

39: Around the World on Foot – Part 2 (1894-96)

Davy Crockett

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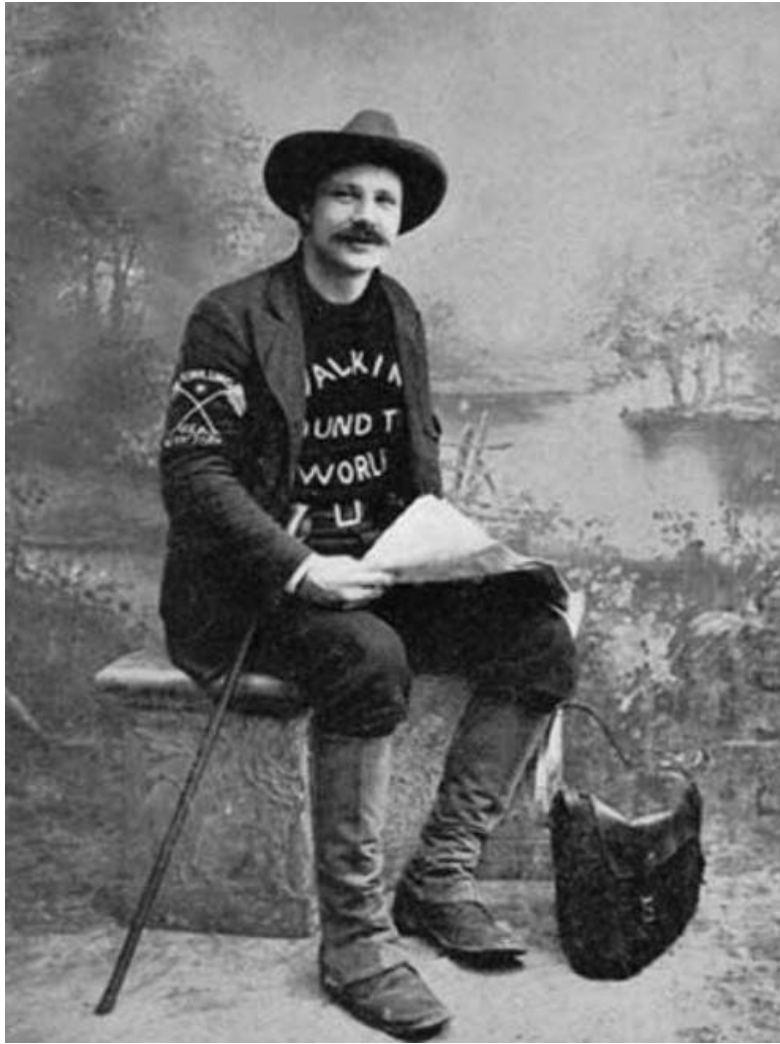
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By Davy Crockett





In Part 1 of this series, about walking around the world, I covered the very early attempts. By 1894, dozens, if not hundreds of walkers, started to participate in an “around the world on foot” craze. For many it was a legitimate ultrawalking attempt, but for most it was just a scam to travel on other people’s generous contributions.

The typical scam went like this: They claimed that they were trying to walk around the world to win thousands of dollars on a wager, but they had to do it without bringing any money. They needed to be funded through the generosity of others, get free room and board, and free travel on ships. Walkers came out of the woodwork and the newspapers were fascinated by these attempts.

Eventually some in the press started to get wise. These walkers started to be referred derisively as tramps, globetrotters, cranks, fools, or “around the world freaks.” One reporter wrote, “A great majority of these wanderers upon the face of the earth are men who would rather do anything than work.” Another astute reporter identified many of these walkers as “frauds, traveling over the country practicing a smooth game in order to be winned and dined.”

Sprinkled in with these self-promoting frauds were also those who were legitimately striving to circle the globe on foot. Their efforts were real and very hard. They underestimated the difficulty involved yet had amazing experiences. There were too many of these “globetrotters” to even list. This article will share some amazing and bizarre tales of the naive, those that failed, the cheats, and the fakers. In the next article, I will

share stories about successful walks around the world.

Samuel Wilson and Horace Yorke – British walkers – 1893

Those that went in pairs usually went the furthest. In 1894 two men from England started a unique walk around the world that would cross through Canada. Samuel Wilson, age 30, of Australia and Horace G. Yorke, an American living in England, both journalists, started their east to west walk around the world from Lincoln, England on August 11, 1893 and they were required to finish it in an unrealistic 18 months. Crazy restrictions were imposed as part of their “journalistic enterprise” that they could not spend any money on food or clothing but had to depend on the hospitality of others they met.

Wilson, a journalist, spoke six languages, claimed that he had previously walked from Cape Horn to Boston and had been the guest of President Grover Cleveland at the White House. (No evidence was found of this ever happening).



They first walked across Britain to Liverpool and then took a steamer to Quebec City, Canada. They walked the railroad tracks to Montreal, arriving there on Aug 28, 1894. There, they received permission from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to walk the line across Canada and use all the bridges.

The paper wrote, “Nearly every person possesses a craze of some sort, but probably the latest development towards the extreme point of the sensation is that of Mr. Samuel Wilson who informed us that it was his intention to tramp round the world. He simply carries a satchel containing his register, wherein he gets subscribed his visits to the various towns he passes through.” Wilson was asked why he was really doing the walk. “I am engaged by the Sydney Bulletin for certain purposes and when my books are published, I shall of course, receive remuneration for them” Why was he going without money? “I believe a man can go through anywhere with civility. You hear a lot of nonsense and tomfoolery in this country about savages, but I have never been seriously molested by them.”

The two continued their walk across Canada going from railroad section house to the next, day by day and never camped out as they made their way to Calgary during the winter of 1893-94. “It was useless to carry food or water because both would become frozen. Neither was there any wood to build a fire, so that they must make the distance between section houses in a day’s journey.” In November, at Winnipeg they were kindly fitted out with complete buckskin suits of clothing to withstand the rigors of the winter. Wilson would visit all the police departments in the cities and would collect buttons which he sewed on this coat until he looked as if he were studded with brass nails.

GLOBE-TROTTING AFOOT.

Samuel Wilson, the Tramp Journalist,
Arrives in Portland.

He Has Engaged to Circle the Earth in
Eighteen Months Without Spending
Money for Food.

After arriving at Seattle, Washington, in March, 1894, they had intended to take a steamer to China, but because of war violence breaking out there with Japan, their passports were suspended from traveling to China. They decided to head for San Francisco and then travel to Singapore, via Hawaii. They claimed that they had walked more than 4,000 miles, averaging about 20 miles per day.

Wilson liked calling himself the "King of Tramps." One description of him included, "His pipe and himself are inseparable. His costume consists of a slouch hat, a Canadian frontier policeman's brass-buttoned pea-jacket, and stout shoes with leather leggings to confine his trousers below the knee."

WALKING AROUND THE WORLD.

Samuel Wilson and Horace Yorke
'Have Tramped 6,000 Miles in
Eight Months.

In May, the two arrived in San Francisco and claimed that they had walked 6,000 miles, a significant exaggeration. Their journey on "foot" was soon abandoned and the two took a railroad handcar to Fresno. At

that point they had a falling out and split up. Yorke said Wilson disappeared and took all their joint possessions with him, leaving Yorke destitute. The railroad took pity on him and gave him a job. Within a few years Yorke was appointed chief inspector of railways by the London Board of Trade and presented a report on American railway methods in Great Britain. Nothing more was learned about Wilson.

Julian Rapport – “correspondent” walker – 1894

Julian Rapport claimed to be a correspondent for the New York Tribune. He showed up in Albany, Oregon, in February 1895, claiming that he was walking around the world and had thus far traveled 5,000 miles from New York, starting on July 4, 1894. He said he also took the northern Canadian route to Vancouver, was heading south to San Francisco and then to China. For money he carried only a specially milled ten cent coin that he was to return to the Tribune. He could not ask of assistance, could not work for money, but would work for room and board.



There was one problem. A smart newspaper columnist for The San Francisco Call, recalled meeting Rapport and detected that he was a fraud. He wrote, “California appears to be a favorite field for this class of fakes, but their increasing numbers will soon dispel the romantic interest which now surrounds a man who is supposed to have crossed the continent on foot.”

The San Francisco Chronicle looked into Rapport’s claim that he was employed by the New York Tribune and received a telegram from the Tribune stating that they did not know Rapport and denounced him as a fraud. That abruptly ended Rapport’s “walk around the world.”

Samuel Shockey, The Pauline Pedestrian Pilgrim – 1894



Some of these world walkers were truly mentally unstable. A man from Ada, Ohio, known as Professor Samuel Wesley Shockey (1858-1904) announced in 1894 that he would walk around the world in five years. He called himself the “Pauline Pedestrian Pilgrim” and had a history of arrests and stays in mental hospitals. He left Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in April 1894 with nothing, wearing only a suit of newspaper clothes. He was arrested before getting out of the city. He was heading for New York City and then would make his way to China. But that trip didn’t last long.

WILL GO HOME.

Prof. Shockey, the Globe Trotter, Has Abandoned His Trip,

About a year later, he was again claiming to be walking around the world. He said that he started in New York City, and was heading west. At Portsmouth, Ohio, in June 1895, he became drunk, was arrested and tossed in prison. But Shockey refused to work on the city stone pile and tried to commit suicide in his cell. The city authorities became tired of him. He decided to abandon his walk around the world and said he would go home.

