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THE CODY (OR WAS IT COADY?) FAMILY TREE

If we are to believe Helen Cody Wetmore, one of William Cody's sisters, her family was descended from Spanish and Irish royalty, and were accordingly entitled to a crest. In her book *Buffalo Bill, Last of the Great Scouts: The Life Story of Colonel William F. Cody*, published in 1899, she wrote that her brother was "a lineal descendant of Milesius, king of Spain, that famous monarch whose three sons, Heber, Heremon, and Ir, founded the first dynasty in Ireland about the beginning of the Christian era."

The Cody family, Mrs. Wetmore asserted, came down from the line of Heremon. Their original name was Tireach, which signifies "The Rocks." Murdeach Tireach, one of the first of this line, was crowned king of Ireland in the year 320. Another of the line became king of Connaught in 701, his possessions being located in the present counties of Clare, Galway, and Mayo, whence came the family name, in a contraction of Connaught-Galway to Connelly, Conly, Cory, Coddy, Coidy, and, finally, "Cody."

All this almost makes sense. However, it is only one of the legends Mrs. Wetmore offers up as fact in her book, despite her disclaimer in the preface that "embarrassed with riches of fact, I have had no thought of fiction."

For the truth about William Cody's lineage, we must turn to Don Russell's authoritative biography, *The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill*. Russell's research was thorough and exemplary; the notes for his book in the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, are proof of that.

According to Russell, "Buffalo Bill's most remote definitely known ancestor was one Philip, whose surname appears in various surviving records as Legody, Lagody, McCody, Mocody, Micody . . . as well as Codie, Gody, Coady, and Cody."

Russell traces Philip to Philippe Le Caude of the Isle of Jersey, who married Marthe Le Brocq of Guernsey in the parish of St. Brelades, Isle of Jersey, on September 15, 1692. Although the family names are French, the Channel Islands have been British possessions since the Middle Ages. No Irish or Spanish in sight; just good English stock.

The Cody Family Association's book *The Descendants of Philip and Martha Cody* carries the line down to the present day. Buffalo Bill was sixth in descent from Philip. Philip and Martha purchased a home in Beverly, Massachusetts, in 1698, and occupied it for twenty-five years, farming six acres of adjacent land. In 1720 Philip bought land in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, and he and his family moved there, probably in 1722 or 1723. When he died in 1743, his will was probated under the name of Coady.

The spelling of the family name had stabilized by the time Bill's father, Isaac, the son of Philip and Lydia Martin Cody, was born on September 15, 1811, in Toronto Township, Peel County, Upper Canada. It is Lydia Martin Cody who may have been responsible for the report of an Irish king in the family genealogy; she boasted that her ancestors were of Irish royal birth.

When Isaac Cody was seventeen years old, his family moved to a farm near Cleveland, Ohio, in the vicinity of what is today Eighty-third Street and Euclid Avenue. That move would ultimately embroil William Cody in a lawsuit many years later, one of several suits he was destined to lose.

Six years after arriving in Ohio, Isaac married Martha Miranda O'Connor, who died in 1835, shortly after the birth of a daughter, also named Martha. Isaac married again soon after his first wife's death; his second wife was Rebecca Sumner of Medina County, Ohio. Within a short time Rebecca, too, was dead, leaving no children.

In 1839 Isaac set out for Missouri with his older brother Elijah and Elijah's family, leaving his daughter, Martha, in Cleveland. The travelers went by boat down the Ohio River, stopping along the way in Cincinnati. There Isaac met Mary Ann Bonsell Laycock. The couple quickly became romantically attached to each other, yet Isaac continued his travels nonetheless. However, he did not stay long in Missouri, but returned to Cleveland to pick up his daughter and then headed for Cincinnati, where he and Mary Ann were married in 1840. Unlucky though Isaac had been in his first two marriages, this one proved to be happy and fertile.

Mary Ann was descended from Josiah Bunting, a friend of William Penn. The Buntings migrated from Derbyshire, England, in 1690 and settled in Derby, Pennsylvania. Mary Ann's mother, Hannah Taylor Laycock, died in 1830; her father, Samuel, a sea captain, remarried and was lost at sea shortly afterward. When her stepmother remarried, Mary Ann went to live with her brother William in Cincinnati, and had been there for three years when she met Isaac Cody. According to Julia Cody Goodman's *Buffalo Bill: King of the Old West*, Mary Ann was a schoolteacher before her marriage.

