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## Article Title: The Variegated Life of Norfolk's Diamond Dick

Full Citation: L Boyd Finch, "The Variegated Life of Norfolk's Diamond Dick," *Nebraska History* 84 (2003): 181-193

URL of article: <http://www.nebraskahistory.org/publish/publicat/history/full-text/NH2003DiamondDick.pdf>

Date: 9/12/2012

Article Summary: Richard Tanner (1869-1943) travelled with a circus as a crack shot when he was a young man. Later he had a medical career in Norfolk and then recreated himself as "Diamond Dick," a medicine show practitioner who claimed to have known all the famous characters of the Wild West.

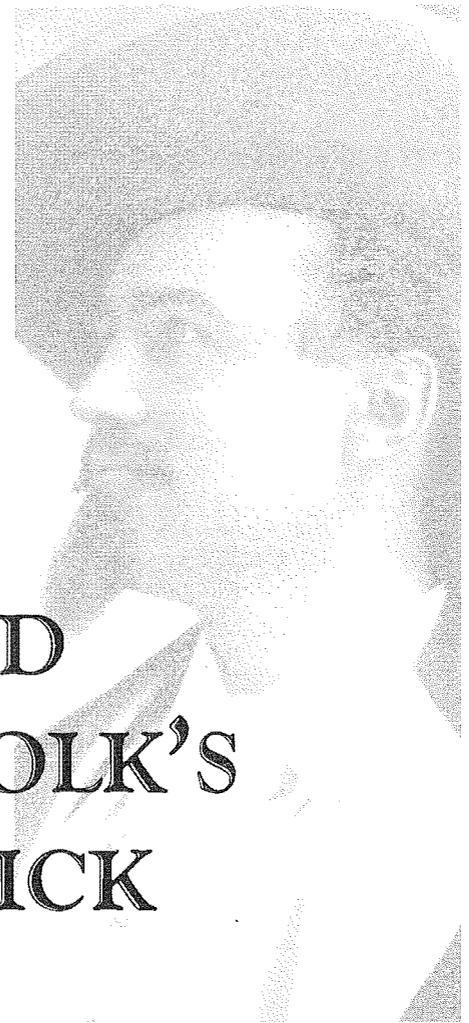
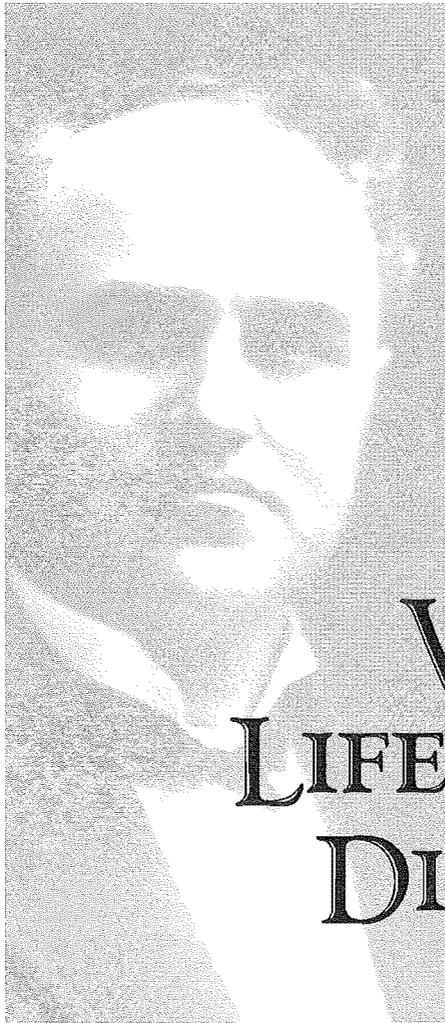
### Cataloging Information:

Names: Richard Jerome "Diamond Dick" Tanner, Nellie Snyder Yost, Buffalo Bill Cody, George G McClellan, W B Lawson, Wild Bill Hickok, Richard "Deadwood Dick" Clarke, Calamity Jane, William F "Doc" Carver

Nebraska Place Names: Norfolk

Keywords: Richard Jerome "Diamond Dick" Tanner, Leman Brothers Circus (later the Great Pan-American Circus), Buffalo Bill Cody, George G McClellan, Pioneer Days Celebration (Norfolk), Wild Bill Hickok, Richard "Deadwood Dick" Clarke, Calamity Jane, William F "Doc" Carver

Photographs / Images: Dr Richard J Tanner; Tanner and "Gyp" (*New York World* cartoon, June 20, 1893); "Diamond Dick" Tanner; handbill for Tanner's Sitting Bull postcard; handbill for a medical "chalk talk" by Dr Tanner; a Diamond Dick novel from Tanner's collection; advertisement for "Diamond Dick's Indianola Herb Tablets"; handbill for Diamond Dick's "Sanitary Soap Cloths"; advertisement for "Watonka," a Tanner remedy; the "Plainsmen" of Norfolk, June 16, 1927: Major Gordon W "Pawnee Bill" Lillie, Captain Luther H "Lute" North, Richard W "Deadwood Dick" Clarke, William F "Doc" Carver, Colonel B R "Idaho Bill" Pearson, and Dr Richard J "Diamond Dick" Tanner



# THE VARIEGATED LIFE OF NORFOLK'S DIAMOND DICK

By L. Boyd Finch

**T**he events of August 28, 1925, were like a rebirth for fifty-five-year-old Dr. Richard Jerome Tanner of Norfolk, Nebraska. Once again he became "Diamond Dick . . . the man who thrilled millions of spectators with his marvelous skill as a crack shot . . . [and] the world's greatest cross-country rider." Advance publicity for Norfolk's Pioneer Days Celebration that August teased the town, revealing only that Diamond Dick was a "prominent Norfolkian . . . who has concealed his identity for years." The "Mystery Man"

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*L. Boyd Finch is a retired regional administrator with the National Park Service. In retirement he has pursued an interest in Western history. Recently he found that his paternal grandmother played in a "Ladies Silver Cornet Band" that accompanied a "Dr. Diamond Dick" and his show through Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas in 1888. Research disclosed that Richard "Diamond Dick" Tanner was not that man, but his story seemed too good to abandon without sharing it.*

would appear at the celebration.<sup>1</sup>

The great day arrived. Dr. Tanner appeared in the buckskin of a frontier showman, riding a calico pony in the parade, and showing that he still was an excellent marksman with a rifle. "Mouths gaped in astonishment," a national magazine reported, "for the Diamond Dick of their dreams was their family physician, Dr. Richard J. Tanner." The "Diamond Dick of their dreams" may have been the young "Col. Dick Tanner" of turn-of-the-century circus fame. For others he was the Wild West fictional adventurer of several hundred dime novels during that earlier era. Or, he could have been one of two other Diamond Dicks in the Missouri Valley from a generation earlier.<sup>2</sup>

Long before Irving Berlin put the words "There's No Business Like Show Business" to music, Richard Tanner joined a circus, succumbing to the allure of the big top. As Annie Oakley

found in Berlin's musical, *Annie Get Your Gun*, other workers "get paid for what they do, *but no applause*." Twenty years after Dr. Tanner began his medical career, he still missed the applause. Eventually he found a way to regain it.<sup>3</sup>

Tanner's life encompassed a noteworthy long-distance horseback ride, circus stardom as a crack shot, disappearance from the show circuit to enter medical college and open practice in Norfolk, lectures and promotion of "natural" medicines, reappearance as "the original Diamond Dick," national news coverage as one of the last frontiersmen, controversy over his claim to be the original Diamond Dick, and the spinning of tales that depicted him as an intimate of many Wild West figures. He was more than a simple "country doctor;" he was truly a *show-man*, a master of self-publicity.