[Notice of No.] [FORM FOR NATIVE CITIZEN]

No. 23134 Issued.....

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

STATE OF Ohio
COUNTY OF Madison

I, Samuel Wesley Shockey, a NATIVE AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport for myself as follows:
to cross born at..... on the..... day of..... 18..... and.....

I solemnly swear that I was born at..... Ohio on or about the..... day of..... 18..... that my father is a Native-born citizen of the United States, that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at..... Ohio where I follow the occupation of..... that I am about to go abroad temporarily; and that I intend to return to the United States in 1899 with the purpose of resuming and performing the duties of citizenship therein.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So HELP ME GOD.

Sworn to before me this 29 day of April, 1895
G. M. C. Latham

DESCRIPTION	OF APPLICANT
Age: <u>27</u> years.	Mark: <u>None</u>
Stature: <u>5</u> feet, <u>3</u> inches. Eng.	Complexion: <u>Light</u>
Forehead: <u>High</u>	Face: <u>Round</u>
Eyes: <u>Dark</u>	
Nose: <u>Medium</u>	

IDENTIFICATION

Asa O. L. 139 1895
I hereby certify that I know the above-named Samuel W. Shockey personally, and know him to be a native-born citizen of the United States, and that the facts stated in his affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

[SIGNED BY WITNESS] Asa O. L. 139

Applicant desires passport sent to following address: Samuel W. Shockey
Asa
Ohio

Application for passport in May, 1895. He planned to be away until 1899.

But in December 1895, his trek went on. He showed up in New Orleans, Louisiana and he shared some of his background. He said that he had been stolen by gypsies when he was nine years old and lived with them for many years learning to read palms. During 1896, Shockey continued to travel to towns and was constantly arrested. In one town he decided to go to bed in the middle of a street, in another he pretended to hang himself from a city light pole.

In 1900 he was walking around the world again and in Pennsylvania he was put into a prison cell where he tried to hang himself again and then was committed to an insane asylum. He got out and continued to be arrested in many towns across the Midwest.

SUICIDE

**Ends Career of Samuel
Shockey,**

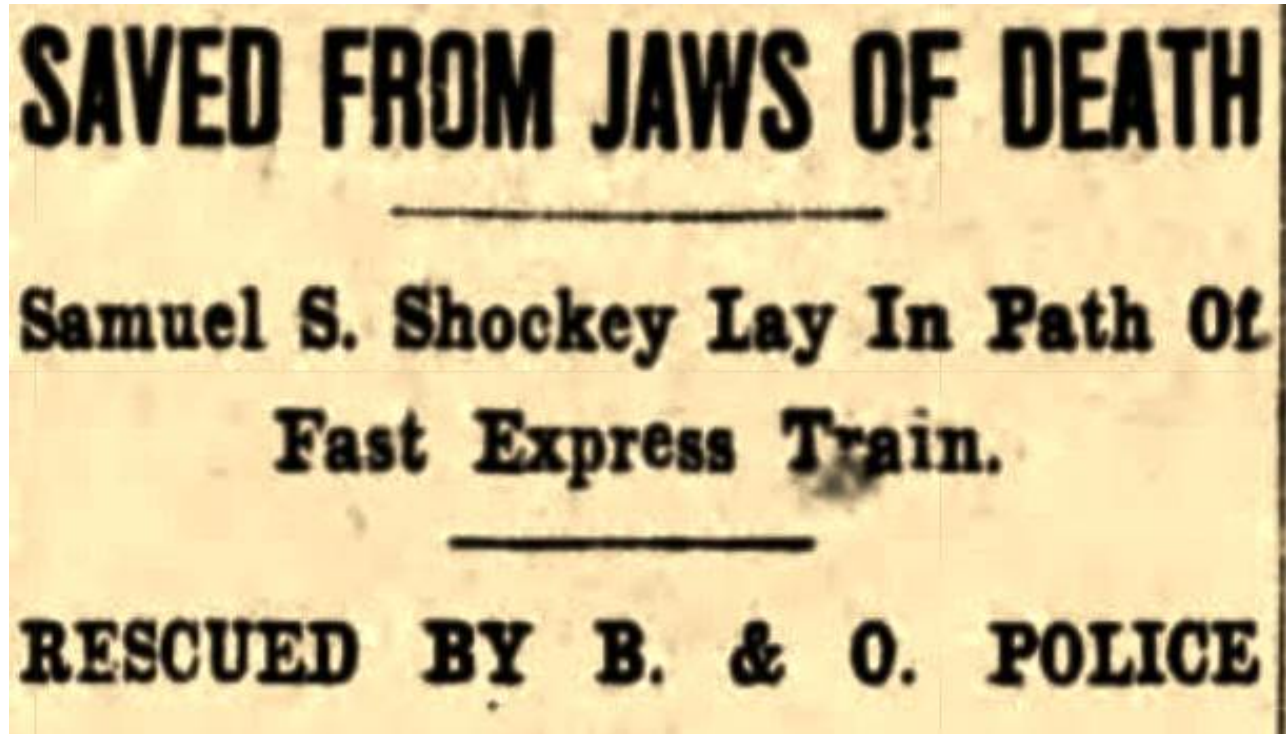
**An Eccentric Character Who
Was Well Known.**

On March 2, 1904, a telegram from Lodi, Wisconsin announced the death of Shockey. An Ohio newspaper said, "his death ends the career of one of the most widely known and peculiar of men. He was a great traveler and has toured the country over in his erratic rambles. He had been born into a prosperous family but sought after a romantic life of excitement. Leaving his farm, he mounted the lecture platform and talked almost constantly on the subject of phrenology. His eccentric conduct and changeable moods won him much notoriety. His melancholy moods grew more frequent and stronger until they culminated in his suicide."

SAMUEL SHOCKEY

**Fresh From the Workhouse String's
Some Toledo Reporters---Samuel Is
"Bughouse" But He Is
Cute Alright.**

The story about Shockey became even more bizarre. He did not actually die in 1904. In 1906 he was walking across the country again in Ohio. A month later he was arrested again and tried to commit suicide in prison using an electrical wire. It was said, "Shockey has attempted self-destruction oftener than any other man in the country, and although twice nearly successful, he has always been saved." He continued to travel, was arrested over and over again, and refused to do labor in prison. Towns were just happy to send him out of town.



In 1910, near Baltimore, Maryland, police found Shockey lying unconscious across train tracks as a fast express train was approaching. They grabbed his head and feet and dragged him from the path of the train. He was taken to a hospital and then arrested. At his court hearing he gave the judge the story of his life, explaining that he served in the 1873-79 Indian Wars and was seeking to live in the Soldiers Home in Washington, D.C. He was given a ride out of the city.

Finally, in 1922, at the age of 64, Shockey, claimed to be a civil war veteran who served with the 82nd Infantry (he would have been less than six years old then). While in Great Falls, Montana. He was picked up off the street, paralyzed drunk. The jailers were also veterans. "The sergeant and corporal put the old veteran to bed and sounded taps," Nothing more was found about Shockey.

Henry Thompson – The Pacific Slope Pedestrian – 1894



TRYING TO WIN \$20,000.

**HENRY THOMPSON'S REMARK-
ABLE UNDERTAKING.**

**The Most Interesting Pedestrian Feat
of the Century.**

Henry Thompson, originally from England, hailing Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, claimed that he started his walk around the world on December 23, 1893 in a paper suit of clothes, but they were soon torn to shreds in the wind. He first was mentioned in the news in New York, in 1894, and never was seen very far away from there. Probably in order to answer questions why he was always seen around New York, he eventually changed his story that he must walk five times across America, once through Canada and then once around the world. In towns he visited, he would give boxing exhibitions and play the piano.

But this is how his visits typically went: At Buffalo, New York, "He was arrested last night for drunkenness and was liberated this morning. An hour afterwards he was drunk again and was put out of several saloons. After holding up several citizens for money, he was rearrested."

At New York City in 1898, he said he was finishing up and only needed to walk back to San Francisco. For his world walk, he said he had stowed away on a ship to Liverpool, England, and walked across Europe, Asia, and Australia. His tales included narrow escapes from death when he was shot six times and once pierced by an arrow in Egypt.

During his visit in New York City, he was walking with his dog, Prince. While in a saloon, Prince disappeared, and when found again it had been painted a bright red. Thompson got into a fight with a man he accused of painting the dog, and was thrown out of the saloon." He was admitted to the alcoholic ward at Bellevue Hospital.



HAS WALKED 26,764 MILES.

**Henry Thompson Now Making
His Last Journey.**

**Five Times He Has Crossed Continent
and Once Around the Globe.**

Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania had a sense of humor. "A queer, disappointed-looking specimen was seen bearing a tag on his back that read, 'Around the world. From San Francisco. Out four years. Thompson.' It was hard to tell whether he is a demented golf champion or strayed from a Maine lumber camp. Very likely both. His coat is a corduroy hunting jacket, while he wears a flannel shirt. So far, so good; but here come the

rub. His trousers are tucked in a pair of golf stockings, which look as though he waded knee-deep through a Hungarian rainbow. They are awful. He has the rubbery gift of story-telling too, this wayfarer. After unfolding a tale of lengthy dimensions, he smiles that ten cent kind of smile, and moves on."

