

ZACK MULHALL, HIS FAMILY,
AND
THE MULHALL WILD WEST SHOW

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PREFACE

In this biographical study an effort has been made to present a comprehensive picture of the background of Colonel Zack Mulhall before his entry into Oklahoma Territory; of the establishment of the Mulhall Ranch and a description of his family, his wife and children, Logan, Agnes, Lucille, Mildred, and Charles; of his live stock interests; of his political activities; and of his Wild West Show which was known throughout the United States.

The influence of Colonel Zack Mulhall was great in live stock circles for many years and his colorful personality lent romance and excitement to many gatherings during the early years of the twentieth century. Insofar as picturesque characters influence the history of a country, just so far has Colonel Zack's power extended. His life is that of the cattleman, longer and slightly more exciting than most.

Sincere appreciation and thanks are extended to the staff of the Oklahoma Historical Society for the use of newspaper files and assistance in this study. The technical advice, criticism, and assistance given to the author in the preparation of this work by Mrs. Mabel Holt, Assistant Professor of History, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, has been invaluable and is gratefully acknowledged.

The author also wishes to express appreciation for the assistance of Miss Lucille Mulhall, Mrs. Owen Acton (nee Mildred Mulhall), Mr. Charles Mulhall, and the many friends and acquaintances of Zack

Mulhall who have contributed to this biography.

Much of the material used in this thesis has been secured through personal interviews with relatives, friends, and acquaintances of Zack Mulhall. Printed sources have been secured through the Oklahoma Historical Society and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College Library.

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ZACK MULHALL, HIS FAMILY,
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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

In 1848, in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, a boy was born to the Vandevere's, a Dutch and English family. Since this was their first child, undoubtedly the young people were very proud of their offspring. At least, they complimented him by naming him for Zachary Taylor, the new United States president-elect. Nominally, little Zachary Vandevere seemed off to a good start in the worldly battle. Unfortunately, however, the parents were not destined to watch their baby's progress for long. Six months after his birth both of them succumbed to the dreaded yellow fever and left their young son to the tender care of a negro "mammy."¹

As soon as possible the negress took the child, Zachary, with her to St. Louis to the home of Joe Mulhall, a relative of the dead parents.² Joe Mulhall had a fairly large family of his own but that

¹Lucille Mulhall, Interview. So far as the above account of Zack Mulhall's birth is concerned this seems to be the first time it has been given in any Oklahoma historical account. Conflicting statements will be found in J. H. Thoburn and M. H. Wright's Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People, (Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1929), p. 764; Charles Hazelrigg's "Zack Mulhall," The Leader, Guthrie, Okla., Sept. 19, 1931; and a number of other newspaper accounts. They also differ among themselves. The account given here is vouched for by Mrs. Mildred Acton (nee Mulhall) and Charles Mulhall. Lucille is given as preferred reference.

²It has been impossible to ascertain the exact relationship.

did not prevent his accepting the further burden of another child in the group. His niece, Mary Agnes Locke, was also made an unofficial member of the same household. Neither child, so far as is ascertainable, was ever legally adopted.³

The Mulhall family claimed Scotch-Irish-English ancestry and professed the Catholic faith. So far as Joe is concerned, there is little known about his intellectual achievements, unless the fact that he was able to provide well for a large family may be taken as evidence of his training and ability. Both foster parents wished to give not only their own family, but also the waifs for whom they were caring, the best educational advantages at their disposal. Hence, both Mary Agnes and Zachary were sent to the parochial schools of St. Louis and later to South Bend, Indiana. Mary Agnes entered St. Mary's of the Woods academy where she became interested in astronomy, painting, and the study of the piano. She became proficient in both music and painting. But, Zack Mulhall, as he was now called, sent to the Brothers' College (now known as Notre Dame), was less interested in study. He ran away once and was taken back, but his lack of application and disregard of restrictions placed on his conduct were so annoying to the authorities that they probably welcomed or even urged his second leaving. Zack was much gratified at being out of school. Baseball seems to have been the only subject offered in which he excelled.⁴

Back in St. Louis, Zack, a tall, handsome, blue-eyed and red-haired boy, began working for the Santa Fe railway company. He was

³Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

⁴Hazelrigg, loc. cit.

employed in directing and ferrying cattle shipments across the Mississippi. On November 17, 1875, Zack and Mary Agnes were married. By this time, Zack felt himself secure enough in his work to undertake the responsibility of a family. Soon he became assistant live stock agent for the railroad. As agent he did quite a lot of traveling and became interested in the new lands opening up in the Southwest. A newspaper account of his life gives some details concerning these years. It is here quoted in part:

In the early '80's he swam cattle by the thousands across the shifting Red river and [drove them] across Oklahoma on a trail which partially was later incorporated in Mulhall's ranch, to the chutes at Dodge, whence they were shipped to eastern markets.

It was thus that Zack first saw the country where later he was to establish one of the largest ranches in Oklahoma territory. At its height the Mulhall ranch was estimated to be from 80,000 to 100,000 acres.⁵

Zack became acquainted with the land and the people of Texas, the Indian Territory, and Kansas. He became a well-known figure, a good hunter, and an excellent "teller of tales." His headquarters were at various times, Anthony, Arkansas City, Kiowa, and Winfield, Kansas. His ability to "tell tales" made it easy for him in later years to claim any of the states as his place of birth. Conflicting statements may be found giving North Carolina, Texas, and in all probability, several others as his birthplace.⁶ Such diversity was, perhaps, dictated by the circumstances at the time the statement was made.

In 1888 and 1889, Zack Mulhall was living in Winfield, Kansas,

⁵ Anon., "Sun Setting on Career of Colorful old Frontiersman, Zack Mulhall," The Leader, Guthrie, Oklahoma, Sept. 17, 1931.

⁶ See note 1, p. 1.

with his family. During these years, the Millers of the 101 Ranch, were also Winfield residents.⁷ It is quite probable that the friendship, which lasted through life between the heads of the two families, was begun at that time. Both families were interested in the new country and both located in it as soon as the government made settlement possible.

On April 22, 1889, at twelve o'clock noon the territory of "Old Oklahoma" was opened by a "run." The line for beginning the run was located just north of the present town of Orlando. About six miles south of Orlando was a little station on the Santa Fe, called Alfred. To this station, slightly in advance of the train, raced five horsemen, well ahead of the main group of settlers. Zack Mulhall, Sam Matthews, Arch C. Elliott, Dude Butler, and W. H. Matthews were the members of the group. Each of these immediately located on a quarter section in the vicinity.⁸ W. H. Matthews, now president of the Mulhall bank, paints a graphic picture of the event. He says,

When the Gun was fired by U. S. Cavalry men of the 5th Regt., we were off in the lead, five of us in all, to locate near the present town of Mulhall, then known as Alfred Station, in twenty minutes we were in sight of our locations which had been selected by our friend, who was familiar with the country and in a short time we were each located on our claims.⁹

Zack Mulhall filed on a quarter close to the Santa Fe depot, Sam Matthews [Mulhall's foreman] filed on the quarter on which the south half of the town was later located, Jim Bryant [not a member of the group of five] filed on the quarter north of Zack, Arch Elliott filed on the quarter west of Bryant and [W. H.] Matthews filed on the quarter west of Zack, while Dude Butler was located on a quarter south of Sam Matthews, but on account of the heat of the sun, he went to find a tree for shade and got off his

⁷ Ellsworth Collings and Alma M. England, The 101 Ranch, pp. 15, 29.

⁸ W. H. Matthews, "History of the Founding of Mulhall," The Leader, April 16, 1936.

⁹ "An Incident of 1889" (Manuscript).

land and lost it. [Another settler "jumped" his claim.]

It was a hot day, clear and bright with a gentle breeze, and the horses got well heated on the 7 mile ride. Soon the chuck wagon with the tents, supplies and equipment of the different parties came and all dug trenches as a start for location, except Zack, who had a headquarters dugout, along the creek that the cowboys had built while holding cattle at this point.¹⁰

Thus Zack embarked upon his career as a ranchman and citizen of Oklahoma Territory. Within a short time Zack brought his family to the territory and began the establishment of a permanent home. While his railroad work often kept him away for long periods, from this time on Zack had a home to which he always returned with pride.

¹⁰Matthews, "History of the Founding of Mulhall," loc. cit.

CHAPTER II

EARLY DAYS ON THE RANCH

When the ranch was established in 1889, the Mulhall family consisted of Zack, his wife, and their three children, Logan, Agnes, and Lucille. Logan was his father's pride and joy. He had been taught to ride and his father had ordered cowboy boots made for him so that he might dress as the cowmen of the territory did.¹ Agnes learned to ride also, soon after she came to live on the ranch. Lucille, although but four years old was anxious to imitate her brother and sister and soon was allowed to do so.

The dugout on the ranch was used as a residence only until a hotel was built in Alfred. Zack then removed his family to it until he could construct a suitable house. The artistically and musically inclined Mary Agnes seems to have adjusted herself remarkably well to the frontier conditions and soon she was well and favorably known over much of the territory. Her sympathy and aid could always be counted on by those ill or in need. Neighbors, to her, were not just those near home but wherever need appeared within a radius of twenty miles or so.

It was not necessary to be ill or in need to experience Mrs. Mulhall's kindness and generosity. For many years the Matthews' family lived quite near the Mulhall Ranch and each Sunday it was the custom of the Mulhall's to make ice cream. The Matthews' had a standing invitation to "come over and share it." If, however, for

¹One of these boots is still to be seen on the grand piano in the ranch house parlor.

any reason they failed to show up, a servant would bring them a quantity sufficient for the family.²

Flowers were a hobby with Mrs. Mulhall, and the scarcity of cultivated blossoms in the town during the early days was difficult for her to endure. She felt that no funeral could be held without some flowers, and during those early years, she often drove over the prairie seeking any wild blooms she could find for those too frequent occasions. At her own funeral, years later, those who had known her benevolence did not forget, and it is said that the room in which her casket stood, would not accommodate the floral tributes which were sent and brought by her friends, neighbors, and acquaintances.³

Mrs. Mulhall was not subjected to many of the hardships which were felt by her neighbors because she was able to hire servants to take care of the household drudgery. She managed her house excellently, however, and was known for her hospitality. A number of clubs were soon organized in the neighborhood and Mrs. Mulhall was often mentioned in the papers of the time as a guest or hostess at the club meetings. One such item will show the attitude of the community toward the family, or at least the feminine side of it. The language of the excerpt shows the tendency of the times in its ornate description of the affair.