Richard Jerome Tanner was born near Stonington, Christian County,

Illinois, on November 27, 1869, to Richard R. and Harriet Tanner. His father died, and in 1878 the boy and his mother emigrated to Nebraska to live with an uncle in Clay County—one hundred yards from the Oregon Trail, he said later. He practiced firearms marksmanship and herded cattle. Although its Tanner Collection fills seven and one-half linear feet of document boxes, the Nebraska State Historical Society finds it “difficult to say just where he was and what he was doing” as a youth. He claimed he began as a Wild West performer when he was “a youth of 16.” He became sixteen on November 27, 1885.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, according to his half-century-old memory, Fred V. Matthews of Laramie, Wyoming, recalled seeing Tanner perform in Portland, Maine, in the summer of 1885, advertising himself as Diamond Dick. Matthews remembered Tanner as “a tall, erect, young man with long curls on his shoulders, with a repeating rifle, who shot blocks of wood from the head of a youth.” In later years, Matthews said, he looked in vain for Diamond Dick at Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.<sup>5</sup>

James Earle Fraser, sculptor of the American Indian statue, *The End of the Trail*, and designer of the Buffalo Nickel, described another encounter with a Diamond Dick in 1885. At age nine, living on a farm south of Mitchell, South Dakota, Fraser was roaming the prairie when a young man came galloping toward him and “he actually glittered as he rode.” Gold and silver flashed from the saddle and bridle, and the rider’s black velvet clothing was decorated in gold. “The bright sunlight . . . made him more dazzling than any person I had ever seen.” The rider carried a beautiful rifle, and asked Fraser to hold his horse while he shot at ducks nearby. Fraser said he did not think the rifle would be good for that. “Oh yes, it will—if I can see it, I’ll only knock its head off.” After firing, he asked Fraser to wade in and get the duck:

[I] waded in, expecting to see a badly



Dr. Richard J. Tanner, as most residents of Norfolk knew him in the period from 1910 to 1925. RG1345:PH:13

mutilated duck, but on the contrary, I found two shot through the head. . . . He put the ducks into his saddlebags, said, “Thanks,” and held out his hand to shake mine. I felt something in my hand as he turned, and I let it drop. “Pick it up,” he said, “and now you can say that you shook the hand of Diamond Dick.” He jumped on his horse and galloped away before I could return the coin. It turned out to be a ten-dollar gold piece. Diamond Dick was certainly picturesque; he became a famous wild west showman.<sup>6</sup>

Fraser’s Diamond Dick may have been Doc Percy Hudson, whose photograph from a Madison, South Dakota, studio illustrated a 1929 *Saturday Evening Post* article about medicine shows. Hudson appeared to be a young man, with a wispy mustache, goatee, and shoulder-length hair; he wore a cowboy hat, slim bow tie and wing collar, and a dark jacket adorned with braid. The story told nothing more about Hudson, but did tell about medicine shows that, like dime novels, were

popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pitchmen had touted tonics and elixirs in Europe for centuries. In America, pitchmen added vaudeville acts, musical groups, and Indians to attract buyers. For rural residents the traveling medicine show offered entertainment for the price of a bottle of tonic or liniment. Scores of the shows were on the road in the 1890s; the Kickapoo Indian Medicine Company alone sponsored as many as seventy-five units. Some practitioners worked alone; other shows grew to rival a circus. The products varied from potions mixed in a hotel bathtub to the mass product of firms such as the Kickapoo company.<sup>7</sup>

Author Wilson Messer claimed he was writing about Tanner in a 1926 *True Western Stories* magazine: “When the most romantic mail service in history was organized[,] Diamond Dick joined the ranks of the pony-express riders. His run was through the worst Indian-infested district in the trans-Missouri country, stretching from Sidney, Nebraska, to Deadwood, South Dakota. At this time, Red Cloud, the famous Sioux chief, was on the warpath, and Diamond Dick fought redskins all the way from the Platte to the Belle Fourche.” Tanner, however, had not been born when the famed Pony Express operated in 1860–61. And Tanner was yet a boy in the 1870s when Red Cloud “had enough of fighting.”<sup>8</sup>

The late Nebraska author, Nellie Snyder Yost, included a puzzling reference to Tanner in her 1980 biography of Buffalo Bill Cody, when Tanner’s persona as Diamond Dick was well established in Nebraska. She quoted a November 24, 1888, North Platte newspaper about a reception in Cody’s honor at Wallace, attended by Cody “and a large party of friends” that included Diamond Dick. Yost wrote that the paper reported there was singing, speech-making, and “Diamond Dick gave a rousing discourse on ‘Prohibition in the South Sea islands.’ Diamond Dick (Dr. Richard Tanner) was a noted

## Diamond Dick

character of the plains. A sometimes preacher, doctor and man of many callings, he was an old friend of Buffalo Bill's and had acquired his nickname because of the many diamonds he habitually wore."<sup>9</sup>

The November 24 newspaper is not on microfilm, thus it cannot be determined whether the parenthetical identification of Diamond Dick appeared in the original article or was inserted by Yost. That a youth of eighteen could be "a sometimes preacher, doctor and man of many callings . . . an old friend of Buffalo Bill's" stretches belief, not to mention the idea of his giving a lecture on prohibition in the South Seas!

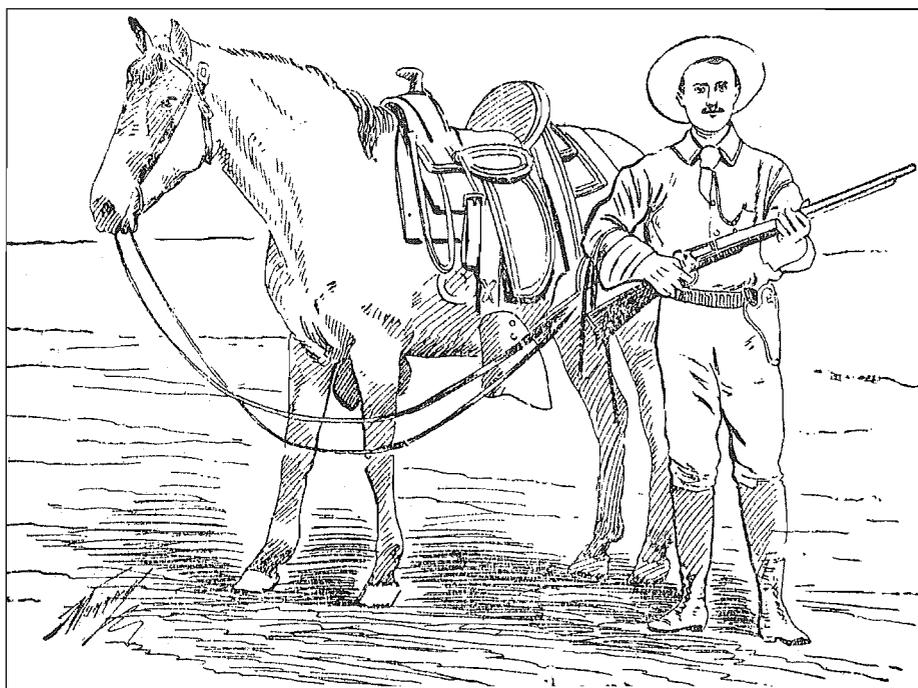
Doubt about Yost's identification of Tanner is heightened by the author's family history. His grandmother from Aledo, Illinois, Lenore Boyd, played in Kate Baker's Ladies' Silver Comet Band that accompanied Dr. Diamond Dick (George B. McClellan) with a medicine show in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa in 1888. Although their entire itinerary is unknown, Dr. Diamond Dick and the band were in Wayne, Nebraska, on October 11, 1888, when Lenore wrote to her future husband, a letter in the author's files. She returned home in mid-November when the show season ended. Since McClellan had been in Nebraska a few weeks earlier, he could have been the Diamond Dick reported with Cody in late November.<sup>10</sup>

Tanner's life comes into focus on March 15, 1893, in Lincoln, when he saddled his bronco, Gyp, for what he later called the longest ride made by one rider on one horse—5,500 miles. Tanner said he paused in Chicago to visit Buffalo Bill at the World's Fair. When he passed Valparaiso, Indiana, a reporter described "R. J. Tanner" as a young man with "clear-cut features bronzed by exposure to sun and storm . . . attired in a suit of corduroy, flannel shirt, cartridge belt, [and] broad brimmed sombrero."<sup>11</sup>

In New York City Tanner visited the office of the *New York Clipper*, a

national weekly of show business and sports news. He planned to circle the globe by sailing east from New York, he said, but fears of cholera induced him to ride west, instead. "He carries an American flag of silk, which was presented to him by the Grand Army boys [Grand Army of the Republic, Union veterans of the Civil War] and the Women's Relief Society [G.A.R.

height, with clear blue eyes, a round frank-looking face and a very small mustache." The paper announced that he would start on his globe-circling journey from the *World* building at 10 a.m. the next day. "The real, live, cowboy" was taking a "kodak" (*sic*), a rubber coat and a revolver in his pack and planned to write a book about his trip. In the next morning's paper, a