Thompson claimed to have more than 17,000 receipts from telegraph operators along the way. He had worn out 28 pair of shoes and 243 pair of underwear. In 1898 he made very slow progress in Pennsylvania and New York, spending many nights in jail. He was last heard from in Elmira, New York in August 1898.

William McDade – Brooklyn walker – 1894

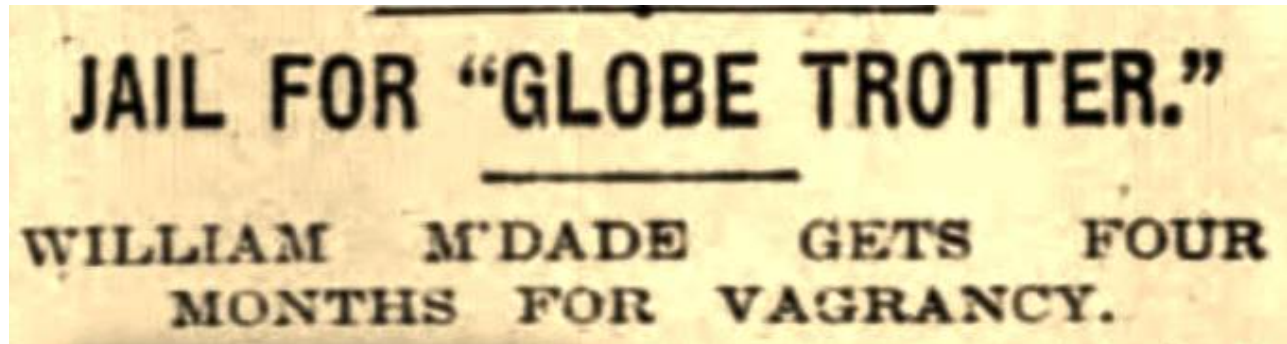
Some newspapers were skeptics about these globetrotters and others were very gullible. William McDade (1863-1901) was from Brooklyn, New York. He had served a year in prison for burglary in 1892-93. In February 1895 he showed up at the Daily Times office in New Brunswick, New Jersey, claiming to be from California. He said that he was walking around the world and had started from San Francisco five months earlier, in September, 1894. Their reaction was, "He is a big talker, and his story does not hang together worth a cent." He declared to be a former president of the California Athletic Club and that he needed to walk around the world in ten months. The newspaper did calculations that he would need to walk 17,000 miles averaging about 65 miles per day.



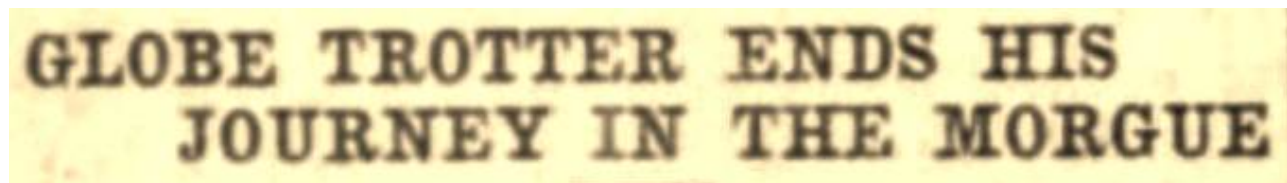
Just six months later, in August, 1895, McDade arrived in New York City on a steamer from England, on his "return trip" from around the world, but from the wrong direction. The naive Brooklyn and San Francisco newspapers believed his story. He claimed that the previous September he had started from San Francisco naked at a Turkish bath with one penny. He appeared on the street with a newspaper suit and was arrested. After being released, contributions were received for his journey. He somehow walked in nearly every state

in four months (no news coverage found), obtaining certificates for many governors. After that, in only six more months, he visited nearly all European countries, Russia, Siberia, China, and countries in Africa, covering 35,000 miles by land and 10,000 miles by sea. In six months he would have had to average about 222 miles of travel per day.

At New York McDade said in order to win his \$285,000 wager (nearly 9 million dollars value in 2019), he still needed to earn \$6,500 and return to San Francisco. "Many persona laughingly gave the man small sums of money, saying his stories of adventure were worth it." He intended to lecture in dime museums. But before he could get work, he was arrested and sent to a workhouse. On his release he had difficulty finding work and abandoned plans to "return" to California. It was said that he then drifted into bad company.



In 1898 McDade was charged with vagrancy in Brooklyn, New York and plead guilty. He was also charged for attempting to swindle a number of real estate dealers by telling them that he was walking around the world on a wager with an Englishman, going in the opposite direction. With a plea deal, he avoided the charge of obtaining money by false pretenses. He was sentenced to four months in the penitentiary where he planned to write on book on his travels. He claimed to have a contract with a San Francisco publishing house. In 1899 he was again put in prison for three months.



On January 31, 1901, William McDade died in a saloon in New York City at the age of 37. He had been trying to put together another trip. His body laid unclaimed for several day at a morgue until some friends finally identified his body. They said he was heart-broken for not winning his original 1894 wager. It was believed that he died of heart disease.

Dick Whittington and His Cat – 1895



William H. Bourne, age 23, was an Englishman by birth, but also a U.S. citizen who had immigrated in 1877. In 1895 he traveled by the name of Dick Whittington, and started walking around the world, west to east, pushing a wheelbarrow for a wager of \$10,000 to finish in three years. On July 15, 1895, he showed up in Rawlins, Wyoming, claiming that he started in San Francisco, California on April 5, 1895 without a cent. He planned to earn his expenses by selling pictures, displaying advertisements, and giving lectures.

He said, "I have to register at every railroad section house and post office on my route and at the capital of every state through which I pass." Whittington had previous experience traveling long distances. "Three years ago I went around the world on a bicycle, being the first man to attempt the feat." He had started in London, went east to west, crossed America on a northern route, sailed to China and completed his ride in 18 months. (No newspaper coverage has been found to prove that this ride ever took place.)

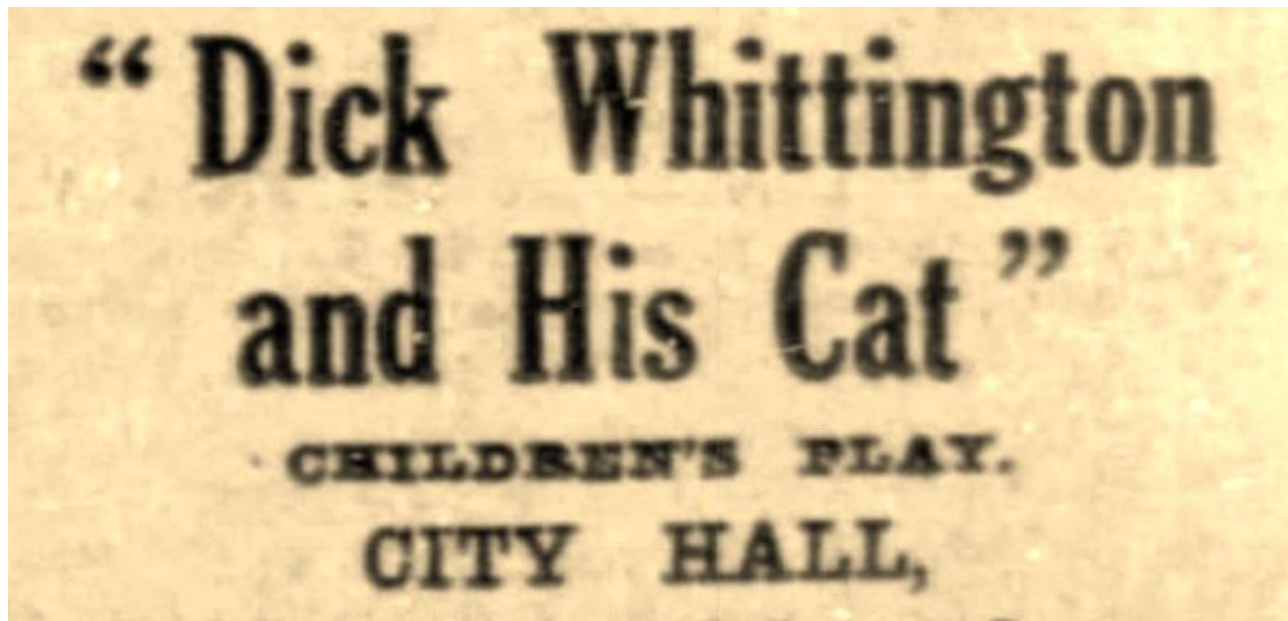
A WHEELBARROW FIEND.

Dick Whittington and His Cat and Dog
Girdling the Globe.

Whittington traveled with a cat and a dog. Strange requirements for his walk included stipulations that he could not cut his hair during the trip, and that he would forfeit \$500 if either the cat or dog died, and \$1,000 if both died.



Americans did not at first understand the amusement of the Whittington-cat connection. In English folklore, a wealthy merchant named Dick Whittington lived in the 1300s had risen from a poverty-stricken childhood and made his fortune through his cat that was skilled in controlling rodent problems in the rat-infested country. The story became a famous play.



Whittington planned to push his wheelbarrow across America and then to places such as London, France, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa, Hong Kong, and Australia. His wheelbarrow weighed about 75 pounds, and up to 150 pounds with his luggage and the animals. He tried to travel 20 miles per day. He planned to make the trip in two and a half years and estimated that his walking distance would be between 13,000-16,000 miles.