The social at the residence of Mrs. Zack Mulhall last Saturday evening was a decided success both financially and socially. "All went merry as a marriage bell." Mrs. Mulhall

² Mrs. Walter Matthews, Interview. Mrs. Matthews is the wife of W. H. Matthews' son. She lives in the town of Mulhall.

³ Mrs. Sarah J. Rawlings (Jenny Shannon), Interview. Mrs. Rawlings was the first teacher of the Mulhall town school. She still lives near Mulhall.

knows how to entertain her guests. The members of the Ladies Industrial Society are warm in their expression of thanks to Mrs. Mulhall and Miss Agnes for their urbanity and generosity. When Mrs. Mulhall entertains again may I be there to enjoy "the feast of reason and flow of soul."⁴

Mrs. Mulhall's hospitality and generosity did not interfere with her care for her family. Her children are extravagant in praise of her homemaking. Many of the cowboys who worked on the ranch called her "Mother," and meant it. Will Rogers often referred to her as an "angel." Kindness was not a pose with her but an integral part of her nature.⁵

There is still one of Mrs. Mulhall's activities which has not been mentioned. This is her active management of the ranch aside from that of the house. This duty was forced upon her as a result of the necessary absence of her husband in his capacity of live stock agent for the Santa Fe. To her capable hands was entrusted the direction of the cowboys and the handling of the multiple details of ranching. Her direction was adequate and the ranch prospered.⁶

As has been mentioned, Zack retained his position with the Santa Fe and often many weeks elapsed between his visits home. He was seldom able to remain at the ranch for more than a few days at a time. He depended upon his wife to look after his interests on the ranch but he usually handled purchases and sales of stock himself. It is not unusual to read in the local newspapers for the years between 1890 and 1900 of stock shipments either to or from the ranch in quantities ranging from 300 to 700 head of cattle at a time. He also pastured cattle in the Cherokee Strip upon land leased from the Indians until

⁴The Mulhall Chief, Jan. 12, 1894.

⁵Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

⁶Ibid.

such activity was forbidden by the United States government.

In 1893, when preparations were being made for the opening of the Strip to settlement, Zack was one of the cattlemen called into service by the government to help guard the border from overly-anxious settlers. A light is thrown on the conditions on the border during that time, by a newspaper article. The article is given here in full:

Several days ago a report was printed in The Leader, coming from an Orlando farmer, that the soldiers and Zack Mulhall's cow punchers had a clash of arms on Salt Fork a week ago, resulting in some losses of cattle and injury to people. This report is untrue, and the misinformation given by the farmer referred to brought about an unintentional injustice to Mr. Mulhall and his employes.

The Leader received the following mild statement concerning the matter from Mr. Mulhall yesterday, which showed that the the report referred to contained some tergiversation:

At Camp, July 27, 1893

To the Editor of the Leader.

You have done me a great injustice by advertising me to the world as having cattle on the Cherokee strip and my cowboys fighting the soldiers and resisting the government orders, etc., which report was given to you as a d--d lie, no word of truth in it, and by some party not as good as a horse thief who scours the strip daily in search of anything they can steal in the way of cattle, thinking because the government says cowmen must go that they own everything in sight, even the birds that fly across the country. My men have been taught there is a penalty attached to resisting orders of the government and therefore do as requested.

Please know from whom you get such statements before publishing them. The man who gave you that report is a nameless liar; not a word of truth in it, and if he belongs in Oklahoma he had best stay at home. Yours very truly,

Zack Mulhall.⁷

Another item attests to Zack's sale of his cattle in the Strip and also speaks well for his reputation for dependability in matters concerning his stock. It follows:

Zack Mulhall, since the preparation to open the Cherokee strip, has sold all his cattle interests. He has, however, a herd of fine horses near Orlando especially selected for making a run to the opening. His many friends will know where to buy

⁷The Leader, Guthrie, O. T., July 29, 1893.

a horse that will get them a good claim or a town lot, for if Zack states that a certain horse is capable of making a certain run they can depend on it.⁸

Zack's connection with the Santa Fe had given him immediate influence in the territory and in particular in his home town during the early years. He was mayor of Alfred when the first newspaper was published there early in 1890.⁹ During that year the county and town were organized and named. The town was named Mulhall in honor of Zack through the agency of an official of the Santa Fe.¹⁰ It seems rather peculiar that a town should bear the name of a family which legally has not existed in that territory. Since Zack was never adopted, he had no right to the name, Mulhall, beyond that of preference and courtesy, and legally still was a Vandevere.¹¹

There has been some controversy over the naming of the county. Some of the old-timers have thought that Logan county was named for Zack Mulhall's son Logan. While no written records are available at present to confute this point, the following explanation appears to present the true story of the naming of the county.

At the opening of the territory of "Old Oklahoma," the number of civil war veterans who made the run was considerable. In fact they were so numerous as to be able to swing almost any election as they might wish to. When they organized a G. A. R. post at Guthrie, they selected the name Logan for their post in honor of one of the originators and the first national commander of the organization. They found that they could not have the name because there already was a

⁸Ibid., Sept. 5, 1893.

⁹The Mulhall Enterprise, June 10, 1898. (Reprinted from The Alfred Monitor, Apr. 17, 1890. The original is not available.)

¹⁰Oklahoma and Indian Territory Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1907-1908, (R. L. Polk & Co., Pub.), p. 301.

¹¹See note 3, p. 2.

post by that name near them. Thereupon, they determined to show their loyalty to and appreciation for General John A. Logan, by naming the county in which they were located, in his honor. This was accomplished at a general election in 1890.¹²

Zack as well as his wife was becoming known for his generosity and geniality. The Guthrie Leader refers to him as "genial Zack Mulhall" and goes on to say that, "Whenever Guthrie people go to Mulhall, Zack treats them as personal guests, delivers the keys of the town, and entertains royally at his beautiful home in the suburbs."¹³

Other stories regarding Zack's generosity are easily found, but the one most often repeated concerns a mother and her six children. It seems that Zack was at the railroad station in Mulhall one evening when the train pulled in. As it waited to take on mail and passengers, the conductor pointed out to Zack a mother and her six children who were on the train. The woman's husband had died in the territory and she was taking her family back to her people. The conductor said that she was destitute and that he believed the children actually were hungry.

Zack spoke briefly to the engineer who found something wrong with the engine which needed immediate attention, and Zack started for home on the run. The ranch house is only a little over a block from the

¹²Fred L. Wenner, Interview. Mr. Wenner is City Treasurer of Guthrie. He is the author of the Anniversary Booklet published by the Co-operative Pub. Co. of Guthrie (1939) and called The Story of Oklahoma and The Eighty-Niners. Mr. Wenner came into the territory on Apr. 22, 1889, on the Santa Fe train from the north. He was sent to the territory to write up the "run." At that time he was representing the New York Herald, the Chicago Tribune, and the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Confirmed by interview with R. A. Estus, Mayor of Guthrie.

¹³May 12, 1894.

station and Zack made it in record time. As he rushed into the house he caught sight of a baked turkey which had been placed on the dining room table to cool for the evening meal. Without a word of explanation, he picked up the turkey, platter and all, and wrapping the tablecloth about it ran back across the field to the train. He hastily deposited his burden in the mother's lap and leaped off the train before she recovered from her surprise. The engineer, oddly enough, at that very instant, found that the train was in readiness and gave the signal to start. The train pulled out and Zack returned to the house. There he was met by a slightly irate wife who demanded an explanation. When he had finished his recital she reminded him that they had company for supper and asked what she should do about it. "Feed them crackers," said Zack. However, the tablecloth which he had carried away had been a wedding present and it was quite a while before Mrs. Mulhall let him forget about its loss.¹³

Such generosity, of course, often left the family short of actual cash. Zack was free with money when he had it but used his credit freely when cash was lacking. Local storekeepers were often left unpaid for longer than they appreciated. Such a program was not approved by Zack's more provident neighbors and his greatest critics are to be found in his home town. Despite this failing Zack handled hundreds of head of cattle for many ranchers, without any documents whatever, and he was fully trusted. No shipper who entrusted his cattle to Zack ever lost a penny in the transaction.¹⁴

¹³A. B. Macdonald, "The First of the 'Cowgirls' Lives with her Memories of Past Glory," Kansas City Star, Mar. 6, 1932.

¹⁴W. H. Matthews, Interview. This statement is verified by a number of other Mulhall residents.

In those early days when lawbreakers made the hills and plains of Oklahoma their rendezvous it was a ticklish proposition for the ranchers to keep from incurring their ill-will and becoming the object of one of their raids. Also, it was quite necessary to have the goodwill of the law enforcement officers. Zack Mulhall seems to have been one of those who managed to accomplish both objectives. Undoubtedly, the Mulhall Ranch furnished fresh horses upon several occasions to bandit groups. Also, no doubt, officers of the law were free to call upon Zack for remounts.

Zack liked to tell one story concerning his impartiality toward the law and the lawless. He claimed that upon one occasion he entertained two wanted guests and two law enforcement officers at the same table with the Catholic priest and himself. It seems that all had been prevailed upon to lay aside their guns for the meal, and each group, ignorant of the presence of the other, then was ushered into the dining room by different doors. There they confronted each other and the priest. Riot seemed imminent, but Zack was able to convince them that since he had their arms securely put away, the better part of valor consisted in partaking of the food before them with gusto and letting future events take care of themselves. At the conclusion of the meal the two law-breakers left the table and having had their guns restored to them, slipped quietly out and away into the night. Zack prevented the officers from following them by allowing them to think that the others were waiting in ambush outside. In the morning when the officers finally left the house, their quarry was many miles away.¹⁵

¹⁵Owen Acton, Interview. Husband of the former Mildred Mulhall.

Instances of Zack's acquaintance with and friendship for some of the "bad men" of the territory are abundant. A story is told that an executive of the railroad once complained to Zack that passengers were using a rival line because so many train robberies were occurring in Oklahoma. Zack knew whom to look for. Henry Starr, the notorious Indian bandit, was undoubtedly the guilty party. Zack had known Henry and his family for many years. He started out to find the young man and came upon him in the northern Oklahoma hill country, where, according to Zack,

he could have shot me easily enough.

