

MILLS, THOMAS SHERMAN 1865-1938

Worland Grit, Thursday, October 13, 1938, page 6

TOM MILLS, TEN SLEEP PIONEER, DIES WEDNESDAY, FUNERAL WILL BE FRIDAY AT TEN SLEEP

Tom S. Mills, 74, Ten Sleep, one of the last of the old pioneers of Washakie county, died in the hospital here Wednesday, after an illness of pneumonia.

Funeral services will be held at 2:20 p.m. Friday for the famed rancher who was an uncle by marriage of Wallace and Noah Beery, motion picture actors.

Pallbearers will be Charles Wyman, Charles Ford, R. W. Spratt, T. H. Fields, G. F. A. Conner, and A. L. Pearson, all of Ten Sleep.

Mills had been ill for several days before coming to the hospital here last Friday; too sick to drive the car. He was immediately placed under an oxygen tent, and for the next few days, until his death, was fighting for his life.

Less than an hour before he died Wednesday morning, a telegram from Wallace and Noah Beery was received, telling him to fight to hang on.

The rancher was born on February 19, 1865 near Maysville, Missouri and moved with his parents to Cheyenne in 1874, where they settled on a ranch in the Horse Creek area. Mills worked with cattle outfits in that area and in Nebraska until 1885, when he went to Buffalo with a cattle outfit there.

Settled here in 1892, in 1892, Mills came to Washakie County and worked for the Milo Burke outfit and then settled on a ranch at the Red Bank in the Upper Nowood country, his home ranch. In 1916, he moved to Ten Sleep where he owned a ranch and a hotel at the time of his death.

He is survived by his wife and a son, Milo, by a previous marriage; and 3 brothers, Ed of Big Trails; Grant of Ten Sleep; and Charles of Maysville, Missouri.

Mills first wife was a sister of the mother of Wallace and Noah Beery. In 1907, Wallace and Noah and their father and mother spent the summer at the Mills ranch and saw their first roundup on the ranch of the late George "Bear" McClellan, Washakie county pioneer and Legislator and a friend of Mills.

This fall, Mills had invited Wallace Beery to come to his ranch for the hunting season but just in the past week, Beery had written to say that work on a new picture would prevent him from coming.

In 1886, a year after he went to the Buffalo country, Mills set the first roping and riding record at the Big Horn Rodeo.

TOM MILLS IS DEAD

(By Paul Frison)

Once more the Black Winged Angel of death, in its irresistible ground swoop, has claimed its victim, and the ranks of the old pioneers have paid the toll.

Tom Mills, a pioneer, a frontiersman, a cowboy, rancher, farmer and businessman, was not only a picturesque figure in the state of Wyoming, but played his part in the building of the west.

Together with his fellow man, he had taken an active part in the transforming of a primitive region, far-flung and remote, rich in opportunity but demanding great human sacrifice and courage.

Today, better than half a century of time looks proudly down upon the effectiveness of their efforts. When the frontier bugle sounded, Tom Mills was here—today as we listen to the sounds of taps, from another world, he is gone. He lies among the bivouacs of the dead.

Tom Mills lived a life peculiarly his own, but not without its justification, its merit or its reward. He was honest to an extreme, generous in emergencies, and candidly frank and sincere. His life in its entirety exemplified a strong, individual personality, with qualities of citizenship worthy of admiration and great respect.