The press commented, "Compared to the others currently walking around the world he must be given credit for more originality in his outfit than any who have preceded him." The cat was a mixed color cat and the dog was a five-month-old white bulldog named Blossom, Rowdy, or Britain, but didn't look strong enough to put up with the "ups and downs of life around the world in a wheelbarrow."

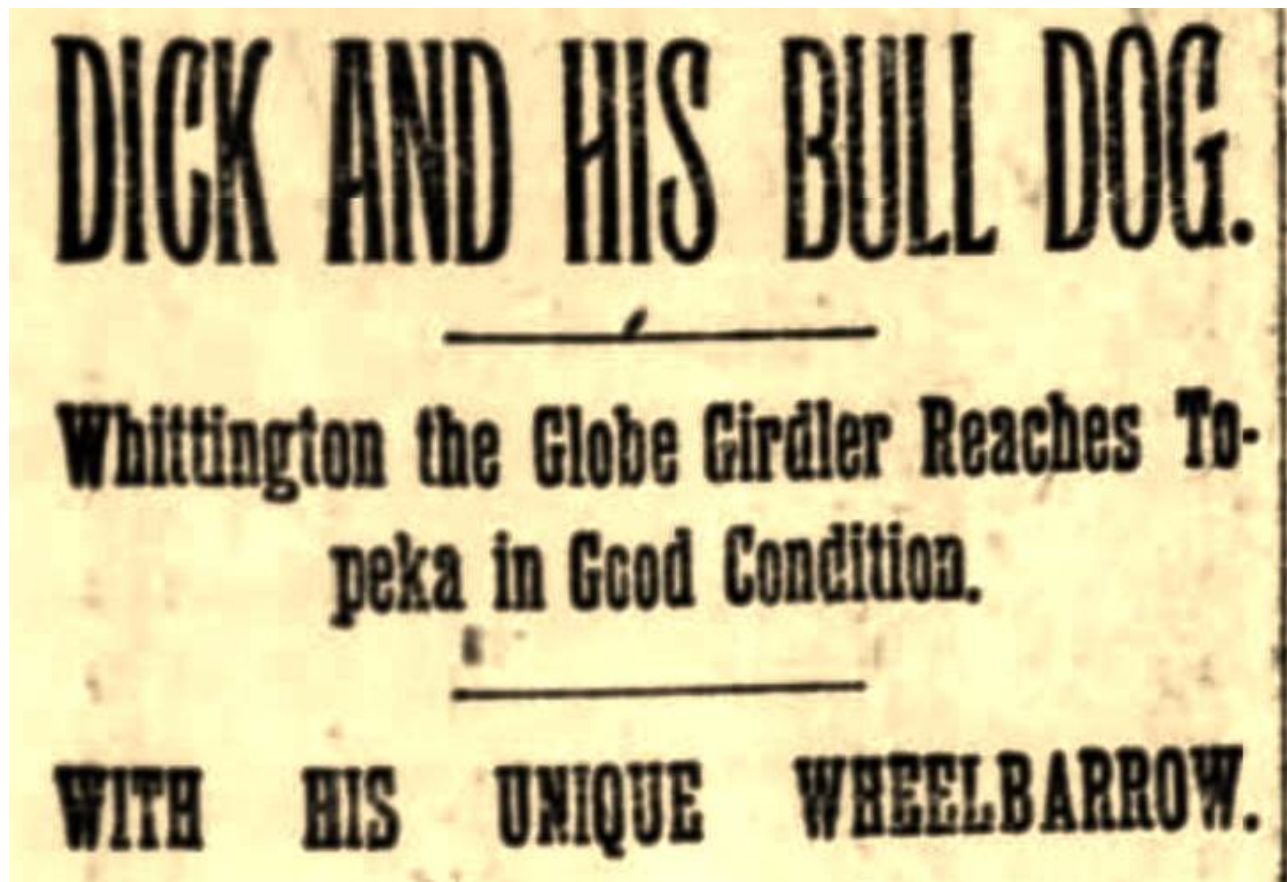
Whittington adapted the wheelbarrow so that it would work well on the railroad rails. "It has a large wooden wheel in front and a second wheel following it closely. Both these wheels have flanges, so that the barrow can be pushed along on one rail with very little effort. The vehicle is covered with canvas and presents the appearance of a diminutive prairie schooner. This is the home of the cat and the dog on whom so much depends in Whittington's undertaking." A handle extended out to the side of the vehicle allowing Whittington to walk in the center of the track.

On the canvas cover people would sign their names and included notes. An American flag flew from the vehicle along with a banner that with his name and proclaiming that he was the "wheelbarrow champion of the world."

Whittington experienced challenges in the West. He reported, "I had a terrible tough time crossing the deserts and came very near starving to death, having for nearly a week subsisted on nothing but rice." The railroad section stations were very far apart. The men stationed there were usually Chinese and lived on rice. He said, "When I pulled into Salt Lake City, I was nearly naked and so badly used up that I was forced to go to the hospital. I placed my cat and dog on exhibition and made money enough to pay expenses."

Whittington's cat died near the border of Colorado and Kansas. It had struggled with the altitude and poor diet going over the Rocky Mountains. He sadly said, "I gave my cat a funeral, but I had to officiate as gave digger, parson, undertaker, mourner, and all." Most from the little town of Kanorado turned out for the ceremony. They had been very supportive. They located a burial plot behind the hotel, obtained a cheese

box to be used as the coffin, and manufactured a tombstone that was appropriately inscribed. Finally a fence was built around the sacred spot.



In early September, 1895, he reached Topeka, Kansas after struggling in rain across the plains. "While he was some distance away the man passed a party of boys who gazed at him in open mouthed astonishment but he paid no attention when they called to him. When the man reached the depot platform there were about 20 people there to meet him. The dog stretched himself on the platform panting from weariness. The man was bathed in perspiration but he gave little evidence of being tired after gong 28 miles that day."

Whittington explained that sometimes he let the dog ride because he could out-walk the dog. So far he had worn out six pair of heavy army shoes and a couple suites of clothing. He was described as "an intelligent looking young man and an interesting talker." He was a small man, about 5'5" and weighed about 130 pounds. When asked why he was doing this, he responded, "I am not doing this for the money alone. I am doing it for the reputation. I wanted to do something that no one else has done." He had a large rattlesnake skin wrapped around his hat and several large rattles dangling from the hat buckle.

He arrived in St. Louis, Missouri in October, after walking for six months. "He went in the evening to the exposition, where his quaint costume of sombrero, black sweater, and canvas leggings attracted much attention. He showed the book in which he collected all the official stamps of the post offices along the route."

IN BLACK FOR HIS CAT

Dick Whittington With His Pup Has Reached Chicago.

In November Whittington arrived in Chicago, still traveling at a believable pace with plenty of witnessing news articles along that way. He was in Ohio, in February and a review for his lecture was unflattering. "The speech and interest were sadly lacking. This did not deter the long-haired freak from extracting a collection of over seven dollars from the audience, after a rambling account of his trip east. People remark that they may give their money to whom they please, but may they? Feeding tramps has been logically condemned as an eventual injury to the vagrant himself."

Whittington reached Pittsburgh in February 1896, but sadly two month later he was still there, in a hospital suffering from a bad attack of the "grip." (respiratory disease caused by a flu virus). It was reported that he suffered from hemorrhages brought on by exposure, was in critical condition, and wasn't expected to recover. On June 12, 1896, William H Bourne, Jr. also known as Dick Whittington died in a Philadelphia Hospital. He had traveled across America in what appeared to be a legitimate attempt, but sadly lost his life because of it.

John Thaler – Half Blind Walker – 1895

William John Thaler of Montreal, Canada, started his planned seven-year walk around the world on May, 5, 1895. He was originally from Austria. In 1892 he immigrated to Canada. Not long after arriving, he was amusing himself with some friends, doing tricks with a chair. While standing on his head on two chairs, one gave way, he fell and struck his left eye. After that he lost sight in both eyes and spent the next 18 months in a care center.

WALKING FOR HIS EYES.

WHY JOHN THALER IS TRAMPING AROUND THE WORLD.

In 1896, Thaler, about 35 years old, made a pilgrimage to a Canadian national shrine, the Basilica of Sainte Anne de Beupre along the Saint River in Quebec. The shrine had been credited by the Catholic Church with many miracles of curing the sick and disabled. Because of his visit, Thaler claimed that his sight was healed enough to walk alone. "He then conceived the idea that if he visited the greater shrines of the world he might fully recover his sight. He thought the matter over all winter, and settled details for a long walk. He would have to walk because he had no money." The Italian community of Montreal confirmed that he was a man of high character and he started out carrying a book with letters certifying that his quest was legitimate. On his chest was a medal with his name and the date he started from Montreal. He certainly sounded like a legitimate walker.

