her she couldn't do something.

Eighty years after Goldie was born, I moved to the small mountain town of Nederland, twenty miles west of Boulder. It was 1973, and that October the wind blew so hard I had trouble standing up straight when I walked to a neighbor's house at daybreak to catch a

ride to Boulder for work. I lived at the western edge of the reservoir, at the end of the street where Goldie had lived before going to a nursing home. The wind would sometimes stop for a day or two, but usually it blew so fiercely it picked up snow and dirt from the streets in town and blew them through my little one-room log cabin and across the reservoir. When I moved in, I didn't know how to build a fire in a cookstove, but I learned quickly. I learned how to saw and chop my own wood because I liked being warm. I learned how handy a pee pot was if you didn't want to get up and wrestle the wind to get to the outhouse in the middle of the night. I learned that lettuce would freeze in the refrigerator which never bothered to run because the closet where it sat hardly ever got above freezing that whole winter. On Halloween night, two children died when their house burned down just up the street from me. I never heard the sirens over the wind.

When spring finally arrived, a friend and I put two inches of insulation in the attic and chinked up the holes between the logs. The next winter was much more bearable. I loved being able to walk for miles from my front door. Some days I walked to the old Tucker homestead on Caribou Road after work. On others I explored the area near Caribou Ranch, not knowing that all these haunts had been some of Goldie's too. I started making wine, nothing very good, but I met my future husband over a bottle of homemade potato wine. Maybe three hundred people lived in Nederland, and every house except mine had three or four dogs which together wandered town in packs. When I walked out my front door I scooped up handfuls of rocks from the driveway to throw at the dogs that charged me. I would have to guess that many of those dogs were descendants of some of Goldie's precious pets.

I never met Goldie. A year after she died, I started a newspaper in town. In the first issue in that October of 1977, I asked the town to name it, and Marguerite Shellhaas, one of Goldie's first friends in Nederland, won the contest with *The Mountain-Ear*. Hers was our first obituary. Over the years, I wrote several times about Goldie, but I didn't really know that much about her.

It turned out that she and I had a lot in common. She ran a still and made her own booze; I made my own wine. She was a female business owner for almost thirty years in Nederland, as was I, although our businesses differed quite a bit. She ran restaurants; I owned a newspaper. She loved telling stories; so do I. And now I've had the chance to tell hers.

Place names change over the years. For instance, the name Nederland Lake was gradually changed to Barker Reservoir, and Boulder Cañon (also Canon) became Boulder Canyon. In all cases, I tried to use the name that was being used at the time. At the time of the Wild Wests, they were just that. There was no need to add the word show because everyone knew what the wildly popular Wild Wests were.

When I began researching Goldie's life, I had much to learn about Wild Wests and cowgirling. I grew up in Colorado, but my childhood was spent in Colorado Springs, not on a ranch. I did go to a few rodeos, and I learned to ride a horse, but they were passing fancies, so in researching this book I had to learn about the sport of cowgirling. In Goldie's time, cowgirls weren't restricted to barrel racing. Between 1886 and 1911, thirty-eight cowgirls competed in rodeos and performed in Wild Wests. The cowgirls were as famous as today's football stars, and they usually competed in all the events. This is not to say that they were better athletes than their counterparts today, but they did have more opportunities to prove their prowess on a horse.

Goldie worked as an athlete even before she became a cowgirl. She started her career as a fencer, boxer, and wrestler. America's first female athletes were thought of as anomalies and freaks, but the cowgirls' enormous popularity helped bring female athletes into the norm.

I spent many hours at the Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave on Lookout Mountain pouring over their collection of scrapbooks and photos of Goldie. Their exhibits and films of the Buffalo Bill Wild Wests allowed me to ride alongside Goldie in my imagination. The Colorado History Museum produced an exhibit about cowgirls



Goldie's wedding outfit was the centerpiece of an exhibit at the Colorado History Museum in Denver in 2008.