Tanner and "Gyp" were portrayed in this *New York World* cartoon, June 20, 1893. MS1345

auxiliary] of Guthrie Center, Ia." The cowboy also carried Mary Jane, a doll with a china head and cloth body, given him when he was one year old. (The well-traveled Mary Jane and the flag rest now in the museum collection of the Nebraska State Historical Society.) The newspaper reported, "Mr. Tanner, who is only twenty-three years of age, has been a cattle herder in Wyoming and Colorado since his eighth year."<sup>12</sup>

The editors of Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* arranged for Tanner to write a weekly letter for the paper. The *World* of June 19, 1893, depicted him as "a modest-appearing fellow of medium

sketch of Tanner and his pony accompanied a story about "Cowboy Tanner." Half an hour before his scheduled departure, onlookers packed Park Row in front of the newspaper building. When Tanner appeared, "a thousand hands" stretched out to shake his hand. With difficulty he pushed through the friendly crowd to Gyp, "swung himself into the saddle and rode through the gap that seemed voluntarily to open." The crowd cheered as he headed for the Cortlandt Street ferry and was on his way west. The paper observed, "the cowboy from the plains learned what a wonderful thing fame is." Tanner saved



"Diamond Dick" Tanner, as he appeared during his circus days between 1895 and 1905. RG1345-4A

the clipping; it was a lesson well learned.<sup>13</sup>

As Tanner traveled on, reporters interviewed him. He obtained clippings from the Canton, Illinois, *Ledger*; Fort Madison, Iowa, *Gem City*; Hill City, South Dakota, *Tin Miner*; and the *Pioneer* in

Deadwood. He remained four days in Deadwood, where the *Pioneer* reported, "he is stuck on the city, which he says is the best country he has yet passed through." Another reporter asked why he had not participated in the horse race from Chadron, Nebraska, to

Chicago which occurred in June; Tanner replied that the race had not been set when he left Lincoln in March. From the Black Hills he rode toward Cheyenne. The Hill City editor believed Tanner's "tough looking dun colored pony . . . seems fit to travel forever," but it was November and apparently the onset of winter or a worn out Gyp ended the journey in Wyoming or Colorado. There would be no round-the-world ride.<sup>14</sup>

Those articles reveal two interesting clues. First, because he visited the entertainment weekly, the *New York Clipper*, Tanner knew something of show business culture. And, second, not one of the articles referred to him as Diamond Dick.

Tanner did not call himself Diamond Dick until later. He first billed himself as Denver Dick. Advertising bearing his photo and calling him "COL. RICHARD J. TANNER / (Denver Dick) / Champion Shot of the World" is in the NSHS collection. The donor, Levi H. Bloyd of Fairbury, Nebraska, wrote in 1961, "I copied this from an early day show hand bill. Dr. Tanner was known as 'Denver Dick' in 1894-1895." Also in the NSHS collection is stationery of Diamond Dick: "The Famous Western Character / Diamond Dick / (Col. Dick Tanner) / The World's Greatest Shot," with a photo of Tanner in costume. Both photos are of the same man. Because of the popularity of the Diamond Dick novels, Tanner's use of the name was a show business coup.<sup>15</sup>

Billed as Diamond Dick, Tanner performed in circuses from 1895 until 1905, appearing in Mexico City in 1898. He formed his own traveling show. His shooting act was impressive, but solid evidence that Tanner performed with Buffalo Bill is missing. Later, when his claim to be Diamond Dick was in question, show business friends and former troupers rallied around. One, Florence Houston, wrote that she joined him in the winter of 1895 as his "object holder and assistant in his shooting acts," remaining with him until his show

## Diamond Dick

closed in Newkirk, Oklahoma, in 1899. She told that Tanner shot pennies off her head and was "the world's greatest shot." Another of his stunts was rapid firing at targets by "fanning" the hammer of a triggerless revolver with his thumb. George A. Knowles wrote that Tanner was "one of the world's greatest shots with both rifle and pistol."<sup>16</sup>

A. O. Perry stated that he first met Diamond Dick in 1895 at Table Rock, in the far southeastern corner of Nebraska, when Perry's small circus crossed paths with Diamond Dick, who was "running a medicine show." After thirty years, Perry still remembered "Dimond [sic] Dick's long hair, his mustash (sic) and Goat tee (sic) and his fluent language in his lectures left a great impression upon me." George B. McClellan, who traveled the Missouri Valley out of Leavenworth and Kansas City as Dr. Diamond Dick, had a medicine show, sported long hair and a goatee, and was a showy marksman. He once was described by a Nebraska newspaper as "a long-haired quack who is a good shot."<sup>17</sup>

Tanner's skill made him a feature of the Lemen Brothers Circus. The circus, and its successor, The Great Pan-American Shows, traveled the Rocky Mountain states in twenty railroad cars. In a letter to Tanner, Bert J. Chipman, formerly the show manager and orator, wrote, "Well do I remember the crack shot you were and your versatility in various lines of the amusement game."<sup>18</sup>

Tanner told interviewers in 1925 that he had "finally succumbed to a lifelong desire" in 1905, entering Cotner College (which then included Lincoln Medical College) and Nebraska Wesleyan University. "My step-father was rapidly failing and I realized that there must be someone to take care of my mother. There wasn't much choice." The college taught Eclectic medicine, "a nineteenth-century medicinal cult. . . . Special attention was given to developing indigenous plant remedies." In other words,

**Tanner promoted the sale of his Sitting Bull postcard with this handbill. RG1345**

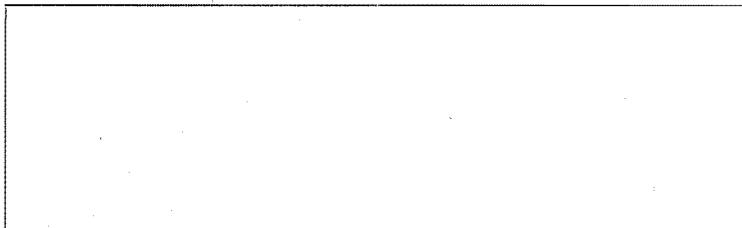
### GREAT HISTORICAL POST CARD FOR SALE HERE



CHIEF SITTING BULL AND FAMILY  
THE ONLY PICTURE EVER TAKEN OF THEM.

Represents four generations of the great Sioux Nation, viz: Sitting Bull's Mother; Sitting Bull; His Daughter and the Daughter's Child.

A picture of historical value—Sitting Bull was the greatest Sioux that ever lived. He claimed to have "mixed medicine" with the Great Spirit that brought victory to the Sioux Warriors and death and destruction to the 7th Reg., U. S. Cavalry—General Custer's Command—at the famous Battle of the Little Big Horn or Custer Massacre.



“root, herb, and bark medicine.”<sup>19</sup>

While in college he married Ruth Goodman, and published a postcard of “Chief Sitting Bull and Family, The Only Picture Ever Taken of Them.” For store display, a handbill promoted “Great Historical Post Card For Sale Here.” He received the M.D. degree in 1909 and ceased using the name Diamond Dick.<sup>20</sup>

Tanner looked to Oklahoma as a promising field for his practice, gathering ten letters of recommendation from Nebraska dignitaries, among them William Jennings Bryan; Gov. Ashton C. Shallenberger; Dean Charles Fordyce of the university; and banker L. J. Dunn, whose endorsement mentioned Muskogee as Tanner’s destination. Evidence that he moved to Oklahoma has not been found.<sup>21</sup>

In 1910 Dr. Tanner opened his practice in Norfolk as an herb doctor and traveled to outlying towns to lecture on medical subjects and promote his medications. His illustrated “chalk talks” on diseases and anatomy were not free; the Tanner Collection includes adult and children’s tickets. A handbill stated on one side, “A Fact / DOCTOR TANNER / Specialist treats all DISEASES for ONE DOLLAR A WEEK / And Furnishes All the Medicine Without Extra Charge. Treatments sent prepaid to all places in the United States and Canada. Special attention given to treatment of DISEASES OF WOMEN.” On the reverse a “SYMPTOM BLANK” listed more than sixty symptoms that the prospective patient could check. Tanner stated, “If I believe your case to be incurable your money will be refunded by first mail. *NO INCURABLE CASES ACCEPTED.*”

He saved letters, many in his own writing, but ostensibly signed by satisfied patients from such points as Valentine, Hartington, Columbus, and Nickerson. His practice was a form of show business, but it lacked the excitement of being a sharp-shooting circus star.<sup>22</sup>