In late May, 1895 Thaler reached Ottawa. His planned route would take him to San Francisco, Japan, Hong Kong, India, Persia, Jerusalem, Greece, Turkey, Russia, Rome, Austria, England, and back to Canada. He hoped to cover 15-20 miles per walking day. In August he was in Michigan, averaging about 12 miles per day. As he was about to cross a bridge, he was arrested by the police. "Not understanding English well and seeing no badge distinguishing the officer, he smashed the pistol in the policeman's hands with a piece of iron he carried." He spent three days in jail. The authorities thought he was a lunatic

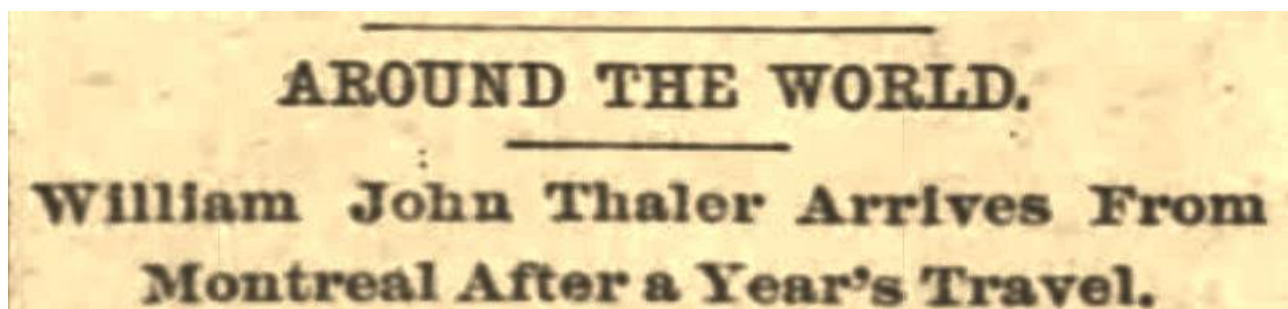


Near the end of September, he reached Green Bay, Wisconsin. Still in Wisconsin in November it was reported that he was receiving free room and board at hotels.

As Thaler was enjoying free room and board in Wisconsin, the story of his eye injury had changed. "Thaler was a clever blacksmith in the employ of a railroad at Montreal. One day a piece of iron flew up and destroyed his eyesight. In time he was able to see a bit with one eye, but he was unfitted for work. So he decided to get as much pleasure out of life as possible by making a trip around the world."

While in Minnesota, he was making himself "a public nuisance" being drunk and was arrested for robbing a saloon till. He was sentenced to 25 days in jail.

In March, 1896, Thaler made it to Iowa. A description was given of him, "He wears dark clothes, with a Prince Albert coat, and although not shabby, each fiber tells the tale of long usage. Thaler is a well educated man and quite a linguist speaking several languages. According to his story he was formerly a physician."

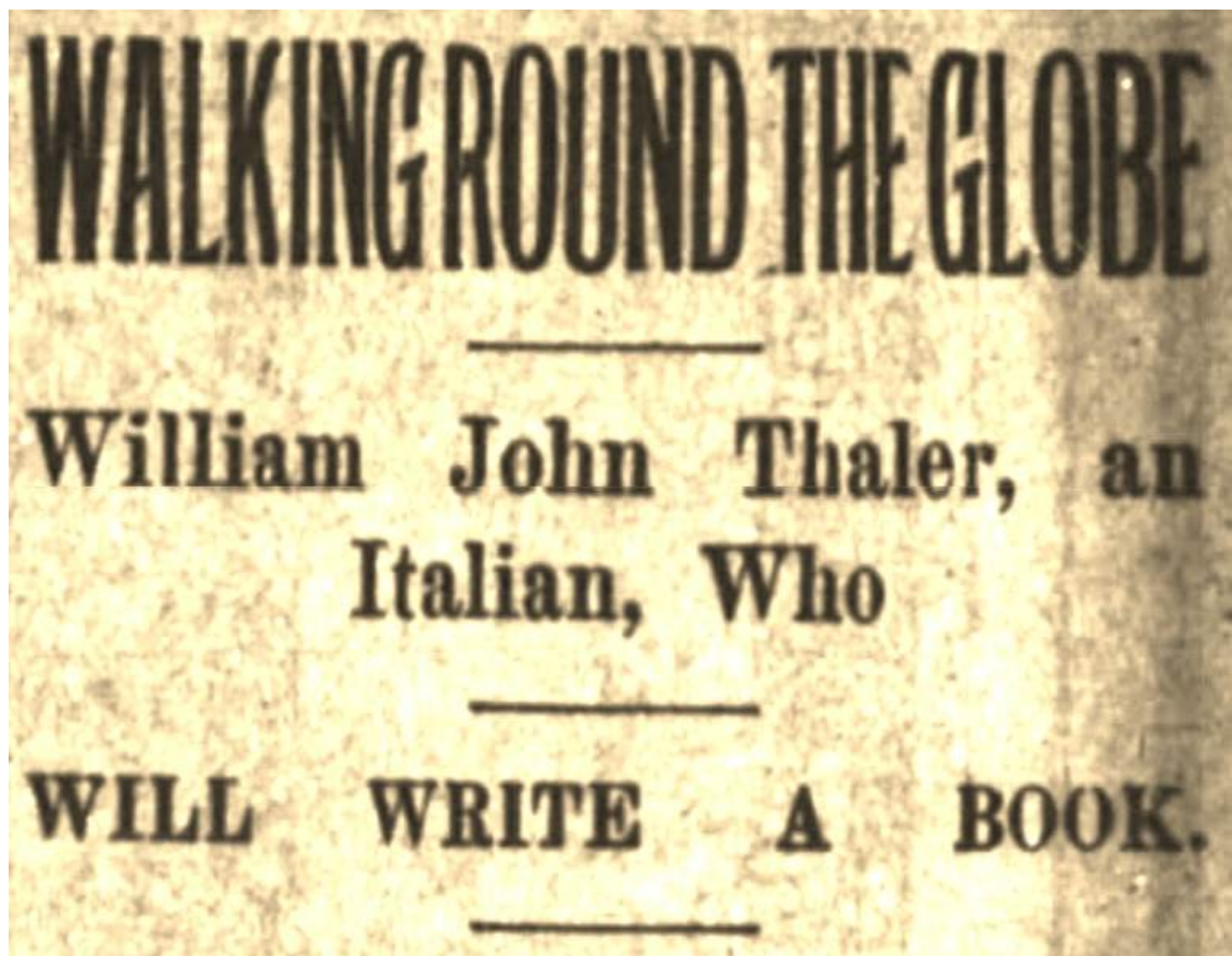


After being away for a year, Thaler reached Nebraska. He was now telling people he lost his eyesight from a fever and a very long illness. After traveling in a southerly direction for months, he finally headed west and arrived at Grand Junction, Colorado, in July 1896. He stated that he had covered 5,495 miles thus far, exaggerated by about 1,000 miles. He complained that Grand Junction was a bad town because they weren't being generous to him. The newspaper wrote, "Thaler is in the tail end of the procession of a fad that is worn out. Why people should feel obligated to contribute to some one's fad, we cannot understand."

Salt Lake City commented on his strategy. "He carries no money, but more than offsets the lack with a prime quality of nerve. When he enters a town he goes to a hotel, tells the proprietor who he is and says that he wants to stay with him. His strange appearance causes the tavern-keeper to desire a chat with him and he is welcomed."

In Nevada he had walked forty miles through the desert without food or sleep. He finally reached Wadsworth, Nevada and was so happy that he took out his pistol and fired it in celebration. He was arrested for discharging a firearm and spent sixty days in jail.

In March, 1897, Thaler arrived in Los Angeles, claiming he had walked more than 7,000 miles since he started nearly two years earlier. His story about his eyes changed again. He claimed to be an electrician, had an accident working, and was totally blind for over two years. He claimed that he next was going to head toward Mexico City, but four months later he showed up in Kansas. He still said he was walking completely around the world. But why did he reverse direction?



Kansas was skeptical of Thaler. "Some advanced the idea that the fellow was a fraud, traveling over the country practicing a smooth game in order to be 'wined and dined.'" By his three-year anniversary, he was touring the South, claiming to have a book deal with an Italian publisher. He changed the length of time for his trip from seven years to eight years.



At the four-year anniversary, in 1899, Thaler was in Texas. He still claimed that he was heading toward New York and had covered 16,000 miles. He now claimed he was doing his walk for a wager of \$40,000 to walk 35,000 miles around the world in ten years. He said that he had walked to Mexico City where he dined with the president and then returned to Texas. He was last heard from in Louisiana, in September 1899. His walk around the world finally stopped for some reason.

Fred Culbert "The Peshtigo Walker" – 1896



AROUND THE WORLD.

Fred. Culbert Starts from Kewaunee to Circumnavigate the Globe on Foot—His Route.

Some walkers continually changed their stories as they traveled. Fred Franklin Culbert (1874-1950), age 22, "the Peshtigo walker" was from Wisconsin. In 1895 he had tried to walk from Wisconsin to New York but came up short at Buffalo, New York, when he fell and developed a strangulated hernia.

On May 1, 1896, he started from Kewaunee, Wisconsin to walk around the globe. "A large crowd gathered to see the start made, and the proceedings were enlivened by the presence of the City band. The young man was gaudily attired in black knickerbockers with red and brown hose, a red, white and blue belt and a brown sweater upon the breast of which were the words, 'Fred Culbert, Walking around the world, three years, Kewaunee, Wisconsin.' On his head was an immense, white cowboy hat." He planned to head to New York,

then steam to England, and use the usual southern route across Europe.