Kay Turnbaugh



while I was writing this book, and it featured Goldie's wedding outfit and saddle. It was a thrill to walk through the doors to the exhibit and see a figure that could have been Goldie standing there. Goldie's grandson Mike completed the picture of Goldie with his many remembrances of "Grandma Goldie" in Nederland.

Goldie was a colorful character. Much of her story came from her own words. All the events are true. All the major characters, and all but a few of the minor characters, existed. When I put myself inside Goldie's mind, her thoughts came from what she had said in recorded oral interviews and to friends and relatives. All the dialogue is based on my research.

In a few instances, I couldn't verify the date of an event because, although those interviewed in the oral histories I listened to could clearly remember the event, they couldn't recall exactly when it happened, or because the dates remembered by different sources conflicted. In particular, when asked when she moved to Nederland, Goldie recalled several different years in the early 1920s. I spent many long afternoons at the library in Boulder looking through microfilm of old newspapers, trying to find some verification of which year. Although I found lots of news that I could use in telling Goldie's story, I couldn't figure out which year she moved to Nederland. I finally arrived at my best guess, and that's what I used.

I could tell as I talked to people in Nederland or listened to their oral history stories that they had discounted most of Goldie's stories as fabrications woven from many tellings into flights of fancy. I listened over and over to the two oral histories Goldie recorded before her death, and I faithfully took notes on her many exploits as she described them. I too thought, "How could one woman have done all that?" As I continued researching, I validated every one of her stories.

She left behind several scrapbooks and many file folders that she had filled scrupulously throughout the years with newspaper and magazine clippings about herself and her friends, including one well-worn, postcard-sized black book filled with photographs that she did not donate to a museum, presumably because its contents

were “private.” Her grandson kindly shared it with me, and in it I found the story of her tour with Lucille Mulhall’s Girl Rangers and clues to her relationship with the Mulhalls, one of the most famous of the Wild West families. Her scrapbooks were treasure troves of information.

Goldie wasn’t modest. She loved telling stories about her life. She was obstinate, opinionated, and fiery. She also was incredibly generous. She was the epitome of the cowboy-girl (their original name) who could ride the rodeo, hit the dust, brush herself off, and appear at a tea in town—all in the same afternoon. Although she could dress for tea and manage the etiquette of the “society” experience while expressing her strong opinions about politics and the state of the world, her speech never lost the coarseness of an uneducated, hard-working woman. A contemporary newspaper story referred to her as “a heller in skirts.” She wasn’t liked by everyone, and that bothered her some. She thought she’d lived a life worth sharing and had planned to write a book about it, but she never quite got to it. Fortunately, she left us with her stories.

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PROLOGUE

“The divorce records are over there.”

I had interrupted the two young men—one was leaning over the other’s shoulder as they looked at a computer screen.

“Okay.” Only one other person was in the room, and she was taking notes from one of two obscenely huge books at a heavy wood table.

“And I’m wondering about this.” I pulled out the copy I’d made that morning before I left Nederland for the long bus trip to Denver. It was a court receipt from 1916.

“Well, I don’t know.” The young man frowned at it. “Those numbers might not mean anything. I don’t recognize them...” He shrugged his shoulders.

“Could you check?”

“This could take a long time,” he warned. He looked at me as if he were hoping I’d go away, but I smiled. I had all day. He disappeared with my piece of paper, and I settled on a hard chair and started looking for divorce records. The microfilm scratched through my machine, and the woman with the big books occasionally turned a page—otherwise the room was silent.

Was it a half-hour? An hour? The young man slapped a slim packet on the counter and beckoned to me. The legal-size papers

were folded into fourths and filed inside a heavy, brown paper jacket tied with a tiny red ribbon. It looked like no one had untied the ribbon since that day in March ninety years ago. Gingerly I picked it up and moved to the other big table.

