

THE PUEBLO STAR-JOURNAL

White Eagle, Pueblo's Only Indian, Has Been Showman, Lecturer, Advisor



White Eagle, otherwise known as Indian Joe Davis, is shown with a part of his huge collection of mementos, relics and souvenirs at his lodge 10 miles southwest of Pueblo.



White Eagle as he appeared at the height of his career with the Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill Wild West shows in Madison Square Garden, New York.

By KARL LEE

10 miles
in a cluster
came
10 miles southwest of Pueblo, a cluster of adobe houses barely visible to the eye until the traveler comes upon them along the Beulah highway. Lives southern Colorado's only Indian chief.

White men know him as "Indian Joe Davis," among red men he's "White Eagle," last of the "medicine men."

White Eagle is 68. Few red men in our day have attained his stature and eminence. Hard experience has been his school, a persevering zest for life and a belief in his destiny, has sustained him in his mission—to be "a friend of man."

Cowboy, bronc buster, showman, magician, traveler, linguist, patriot, lecturer, diplomat and counselor, his "medicine" for a half century has been strong, his star has shown brightly. The Great White Father twice has called him to service to help bridge the chasm that has

kept white and red men apart. He has known all the "greats" of his time, many have been his close friends—Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill, immortals of the wild west shows; the Miller Brothers of 101 ranch; Tex Rickard, of Alaska and Madison Square garden; Jim Thorpe, perhaps the greatest athlete of all time and Clarence Tinker, who rose to be general in the air force and lost his life in the Pacific in World war II, both Indians; Will Rogers, Otto Floto, Geronimo, Chief Rain-in-the-Face, Kicking Horse, Fred Stone, George M. Conan; Gen. MacArthur (when he was a lieutenant); Gabe Parker, the Choctaw who became register of the U. S. treasury; Monte Montana, Jack Walton, Josh Lee—immortal others whose high achievement and reckless daring, stirred the imagination of a young America a half and a quarter century ago.

Half that time White Eagle lived in the arena in the saddle, riding broncs and Brahmas, dancing the war and Buffalo dances, performing sleight-of-hand tricks with rope and lariat, traveling in the company of famed Indian braves and the notable white scouts of the day, bringing to people the story of the conquest of the west, the civilizing of the red man. Master of the arts of frontiersmen and his own people—he turned lecturer in schools and colleges across the land and was beloved by thousands of children.

LIVES IN MUSEUM

Now in the sundown of life he has chosen historic ground to pass his days before he makes the last journey to join his fathers in the eternal Happy Hunting Ground. His buildings on the old Pop Bone place are a veritable museum, crammed with mementos, souvenirs, testimonials, relics—originals of Indian treaties and state papers, that some day may become the prized possession of historical societies and the government. On the walls and in cabinets, are his ornamented and brightly painted buckskins and headdresses, the proud feathers of the eagle, from which



Another photo of southern Colorado's only Indian chief in the heyday of his prowess as a rodeo performer.

Indian legend has it, the red man's chief derives invincibility.

Far to the north looms Pikes Peak, mysterious abode of the Indian god, Manitou; on the west and south are the rugged, towering Old Baldy, Blanca and the Crestone Needles standing in bold relief, to the south, the Spanish peaks majestically pierce the sky, with Mosca pass, historically the Indian route to the Great Sand Dunes and to Taos, and the pueblos of the southwest, close by.

A hundred miles northwest lies the watershed in which the head waters of the Eagle river rise there is the traditional home of the Golden and Rocky Mountain eagle, and the less populous bald eagle. For centuries hunting grounds of the Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Kiowas, a land where Kit Carson subdued the warring Utes, Hardscrabble creek where Pikes men found gold, land where Jim Onate and the Spaniards in 1598 prospected the slopes of the Continental divide—it's all there, 1

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 1949

The thread of history unfolding as the eye travels the circumference of the circle of which White Eagle's 20 barren acres is the center.

COLORFUL LAND

Land of Indian braves, explorers, adventurers, prospectors and cattle kings, hunting grounds of countless generations of red men—perhaps White Eagle knew all this when he chose to live in the heart of it the last of his days.

White Eagle was born to the purple—his father, from whom he takes his name was a Pawnee chief; his mother, Mary Yellow Horse. His birth, Jan. 23, 1880, on a reservation near Fremont, Neb., dated the Indian wars of the 50's, 60's and 70's. Custer's massacre, Meeker's massacre, the Sand Creek massacre were history. He grew up steeped in the lore of his race, knowing as a boy many of the tribal elders who had resisted the white invasion. Early in young manhood he went to Oklahoma, where he met and married his first wife, Cora Red Buffalo, a Kiowa. The Kiowas, led by the warrior chief, Santanta, known as the "Orator of the Plains," had migrated from southern Colorado to Oklahoma, at the request of the old chief's captor and friend, Gen. George Custer. The Kiowas had inherited the Old Santa Fe trail from the 30's and, in the 60's joined in the Indian wars that led to their subjection.