The *Omaha Daily News* reported in 1911: “Diamond Dick Dies Quietly in His Bed / No Lightning, No Shooting, No Thunder, No Excitement in Close

# COMING!

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*THE GREAT*

## *Richard Jerome Tanner, M. D.*

*Surgeon and Lecturer*

*WILL DELIVER HIS FAMOUS CHALK TALK ON*

# APPENDICITIS

*and demonstrate the*

## SURGICAL OPERATION

A handbill announcing one of Dr. Tanner’s medical “chalk talks.” RG1345

of Famous Career.” The story identified George B. McClellan of Kansas as the Diamond Dick “of literary fame” who “ran away at age sixteen and later joined Buffalo Bill’s and Pawnee Bill’s shows.”<sup>23</sup>

That there could be more than one Diamond Dick should not have been surprising. A generation or more of Americans knew the fictional Diamond Dick, and his son, Diamond Dick, Jr., as

two heroic figures in cheap melodramatic dime novels (many selling for a nickel). From the 1880s to 1911 several men wrote Diamond Dick novels, using the pen name W. B. Lawson. The hero rescued damsels and thwarted villains. Most tales were set on the frontier, but one was “Diamond Dick’s Wild West Show.” Several others featured circuses, but no medicine shows. Tanner collected a score of the novels.<sup>24</sup>

## Diamond Dick

Dr. Tanner's ads, headed "SPECIALIST," bore his photo—a clean-shaven, balding man in a wing collar, wearing a small string tie and a dark suit—and captioned, "The Eminent Specialist, RICHARD JEROME TANNER, M.D., Physician and Surgeon." A larger ad or handbill declared, "It is a fact that Dr. Tanner cures more people for less money than any other specialist in America. . . . No living physician has ever guarded the people's health more honestly than has Dr. Tanner. . . . Dr.

Tanner has made good in Norfolk, and his hundreds of cured patients are constantly sending others." At the bottom was a testimonial from Mrs. T. R. Leonard of Norfolk: "[A]fter taking a few doses of his medicine I was relieved of a heaping handfull [sic] of gallstones, and now I am well."<sup>25</sup>

Tanner may have been "making good," but in 1921 nostalgia for show business led him to write Cincinnati showman J. T. McClellan (presumably not related to George B. McClellan) about organizing a stock company "after this season" to "put out a big show" on the road. McClellan expressed mild interest, but nothing developed. Tanner wrote to Bert Chipman, his former boss with the Great Pan-American Circus, that he was planning a book, *Shows and Showmen That I Have Met Up With*. Chipman offered to help with information from his scrapbooks. If Tanner wrote such a memoir, it is not in the Society's collection.<sup>26</sup>

By January 1925 Dr. Tanner was thinking of reviving his career as Diamond Dick. He inquired of old friend E. P. Wiley about bookings for a sharp-shooting act. Wiley, operating as United Producing & Amusement Co., "Producers of Indoor and Outdoor Shows," replied that a committee in Sheridan, Wyoming, was considering "putting on a Rodeo on the old Custer

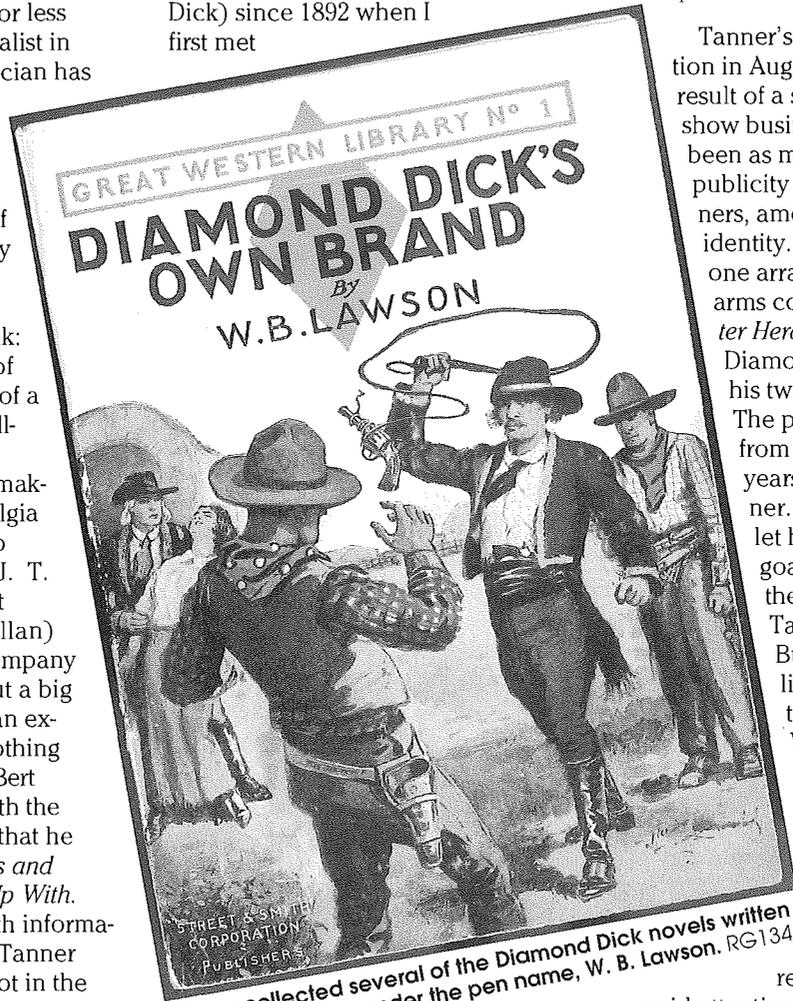
Battle Field during June . . . and they want some outstanding feature, so, if you think you want any of that kind of work let me know at once." Thirteen days later Wiley provided a "To Whom It May Concern" endorsement: "I have known the Bearer of this letter Mr. Dick Tanner (otherwise known as Diamond Dick) since 1892 when I first met

along the Elkhorn River. . . . A flock of sand hill cranes, flying so high that they looked like mere specks in the sky, passed over our heads. I think the third or fourth shot from Diamond Dick's rifle, brought down one of those great birds. The crane was so high in the air that when it struck the earth, within a few feet from where we stood, the impact burst the body wide open."<sup>28</sup>

Tanner's emergence at the celebration in August of 1925 was not the result of a sudden whim, and his show business past may not have been as much a local mystery as publicity suggested. The event planners, among others, knew his identity. Well in advance, someone arranged for the Winchester arms company's August *Winchester Herald* magazine to tell of Diamond Dick's plan to "break his twenty-five year retirement." The piece included a photo from Diamond Dick's circus years but did not name Tanner. Also, the doctor began to let his hair, mustache, and goatee grow. By the time of the parade, the stocky Dr. Tanner looked as much like Buffalo Bill as possible, a living symbol of the romantic myth of America's Wild West.<sup>29</sup>

His appearance at the celebration was a publicity success. The Norfolk correspondent for the Associated Press let the world know that the frontier marksman had returned, and the world

paid attention. But fame had a drawback. Dr. Tanner's claim to be Diamond Dick was challenged immediately. The *Omaha World-Herald* reported, "No sooner had the word gone out over the nation's press wires than he was called upon to defend his title." A Cleveland, Ohio, dispatch quoted Mrs. Owen Sullivan, "who says she is a sister to 'Diamond Dick,' associated with Buffalo Bill many years ago." She declared that

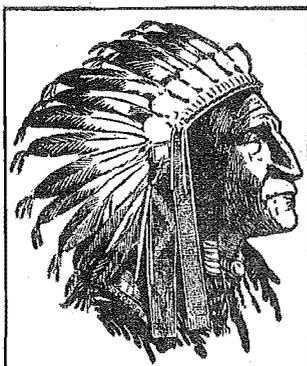


Tanner collected several of the Diamond Dick novels written by various authors under the pen name, W. B. Lawson. RG1345

him in Lincoln . . . I consider his Rifle shooting to [be] among the best exhibitions of that nature I have ever seen." Sheridan's leaders made other plans.<sup>27</sup>

Lawyer J. C. Cook of Fremont endorsed Tanner as "positively a genius, either with the rifle or a six shooter:"

Diamond Dick and the writer, one bright spring day [in 1896], were target shooting



**Diamond Dick's  
Indianola Herb Tablets**

A mild but effective laxative for relief from obstinate Constipation.

Root, herb and bark formula.  
DOSE: 1 or 2 at Bedtime.