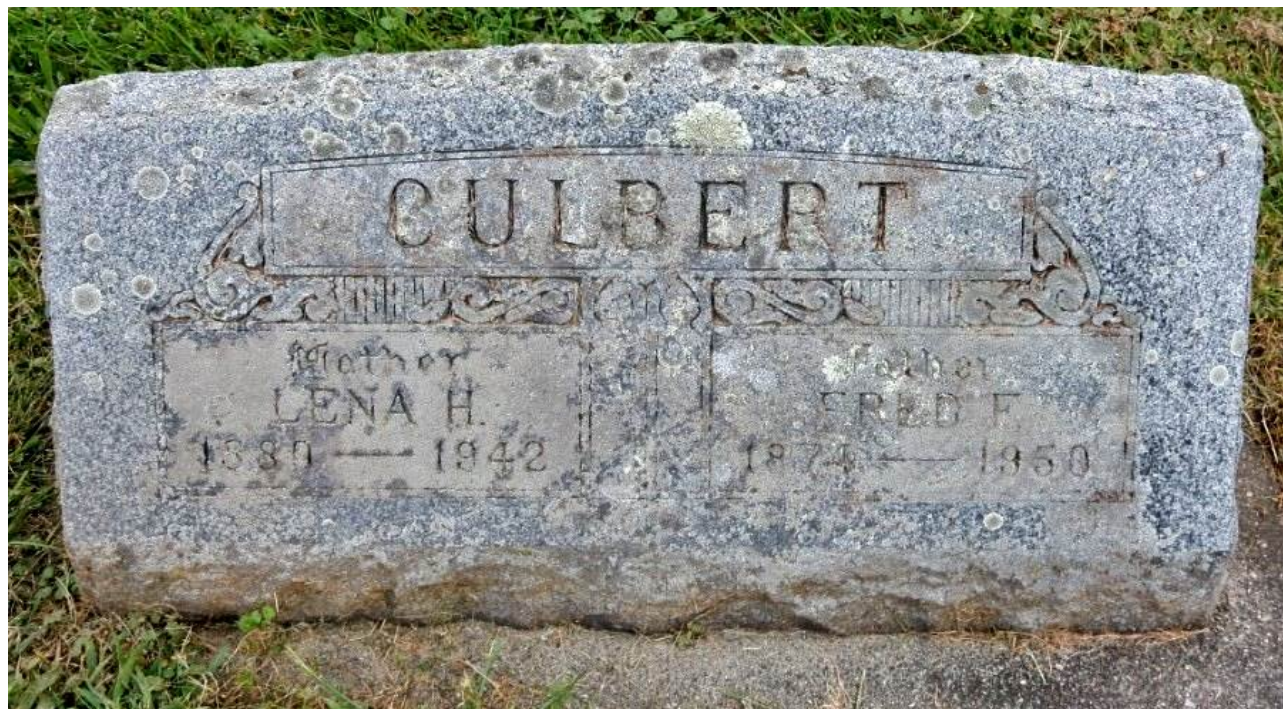
It was reported that he started without a cent but could solicit donations to pay expenses. "He does not smoke, drink, or chew, and carries no baggage except a coat and a small valise containing testimonials from the mayors of some of the leading cities in the United States."



Another walker, George Boynton shows of his paper suit.

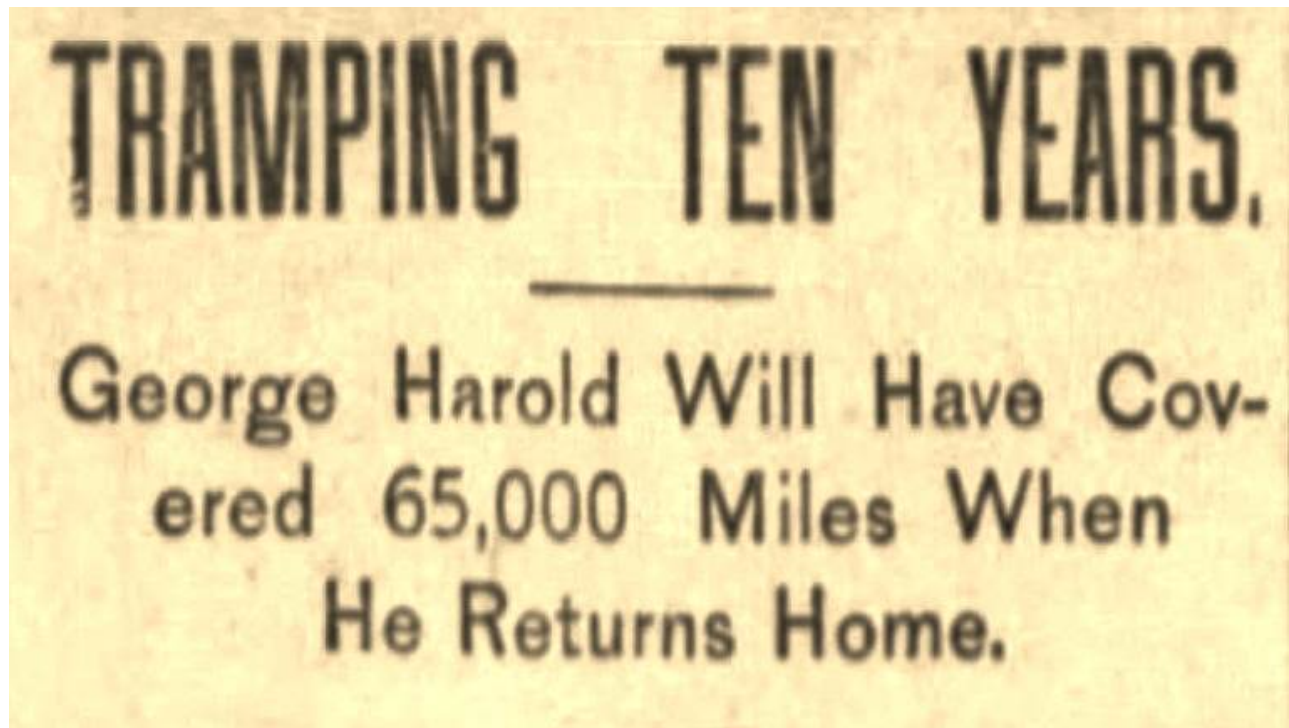
Well, plans changed along with his story. In June and July, 1896, he was in Minnesota getting free hotel stays. What? He must have taken a wrong turn and was heading west. His story also changed. He said he started from Boston, Massachusetts on May 1st instead of Wisconsin. He also changed his starting story saying that he started wearing only a paper suit of clothes! But now, "He was covered from head to foot with medals and advertisements written in nearly every nook and corner of his person." He said he was heading for San Francisco, California. His pace was very slow, averaging only 8 miles per day.

Strangely in August, he reversed course in Nebraska. In October, a Wisconsin newspaper got wise. They reported that he was heading back in Wisconsin telling newspapers that he had already been around the world and was finishing up. "Culbert is a gorgeous fake. He left Kewanee less than six months ago, got as far as Nebraska and is now coming back spinning weird yarns of countries he has never seen to every credulous listener." They recognized that he was a lazy bum "and his truthfulness was lost the first day of his trip."



In December 1896 Culbert was in Buffalo, New York, claiming to be finishing a trip across America from San Francisco where he started wearing a paper suit on July 1st. (He was actually in Minnesota on that day). "A young man with knickerbocker pants and his breast covered with souvenirs of all kinds attracted some attention on Falls Street this afternoon and was made the butt of some jests by onlookers. People here think that the fools are not all dead yet." After more free hotel stays in upstate New York, his farce concluded. but a couple weeks later he was back home in Wisconsin admitting that his walk around the world "undertaking was somewhat too big." Culbert continued to scam the public on a few more walks in the following years. Fred Culbert eventually found real work as a machinist helper for the railroad, married, raised two children, and died in 1950 at the age of 76.

George Harold "The Boy Tramp" – 1896



And then there were those who spent nearly their entire life pulling the globetrotter scam. In 1896, George Harold (1873-1908), who was known as "the boy tramp" appeared in the midwest United States claiming that he had been walking around the world for ten years, since the age of thirteen. He claimed his wager of \$10,000 was made with the California Athletic Club in Oakland, California, in 1887. He needed to walk 65,000 miles within ten years and he was nearly finished. He claimed to have visited all the countries in the world except for Canada, Greenland, and Siberia. He told fantastic stories including meeting Queen Victoria, and he displayed a large collection of curiosities including a piece of rope that President James Garfield's assassin was hung by.

An Oakland newspaper did a little due-diligence on the story. The Athletic club no longer existed. Its former director in 1887 had never heard of Harold before. No one in Oakland claimed to be friends with Harold. "He will have trouble in finding his relatives for they have long since changed their residence in Oakland and are nowhere to be found in the city."