He said: "Zack, what do you want with me?" I said: "Well, Henry, I'm not going to try to capture you, but I want you to do me a favor. Can't you see to it that the trains on my railroad are left alone? My boss is getting sore about the holdups." Henry agreed and from that time on our line wasn't bothered.¹⁶

Zack's friendship for Starr is vouched for by A. B. Macdonald, correspondent for the Kansas City Star. He tells of visiting at the Mulhall Ranch and seeing a tall, slender, black-haired young man curled up in a chair, reading. He says,

I did not suspect that he was Henry Starr, the "lone outlaw," who, single-handed had held up and robbed so many banks in Oklahoma that the bankers were in a panic, and that then, as he curled up in an easy chair, his feet under him, Indian fashion, reading, there was a price of \$5,000 on his head.¹⁷

Later, Henry was shot and captured in Stroud, Oklahoma, after a bank robbery. He was riding a horse which belonged to Zack Mulhall. Mulhall came to Chandler, where Henry was being held in the jail. He claimed the horse and then went to the jail to see Henry. A. B. Macdonald quotes Zack regarding the bandit's possession

¹⁶Blackwell Morning Tribune, Sept. 19, 1931.

¹⁷Loc. cit.

of the horse:

"How did Starr get my horse?" repeated Zack, "Why, I've known Henry ever since he was a boy; knew his father and mother before him, and all his folks. So Henry, like any other Oklahoman who is my friend, is welcome to come to my house any old time and stay as long as he will, the longer the better. I have a hundred horses up there at my ranch, and any friend of mine is free to borrow one whenever he wants to. That's always been the law of the range. So, Henry, wanting a horse, just borrowed this one from my stable, without asking my leave, and when I heard he had been downed and was riding a fine blooded horse, I came down here to see if it was one of mine, and sure enough it was. I'm taking my horse back home, but before I go, I'm stopping here to see if there's any way I can help my friend, Henry Starr."¹⁸

That was the kind of friend Zack was. Although himself law-abiding, Zack considered his relationships with friends as beyond the law. Their faults did not destroy his feeling for them. Henry Starr was not the only outlaw who could call upon him in time of need. He helped Al Jennings get his citizenship restored during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt. He undoubtedly furnished shelter to many others at various times. In this he was only following the tradition of the frontier and was doing no more than the majority of the cattlemen of the time would have done under similar circumstances.¹⁹

During these early years, Logan and Agnes Mulhall were kept in school in St. Louis. Both were good students and were winning many friends through their school associations. Zack was inordinately proud of the two oldest children and hired Mr. DeVoe, a Kansas City artist to paint their portraits during the year 1895. Agnes' portrait is life-size and still hangs in the ranch parlor. It portrays a lovely young girl and gives visible proof of the beauty which became so well-known throughout Oklahoma territory. The picture of

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

Logan was posed on his pony and although necessarily not so large as that of Agnes it still is an excellent likeness.²⁰ At Christmas, 1895, both children returned to the ranch for the holidays. Unfortunately, Logan caught a very bad cold on the journey and on December 29, he died of pneumonia.²¹ He was almost fourteen years old at the time of his death.

Logan's death was a severe shock to the entire family. Agnes did not return to school immediately after the holidays and Zack evidently thought that a change of scene would be good for all of them. So, in the latter part of January, Zack took Mrs. Mulhall, Agnes, Lucille, and the baby, Mildred, on an extended trip into old Mexico. They visited Mexico City before returning to the territory.²² While the trip did not lessen their sorrow it seems to have helped them over the darkest days and upon their return they set about their every-day duties calmly.

In the spring, Zack determined to erect a tomb for Logan's body and arranged to secure Carthage stone from Missouri for its construction. The tomb which was built to accommodate six bodies elicited the following item from the local newspaper editor:

Zack Mulhall is erecting a tomb on his beautiful farm which when completed will be the most beautiful and costly structure of its kind in Oklahoma. It is built in memory of Logan, son of Mr. and Mrs. Mulhall, whose untimely death six months ago brought such sorrow to the family. Mr. DeVoe, an artist from Kansas City is the designer and J. T. Thorpe of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, is superintending the work.²³

The year following Logan's death marked Agnes' sixteenth birthday.

²⁰The paintings are to be seen at the Mulhall Ranch. Other portraits, on a smaller scale, and photographs of Logan are available there for comparison.

²¹The Mulhall Enterprise, Jan. 11, 1896.

²²Ibid., Feb. 8, 1896.

²³Ibid., May 23, 1896.

She had inherited her mother's musical talents and her school years had given her a chance to develop them. Zack was very proud of her accomplishments and bought her a Steinway grand piano which was placed in the ranch house parlor.²⁴ Her singing was already receiving much praise and the local paper was loud in its acclaim. One correspondent's lyrical comment describes her as "remarkably gifted with a superb voice which has a wonderfully musical cadence." Furthermore, according to the same writer, "Whenever she appears on the stage she elicits high encomiums upon her classic performances."²⁵

During the late '90's Agnes and her younger sister Lucille often joined Zack in St. Louis, Kansas City, or Fort Worth. In these cities they became well known and enjoyed the social activities greatly. Agnes won much attention because of her beauty as well as her accomplishments. She was the "original of the character 'Bossie' in Hoyt's A Texas Steer, a long time stage success."²⁶ Many newspaper correspondents grew verbose in praise of the young lady. The Mulhall Enterprise proudly reprinted a long article which had appeared in a St. Louis newspaper. The article gives an expression of the sentiment of the times concerning Oklahoma as well as that held with regard to the Mulhall family. It is quoted here with minor eliminations.

"The Rose of Oklahoma." This pretty title has been given by a coterie of admirers to Miss Agnes, or "Bossie" Mulhall, the charming 18-year-old daughter of Mr. Zack Mulhall, one of the widest-known cattlemen in the southwest.

Just south of the Kansas boundary line on the Santa Fe railroad, rises the village of Mulhall, which was named in honor of Zack Mulhall, the cattle king. The thriving little town rests in a fertile region, indeed, all the country round about it is the finest in the world. The climate is perfect, the air is clear, the sunsets visions of glory. It is the ideal living

²⁴Ibid., Dec. 28, 1895.

²⁵Ibid., June 15, 1895.

²⁶The Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 17, 1931.

country for the American herdman.

Perhaps the most interesting family in this region and certainly the most interesting to St. Louis readers, is that of Mr. Zack Mulhall....To be entertained at the Mulhall ranch is to live like a prince, with one of the finest American gentlemen for your host. The ranch comprises immense fields of pasture covered with thoroughbreds in the way of horses and cattle, and contains large cultivated fields. It is considered one of the best appointed ranches in Oklahoma. The house is large and comfortable, with wide piazzas and outlying barns and servants' quarters....

Mr. and Mrs. Mulhall have several children, but the pride of their hearts, the star of the household, is their oldest daughter, "Bossie." She is an attractive young woman. A graduate of one of St. Louis convents, she is accomplished in all the arts, sings well, and plays in a corresponding manner. To be entertained by the music she draws from the strings of her grand piano, with a song or two interspersed is to have a delightful memory. Then she talks vivaciously and well, is thoroughly conversant with all the topics of the day, and can make any subject interesting by her coquettish, fetching manner, whether it be the condition of the stock markets or the capture of Havana. But Miss Mulhall's most unique accomplishment is her equestrienneship. She is a daring horsewoman, having been taught to ride by her father before she was scarcely able to hold on the saddle's pommel. At the age of ten she owned two horses, spirited ones, they were, too, and rode them both, going about the ranch with her father, and staying in the saddle for hours at a time without showing a sign of weariness. But the mere riding is not all her skill. Her cowboy friends have taught her to throw the lariat, cinch a saddle, and shoot a rifle with the skill of an expert. Two beautiful furry wolf rugs, which are spread out on the hardwood floor of her music room, are trophies of her skill. She shot the wolves while chasing them, her horse going at full speed across the country. As a modern athletic girl she heads the list, and can entertain her friends by feats of lasso throwing and rifle shooting, afterwards going into the parlor to receive them with graciousness and dignity. Miss Mulhall is a remarkable girl in many respects, and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that at all territorial entertainments she is the belle par excellence. Her father idolizes her, and gratifies her every wish. The string of fine horses owned by her would make a St. Louis or New York girl turn green with envy. She has a beautiful sorrel saddle horse, a Kentucky bred, a bay steeple-chaser, a thoroughbred driver, a team of cobs. There are few girls more characteristically American than Miss "Bossie" Mulhall, and few that are more admired.²⁷

While the above article is highly complimentary, many Mulhall residents

²⁷The Mulhall Enterprise, June 17, 1898. (Reprinted from the St. Louis Sunday Republic, June 11, 1898.)

can be found who subscribe fully to the sentiments expressed in it and who vouch for the truth of the statements regarding "Bossie's" riding ability and the horses which she handled.²⁸

Lucille and Mildred were also learning to ride well and to rope cattle. Wolves were often found on the ranch and the girls learned to shoot accurately, not simply as an accomplishment but almost as a necessity for their own safety.

Zack Mulhall's connection with the Santa Fe was of seeming advantage to the town of Mulhall. Neighboring towns became envious at what seemed to them preferential shipping rates due to this affiliation. An article in the local paper containing reprints from two of these neighbors, together with the Mulhall editor's reaction, is interesting. It follows:

What is the object of the Santa Fe discriminating \$5 a car in favor of Mulhall, against Guthrie, on stock shipments? Guthrie pays that road a half a million in freights. -- Capital.

The Guthrie club is just awakening to the fact, eh? Guthrie has lost hundreds of shipments of cattle and hogs from this section just on account of the difference in the car rate between Guthrie and Mulhall. Shippers go to Mulhall and consequently spend considerable money there. We imagine Zack Mulhall saw to it early that Mulhall got this rate over Guthrie, but farmers would rather ship from Guthrie any day in the week if it were not for this discrimination. -- Perkins Journal.

Why, Brother Hinkle? Our buyers always pay more than Guthrie buyers and our merchants always strive to treat your people fairly when they come here to trade. Then tell us why you so much prefer Guthrie to Mulhall.²⁹

A letter from Owen L. Cope, present Live Stock Agent for the Santa Fe, denies the validity of the assumption that Zack had anything to do with the freight rates from Mulhall. The paragraph from his letter referring

²⁸Charles Hazelrigg, Mrs. Walter Matthews, Mrs. Nora Stansbury, and others.