With a small tug, my treasure opened. Inside was proof that the events I had been researching really happened. The people involved existed—they had given evidence to a policeman. I wanted to whoop for joy, but I stifled my shout with a gagging sound that made the woman look up from her big book for a second, and the young man who was still standing at the counter stared at me curiously.

I had a new respect for her tales. I'd been listening to her stories as other people could recall them and on two oral history tapes she'd recorded. I'd seen the newspaper stories—the ones in her scrapbooks and the ones I'd found through my research—but there was something so much more concrete about this little packet of court papers.

That day, sitting in the basement of a sterile government building in downtown Denver, Goldie Griffith Sterling Cameron came alive for me. She danced across my mind—a beautiful young cowgirl trying to make sense of what had happened to her life in Denver in 1916.

A promotional shot of Goldie, probably taken at the beginning of her career as a cowgirl with the 101 Wild West.

*Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave,
Lookout Mountain, Golden*

Part 1

❧ **Bucking Broncos** ❧

1893-1923



ONE

A Kind of Nightmare

HE DIDN'T HAVE HIS SPURS ON, so he didn't jingle as he walked. He sounded like any other man—his boot heels drummed a hollow thump, thump, thump on the tatty pine floorboards. He shrugged his slim shoulders into a worn work jacket and grabbed his wide-brimmed hat and leather gloves. Goldie could tell by the way he squinted at her suspiciously over his shoulder before he stepped out the door that he knew she was up to some mischief.

She followed him outside into the frosty air.

She hadn't seen him since that horrible day in Texas. She'd been on her own the last couple of months, and she was broke—she was down to her last twelve cents—a dime and two pennies, three little coins that wouldn't last long. They hardly weighed anything, and when she rubbed her fingers across the outside of her coin purse, she couldn't even feel them. But then, if she went to jail, she wouldn't have to worry about her next meal, would she?

Her husband should have come back to Denver with her, especially after what she'd done for him before his trial. Instead, he'd disappeared. When she heard he was back in town, she was

furious. She found out that he was staying with his friend A.W. Simuel. This morning, when she'd walked uninvited into Simuel's house, A.W. sneered at her. "What do you need her for, Harry? You don't need her. She ain't nothin'." Harry didn't defend her, and he and Simuel got ready to leave the house, as if she didn't even exist.

The smells of thousands of cattle and horses from the next-door stockyards permeated everything in this part of the city. Today the breeze was slight, and that was good because she was only a pretty good shot. Not having to adjust her aim for the wind would make it easier to hit her target. Looking at the clouds gathering overhead she thought it might even snow one more time tonight, but what did she care, she wouldn't be back in her drafty apartment—all she could afford since Harry had left her—she'd be in jail.

Harry and Simuel stopped before stepping from the yard into the street. A young boy in overalls led an old, dappled horse down the middle of the dirt street, the horse limping and the boy skipping. A Model T rattled around them, honking before it disappeared around the corner, and a dog barked once in response. Then twice for good measure.

The men glanced back at Goldie. She walked toward them and pulled the gun out of her muff. Simuel started to run, but he slipped on a lingering patch of ice. Harry began backing into the street, wanting to run like his friend, she could tell, but unwilling to take his eyes off her. Time stopped, and the three other men who happened to be out in the street were frozen with it. Only Goldie moved, inexorably, toward her husband.

The trigger felt alive under her finger. She wanted so desperately, so fiercely to kill him. She didn't know she would cry, but she was blinking back tears, and she aimed unsteadily at Harry's chest. She squinted at the buttons of his shirt, sucked in her breath, and aimed a bit lower. "After all you've done to me, it's the least I could do for you," she couldn't believe she could say it so coolly.

He was too calm, standing there, smiling at her like a naughty child. She hated him even more for it. “Goldie, darlin’,” he drawled. Simuel had recovered from his fall and pulled at Harry’s arm, trying to drag him away.