GEORGE HAROLD,

The Original Boy Tramp,

**Who is Making 65,000 Miles
on a Five Thousand Dallar
Wager, has many Interest-
ing Relics.**

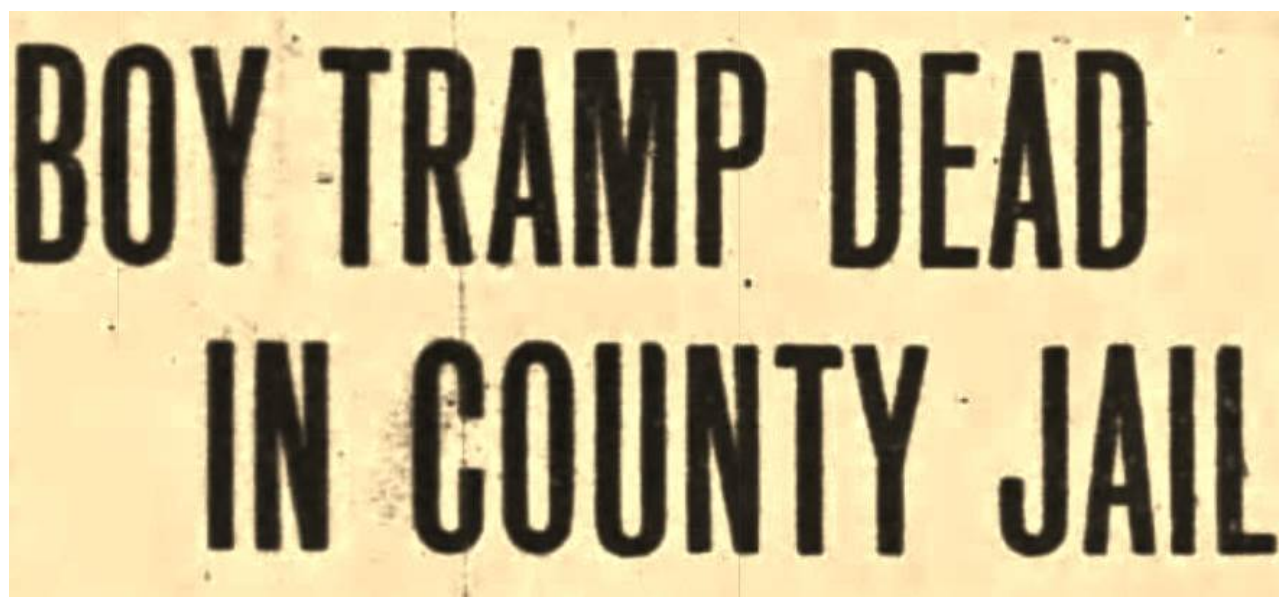
Harold's story quickly changed. He said he had started from his home in St. Louis, Missouri and then from Newport, Kentucky and then from New York City. In Kansas it was reported, "Quite a crowd heard his story and many believed. He told it without wincing, and never cracked a smile. He may be what he claims. One rustic standing nearby exclaimed, 'Be ye lying boy, or be ye the devil himself?' He kept up his scam for several years. The rope fragment soon was from the rope that that hung murderer Cherokee Bill.



Harold made his way to Buffalo, New York, was found sleeping in a box car and brought to the police station. For two hours he talked and talked. "If Justice Miller had not arrived and suspended sentence on him, the chances are he would still be talking. George Harold is the most accomplished liar ever permitted to burden the earth. He is a good talker. That is, he can tear weird tales off by the yard and at the finish rise on his tip-toes and scream for more time and fresh victims. The police were only too glad to rid themselves of his presence."



Oddly, his ten-year journey that was supposed to have end in 1897, was still happening in 1902 when he was pulling his scam at Afton, Illinois. "George Harold, is a greasy specimen of genius hobo, imposing on the credulous, and representing that he was walking around the world. His appearance indicated that he has not washed since he started on the trip nine years ago." In 1903 he changed the story to be a bet to travel for 15 years. In Indiana it was stated, "Almost everyone here knows 'Phoney' the boy tramp."



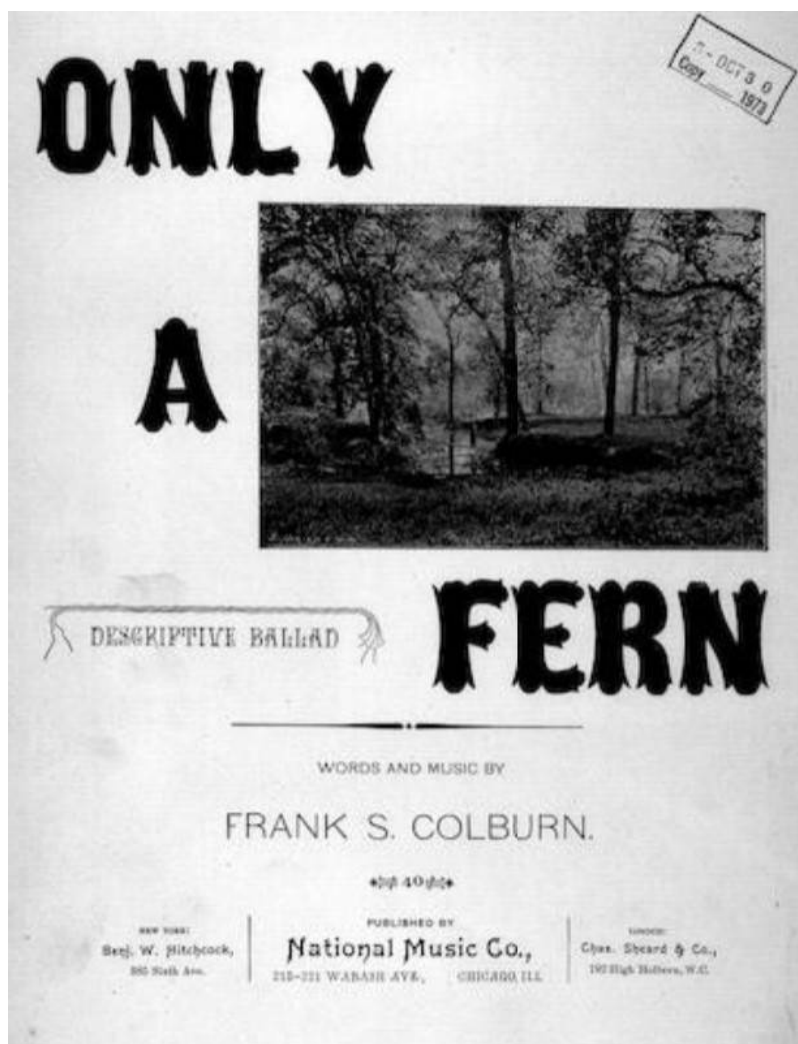
PLACE OF DEATH		Indiana State Board of Health. 293	
County of <u>Bartholomew</u>	CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.		
Township of <u>Columbus</u>	Registered No. <u>4</u>		
OR City of <u>Columbus</u>	St. <u>1st</u> Ward		
FULL NAME <u>Andrew Voll</u>		If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give the NAME, NUMBER OF STREET and NUMBER	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS.		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH.	
SEX <u>Male</u>	COLOR <u>White</u>	DATE OF DEATH <u>Jan. 20</u> 190 <u>8</u>	
DATE OF BIRTH <u>Dec 25</u>	I HEREBY CERTIFY That I attended deceased from		
AGE <u>35</u> years, <u>00</u> months, <u>22</u> days	190 <u>0</u> to 190 <u>8</u>		
SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Single</u>	that I last saw him alive on <u>Jan 15</u> 190 <u>8</u>		
NAME OF HUSBAND OR WIFE	and that death occurred on the date stated above, at <u>6:30</u> P.M.		
BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) <u>Ohio</u>	The IMMEDIATE CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:		
NAME OF FATHER <u>Andrew Voll</u>	<u>Epilepsy</u>		
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) <u>Germany</u>	Contributory <u>to by Alcoholism</u>		
MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Anna Timbach</u>	duration <u>3</u> days		
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) <u>Germany</u>	Signed <u>Just Buchanan</u> M.D.		
OCCUPATION	JAN <u>25</u> - 190 <u>8</u> Address <u>Columbus</u>		
THE ABOVE STATED PERSONAL PARTICULARS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF		SPECIAL INFORMATION only for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients, or Recent Residents	
(Informant) <u>George Voll</u>	Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death?		DATE OF BURIAL
(Address) <u>Cincinnati Ohio</u>	PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>City Cemetery</u>		<u>Jan 22 1908</u>
Filed <u>1-28-1908</u>	DR. A. M. KIRK		ADDRESS <u>Columbus</u>
Health Officer or Deputy		J. D. EMMONS	

Harold kept up his wanderings from town to town in the Midwest telling his changing stories until 1908 when he died in a jail in Indiana at the age of 35. He was thought to be drunk, was unconscious when placed in jail, and never woke up. It was rumored that he had been murdered by someone in a saloon who gave "croton oil" in a drink of whiskey. The story was widely published causing quite a stir because he was well-known. But Harold's brother showed up and let people know the George Harold was actually 35-year-old Andrew Voll, born in Ohio. His brother said Harold often had drunken fits and had once before tried to commit suicide while in a drunken tantrum. He had been afraid that this would happen. A scheduled autopsy was canceled and he was buried in the Columbus, Indiana cemetery.

After his death, the true story of George Harold was told. About 1892, at the age of 19, he drifted into Columbus, Indiana and started working at the waterworks. He wanted a reputation, and a friend suggested that he start out as a "boy tramp." The story continued, "A sweater was secured on which the words, 'The Original Boy Tramp' were lettered, and Harold left Columbus and took the long trail. Supposedly, he was making a circuit of the globe, but he never got very far away from Columbus, returning two to three times a year. Throughout the years that followed, Harold was busy making his reputation. He was never anything but a tramp, but that was his ambition in life, and he was proud of it. He had enough clippings from city papers about himself to fill an extra large scrap book. He always brought back 2-3 dilapidated grips full of 'junk' and his imagination was so good that each piece of junk had its story. The man was harmless."