²⁹The Mulhall Enterprise, May 2, 1896.

to the matter is quoted below:

That any preferential rates (freight) were given the town of Mulhall through influence or efforts of Mr. Zack Mulhall is unlikely and evidently so thought or represented in error. Neither his position, acquaintance or influence, or the volume of tonnage would justify these conclusions.³⁰

Late in 1896, Zack was appointed general Live Stock Agent of the Frisco railroad, and consequently resigned from his position with the Santa Fe. In commenting on his appointment, The Mulhall Enterprise was highly complimentary. It said, "Mr. Mulhall is one of nature's best fellows. As live stock agent of the Santa Fe he has done great work and is perhaps one of the most popular men connected with the Santa Fe. His new position gives him a wider scope and it is generally conceded that the Frisco has secured a jewel."³¹ This connection was to continue for the next ten years to the satisfaction of both employe and employer.

Zack's influence with the Santa Fe remained even after his employment by the Frisco. It is said that upon one occasion when some farmers were finding it impossible to get cars for their grain and cattle, Zack wired to the main offices and within a few hours the cars were sent to Mulhall for the convenience of those men.³² At another time, late in the year 1898, Lucille Mulhall was stricken with appendicitis and Zack secured a special car which rushed her to a Kansas City hospital.³³ Even today after the lapse of years and the death of Zack, Lucille still retains many friends in the service of the railroad. One of the engineers always salutes her as his

³⁰ Letter to Iris Koch, August 14, 1939.

³¹ Sept. 26, 1896.

³² Bert Stansbury, Interview.

³³ Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

train passes the ranch and often he throws off great bundles of papers and sometimes books which he thinks will be of interest to her.³⁴

In his capacity of Live Stock Agent for the Frisco, Zack Mulhall took part on programs of the cattlemen's conventions. He was a fluent speaker and could make himself popular with an audience. One instance of activity in this direction is found in his appearance in January, 1898, as a speaker on the program of the Oklahoma Live Stock Association which met at Woodward.³⁵

Late in the year 1897 and during the early months of 1898, the town of Mulhall was beset by an incendiary. Several business houses and residences were set on fire and some of the losses were quite heavy. The entire town was worried by the attacks of the fire-bug.³⁶ The Mulhall Ranch was not immune from him as is shown by an item in The Mulhall Enterprise:

Early Monday morning [October 25] Mrs. Mulhall was awakened by the loud barking of the dogs and arose just in time to see a flying figure on horseback leaving the premises and the hay stacks just back of the stable in flames. The alarm was given, the people turned out by heroic efforts saved the stable which was within ten feet of the burning stacks. The town fire engine did considerable service. It was doubtless the work of an incendiary but little or no clue is had as to his identity.³⁷

The incendiary was never caught and the damage which he caused both materially and to the morale of the townspeople was never completely repaired. Few of the business houses destroyed were rebuilt and the prestige of the town, which had been considerable, slowly declined

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Program of the Oklahoma Live Stock Association, Woodward, O. T., Jan. 3 and 9, 1898.

³⁶W. H. Matthews, Interview.

³⁷October 30, 1897.

from this time on.

The Mulhall Ranch also had reached its peak of prosperity and while it continued as a show place for several years and retained much of its glamour through the activities of Zack, its growth had stopped and its period of decline was soon to follow.

CHAPTER III

THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND THE MULHALL FAMILY

When the Rough Riders' reunion was held in Oklahoma City on July 2, 3, and 4, 1900, great plans were made for the entertainment of the veterans. Zack Mulhall helped with the arrangements and in honor of Colonel Roosevelt, then Governor of New York, a wild west show was scheduled. Lucille Mulhall returned from a year of school in St. Louis and prepared to enter the riding and roping contests. The Mulhall town band also, being one of the best bands in the territory, embarked upon a period of daily practices in preparation for the occasion.

The great event came and the Mulhall's, town and family, were well represented. Colonel Roosevelt commented upon the band and was very much impressed by Lucille's riding. Lucille rode in the parade each day and entered the riding contest on the second day. Colonel Roosevelt was not the only one impressed by the young lady's facility and grace. The correspondent for The Oklahoman expressed his approbation in florid terms. He says,

And then there was Miss Mulhall, the famous young Oklahoma rider, the envy of ladies and the admiration of all the men. Deep down in their hearts doubtless every woman in that vast audience would gladly have yielded all her ribbons and have donned the riding boot, bifurcated skirt and cowboy hat could she have exchanged with the fair and daring rider. Mounted upon her staunch gray pony, Miss Mulhall scurried over the grounds, as freely and cosily as if she were on the unfenced prairie.¹

¹July 3, 1900.

Under such circumstances it is little wonder that the admirer of all things western, Theodore Roosevelt, should be tremendously intrigued by the youthful rider. Not long after the reunion in Oklahoma City, Roosevelt visited at the Mulhall Ranch and again met the charming Miss Mulhall. He urged her father to put her on the stage so that the entire country might enjoy her unusual talents "before that girl dies or gets married or cuts up some other caper."²

Altogether, Colonel Roosevelt made three visits to the Mulhall Ranch preceding and during the early years of his presidency. He became good friends with the entire family and continued to admire and praise Lucille. Once while discussing the stories of Ernest Thompson Seton, Roosevelt spoke of the ferocity and wisdom of the lobo wolf, saying that the author emphasized those qualities in particular in his discussions of the animal. Lucille said that she often shot them and that she was not completely in accord with the views expressed by Mr. Seton. A. B. Macdonald gives Lucille's account of the conversation:

"Yes, Lucille, but did you ever rope a lobo wolf?" asked Roosevelt. I said I had not but I knew I could do it. He challenged me to rope one and bring it in for him. I did so while he was there. I ran it down, lassoed it and then got off my horse and beat it to death with my stirrup iron.³

The wolf was later mounted and presented to Colonel Roosevelt in Washington, in the White House, upon one of the visits made by Agnes Mulhall to his home.⁴

The friendship of Mulhall and Roosevelt led to the idea of

²La-Vere S. Anderson, "'Original Cowgirl' Still Lives on Ranch," Tulsa Daily World, June 28, 1931.

³Loc. cit.

⁴Agnes Mulhall sang at the Inaugural ball in Washington at Roosevelt's inauguration in 1905. She visited there on several occasions.

creating a territorial band to be sent to Washington for the inauguration of McKinley and Roosevelt. The idea seems to have originated with Zack and to have been welcomed by the new vice-president elect. Zack decided that the Mulhall band should furnish the nucleus for the group. He approached the members with the idea and found them willing to cooperate. He is supposed to have guaranteed them transportation if they would call themselves the Rough Riders' Band. The band began gathering extra players to make up their quota of from twenty-five to thirty members. The Wichita Beacon of January 4, 1901, carried a small story describing the costumes which they were supposed to wear for the event. The dress was quite elaborate: "white cowboy hat, a blue shirt, and red handkerchief and leather leggings with white hair down the front and...cowboy high heeled boots." To help pay expenses, booklets were made to the number of 10,000. They were to be distributed in Washington and most of the towns were anxious to be included. The Newkirk Herald of January 25, carried an article concerning the booklets and their importance as an advertising medium for the towns of the territory. Zack and his home town received a great deal of publicity over the territory and throughout the Southwest. However, a difficulty arose, and one might conjecture that it concerned the fact that with all the advertising going on, the Frisco railroad was being left out. At least, the Rough Riders' Band was supplanted in the affections of the company by the Guthrie band under the name of the Frisco Line Band. That this can be blamed on Zack Mulhall is hardly credible. He may be blamed to the extent of having been rather free with promises without having sufficient power to make good on those obligations. The denouement came at the inauguration in Washington

and for some time afterwards feeling was rather strained between Zack and the members of the Mulhall (Rough Riders') Band.

A thorough-going exposition of the entire affair is given in The Mulhall Enterprise following the return of the band. It is biased by the feelings of the writers but makes the situation clearer than any other explanation could. While the affair was certainly not humorous to those concerned, the article is almost a cause for hilarity to those who read it now after the lapse of so many years. For this reason, it is quoted in full;

Ananias was a liar, Judas Iscariot, a traitor. They lived some centuries ago. In these days of progress we have the attributes of both these culprits united in the person of one whose erstwhile cognomen was Zack Mulhall, but who latterly has rightfully earned the name Judas Ananias Mulhall. Judas betrayed and Ananias lied, each for money, but Judas Ananias Mulhall can do both with greater facility without any incentive except such as comes from a crooked nature. What foresight the old Greek philosopher must have had when he said: "The more I see of men the better I like dogs." The application of these remarks will appear a little later on.

Judas Ananias Mulhall wrote the Mulhall Band under date of January 8, 1901: "My dear boys: It affords me much pleasure to notify you that I have arranged to carry your band consisting of 25 members free of charge from Mulhall to Washington, D. C., and return." What a lie! He never had transportation from Mulhall to Washington for anybody, and he knew it was not true when he wrote it. Then Judas Ananias wrote us we must buy complete cowboy uniforms, white hat, blue shirt, leather leggins, high-heeled boots, scabbard with pistol and cartridges, spurs, etc., etc., ad nauseam. To this a protest was made. We could not spend \$700 for uniforms when we already had good uniforms. Besides Gov. Barnes had written offering us the uniforms of the First Regiment Band, but none of these would suit Judas Ananias. Imagine the effect of advertising Oklahoma as a cowboy country--Oklahoma the peer of the states, to be heralded as the home of cowpunchers!

Early in February Judas Ananias came home, and while here was in consultation with the band, during which consultation he delivered himself of a fresh batch of lies. For instance, that Oklahoma City had offered him \$1,000 if he would take their band, and others equally as absurd and false. During this consultation he was told that we could not buy the cowboy outfit he named and that if he insisted on our wearing it he would have to get it himself. To this he answered: "Well, I'll wire my people and see what I

can do." Two hours later he took the train and went to Guthrie and made them a proposition to take them in the very uniforms Gov. Barnes had offered us. Up to this time our band had spent about \$200 for advertising, music, car fare and other expenses, to get the band together. Such a contemptible betrayal was never heard of in this vicinity. A spade is a spade. A dog is always faithful to a friend. How forcible the words of the old Greek philosopher! Well, the band went anyway, clad as Rough Riders and paid its own way aided by the citizens of the city of Mulhall.