30 TABLETS Postpaid for 25c

**DR. RICHARD TANNER  
(DIAMOND DICK)**

315 South 12th St.

Norfolk, Nebraska

"Diamond Dick's Indianola Herb Tablets." MNH8073-123

**A NEW INVENTION MADE IN NORFOLK**



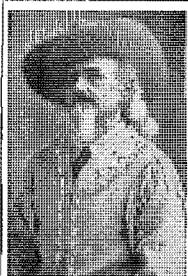
DIAMOND DICK  
(Richard Tanner, M. D.)  
Mexico City, Dec. 5, 1898

**Diamond Dick's  
MEXICAN WONDER  
SANITARY  
SOAP CLOTHS**

HEALING — HYGIENIC — HANDY  
Ideal for Toilet and Bath

By cutting Sanitary Soap Cloths into smaller pieces a sufficient supply to last many days can be carried in purse or pocket.

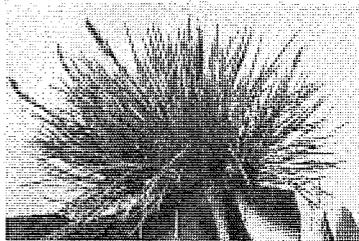
**YOU NEED NO OTHER SOAP!**



DIAMOND DICK  
(Richard Tanner, M. D.)  
As he appears in 1907

A Paramount Product that will quickly prove all claims and assertions made for them.

Guaranteed Satisfactory or your money cheerfully refunded



**MEXICAN SOAP PLANT**

Soap like the Indians make in Old Mexico, where in 1898 Diamond Dick learned how to make it. Contains Mexican Soap Root which helps it to produce an amazing amount of rich white lather that is softening, healing and cleansing. Does not contain any injurious chemicals and will not injure the most delicate skin. Use Sanitary Soap Cloth the same way that you would use a bar of toilet soap, and each Soap Cloth can be used many times. Individual Soap Cloths protect you from using a bar of soap which some diseased person has used and left for you to use. "A word to the wise is sufficient." Individual Sanitary Soap Cloths solve the problem for tourists and the traveling public, and they are ideal for home or office. Something new, something different, hygienic, handy and economical. Guaranteed satisfactory or your money refunded. One Dozen (Regular size) 25 cents, postpaid United States or Canada. Invented, Made and Sold by

Something New!  
Something Novel!  
Decidedly Different!  
The Sanitary Way!  
The Safe Way!  
The Handy Way!  
A New Invention!  
They Stand Alone!

**RICHARD TANNER, M. D.  
(DIAMOND DICK)**

Office and Medical Laboratory—315 So. 12th St., Norfolk, Nebr.  
Located in Norfolk Twenty-seven Years

A handbill advertising Diamond Dick's "Sanitary Soap Cloths." RG1345

Diamond Dick was her brother, George B. McClellan, "who died thirteen years ago in a Kansas City hospital" and was buried at Ogdensburg, New York. Mrs. Sullivan displayed photographs of her brother bearing the inscription "Diamond Dick."<sup>30</sup>

The *World-Herald* published Tanner's response, telling of his Diamond Dick background, mentioning his letters from old show business colleagues. With the story were two photos, the one he used in his medical ads and one from his circus days, a dramatic left profile, complete with a broad-brimmed hat and formal attire, with shoulder-length wavy hair, a goatee, and mustache. "Ever since 'Diamond Dick' became a national figure, others have tried to assume the name," he told the paper. "Dr. Tanner said that during the many years that he was putting on shooting exhibitions . . . he never heard the name of George B. McClellan, and has never known there was such a man." The *Norfolk Daily News* reported, however, that Tanner "concedes others may have used the pseudonym Diamond Dick," and said that Norfolk's mayor once had "ordered out of town" a Diamond Dick show.<sup>31</sup>

Another contradictory view appeared. Dr. James H. A. Stockfield of Fremont told the press that Tanner was not the original Diamond Dick, and that he had ended the Lincoln-to-New York horseback ride because of his horse's sore back. To counter the latter charge, Tanner showed an 1893 clipping from the *New York World* reporting his ride from Lincoln to New York City, and telling of his departure for the return trip.<sup>32</sup>

To the press Tanner talked at length about famous Western characters. It was the beginning of his storytelling in print and on the radio:

Dr. Tanner likes to recall his days among the west's pioneer characters. He recalls many tales of "Colorado Charley," "Wild Bill" Hickock [sic], "California Joe," the immortal Custer, "Calamity Jane," and "Deadwood Dick. . . ." Recalling "Calamity Jane," Dr. Tanner tells of how she frequently dressed as a man. "The next

## Diamond Dick

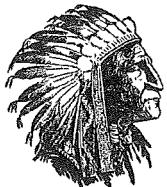
day," he said, "she would be seen in feminine attire."<sup>33</sup>

Tanner once again discovered "what a wonderful thing fame is." To add more Wild West luster to his background, he moved to elaborate on his Diamond Dick identity. As the Society's biographical summary states, "He set about corresponding with a number of other 'frontiersmen,' establishing his name and discussing events of the past. Tanner, rightly or wrongly, assumed the character of the 'Diamond Dick' who had been the hero of . . . very popular 'dime-novels'." Among the luminaries he wrote were W. F. "Doc" Carver, champion marksman; Luther "Lute" North, army scout; Richard W. "Deadwood Dick" Clarke; and Wild West showman "Pawnee Bill" Lillie. All were older than Tanner. Perhaps to make up for his relative youth, Tanner read widely in histories and fiction of the West, and steeped himself in the details. In writing to the older men he could cite early events and remind them that he had met them years before. Correct or not, his correspondents remembered Diamond Dick Tanner.<sup>34</sup>

In 1926 *Happy Hours Magazine*, published for dime novel collectors, printed Tanner's article, "The Death of Wild Bill," which he called an imaginative first-hand report of the murder of Wild Bill Hickok in a Deadwood saloon in 1876. The editor called Tanner "the original Wild West pony express rider and government scout." That article was followed by "Deadwood Dick on Deck," wherein Tanner stated that he and Deadwood Dick had worked for Wells Fargo. In another *Happy Hours* piece, "Friends of the Old West," the title and text suggested that Tanner was writing about personal acquaintances: "Wild Bill Hickok, as I remember him, was a mild-mannered, soft-spoken, unassuming gentleman." Hickok died on August 2, 1876, when Tanner was age six. Among other "Friends" in Tanner's article were Calamity Jane, Sitting Bull, Deadwood Dick, and Doc Carver. Chairman A. S. Ellison of the Wyoming

# WATONKA

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CHIEF LONE STAR

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Many years ago when the various tribes of Indians spent much of their time hunting, fishing or trapping along the streams of the West, Chief Lone Star told Dr. Richard Tanner (Diamond Dick) about a wonderful herb which he called "WATONKA," and he took Dr. Tanner and showed him the herb growing on the prairie, and explained to him how the Indians used WATONKA as a medicine in their treatment of various diseases. Dr. Tanner never forgot what Chief Lone Star told him, and ever since he has been in the practice of medicine Dr. Tanner has used Watonka in his herbal remedies for diseases of the blood, stomach, liver, kidneys, constipation, indigestion, nervous prostration, palpitation of the heart, loss of sleep, loss of appetite, loss of memory, that tired feeling, appendicitis, asthma, rheumatism and gall stones.