It was enough to stop her tears. “Don’t darlin’ me, you sidewinder. And Simuel, you piece of shit, I should kill you too.” She waved the gun at the other man, and he jumped away from her husband. She took aim again at Harry and squeezed the trigger—just the way he’d taught her. She wanted him to suffer, and after she settled the gun so it was level again from the recoil she pulled the trigger a second time.

She wanted him dead.

The white cloud that had billowed from the gun with the first shot now totally enveloped her, and it grew impenetrable when she fired again. The last thing she could see was Harry walking away like nothing had happened. She was still aiming at him, and her arm was steady, so she fired again. The acrid smoke was unbearable—it made her eyes gush with more tears, and she started coughing. She could no longer see anything, no buttons, no Harry, not even the gun in her hand, although she could feel her wet cheeks begin to freeze in the cold March air.

She was pretty sure she hadn’t done the job. If she’d shot him, she would have heard him fall and maybe cry out in pain. But there’d been no other sound since the shots which still bounced around in the opaque air. She tried waving the smoke away from her stinging eyes. That was it—the smoke—she should have guessed that the ammunition in her gun might have gone bad sitting in her trunk while she waited for Harry to come back.

Finally, she could see again. She couldn’t make out either a corpse or a writhing body. Damn. He’d slipped away again. It was the story of their life together. Furious, she turned to go back to her apartment.

A rough hand grabbed her arm and ordered her to stay put until the police arrived. The thought of the police made her hopeful that she had killed him.

“Is he dead?” she asked anxiously, coughing and spitting up the words through the smoke still caught in her throat.

“No—no thanks to you,” growled the deep male voice in her ear. Goldie heard other voices and squinted to see who it was through the haze. It was Harry and Simuel. With them were a tall bearded man in workman’s clothes and a man she recognized from the stockyards. “Don’t you want to talk to the police?” It was the bearded man, talking to Harry. Goldie saw Harry look her way, and she held her breath.

“No sir, I don’t.”

“But, mister, I think, I mean she just shot at you, don’t you think...?”

The smoke had evaporated into the few trees, and Goldie could hear the mounted policeman galloping down the street towards the fracas. He probably heard the shots at the stockyards.

“Shit.” Ladies in Denver in 1916 didn’t say words like that, but it happened to be the perfect word to express her feelings. Besides, she was no lady. She tried to shake off the man who was gripping her arm. “Don’t worry ’bout him, he’s just a slippery ol’ snake,” she muttered, but the man wouldn’t let go, in fact, his hold on her arm tightened, and he looked down at her with such distaste she almost felt like laughing. It had felt so good to aim the gun at her husband and fire. She was so tired of his tomfoolery. He was such a low-down, lyin’, good-for-nothin’—she couldn’t think of a word vile enough to describe him—and the sooner she got him out of her life the better. The only good thing in their three-year marriage was the wedding, but no matter how many times she pulled out her scrapbook to look at the newspaper stories of that grand day in Madison Square Garden it didn’t change the rest.

Officer Art Wachter slid off the handsome bay with the white stripe that zigzagged from ear to nose. The officer dropped the reins and ran toward her. Lightning was trained to stand still when his reins were on the ground, and Goldie

admired both the horse and the six-foot-tall man who stopped first to speak to Harry. She strained to hear what they were saying, but she couldn't make it out. She trusted Art to get it worked out.

As Art walked over to her he shook his head. "You'll have to come with me to the jail, Goldie. It looks like you've really done it this time—I'm going to have to charge you with assault to kill." Art sounded reluctant, but he added, "There's witnesses, and that's what they said happened."

Goldie just shook her head.

The man who had hold of her arm gave Art her gun, which he had twisted out of her hand, but he didn't want to let go of her. He *obviously* didn't know who she was, but that would change when the newspaper people came to interview her. *This time the whole world will know what a skunk you are, Harry. I can promise you that.*

"You can let go of her now," Wachter told the man. "She's not going anywhere, are you, Goldie?" Art had been friends with Harry and Goldie since their first week in Denver. "Goldie, Goldie, Goldie. Why'dya have to start shootin', at Harry, of all people? Can't you people just have regular arguments? I don't think I can help you out of this one."