In St. Louis, Judas Ananias had the brazen effrontery to say to our leader, "If I can do anything for you while you are in the city just name it and I'll do it." This was the answer: "Mulhall, you once had a chance to do something for us and you didn't do it. Now, we don't want anything to do with you."

One would think that betraying friends and lying like an Arab would be accomplishments enough for one man but not for our Judas Ananias. We must add theft to his list. The Frisco Line Band of which Zack had charge was assigned a place in the printed program in the second brigade of the second division. It was not until Feb. 27 that we knew for sure that the Rough Riders Band would go, hence it was too late for us to get a place in the printed program. However, on this day a telegram was sent to Gov. Roosevelt stating that we were coming in his honor and asking that he secure a place for us in line if possible. Gov. Roosevelt immediately wired the committee at Washington for a place for us.

As all newspaper readers know, the controversy between the G. A. R. and the inaugural committee was not settled until Saturday, March 2. By that time all the bands that had been invited had been placed in line. With the G. A. R. matter settled in their favor the veterans had no band. So when Roosevelt asked for a place for us, Gen. Sickles said "We'll take the Rough Riders' Band" and special orders No. 3, were made assigning the Rough Riders' Band of Mulhall, Okla., to lead the veteran escort of President McKinley from the White House to the Capitol. This announcement was made in the Washington Sunday papers. Gen. Greene, chief marshal, sent one of his aides to our hotel to notify us of this order and where and when to report.

What a pain it must have given Judas Ananias to see the Rough Riders' Band that he had so basely turned down, given post of honor and his own band not even in the same division with it! He sent an emissary to ask if we would not like to throw both the Oklahoma Bands together for the morning parade. This emissary was a blunderhead named Hammer, who claimed to live at Enid, Okla. Hammer said he came straight from Zack Mulhall who was the author of the proposition. He was told to go straight back and tell Judas Ananias to go to a place where fur coats are not fashionable. This good advice was not heeded. Choosing the night time like all other thieves do for their work Judas Ananias went to Governor Roosevelt with representations that he was in charge of the Rough Riders' Band from Mulhall, Okla.

Roosevelt, not knowing the circumstances, sent a note to

Gen. Sickles asking him to use Zack Mulhall's band if he could. Thereupon Sickles wrote an order accordingly. This order was shown only after we were in line at the head of the column and then it was too late to have it changed as the column was ready to move. How proud Judas Ananias must have felt at the consummation of this piece of villainy! And that other little whippersnapper in a borrowed suit of clothes who was in direct charge of the Frisco Line Band! What a self-important patronizing air he assumed. He was the dirty little cur who helped to pull Judas Ananias' chestnuts out of the fire.⁵ Zack Mulhall has forever damned himself with the citizens of Mulhall for his perfidy and bad faith. Gov. Roosevelt told a committee of the Rough Riders' Band that he had been deceived by Judas Ananias and deplored the fact that we were not given the place he intended should be ours.

We cannot close this article without mentioning the fact that Mrs. Mulhall remained a good friend to the band and at all times acted in good faith with us.

As it was the Rough Riders' Band was at the head of the President's party and escort. We believe this statement to be necessary inasmuch as the lying State Capital [Guthrie] has industriously labored to give the Rough Riders' Band a black eye ever since it was organized.

T. E. Genet,
D. McConnehey,
Ohas. W. Brown,
Frank Shoemaker.⁶

The misunderstanding must have been pretty well localized or else Zack was able to explain his way out of the tangle in a fairly satisfactory manner. At least, it did not seem to affect his relations with Roosevelt for soon after Roosevelt's succession to the office of president, he gave a striking proof of his friendship.

William N. Jenkins had been appointed by President McKinley to the governorship of Oklahoma Territory after March 4, 1901, and he had taken office in May. By the last of October, so much dissension had arisen in the territory over the management of the affairs of the territorial insane asylum that President Roosevelt felt justified in removing Governor Jenkins. Of course, there were many candidates for the office. The Republicans were quarreling among

⁵Note: This reference is in all probability directed at the drum major, Tom Mix, later to become a motion picture star.

⁶"Zack Mulhall Exposed," March 15, 1901.

themselves and there seemed no possibility of an amicable settlement upon one satisfactory candidate. Thereupon, Roosevelt let it be known to the press that he was seriously considering the appointment of a Democrat, Zack Mulhall, to the office. This statement had an immediate effect on the warring candidates and the Democratic appointment was blocked as soon as possible.⁷ Thompson B. Ferguson was appointed and the memory of what might have happened kept the Republican bloc quiet for a few weeks.

The discussion concerning the governorship tended to bring Zack back into favor in his home town. His faults disappeared as if by magic, at least from the pages of the local newspaper and only praise was to be found therein. A dispatch, unsigned, from a Washington correspondent is printed in full in The Mulhall Enterprise of November 8, 1901. It follows:

It is probable that Oklahoma will have a new chief executive within the next sixty days. President Roosevelt is anxious to install in the most important office in the territory a man in whom he has implicit confidence, and who is also his personal friend. The man in question is Col. Zack Mulhall, of Mulhall, Okla.⁸ A man of independent means, rugged integrity and executive ability, Col. Mulhall meets all the requirements for this position demanded by the president.

While it is probable that no definite decision has yet been reached, there is no doubt that the president is considering the question of tendering the governorship to his friend. This is made possible by the controversies which have recently arisen over Gov. Jenkins. The president is anxious to secure peace and harmony in Oklahoma if such is possible. The fact that differences have already arisen in Gov. Jenkins' short incumbency of the office furnished an excuse for making a change, and at the same time of placing in the highest position in the territory a personal friend....

It was in his own home, surrounded by his family that the president formed the high estimation of Col. Mulhall that he now entertains.

When Mr. Roosevelt was inaugurated as vice president, Col.

⁷Blackwell Morning Tribune, Sept. 19, 1931.

⁸Note: The title of "Colonel" is often applied to any person of influence who holds a position of esteem in a community.

Mulhall came to the national capital to attend the inaugural ceremonies. He brought with him the famous Mulhall band, consisting of seventy pieces. [The Rough Riders' Band and the Frisco Line Band, together.] Upon his arrival here there was some dispute as to the position the band should occupy in the parade. Col Mulhall called upon Mr. Roosevelt and explained to him the situation.

"If I can secure it, the Mulhall band shall have the position of honor in the inaugural parade," declared Mr. Roosevelt with emphasis. He dispatched a messenger to the grand marshal of the parade, which resulted in the Mulhall band being selected to escort the presidential party from the White House to the capitol.

No criticism of the above paragraph is offered by the editor who proceeds to comment on the news as follows:

A definite decision is expected within the next two weeks, when Col. Mulhall and his daughter will visit Washington in response to the president's invitation.

The associated press dispatches during the past week have fairly teemed with writeups of the prospective governor, all wanting to get on the band wagon, we presume. Meantime, one of our little city's distinguished citizens is being advertised everywhere.⁹

In the same issue of The Mulhall Enterprise is another interesting item. It seems that both Mulhall and Guthrie were seeking the location of the projected county high school. The editor stated that a delegation of Guthrie men had offered to support Zack Mulhall for governor if the town of Mulhall would concede the location of the high school in Guthrie's favor. Furthermore, the editor sarcastically alluded to the town's growing importance in the political ring of the territory.¹⁰

Some of the people seemed to think that Zack Mulhall lost the appointment because too much stress was placed upon his friendship with President Roosevelt.¹¹ Regardless of the reason, Zack did not

⁹"Mulhall for Governor."

¹⁰Nov. 8, 1901.

¹¹The Wichita Daily Eagle, Nov. 13, 1901.

get the appointment, although his friendship for Roosevelt continued through the ensuing years. Later, during his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt came back to the territory for a wolf hunt. Zack Mulhall accompanied the party on a trip to the Wichita Mountains at that time.¹²

Following this brief flurry in national affairs, Zack retired from the political arena for many years. His other interests were sufficient to keep him busy, and aside from local matters, he wielded little political influence, at least, openly, until his later years.

¹²P. L. Wald, Interview. Mr. Wald is a resident of Stillwater, Oklahoma, at the present time but during the period referred to above he lived at Lone Wolf, Oklahoma Territory.

CHAPTER IV

THE MULHALL WILD WEST SHOW

During 1899, Zack became interested in racing and began to train a number of racing horses. Several of his horses did quite well, locally, in succeeding seasons, especially Colonel Gay and Sam Lazareth. One of his best loved race horses was named Logan Mulhall after his dead son. Soon, besides entering his race horses in contests, Zack began to take a few of his best riders and ropers around the country to fairs, and other town entertainments.¹ Such was the humble beginning of one of the finest wild west shows of the time.

In the fall of 1899, Zack took a few riders and ropers to the annual state fair held at St. Louis to enter them in the contests there. Will Rogers, just a boy, was with them. A little over a year after this Will started out on a trip which extended nearly around the world and it was not until 1904 that he was again at the Mulhall Ranch.²

Preceding the Rough Riders' reunion in Oklahoma City in 1900, Zack Mulhall had not considered show business as a career for his daughter, Lucille. However, after that event and the publicity given her performance there he began to feel that perhaps Roosevelt

¹Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

²Note: Lucille Mulhall has a photograph of Agnes, herself, a cowboy whom she remembers only as "Shorty," and Will Rogers. All are mounted and the picture is distinct enough for easy recognition. It was taken early in 1901 before Will started on his tour of far places. The photograph can be seen at the Mulhall Ranch and it was copied in The Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 17, 1935.