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**MEDICAL TREATMENT ONLY ONE DOLLAR A WEEK**

---

**DR. RICHARD TANNER**  
"Diamond Dick"

---

**NORFOLK, - NEBRASKA**

"Watonka," one of Tanner's remedies that he claimed, "were known to the Indians." RG1345

Historical Landmarks Commission congratulated Tanner on his "first-hand statements regarding Wild Bill, Pawnee Bill and Deadwood Dick."<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Tanner built on his celebrity to promote his cures and lectures. He introduced "Diamond Dick's Indianola Herb Tablets," thirty for a quarter, and "A New Invention Made in Norfolk:

Diamond Dick's Mexican Wonder SANITARY SOAP CLOTHS," with photos of himself in 1898 in Mexico City wearing a large sombrero, and a contemporary portrait in buckskins and western hat, with mustache, goatee, and shoulder-length hair. For twenty-five cents post-paid a buyer received one dozen cloths from his "Office and Medical Laboratory—315 So. 12th St. Norfolk, Nebr."<sup>36</sup>

The belief that American Indians knew effective natural medications infused his ads: "Diamond Dick (Dr. Tanner) compounds the major portion of his medicines from roots, herbs, gums, barks, leaves and berries—Nature's own production—God's gift to mankind. Many of the roots and herbs used by Dr. Tanner were known to the Indians." An ad depicting an Indian male promoted "Watonka," supposedly a prairie herb remedy that Tanner claimed "Chief Lone Star" had shared with him. To what extent Tanner used roots and herbs is not clear. Among his papers are three formulas: "Dr. Tanner's Snow Liniment for Man or Beast," "Wonder (Indian) Liniment," and "Pulque." The liniment concoctions used turpentine, vinegar, eggs, and warm water, plus a package of sewing needles in the Wonder version. "Pulque," primarily water and sugar, bore little resemblance to the alcoholic Mexican pulque, made from agave.<sup>37</sup>

As noteworthy as Dr. Tanner's "coming out" as Diamond Dick in 1925 was, a Norfolk parade in mid-June 1927 was even more memorable. Tanner and Norfolk radio personality Karl Stefan, representing the Chamber of Commerce, created a publicity triumph. After establishing pen-pal contact with several notable western characters, Tanner enticed them to come to Norfolk for a sort of "last Roundup."

Stefan persuaded delegates at the National Editorial Association convention in Omaha to stop in Norfolk on the big day while on a tour to the Black Hills. National news stories resulted. Indicative of the coverage was the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* headline, "Diamond

Dick Rounds Up His Old Friends.”<sup>38</sup>

Despite a persistent drizzle, crowds lined Norfolk’s streets to see, as the press called them, “a half dozen of the most notable Scouts and Indian fighters of a half century ago.” A suitably impressed editor from the *Kansas City Sunday Star* described the scene:

Here they came, riding through the rain on decidedly spirited horses . . . riding two by two, while brass bands flared [*sic*] and the crowds cheered anew. Here were “Pawnee Bill,” with his huge sombrero, and “Doc” Carver, an imposing figure on a bay charger that was almost covered by the huge buffalo coat that Carver wore and which he has possessed for nearly sixty years. Next were “Idaho Bill” and “Lute” North, both riding as if they had been born in the saddle, and closely followed in twain by “Deadwood Dick” and “Diamond Dick.” What a sight—what a thrill—what a picture!<sup>39</sup>

It was a remarkable assemblage: Major Gordon W. “Pawnee Bill” Lillie, Oklahoma showman and Buffalo Bill’s last Wild West show partner; “Doc” W. F. Carver, Cody’s first partner in the arena show and once the world’s champion rifle and pistol shot; Col. B. R. “Idaho Bill” Pearson, scout and animal trapper; Capt. L. H. “Lute” North, organizer with his brother, Frank, of the famous Pawnee Indian Battalion that scouted for the army on the Plains; and Richard W. “Deadwood Dick” Clarke, early-day Deadwood figure who rode alone through Indian country bringing the mail to the boomtown and whose dime novel namesake may have been even better known than was Diamond Dick.

At parade’s end, eighty-seven-year-old Doc Carver was “giddy.” He and the others retired to their rooms to rest before dining with the visiting editors. Wearing big Western hats, the men posed for group photos. Afterwards they adjourned to a meeting room where they sat around a large table. Banker C. E. Burnham took the chair, proposing “to set aright some disputed history concerning what happened at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.” A recent magazine had stated that Custer committed suicide at the battle. Upon hearing that,

Deadwood Dick exploded, “That’s a damn lie!”<sup>40</sup>

With that, the evening got under way. As the smoke thickened, the characters out of the past talked until after midnight. A Union Pacific official took shorthand notes, enabling the Kansas City newspaper to devote thirty-three column inches to the discussion. Diamond Dick, Idaho Bill, and Pawnee Bill did not participate in any significant way, but Deadwood Dick, Doc Carver, and Lute North went at it hot and heavy. Of course, none had been at Little Bighorn, but they had some acquaintance with Custer and they knew the stories as told by Indians and army men. They disparaged parts of the Indian remembrances of the fight; Carver alone credited the story that Custer killed himself. The Kansas City journalist concluded:

Finally, when the ends of our cigars had begun to burn low . . . we bid them goodnight, and good-by, perhaps with just a little pathos after holding each rough hand, for now there [*sic*] were separating the men who had never before met together and perhaps never would meet again.<sup>41</sup>

For Doc Carver, the events of the day were too much. He returned to his California home, took to his bed and, two months later, died on August 31, 1927.<sup>42</sup>

For Dr. Tanner, the gathering was a heady success, a validation of his identity as Diamond Dick. Under one of the group photos, the *Union Pacific Magazine* headed the story, “Is There Any of These Famous Characters You Haven’t Heard Of?” It identified Tanner as the “famous owner of medicine shows.” Once again the shadow of George B. “Dr. Diamond Dick” McClellan intruded. As Diamond Dick, Tanner had been a circus star, not a medicine show operator as was McClellan. The article also quoted Doc Carver who said, of Diamond Dick: “Forty years ago, he wore more diamonds than you ever saw—thousands all over him, even on his hat—and he had the finest palace car in the world.” The old showman probably

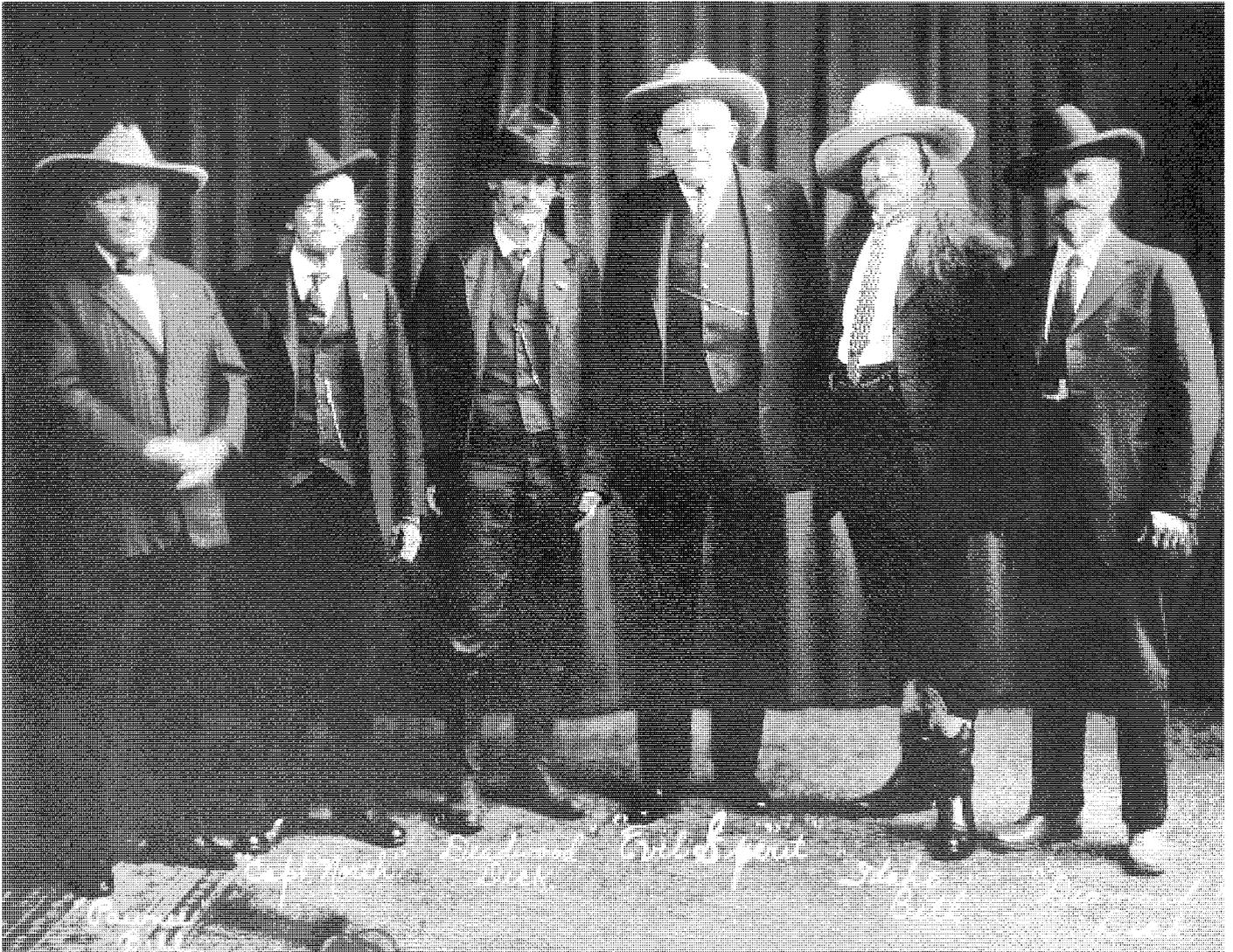
was mistaken in believing that he was remembering Tanner. It was McClellan, as Dr. Diamond Dick, whose show traveled in a luxurious palace car.<sup>43</sup>