"That's okay, Art. I'm ready to go to jail. I could'a spent the rest of my life in jail if I'd jus' killed 'im." Goldie sneaked a look at Harry and then turned so she couldn't see him. Art caught her hateful look. "You and Harry have had your troubles, but that doesn't mean you should go and try and kill 'im. Harry swore to me he'd take care of you." Art bit his lip. "Maybe you should'a given him a little more time, what with what he's been through." The bull of an officer cussed softly under his breath as he opened the door of the police automobile that had arrived to back him up. Goldie climbed into the back seat.

She had been hoping she'd get to ride to jail on Art's magnificent horse. It would have made a grand exit from the scene,

but the machine from the police department would have to do. She took one last look at the horse quietly waiting for Art and the small crowd that had assembled to watch the action, making sure they were watching her. Art had asked Harry and the witnesses to wait for him, and they stood off to one side, talking among themselves.

Art leaned over and spoke to her through the open door of the automobile. "I'm sorry, Goldie, that we gotta take you to jail."

"Don't worry 'bout me, Art. It was worth it. I jus' wish I'da done the job." She said the last just loud enough for the small crowd to hear and was gratified to hear several gasps.

She meant what she'd told Art, even if it meant she'd never ride a horse in the arena again.

She'd been in jails before, but it was to visit, not to sit behind the bars. Yesterday she had decided that even the prospect of being in jail forever would be a small price to pay to get Harry out of her life. When she heard he was in Denver and hadn't lifted a finger to see her, she was livid—after everything she'd done for him—he should have come to see her, his wife. Overnight, her fury grew, and this morning she pulled the little gun from her show trunk, hid it in her muff, and, well, it was just too bad the ammunition had gone bad since the last time she'd used the gun, and up in smoke, instead of into Harry.

She was in the matron's quarters of the Denver jail, and she should have been crying, but instead she found herself almost giddy with relief. Thinking back on it, it was a stupid thing to do, but it sure had felt good. She knew it would be a big story in the newspapers—"Wife shoots at husband, but misses,"—and she talked to all the reporters—knowing that her best defense—if she ever got to court—was her story. It was time to tell the world what had really happened. The reporters loved the story—she made sure of that—even if it meant she had to invent a few picturesque details. All part of the entertainment business.

"Why'd you do it?" The young reporter for The Denver Post leaned toward her as he scribbled in his notebook.

That was the question, wasn't it? Three years of lies, that's what did it, she thought. It was the lies that turned her heart to stone and put her finger on the trigger.

The young man stopped scribbling and looked up. He seemed fascinated by her serene smile. She knew that he would believe what she told him. He was mesmerized as she recounted her wedding on horseback in Madison Square Garden. She didn't have to embellish that at all. It was grand—grander than grand. She was a cowgirl with the Buffalo Bill Wild West and Pawnee Bill Wild East—the Two Bills show—and Harry was a dashing, daredevil cowboy. Their wedding was part of the evening performance at the Garden. At the time, May of 1913, the audience of eight thousand was the biggest on record for a wedding.

OF COURSE, IT ALMOST DIDN'T HAPPEN. Now that she thought about it, it seemed that the whole year that ended in 13 was jinxed.

The day before her wedding she was a nervous wreck, or at least that's what the newspapers reported. She was the butt of numerous practical jokes by the other cowgirls, and the newspaper stories said she fainted before that night's performance, although she didn't remember fainting—feeling a little faint maybe—but not actually crashing. Unfortunately, that wasn't the worst of it.