Isaac Cody was a good husband and father but afflicted with a bad case of wanderlust. Like many pioneers, he simply could not remain long in one place. Shortly after his marriage to Mary Ann, he took his wife and daughter to Davenport in the Iowa Territory, traveling down the Ohio and up the Mississippi. There he prospered as an Indian trader, and inside a year he bought a house in the town of LeClaire. He also filed a claim on a site two miles west of LeClaire. He used his house as his headquarters for the next fourteen years, and his first son, Samuel, was born there on February 22, 1841. Meanwhile, Isaac built a four-room log cabin on his claim, and there his first daughter in his marriage to Mary Ann, Julia Melvina, was born on March 28, 1843. It is altogether fitting that William Frederick Cody was born in that same log cabin on February 26, 1846.

In the first of his two autobiographies, *The Life of the Hon. William F. Cody, Known as Buffalo Bill*, published in 1879 by Frank E. Bliss of Hartford, Connecticut, Cody gives his year of birth as 1845, but the family Bible and the United States Census of 1850 show it as 1846. The family eventually consisted of five daughters and two sons—Martha, Samuel, Julia, William, Eliza, Helen, and May.

By 1849, when news of the discovery of gold in California reached the East, Isaac Cody was a solid citizen of his community. In 1847 he contracted with William F. Brackenridge to clear a six-hundred-acre farm on the Wapsipinicon River. Cody hired twenty-five men to open up the land, and additional men to cut stone in a quarry on the tract and to build a house of eight to ten rooms. In this stone house, still standing with additions, Cody lived as farm manager.

The news of the gold strike at Sutter's Mill was quite enough to inflame Isaac Cody's wanderlust. He resigned as the Brackenridge farm manager and planned to head to California with two other men, George Long and Dennis Barnes. However, the trip never took place, either because Cody became ill, or because Long got cold feet when he heard reports of Indian attacks. The fate of the Donner Party, snowbound in the High Sierras and resorting to cannibalism, may also have dampened Long's

enthusiasm for the journey. In any event, Cody and Barnes were unable to finance the trip themselves, and it was aborted. Isaac Cody then swapped his covered wagon for an ambulance—what might be considered an early version of the station wagon—and contracted to carry the mail and passengers from Davenport to Chicago, making one trip a week. By the year 1852, Isaac had sold both his LeClaire property and his stage business, and once again hired on with Brackenridge to manage a large farm at Walnut Grove.

Little Will Cody's Iowa years were filled with the kind of adventures common to small boys living in the country. He learned to ride at an early age and owned a dog named Turk. He described himself in his autobiography as something of a scamp, stealing apples and melons from a nearby orchard, and being "nearly eaten up by a large and savage dog." On another occasion, he claimed that he went out on the Mississippi River in a boat with two other boys. They lost their oars, became frightened, and let out a chorus of piteous yells. A man heard their cries and came to their rescue, towing them to shore with his canoe.

Helen Cody Wetmore described her brother's dog as "a large and powerful animal of the breed of dogs anciently used in Germany in hunting the wild boars. . . . His fidelity and almost human intelligence were time and again the means of saving life and property; ever faithful, loyal, and ready to lay down his life, if need be, in our service." Curiously, Cody himself does not mention Turk in his autobiographies.

His early education was haphazard. In 1847 Will's father hired Miss Helen Goodridge to teach school in a log building with board benches. She had twelve to fifteen pupils, among them Martha, Samuel, and Julia. The two-year-old Will went along with his brother and sisters, but his exposure to book-learning was seemingly imperfect, judging by his spelling later in life.

Much of his time, however, was not spent in school but in trapping quails with figure-four traps, which he built himself, and riding horseback.