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was right.³ So when the fair committee of Springfield, Missouri, wrote asking him to bring his two daughters and appear in their roping contest, he decided to accept. An idea of the advance advertising given them may be gathered from an article reprinted in the territory and taken from the Springfield Republican. It says,

Wonderfully good news was received by the fair committee in a letter from Zack Mulhall of Mulhall, I. T., [sic] in which he accepts the committee's invitation to attend the roping contest, Wednesday and Thursday of fair week, and that he will bring also, his two daughters with him, together with their ponies, saddles and lassos. This is without doubt the very best possible news that could come and insures the roping contest to be the most attractive exhibition ever seen by the public anywhere in the world. Miss Mulhall, although a young lady, still in her teens, can outride any of the boldest men riders in all the cattle ranges, and throws a lasso with an accuracy and skill that is the envy of all the boys. Whenever she enters a contest she creates the wildest enthusiasm and the audiences rise to a pitch of excitement unknown in any other exhibition yet given to the public. Those who saw Miss Mulhall in Oklahoma City say the sight was the grandest they ever beheld, and they are wild to see it again. It is an assured fact that Springfield's roping contest with all its cowboy entries and crowned by Miss Mulhall's participation will reach the very pinnacle of sporting events and will be remembered with keenest delight by every person who shall be present. For years the Springfield roping contest will be an epic in the memories of all the southwest country.⁴

Lucille Mulhall's skill in riding and roping had been acquired over a period of years. She says that she cannot remember when she learned to ride. At the age of seven her father had laughingly told her she might have all the unmarked steers in his herd which she could rope and brand alone. Adopting the brand LM-bar for her stock, Lucille proceeded to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered. In a short time she had roped and branded so many calves that her father begged off from his bargain.⁵ Besides the skill gained in

³See page 24.

⁴The Daily Chieftain, Vinita, I. T., Aug. 16, 1900.

⁵Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

straight roping, Lucille tried every trick which she saw another rider do. She began to train her own ponies to do the tricks which the other horses could do and soon she surpassed the cowboys on the ranch in trick work. Her father, while pleased by her ability, was slightly alarmed at her daring and it is said that she was sent to St. Louis to school in the hope of restraining some of her wildness. However, her return to the ranch marked her return to the saddle as well. She was not of the same type as her sister Agnes. Lucille would rather ride the open range or do stunts for vociferous cowboys and friends who appreciated the difficulty of her endeavors than to ride before an admiring group of society people. Her riding and roping were honest accomplishments and she had little or no use for the artifice and pretence of social life.⁶

During most of 1901, Zack Mulhall had so many other interests, including the inviting prospect of the territorial governorship, that riding and roping took second place. Except for the riding which was to be done around the ranch and an occasional local affair, the Mulhall girls confined their attention to other matters.

Early in 1902, however, the cattlemen's convention was held in Wichita. Zack was there, of course, and Lucille entered the roping contest and won fourth prize, a stetson hat. The local paper described the event graphically,

Miss Lucille Mulhall, as we glean from the Wichita Eagle, created great enthusiasm at the roping contest. The crowd cheered constantly and by their demonstrations, it is intimated, handicapped her in her work or she might have stood higher in the list. As it was she showed good judgement and generalship, caught her steer and tied him good and fast in 2.20 time, and that in a drizzling rain that froze as it fell.⁷

⁶Ibid.

⁷The Mulhall Enterprise, Feb. 21, 1902.

Miss Lucille was learning that show life is not all sunshine. Later in the year she experienced an accident more dangerous and painful than roping steers in a freezing rain. Again The Mulhall Enterprise portrays the event vividly:

The Enterprise and Miss Lucille Mulhall's friends at home are glad to know that the report of her accident at St. Louis was over colored. A telegram from her father to Jack Bellew here assures him that Lucille was not seriously hurt and would be able for a trip to San Antonio, Texas, next week. A part of the report from the St. Louis Republic follows:

"At 3:30 p. m. the signal was given to make ready for the pony relay race. Miss Mulhall vaulted into the saddle and took her place with Pat Berry and Jim Harmon, two of the most daring riders in the band. The signal was given and with the cheers of 15,000 spectators, the swish of the quirt and the thud of hoofs ringing in her ear Miss Mulhall fairly lifted her game little mustang down the first quarter.

"At the eighth pole the timekeepers snapped their watches at twelve seconds. They were riding in a bunch, urging the ponies for every ounce in them. Miss Mulhall was slightly in the lead. When she neared the quarter pole she gradually drew in her pony and made ready to slide down and jump on the fresh pony. As she did so, Berry passed her. She jumped, and Harmon thundered by. He was unable to swerve in time, and the flying hoof of his pony struck her just below the knee, knocking her down.

"Tom Madden saw the accident and hurried to Miss Mulhall's assistance with Mr. Mulhall's buggy. She was lifted into the buggy and rapidly driven to the clubhouse. Doctor Frank Floyd was summoned and examined her injuries. He found it necessary to put her ankle in a plaster cast.⁸

The ankle took longer to heal, however, than Col. Zack had thought. Miss Mulhall did not attend the San Antonio show but returned to Mulhall for a rest instead.⁹

The cattlemen's convention in 1903 was held in Oklahoma City, and, as a special favor, Colonel Mulhall was able to secure the presence of United States troops for the affair. This favor was secured through the friendship which existed between Colonel Zack and President

⁸Ibid., Oct. 17, 1902.

⁹Ibid., Oct. 24, 1902.

Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt had been the guest of honor at the cattlemen's convention early in 1901 and, in response to Zack's request, although unable to attend this later convention personally, he arranged for troops, cavalry and artillery, from Fort Sill to be present. The Frisco Line Band and the roping and riding contests were under Zack's control and guidance. The Oklahoma City convention was a huge success and Zack Mulhall received great praise and incidentally, fine advertising for himself as a showman.¹⁰

Early in May, 1903, dedication ceremonies, for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis, were held in that city. The actual fair opening was put off until the following summer but the dedication was held as scheduled. Zack Mulhall took a show to this event and Lucille was one of the major attractions. However, the roping show did not continue long. The Mulhall Enterprise gives the reason for its early withdrawal:

In the roping contest, last Sunday after-noon at St. Louis, given under Col. Mulhall, two steers were killed by being thrown with the lassos of the cowboys. Representatives of the humane society made complaint and had the parties responsible arrested. Zack Mulhall, who is the manager of the show, was taken to the fair grounds police station, but as no one appeared against them, they were released. The show attracted a crowd of 20,000 people. Jim Hopkins roped and tied his steer in twenty-four seconds. Lucille Mulhall roped and tied a steer in one minute and eleven seconds, and won third prize.¹¹

Not dismayed by bad luck, Colonel Mulhall scheduled a show at Vinita, Indian Territory, in October. But the humane society was not the only organization which could be offended by a show. The exhibition was advertised for Sunday and the churches protested against

¹⁰Lucille Mulhall, Interview, and The Mulhall Enterprise, Feb. 13, 1903.

¹¹May 8, 1903.

such a sacrilege. The affair was postponed until Monday. "Colonel Mulhall submitted gracefully, stating that there was no desire to offend, either against the law or against sentiment."¹² A baseball game was substituted and the Mulhall show band also entertained the guests who had gathered for the roping show. Concerning the Monday exhibition, the paper goes on to say that "Miss Lucile [sic] Mulhall is a pleasant faced girl, said to be 18 years old yesterday. That she has no fear of a horse may readily be believed after witnessing her performance."¹³

A program of the Mulhall show gives a comprehensive idea of the attractions offered. The hand-bill is copied here in full:

1. - Introduction to the public of members of the great Congress of Riders.
2. - Fancy foot roping, catching horses by each foot separate, then two feet, then three feet, and finally by all four feet. This performance is very good and should have every attention - by Hopkins, Lucille Mulhall, and Chas. Thompkins.
3. - Tournament riding by George Elser, Thompkins and Hopkins.
4. - Picking up objects from the ground, from back of running horse. George Elser, the great trick rider, will in this feat pick up silver dollars and dimes, and finally a pin - by Chas. Mulhall, Frank Shram, Curt Reynolds and George Elser.
5. - Kid McSpadden, said to be the fancy trick roper of all nations. Watch him.
6. - Pony express, showing how the mail was carried in early days before the railroad; St. Joseph, Mo., to San Francisco, Cal., in three days. The government had relays of horses every ten miles. Watch the quick change of horses by the cowboys. George Elser and Charlie Thompkins. Distance, two miles; change of horses every quarter mile.
7. - Miss Lucille Mulhall, with her wonderful trick horse, "The Governor," acknowledged by the press to be the best horse of his kind in America; doing tricks that are marvelous and hardly comprehensible. The public has never seen his equal. Owned, trained and educated by Miss Mulhall.
8. - Potato race, a farcical game of sport first introduced by Colonel Mulhall at the great St. Louis horse show.

¹²The Vinita Weekly Chieftain, Oct. 22, 1903.

¹³Ibid.

9. - George Elser, the cleverest and best trick rider in America.
10. - Bronco riding. The worst spoiled horses from the western ranges.
11. - Half mile dash, between two cowboys and Lucille Mulhall. Any outside horse has privilege of entering.
12. - Wild steer riding by members of Rough Riders.

Roping contest open to the world, and after this contest the grandest exhibition contest ever seen in the west by the most expert ropers and winners of prizes all over the continent. This will be a contest of each roper tying three steers each. Jim Hopkins, representing the Indian territory; Charles Thompkins, representing Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and Lucille Mulhall, representing the county and territory in which she lives -- Oklahoma. The celebrated cowboy band will render music during the afternoon.¹⁴

Colonel Zack was extremely proud of his show and his band. His wife seldom accompanied her wild-riding family on its jaunts and so had not had the opportunity of seeing the show or hearing the band, which was often referred to as the best band in the territory. Col. Zack decided, therefore, to surprise her with a serenade, so he brought his entire group to Mulhall on its way to the autumn fair at St. Louis.¹⁵ That the town considered the visit important is attested by the newspaper comment on the show. The editor says,

Mulhall's Cowboy band, of wide spread notoriety, made this town (Zack Mulhall's home) a two days' visit this week. This is the first time an opportunity has been given to our people to hear and see this famed band. They arrived on the morning train Monday and went directly to the Mulhall home. In the afternoon, they appeared on the streets in their picturesque uniforms and attracted much interest and attention, both by their fine playing and striking appearance.

They paraded the streets, playing some of their finest selections. At the school grounds they gave several appropriate numbers to the delight of the teachers and pupils. Returning, they favored several of the business houses with a serenade. The Enterprise was favored and returns thanks.

A grand free concert was on the program for the evening which brought a large crowd. The second story balcony of G. W. Rotterman's store building was brilliantly lighted, and the band took its place there and for over an hour delighted the audience with some very fine music. As a band they are all right, but their concert

¹⁴Program, "Mulhall's Congress of Riders," 1903.