During the show, she was riding as one of many escorts to two large prairie schooners circling the garden. That was one newspaper's version. Another paper reported that it was during a mock Indian battle. Another said it was during a Virginia Reel on Horseback which was part of the portion of the show known as A Holiday on the Ranch. She put all the stories in her scrapbook. All agreed that her horse bolted, probably from a blank cartridge she (or someone else) fired in the air too close to its ears. The horse careened to the Fourth Avenue side of the Garden, reared and tossed Goldie into a front row box.

L. F. Eppich
 IDEAL BUILDING
 REAL ESTATE, INVESTMENT, BROKERAGE, AND LOAN OFFICE
 DENVER
MEMBER OF THE DENVER REAL ESTATE EXCHANGE

March 14-1916

Dear Mrs. Walters-

I was in to see you this afternoon, but the Chief was out, and I could not get a permit. Am very sorry to learn of your trouble, and hope you will soon have things straightened out again.

Have not forgotten the lift you gave me in Chicago, when I was down and out, and wish to say that if there is any thing you need, and the Chief is willing, I will be glad to get for you.

You can have the matron phone me at the office, and if I am not in, leave word to call you, or I can be reached at home after 6:30 P.M., York 615.

Don't hesitate to ask, for I owe you more than you gave me.

Yours Very Truly,
 J. G. Middleton

A letter from a friend to Goldie when she was in jail: "March 14- 1916. Dear Mrs. Walters—I was in to see you this afternoon, but the Chief was out, and I could not get a permit. Am very sorry to learn of your trouble, and hope you will soon have things straightened out again. Have not forgotten the lift you gave me in Chicago, when I was down and out, and wish to say that if there is anything you need, and the Chief is willing, I will be glad to get for you. You can have the matron phone me at the office, and if I am not in, leave word to call you, or I can be reached at home after 6:30 p.m. York 615. Don't hesitate to ask, for I owe you more than you gave me. Yours Very Truly, J.G. Middleton."

Buffalo Bill Museum and Grave, Lookout Mountain, Golden, Colorado

23284
Original
No. _____

IN THE
DISTRICT COURT

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF
COLORADO

vs.

Goldie Sterling, alias
Goldie Smith.

INFORMATION FOR

Assault to Kill.

Filed this _____ day of _____
A. D. 191____, by leave of Court, and bail
fixed at MAR 20 1916

John's 2000.00
William Brown
McCann D. Wright

Judge.

A. B. HIRSCHFELD PRESS, DENVER

The top section of the packet of court documents from Goldie's arrest in March of 1916. Goldie and Harry were using their rodeo name of Smith at the time.

Some thought it was part of the show. But the bastion of sports news, *The New York Herald*, reported that “many men and women in the audience stood up, and some put their hands over their eyes in horror.” The cries of alarm attracted ushers who sent for an ambulance to retrieve the unconscious bride-to-be. Some of the papers reported that her fiancé, Harry, sprang from his horse and carried her out of the arena.

The next thing she knew, she was flat on her back in an ambulance. Her head throbbed, and she wasn’t sure she could move her right leg. “My wedding,” she croaked through parched lips. The ambulance nurse shook her head and shushed her.

The Bellevue Hospital doctor examined her and pronounced that she would have to spend the night. They gave her something for the pain, and she drifted off to sleep thinking only about her aborted wedding. The doctors wouldn’t let reporters into her room, but they were quoted as saying that Goldie was resting easily and they wouldn’t know until the morning how seriously she had been injured.

She was in the hospital all the next day—the day she was supposed to be married. “What about my wedding?” she kept asking. “It won’t be today,” the doctor said. “Maybe next week. You must get some rest.” Oh dear, she thought, Colonel Cody won’t like that. He had told her how proud he was to host her wedding, and she knew he was counting on it to sell more tickets than usual. But she could hardly walk—every movement shot pain through her back, and her head still throbbed, so she reluctantly laid in bed. Several times she cried, and then the nurse would bring her something for the pain.