Helen Cody Wetmore tells a story about her mother that may also belong more to family legend than to family history. It seems that Mary Ann Laycock and her sister were in a Southern city to which a fortune-teller came. The two girls visited the seer, who prophesied that Mary Ann "would meet her future husband on the steamboat by which she expected to return home; that she would be married to him within a year, and bear three sons, of whom only the second would live, but that the name of this son would be known all over the world, and would one day be that of the President of the United States." Mary Ann Laycock was persuaded by

the fortune-teller that Will Cody would indeed do great things when he grew up.

Either because of this prophecy or because he was so appealing as a child, he was doted on by his older sisters and worshiped by the younger, as well as being much fussed over by his mother.

The first part of the prophecy—if it was actually made—was fulfilled in the fall of 1853 when Samuel Cody, then twelve, died tragically.

One of Samuel's chores was to bring the cows home in the evening from a pasture two or three miles away. To do this, he rode a troublesome mare, Bettie. That day he passed by the schoolhouse just as school was letting out. He probably attempted to show off his horsemanship, and the mare, sensing that her rider had grown careless, reared and toppled over on her back, crushing Sam beneath her. In his 1879 autobiography, Cody wrote that he was riding along with his brother and promptly rode off to inform his father, who took Samuel to the house. A doctor was summoned, who examined the boy and told the family there was nothing he could do. Samuel died the next morning.

Isaac Cody was not long satisfied with the life of a farm manager. Upon learning that the Territory of Kansas was soon to be opened for settlement, he wrote to his brother Elijah, who was then living in Weston, Missouri, across the river from Leavenworth, Kansas, and asked for information. Elijah told him to come and stay with him. Isaac had also been assured by members of Congress, to whom he had written, that the act opening Kansas and Nebraska to settlement would be passed in the winter session. Once again Isaac resigned his job with Brackenridge and prepared to migrate.

On about the first of April in 1854, the Cody family was on the move. They were well equipped for the journey, with a large four-horse wagon, filled mostly with clothing, another wagon filled with goods to trade with the Indians, and a big family carriage, drawn, according to Helen Cody, by "a span of fine horses in silver-mounted harness." Will rode alongside the carriage, acting, as his sister put it, "as an armed escort." He himself described his role as "second in command."

The Codys did not camp out along the way, but went from county seat to county seat, usually staying in makeshift hotels or in private houses. The trip took them a month, for they stopped frequently and once took part in a horse race. In Missouri, young Will had his first encounter with a Negro, a slave who addressed the boy as "Massa."

Elijah Cody's home was in Weston, Platte County, Missouri, at that time a sizable community, where he ran a general store. Elijah welcomed his brother's family and put them up in a house on his farm two miles from town. Elijah suggested that he and his brother and their wives look

over the prospects in the Kansas Territory. They took Will along with them.

After crossing the Missouri River by ferry, they stopped at Fort Leavenworth. A regiment of cavalry was there at the time, and young Cody was greatly impressed by a full-dress parade he saw. It is possible that the memory of those dragoons in their brightly colored uniforms came back to Cody when he planned his first Wild West show. At Leavenworth he also saw his first Indians and rode Indian ponies. He described the Indians as “dark-skinned and rather fantastically-dressed people . . . and as I had never before seen a real live Indian, I was much interested in them. I went over and endeavored to talk to them, but our conversation was very limited.”

The West that the Codys were seeing for the first time in the 1850s was called “the Great American Desert,” and carried that designation on contemporary maps; it was thought to be habitable only by savages and so was at first bypassed for settlement. However, on their way to the Potawatami Indian Reservation, where Elijah Cody had business to negotiate, the Codys crossed over a high hill known as Salt Creek Hill, from which they looked down into what Will Cody considered the most beautiful valley he had ever seen. Isaac and Mary Cody felt the same way; they immediately picked a site in the valley as their future home.

In the Salt Creek Valley, Will was much impressed by the sight of white-covered freight wagons, prairie schooners heading, his father informed him, to Utah and California. Both the Mormon and California emigrants passed through the valley and camped beside its numerous streams. The boy was warned by his father to avoid the Mormons, for a cholera epidemic that had already claimed hundreds of victims was raging in their camp.