The myth-building continued. The *Literary Digest* called Tanner “A buckskinned centaur of the plains.” Writers were drawn to him, and he was willing to talk. “What kind of a story do you want?” he asked one writer.<sup>44</sup>

Tanner continued to contend that he was “the original Diamond Dick,” but in 1929 a veteran medicine show operator, Dr. N. T. “Nevada Ned” Oliver, co-authored two articles about medicine shows for the *Saturday Evening Post* that named two other Diamond Dicks. Tanner was not mentioned. The magazine included a photo captioned “Dr. George McClelland [*sic*], Original of Diamond Dick, With Crazy Elk, Big Horse and Squaw in 1903.” With the second article was a photo of Doc Percy Hudson, identified as “The First of the Diamond Dicks.” Nevada Ned’s designations of “The First” (Hudson) and “The Original” (McClellan) were not explained except in his list of showmen who had “gone to the Happy Hunting Ground.” He wrote, “The latter [Diamond Dick] was the original, I always have understood, of the celebrated nickel-novel hero of that name. His true name was George McClelland [*sic*].” Nevada Ned was correct that in 1882 a *New York Dime Library* story—“Diamond Dick, The Dandy from Denver”—was the original dime novel appearance of Diamond Dick, who was knowledgeable about herbal medicine. The author noted that he modeled Diamond Dick on “George McClellan, a living character of to-day.”<sup>45</sup> Nevada Ned revived the controversy over Tanner’s Diamond Dick claim. After the first article appeared, Lute North wrote to Tanner, “What should you care if these ducks try to make out that there was some other Diamond Dick[,] your friends know what the real Diamond Dick is.”<sup>46</sup>

In Nebraska, Tanner’s renown as Diamond Dick remained unchanged. Invitations to events arrived from as far

## Diamond Dick



The "Plainsmen" at Norfolk, June 16, 1927 (left to right): Maj. Gordon W. "Pawnee Bill" Lillie; Capt. Luther H. "Lute" North; Richard W. "Deadwood Dick" Clarke; William F. "Doc" Carver; Col. B. R. "Idaho Bill" Pearson; and Dr. Richard J. "Diamond Dick" Tanner. RG2320-34

away as Arkansas. Show cards touted his appearances "in full regalia" as Diamond Dick. An old frontier scout, "Montana Mac," Major Manis McGurrin, came to Norfolk "for no other purpose than to visit Dr. Richard Tanner," whom he said he had known for forty years although they had never met.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1930s the weekly *Madison* (Nebr.) *Star-Mail* published a twelve-week series of Tanner's tales. Sitting Bull, Buffalo Bill, Doc Carver, Billy the

Kid, and other westerners of bygone days figured in his writings. A local radio station broadcast his stories, based on "my historical collection," which he said he had gathered for forty years. He wrote his scripts and articles by hand. In one he wrote, "the greatest human enigma that ever came under my personal observation [underlined in the original] was that strange, odd and remarkable woman, Calamity Jane." He might have met her, for she lived until

1903, but he went on to describe how she "rode into Deadwood [with] Wild Bill, Colorado Charley [and] Bloody Dick Seymour; she was dressed in male attire, and was riding a man's saddle." Historian Howard Roberts Lamar states, "Hickok's biographers have failed to establish any association whatever" between Wild Bill and Calamity Jane.<sup>48</sup> Sometimes fiction and fact were confused. In a published letter about his boyhood near the Oregon Trail, the

writer signed as “Richard Tanner, Author of the ‘Diamond Dick’ stories.”<sup>49</sup>

In the last decade of Tanner’s life, he began canceling appearances as Diamond Dick. He had a prostate operation in Milford, Kansas. His health continued to be fragile. On July 2, 1943, a few days after breaking a leg in a fall at home, he died at a Norfolk hospital. He was seventy-three. Ruth survived; they had no children. Burial was in Prospect Hill cemetery.<sup>50</sup>

Obituaries appeared across the nation. The *New York Times* chronicled his life in a story more than thirteen inches long, accompanied by his photo in Western attire. A *New York Herald-Tribune* story, also with photo, ran nearly as long. One article reported, “He liked to recount, with relish, his association with ‘Wild Bill’ Hickok and other figures of the old West.” Another writer acknowledged that Tanner was “too young to take part in the Indian wars that opened the west,” but perpetuated the tale that he “traveled for years with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show.”

His death made news in the west also. In Casper, the *Wyoming Tribune Herald* headlined “‘Diamond Dick’ Tanner of Wild West Fame, Dies at 74 [sic]” and Denver’s *Rocky Mountain News* announced “Famed Marksman of Roaring West Dies.” Truly, he was famed, twice.<sup>51</sup>

Norfolk remembers him even today. Visitors learn that Dr. Tanner was “a fearless rider and crack shot with Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show and that he got his name because of the many diamonds he wore as shirt studs, tie pins and every other possible place.”<sup>52</sup>

The extreme in myth-making appeared in a book by Quentin Reynolds about dime novels. After providing wiggle room by stating that he was “lean[ing] on legend and newspapers,” Reynolds wrote that the Diamond Dick authors were inspired by “Richard Tanner, an old frontier fighter. . . . After his hard-riding, quick-shooting days on the plains with Custer, Tanner joined a Wild West show.”<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps it was the temptations of

fame that led Dr. Tanner to become a willing accomplice to writers who sought to make him a relic of the frontier west, a “pard” with Cody, Hickok, Calamity Jane—and even Custer. He had, indeed, made a newsworthy ride in 1893, and he was featured in circuses until 1905, when he embarked on a medical career and became a medicine show practitioner, but not under the name Diamond Dick until 1925. That there had been a medical show proprietor who called himself Dr. Diamond Dick—George B. McClellan—from the 1880s to 1911 was an uncomfortable fact that Tanner preferred to ignore.

In 1999 the Nebraska State Historical Society mounted an exhibit, *Nebraska’s Wild West*, featuring Buffalo Bill Cody, D. C. (Omaha Charlie) Bristol, Doc Carver, and Diamond Dick Tanner, who “helped to perpetuate the image of the American West as a place of romance and adventure, history and legend.” Under a heading, “Which came first, the man or the legend?” the exhibit concluded:

The line between fiction and fact is sometimes hard to see. In the case of Wild West personalities it can be nearly impossible. Nicknames helped transform ordinary people into larger-than-life characters. Dime novels, newspaper stories, and their own self-promotion glorified the deeds of these men and created imaginary heroes as well.<sup>54</sup>

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *The Covered Wagon*, American Legion Post No. 16, Norfolk, Nebr., n.d., 2, in MS1345, Richard J. Tanner Collection, Nebraska State Historical Society, hereafter cited as Tanner Collection.

<sup>2</sup> “Extry! Diamond Dick is Alive and Kicking,” *Literary Digest*, Sept. 10, 1927, 36, Tanner Collection; Dr. N. T. Oliver (Nevada Ned) as told to Wesley Stout, “Med Show,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Sept. 14, 1929, 169; Oliver, “Alagazam: The Story of Pitchmen, High and Low,” *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 19, 1929, 26, 79. The catalog of the University of Minnesota library, which has a substantial collection of dime and nickel novels, lists 1,266 Diamond Dick titles, however, many are reprinted editions.

<sup>3</sup> Irving Berlin, “There’s No Business Like Show Business,” from *Annie Get Your Gun*, in *Irving Berlin Fake Book* (Milwaukee: Irving Berlin Music

Company, 1992), 138.

<sup>4</sup> Manuscript Record, biographical note, Tanner Collection.

<sup>5</sup> Fred V. Matthews, Laramie, Wyo., to editor, Denver *Rocky Mountain News*, July 21, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> James Earle Fraser, “A Dakota Boyhood,” *American Heritage* (December 1968): 84–85.