Many years later she would tell a reporter that it was a kind of nightmare.

The next day when Harry dropped by to see her he seemed too cheerful. He looked her up and down. “Let’s see you move.” Obliging, she slowly and painfully bent each arm and leg for him. “I don’t think you’re so bad. Let’s get you out of here. We

gotta weddin' tonight." He kissed her on the cheek, and that was that.

The show went on.

The beads that had been strung into the fringe on her cherry red leather riding skirt tinkled and flashed in the arena lights as she mounted her horse with a helping hand from her maid of honor. The beaded steer's heads on her back and on her skirt were exquisite, but the outfit had felt heavy as she dressed, trying to avoid banging the beads into the worst of the bruises. Her bridal outfit was complete with her big-brimmed hat, scarf, tall boots, spurs, and gauntlets on her gloves that were beaded with her name. She flipped open the tin embedded in her bracelet and dabbed at some rouge. Holding her arm so she could see what she was doing in the tiny mirror, she patted her cheeks with the pink powder, and she was ready.

She was limping and a mass of bruises, but she could ride. On their cue, she and Harry rode to the middle of the arena to the thunderous cheers of those eight thousand fans. Buffalo Bill, the legend himself, gave the bride away. Pawnee Bill was the best man, and fellow cowgirl Eva Fisher was her maid of honor. The glass plate of the photo of the wedding would become one of Goldie's prized possessions. It showed the wedding party on horseback before the Reverend Robert Ryan of the Brooklyn Missionary Society, who stood in front of them because he didn't ride. Ribbons adorned the heads of Harry's and Goldie's horses, and Harry's fancy woolly chaps draped over his boots. Buffalo Bill was hidden from sight, only part of a stirrup showed in that famous photo, a trick of fate that incensed the aging promoter who was direly in need of any publicity at that point in his career.

Looking back, she wasn't sure she was ready to get married. She was nineteen, certainly old enough, but in some ways she was too trusting and too naïve, even though she had been raised in show business.

NEW YORK EVENING JOURNAL, MAY 10, 1923.

COWGIRL WEDS "PUNCHER" MID APPLAUSE OF 8,000 GUESTS

Never before have a bride and groom had so many guests at their wedding as did "Goldie" Griffiths and Harry Smith, the former a cowgirl and the latter a cow "puncher" in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which since a long engagement is about to begin at Madison Square Garden.

When the new home of the Broadway Missionary Society, stepped to the centre of the arena, Buffalo Bill and "Goldie" Griffiths, mounted under the fan, rode their horses side by side before him, the audience of eight thousand persons applauded rapturously.

May Schaffner, another cowgirl, acted as bridesmaid, and "Len" Esselbach, chief of the cowboys, was the best man. The little word "oh!" was said by "Goldie" as though she liked the sound of it, and Harry appeared as a regular bridegroom.

After the wedding, Major Gordon rode with the "Puncher" Bill, rode for

"GOLDIE" GRIFFITHS AND HARRY SMITH

Still riding the horses on which they perform wonderful feats in "Buffalo Bill's" Wild West Show, Miss "Goldie" Griffiths and Harry Smith were married amid the cheers of over 8,000 people. The wedding establishes a record for number of guests.

WEDDED IN WILD WEST RING

Performers, Mounted on Mustangs, Made One as Audience Looks On.

The performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Bar East shows was halted for a few minutes last night in Madison Square Garden for a public wedding ceremony.

Mounted on their mustangs, Miss Goldie Griffiths, of Chicago, and Harry Smith, of Los Angeles, were mar-

Horseback Wedding at Wild West Tonight

Plucky Goldie Griffith, Injured Cowgirl, Is Happy Bride.

Despite the injuries she received Wednesday night at the Wild West Show when her horse threw her off and she became unconscious, Goldie Griffith, a "cowgirl," refused to re-

A page in one of Goldie's scrapbooks.

The Sterling family