On their return to the fort, Isaac Cody met the quartermaster and received permission to graze his horses in the valley. He also was given a contract to provide hay for the army and permission to build a cabin for his family’s temporary use. Until the cabin was finished, Isaac and Will camped out in the valley, while Cody’s mother and sisters remained in Weston. They traded for Indian ponies, one a gentle mare they named Dolly, the other an unbroken mustang that Will named Prince.

A young man they met shortly after their arrival turned out to be Horace Billings, the son of Isaac Cody’s sister Sophia. Billings had left home years earlier and no one knew his whereabouts until he arrived at the Salt Creek Valley. He must have seemed the epitome of the westerner to little Will: Over six feet tall, well built, he wore a beaded buckskin suit and a broad-brimmed hat.

In his years of wandering, Billings had been a circus acrobat, had lived in Hawaii and California, where he worked not as a miner but as a mustanger, breaking horses. He helped Will break Prince and also taught the horse to kneel. He displayed his own skills as a horseman by riding one of the Cody horses bareback and standing up. He did not linger long in the valley, but returned to mustanging. His short stay left a permanent impression on young Cody, who undoubtedly borrowed some of the flamboyance he later displayed from Horace Billings.

On May 30, 1854, President Franklin Pierce signed the act Congress had passed to officially organize the Territory of Kansas. News traveled slowly in those days, and Isaac Cody learned of the Kansas-Nebraska Act only on June 10. He immediately packed up his wife and family and moved them to the cabin he had built in Salt Creek Valley. He could claim to be the first legal settler in Kansas, though there were already squatters in the territory. Isaac dutifully filed his claim at Fort Leavenworth and hired men to build him a seven-room log house.

One common feature of frontier life was the Fourth of July celebration. That first year in Kansas, Isaac Cody organized a patriotic fete, along with a missionary, the Reverend Joel Glover, and M. Pierce Rively, who operated a trading post for the Kickapoo, Delaware, and Cherokee Indians in the region. They decided on a barbecue and picnic and bought the necessary supplies. Except for those Indians, there weren't many neighbors to invite to the celebration. Cody and Rively got two large beeves, one for the whites, who roasted their meat in a pit and served it on a long table constructed of boards and sawhorses, and another for the Indians, who butchered it as they did buffalo and ate it in the same fashion, wasting nothing. The Indians gave war dances, ran horse races, and played games. The whites made patriotic speeches.

Although Isaac Cody may have been the first legal settler in Kansas, squatters from Missouri, most of them slaveholders, had preceded him, setting the stage for a fateful conflict. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 introduced the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which permitted all U.S. territories to have self-government in all matters, including slavery. It was only a matter of time before a bitter sectional rivalry broke out between free-soil and antislavery factions and the proponents of slavery. The Republican Party was formed by Free-Soilers and was ascendant by 1860.

Between 1854 and 1859, however, the issue figuratively tore Kansas apart and ushered in a period of political chaos and bloodshed. Free-soil forces from the North formed emigrant associations to populate Kansas, while pro-slavery advocates poured over the border from Missouri. Some of them brought bottles of whiskey with them, and when they had drunk

the whiskey, they would drive the bottles into the ground to mark their claims. Four logs tied together in a square were called an "improvement" and entered as evidence of legal settlement. The town of Leavenworth consisted of four tents, a steam engine, and a sawmill. It was pro-slavery. Brutal and quarrelsome border men continued to pour into the territory from Missouri, most of them pro-slavery. They held meetings in Rively's trading post, expressing their intention to make Kansas a slave state. Northern abolitionists hurried from Illinois to fight the pro-slavery Missourians with gun and Bowie knife.

"Stake out your claims!" declared a border newspaper. "And woe to the Abolitionist or Mormon who shall intrude upon it!" Every Saturday night, rallies at the local grocery stores stirred the mob spirit around the whiskey barrels whose spigot poured a powerful liquor, said to have the strength of forty jackasses. A southerner waved a hundred-dollar bill, boasting "I just sold a nigger for that and I reckon that's my share for cleaning out them daggone Yankees!"

"If I had my way, I'd hang every damned Abolitionist!" trumpeted an editor named Stringfellow from the Missouri side of the river. "And everyone born north of the Mason-Dixon line is an Abolitionist." At his urging, a mob of horsemen rode into the Salt Creek Valley, where the Codys lived, and declared that slavery was "thereby instituted in the Territory of Kansas."