The monotony of reservation life irked the son of a Pawnee chief and White Eagle soon began the first of his travels, destined to take him hundreds of thousands of miles criss-crossing the land and into old Mexico. He became a cow puncher and bronc buster, working on ranches in east Texas to the gulf. Occasionally he rode in rodeos and learned the white man's ways.

BROOMS SHOWMAN

In 1908 in Mississippi he met William H. (Buffalo Bill) Cody. His fame as a rider had preceded him. He joined the famous scout's wild west show and remained until its fabulous leader retired to die, 14 years later. The meeting set the pattern of his life. White Eagle became a showman, at first one of a large, colorful troupe; later he appeared in vaudeville with his Indian maiden partner, Red Wing; still later he went it alone, entertainer and lecturer, seeking always to know more of the white man and to say and do the things that would bring his people their rightful place in the civilization they had brought to the Indian country.

As a superb athlete, always in condition, he became an exponent of

living, no dissipation are the true road to health, he holds.

A friend of America's humorist-diplomat, Will Rogers, whom he knew in Oklahoma when the master of the lariat and dialogue was unknown, and later when Will had acquired his millions, he has assayed to imitate the Claremore vaudeman's unique method of expansive good will and clean humor. At one time he took Will's place in a vaudeville skit when Rogers failed to appear at showtime.

In 1909 when Buffalo Bill combined with Pawnee Bill, he was with the show at Madison Square Garden in New York. Buffalo Bill's section portrayed the wild west; Pawnee Bill's, the near east. Pawnee Bill had Sengalese, Hindus, Cossacks, camels and water buffalo. White Eagle rode a bucking camel in a show especially for Shriners. (He's a Mason, joined Cecile Daylight Lodge No. 305, Kansas City, March 16, 1927.) His most exciting experience in the roped arena was the time he was kicked by a Missouri bucking mule and given up for dead. He awoke on a slab in the morgue, and had difficulty in convincing his friends he was alive. Pay was small in those days, \$10 a week, but excitement was plentiful.

In the east he learned the story of Pocahontas, became interested in Indian history. When the first World war broke, he went to Washington to join the army and go overseas. Past the age limit, the best he could do was get permission from federal school officials to appear and entertain at hospitals and base training camps and assist in Liberty bond drives with the Red Cross and YMCA. He gave his time freely, cheering the wounded and the sick with his dances, songs and stories of Indian life. One of his prized possessions is a letter from P. P. Closter, head of the U. S. board of education granting him authority for this work. His war service registration card was made out to "Indian Joe Davis," dated Sept. 12, 1918. He became interested in the lot of red men veterans and was one of many who followed Gabe H. Parker, full-blood Indian, a leading member of the Oklahoma constitutional assembly and of the Five Civilized Tribes, in promoting legislation to give the Indian the right to vote.

After the war he kept to the road. Orphanages, reformatories, prisons, colleges, veterans hospitals and organizations, churches, schools came to know him for his one-night entertainments—his files are crammed with hundreds of testimonials from admirers of all

his advice was heeded. In 1933 his wife died and he returned to Oklahoma. Two years later, in 1935, he married Effie Marshall, of Pawhaska, Okla., an Osage.

When CCC camps sprang up, White Eagle longed again to serve his country. He obtained permission from their regional commander to put on his show in Colorado-Wyoming camps and became a familiar figure. When war broke out he went to Salt Lake City, where he was employed in the air force depot for the duration. In 1940, he purchased his lodge on the Beulah highway. After the war he kept horses but gave them up when thieves ran them off.

Today, when at home, he repairs watches, advises his neighbors and friends and holds council on matters of interest to his race. When the mood impels him he's off to the southwest and the pueblos; to the north, east or west, assured of a place in the tepee or hogan of a redman friend wherever he may be.

<http://i1209.photobucket.com/albums/cc383/bowhuntingnut/Indian%20Joe%20Da...> 6/29/2017

Physical culture learning by empire method the basic truths of good health which, to this day, he passes on to the lingering trickle of Spanish + red men who make the long journey to his lodge. Clean

Faiths, race and creeds.

Indian Joe Davis became a legendary figure welcomed at tribal councils in Gallup, in the Black Hills, wherever red men meet and