¹⁵Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

work is especially fine and was greatly appreciated by the audience.

In the forenoon Tuesday, a public exhibition on the street of fancy riding was given. Miss Lucille Mulhall rode the celebrated trick horse, Governor. This animal seems endowed with almost human intelligence, and is credited with thirty-two tricks, such as, a very realistic cakewalk, waltz, picking up a handkerchief, taking a hat from a man's head, and others equally as interesting.

At 1:30, the band, accompanied by Zack Mulhall, took the train on their way to St. Louis, where they will play at the annual fair.

Zack Mulhall, in his characteristic off-handed, free way, has given the people of this town the pleasure of seeing some of the performances of which they have been reading--and all as welcome and free as water and air.¹⁶

By this time Lucille Mulhall had become a seasoned show rider. She had won the \$1,000 gold medal awarded at the cattlemen's convention held in Fort Worth late in 1902, by roping and tying the three steers allotted to her in three minutes, thirty-six seconds. Her time was better than that of any other entrant in the contest.¹⁷ It was following this exploit that she was given the title of "Queen of the Range," by an admiring press writer. The name clung to her through the years which followed.¹⁸

In 1903, at McAlester, Oklahoma, then Indian Territory, Lucille proceeded to beat her own steer roping and tying record by roping and tying "three steers in 30 1-4, 40, and 40 4-5 seconds respectively, amazing all the experts who saw it done."¹⁹ Another gold medal took its place in the parlor of the Mulhall Ranch. Soon the prizes became so common that they were scarcely remarked at the ranch, they were simply expected when Lucille entered a contest.

¹⁶The Mulhall Enterprise, Oct. 30, 1903.

¹⁷The trophy mentioned and many others are to be seen at the Mulhall Ranch.

¹⁸Macdonald, op. cit.

¹⁹Ibid.

But the best of all was the great silver belt buckle which she won at the Frontiers Day celebration at Pendleton, Oregon, in 1905, when she won the women's roping championship of the world by roping and tying a steer in twenty-two seconds.²⁰ No record appears to the effect that this has ever been equalled or surpassed by any woman.

In 1904, Colonel Mulhall took a group of riders and ropers to the World's Fair at St. Louis. His show was a part of the Cummings and Mulhall Wild West Show and was located on "the Pike," the Street of Shows. However, the show proved unlucky for Zack. On the night of June 18, he shot three men on the street in front of the show and brought himself to the gates of the penitentiary. The story of that long ago affair is well told by a press dispatch from St. Louis, printed in The Mulhall Enterprise. It follows:

St. Louis, June 18, -- Zack Mulhall, live stock agent of the St. Louis and San Francisco railroad tonight shot three men. One of them, an innocent by-stander, named Ernest Morgan, is believed to have been fatally wounded. He was shot in the abdomen. The other men are Frank Reed, boss hostler of the Wild West show, and Johnny Murrah, one of the cowboys. They are being cared for at the emergency hospital on the world's fair grounds.

The doctors say that Morgan will die. He lives in St. Louis and is 18 years old. Frank Reed, who is 50 years old, was shot in the arm and the right side of the neck. Murrah, aged 55 years, was shot in the abdomen. The shooting was the culmination of trouble between Mulhall and Frank Reed over the question of authority. The shooting occurred at the entrance of the show just at the conclusion of a performance while the Pike was crowded with people and great excitement was caused. Mulhall was locked up and bail was refused.

There has been trouble for some time between Mulhall and Reed. The latter says it was because Mulhall tried to run things although he was only an employe like Reed.

Last week Mulhall had Reed arrested on the charge of disturbing the peace, and Reed was fined \$50.

This afternoon, according to Reed, he received word that some horses which had gone astray had been taken up in St. Louis

²⁰The belt buckle is worn by Miss Mulhall whenever she appears in public in western costume.

county, and he went to get them. He took "California Jack" Roberts with him over the protest of Mulhall, who did not want Roberts to go.

After they returned Mulhall went to the stables and, noticing that one of the horses had been used, asked Reed what he had been doing with the horse.

Reed told him that he had ridden the horse when he went after the strays. This was after the show last night. A bitter quarrel followed, in which Mulhall pulled his gun and threatened to shoot Reed. The latter, not being armed, he desisted.

Tonight, at the conclusion of the Wild West show, Mulhall met Reed as he was emerging from the show.

Mulhall pulled his revolver, but before he could use it Murrah attempted to take it away. In the scuffle the weapon went off and Murrah was wounded. Mulhall then fired point blank at Reed, the first shot striking him in the arm, the second grazed his neck and hit Morgan. Two additional shots fired by Mulhall went wild, Mulhall then ran into another Pike enclosure, where he was arrested. Mulhall, it is stated, previous to running away, pointed his gun at Cummings, proprietor of the show, but did not shoot.

It was learned from the hospital late tonight that Reed's wounds are not serious. Morgan is in a very serious condition, and the hospital physicians refused to allow the police to talk to him. Murrah is also badly hurt, but there is more hope for him than for Morgan. The police arrested Wm. Langan, Harry Phillips, Earl Stoehr, Frank Schramm and John Christie, cowboys, whom they are holding as witnesses.²¹

Lucille Mulhall tells a slightly different story than that told by Reed as given in the above quotation. She contends that her father was not satisfied with the treatment given the horses. His quarrels with Reed were over this and Reed was very angry, particularly after Zack had had him arrested. According to Lucille's story, which was Zack's also, Reed planned to ambush Zack as he came out of the show. Zack, however, "was tipped off to this and came out shooting."²² A fact which lends some credence to this latter story is the failure of Reed to sue Zack after the shooting occurred.

The shooting of Ernest Morgan, the "innocent bystander," however,

²¹The Mulhall Enterprise, June 24, 1904.

²²Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

was much more serious. Zack was charged with assault with intent to kill, and released on \$20,000 bail. When the case came up in July, it was continued until August because Morgan was still confined to his bed. A suit for \$10,000 damages was also instituted by Morgan. This latter was decided against Zack but the award was cut to \$5,000. After another continuation of the trial, a jury found Zack guilty in a surprise verdict and assessed punishment at three years in the penitentiary. Zack filed motions for arrest of judgment and a new trial and was released on \$2,500 bond. Finally, in 1907, the case was settled in the state supreme court of Missouri. Zack was freed on his plea of self-defense. The affair caused him a great amount of difficulty and cost him more than \$100,000 before it was finally settled in his favor.²³

As a result of the unfortunate shooting affray, the Mulhall portion of the show was withdrawn from the Fair and most of the cowboys returned to the Mulhall Ranch for the latter part of the summer.

Among the cowboys who were with the show in St. Louis and later on the ranch was Will Rogers, Oklahoma cowboy humorist. Upon his return from abroad he had visited at his home for a short time and then joined his old friend Colonel Zack at St. Louis. Upon the return of the troupe to the ranch he continued his practice of learning new tricks for his show routine. He was a favorite around the ranch because of his droll jokes and his chronic good humor. He insisted,

²³The above summary of the results of the trial is made up of statements made by Miss Mulhall, supplemented and confirmed by newspaper accounts, namely: The Mulhall Enterprise, June 24, and July 29, 1904 and Jan. 27, 1905; The Indian Journal, Eufaula, I. T., Feb. 3, 1905; Kingfisher Weekly Star and Free Press, Oct. 10, 1907.

when in the house, on playing the piano with one finger. His favorite tune, perhaps the only one he knew at that time, was "I may be crazy, but I'm no d--d fool," and he sang it until he almost drove the family crazy, too.²⁴

Colonel Zack had been offered \$5,000 to bring a group of a dozen or so of his best cowboys to New York's Madison Square Garden for the Horse Show in April, 1905, and Will begged to be allowed to go with them. The Colonel did not think much of Will's riding, considered him lazy, and was not at all enthusiastic about taking him along. However, Will went to Mrs. Mulhall and pleaded with her to use her influence in his behalf. Mrs. Mulhall told the Colonel to take Will with him so she could have some peace around the place. Will went to Madison Square Garden with the group.²⁵

The troupe was rather nervous and on the opening night, just before the performance, the Colonel shouted: "Come on boys. Let's give 'em a real show, a Mulhall show. Lucille now, baby, rope like you have never roped before." And to Will, "Injun, wake up and get in there!"²⁶ This became the pep talk for the show from that time on.

The show "clicked." It formed a part of the Horse Show and drew thousands to the Garden. The press was enthusiastic and insisted upon getting the Mulhall girls' viewpoints on city life as contrasted to ranch life. Agnes and Mildred also had places in the show as well as Lucille. Everywhere the cowboys and cowgirls went they wore their

²⁴Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

²⁵The Oklahoma City Times, Aug. 31, 1935.

²⁶Ibid., Note: "Injun" was the name which Zack always used for Will Rogers, referring to his Indian ancestry.

western costumes and were always the center of attraction. Will Rogers was a constant source of annoyance to the Colonel because he would not wear a silk shirt.²⁷

Will was supposed to get \$60 a month as a trick-rider. He liked the work, and he used to say that it was a good thing he did because he didn't always get all his wages. A newspaper comment gives an account of Will's ingenuity concerning the collection of wages:

The colonel, a colorful character, was a great spender when he had money. The old man had a habit of ordering drinks for everybody in a saloon and handing the bartender a bill of perhaps \$20 to pay a \$5 or \$6 check. Will liked to edge in next the colonel when the change returned, then grab it and duck.

"Well," said Will, once recounting that experience, "The colonel thought that was a great joke, and so did I. In fact, I think it was one of the best jokes I ever pulled. He would laugh and that would make a good fellow out of him with the crowd, and incidentally keep from making a tramp out of me. I was perfectly willing that they could have the drinks as long as I got the change."

²⁸Of course, Will didn't keep the change if it wasn't due him.

The same article goes on with a description of an exploit of Will's which brought him forcefully and advantageously to the attention of the public. It states:

Will hadn't come to New York to make money in the colonel's show, but to get started on the vaudeville stage. This idea was in his head when a steer, turned out for Lucille Mulhall to rope, jumped the arena fence. Up into the seats the frightened animal clambered, as a path of shrieking men, women and children cleared before him.