There was no government to speak of. "Govern Kansas?" said Wilson Shannon, the second territorial governor. "You might as well have attempted to govern hell!" Violence was inevitable. Guerrilla bands were formed by both parties. "Bleeding Kansas" became a reality with the sack of Lawrence, Kansas, in 1856, during which a pro-slavery mob swarmed into town, wrecking and burning the hotel and newspaper office in an effort to wipe out this "hotbed of abolitionism."

Three days later, John Brown led an antislavery band in what was called the Pottawatomie Massacre. Five pro-slavery settlers were dragged from their homes and hacked to death. After this raid, the name of "Old Osawatimie Brown" conjured up a fearful image among pro-slavery apologists. Less than three weeks after the battle, a drama called "Osawatimie Brown" opened on Broadway. Periodic bloodshed along the Kansas-Missouri border followed, as the two factions fought battles, captured towns, and set prisoners free; Brown went on to lead his ill-fated raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859.

Isaac Cody did not consider himself a Free-Soiler, but he was inexorably drawn into the conflict. On the very day he moved his family to Kansas, a group of quarrelsome squatters met in Rively's store to organize for the protection of their rights to illegal claims, a common practice in

western settlement. The result was the Salt Creek Valley Resolutions of June 10, 1854. It attracted attention because of two provisions. The first: "That we recognize the institution of slavery as always existing in this Territory and recommend that slaveholders introduce their property as soon as possible." The second provision read: "That we afford protection to no Abolitionists as settlers of Kansas Territory." Rively was clearly a prime mover in these declarations.

Isaac Cody saw no reason to be concerned about the resolutions; he was not, after all, an abolitionist; his main ambition in coming to Kansas was to attain material success, not lead or join a crusade. Moreover, he was no politician. Although his son and daughters later claimed that he had been elected to the Iowa legislature, there is no record of his having ever served there.

Isaac Cody was credited with being a good public speaker, though, and on September 18, 1854, when he was passing Rively's trading post on horseback, he was hailed and asked to address his fellow settlers. He did his best to beg off, but some of the settlers took him to a large drygoods box that served as a platform and demanded a speech. As reported by his son, "as nearly as I can recollect," Isaac Cody explained that he had always voted to make Iowa a *white* state—"that Negroes, whether free or slave, should never be allowed to locate within its limits; and, gentlemen, I say to you now, and I say it boldly, that I propose to exert all my power in making Kansas the same kind of state as Iowa. I believe in letting slavery remain as it now exists, and I shall always oppose its further extension. These are my sentiments, gentlemen, and let me tell you—"

He never finished this sentence, or his speech. He may have intended to mollify the crowd with additional disclaimers, but he was shouted down, and several spectators attempted to drag him from his platform. One hot-headed pro-slavery man named Charles Dunn, an employee of Elijah Cody, stabbed Isaac twice in the chest with a Bowie knife. Dr. Hathaway, a neighbor who also supported the free-soil movement, took Cody into Rively's store and treated his wounds. Mrs. Cody was sent for. When she arrived with a wagon and driver, she took her husband to Elijah Cody's home to recuperate. He stayed there for three weeks. He had been stabbed in the lung.

Isaac Cody eventually recovered and resumed his normal life, but three years later, when he died, the stab wounds were listed as factors contributing to his death.

In his first autobiography, the one published in 1879, Buffalo Bill wrote only that "his father shed the first blood in the cause of freedom in Kansas." Helen Cody Wetmore's account of the episode gave her brother a leading role in the affair. "As father fell," she wrote, "Will sprang to

him, and turning to the murderous assailant, cried out in boyhood's fury: 'You have killed my father. When I'm a man, I'll kill you.'" Helen Wetmore added that "supported by Will, father dragged his way homeward, marking his tortured progress with a trail of blood. This path was afterward referred to in the early history of Kansas as 'the Cody Bloody Trail.'"

Cody himself further embroidered the tale in his second autobiography, published after his death, in this fashion: "I saw the gleam of a knife. The next instant, without a groan, father fell forward stabbed in the back. Somehow I got off my pony and ran to his assistance, catching him as he fell. His weight overbore me, but I eased him as he came to the ground."