Frank S. Colburn "The Yankee Tourist" – 1896

Frank Saywood Colburn (1856-1932) of Maine, known as the “Yankee Tourist,” started his walk around the world from New York City on September 18, 1896, going east to west. He was one of the very few who was not walking for a wager with stipulations of poverty. He said he was doing it to study human nature and improve his health through exercise. He hoped to reach Paris for the exposition of 1900 and he said he was in no hurry.

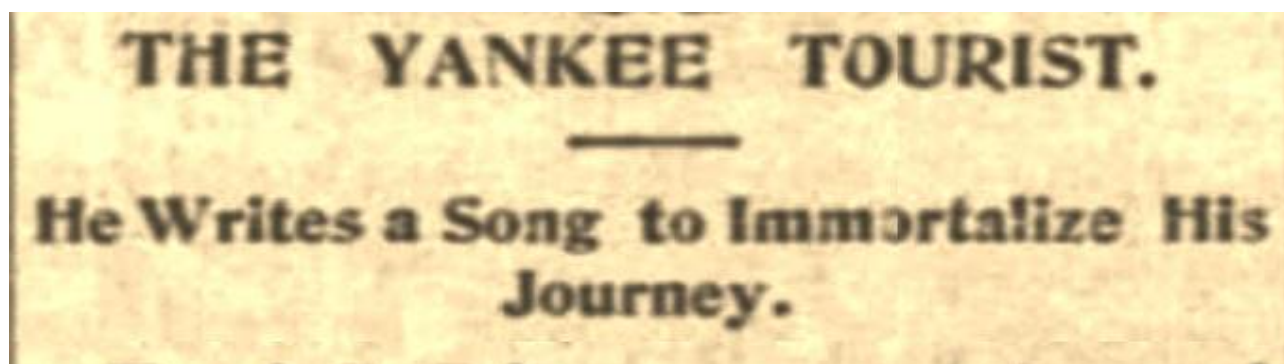


Coburn explained, “For several months I had been struggling earning a living in New York City. The idea came to me that I might as well try to work my way around the world, for, although I might starve to death, my fate could not be worse than it would be in a busy metropolis, and I would at least learn something while I was suffering the pangs of hunger.”

Coburn was a newspaper reporter but also a talented and renowned song writer. He was famous for writing the music and lyrics for “Only a Fern” which he wrote in 1895. It was about finding a fern in his late mother’s bible, marking the parable of the prodigal son.



In West Virginia it was observed, "The 'Yankee Tourist' is an entertaining talker and his experiences are well worth hearing. He wants to see the world, gain knowledge of customs and devices of this queer world." He reached Chicago in December where he stopped for two months, waiting out the cold weather and worked on his music.



In Iowa, Colburn wrote a song about his trip entitled "The Yankee Tourist." "The song is a merry jingle explanatory of the trip and should be the means of hypnotizing many a glittering dime for Colburn." In April, in Omaha, Nebraska, Coburn was arrested for begging in the street, but released when he showed the court that he was seeking donations to ship home a package of songs and books that he had written.

Colburn's walk was viewed as highly credible. In July, 1897 at Grand Junction, Colorado it was written, "The gentleman is not one of the gushing globetrotters who have periodically pass through here. He has a definite laudable object in view and he never swerves for a moment from attaining it. His songs are nicely printed and are a valuable contribution to musical literature."

Colburn described his trip across the Utah and Nevada desert, "Many times I nearly died of thirst and starvation. At one point where I was nearly exhausted, an engineer on a passing freight train threw me the

remnants of his lunch, which probably saved my life. Section men, station agents, and hotel keepers generally treated me kindly. Through the great snowsheds of the Sierra, out into one of the most beautiful and romantic portions of California, I walked, and finally footsore and wearily reached Sacramento. From there to San Francisco I rode, because several years before I had walked over the same ground."



There, he was unable to find passage to China. He joined the California Volunteers in 1898 when the Spanish American War broke out and hoped to be sent to the Philippines where he could then leave the service and continue his walk. But he was kept in California on heavy artillery coastal duty. He became disheartened as he couldn't find passage to Asia. One day, a friend of his told him that he resembled Uncle Sam. Colburn decided it was his birthright and trademark. In 1899 he was mustered out of the service and given a nice benefit in San Francisco. He was highly respected and donned the persona and costume of Uncle Sam.



Colburn had not given up on his world walk and headed north toward Seattle, walking nearly the entire way, hoping to catch a steamer to Japan. He was now known as "Uncle Sam." In Oregon it was observed, "Without the customary makeup, Colburn is an excellent representation of Uncle Sam. It takes all kinds of people to make up the world, and Colburn is one of them, one we feel younger for meeting, whether a crank or not."

Colburn reached Seattle and tried to stow away on a steamer, but was discovered and thrown off. He claimed that he could have succeeded if he had discarded his Uncle Sam costume. He went to Victoria, Canada where he was met with a similar reception. He knew he was out of time to reach Paris for the world's fair, so in July, 1900, he decided to start heading back to New York in a 'go-as-you-please' manner, riding or walking, stopping for lectures, and hiring out for advertisements. He would put himself on display in store windows to advertise goods.





In 1904, Coburn, age 46, was back walking around the world. claiming that he was the original Uncle Sam and had walked across America and back. He lectured about the U.S. constitution and the Declaration of Independence. He made it as far as St. Louis, Missouri. In 1913 he started again, but had an operation for eye trouble and changed plans to walk to Panama, but gave that up and just continued to compose music and travel.

In 1917 he started yet another walk to California still dressed as Uncle Sam. He claimed that it was his 20th cross-country tour and that he had walked nearly 20,000 miles for the past 20 years. He planned to walk 10,000 miles during the next three years. As he went along he performed a vaudeville act, as the original Uncle Sam. It became very successful. He didn't end up in California, but for the rest of World War I, he promoted Liberty loans as Uncle Sam.





In 1921, Colburn was on a very strange walk east to west. Along the way he was walking a route that on a map formed the words "Uncle Sam." Too bad he didn't have a GPS to put it on Strava. Colburn's fame as Uncle Sam continued for years. When asked why he was doing that, he replied, "This is just a notion of mine. Everybody has some hobby, you know, and this is mine." At age 71 in 1929 he was still touring and performing. He wrote a popular song, "After the Ball is Over." He claimed that he was the Uncle Sam with a pointing finger on the familiar World War poster captioned "Uncle Sam Wants You." He had performed his theatrical role in all 48 states. Frank S. Colburn died on January 4, 1932 in a veteran's hospital in Missouri, at the age of 73.

The Craze Continues

Even young boys were affected by the frensy. "Three Oklahoma boys recently started to walk around the world. They got 15 miles and then returned home to get something to eat."

Starting these jaunts naked had turned into quite a fad. In Wisconsin it was reported, "Gust Johnson was found in the woods in a nude condition preparatory, the fellow said, to starting to walk around the world. The case is being investigated."

New Yorker—I think this man Jones, who left Boston for a tramp around the world, is a blamed fool.

Chicagoan—And I think he is remarkably bright.

What for?

Leaving Boston.

In Buffalo, New York, a man appeared in town. On the back of his coat was written, "Walking around the world for a wager of \$20,000." He went up to a group of cyclists, passed his hat and collect 56 cents. One refused to contribute. The man took the money, went into a bar, came out drunk and passed out. The cyclist who didn't contribute said to his friends, "You fellows are easy. That fellow is work a new game. He is no moare walking about the world than I am. He plays this dodge up North during the summer time and down South during the winter. He makes a good living and does nothave to work. He keeps away from the cities for the police are onto him and he is liable to be pinched for vagrancy."

A Chicago man has started to walk around the world. So many signs of "keep off the grass" prevent him from cutting across.

By the end of 1896 some newspaper men were tired of the globetrotters. "These erratic specimens of our common humanity were novelties once, and as such were interesting, but the novelty is all gone now, and their invasion of private offices in their endeavor to work schemes by which they are to garner their thousands, has become so tiresome and so frequent, that it makes men long for a refreshing visit from a book agent or a lightning rod man."

Some tried hard to persuade the masses to wise up. "We welcome the fake with open pocketbooks. Let a man come who says he is going to walk around the world as an example. As a farm hand, working hard, and giving good value, he is not encouraged nor helped. But the day that he announces his determination to attempt a very foolish performance, to do something that is a wicked waste of energy that cannot possibly result in good to anybody, we open our purses and encourage him in his folly. We have no assurance that he will half accomplish his foolish undertaking, but take his word for it and shower our money accordingly."

Some towns in the Midwest were through with the walkers. "The next tramp who arrives in town carrying a flag or a message from the Queen of Wahsitaw, or a letter to the mayor of Dead Beats Rest, or a note to the chief of Easy street, all of which necessitates a tramp around the world, should be arrested and put to work on a rock pile. Nine out of ten of this variety of globe trotters are dead beats and worse than common tramps. They do not go around the world and never intended to do so, but simply tramp and make money at it."

Read all parts:

Part 1 – Around the World on Foot (1875-1895)

Part 2 – Around the World on Foot Craze (1894-96)

Part 3 – Around the World on Foot (1894-1899)

Part 4 – Around the World on Foot – The Bizarre

Part 5 – Races Around the World on Foot – Dumitru Dan

Part 6 – Walking Backwards Around the World

Part 7 – Dave Kunst – Walk Around the World – 1

Part 8 – Dave Kunst – Walk Around the World – 2

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