Zack Miller [a member of the Mulhall troupe upon this occasion] remembers the steer running his horns through a bandman's drum. A policeman went after the steer, and Rogers yelled jokingly, "What are you going to do with it when you catch it?"

Will knew the steer would go to the back of the stand, and it did. The young showman hurried around, put his rope on the

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

animal and led it down.

The crowd cheered their protector, and reporters mobbed Will. How long had he been a cowboy? What was his history? He told Tom Mix, in a pause from the question answering: "Why, you'd think I'd done something."

"Maybe you have," observed Mix.

Will had already, according to Minnick,²⁹ received offers of \$75 a week. Now the price mentioned was \$125, but Will was adamant for more.

The Mulhall show ended its eight-day run, and Will stayed behind in New York. His asking price for a vaudeville engagement was \$250 a week, and after two months of waiting he got it.³⁰

Zack Mulhall has often been credited with getting Will into vaudeville. Zack, himself, disclaimed this. In an article written for the 101 Ranch Magazine in 1926, he said:

Much has been said in the years past in regard to the start of Will Rogers to fame. It has been said that Zack Mulhall made Rogers. While such is not the case it is true that I took him to New York from Mulhall and presented him to the people of New York City. Even then it was my opinion that he was a greater humorist than Mark Twain and that all he needed was a chance before the American people. It was my opportunity to give him this chance. Will Rogers has made a success for the reason that while he is naturally witty, he has also been always shy. He was an inmate of my home for a number of years, being treated always as one of the family, and a welcome guest in my home....During the St. Louis world's fair in 1904 the Associated Press boys, who were always having a good time and spending their money, asked to have a show staged for their benefit on a Sunday afternoon. As the fair was closed on Sundays, we moved the show to the Delmar race track and put on a real wild west show before some 15,000 people.

This was really Will Rogers' first public appearance in roping and riding, and from that date forward until I took him to Madison Square Garden in New York City, he was more or less talked about....

I do not claim the distinction of having started Will Rogers to his success or fame. I really did not do any more for him than I tried to do for others to whom this same opportunity to succeed was presented. The others let it get away from them, and Will did not. He never let anything get away from him.³¹

The friendship between Will Rogers and the Mulhall family lasted throughout his life and often after bad times had come to his friends

²⁹Note: Jim Minnick was a member of the troupe and furnished some of the horses used in the show.

³⁰The Oklahoma City Times, Aug. 31, 1935.

³¹P. 8.

on the ranch, Will is known to have contributed liberally to the family treasury.³² His death was a great blow to Lucille and she can seldom keep back the tears, even now, when speaking of him.

Following the New York appearance in 1905, Lucille also embarked on a vaudeville career. She appeared on the Orpheum and Pantages circuits and later participated in many rodeos throughout the country. She became the idol of the country. "Wherever she went -- New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, Memphis -- the town turned out in force and the newspapers dealt in superlatives. She was 'COPY' in capital letters for every journalist east of the Mississippi river."³³

In those years while the Mulhall Wild West show traveled through the country during the summers, and Lucille thrilled theatre audiences during the winters, the name of Mulhall was one to conjure with in the show business. Zack Mulhall was a "born" showman and his name could be counted on to ensure a crowd whenever he staged a show.

Pages could be devoted to the compliments and praises heaped upon Lucille, for her horsemanship, her rifle-shooting, and her roping. Suffice it to say that during her stage career no other woman rider ranked near her in ability or fame. She was innately modest and her glory was won honestly by her accomplishments, not by publicity agents and spectacular attempts at notoriety. She never rode a side-saddle nor wore slacks or trousers when riding. She always dressed in a divided skirt for her act. On the vaudeville circuit

³²Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

³³Anderson, loc. cit.

she wore spotless white and mounted on Eddie C, her white horse,³⁴ she made a striking picture. At present, when she appears in western costume, her skirt is red corduroy, her blouse is white silk; a colored handkerchief is around her throat and her silver buckled belt, a wide brimmed hat, and high-heeled boots complete the outfit. Sometimes she wears the beaded jacket, which was given to her by Geronimo,³⁵ over her blouse. Her youthful beauty has gone but her gracious dignity, gained through years of contacts with the great of this continent and of Europe, still marks her as one apart from the crowd.

In 1920, Lucille married Tom Burnett, multimillionaire and son of Burk Burnett, of Burkburnett, Texas. They were called the king and queen of rodeo, but the romance lasted only two years.³⁶ Lucille retained the name of Mulhall during her marriage and regained it after her divorce. Although the marriage did not last it brought an end to the Mulhall show and climaxed Lucille's career. She never appeared again on the stage or in a rodeo.

³⁴Note: Eddie C cost Colonel Zack \$1,000 and it is said that he refused to take three times that for him.

³⁵Noel Houston, "A Flashback to Range Days," The Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 15, 1936.

³⁶Houston, "World's Best Cowgirl Ends Final Parade," The Daily Oklahoman, April 23, 1935.

CHAPTER V

THE END OF THE TRAIL

After Lucille's marriage in 1920, Colonel Zack Mulhall disbanded the show and retired to private life. When the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association was organized in that year, he was a member of it.¹ He looked forward to an old age lived in quiet comfort at his ranch. However, when his old friend, Colonel Zack Miller, of the 101 Ranch asked him to act as advance man for his show, he could not resist the lure of the old life. His connection with the 101 Ranch show lasted from that time until the year before his death, 1930. He often acted as parade leader for the show. In 1928, he appeared once more in New York with the Miller Brothers show to help raise money for the city milk and ice fund and returning to Mulhall by air, experienced his first airplane ride.²

When "Jack" Walton sought for color for his campaign for governor of Oklahoma in 1922, he selected Colonel Zack to handle his "show." At the inaugural parade, the Colonel, as marshal of the day, "wearing the typical prairie sombrero, riding a spirited white horse with the silver mounted jeweled saddle, followed the buglers and preceded the automobile in which sat Governor Walton and former Governor Robertson."³ At the famous barbecue which followed the inauguration, Zack was very much in evidence. Later in the same year, Mulhall was

¹Note: Col. Mulhall's picture is to be found on the so-called map of the Association which hangs in the State Historical Building in Oklahoma City.

²The Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 5, 1928.

³The Oklahoma City Times, Jan. 9, 1923.

employed sporadically in the health department as an inspector. When Governor Walton was impeached, Zack Mulhall was called as a witness, and, although now an aged man, his showmanship on the stand kept the press correspondents entertained. Dr. E. E. Dale, professor of history at the University of Oklahoma, has a document recounting one of the episodes of this trial. As the story goes, Zack Mulhall was asked about a certain restaurant. Under questioning he said that he ordered a piece of pie there and then told the owner that the place of business was very dirty and must be cleaned up at once. Upon being asked if he had made a written report on the condition of the restaurant, he said that he had not. "Why?" came the question. "Because the fellow was a Greek and I couldn't spell his name," answered Zack.⁴ Similar questions and answers are to be found in the official records of the trial. However, since Zack had been employed by Dr. Davenport and had not been sponsored directly by the Governor, his testimony was stricken from the records as irrelevant.⁵ After Walton's conviction, Zack once more retired from the political ring.

On January 19, 1931, Mrs. Zack Mulhall, died at the Mulhall Ranch. She was seventy-eight years old. Nearly a thousand friends and townspeople paid tribute to her by attending the funeral services held at the ranch. She was buried in the family vault beside her children, Logan and Agnes. Agnes had passed away several years before. Will Rogers, unable to attend the ceremonies, expressed his tribute in a newspaper article praising the "angel" of Mulhall. She was one of the

⁴Interview.

⁵Transcript of Proceedings of the Senate of the Ninth Legislature Extraordinary Session, State of Oklahoma, (Sitting as a Court of Impeachment, Oct. 24, 1923-Nov. 20, 1923), Novak & Walker, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1923.

best loved women in Oklahoma.⁶

Colonel Zack never recovered from the shock of his wife's death. During the summer he became more and more dependent upon Lucille. His eyesight became very bad and care had to be taken to see that he did not wander around and get hurt. Lucille devoted every moment of her time to him that she could spare from sleep and necessary duties. If she left him alone he would wander around calling "Lucy, Lucy!" He never called vainly. She came to him as soon as she heard him. His care was onerous but she undertook it cheerfully and lovingly. To her he was always the great showman and his weakness only made him more dear. On September 18, 1931, Zack Mulhall died at his beloved ranch. During the last few days of his illness, hundreds of his old friends came to his bedside to bid him farewell, and upon receiving the news of his death, the newspapers all over the state and in many neighboring states carried long articles concerning his life and his show work. Literally thousands gathered for the final rites when his body was placed in the mausoleum which he had himself planned so long before. Pioneers and state notables were pall-bearers both active and honorary. Colonel Zack Mulhall, the showman, would have approved of his own final appearance.⁷

Colonel Zack's memory was honored at the '89er celebration in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on April 22, 1932. The horse of the pioneer rancher, with its owner's boots and spurs across the saddle, led the parade.⁸

⁶Mulhall residents. Not a single "old-timer" has been found who disputes this statement.

⁷The Daily Oklahoman, Sept. 17 and 19, 1931; The Guthrie Leader, Sept. 17, 18, and 19, 1931; Blackwell Morning Tribune, Sept. 19, 1931.

⁸The Daily Oklahoman, March 20, 1932. (Announcement of the event.)

Lucille Mulhall made what she termed her "final parade" at Guthrie in 1935. She did not stay in the parade for its entire duration. It was too much of an effort. The girl who in days past whirled herself gracefully on and off the back of her horse now found it difficult to mount and dismount without strain.⁹ She has earned a rest and she means to take it. She welcomes the aging years gracefully.

The ranch is no longer a show place. Disaster has come to the Mulhalls and left them very little besides their memories. Those memories, supplemented by the trophies which cover the walls and the tables in the ranch parlor, are worthy and cannot be tarnished by mere lack of worldly goods. The trophies could be disposed of for a great deal of money but so long as Lucille lives, they will remain as a part of the ranch. She has had money and she has been without it and she would rather keep the evidences of a full life than be assured of bodily comfort if it means a sacrifice of her cherished mementoes.¹⁰

⁹Houston, "World's Best Cowgirl Ends Final Parade," The Daily Oklahoman, April 23, 1935.

¹⁰Lucille Mulhall, Interview.

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