In this highly unlikely version, Isaac is stabbed in the back, not the chest, and though only eight years old at the time, the future scout is credited with an early act of daring, although his sister Julia later said that Willie was at home at the time of the stabbing.

Some observers took Cody's second account of the stabbing as proof positive that it never took place. The incident was, however, reported in the *Democratic Platform of Liberty*, Missouri, on September 28, 1854, and in a hostile fashion at that:

A Mr. Cody, a noisy abolitionist, living near Salt Creek, in Kansas Territory, was severely stabbed while in a dispute about a claim with a Mr. Dunn, on Monday week last. Cody is severely hurt, but not enough it is feared to cause his death. The settlers on Salt Creek regret that his wound is not more dangerous, and all sustain Mr. Dunn in the course he took. Abolitionists will yet find "Jordan a hard road to travel!"

There was a sequel to the original attack. Isaac Cody's neighbors showed their disapproval of his sentiments by driving off his horses. Then three thousand tons of hay he had put up to fulfill his Fort Leavenworth contract mysteriously burned.

Isaac Cody was not one to be frightened off by threats or violence. He filed his claim in Kickapoo Township, Leavenworth County, in the fall of that year, paying \$1.25 an acre for it. He was in Kansas to stay.

Whether the attack on him prompted his future activity or not, in time he did take an active part in the affairs of his adopted state. He was instrumental in founding the new town site of Grasshopper Falls, later Valley Falls. Both a sawmill and a grist mill were built, and Isaac became active in an emigrant society that helped Free-Soilers move to the community to establish their homes. Clearly, Isaac Cody was every bit as memorable a character as his celebrated son.

Once he had finished building his own house in Grasshopper Falls, Isaac Cody established a school in his old log cabin. He hired Miss Jennie Lyons to be the teacher and rounded up a dozen children to attend it, in-

cluding two Kickapoo Indian boys who became Will's friends. The school didn't last long, however. A group of squatters visited it and told Miss Lyons in no uncertain terms that they weren't going to let a "damned abolitionist" run a school, and that if they came again they would burn the school and everyone in it, since most of them were Cody's brats anyhow. The frightened teacher quit her job, and Will's education was interrupted, not for the last time.

During this period, nine-year-old Will, besides attending school, worked alongside his twelve-year-old sister Julia to plow ten acres and plant corn—perhaps the only time in his life he worked as a farmer.

On May 10, 1855, Charles Whitney, the last of the Cody children, was born. Charlie was always a delicate child and died at the age of nine, on October 10, 1864.

One episode that members of the family agreed took place at about this time concerned a justice of the peace named Sharpe. Apparently Sharpe came to the Cody house one evening and demanded food. He asked Mrs. Cody where "her damned abolitionist husband" was. Mary Cody told him that she thought her husband was in Grasshopper Falls, when actually he was upstairs, lying ill in bed. Sharpe sat in a chair, sharpening a Bowie knife on a whetstone and swearing that he was going to take Isaac Cody's lifeblood when he caught him. Mrs. Cody sent Will and her daughter Julia upstairs, telling the boy to get his gun and Julia to get an ax. They were waiting on the stairs, ready to attack if Sharpe attempted to take their father's life. Mrs. Cody kept on talking to the intruder until finally he left, though not before stealing Isaac Cody's saddlebags or Will's pony Prince, depending on whose version of the story you read.

Meanwhile, the troubles in Bleeding Kansas continued. Pro-slavery vigilantes terrorized the area, lynching and tarring and feathering. An abolitionist lawyer in Leavenworth, now growing rapidly into a city, was seized by a mob, his clothes stripped from him, his head shaved, covered with hot tar, ridden on a rail for more than a mile, and then, the ultimate indignity, sold for a dollar and a half by a Negro auctioneer. Pro-slavery elements endorsed this brutality and described the victim as a "moral perjurer."

On March 30, 1855, an election was held for the state's first legislative body, carried by ballot-box stuffers from Missouri. Free Staters called it "a bogus legislature." Aroused, the various opponents of the pro-slavery forces joined together and held a constitutional convention in Topeka. The so-called Topeka Movement held an election on January 15, 1856, in which Isaac Cody was elected a representative from the Twelfth District.