<sup>7</sup> Oliver (Nevada Ned), “Alagazam,” 26, 173. Hudson’s photo presumably dates from 1889 or later, after the state of South Dakota was formed from Dakota Territory.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson Messer, “Diamond Dick Returns,” *True Western Stories* 2 (April 1926): 27, Tanner Collection; James C. Olson, *Red Cloud and the Sioux Problem* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), 246.

<sup>9</sup> Nellie Snyder Yost, *Buffalo Bill: His Family Friends, Fame, Failures, and Fortunes* (Chicago: Sage Books, Swallow Press, 1980), 214–15, quoting North Platte *Lincoln County Tribune*, Nov. 24, 1888.

<sup>10</sup> Lenore Boyd, Wayne, Nebr., to Charles Finch, Oct. 11, 1888, in author’s files; *Aledo (Ill.) Democrat*, Nov. 23, 1888. See L. Boyd Finch, “Doctor Diamond Dick: Leavenworth’s Flamboyant Medicine Man,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 26 (Spring 2003): 2–13.

<sup>11</sup> *Valparaiso (Ind.) Daily Star*, May 12, 1893; (Richard J. Tanner) “Adventures of Mary Jane, Diamond Dick’s Doll,” ms, both in Tanner Collection.

<sup>12</sup> *New York Clipper*, June 24, 1893; items 85 and 112, Nebraska State Historical Society Museum, collection # 8073 (hereafter cited as NSHS #8073).

<sup>13</sup> *New York World*, June 19 and 20, 1893, Tanner Collection.

<sup>14</sup> *Canton (Ill.) Ledger*, July 23, 1893; *Fort Madison (Iowa) Gem City*, date unknown; *Deadwood Pioneer*, date unknown; *Hill City (S. Dak.) Tin Miner*, Nov. 2, 1893, all Tanner Collection.

<sup>15</sup> Levi H. Bloyd, Fairbury, Nebr., to Nebraska State Historical Society, May 24, 1961, inscription on reverse of advertisement, Tanner Collection.

<sup>16</sup> Florence Huston, San Francisco, to Tanner, Nov. 1, 1925; George A. Knowles, Norfolk, Nebr., to Tanner, Nov. 3, 1925; W. Howard Forsythe, “A Romance of the Old West: The Story of ‘Diamond Dick,’” *Success Magazine* (September 1927): 49; Montgomery E. Dean (Mrs. Dean’s Big Boy Skip), Lincoln, Nebr., to Tanner, December 1925, all Tanner Collection.

<sup>17</sup> A. O. Perry, Bassett, Nebr., to Tanner, Apr. 10, 1925, Tanner Collection; *Wayne (Nebr.) Herald*, Oct. 18, 1888.

<sup>18</sup> Bert Chipman, Los Angeles, to Tanner, Mar. 10, 1924, Tanner Collection; *New York Clipper*, scattered issues, 1897–1901; Tom Ogden, *Two Hundred Years of the American Circus, from Abadaba to Zavetta Troupe* (New York: Facts on File,

## Diamond Dick

1993), 231.

<sup>19</sup> Helen K. Yam, McGoogan Library of Medicine, University of Nebraska College of Medicine, Omaha, to author, July 30, 2001, e-mail. Ms. Yam cited the definition of Eclectic medicine in *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* (1994), 525.

<sup>20</sup> Manuscript Record, biographical note, Tanner Collection; No. 76, NSHS #8073.

<sup>21</sup> The letters, all written in Lincoln, date from Jan. 1 to June 2, 1909, and are in the Tanner Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Tanner Collection; items 121, 122, NSHS #8073.

<sup>23</sup> *Omaha Daily News*, Dec. 16, 1911.

<sup>24</sup> J. Edward Leithead, "The Derring-Do of the Diamond Dicks," *Dime Novel Round-Up* 16 (April 1948); Several novels are in the Tanner Collection.

<sup>25</sup> Tanner Collection.

<sup>26</sup> J. T. McClellan, Cincinnati, to Tanner, Feb. 1, 1921, and June 11, 1923; Chipman to Tanner, Mar. 10, 1924, all Tanner Collection.

<sup>27</sup> E. P. Wiley, Denver, to Tanner, Jan. 9 and 22, 1925, Tanner Collection.

<sup>28</sup> J. C. Cook, Fremont, Nebr., to Tanner, Jan. 17, 1925, Tanner Collection.

<sup>29</sup> Frank Warner, Norfolk, to R. L. Stevenson, Jan. 7, 1931; "Diamond Dick Oils up His Winchester," *Winchester Herald* (August 1925): 38; Warner to P. K. Whipple, Jan. 17, 1931, all Tanner Collection.

<sup>30</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1925; unidentified Associated Press clipping dated Sept. 1, 1925, Tanner Collection.

<sup>31</sup> "The Real 'Diamond Dick,' Dr. Richard Tanner

of Norfolk Shows Letters to Prove Identity as Noted Deadshot [sic]," *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1925.

<sup>32</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 15, 1925; *Norfolk Daily News*, Sept. 3, 1925, Tanner Collection.

<sup>33</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, Sept. 9, 1925.

<sup>34</sup> The letters are in the Tanner Collection.

<sup>35</sup> *Happy Hours Magazine* 2 (Jan.-Feb. 1926):1; (Sept.-Oct. 1926): 1; 3 (Nov.-Dec. 1927): 26; A. S. Ellison, Laramie, Wyo., to Tanner, Sept. 2, 1927, all Tanner Collection..

<sup>36</sup> Tanner Collection; Nos. 124, 125, NSHS #8073.

<sup>37</sup> Tanner Collection.

<sup>38</sup> *Kansas City Sunday Star*, June 26, 1927; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 10, 1927. Karl Stefan was later elected to Congress from Nebraska.

<sup>39</sup> *Kansas City Sunday Star*, June 26, 1927.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*; Raymond W. Thorp, *Spirit Gun of the West: The Story of Doc W. F. Carver* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1957), 243.

<sup>41</sup> *Kansas City Sunday Star*, June 26, 1927.

<sup>42</sup> Thorp, *Spirit Gun*, 244.

<sup>43</sup> *Union Pacific Magazine* (August 1927): 34, Tanner Collection. McClellan's palace car was described in the *Leavenworth (Kan.) Times*, July 12, 1888; *Sioux City (Iowa) Journal*, Oct. 4, 1888; and *Davenport (Iowa) Democrat-Gazette*, Feb. 4, 1889.

<sup>44</sup> *Literary Digest*, Sept. 10, 1927, 36.

<sup>45</sup> Dr. N. T. Oliver (Nevada Ned), "Med Show," 166, 169; "Alagazam," 26, 79; "Buckskin Sam" (Major Sam S. Hall), "Diamond Dick, The Dandy

from Denver," *New York Dime Library*, Aug. 26, 1882, 2. Nevada Ned's real name was Edward O. Tilburn. Prior to Buckskin Sam Hall's 1882 dime novel, a Diamond Dick appeared in two 1878 stories published in a story paper, the *New York Weekly*, according to J. Edward Leithead, "The Derring-Do of the Diamond Dicks," 25.

<sup>46</sup> L. H. North, Columbus, to Tanner, Sept. 24, 1927, Tanner Collection.

<sup>47</sup> *Norfolk Daily News*, Sept. 23, 1929, Tanner Collection.

<sup>48</sup> The scripts are in the Tanner Collection; Howard R. Lamar, "Calamity Jane (Martha Jane Canary)," *New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 150-51.

<sup>49</sup> *Placerville (Calif.) Pony Express Courier*, Sept. 4, 1934.

<sup>50</sup> *Omaha World-Herald*, July 3, 1943; *Norfolk Daily News*, July 3, 1943.

<sup>51</sup> *New York Times*; *New York Herald-Tribune*; *Casper (Wyo.) Tribune-Herald*; *Denver Rocky Mountain News*, all July 4, 1943; AP dispatch in unidentified newspaper.

<sup>52</sup> "Norfolk Area Visitors' Guide" (Norfolk: Norfolk Area Convention and Visitors' Bureau, n.d.), 20; "1999 Northeastern Nebraska Visitors' Guide," 17.

<sup>53</sup> Quentin Reynolds, *The Fiction Factory or from Pulp Row to Quality Street: The Story of 100 Years of Publishing at Street & Smith* (New York: Random House, 1955), 96. Tanner was six years old when Custer died.

<sup>54</sup> Shirley Ray, *Nebraska's Wild West*, exhibit at the Nebraska State Historical Society.