The pro-slavery men, or Border Ruffians as they were called, made no attempt to vote in this election, but they did commit one of the most

atrocious crimes of the border war. At the town of Easton, near Leavenworth, they threatened to stop the voting. A Free State militia company, led by Reese P. Brown, who was also a candidate for election, was called out to guard the polls. Kickapoo Rangers, the notorious squatters of Cody's hometown, caught Captain Brown unawares and hacked him to death.

Cody was active in the state legislature that year. He was one of the thirty-three members out of sixty who attended the first roll call to establish a quorum. He served on the Ways and Means Committee and the Accounts Committee, and out of fifty roll calls, he was present at all but three.

But the harassment of Isaac Cody by the Kickapoo Rangers had by no means ended. On one occasion, as Will Cody tells it, a hired hand told him that "the pro-slavery men had laid another plan to kill him and were on their way to Grasshopper Falls." According to Helen Cody Wetmore, however, Will was in bed with what was then called "the ague," a malarial fever with chills and hot and sweating stages, when he heard about the plot to ambush his father on his return trip from the falls. His mother started him off on Prince, with a warning letter to his father in his sock. Though he was weakened by his illness, and a storm threatened, he set out on his mission. At Stranger Creek, about eight miles out, he saw a camp of armed men. One of them recognized him and cried out: "That's the son of the old abolitionist we're after." Though he was ordered to halt and a pistol shot was fired, young Cody galloped off, pursued by several men. Prince stayed barely a few hundred yards ahead of his pursuers. The storm finally broke; Will lost his hat and began to vomit. Realizing that he could not go much farther, he remembered that friends of his father, a family named Hewlette, had a farm about nine miles from the creek. If he could reach it in time, he would be safe. He arrived at the Hewlette gate just ahead of the Kickapoo Rangers. Although his horse's muzzle was white with foam and Will had puked all over the beast, he insisted on going on to warn his father. Mr. Hewlette told him that Isaac Cody had no intention of returning home before the end of the week, so there was no reason for him to go any farther. Hewlette then put the boy to bed, where he slept soundly and awoke the next morning feeling fine. He then rode on to Grasshopper Falls to join his father, who would remain a hunted man for the rest of his life.

When Isaac Cody and his son returned home several days later, it was felt that Isaac would not be safe in the house, inasmuch as there were watchers visible on a hill not far off. A bed was made up for him in a cornfield. During the day he wore a dress and cape and bonnet, so that he would look like a woman from a distance. Later he walked to Fort Leav-

enworth, but as he was ill from exposure, it took him three days to walk four miles. Will and Julia accompanied him, carrying food, water, and blankets from one stop to the next.

In early 1857 Isaac journeyed east to recruit settlers for his Grasshopper Falls colony. In Cleveland, he stayed with his brother Joseph. The two brothers went to Chicago to attend a Republican conference, and there Isaac met Abraham Lincoln, who was then still a country lawyer in Springfield but already an influential member of the fledgling political party. Isaac's eastern trip was a success; he brought some sixty families back to Grasshopper Falls with him, inviting them to stay at his house until they were settled. "As a result," wrote Mrs. Wetmore, "our house overflowed, while the land about us was white with tents; but these melted away, as one by one the families selected claims and put up cabins."

Because of the overcrowding, scarlet fever and measles broke out, and four people died; at the time, there was no known treatment for these diseases, no hospital in Grasshopper Falls; loved ones could only attempt, without much success, to alleviate the victims' suffering. While working in the rain in an effort to be helpful, Isaac Cody caught the chill that was to prove fatal. Dr. Hathaway was called but could do nothing; pneumonia had set in. Elijah Cody came from Weston, bringing another doctor with him. Despite all the efforts to save him, Isaac Cody died on March 10, 1857; he was only forty-six. He was buried in Pilot Knob Cemetery, overlooking Leavenworth. At the age of eleven, Will Cody, a handsome youth, conspicuous for his large brown eyes, his fine features, and his mop of blond hair, was a good rider, a crack shot, and the principal breadwinner for a family of six.